

# *Tracing Orientalism in Cricket: A Reading of Some Recent Australian Cricket Writing on Pakistani Cricket<sup>1</sup>*

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The Oriental man was first an Oriental and only secondly a man' (Edward Said).<sup>2</sup>

On 25 February 1995 most Australian dailies published concurrently two reports from Pakistan. One of them covered the blasphemy verdict against two Pakistani Christians and the other a bribery scandal in Pakistani cricket. Lindsay Murdoch covered both of them in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and his stories were linked inviting his audience to read them together. At the end of the report under the headlines, 'Blasphemy verdict overturned', there was a note referring readers to 'PAGE 31: The land where cricket is god'.

The 'blasphemy verdict overturned', filed from Islamabad, suggested that 'a thirteen-year-old Christian boy accused of insulting the Prophet Mohammed will flee Islamic Pakistan ...'<sup>3</sup>The report carried a photograph of the boy and a photograph, ten-times larger, of a *mullah* (priest) with the following caption: 'Islamic zealots carry a *mullah* outside the Lahore court on Wednesday after he decided to re-enter the blasphemy case'. With his long beard, a black Muslim League cap, both hands raised with a roll of paper in his left hand, the mullah was a threatening figure. This 'Islamic' threat was literally carried on the shoulders of other Pakistanis who were described as 'Islamic zealots'.

The land where cricket is god' noted that 'gambling is prohibited in strictly Islamic Pakistan but placing a bet on cricket is as easy as picking up a mobile phone'.<sup>4</sup> The report continued that 'bookmakers in Pakistan have status and a pervasive influence, despite the fact that Islam prohibits any form of gambling'. Also included in this story was a photograph, of Shane Warne bowling in a Test match in Pakistan, which was captioned: 'The other religion ... Australian Shane Warne bowls

during last October's First Test in Karachi against Pakistan'. The religion of the first report was Islam, fundamentalist and extremist, responsible for persecuting innocent thirteen-year old Christian boys. The decoding of 'religion' in the second report is more intriguing because it is followed by dots, indicating a silence. What does this gap represent? Does it reflect the reporter's or the caption-writer's doubt, indecision, and uncertainty? Or, is it the surplus of our understanding assumed by the reporter and the editor? Are they relying on common perceptions and established prejudices to fill the gap?

When Australian cricket journalists tour Pakistan they do not write about cricket only, they look for other stories and write about them as well. These stories, directed to readers back home, employ a 'language' understood by their audience. They use metaphors, images, myths, stereotypes that are in circulation, and by re-employing them, add new values to them. In telling and retelling these stories, they construct the Pakistani as the 'other'. In the process, the power of speaking resides only with the authors, the Australians. The 'other' remains a passive object. The aim of this article is to explore how Australian cricket writers, by employing the discourses of cricket and Islam and by telling stories about Pakistani cricket and Pakistani Islam, authors their subject, the Pakistani.

### **The Stadium, Spectacle and Subjectification**

Nations like individuals need stories to constitute themselves. Most often these tales are about wars, victories and defeats. They always have an 'other', the enemy, against whom the hero, an individual or a community fights and usually wins-though defeats may be defined as glorious as well. The enemy need not be human, it can be nature itself: deserts, mountains, rivers, oceans and the bush. space becomes the prime target to be conquered, tamed, inscribed and assimilated into the metanarrative of history. It is the enemy and the setting where the battles take place. It is metaphorised and mythologised and turned into an archive of time.

One such space where the 'battle' with the 'other' is performed is the stadium. In sporting battles new plots are added to the story about the self and 'other'. The circus arenas, amphitheatres, stadiums, school playground are the sites where power is applied to discipline bodies, to constitute and disseminate individual and connective identities.

Mass spectacles, by their very nature, have the capacity to trigger collective emotions, to persuade an individual to become one with a group, to be loyal to a team, a group and a nation. Modern stadiums are, what Mikhail Bakhtin calls, the chronotopes where the narrative of a nation unfolds, where the story is told and performed and where, contrary to normal theatrical conventions, the spectators do not remain passive observers but become actors.<sup>5</sup> These sporting spectacles are accompanied by a multitude of visual and sound images. As in opera, the verbal or written signs are appendages to the visible and the audible.

