Towards New Horizons in Postcolonial Refugee Studies

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It is impossible to separate one's intellectual and theoretical activity from the circumstances of one's life. Certain events in my life have irrefutably proved the truth of this axiom.

When I was picked to be brought to the Villawood immigration detention centre (VIDC), I felt overwhelmed and due to the harassment consequently caused, I forgot that my educational and professional documents were left at the place from where I was picked. These included:

-My M.A degree (Government College University [GCU])
-My B.A degree (GC)
-Results for M.A – I & II (GC)
-Results for B.A – I & II (GC)
-Result card for intermediate (GC)
-Roll of honour awarded to me by GCU for editing the Ravi
-My IELTS result.
-Experience certificates from Beaconhouse National University, Government College University, National College of Arts, Virtual University of Pakistan, Pakistan School of Fashion Design.

These also included copies of my published writings.

At VIDC, I spoke to my DIAC case managers but nobody helped me in retrieving my educational and professional documents. Within the very first few days of being brought to VIDC, I filled a client request form about this but no one ever responded to it. I also got in touch with the university of Sydney and was thereby advised to fill the lost property form on its web site. I filled the form but what I got in response was (eventually) an email expressing inability and failure to find my books – which had been taken by the university of Sydney security – but not a single word was mentioned about my professional and educational documents! My subsequent email, reminding them of the issue (of documents) that had been evaded was never answered.

I complained to the Commonwealth and Immigration Ombudsman and the Ombudsman's office is currently investigating it [Ombudsman 11].

Before proceeding any further, I believe it is important for me to explain that, for many of the dates I would be citing now, I do not necessarily have to rely on my faulty memory since I would be citing these dates from those documents which are currently in my possession. During the RRT session, on the other hand, I had to rely on my memory alone to recall the dates as I did not have access to my educational and professional documents then, as I have not been able to gain access to those until now.

Furthermore, in an unpublished essay, I have argued that the human memory operates contrapuntally and it is in light of this knowledge that my ability to recall certain details while forgetting certain others must be understood. Here I just want to note that the neglect of the contrapuntal nature of human memory determines the regularity of a Manichean discourse. This Manichean discourse has been

1 Jim Shumile Adriel is the pseudonym of Shumile Arif. He has been detained inside the Villawood immigration detention centre for a period exceeding two years.

constructed at institutions like the FCAFC and the RRT and is auto-referentially echoed by DIAC.

On 12/06/2009, I went to attend the RRT hearing on its invitation. It was horrible. But what was really odd was the fact that the RRT member had my original educational and professional documents in her possession. These were not mere photo copies. These were original ones.

She showed me those – waived those at me towards the end of the session. I tried to ask her about those but she interrupted me and told me to ask my supervisor instead. So she had ruined my career by keeping my documents with herself and was not even willing to be bothered about it! It is impossible to imagine the material realization of a more provocative behaviour!

These documents are not mere photo copies. These are original documents. I never submitted these original documents to RRT or DIAC – except when these were required by the Australian consulate (in my country of origin) in connection with my student visa application (in-so-far-as I am able to recall this correctly). After sometime, my original documents were returned back to me. Due to my faulty memory, I cannot recall the exact dates regarding the time period when my original documents were sent to the Australian consulate and when these were given back to me. I cannot reproduce the past in its entirety in a crudely linear narrative of events. All that is humanly possible for me to do is nothing more and nothing less than putting forth traces of the past.

My original documents were in my possession – until I was brought to VIDC. I lost possession of those in the process of being brought to VIDC. I attempted to seek help from DIAC, VIDC service provider and the university of Sydney but nobody helped. So I complained to the Ombudsman.

On a later date, I spoke to a lady from DIAC who was, then, present at VIDC (probably) in connection with feedback and complaints. She conveyed it to my (then) DIAC case manager, who, in his turn, got in touch with the RRT about it.

My (then) DIAC case manager Satinder Singh Pasrichah, however, failed to grasp the substance of the problem. When he spoke to me on phone, he referred to "copies" (sic!) of my documents which, in his imagination, I had submitted to the so-called "tribunal" (sic!). I corrected him. But, I am not sure, if he has still managed to comprehend the case of my documents – nevertheless, he is no longer my case manager.

The lady from DIAC, on the other hand, was much more conscientious. Her willingness to heed my perspective showed her open-mindedness.

