could gain the impression that the Big Bang started in the Netherlands. There are, in any case, some points that deserve further discussion, such as the place occupied by popular religiosity in the controversial discourse or in the religious life of the Mudejars. Would the Mudejar *Maghāzī*s potentially contain controversial elements as well? Would the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad be used in a controversial discourse to feed popular religiosity or was it religiosity that fuelled the controversy? Why did the aljamas adopt the position of avoiding controversial discussion?

In short, this is a valuable book, full of suggestive interpretations that contribute to the history of the polemics in the Islamic West. The intellectual wealth of the elites of Mudejar society, and their ways of building their identity, are drawn in a skilful way to show the complexities of a Muslim group living in a peripheral, aggressive context, albeit sure of its own religious personality.

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WAEL B. HALLAQ:
Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge.
x, 384 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018. £30. ISBN 978 0 231 18762 6.
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Fifteen years after Edward Said's untimely passing, Wael Hallaq presents the first book-length immanent critique of *Orientalism*, the book that launched the ongoing struggle to decolonize the humanities in 1978. Wael Hallaq endows Said with the rarified status of "founder of discursivity". But Said's influence on the humanities has not been the blessing we all thought it was, he argues in *Restating Orientalism*. This is not surprising. Whereas Edward Said repeated, time and again, the mantra that "everything is hopelessly mixed up together" – "the search for roots is essentially an affirmation of identity, ethnic identity, religious identity, national identity. And that is almost always a construction" – Wael Hallaq presents a labyrinthine identitarian argument for an autogenetic, singular, pre-modern Islam that was destroyed by rapacious liberal and secular thoughts of European modernity. He charges Said and his postcolonial interpreters with blindness to the structural violence that Enlightenment rationalism wrought on the planet because they have only considered Orientalism as a regime of "(mis)representation" which is both too totalizing and too limiting. The point is to study how most Orientalists actually implemented this regime and assimilated the Orient into the fold of Western modernity.

This destructive modernity sprang not even from the geo-political dialectics of capitalism and the colonial encounter. These are political economists' "superficial" arguments that effectively make the non-Western victims of European violence complicit in their own subjugation (pp. 19–20). Rather, modernity was rooted entirely and autogenetically in modern European thought as Christian theology turned into the theology of secularism in the aftermath of the four genocides of the sixteenth century – the Amerindian, Andalusian, African and the Great Inquisition's witch-hunt (pp. 85–7). While I am sympathetic to the Dialectics-of-Enlightenment critiques of colonial modernity, *Restating Orientalism* fails to prove its particular case, whether by historical evidence or sound philosophical argument, for the "*necessary effects*" of early modern philosophy on sixteenth- or, indeed, twentieth-century genocides (p. 232). Moreover, Hallaq's uncharitable, polemical and prosecutorial style of arguing makes his passionate

plea for a new ethical and self-critical practice of Orientalism at the end of the book seem instrumentalist or disingenuous, or both.

In his introduction, Hallaq builds a complex matrix of methods and theories in order to move beyond *Orientalism*'s well-known conceptual aporiae and to sustain his book's most radical claim which he presents in the following syllogistic fallacy: modern academia is "connected, however unconsciously … to the colonialist project of Western modernity"; "there is an equally structured relationship between modern colonialism and genocide"; *ergo* academia is "complicit in structural genocide" (p. 24). To forestall the matter, the penultimate chapter which is supposed to demonstrate this case, reveals no smoking guns. Instead, analogous, counterfactual and speculative reasoning and stream-of-consciousness conclusions from weak premises and proofs prevail, but the journey is entertaining nonetheless, if you are a tolerant traveller.

It starts with a close if laborious reading of Foucault's "What is an Author?" and a loose and lax invocation of conservative German jurist Carl Schmitt on the oppressive nature of secular theology and sovereignty. This combination allows Hallaq "a discursive exit strategy" out of *Orientalism*'s corset in which all Orientalists are stuck (p. 52). Drawing on J.L. Austin's concept of "performative utterances" and their "conditions of felicity", (p. 39) Hallaq promises to probe exactingly the nexus between "performed" academic knowledge and colonial power executed in a very real Orient on the one hand, and the diverse locations of authors within, without, and in between discursive formations on the other. This toolkit offers people who genuinely idealize the Orient, like the book's heuristic hero, the disaffected French occultist-turned-Sufi convert René Guénon (d. 1951), or who strategically essentialize Islam, like Hallaq himself, an affirmative space in which to develop an ontologically and epistemologically superior alternative to the singularly materialist, liberal-secular, anthropocentric and modern West.