Some have viewed the spectacle of establishment cricket as a colourless affair dominated by the white, the green of the turf and the red of the cricket ball. Its colourlessness and the stern coolness indicates its English public school origin and patronage along with the Victorian values of this colonial game which was transported into the vast realms of the Empire. It was initially a game of the whites played in all white, and for the coloured of the colonies, the black and the brown sahibs, the donning of white was akin to putting on a new skin—the skin of power. The empowering of the colonised through the game, however, came much later when it was acquired, appropriated and assimilated by them. From the late nineteenth century the game was directed at the body and the soul of the colonised subjects, and the aim was to anglicise them. Richard Cashman, in his history of Indian cricket, described the efforts of Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay between 1890 and 1895, and a keen patron and promoter of the game in colonial India. Harris was of the opinion that this peculiarly English game required the ‘doggedness of the English temperament’ and that ‘excitable Asiatics’ had to be taught the ‘disciplined and scientific manner’ of playing so characteristic of the ‘phlegmatic Anglo-Saxons’.<sup>6</sup> The Orientalist discourse behind this counter positioning of the ‘phlegmatic, dogged, disciplined and scientific Anglo-Saxons’ and the ‘excitable Asiatics’ is quite transparent. By framing the problem in this way, Harris linked cricket directly with other ‘orientalising’ and colonising practices. It will be suggested later that the opposition between ‘them’ and ‘us’ between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ has persisted even to this day, and that the Australian cricket writing about Pakistani cricket uses similar metaphors to constitute the Pakistani ‘other’

Colour was reintroduced into the game of cricket literally and metaphorically in 1977, when Kerry Packer’s World Series Cricket challenged the long-established conventions of playing and watching

the game. It was the beginning of a romance between coloured television and the 'colour-blind' game which ended in a marriage, but as Gideon Haigh remarked, the marriage 'has not been blissful'.<sup>7</sup> World Series Cricket introduced helmets, white balls and coloured clothing and popularised play under lights. Its detractors called it a 'circus' and the Limited Overs game retained the best elements of circus: the lights, the colourful uniforms, the huge television screen with replays, the Mexican wave and most of all, some cricketers who enjoyed 'clowning' for the benefit of the crowds. The circus invaded many sitting rooms where it was amalgamated with advertisements featuring some of the 'gladiators' battling on the field. Cricket circus has most elements of Bakhtin's carnivalesque: the combination of the serious with the funny, the religious (that is, traditional amateurism), with the profane (professionalism). It introduced the fun and freedom of the bazaar or the supermarket. There were some limits to its carnivalesque character in that the displaced English seriousness was not replaced with anything positive. Instead an enhanced rigour of telling the same stories about the self and the nation emerged using the familiar metaphors and stereotypes about the 'other'.<sup>8</sup> The multitude of visual images were harnessed to strengthen the age-old prejudices between the 'white' and the 'coloured'.

It is worth examining the visual images in detail, because they provide the best means to embody the 'other'. In a Test match, when players are dressed in white, the whiteness glosses over the differences. Coloured uniforms, on the other hand, make the 'other' more palpable. The clothing of the teams participating in the World Series Cup in Australia reveals national identities: the Pakistani team is dressed in green, the dominant colour of Pakistan's national flag; the dark blue of the Indian team is the colour of the *chakra* (wheel) in India's tricolour flag; the blue of the English is one colour of their flag; the maroon of the West Indian team is the colour of their cricketing 'nationality'. The Australian team is a glaring exception: its gold and green is not the colour of its flag although these colours have been officially accepted as the national sporting colours. The opposition between the red, white and blue of the flag and green and gold-derived from the gum tree and wattle-represents a dramatic tension in Australian nationality which needs a more detailed and separate investigation. The decision of Aboriginal Cathy Freeman to drape herself with 'her' own red, yellow and black flag (in addition to the official flag) demonstrated another

tension in regard to appropriate Australian identity and colours. By her action Freeman voiced her own 'otherness'.<sup>9</sup>

Imagine a Limited Overs match between Australian and Pakistani teams. Eleven men dressed in the green battling with eleven Australians dressed in the green and gold.<sup>10</sup> The flags are carried by bodies, covering and merging them so that the individual is dissolved in the collective; the abstractness of nations locates the corporeality of bodies. Many spectators in the stadium dress and even paint their faces in national colours, wave flags and sing songs such as 'C'mon, Aussie, C'mon'. The body of the nation, thus, extends from the playing field—the acting space—into the stands—the spectating space; a conflation of the collective 'I' of the team on the field takes place with the spectators to become a resounding 'We'. This 'We' however does not stand alone; it exists because there is someone, who represents 'They'. It is 'Us' against 'Them'.

This conflation of 'I' and 'We' and its counter positioning against 'Them' is important, because sporting contests, their performance, viewing and reporting have been traditionally associated with a metonymy that creates a similar conflation. In its simplest form it works like this: the word 'team' is dropped from the phrase 'the Australian team', and the Australian cricket team begins to represent the Australian community. Instead of saying that 'the Australian team won' it is reported that 'the Australians won'. When the Australian cricket team won the series against the West Indies team in May 1995 the *Australian* banner headlines declared: 'We did it'. By implication every Australian citizen was party to the win and should be elated by this success. Similarly, Mark Taylor's phrase at the end of the Pakistani tour —'We're better than Pakistan'—which became elevated to headline status, may be read in broader terms that Australians are better than the Pakistanis, not merely in the cricket field but in general.