Consequently, one RRT officer Mr/Ms Stuart Aiken sent a letter to me on 05/02/2010. It begins:

> "I am writing about your request for the return of original documents you submitted to the Tribunal (sic)."

The very first line shows that the fundamental assumption behind the RRT's response is absolutely wrong. To correct it, I wrote back to the RRT on 10/02/2010 and faxed my letter on the same day.

> "Dear Mr/Ms Aiken
>
> "Your letter dated 5 February 2010 was handed to me yesterday. Thank you for writing to me. It seems to me that you were not given the correct information, or, for some human reason, you did not get to hear it correctly."
>
> "The documents I am speaking about, were never submitted by me to the RRT. But the RRT member had them in her possession at the time of the hearing. That was on 12 June 2009. To make her point, she showed me my documents in her hand.
>
> "These documents are my educational and professional documents. They include my degrees, certificates, etc. I need my original documents back. I do not need their copies. These original documents were in the RRT member's possession.

> "I never submitted these to the RRT. How the RRT member got these in her possession is as much of a mystery to myself as to anyone else! As I have been kept in detention for all this period, so I did not have any way to know about it.
>
> "And ironically, the RRT member utilized my documents to make her point but never thought about returning these to me. This falls radically short of decent conduct among human beings.
>
> "No one has any right to deprive me of my own educational and professional documents. These documents are no one's property but mine. The only appropriate course of conduct for whoever has these in his/her possession is to return these to me.
>
> "Thanking you in anticipation.
> "Yours sincerely
> "(Signed)"

The RRT never replied to my letter since it had no reply to the truth of my contention.

As I wrote, these original documents were never submitted by me to the so-called "Tribunal" (sic). I had no reason to do so – no reason to submit my original educational and professional documents to the so-called "Tribunal" (sic).

If someone is unwilling to believe me, then one can read the RRT member's own list of the documents submitted by me to the "Tribunal" (sic). So I am citing it here for the sake of everyone's convenience. It is not difficult to discover that the said RRT officer Stuart Aiken's (mis)information is inconsistent with the RRT member Kerry-Anne Hartman's description of the documents submitted by me to the so-called "Tribunal" (sic). She writes:

> "The applicant submitted the following documents to the Tribunal prior to the hearing.
>
> "-Letter to the Tribunal from the applicant. The letter asks the Tribunal to consider what the psychologist has written about him. He stated that in his session with a psychologist facts about his psychological state have come to light. He states that he has been suffering from 'Procrastination' for nearly three years.
>
> "-'Standard Health Event' document dates 10 June 2009.
>
> "-Pages from Wikipedia about Procrastination." [RRT 32]

Where, in this list, is any mention of my original educational and professional documents (which I am supposed to have submitted to the so-called "Tribunal")? There is not even the slightest mention of those. This is the truth. If anyone is able to prove otherwise, I challenge him to do so.

Aiken's (mis)information is inconsistent with Hartman's description – so-much-so that if Aiken is right, then Hartman is wrong and if Hartman is right, then Aiken is wrong: if I had provided my documents to the RRT, as Aiken claims, then why did Hartman not mention it? And if Hartman's list is correct, then why did Aiken claim that I had submitted these to the RRT – while Hartman's own list does not make the slightest mention of these?

This inconsistency – or what may also be mentioned as strategic flexibility (in the incomparably sophisticated language of cultural theory) – nevertheless, comes along with an ideological rigidity. It reproduces, in another form, Hartman's confusing mumbo-jumbo about "the documents he provided to the Department…" [RRT 122]. While Aiken constructs his/her discourse to create the false impression that I – for some mysterious reason – submitted my own original educational and professional documents to the RRT, Hartman had earlier given a deeply confusing account meant to create the false impression that I had given my own original educational and professional documents to DIAC.

This auto-referential echo of an Orientalist discourse is meant to protect these putatively (ir)responsible institutions from the inevitable disclosure of the fact of their very real and serious (ir)responsibility: the fact that I lost my documents due to these institutions had been predeterminedly protected from disclosure

through the prior construction of a discourse that I had provided these to DIAC/RRT and hence a discourse was constructed and interpellated that I, and not these institutions, am responsible for their subsequent fate (and therefore my own problems), that I have no one to blame but myself! Ironically, this is exactly what the DIAC interviewer (the so-called "Minister's delegate") had said to me, "this is all your fault!" The really significant question about these institutions' own (ir)responsibility, and, therefore any serious attempt at investigation about the very real disjuncture between what these institutions claim to do and what they really do – had been evaded in advance.

