

Orientalist Dramaturgies

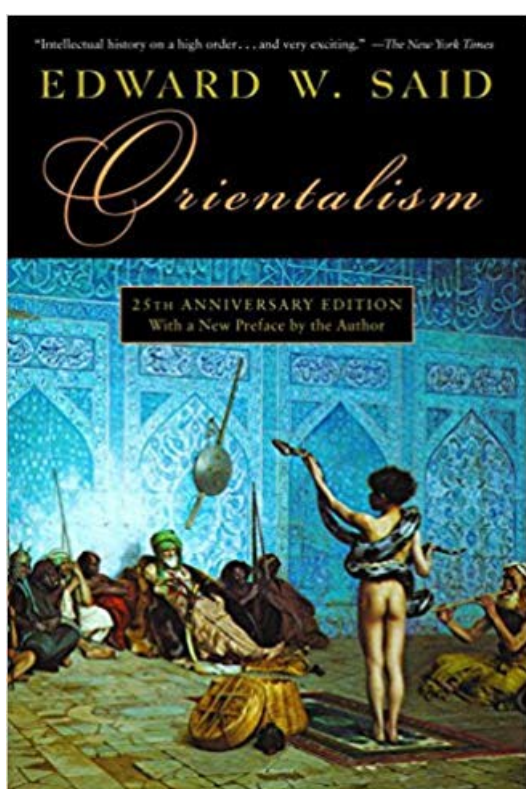
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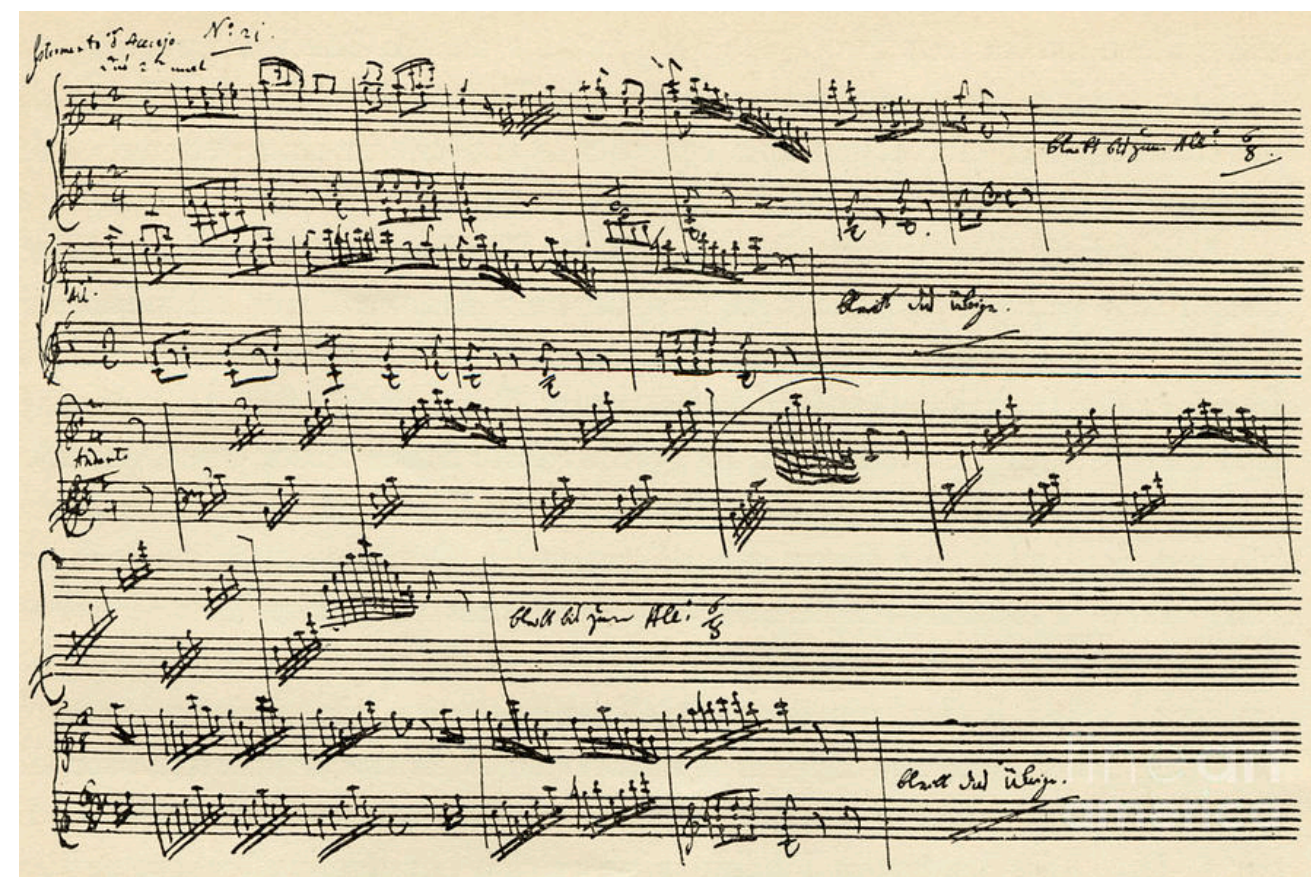
Edward Said, Theatre Studies, and Opera