Pakistani cricket, and the Pakistani team, has not enjoyed a positive press in many other cricket countries. There have been many newspaper headlines suggesting that 'the Pakistanis cheated' or 'tampered with the ball'. The dropping of the word 'team' introduces generalisations which re-enforce the age-old construct of Orientals as 'cheats'. It is interesting that equally often the word 'Pakistani' is replaced by its shortened version the 'Pakis'. In the Anglo-Saxon world the word 'Pakis' has racial and disparaging connotations, so a newspaper headline that 'the Pakis

cheat' doubles the offence to Pakistanis.<sup>11</sup> The word 'Pak' in Urdu means 'pure' and the word 'Pakistan' means 'a nation of the pure'. The inflection 'Pakis' has semantically turned into a derogatory expression, the opposite of what the root 'Pak' means.

### **'Happiness is a dry fart' — the Land of Dirt, Dust and Dysentery**

'Cricketers traditionally return from a tour of India and/or Pakistan with hair-raising tales of sub-standard living, crook food, undrinkable water and shocking umpiring', wrote New Zealand's John Morrison.<sup>12</sup> His fellow countryman, Sir Richard Hadlee, described the horrors of the dreaded 'Delhi Belly' and noted that 'a large part of a tour of India is spent either on the toilet, or trying desperately to get there before it's too late'. This is, according to Hadlee, 'a clear enough proof of the truth of that old saying: in India, happiness is a dry fart'.<sup>13</sup>

Dennis Lillee was reluctant to go on the 1980 tour of Pakistan because he had 'been told living conditions were terrible, there was a good chance that he would pick up a disease which could affect him for the rest of his life'.<sup>14</sup> Lillee finally relented but described Faisalabad, the site of the Second Test 'as the worst place I've ever seen ... filth, mud, flies, the lot'.<sup>15</sup> On the way to Pakistan, the team stopped in Bombay where Lillee had the first 'glimpse of the true poverty that I later found abounds in India and Pakistan'.<sup>16</sup> When the tour was over Lillee declared forthrightly that 'as we packed to go home I reflected on the fact that against my better judgement I'd toured Pakistan ... and declared that I would never go back'.<sup>17</sup> However, Lillee did return to the subcontinent, not as a cricketer but as a coach.

Many English and Australian cricketers have expressed similar sentiments to Lillee about India and Pakistan. In addition to the flies, heat, dirt, dust and dysentery, players have dwelt on the abject poverty in the form of slums, shanty towns and beggars. There have been some notable exceptions, such as Mike Brearley, who developed a deep respect for the culture of the subcontinent. Cricketers are similar to many other tourists from the 'first world' who return with similar stories. Their shock foregrounds their ignorance of the poverty of some of Australia's indigenous people.

It is interesting that both India and Pakistan are scripted similarly: the metaphors and the visual images are the same. The portrayal, however, becomes different as soon as the focus shifts from these

immediately visible features to Islam. Added to the image of dirt, dust and dysentery—physical discomfort—Islam represents the elements of suspicion and threat so that Pakistan becomes a land of danger. The discourse about Islamic fundamentalism penetrates the discourse about economic ‘backwardness’ of the ‘third world’ countries.

### ‘Mohammad now just a Paki Pebble’

Between 1980 and 1994, four Australian cricket teams toured Pakistan. Each of these tours was marred by scandals and clashes on and off the field. Mike Coward of the *Australian* expressed the belief, common amongst Australian cricketers, that ‘a tour of Pakistan is among the most challenging that can be undertaken’.<sup>18</sup> His fellow journalist Trent Bouts agreed that ‘Australian teams have long regarded a tour of Pakistan as a battle of wits’.<sup>19</sup>

It is interesting, however, to note that the nature of reporting of tours to Pakistan underwent a significant change in 1994. The reporting of the previous three tours, of which the 1988 tour was perhaps the most controversial, operated primarily within the discourse about the economic and cultural ‘backwardness’ of a ‘third world’ society. Other issues which surfaced were the alleged lack of fairness in umpiring and playing conditions which re-enforced the construct of Pakistanis as ‘cheats’. Dennis Lillee and Allan Border focussed on these issues in their books.

Australian cricket writing on Pakistan appropriated the global discourse about Islamic fundamentalism for the first time in 1994. The reports of Mike Coward and Trent Bouts in the *Australian* will be examined in detail to explore this phenomenon, though writing in this vein was not limited to this newspaper.