This ideological rigidity is shared by both Hartman and Aiken. However paradoxical as it may seem, this ideological rigidity finds its own condition of possibility in a peculiar strategic flexibility. While Hartman claimed that I had submitted my own documents to the "department", Aiken changed the strategy to reformulate the ludicrous claim that these documents had been submitted by me to the so-called "Tribunal" (sic). But what remained rigidly and a-historically unchangeable and invariable was the deeply-entrenched prejudice that the one responsible for providing my documents to these institutions was none other than myself – and therefore, no one is responsible for my troubles but my own self! This dialectical tension between a flexible manifest Orientalism and a rigid latent Orientalism has constrained the boundaries of the discourse hitherto constructed and provides clue to the regularities of this discourse. So any discussion of these institutions' own (ir)responsibility has been very cunningly evaded in advance. As a discourse, Orientalism employs strategic flexibility in the service of an ideological rigidity.

Before proceeding further, I must note in passing that, my deconstruction of the FCAFC's, RRT's and DIAC's discourse has now culminated in my own original theoretical discoveries which are bound to contribute to certain crucial issues under discussion in postcolonial and cultural theory. For example, a hotly-contested controversy has arisen – is Orientalism discourse or ideology? In quite a dogmatic strain, Aijaz Ahmad objected to Edward Said's study of Orientalism as discourse due to the non-Marxist origin of the terminology involved (Ahmad 2008: 165-167). This has set the tone for an influential group of critics. Another trend among critics – due to its hostility towards Marxism – has been objecting to attempts at analyzing Orientalism as an ideology. Most have failed to grasp the true significance of Edward Said's own critique of Orientalism as both discourse and ideology.

A related question, instigating debate, has been focused round the issue of formulating a critique that avoids a simplistic understanding of Orientalism mirroring its own static, unchanging and a-historical re-presentation of the Orient.

In my opinion, this controversy has been waged in binaristic terms since the very question – whether Orientalism is a discourse or an ideology – implies the acceptance of the same binaristic logic that the late Edward W. Said had correctly rejected at the outset. My own theoretical approach, as we saw above, by abandoning the fundamentally constrained premises of this controversy, has led me to an altogether different conclusion: the Orientalist discourse employs strategic flexibility in the service of an ideological rigidity.

The fact that I have come to this conclusion through deconstruction of the discourse constructed during the so-called "refugee determination process" demonstrates – most emphatically – the absolute absurdity of separating the circumstances of one's life from one's intellectual and theoretical activity.

Now coming back to our point of departure: what is truly concerning is, not only the fact that both Aiken and Hartman lied but also the fact that their lie shared a very similar structure. There is nothing new in the structure of Aiken's lie except the fact that he/she replaces the "Tribunal" for Hartman's "department"!

But the real purport of what Hartman was trying to do becomes comprehensible through the deconstruction of the following line written by her:

"The Tribunal is of the view that if the applicant had been appointed and employed as a university lecturer in Pakistan he would have remembered when he had been appointed and how long he worked for and would not have needed access to the documents he provided (sic) to the Department in order to provide a consistent account of his employment" [RRT 122].

So that is it! Kudos! It is not difficult to see what lies behind-the-lines: having deprived me of my educational and professional documents, she is happy that the conspiracy to ruin my career has been accomplished!

And the FCAFC declares "omnisciently" (I write this with all due respect):

"The Tribunal put its concerns about these inconsistencies to the respondent. His explanation was that he did not have access to his certificates of employment whilst in the detention centre as they were with the Department with whom he had lodged his visa application. The Tribunal rejected this explanation thus:

"'The Tribunal is of the view that if the applicant had been appointed and employed as a university lecturer in Pakistan he would have remembered when he had been appointed and how long he worked for and would not have needed access to the documents he provided (sic) to the Department in order to provide a consistent account of his employment'" [FCAFC 67].

As if this auto-referential echo was not ironical enough already, his Honour adds further to his metaphysics of "truth" seeking: "The Tribunal did not seek the certificates itself" [FCAFC 68].

Does his Honour intend to suggest that I am not educated and have not been employed?

A discourse which is so thoroughly at variance with the objective reality can never lead anyone to truth. Objective reality is under no obligation to conform to discourses and texts in order to be objective and real but texts and discourses must conform to objective reality.

