

“Asian Contributions to World Academy:

Humanities, Religious Studies, or Social Sciences?”

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This oft-made statement ‘theory comes from the west and data from the east’ needs to be critically interrogated. Proponents of Said’s Orientalism argue that the modern academy in the last three hundred years, being a child of the west, has developed the theoretical apparatus and language to study the orient, and the orient itself uses these very theories to conceive itself. I will counter-argue that the orient did not simply accept and use the occidental categories and theories, rather even through the modern era it produced theories and knowledge using conceptual schemas arising out of non-western traditions. These non-western academic voices, primarily embodied in non-western ‘religious’ traditions, entail a wealth of insights, both substantive and methodological, which not only critique the hegemonic western academy but also offer a powerful alternative way of conceiving being-in-the-world. Thus there is an overwhelming imperative for Asian academic voices to be articulated within the bounds of their intellectual traditions and presented *via* dialogue with its western other, to the world academy.

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