A feature of Coward’s cricket writing is that it is rich in allegories and metaphors. This is how he reported the arrival of an Australian team in Pakistan:

And if it is not *blasphemous*, perhaps the *muezzin* could even broadcast the news from *the minarets* reaching for the sky beyond the shimmering heat haze which always shrouds the *barren* plains of Pakistan. Let it be known, there have been confirmed sightings of one of the rarest species known in the cricket jungle—*the relaxed, open-minded, resolute and optimistic Australian cricketer in Pakistan*. For the moment, anyway, there is no paranoia which has eaten away at all Australian teams since the masterful Fazal Mahmood ran amok on the

mat against Ian Johnson's pioneers just nine years after Pakistan was partitioned from *Hindu* India in 1947 [my emphasis].<sup>20</sup>

The above passage is interesting because it contains a number of different voices. Firstly, the re-presentation of Australian cricketers as 'relaxed, open-minded, resolute and optimistic' is intoned with a certain degree of irony. Those familiar with Coward's book, *Cricket beyond the Bazaar*, will be able to detect it easily. This is an important aspect of his writing which will be explored more later.

The other voice that one cannot fail to hear is that of the *muezzin* (priest) which Coward appropriates to paint the Islamic landscape of Pakistan; the allusions to mosques, *muezzin*, minarets in the 'barren plains of Pakistan' are essential elements of this depiction. Coward goes a step further in his report of the Australian team's one wicket defeat in the First Test:

To the bedlam of a crowd *chanting Allah-o-Akbar (God is great)* Pakistan sought and received *divine help* to defeat Australia by one wicket in a Test that surely will have revived interest in Test match cricket on the Indian subcontinent. To the unrestrained delight of the mob Inzamam-ul-Huq Ahmed and Mushtaq Ahmed became *the agents of the Prophet* and with ruthless efficiency *broke the hearts of the Australians* who for much of the past two days had seemed destined to achieve a historic victory [emphasis added].<sup>21</sup>

Coward described the final moments of the Test match as if it was a crusade or a *jihad* (holy war), in which the Muslim 'mob' chanted the battle cry and Pakistani cricketers, 'the agents of the Prophet' received divine help which enabled them to defeat the 'resolute and optimistic' Australians, breaking their Christian hearts. The 'other' has been defined clearly and forcefully, and this 'other' is no other than the Islamic Pakistan. The Pakistani cricketers are not only Muslims but 'the agents of the Prophet'. It is important here to ask whether an Australian journalist would have used the same language if the Pakistani team had included a Hindu player.<sup>22</sup> The answer is, most probably, yes. This is because the discourse about Islamic fundamentalism is so overwhelming that minor discrepancies can be glossed over. Moreover, a cricket Test match requires that the 'other', the enemy, be defined as clearly as possible.

The foregrounding of the Islamic nature of Pakistan is also achieved by using the full name of the country—The Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Coward uses this frequently. Bouts uses a shortened version, such as ‘Islamic Pakistan’ or ‘The Islamic Republic’. In one of his reports about a Limited Overs match, Bouts hints at rumours of the throwing of matches by the Pakistani team and notes that ‘there was a suggestion that players of the Pakistani team were made to take an oath on the Islamic holy book, the Koran’.<sup>23</sup>

The reports of Coward and Bouts foster a reading which suggests that in Pakistan, cricket is nothing but an extension of Islam, that cricket is played in the same way as Islam is practised, and that every Pakistani cricketer is a devout Muslim, who goes on to the field as if it were a battle field where he fights for Allah. The images of Pakistani cricket and Pakistani Islam penetrate and frame each other.

In an article on the Mohammad dynasty —‘Mohammad now just a Paki pebble’—Bouts suggested that ‘cricket is a religion’ in Pakistan.<sup>24</sup> In another report he contended that ‘cricket is not so much a funny game in Pakistan as a volatile one’. Bouts introduced another dimension when he defined Pakistani cricket in terms of its difference with cricket in Australia: ‘not even the love of cricket is common to both countries. It is a highly popular national sport in Australia but to an increasing portion of the 125 million in Pakistan it is an obsession.’<sup>25</sup> This comment echoes Lord Harris’ comments about the ‘excitable Asiatics’ as opposed to the ‘dogged, disciplined and scientific English’.

Cricket in Pakistan has been viewed as religion. But what is the state of cricket itself in Pakistan? According to Coward, ‘corruption is rife at all levels of society in Pakistan and not every administration has cared deeply of the welfare of cricket’.<sup>26</sup> Coward adds that Pakistani cricket is ridden with ‘intrigues’ and there was a ‘smell of Palace revolt’.<sup>27</sup> Bouts added that Pakistani cricket is surrounded by rumours of ‘betting scandals’ which have been ‘superseded by accusations of nepotism’.<sup>28</sup> Pakistani cricketers, it is alleged, do not play their cricket with fairness and honesty: their umpires are not always impartial, they tamper with balls and prepare pitches which suit their team. Dennis Lillee did not want to play cricket in Pakistan because, according to him, some Pakistani cricketers admitted that they were ‘preparing wickets to counter [their] opponents and suit themselves’.<sup>29</sup> Thus cricket, which is ‘religion in Pakistan’, is corrupt.

