



The East, the West, and Sex: A History of Erotic Encounters

By Richard Bernstein

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The East, the West, and Sex: A History of Erotic Encounters By Richard Bernstein

A rich and seductive narrative of the powerful erotic pull the East has always had for the West—a pervasive yet often ignored aspect of their long historical relationship—and a deep exploration of the intimate connection between sex and power.

Richard Bernstein defines the East widely—northern Africa, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific Islands—and frames it as a place where sexual pleasure was not commonly associated with sin, as it was in the West, and where a different sexual culture offered the Western men who came as conquerers and traders thrilling but morally ambiguous opportunities that were mostly unavailable at home. Bernstein maps this erotic history through a chronology of notable personalities. Here are some of Europe’s greatest literary personalities and explorers: Marco Polo, writing on the harem of Kublai Khan; Gustave Flaubert, describing his dalliances with Egyptian prostitutes (and the diseases he picked up along the way); and Richard Francis Burton, adventurer, lothario, anthropologist—and translator of *The Arabian Nights*.

Here also are those figures less well-known but with stories no less captivating or surprising: Europeans whose “temporary marriages” to Japanese women might have inspired Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*; rare visitors to the boudoirs of Chinese emperors in the Forbidden City; American G.I.s and journalists in Vietnam discovering the sexual emoluments of postcolonial power; men attracted to the sex bazaars of yesterday’s North Africa and the Thailand of today. And throughout, Bernstein explores the lives of those women who suffered for or profited from the fantasies of Western men.

A remarkable work of history: as unexpected as it is lucid, and as provocative as it is brilliantly illuminating.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. “Is the notion of the East as a zone of special erotic possibilities purely a matter of Western fantasy and wishful thinking...?” This question is at the center of Bernstein's wide-ranging, critically astute history of the complicated relationship between Western male sexuality and the East. The book opens in 2006 Shanghai and concludes in contemporary Bangkok; in between, we are led through a sweeping yet focused, male-centered history of sexuality, spanning a broadly defined East and West, from antiquity to the 21st century. Bernstein examines Flaubert's sexual exploits in Egypt, where he vividly recorded “a sensual intensity, impossible in the West”; British explorer Richard Burton's travels through the Middle East, India and Africa, all exemplified by a sexual artistry uncultivated in Christian Europe; the fascinating case of the secretive Henry de Montherlant, a pederast who spent years in North Africa “greedy for flesh” and eventually took his own life. Former *New York Times* correspondent Bernstein (*Fragile Glory*) writes lucidly and with verve. This probing, absorbing and eclectic study critically challenges morally and politically correct interpretations of the Western sexual exploitation of the East. 12 illus. (June 2)

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Review

“Fascinating . . . Accessible, much-researched and far-reaching . . . Bernstein's book provocatively externalizes, and maps, the heterosexual male erotic mind.”

-Toni Bentley, *The New York Times Book Review*

“*The East, the West, and Sex* is the best sort of book about sex: It is replete with anecdotes from history that titillate as they inform and observations on human nature that amuse as they illuminate, all delivered in language and tone that is broadly moral without being moralizing.”

-Tunku Varadarajan, *The Wall Street Journal*

“Provocative and intriguing . . . Properly high-minded . . . Very good and eminently discussable.”

-Simon Winchester, *The New York Times*

“Bernstein negotiates this territory with great delicacy and considerable historical knowledge . . . [An] elegantly written book.”

-Laura Miller, salon.com

“Bernstein is very good at telling these stories . . . [He] is brave to insist, in the face of much postmodern academic writing about colonialism, that for various reasons having nothing to do with the West, women . . . were far more readily available in the Middle and Far East than in Europe.”

-Thomas W. Laqueur, *San Francisco Chronicle*

“Wide-ranging [and] critically astute . . . Sweeping yet focused . . . Former *New York Times* correspondent Bernstein writes lucidly and with verve. This probing, absorbing, and eclectic study critically challenges morally and politically correct interpretations of the Western sexual exploitation of the East.”

-Starred review, *Publishers Weekly*

“A survey whose range is almost stupefyingly wide . . . Bernstein's book . . . introduces the complexity of everyday reality into a world about which it is easy to preach.”

-Colin Thubron, *The New York Review of Books*

“In his loose-limbed style . . . a diligent scholar pursues a subject . . . intriguing any way you look at it.”

-*Kirkus*

About the Author

Richard Bernstein is a columnist for the *International Herald Tribune* and a contributor to *The New York Times*. He has served as a foreign correspondent in Asia and Europe for *Time* and the *Times*, and is the author of six previous books, including *Fragile Glory: A Portrait of France and the French*, a *New York Times* Best Book of the Year, and *Out of the Blue: A Narrative of September 11, 2001, from Jihad to Ground Zero*, named by *The Boston Globe* as one of the seven best books of 2002. He lives in New York City.

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The reason? Because this *The East, the West, and Sex: A History of Erotic Encounters* is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap it but latter it will surprise you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such incredible way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of gains than the other book include such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

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