In the Federal Magistrates' Court of Australia (FMCA)'s much more perceptive text of judgment, the same line has been cited and it has been noted:

"When rejecting his evidence, the Tribunal appears even to have had doubts about his claimed academic history in Pakistan" [FMCA 26].

Notwithstanding the FCAFC's disagreement with the FMCA's disclosure of the RRT's jurisdictional error, the FCAFC notes:

"Indeed, having perused the Tribunal's reasons with some care I feel bound to observe that its degree of disbelief in almost anything put by the respondent leaves in my mind the distinct impression that the value of the Tribunal's reasons as testimony may be somewhat limited." The significance of this admission cannot be overemphasized since this is not coming from a source which is, even by the slightest degree, hostile to the RRT, but from the FCAFC which, as a matter of fact, supported the RRT's decision! "That exceptional reasoning raises real questions in my mind as to the quality of the decision making process undertaken. It is not necessary to pursue this further: it suffices only to say that a case for giving the Tribunal's view of things decisive weight is not made out" [FCAFC 61].

Exactly! And particularly since the "Tribunal" did with my documents what it did, "a case for giving the Tribunal(sic)'s view of things" any "weight is" certainly "not made out." And neither is there any case for supporting the RRT's contention which is what the FCAFC did.

While the FCAFC declares the RRT's decision-making process to be one of questionable quality, it has never (even remotely) doubted the FMCA's integrity. Ironically, however, FMCA's decision and proceedings have been canceled while the RRT's decision based on a questionable decision making process has been upheld! This raises real questions about the quality of the decision making process undertaken at the FCAFC itself. What kind of a precedent is intended to be set here – a precedent to uphold questionable decisions? This shows that the

discourse constructed at the FCAFC is premised on the prejudice – and has concluded – that the RRT's questionable decision-making is not a deviation from law but is the law here!

Is such reasoning sustainable?

Is it correct to set such an unwholesome precedent?

If the FCAFC had failed to discover that the RRT's decision-making process was questionable, then there might have been grounds for deeming its conclusions as ones based on individuous and idiosyncratic errors. But, after having discovered and explicitly declared that the RRT's decision-making process was questionable, the FCAFC's conclusions can, by no means, be regarded as merely individuous and idiosyncratic errors. Quite the contrary! Colonial discourse analysis – which is my predilection as a postcolonial theorist – has led me to conclude, safely, that the peculiar mode of (mis)interpretation of legal discourse employed at the FCAFC has been intended to bestow on RRT the license to impose its questionable decisions on asylum seekers! There can be no other plausible explanation for the fact that, having admitted that the RRT's decision-making process was a questionable one, the FCAFC went on to (mis)interpret legal discourse in the interest of upholding a decision imposed on the basis of a questionable decision-making process! Since, upholding the RRT's questionable decisions – and therefore its arbitrary power – is not a deviation from its legal discourse but is its legal discourse, hence the jurisdictional error here is not merely individuous and idiosyncratic but is systemic and structural.

It betrays the involvement of a "whole network of interests" (Said 2003: 3).

My educational and professional documents were in Hartman's possession. Wherever these were before or after the session – through the mafia-like manipulations and intrigues of anyone – this was definitely the case on 12 June 2009 – i.e., during my RRT hearing.

Hartman knew that I had been educated in and employed by Pakistani universities (prior to my arrival in Australia). She knew it because she had my original – and I emphasize original and not mere copies – educational and professional documents in her possession during the hearing. And yet she threw doubt on precisely this fact! It is not difficult to conclude that this is no innocent error but a deliberate wrong: since she had my original educational and professional documents in her possession and yet she could throw doubt on my qualifications, the conclusions one may draw about her own veracity can, by no means, be flattering.

This was a psycho-pathological display of power meant to crudely and yet subtly harass me against even remotely harbouring any hopes for obtaining justice.

This was a subtle process of ideological interpellation.

This was a conspiracy to ruin my career and therefore suppress the emergence of my contrapuntal perspective. This was a conspiracy to eliminate me as an intellectual. The significance of this fact cannot be overemphasized. My specialized focus is on postcolonial theory pioneered by Edward W. Said's secular criticism of Orientalism. And yet I have been, until now, assessed through a methodology constrained within the prejudiced framework of Orientalism. No wonder, neither RRT member Hartman nor DIAC interviewer Mohan Zachariah, was willing (and able) to discuss the area of my specialized focus with me. They kept on evading this issue by using various pretexts or by changing the subject of conversation. And Hartman went so far as to attempt to trivialize what was not trivial and therefore not trivializable:

"He claimed that Edward Said, a Palestinian American has written a book on Orientalism. He claimed that it is about how the west perceives the Orient. He claimed that the book is about multiculturalism and secularism. He claimed that he wanted to write a thesis on Orientalism. He claimed that his thesis was titled 'Was Marx an Orientalist (sic)'" [RRT 43].

