

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Fall 1992

ORIENTALISM AND SOUTHEAST ASIA
Other People in Our Knowledge

History 283/ Freshman Honors Seminar

Thongchai Winichakul

In 1978 Edward Said, a professor of English literature and himself a Palestinian, wrote an influential book, Orientalism, exploring an academic field known as Oriental Studies which has been very popular especially in Europe since the nineteenth century. Said's critical study shows that the Oriental, in his case the Arab in particular, are not represented as they actually are. Rather they are represented, or even invented, as the counterpart, the opposite of Western civilization. In his words, they are "the Other" of the West. This Orientalist (mis)representation, moreover, is not simply the result of ignorance or inadequacy of knowledge, but it is the effect of power relations between the East and the West.

The responses to Said have been strongly positive and negative and everything in between. The implication of his ideas begs for two kinds of question. First, can his ideas be applied to any other Asian societies? How are other Asian culture represented by the Orientalists? Second, a representation of 'the Other' does not belong exclusively to Western culture. Indeed, Orientalism is a kind of ethnocentrism. If so, how other cultures have invested power in the relations to their "Other"? Would it be possible to study a culture by looking at the ways "the Other" of a culture is represented or invented?

The seminar is not intended to answer the above questions, however. Said's questions are our starting point and a challenge to explore new arena and approaches to understand relations among different culture. Southeast Asia is our case. The seminar will try to look at various kinds of materials and methodologies for a cultural and intellectual history.

Class Meeting: Thursday 1:30-3:30 (extra appointment will be discussed)

The seminar room will be on the 5th floor Humanities. But for each meeting, please look for the specific room-number at the History Department counter (3211).

Office Hour: Room 5211 Humanities ph: (608) 263-8931

Monday 1:30-2:30 Thursday 4:00-5:00 or by appointment

Readings: Nearly all of the readings mentioned below can be found in the library. The student responsible for each week may check out and prepare about two weeks in advance. See the instructor if the material cannot be found. For the rest of the class in each week, students should find the required reading first; if not possible, you are recommended to read something on the list for that week. For some articles difficult to find in the library, there will be a folder in the instructor's mailbox (#5043 5th fl. Humanities near the room 5211) for this class. In the folder, from time to time, there will be an article or two for your interest. If you are so, please take it for only an hour to make your own copy. Then return it to the folder for others. So please check the folder from time to time.

Requirement:

1. Every student has to make presentation(s) (10-15 min.) at the beginning of the chosen meeting(s) (to be decided in the first meeting). The presentation discusses the weekly issue as s/he studies from that week's reading or material. PLUS s/he should try to raise questions or topics for discussion and lead the seminar. (20%)

2. A research essay (10-15 pages on A4 paper, double spacing) on any topic related to the course. We will work together in class as well as on the one-to-one basis in the following process.

2.1 Find the topic and write a statement of idea or interest.

2.2 Survey of appropriate literature and make a bibliographical list.

2.3 Do the reading and collecting data (information) needed.

2.4 Write an abstract or a summary of the essay planned to write.

2.5 Write the essay.

This is designed for students to learn the basic research techniques. There is no deadline for each step, except that the finished paper must be handed no later than Dec 22. So the sooner each step is done the better for students. This research work is 50%.

3. Participation is crucial. Every students must prepare for discussion each week. S/he should be active participant. This does not mean an overly talkative; it simply means attention and involvement in the discussion. Too many absence and uncooperative sit-ins will be noted. (30%)

4. The last two meetings are for students to present the expected result of their researches. No mark and no penalty, just for students to demonstrate their work and exchange ideas.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(* = required reading or work. The rest are supplementary for your interest)

Week 1 (Sept 3) Introduction to the course. Discuss the assignment and meeting.

Week 2 (Sept 10) Said's Orientalism

Issue: Discussing Said's ideas and its implication

* Said, Edward. Orientalism. chap.1(I,II) and chap.2 (I,III,IV)

Cohen, Warren ed. Reflections on Orientalism.

"Review Symposium: Edward Said's Orientalism" Journal of Asian Studies 39 (1980), pp.481-516.

Kabbani, Rana Europe's Myth of Orient.

Week 3 (Sept 17) Travel to the Other's Space

Issue: The meaning and function of travel; exoticism; how to make the Other exotic .

* Loth, Heinrich. "The Knowledge of Asia and Africa in the Age of Enlightenment: Travel Books as Historical Sources," in The French Revolution of 1789: Its Impact on Latin America, Asia and Africa. ed. Joachim Heidrich, pp. 39-44.

* Either: Look through one or many of the following items:-

Mouhot, Henri. Diary: Travels in Central Parts of Siam, Cambodia and Laos during 1858-1861.

La Loubere, Simone de. The Kingdom of Siam.

Bowring, Sir John. The Kingdom and People of Siam, 2 vols.

Linschoten, Jan Huygen van. The Voyage of John Huygen Linschoten to the East Indies.

Ibrahim, Muhammad Ibu. Ship of Sulaiman.

Or: See the guidebooks or collecting travel brochures about other countries, especially Asia.

See HOW those travel literature or guidebooks present, portray, or show the destination.

Campbell, Mary B. The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing 400-1600. part I.

Smith, Bernard. European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas. especially chap. 1,2,4,11.

Baudet, Henri. Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images on Non-European Man.