If things are so bad with the cricketing religion, what is the state of their other religion, Islam? Bouts in his article 'Cricket's end of innocence' discussed the betting scandal from within the cultural context of Pakistan and described a dinner party given by a former Test cricketer in Karachi. The guests were offered 'Black Label whisky and hashish'. The use of hashish was illegal but 'safe because the host knew the right people'. With regard to the drinks, Bouts continued:

He poured drinks but not for himself. 'Not until I pray', he said, explaining that he would be open with Allah before touching alcohol, which is *ostensibly* outlawed under Islam. He argued that the Koran did not ban drink, only intoxication. So he had never been drunk. *Like so much in Pakistan correctness was a matter of contacts and interpretation.* Black-and-white responses to blunt questions can be difficult to find, *Grey is a predominant colour not just in the dust that is everywhere on the sub-continent* [emphasis added].<sup>30</sup>

This is an instance where a journalist was unable to resist a wide-ranging generalisation based on an individual event. Islam prohibited gambling and drinking but Pakistani Muslims still indulged in them, therefore, either Pakistani Muslims had double standards, or there was something fundamentally wrong with the Islam itself which permits the 'correctness to turn into a matter of contacts and interpretation'. Bouts illustrated this by letting a former Pakistani Test cricketer, the former 'agent of the Prophet' in Coward's words, interpret the Koran to justify drinking. Pakistan's Islamic landscape with mosques, minarets and the muezzin, which Coward so romantically described earlier, according to Bouts, was painted in grey, the colour of opportunism and convenience.

### **Romanticising the Orient**

Commenting on the genealogy of the Western fear of Islam, Edward Said noted that a significant number of metaphors employed in the discourse about Islamic Orientalism are inspired by its desire to negotiate the elements of threat and fear. In this process 'the threat is muted by imposing familiar values', and 'the mind reduces the pressure ... by accommodating things to itself as either "original" or "repetitious"'.<sup>31</sup> 'The Orient' which is thus constructed, 'vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight in—or fear of—novelty'.<sup>32</sup> According to Said, when the West encountered novelty in the

form of Islam its response vacillated between ‘contempt’, ‘delight’ and ‘fear’. Although this explanation has an element of reductionism, it throws light on Australian cricket writing on Pakistan.

A distinctive feature of this writing is the way it romanticises Pakistan, its landscape, architecture and history. This discursive strategy is very evident in Coward’s writing. He described the Test venue in Faisalabad:

Barely two years old, it is true the most *appealing* of the country’s Test venues with *wonderful* views to 88-metre minarets of the Faisal Mosque in the nation’s capital of Islamabad and beyond to the *splendid* Margala Hills ... [emphasis added].<sup>33</sup>

The Mosque reappeared again when he wrote:

If one wasn’t sitting high atop the pavilion and within sight of the *magnificent* Faisal Mosques in the nearby capital of Islamabad ...[emphasis added].<sup>34</sup>

The adjectives used in these passages are striking. They have echoes of the metaphor of the ‘marvellous’ which, as Stephen Greenblatt has shown, pervaded Christopher Columbus’ records of his encounters with the New World.

Bouts added the elements of the ‘primitive’ and the ‘backward’, when he described the city of Multan:

Dating an estimated 4000 years, Multan is considered the oldest city on the subcontinent and on early evidence is still having trouble catching up. The team hotel is brand new, so new, in fact, it is far from complete with just one floor open specifically for the cricketers.<sup>35</sup>

In Bouts’ super highway of history, Multan and perhaps Pakistan was banished to those far posts which have been passed, seen and forgotten in that they are ‘still having trouble catching up’. On this super highway, time flows only in one direction, from the ‘third world’ to the ‘first world’, but Multan and hence Pakistan are burdened by the weight of their history, antiquity and irrelevance. If Coward’s encounter with Pakistan is full of delight and wonder, Bouts has pity, compassion tainted with irony, and some contempt. Each has devised his own strategy to negotiate the encounter.

It has been noted that Australian cricket writing changes its contours when it moves from India to Pakistan with the spectre of Islam haunting the image of Pakistan. Said has also stressed a similar difference between Orientalism and its Islamic version. In his opinion the encounter of Islamic Orientalists with Islam and the ensuing estrangement from it 'intensified their feeling of superiority about European culture, even as their antipathy spread to include the entire Orient, of which Islam was considered a degraded (and usually, a virulently dangerous) representative'.<sup>36</sup> The Islamic Orientalists saw and constructed Islam in relation to Christianity and Judaism, and compared to them, 'Islam remained forever the Orientalist's idea (or type) of original cultural effrontery, aggravated naturally by the fear that Islamic civilisation originally (as well as contemporaneously) continued to stand somehow opposed to the Christian West'.<sup>37</sup> It would be unfair to reduce Australian cricket writing totally to some form of Orientalist discourse, but one thing is certain: Australian journalists after crossing the border between India and Pakistan begin to 'journey' through the discourse which Said calls Islamic Orientalist. Islam is represented both as 'opposed to Christianity' and as a 'misguided version'.<sup>38</sup>

The above opposition is foregrounded in the way the blasphemy charges against two Pakistani Christians were reported in Australian newspapers. For instance, the report in the *Canberra Times* carried two headlines: the first one read, 'Pakistan Muslims plan protest rally', followed by the second, which stated, 'Christians set free'.<sup>39</sup> The second headline was printed in bold and was twice the size of the first headline. Thus by opting for a dual head-line, the opposition between Islam and Christianity is thrust into the forefront. The newspaper wants its readers to focus on this opposition and to create empathy between 'us' and 'their Christians'.