It was by no means an instance of myself somehow falsely claiming that Edward Said authored Orientalism, a work in which he

employed secular criticism to deconstruct the binaristic and Manichean discourse of Orientalism. It is the objective truth. Anyone educated in humanities must be aware of it. Anyone who claims to be educated and is occupying a responsible position affecting the lives of asylum seekers – anyone making such claims must be aware of Edward Said's secular criticism of Orientalist textualism.

If she is not aware of this, then I have no difficulty in considering her nothing but an ignorant lout and a "half-literate technocrat" – to use Said's own phrase for people of such ilk – who had a very low intellectual calibre. If such is not the case and she rather prefers to think of herself as a "superliterate Orientalist" (Said 2003: 108), then this reveals the clue to the very real injustice manifesting itself in the truly absurd irony of the entire situation: someone like me with a specialized focus on the analysis of Orientalism as an ideological and discursive formation has been viewed, until now, through the prejudices of a discourse constrained within the limitations of Orientalism. This auto-referentiality means a predetermined condemnation, or, to phrase it slightly differently, a condemnation in advance and thereby seriously undermines the credentials of those who have judged me as embodying some kind of impartial and independent judicial bodies – with the sole exception of the FMCA. However, my right to impartial and independent justice has been bequeathed to me in article 10 of the universal declaration of human rights.

The FCAFC failed to display any meaningful and substantial comprehension of this issue: its text of judgment is totally devoid of any reference – even a slight one – to my specialized focus on Edward Said's secular criticism of Orientalism as an ideological and discursive construction – notwithstanding the fact that my legal representative (who had, in fact, a very limited understanding of this aspect) had referred to it – on my insistence – in his submission to the FCAFC (albeit, in a very timid manner). I would like to point this out with all due respect.

The FCAFC's unfortunate failure to engage in a meaningful discussion about this aspect of the situation had the undesirable consequence of closing their eyes to their own Orientalism – Edward Said had diagnosed Orientalism's major failure as a human as much as an intellectual one: Orientalism failed to identify with human experience and failed to see it as human experience (Said 2003: 328). And here we are dealing with a legal discourse that "did not require the Tribunal to press the respondent to call further evidence of his psychological problems or to expand his arguments relating to the ramifications of his problems for any aspect of the case he sought to present" [FCAFC 20].

The chilling truth of this Orientalist insouciance towards a contrapuntally overdetermined human situation reveals itself in the following remark: "I respectfully differ from Smith FM because I do not think that the analysis turns on whether an applicant was, or was not, afforded a fair hearing" [FCAFC 75]. Since the FCAFC's analysis was, by its own admission, not concerned with procedural fairness, one does not have to go really far to argue that its procedure was not fair. And since his Honour Smith FM's analysis was, in terms of the FCAFC's own admission, deeply concerned with procedural fairness, one does not have to go too far to argue that the FMCA's procedure was absolutely fair. So the question that the FCAFC sets before itself is not whether or not the FMCA's procedure was fair (the FCAFC itself never challenged the FMCA's procedural fairness). This question does not simply exist for the FCAFC's Orientalist discourse because asylum-seekers, unlike others, are not human and therefore do not deserve procedural fairness! It brushes aside this crucial question of procedural fairness because it does not believe in procedural fairness for asylum seekers – instead it bestows on the RRT a license to impose its questionable decision-making process on asylum seekers and therefore, gives arbitrary power to the RRT.

Since the FCAFC does not believe in procedural fairness for asylum-seekers, it is obvious that it does not consider asylum-seekers as human beings. Procedural fairness is, after all, meant for human beings – but asylum-seekers are not

considered human in its discourse. After this, it becomes impossible to claim that the FCAFC's decision – and the RRT's – embodies anything that is procedurally fair since the FCAFC's (mis?)interpretation of legal discourse is not concerned with the issue of procedural fairness towards asylum seekers. And it becomes impossible to claim that the FMCA's procedure was not a fair one since the FMCA was indeed – unlike the FCAFC – deeply concerned with procedural fairness. His Honour Smith FM's perspective was concerned with "the important consideration of fairness" [FMCA 63] while the discourse constructed at the FCAFC failed to give due importance to his Honour's concern. Since the FCAFA was not concerned with procedural fairness, it cannot be argued, by any stretch of imagination that its procedure was fair.

