

# Edward Said



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Few public intellectuals have had such a big impact outside the academy as Edward Said, whose work has been the subject of much debate and discussion over the last two decades. From critiques of ideology mixed with philosophical reflections, to intellectual histories, literary criticism, and radical sociopolitical analysis he has single-handedly sustained a permanent insurrection against the status quo.

This, the first full-length intellectual biography of the groundbreaking author of *Orientalism*, reveals some startling observations. Abdirahman Hussein argues that underneath Said's carefully constructed eclecticism there is a global method in his work. His key text is not *Orientalism* but *Beginnings*, and the Palestinian experience informs all his texts, not simply those that deal explicitly with the catastrophe of 1948. Palestinian life has been scattered, discontinuous, and affected by what he calls the 'synchronized rhythms of disturbed time.' Edward Said's oeuvre mirrors this state but simultaneously transcends it in a permanent search for a new synthesis. Hussein argues that this informs Said's approach not only to Conrad, Swift, and Eliot, but also to Lukács, Williams, Gramsci, and Adorno.

Hussein's biography itself is bound to become the object of criticism and

counter-criticism, a vital book that spotlights the collected writings of one of our most gifted cultural theorists.

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