Some reports opted to drop the word Pakistani from the 'accused' Pakistani Christians. It is likely that the equivalence between a Pakistani and a Muslim was viewed as so complete that a Christian could not be defined as a Pakistani, the two were considered mutually exclusive.

### **'Taylor ponders a clash of cultures'**

The opposition between Christianity and Islam is often framed within a broader opposition between the West and the East which spans every aspect of their cultures. The differences are constructed as basic,

prototypical and irreconcilable. They stand opposed to one another and always clash.

If metaphors of 'delight', 'contempt' and 'fear' dominated the way the West negotiated its encounters with the otherness of the East, it never stopped theorising the East, approaching it as an object of knowledge, and in that process objectifying and essentialising it. This knowledge, as Said has shown, was turned into an instrument of power: it created this power and was legitimised by it. However, there seems to be another interesting turn in this power-knowledge relationship, which functions on the assumption that the 'otherness' of the East is unknowable, that the East is so irrational and illogical that it cannot be put into discursive forms.

This insularity and unknowability is employed to justify the absence of any engagement with it. To use Mikhail Bakhtin's words, the West after 'monologically' constituting the 'other' leaves it out of any dialogue. By denying the possibility of any dialogic relation, the West reinforces its power of monologising and essentialising the 'other'.

In a newspaper report, 'Taylor ponders a clash of cultures', Bouts foregrounded the West's dilemma about the East's seeming lack of order, confusion and unknowability. According to him, 'there are examples at every turn' in Pakistan which show that 'not everything is as it seems on the surface'. He supported this view with a statement from Australian Captain Mark Taylor: 'I don't think an Australian person can ever understand the way they think over here ... because it is such a totally different lifestyle, different culture, different upbringing, everything'.<sup>40</sup> Bouts elaborated an Australian inability to make any sense of a 'beast' called Pakistan by noting that 'despite all the best intentions, it seems now this latest touring party will also return home with more questions and confusion than they brought'.<sup>41</sup>

Although Pakistan, its cricket and Islam, are considered unknowable and insular, the Australian cricket team had to go and play cricket there, and this required that there was some semblance of a 'dialogue'. Mikhail Bakhtin has shown that not all dialogues are 'dialogic', that drama which is based on verbal exchanges is basically monologic, because all dialogues are circumscribed within and by a single consciousness of the author. It is a monologic dialogue.<sup>42</sup>

The managers of the Australian team were convinced that there could never be a true dialogue with 'Pakistan' and hence they devised

and practised a monologised version of dialogue before they left for Pakistan. A report in the *Australian* informed that the Australian Cricket Board 'employed a media relations firm to assist the players'. As a result, 'not only has each member of the touring squad been given a book on Pakistan, its history and its customs, but they have also been furnished with a list of recommended responses to local media probing of contentious issues'.<sup>43</sup> The Australian Cricket Board wanted 'to patch up relations with the Pakistanis' and was relying on pre-prepared responses such as: 'weather conditions during a hot Australian summer are just as challenging for touring teams; and ... conditions in Pakistan are very comfortable; five-star accommodation, hotel prepared food at the grounds, bottled water'.<sup>44</sup> It was ironic that this news report was followed by a short item which stated that 'Justin Langer missed Australia's first training in Pakistan yesterday because of gastric problems'.

### **Looking beyond the Bazaar**

It was mentioned earlier that Mike Coward's writing on Pakistani cricket is marked by the presence of a number of different voices. His portrayal of Australian cricketers on the 1994 tour of Pakistan as 'relaxed, open-minded, resolute and optimistic' is full of irony, especially when it is read in the context of his account of the disastrous 1988 tour of Pakistan.

