

Thematic Questions: Amin al-Rihani & Freya Stark

I. Amin al-Rihani: "The White Way and the Desert"

1. What is the "White Way" of New York and the "White Way" of the Arabian desert? According to al-Rihani, what does the contrast between the two serve to demonstrate?
2. How does Amin al-Rihani conform to or undermine Edward Said's orientalism thesis?
3. As a place and a concept, what does the desert represent to Amin al-Rihani?
4. How does al-Rihani's experience with the desert collide with T.E. Lawrence's?
5. Does al-Rihani apprehend Bedouin culture and society differently than T.E. Lawrence?

II. Amin al-Rihani: "Romantic Deserts of Fact and Fiction"

1. How does al-Rihani's account of the representation of the desert in cinema differ from David Lean's representation of the desert in "Lawrence of Arabia"?
2. How does al-Rihani describe the formation of an "Orientalist" representation of the Orient?

III. Freya Stark: *The Southern Gates of Arabia*

1. How does Stark's account of her travels in Southern Arabia fit into the romance vs. realism dialectic described by al-Rihani?
2. What appears to motivate Stark's interest in travel? What is she "looking for" and what does she find in her journey to Hadramawt? In what ways does she resemble and differ from al-Rihani and T.E. Lawrence?
3. Can we classify Stark as an orientalist as *per* Edward Said? What are the arguments for and against such a classification?