

Postcolonialism

Reading list

Postcolonialism

Colonialism, Imperialism, Decolonization, Postcolonialism, Neocolonialism

From Commonwealth Literature to Postcolonial Literature

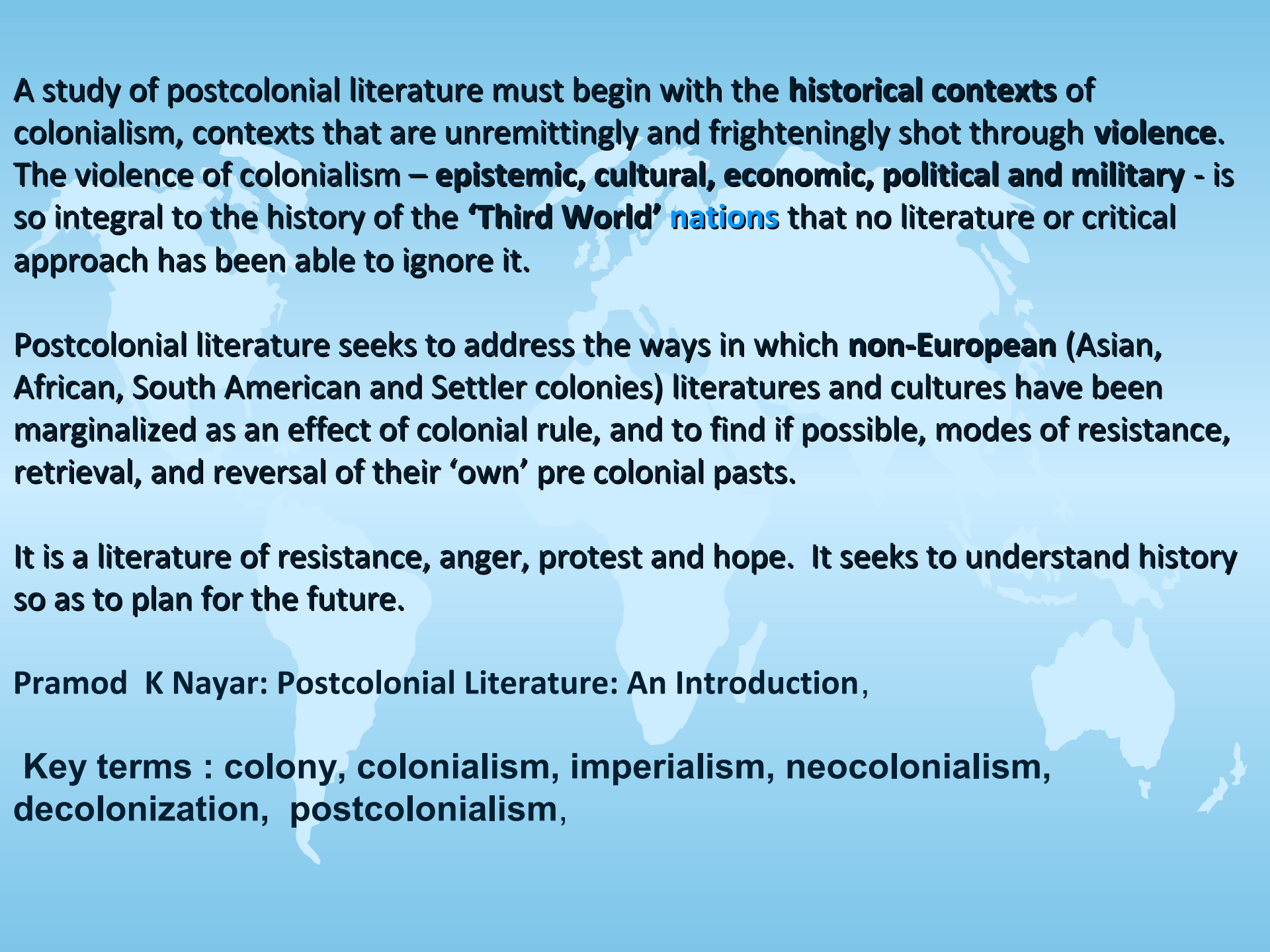
Frantz Fanon: 'Wretched of the Earth', 'Black skin, White Masks'

Edward Said and Orientalism

Bill Ashcroft: The Empire Writes Back

Nationality, Negritude and Nationalistic Culture

Postcolonialism and Gender



A study of postcolonial literature must begin with the **historical contexts** of colonialism, contexts that are unremittingly and frighteningly shot through **violence**. The violence of colonialism – **epistemic, cultural, economic, political and military** - is so integral to the history of the **‘Third World’ nations** that no literature or critical approach has been able to ignore it.