Building a Better Vocabulary

How do you define a term that you yourself have created?

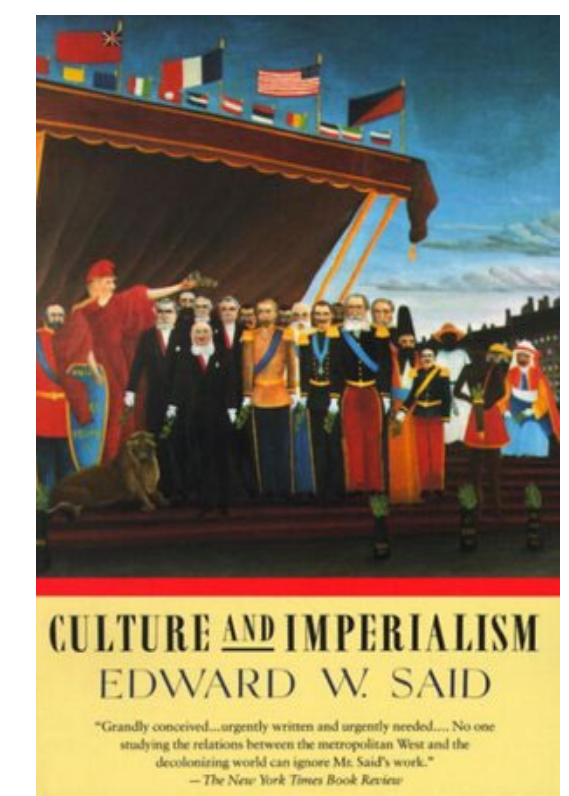


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Creating a More Agile Analytical Tool

How do you improve upon what is established in the literature?



Saidian-Informed Dramaturgy

Saidian-Informed: refers to Edward Said's theory which he outlines in his 1978 book *Orientalism*. Said's theory refers to the dynamic of power between The West and the mystic East, the hierarchies established via colonialism, and the ways in which Western scholars/institutions used stereotyping and the arts to mediate Western opinion of Eastern people, places, personalities, and politics.

Dramaturgy: Terry McCabe defines dramaturgy as "a comprehensive exploration of the context in which the play resides...the physical, social, political, and economic environment in which the actions take place...the various metaphorical expressions in the play, as well as the technical consideration of the play as writing (structure, rhythm, flow, and word choice)".

The Broader Impact

Edward Said's work as a theorist and cultural critic has been applied to many different humanities studies, but one that consistently lacks full exploration is Said's impact on Performance Studies. Said himself was also a published musicologist, although generally eschewing that title. Working on this project, attempting to understand and explain a Saidian-Informed reading of a script or libretto will have a definitive impact on the outlook of my career. From these analyses I will further develop and more clearly articulate the concept and functionality of Saidian-Informed Dramaturgy; this means fighting assumptions in the literature and working to look for ways that Orientalism, as described by Said, influence the creation and performance of these works far beyond the description as an "Orientalist Opera". The development of this theory of Saidian-Informed Dramaturgy will result in a clearly articulatable framework which is able to be repeated not just on other operas, but also on the many musical theatre pieces which tend to fall victim to the same traps (including many who find their source material in opera). The development and use of this tool will allow for directors/designers/actors to work to create more socially and culturally conscious works that find new life generation after generation, minimizing the harmful capabilities of these works while discovering new appreciation for the craftsmanship and creative outputs.

What Comes Next

Through the full development of the Saidian-Informed Dramaturgy model, I will be able to publish and demonstrate new techniques for direction, design, performance, and production of operas, musicals, and even plays. This will push the field in more equitable and diverse ways that will allow for a brighter and more inclusive future in the performing arts.