His portrait of Australian cricketers is quite different from the way they are traditionally portrayed in the Australian media. Coward suggested that in 1988 the Australian team was 'in the grip of a persecution complex' and 'with few exceptions the behaviour of the team was so irrational and the prejudices so deep that it became impossible for journalists to distinguish between events just and unjust'.<sup>45</sup> If Australian cricketers were irrational and prejudiced so were the journalists. According to Coward, 'the extraordinary circumstances demanded opinionated writing and as a consequence there developed a split in the Australian press corps between those who accepted without question the claims and observations of the Australian party and those who did not'.<sup>46</sup>

In Coward's description of the controversial tour one can detect an attempt to question the rigid opposition between 'us' and 'them'. This opposition is no longer simple neither is the equation that defines 'us'. The 'us' cannot be reduced to a simple summation of its three basic

constituents: the team, the journalists and the Australians back home. He also underlined the situated nature of journalistic writing, although he used the word ‘opinionated’ to describe it. However, the most interesting part of his description is his attempt to allow the ‘Pakistani’ to speak and to be heard.<sup>47</sup>

Coward’s writing about the 1988 tour can be called ‘objective’ or ‘unbiased’ but it is more than that. It is an attempt to speak from the position of the ‘other’ and to look at one’s own culture through the eyes of the ‘other’. His writing represents a significant departure from the way Australian journalists report Pakistan and its cricket.

### **Conclusions**

In reading recent Australian cricket writing about Pakistan I have not attempted to decode the so-called ‘real’ intentions of various authors. This is because my reading is located within the poststructuralist paradigm that posits that texts, after they have been written and published, lead their own lives. They become parts of the discourse which is in circulation at a given time and space and hence are read through and within these discourses. Their value thus gets detached, to a certain extent, from originators and they acquire new values through their circulation within society.

This article began with the reports on the blasphemy trial of Pakistani Christians and on the bribery scandals in Pakistani cricket. These texts illustrate how the discourse about Islam and Islamic fundamentalism has penetrated Australian cricket writing about Pakistan. Australian journalists construct the Pakistani and Pakistan by employing metaphors of this discourse and combining it with several other metaphors of Orientalism. A Pakistani, constructed in such a way, resides in the space constituted by an array of discursive contours.

Australian cricket writing re-presents and thereby constitutes Pakistani cricket as corrupt and unfair, ridden by intrigues and nepotism. The Pakistani cricketer described by Australian journalists as ‘the agent of the Prophet’ or ‘the batsman of Allah’ is not faithful to his cricketing religion; he is corrupt, dishonest and lacks loyalty. Pakistani Islam is viewed as fundamentalist persecuting young and innocent Christian boys. Pakistani Muslims, including cricketers, are duplicitous since Islam and correctness is a ‘matter of contacts and interpretation’. The Australian cricket discourse creates a complete equivalence between

Pakistan and Islam, and between Pakistani and Muslim, implying that every Pakistani has to be nothing but a Muslim.

Australian cricket writing about Pakistan employs, and in doing so reinforces, the existing oppositions such as West and East, and Christianity and Islam. In its encounters with Pakistan it uses the metaphors of the 'marvellous', romanticising its image, but also expresses contempt and fear. However, this encounter also places the 'relaxed, open-minded, resolute and optimistic' Australians in opposition to tense, excitable, narrow-minded, contradictory Pakistanis. The differences between the two are hyperbolised to such an extent that Pakistan and the Pakistani are reduced to unknowable, incomprehensible messiness. The knowability of the West is placed in opposition to the unknowability of the East. By banishing the Pakistani into a cell of communicative insularity, the Australian cricketer and journalist close all channels of a 'dialogic' dialogue. This discursive strategy ensures that only they retain the speaking position and hence the power. 'I am ready to play cricket with you', the cricketer tells him, 'but I won't speak to you or let you speak'.

'... cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not "truth" but representations' (Edward Said).<sup>48</sup>

#### NOTES:

- 1 I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by Brian Stoddard, Richard Cashman, Mike Johnson, Helen Tiffin and Johanna Sutherland, in the preparation of this article.
- 2 Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient*, Penguin, London, 1991, p.231.
- 3 Lindsay Murdoch, 'Blasphemy Verdict Overturned', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 Feb. 1995.
- 4 Lindsay Murdoch, 'The Land where Cricket is God', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 Feb. 1995.
- 5 Mikhail Bakhtin, the noted twentieth-century Russian philosopher and literary critic has shown that literary narratives not only re-present historical time, space and human beings but in doing so they use specific forms of time and space to structure themselves. Bakhtin uses the concept of the 'chronotope (literally time-space) to discuss the narrative structure of literary texts, and to describe their relation with the extra-textual reality. Literary chronotopes are derived from real-life chronotopes but the relation between the two is quite complex. For a more detailed discussion on this see Michel Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, Routledge, London, 1990.
- 6 Richard Cashman, *Patrons, Players and the Crowd: The Phenomenon of Indian Cricket*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1980, p. 3.
- 7 Gideon Haigh, *The Cricket War: The Inside Story of Kerry Packer's World Series*

