

Orientalism: Defined and Shown Through The Work of Henry Kissinger

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Orientalism: Defined and Shown Through The Work of Henry Kissinger

Edward Said first published Orientalism in 1978 and the book has continued to open readers' eyes to the true effects of biased thought. Said carefully examines what he calls 'Orientalism' in an attempt to show how different cultures view each other and depend upon other cultures to define their own. This essay will include a brief definition of Orientalism as well as how Henry Kissinger has an Orientalist view upon developing countries, shown through numerous examples from Said's book.

Given on the first few pages of his book, Edward Said allows his readers to absorb the concept of Orientalism early on in his book, adding to the definition throughout. Said [presents](#) his definition of Orientalism in three "interdependent" fashions, the first shown through the Orient's place among Western European culture:

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. In [addition](#), the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. [pp. 1-2]

Simply put, Said claims that Orientalism represents how Europe has defined themselves against Oriental characteristics. A second form of Orientalism comes from the academic world and is still prevalent in today's society. Said states that "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient [regardless of field of study] is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. In a more general sense, this can be seen when academics make the "ontological and [epistemological](#) distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (p 2). Said states that while this form is not as common as in years past, Orientalism will exist so long as these ideas are taught.

As the first of the two definitions deal with the "academic and imaginative meanings of Orientalism," the third meaning is derived from the combination of the first two. Said believes that Orientalism can also be thought of as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style, for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p 3).

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