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Review Questions

•Literary critic Edward Said wrote that “the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture.” To what extent do the case studies of this chapter support Said’s assertion?

•What are the means by which political leaders inflame, or tamp down, potential ethnic, religious, and cultural confrontations? Please give examples.

•Does this chapter seem to suggest that history repeats itself, or that historical change is often surprising because we never know what is coming next?

•To what extent does change in identity seem a natural phenomenon, in part because each new generation will have its own new way of looking at the past?

•What changes in political, economic, social, or cultural identities in the United States and the world currently seem to be most directly affecting your life?