Hallaq makes this case in chapter 2 by contrasting the non-anthropocentric, non-materialist and non-sovereign Islamic ethos and essence of pre-modern Sharia law, Sufism and the *waqf* property system (pp. 73–84) with the unbridled, nature-destroying Enlightenment thought-in-action in British India, French Algeria, Dutch Indonesia and modern Ottoman rule. The seeds of legal Orientalism, according to Hallaq, lay in early modern European philosophy's "fact/value split" which Orientalists like William Jones, Marcel Morand, Cornelis van Vollenhoven and Snouck Hurgronje exported and implemented in late eighteenth century South Asia, in mid-nineteenth century Algeria, and in late nineteenth-century South East Asia respectively. The Ottoman Tanzimat reforms merely aped the colonial process of incorporating the hitherto autonomous Islamic legal profession and authentic Sharia framework into the secularized state (pp. 116–36).

In chapter 3 Hallaq instrumentalizes the maverick Orientalist René Guénon to show that you can be an ethical and empathetic European Orientalist as long as you are anti-materialist and anti-liberal. In Guénon, Hallaq has found a fin-de-siècle Ghazalian *Denkfigur* "outside modernity" through whom he can ventriloquize an authentic Orientalist alternative (p. 145). Guénon offered not only a trenchant diagnosis of the malaise of European modernity but also the remedy to overcome it. In the last chapter, billed as the roadmap to a more ethical and empathetic Orientalism, it is neither Guénon nor the much more obvious and sophisticated nemesis of modernity's technocratic materialism, Martin Heidegger, however, but the quixotic philosophical anthropologist Max Scheler (d. 1928). Hallaq deems Scheler's spiritual arguments more substantial than those of contemporary environmentalists whose atheism is a sign of both their complicity in liberalism and their inability to see the real crisis of "Western materialism". It does not occur to Hallaq that anti-modern mavericks and anti-materialist movements were a defining feature of fin de siècle modernism, not modernity's others.

It is unclear to me how Hallaq's prescription that Orientalists should start spending more time on their own positionality than on futile Middle Eastern studies of "microhistorical" detail (p. 258) is any less Eurocentric or navel-gazing than Said's *Orientalism*. If, as Hallaq argues, the much-maligned Other needs to become the salvific alternative tradition for a planet that liberal modernity has consigned to natural and human disasters, then we hear remarkably little in *Restating Orientalism* from Muslim intellectuals of that alternative tradition out there. Until we do, *Orientalism*'s liberal biases notwithstanding, Said's account is still analytically sharper than the conservative messianism of Wael Hallaq's critique.

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SOUTH ASIA

WHITNEY COX:
Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India: Moonset on Sunrise Mountain.
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In this long-awaited study of the south Indian monarch Kulottuṅga Cola, Whitney Cox's *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry in Medieval South India: Moonset on Sunrise Mountain* promises to upstage twentieth-century classics (e.g. Nilakantha Sastri, Subbarayalu) as the gold standard of historiography on the Cola Empire. Through a relentlessly interdisciplinary fusion of "history, politics, and philology", Cox moves well beyond the reconstruction of regnal years and military campaigns endemic to positivist historiography in favour of a recovery of the human agency at the heart of Cola imperial politics – defined by Cox as the "array of customary and constitutional institutions and practices that meaningfully maintained and reproduced the asymmetrical distribution of power and access to resources". Significantly, for Cox, the *political* fundamentally includes the *textual*, entailing a recover of the monarch's discursive footprints in multiple languages and genres. Thus, Cola-period epigraphy and literature are rendered themselves as strategic acts, whose motivations come into sharp relief through Cox's painstaking philological acumen.

While the four chapters of *Politics, Kingship, and Poetry* are structured sequentially as chronological episodes in the life (and afterlife) of Kulottuṅga Cola, the book's narrative is equally punctuated by episodes of intervention in the close reading of key texts and genres. The early years of the Cola Imperium figure prominently in Cox's reconsideration of the *mĕykirtti* genre of royal encomium, a eulogistic signature of Cola regents that precedes the documentary activity of imperial edicts. Although highly regimented in its form and function, the *mĕykirtti*, Cox demonstrates, were intended as deliberate political acts, the genre serving less as a static emblem of Cola imperial legitimacy than as an arena for strategic choices in rhetoric that sought to intervene in extra-textual social relations. Most notably among these choices, in both Tamil *mĕykirtti* and Sanskrit *praśasti*, figures the deliberate invocation of dual imperial imagery, where references to the Cālukya emblem, the boar *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, and the mythological heritage of the Colas