Postcolonial literature seeks to address the ways in which **non-European** (Asian, African, South American and Settler colonies) literatures and cultures have been marginalized as an effect of colonial rule, and to find if possible, modes of resistance, retrieval, and reversal of their ‘own’ pre colonial pasts.

It is a literature of resistance, anger, protest and hope. It seeks to understand history so as to plan for the future.

Pramod K Nayar: Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction,

Key terms : colony, colonialism, imperialism, neocolonialism, decolonization, postcolonialism,

Colony: English Vocabulary 14th C

origin – ‘Latin *colonia* 'settlement, farm', from *colonus* 'settler, farmer', from *colere* 'cultivate’

late Middle English – settlement of Roman citizens in a hostile or newly conquered country. These citizens retained their Roman citizenship, received lands in the new place and served Roman interest by working as garrison (a group of soldiers living in or defending a town or building, or the buildings that the soldiers live in)

15th C – Belonging to or relating to a colony, or specifically British Colonies.

OED (the colonies) all the foreign countries or areas formerly under British political control

OED (the colonies) the thirteen areas on the east coast of North America that gained independence

colonies - **settlements by communities seeking better life**

- roman, puritan migration

Derek Walcott – Satiric – New World

*Adam had an idea
He and the snake would share
the loss of Eden for profit
so both made the New World
and it looked good*

Present OED definition – Colonialism:
the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically

Synonymous with oppression, inequality, racism and exploitation

Non European cultures, knowledge were destroyed, modified and disciplined.

In India

I Stage: Assimilation – Interest in language, culture, religion, art

II Stage: superiority – primitive, irrelevant, out of date

III Stage: Imposition – language, knowledge, modernization

Race Theories: Science, Medicine, anthropology, and other disciplines formalized theories of race that justified imperial presence in Asian and African lands.

Non European races occupied the lower end of the scale of human development

native races- primitive, childlike, effeminate, irrational, irreligious, criminal, unreliable

should be taken care of – justification for European presence

Three central features of colonialism:

- 1. The governance of non European places by European administrators** – through economic, political, and military modes
- 2. The study of non European cultures by European academics, scholars, and scientists**(anthropology, literature, ‘area studies’)
- 3. The slow transformation of native societies** (missionary work, European education system, bureaucracy)

Racial difference =
biological difference →
Africans = black skin,
small brain + savagery
e.g. Darwin *The
Descent of Man* (1871);

C Murray and R. J.
Herrnstein *The Bell
Curve* (1994)
differences of whites'
and black's IQ test
performances caused
by their genetic
differences.



Up to 15th C migration involved a mixing of races

18th C 19th C retained their original differences – England – Home
native as different from ‘settler’ or ‘colonizer’

USA, South America, Australia – destroyed Native Population

OED – ‘an alleged policy of exploitation of backward or weak people by large power’
In India

I Stage – Assimilation – Warren Hasting – William Bentinck – William Jones- JS Mill
studied Sanskrit/Persian – Translation
Law, Religion, Art, Science

II Stage – Assertion of Superiority – Indian Texts and Cultures
primitive, Irrelevant, out of date

III Stage – Imposition – English as a medium of Instruction – Macaulay’s Minute
European culture – equality, liberty, development and
modernization, knowledge, religion

Formulation of Race Theory:

CED : a group, especially of people, with particular similar physical characteristics, who are considered as belonging to the same type, or the fact of belonging to such a group.

classifications based on observable characteristics as skin color, hair type, body proportions, and skull measurements

Now seen as socially and ideologically constructed to meet specific needs during slavery. It was used as a mode of social organization and identity formation in the West.

What is caste/regionalism/linguistic difference in India?

science, medicine anthropology, were used to justify the imperial presence of Europeans in Asian and African lands

Native Races

1. Primitive, child like, effeminate, irrational, pagan, criminal, unreliable
2. cannot take care of itself. It must be taken care of – By whom?

