**Edward Said**

Edward Said's **Orientalism** is a seminal work that challenges the Western representations of the Middle East and Asia as exotic, backward, and inferior. Said argues that these representations are not based on objective knowledge, but rather on a discourse of power and domination that serves the interests of the colonial and imperialist West. Said traces the origins and development of this discourse from the ancient Greeks to the modern Orientalists and Arabists, showing how they constructed a binary opposition between the Orient and the Occident, the East and the West, the self and the other. Said also exposes the political, economic, and cultural consequences of this discourse, which has justified the exploitation, oppression, and violence against the non-Western peoples and cultures. Said's Orientalism is therefore, a groundbreaking critique of the Western scholarship and literature on the Orient, as well as a call for a more humanistic and dialogic approach to understanding the diversity and complexity of the world.

* Some examples of the orient-occident binary are:

- **Civilization vs. barbarism**: This is a common trope that portrays the West as civilized, rational, and progressive, while the East as barbaric, irrational, and stagnant. This binary justifies the Western intervention and domination of the Eastern lands and peoples, as well as the appropriation of their resources and culture.

- **Self vs. other**: This is a psychological mechanism that defines the identity of the West by contrasting it with the alterity of the East. The West constructs the East as the other, the different, the exotic, and the inferior, while the West as the self, the same, the familiar, and the superior. This binary reinforces the sense of superiority and entitlement of the West, as well as the marginalization and oppression of the East.

- **Masculinity vs. femininity**: This is a gendered metaphor that associates the West with masculinity, strength, and agency, while the East with femininity, weakness, and passivity. This binary enables the sexualization and objectification of the Eastern women, as well as the emasculation and infantilization of the Eastern men.

* Some examples of Oriental discourses in literature are as follows:

**The Arabian Nights**, a collection of stories from the medieval Islamic world, which influenced many Western writers such as Voltaire, Goethe, Poe, and Borges. [The stories feature exotic settings, magical elements, and themes of love, adventure, and justice](https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/99002/frontmatter/9781108499002_frontmatter.pdf)

**Kim**, a novel by Rudyard Kipling, which depicts the life of a young Irish orphan who grows up in India during the British Raj. [The novel explores the cultural and political conflicts between the East and the West, as well as the role of espionage and religion](https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/99002/frontmatter/9781108499002_frontmatter.pdf)

**The Waste Land**, a poem by T.S. Eliot, which incorporates references to various Eastern texts and traditions, such as the Upanishads, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Grail legend. [The poem reflects the disillusionment and fragmentation of the modern world after the First World War](https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/99002/frontmatter/9781108499002_frontmatter.pdf).

**The God of Small Things**, a novel by Arundhati Roy, which tells the story of a family in Kerala, India, and the tragic consequences of their forbidden love. [The novel critiques the social and political oppression of the caste system, the legacy of colonialism, and the impact of globalization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orientalism)