After all, here is an open confession that the particular (mis?)interpretation of legal discourse employed at the FCAFC was indifferent towards a contrapuntally overdetermined human situation. But if the Orientalist insouciance towards a human situation is not a deviation from law but is the law, then all it means is that the jurisdictional error is not merely individous and idiosyncratic but is systemic and structural.

My own intention in emphasizing the psychological dimension of my situation was to open their eyes to their Orientalist abstraction from the human dimension of one's situation. However, in the FCAFC's discourse, the RRT's failure to take account of the human dimension of one's situation is not a deviation from law but is the law here!

And the FMCA, which took a human interest in my situation and ordered the RRT in this spirit has been criticized for doing precisely this! However, only a fascist could argue in that strain: fascism, too, had a legal structure to legitimize its existence but what differentiates a democratic legal structure from a fascist one is precisely the fact that the latter would not take interest in a human situation while the former would. The FCAFC's Orientalism's human failure is total. In its discourse, law is considered to have fulfilled its function to the maximum perfection precisely at the moment when it has made the maximum abstraction from the human dimension of a situation and from procedural fairness.

In my application for special leave to appeal before the High Court of Australia (HCA), I raised questions of procedural fairness. In a very thin text of judgment, it was stated that I did not advance any questions of law. This shows that the High Court of Australia does not consider the question of procedural fairness as a question of law!

Since we are in a place where asylum seekers are kept in immigration detention centres which is "a space at once outside of the law yet at the same time within it", there is no wonder that such reasoning is being applied. What we are dealing with here is "the state of exception whereby the law is seen to achieve its ultimate objective at the very moment when it is suspended. The state of exception forms the means by which a state may, along with other non-legal acts, legitimately deny certain members of its population the rights usually enjoyed by all its citizens..." (Fuggle 2009: 82). One may pause to reflect on the irony that Giorgio Agamben's reflection on certain horrors of Nazism is equally true of Australia's immigration detention regime and is applicable here, almost, word-to-word!

I would recommend legal practitioners and human rights activists to pay special heed to the crucial distinction underwriting Noam Chomsky's approach to legal discourse – "a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate laws, on the one hand, and legitimate and illegitimate applications of those laws on the other" (Barsky).

The non-falsifiable orthodoxy which the FCAFC considered itself bound to follow merely shows that the legal discourse has irredeemably got bogged down into and is inexcusably tainted with the sin of auto-referentially. The only way to avoid this sin of auto-referentially is to engage in a healthy dialogic interaction with my contrapuntal perspective.

No discourse constrained within the limitations imposed by Orientalism can really grasp the truth.

"Orientalism is a discursive construction of the West that has no necessary relation to the actual although if Westerners want to say anything about that actuality then they still have no option but to use Orientalist discourse" (Young 2007a: 22-23).

So when I said in the FMCA that my hands were tied while the opposing side was free to do anything, the substance of my words had more than a mere literal implication. It has perhaps been taken to mean only literally, that I was in detention. This was true but not sufficient.

The fact that I have been held in detention, has resulted in great deal of emotional distress for me and had been wisely criticized by his Honour Smith FM during the proceedings in the FMCA – where my contention had been upheld [FMCA 70]. What truly complicated the situation was the Orientalist unwillingness and inability on part of the RRT and DIAC (earlier and the FCAFC later) to engage in a meaningful dialogue with me – instead, my hands had been tied through a prior forbiddance on speaking about "general" issues: as I attempted to analyze the situation by making use of the framework created by Edward Said's secular criticism, during the interviewing session held by a half-literate technocrat from DIAC, Mohan Zachariah (the so-called "Minister's delegate"), he forbade me from speaking about "general" issues! Instead, he tried to confine me "to speak about yourself only."

What this half-literate technocrat did not understand was that "No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being member of a society" (Said 2003: 10).

And what these half-literate technocrats and super-literate Orientalists also did not understand was that "a search for events and their origins, which coming up short against a well-nigh Althusserian/Derridean realization of their status as 'always-already-begun,' suddenly finds itself deflected into autoreferentiality, and begins to foreground this textual and representational search as a process" (Jameson 2002: 269).