For more : ***The Incredible Human Journey / Racism: A History (ep 2:Fatal Impact)***

Forms of Colonialism:

1. Colonies of occupation
2. Colonies of Settlement

1. Colonies of occupation: spaces occupied by European military and political powers and economically exploited for the benefit of 'mother country' eg ?

2. Colonies of Settlement: spaces where the white races settled down
eg: Australia, USA, Canada, Brazil, South Africa

Were these countries empty?

Were there locals/ indigenous people?

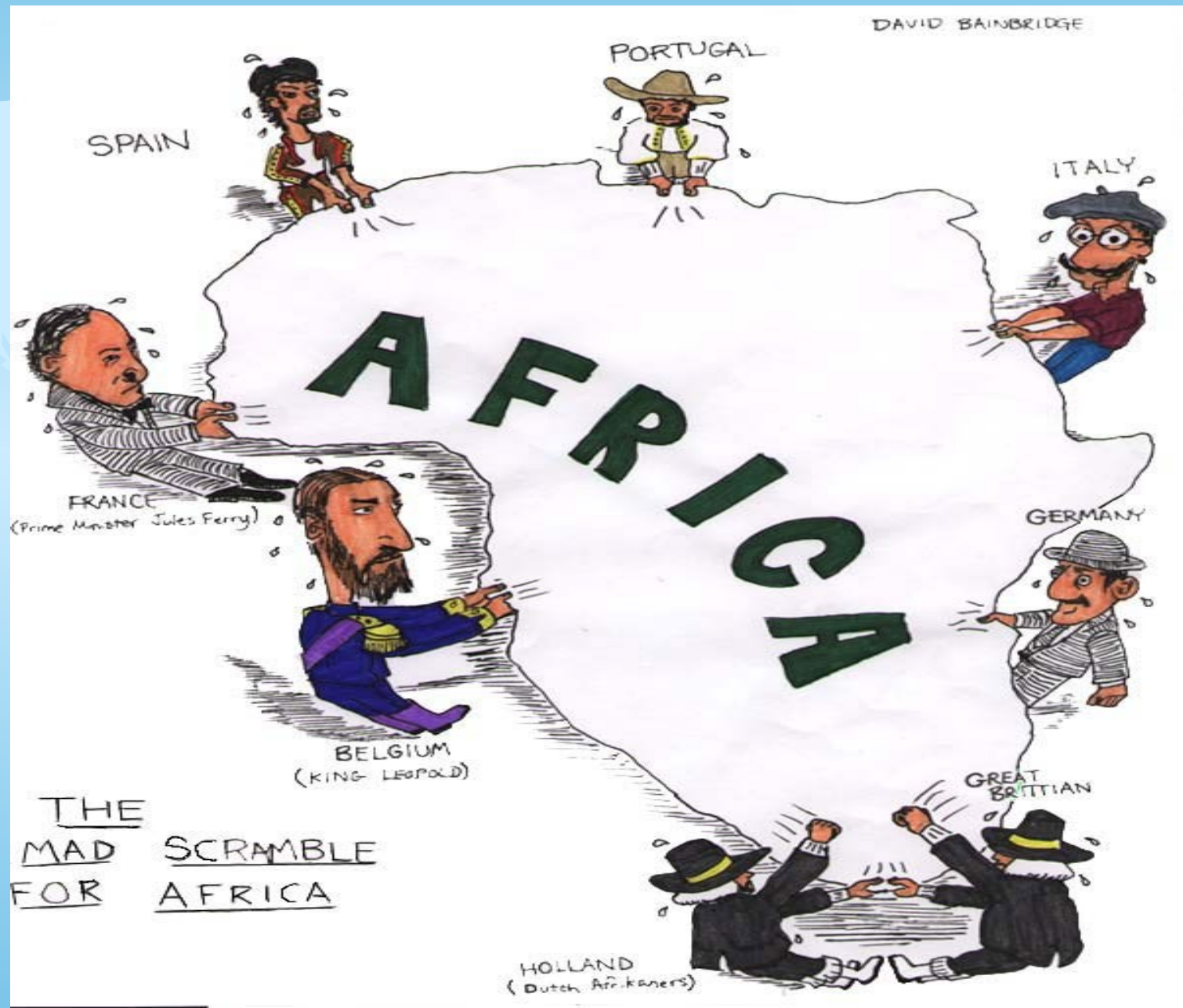
Legal term – 'terra Nullis' (L) = nobody's land/ no man's land

brutal suppression of natives - History of Racism – BBC 4

In India: Aryans, Moghul - Colonies of occupation/Colonies of Settlement ?