Schwartz, Milliam L. The Imaginative Interpretation of the Far East in Modern French Literature 1800-1925.

Week 4 (Sept 24) An English governess and an Oriental despot

Issue: Western missionaries and Oriental ignorance

A Western woman and an Eastern king

* See "The King and I"- the movie

Landon, Margaret. Anna and the King of Siam.

Leonowens, Anna. Siamese Harem Life.

_____. The Romance of the Harem.

_____. The English Governess at the Siamese Court.

Griswold, A.B. King Mongkut of Siam.

Moffat, Abbot L. Mongkut: the King of Siam.

Blofeld, John. King Maha Mongkut of Siam.

Bradley, William. Siam Then: the Foreign Colony in Bangkok before and after Anna.

Clymer, Kenton. Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines 1898-1916: An Inquiry into the American Mentality.

Tuck, Patrick J.N. French Catholic Missionaries and the politics of Imperialism in Vietnam 1857-1914: A Documentary Survey.

Week 5 (Oct 1) The colonial fiction and the post-colonial conscience

Issue: The function of the East in Conrad's stories. Comparison between Conrad, Kipling and Forster or Orwell

* Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness or Lord Jim.

Forster, E.M. Passage to India. (also as a movie)

Orwell, George. "Shooting an Elephant"

Moore, Gilbert. Kipling and "Orientalism".

McClure, John A. Kipling and Conrad: the Colonial Fiction.

Darras, Jacque. Joseph Conrad and the West: Signs of Empire. part 1.

Osborne, Milton. Fear and Fascination in the Tropics: a Reader's guide to French Fiction on Indochina.

Roskies, D.M. Imperial Perceptions: Examples of Colonial Fiction from Netherland Indies.

Week 6 (Oct 8) The ethnographical construct

Issue: What is anthropology or ethnography? How does an ethnographical object change due to the ethnographical writer?

* Vickers, Adrian. Bali: A Paradise Created.

Schulte Nordholt, H. Bali: Colonial Conceptions and Political Change 1700-1940.

Heniger, Johannes, "Dutch Contributions to the Study of Exotic Natural History in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Terra Australis: the Furthest Shore. ed. W. Eisler and B. Smith, pp.59-66.

Smith, Bernard. "The Intellectual and Artistic Framework of Pacific Exploration in the Eighteenth Century," in ibid. pp.123-28.

Mead, Magaret. Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization.

Freeman, Derek. Magaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth.

Week 7 (Oct 15) No class. Mid-term intermission

Week 8 (Oct 22) The Needed Enemy: Vietnam in American Memory

Issue: What is Vietnam in the American literature and films about the Vietnam War?

* See the following movies

The Green Berets, The Deer Hunter, Full Metal Jacket

(There are a large number of novels about the war, and shelves of studies about them. Here are only some examples of the latter.)

Auster, Albert and Quart, Leonard. How the War Was Remembered: Hollywood and Vietnam.

Dittmar, Linda and Michaud, Gene eds. From Hanoi to Hollywood: the Vietnam war in American Films.

Lomperis, Timothy. 'Reading the Wind' the Literature of the Vietnam War.

Melling, Philip. Vietnam in American Literature.

Hellman, John. American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam.

Cultural Critique 3 (Spring 1986) on "the representation of the Vietnam War" see the articles by Michael Clark and Claudia Springer.

Week 9 (Oct 29) The Native Response

Issue: Reaction from the East, a nationalist view and a humanist one. How are they different from 'Orientalism'?

* Bresnahan, Roger. " 'Thanks Joe!': The American Image in Philippine Literature" (An article in progress, ask the instructor. If not available in time, students will be informed in advance.)

Toer, Pramoedya Ananta. This Earth of Mankind.

Yabes, Leopold Y. ed. Philippine Short Stories, 1925-1940, and Philippine Short Stories, 1941-1955 2 vols.

Week 10 (Nov 5) Minorities: the Other Within

Issue: Can Said's Orientalism be applied to the case of minorities?

* See two Thai movies about the Lao people in the country:

"Luk Isan" and "Thongpan" (time and place to be arranged)

("Luk Isan" is based on the book of the same title already translated into English as A Child of the Northeast.)

Keyes, C.F. Isan: Regionalism in Northeastern Thailand.

Streckfuss, David. "Creating 'the Thai': the Emergence of Indigenous Nationalism in Non-colonial Siam 1850-1980." M.A. thesis, UW-Madison.

Anderson, Benedict. "Introduction" to Southeast Asian Tribal Groups and Ethnic Minorities.

Week 11 (Nov 12) Ethnic Identity and Others

Issue: The indispensable Other. No identity without the Other

* Leach, Edmund. Political System of Highland Burma.

Barth, Fredrik. Ethnic Group and Boundaries: the Social Organization of Cultural Difference. see introduction.

Keyes, C.F. Ethnic Adaptation and Identity: the Karen on the Thai Frontier with Burma. see the articles by Keyes, Kunstadter, Marlowe, Lehman and introduction.

Moerman, Michael. "Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who are the Lue?" American Anthropologist 67, no.5, part 1, (Oct 1965), pp. 1215-30.

Week 12 (Nov 19) Concluding Discussion

Said, Edward. Orientalism. chap. 3.

Week 13 (Nov 26) Thanksgiving Recess

Week 14 and 15 (Dec 3, 10) Presentations of research essays