

Orientalism

The Colonial Imagination

- A Eurocentric master narrative tends to position Europeans as the first explorers and the rest of the world as an uncivilized frontier to be discovered and conquered
- The American circus exploited the western imagination of the East
- Orientalism is a [racist](#) ideology

Okihiro's Points

- Asia and the Pacific existed as civilizations long before European contact
- Europeans knew this, which is why they set out looking for Asia
- European colonialism brought not only systems such as capitalism, evangelism, and slavery, but also a world-view.
- That world-view mapped the world in the way that we understand it today

Edward Said

- 1935 - 2003
- Palestinian American literary theorist, cultural critic, and activist
- Founding figure of postcolonial studies
- *Orientalism* (1978) is his most well known work

Summary

- Orientalism defines the "West" in relation to the "East"

The East	The West
Feminine	Masculine
Sensual	Rational
Mystery, romance	Science
Ancient past	Progress, modernity
Passive, weakness	Strength, power
Heathenism	Christianity