Indian Colonialism ?

Scramble for Africa



Ellek Beohmer – Colonial and Postcolonial Literature (OUP)

Colonialism = settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands

1. settlement of land
2. economic relationship
3. unequal power relationship





- | | |
|---|---|
| British | Portuguese |
| French | Belgian |
| German | Spanish |
| Italian | Independent African States |

0 400 800 Km
0 400 800 Miles



Imperialism - not a synonym of colonialism
also a rule by a European nation on a non-European

Practice of governance through 'remote control', without
actual settlement

Imperialism is the **ideology** to **justify** colonial rule.

conquest of newer regions for the sake of **economic
exploitation**.

political theory behind colonial conquest.

originates from **European centers** of political, military,
and economic power and spreads outwards to take in
the whole earth.



THE DEVILFISH IN EGYPTIAN WATERS.

justifies conquest in the name of **evangelicalism**
(uplift the pagans),

economy (for the good of the European
nation) or

politics (the defense of democracy).

non-European region on the **periphery** and
controls it mostly through economic measures
(slave labour, capitalism, trade restrictions
may be accompanied by political and military
control) Eg: Iraq, Afghanistan,

**Imperialism is the theory and colonialism is the
practice.**

Decolonization

a political process, frequently involving violence. In extreme circumstances, there is a war of independence, sometimes following a revolution.

In rare cases, the actions of the native population are characterized by nonviolence.

Three Periods:

1. **Loss of American colonies & the Declaration of Independence in 18th C**
2. **Creation of dominions – CANS – formed Commonwealth – became independent**
3. **End of Second World War – Achievement of Independence**

It seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking, a freedom to revive and rejuvenate native forms of knowledge. It is a methodology wherein European categories and epistemologies are called into question.

Closely examines the historical process – European forms of thought, nationalist thinking and forms of resistance.



Neocolonialism

"As long as *imperialism* exists it will, by definition, exert its domination over other countries. Today that domination is called *neocolonialism*".

Che Guevara

Practice of using **capitalism, globalization, and cultural forces** to control a country (usually former European colonies in Africa or Asia) in lieu of direct military or political control.

Such control can be **economic, cultural, or linguistic**; by promoting one's own culture, language or media in the colony, corporations embedded in that culture can then make greater headway in opening the markets in those countries.



“The result of neo-colonialism is that **foreign capital** is used for the **exploitation rather than for the development** of the less developed parts of the world.

Investment under neo-colonialism increases rather than decreases the **gap between the rich and the poor countries** of the world.

The struggle against neo-colonialism is not aimed at excluding the capital of the developed world from operating in less developed countries.

It is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as **to impoverish the less developed”**.

Vladimir Lenin's *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism* (1916)

From Commonwealth Literature to Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial Writing:

Textual/ literary processes through which formerly colonized people assert difference from, resistance to, and negotiation with, European colonial masters and cultures while attempting to develop similar strategies to tackle contemporary globalizing and neocolonial processes of domination by Euro-American powers

Commonwealth literature:

- From 1950 – to describe literatures in English emerging from a selection of countries with a history of colonialism
- to identify the common concerns

RK Narayan (India), George Lamming (Barbados), Katherine Mansfield(NZ), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)

-Salman Rushdie: Commonwealth Literature- Does not Exist- it forces people from diverse countries, cultures, and colonial experience into a 'ghetto' – so preferred Postcolonial

-1950-60 – Post colonial literature: Themes of Nationalism, euphoria of

Themes:

bi-culturalism, nationalism, local and tribal identities as opposed to universal humanism, the conflict between European modernization and native tradition, generating a discourse about the nature of postcolonial identity

- Raja Rao, Narayan, Patrick White, Derek Walcott

**1980s – multicultural cities, countries – loss of postcolonial dream –
disillusionment with nation**

Salman Rushdie- Midnight's Children

Naipaul – The Mimic Men

Ngugi – Petals of Blood

Roy – The god of small... Adiga – White Tiger... Ghost – Sea of Poppies

**Mixing of genres – autobiography, popular culture, documentary history,
fiction**

common themes:

cultural roots

identity

migrancy

multiculturalism

displacement

Nativization of English language

Under the kind patronage of His Excellency,
Señor Samuel Moncada, the Ambassador for Venezuela,
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by Tuesday 15 November 2011





Orientalism

A study of how western colonial powers of Britain and France represented North African and Middle Eastern lands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Orient – collective Noun refers to far Eastern lands

Orientalism refers to the sum of the West's representations of the Orient.

