



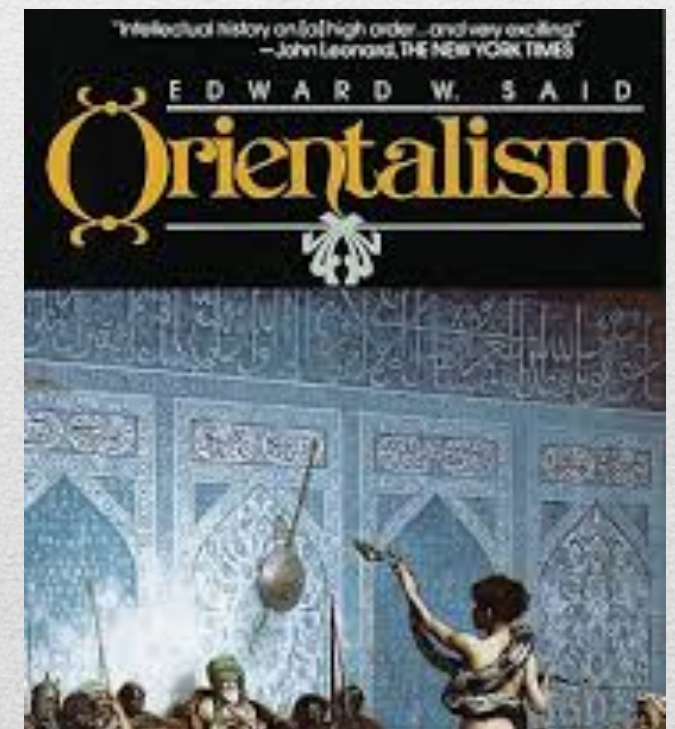
Orientalism

©Dr Eloise Govier

Orientalism

- Culture
 - Ideas
 - History
 - Power
-

- "History is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and re-written, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that "our" East, "our" Orient becomes "ours" to **possess** and **direct**" (Said: 2003).



Edward Said: 1978

History

- Linear?
 - Contested?
 - Re-written?
 - Omitted?
-

- The 'Western' gaze
 - The power to 'possess'
 - Western viewers and consumers
-

- E. Said argued that the Orient was a European invention
- It was presented as
 - A place steeped in romance
 - Exotic beings
 - Haunting memories & landscapes
 - Remarkable experiences

Renoir. 1870.
'Woman of
Algiers'



A European 'Invention'



- The Orient is presented as 'Other'
 - The Orient is articulated through European Western experience
 - It is a Western construct
 - "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other".
-

Orient v Occident

- Arbitrary boundary?
 - Drawing a line on a map
 - Orient is being presented through Westerners experiences
-

Said on Orientalism

- Colonialism
 - Orientalism "connotes the high-handed executive attitude of nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European colonialism".
-

Said (1985): Legitimization

- Legitimization
 - It refers to a scientific discipline that, emerging in the early nineteenth century, specialized "in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions"; and that, ideologically, it legitimizes the circulation of images and fantasies of the Orient designed, in large part, to confirm the epistemic authority of the West. "Orientalism Reconsidered" (Said 1985: 128).
-

- Domination
 - A system of domination which is "collectively maintained" (Said 1985: 141-43).
-

Power and Control

- Said employed Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse (The Archaeology of Knowledge & Discipline and Punish)
 - Making statements about it
 - Authorizing views of it
 - Describing it
 - By teaching it
 - Settling it
 - Ruling over it
-

Cultural Politics

- The basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts.
 - A form of imperialism that was/is constructed via culture.
 - European culture was managing and producing the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period.
 - "Because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action".
 - Examine Orientalism as a discourse
-



The Power of Culture
This was acted
out through
culture

Critique of Said

- Mortimer 2005: Said grants all control and representation to the colonizing power, thereby rejecting the possibility of resistance or independent action on the part of the colonized.
 - James Clifford 1980 : Said's book, for all the power of its criticism, "sometimes appears to mimic the essentializing discourse it attacks"
-

- Prakash (2005): "Orientalism's authority as a critique of Western knowledge remains unmatched, and continues to derive force from its subversive violation of borders".
 - Lisa Lowe (1991)
 - Orientalism historically and geographically heterogeneous
 - The Orient Said refers to may encompass all or parts of Central Asia, North Africa, Turkey, and the Middle East (Lowe 5).
 - There is a fundamental heterogeneity and instability of the discourses contained within the umbrella term "Orientalism,"
 - Expand the territory to Japan and China (Which Lowe does)
-

G. Huggan (2005)

- The expansion of the geography of the 'Orient' risks turning Orientalism into a code word for "Other-ing"
 - A process that involves the mapping of dominating practices of knowledge/power onto peoples seen as culturally 'marginal,' economically 'undeveloped,' or psychologically 'weak'
-

**Orientalism is
a Tool of
Colonialism**