In Lieu of a Bibliography2

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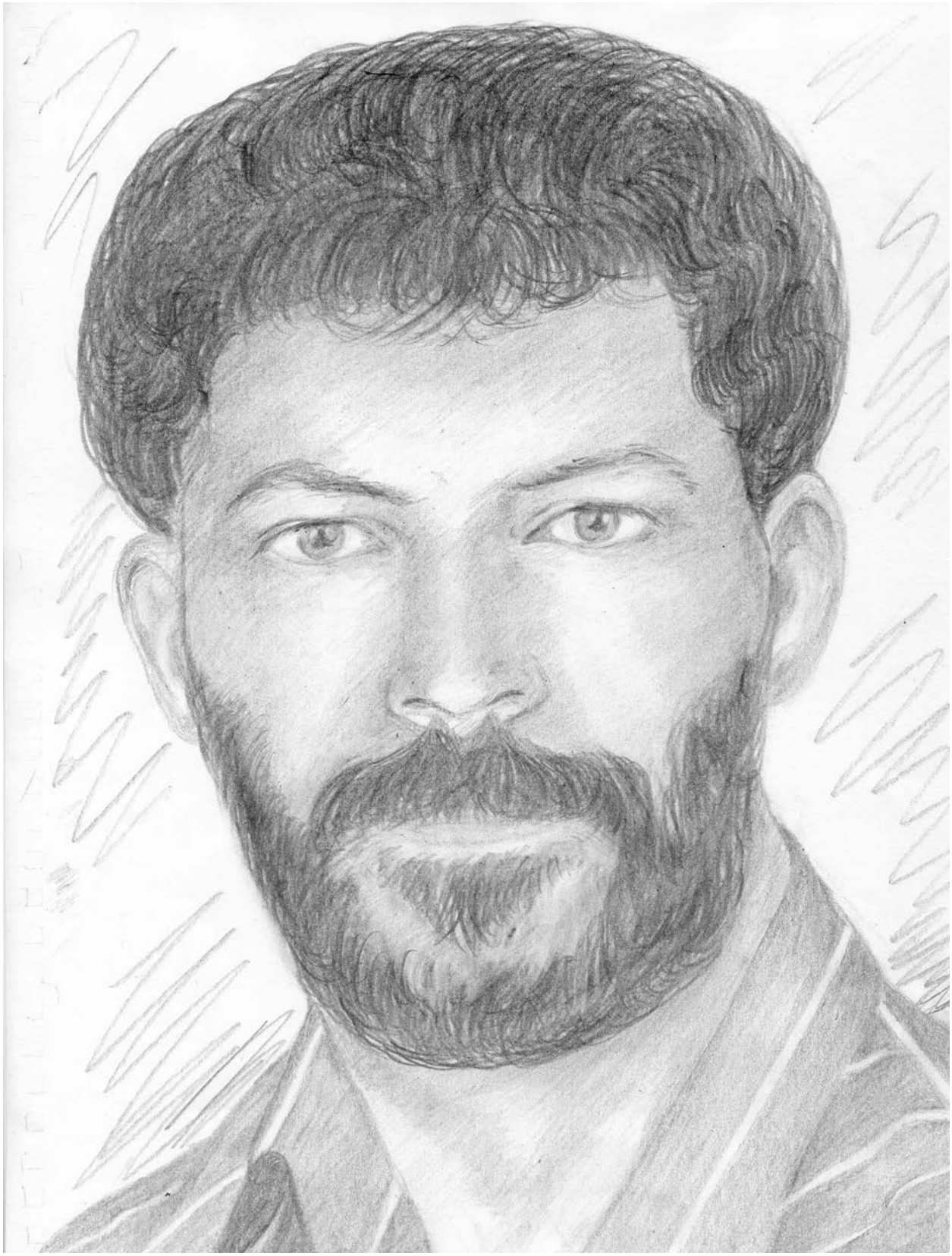
2 This is not a bibliography in any conventional sense of the word. Its peculiar form is – as everything in this piece of writing is – determined by the fact of my immigration detention. Therefore, I prefer to call it "in lieu of a bibliography." If it is considered important to give name to this peculiar style of referencing, then it may be called the Villawood style of citation.



Tahmineh Jafari, Memorial to Kamran Abdolahi Mehr, pencil on paper, 21x29cm