- Cricket, Text, Melbourne, 1993, p. 323.
- 8 Bakhtinian notion of the carnivalesque not only reflects the reversal of the hierarchies and power structures as seen in Renaissance period European carnivals and novels but also celebrates the open, fragmentary and heterogeneous nature of identities. For a more detailed discussion see Holquist *Dialogism*, or Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaic*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1990. It can be argued that the carnival of one-day cricket seems to re-inforce stable, rounded and complete individual and national identities.
  - 9 In the last Commonwealth Games, when Cathy Freeman draped herself with 'her' own flag along with the Australian flag, she raised many issues about Australian identity and the nature of the Australian flag. The victory lap also, in my view, questioned the notion of the Australian (person or nation) as something total, rounded and stable.
  - 10 It is interesting to note that green is also the dominant colour of South Africa and the colours of the southern hemisphere soccer power, Brazil, are similar to those of Australia.
  - 11 The word 'Paki' is 'slang' and is 'derogatory'. See *Collins English Dictionary*, Australian ed, Collins, Sydney, 1986.
  - 12 John Morrison, 'From the Paddington End', in *Cricket's Finest Tell Their Funniest*, Swan Publishing, Byron Bay, 1989, p. 184.
  - 13 Richard Hadlee, 'Happiness is a Dry Fart', *Cricket's Finest*, p. 84.
  - 14 Dennis Lillee, *Lillee: My Life in Cricket*, Methuen, North Ryde, 1982, p. 135.
  - 15 Lillee, *Lillee*, p. 139.
  - 16 Lillee, *Lillee*, p. 136.
  - 17 Lillee, *Lillee*, p. 142.
  - 18 Mike Coward, 'Chance of a Lifetime Goes to ground with Dropped Catches', *Australian*, 27 Sept. 1994.
  - 19 Trent Bouts, 'Aussies Stumped by Ball Switch' *Australian*, 10 Oct. 1994.
  - 20 Mike Coward, 'Tourists Begin New Epoch Mindful of Reparation', *Australian*, 28 Sept. 1994.
  - 21 Mike Coward, 'Epic Encounter Signals Start of New Epoch' *Australian*, 3 Oct. 1994.
  - 22 Wicket keeper Anil Dalpat played for Pakistan in the 1985 World Championship of Cricket in Australia.
  - 23 Trent Bouts, 'Waugh wound sours victory' *Australian*, 31 Oct. 1994.
  - 24 Trent Bouts, 'Mohammad Now Just a Paki Pebble' *Australian*, 9 Nov. 1994.
  - 25 Trent Bouts, 'Taylor Ponders a Clash of Cultures' *Australian*, 28 Oct. 1994.
  - 26 Mike Coward, 'World Cup a Chance to Reclaim Test Venues', *Weekend Australian*, 8-9 Oct. 1994.
  - 27 Mike Coward, 'Absence Smells of Palace Revolt' *Australian*, 3 Nov. 1994.
  - 28 Trent Bouts, 'Pakistan Fight Back' *Australian*, 2 Nov. 1994.
  - 29 Lillee, *Lillee*, p. 142.
  - 30 Trent Bouts, 'Cricket's End of Innocence', *Weekend Australian* 18-19 Feb. 1995.
  - 31 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 59.
  - 32 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 59.
  - 33 Mike Coward, 'World Cup a Chance to Reclaim Test Venues'.
  - 34 Mike Coward, 'Waugh Relishes Good Contest' *Weekend Australian* 8-9 Oct. 1994.
  - 35 Trent Bouts, 'Crompton Backs Penalties to Up Tempo' *Australian*, 14 Oct. 1994.
  - 36 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 260.
  - 37 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 260.
  - 38 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 61.
  - 39 'Pakistan Muslims Plan Protest Rally: Christians Set Free' *Canberra Times*, 25 Feb. 1995.

- 40 Trent Bouts, 'Taylor Ponders a Clash of Cultures'.
- 41 Trent Bouts, 'Taylor Ponders a Clash of Cultures'.
- 42 A discussion on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism is beyond the scope of this article. This notion has become very popular within literary and cultural studies. For a comprehensive discussion on dialogism see Holquist *Dialogism*, and Morson and Emerson *Mikhail Bakhtin*.
- 43 Trent Bouts, 'Cautious Col Manages Without a Room for the Night', *Australian*, 21 Sept. 1994.
- 44 'Tour Squad Taught Art of Media Diplomacy', *Australian*, 21 Sept. 1994.
- 45 Mike Coward, *Cricket Beyond the Bazaar* Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 64. The title of the chapter in which the tour is described is 'Conspiracy or Hypocrisy' which clearly foregrounds the two attitudes in describing the controversial tour.
- 46 Coward, *Cricket Beyond the Bazaar* pp. 64-5.
- 47 For instance, Coward presents the following quote from the Pakistani umpire Mehboob Shah: 'I am sure there is a general view that with a coloured umpire it is often a question of integrity; with a white-skinned man the same mistake is called human error' (Coward, *Cricket Beyond the Bazaar* p. 71).
- 48 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 21.