The shape of Orientalism
The stereotypes of the Orient

I The shape of Orientalism

1. Orientalism constructs binary divisions
2. Orientalism is a western fantasy
3. Orientalism is an institution
4. Orientalism is literary
5. Orientalism is legitimating
6. Latent and Manifest Orientalism

II Stereotypes of the Orient

1. The Orient is timeless
2. The orient is strange
3. Orientalism makes assumptions about race
4. Orientalism makes assumptions about gender
5. Orient is feminine
6. The oriental is degenerate



I The shape of Orientalism

1. Orientalism constructs binary divisions

Orient and Occident

assumed to exist in opposition to the other

Orient is what West is not

the Orient described in negative terms

West seat of knowledge and learning

West – superior and East subservient

Orient has been fundamental in defining the East ‘as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience’

the West comes to know itself by proclaiming via Orientalism everything it believes it is not



2. Orientalism is a Western Fantasy

orient is the result of West's Dreams, fantasies and assumptions about this radically different, contrasting place contains.

Orientalism is a fabricated construct, a series of images that come to stand as the Orient's reality for those in the West.

It doesn't exist outside of the representations made about it by Westerners

3. Orientalism is an institution

used Science and history to serve its ends

the Orient became an object 'suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national religious character



4. Orient is literary

influences literary and non-literary writing.

Philology – the study of the history of languages

lexicography – dictionary making

history, biology, political, and economic theory, novel writing and lyric poetry

adventure story - popular – Victorian period

5. Orientalism is legitimizing:

orientalist representations function to justify the propriety of Western colonial rule of Eastern lands.

6. latent and manifest Orientalism



Stereotypes of the Orient

1. the Orient is timeless

Orientalism assumed an unchanging orient
trapped in antiquity far behind the modern developments of the 'enlightened' west
considered 'primitive or backwards'

a westerner travelling to Oriental lands was not just moving in space from one location to the other, potentially they were also travelling back in time to an earlier world

timeless place, changeless and static, cut off from the progress of Western history

2. The Orient as strange

the orient is not just different; it is oddly different – unusual, fantastic, bizarre.
Occident was rational, sensible, and familiar,
Orient was irrational , extraordinary, abnormal

3. Orientalism makes assumptions about 'race'

Assumptions about inherent racial characteristics of Orientals

Arab = Violent

Indian = Lazy

Chinese = Inscrutable

racializing categories like 'Arabian' and 'Indian' were defined within the general negative representational framework typical of Orientalism , and provided Orientalism with a set of generalized types.



4. Orientalism makes assumptions about gender

gendered stereotypes

effeminate Oriental male or the sexually promiscuous exotic Oriental female

Oriental male – insufficiently manly and displayed a luxuriousness and foppishness that made him appear grotesque of ‘gentler’ female sex

Oriental female – exoticised – often depicted nude or partially clothed in hundreds of western works of art

represented as immodest, active creature of sexual pleasure

western men – active, courageous , strong

western women – passive, moral , chaste

gender identity is transgressive

5. The Orient is feminine

East is feminized, deemed passive, submissive, exotic, luxurious, sexually mysterious and tempting,

West – Masculine, active, dominant, heroic, rational, self controlled and ascetic

sexual vocabulary:

the orient is penetrated by the traveler whose passions it rouses, it is possessed , ravished, embraced and ultimately domesticated by the muscular colonizer

6. The Oriental is degenerate:

oriental stereotypes fixed typical weakness as cowardliness, laziness, untrustworthiness, fickleness, laxity, violence and lust

Oriental people indulge in dubious aspects of human behaviors.

Therefore oriental peoples needed to be civilized and made to conform to the perceived higher moral standards upheld in the West.

Orientalism justified the propriety of colonialism by claiming that Oriental peoples needed saving from themselves