EDWARD SAID, ORIENTALISM, AND EVERY MAN IN THIS VILLAGE IS A LIAR

Introduction to Unit 4 - Encountering Conflict 2015
POTENTIAL THREADS

- Truth & Lies
- Journalism & War
- Bystanders & Perpetrators
- Colonialism & Orientalism
- Values & Ideology
- Writers, Artists, Photographers
SUGGESTIONS FOR CREATIVE/PERSUASIVE/HYBRID

• Use famous children’s stories that subscribe to colonialism or orientalism as bookends in a hybrid style. (See model essay).

• Model a feature/opinion piece on the work of John Pilger (activist, filmmaker and journalist and purveyor of dangerous ideas).

• Write a review of an art exhibition centred around Orientalism and Conflict, taking on the persona of Megan Stack. Date it as the 10th anniversary of Edward Said’s death.

• Write a persuasive piece about the need to see asylum seekers as people, using the material you gather during this study as the foundations of your arguments. Take on the persona of one of the members of the US military who stood by while prisoners were tortured at Abu Ghraib.
Academic – Edward Said, scholar, wrote a book called *Orientalism*

Textual – Megan Stack

Global Conflict – Israel and Palestine

Local Conflict – Australia’s “secret wars”

An essay on colonialism and ideology would be framed by discussion of values, racist assumptions, the clash of cultures, western domination and eastern subordination.
WHO WAS EDWARD SAID?

- very influential writer on Colonialism.

- a scholar in the humanities who grew up in Egypt and Palestine, but whose entire education was Western

Author of over 20 books, including:

- *Orientalism* (1978); *Culture and Imperialism*; *Blaming the Victims*; and *The Politics of Dispossession*

- died in 2003 at age 67
THE COLONISER AND THE COLONISED

• To Said the colonised people are “something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual.”

• Seen as mere objects of study

“The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is contained and represented by dominating frameworks.”

• Said’s cultural analysis can also be used to frame the experience of Indigenous Australians as examples of the “other” in the colonial context.
The notion of Europe as a “mother” nation stems from imperialist expansion of Europe and the rest of the world. The dominance, control, influence of Europe (and more broadly the west) over indigenous peoples is a system that carries with it inherent notions of racial inferiority and exotic otherness.
KEY TERMINOLOGY - IMPERIALISM

- A policy of extending a country’s power by process of colonisation through military force.
The process by which one country invades and takes over another country or territory.
Key terminology – The Other

- Social and psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalises another group

- By declaring someone “other”, the emphasis is on what that person is not, i.e.; how are they dissimilar to the dominant (colonialist) individual?

- Carries over into the way they are represented and is the catalyst for stereotypes
**KEY TERMINOLOGY - ORIENTALISM**

- The process by which “the orient” has been constructed by European studies and culture over the 300 or so years.

- A broad western generalisation rather than a true study and helps to perpetuate stereotypes.

- Orientalism erodes and ignores substantial difference among the people it puts an umbrella over.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pmkfvzmLdU
• Orientalism, as used by Said, is used to describe people from Oriental, Islamic and Asian cultures

• at one time referred mainly to the lands of the Bible (the Middle East) and to India and only later was it extended to include China, Japan, etc.

• So, Said uses the term “the Orient” to refer to Arabs and Islam, which, as he points out, “for almost a thousand years together stood for the Orient”.

• Britain and France dominated the eastern Mediterranean region from the late 1600s on and American imperial influence has been prominent since the end of World War II.

• a “contrast conception” for Europe: “THE ORIENT IS EVERYTHING THAT EUROPE IS NOT”

• Orientalism is responsible, according to Said, in producing a cultural binary…
A system of values beliefs or ideas shared by some social groups, often taken for granted as natural or inherently true.
CULTURAL VALUES

• A discussion of cultural values is central to our exploration of *Every Man in this Village is a Liar*

• By what process are our values as individuals acquired?

• Who has a say in the things we hold dear as individuals?

• Is there such a thing as “goodies” and “baddies” and if so, who decides who is who?

• Why does the West feel the need to get involved in wars that are removed from it, both geographically and philosophically?