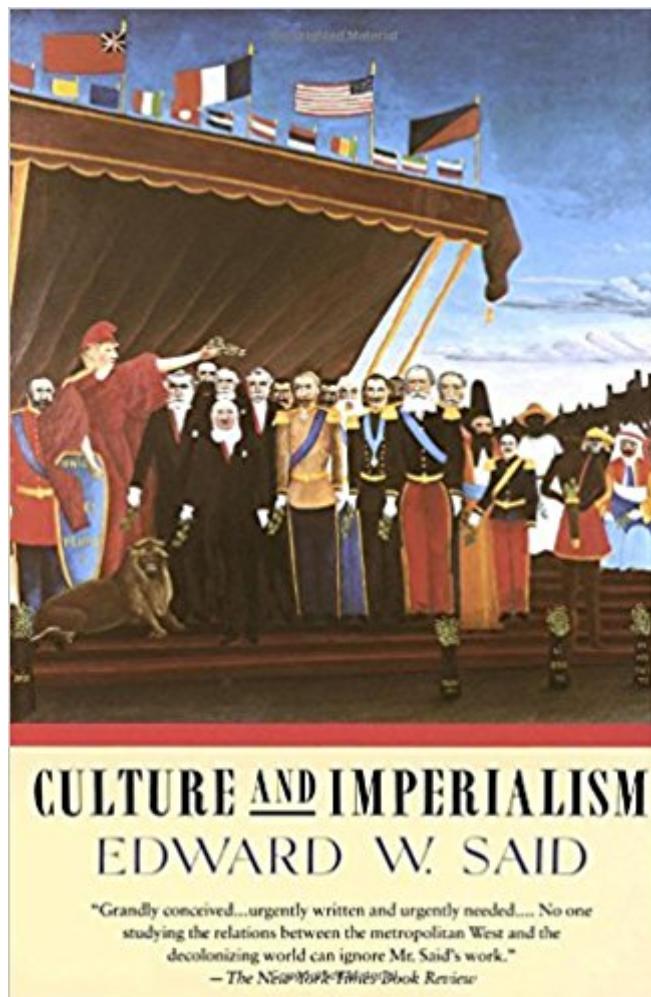


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# Culture And Imperialism



## CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM

EDWARD W. SAID

"Grandly conceived...urgently written and urgently needed.... No one studying the relations between the metropolitan West and the decolonizing world can ignore Mr. Said's work."  
— *The New York Times Book Review*



## Synopsis

A landmark work from the author of *Orientalism* that explores the long-overlooked connections between the Western imperial endeavor and the culture that both reflected and reinforced it. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as the Western powers built empires that stretched from Australia to the West Indies, Western artists created masterpieces ranging from *Mansfield Park* to *Heart of Darkness* and *Aida*. Yet most cultural critics continue to see these phenomena as separate. Edward Said looks at these works alongside those of such writers as W. B. Yeats, Chinua Achebe, and Salman Rushdie to show how subject peoples produced their own vigorous cultures of opposition and resistance. Vast in scope and stunning in its erudition, *Culture and Imperialism* reopens the dialogue between literature and the life of its time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Edward Said makes one of the strongest cases ever for the aphorism, "the pen is mightier than the sword." This is a brilliant work of literary criticism that essentially becomes political science. *Culture and Imperialism* demonstrates that Western imperialism's most effective tools for dominating other cultures have been literary in nature as much as political and economic. He traces the themes of 19th- and 20th-century Western fiction and contemporary mass media as weapons of conquest and also brilliantly analyzes the rise of oppositional indigenous voices in the literatures of the "colonies." Said would argue that it's no mere coincidence that it was a Victorian Englishman, Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton, who coined the phrase "the pen is mightier . . ." Very highly recommended for

anyone who wants to understand how cultures are dominated by words, as well as how cultures can be liberated by resuscitating old voices or creating new voices for new times.

The author of Orientalism examines the interrelationship of Occidental literature and imperialism from the 17th century to the Gulf war. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I really like Edward Said's work, especially 'Orientalism', and he has a great grasp of colonization and imperialism, and how they affect the culture of both, and the power relationships.

In Said style. Very nice

this is a great book especially for an understanding of caribbean culture and attitudes and the effect slavery and colonisation has had on the region.

A landmark work. Had to have a paperback copy for our home library.

Good

An extremely interesting read!

it gives good insight that imperialism still exists in full force but in a different guise; the intelligence of the ordinary is beguiled.

The name of Edward Said will forever be associated mostly with his famous masterpiece, "Orientalism" (Orientalism) in which he studied many historical and literary texts of the 18th and 19th century to criticize the imperialist background of the field of 'Oriental studies', as it was known at the time. Despite its fame however, "Orientalism" is a difficult read for most people, lacking a clear structure and containing long excursions on generally obscure travel books from the 1820s and so on. For the readers intrigued by the idea of "Orientalism" but who seek a more structured, accessible and explicitly political version of the same, "Culture and Imperialism" is the ideal book. It is perhaps for these reasons better than "Orientalism" at achieving its purpose, since Said's writing style is also generally better and more polemically strong in this book, and the literary studies are less obscure and more clearly linked to the topic. Though much of it still consists of 'lit crit', there is in this book a

direct analysis of the imperialist contents and their historical background of such famous works as "Mansfield Park", Joseph Conrad, the "Aida" of Verdi and the oeuvre of Camus. Said brings all his erudition and subtlety of judgement to bear on these and similar products of culture, and the result is an engrossing, stimulating and effective polemic, while generally lacking in an actual outright polemical tone. Also of interest is that a significant part of the book is concerned with the counter-imperialist products of culture, from the poetry of Yeats to the evocative works of Fanon and Achebe. As some have remarked already, what it does not do is establish Said's somewhat exaggerated implication that imperialism is the one Grand Theme of 19th Century literature in Europe, let alone the 20th; but imperialism certainly is a major one, and Said has done great work in excavating that particular aspect. In a time when the 'new conservatism' has made it en vogue to unreflectively declare the West 'superior' again to the Orient (despite the West having historically been vastly more murderous and destructive) and in an atmosphere where the ideas of the White Man's Burden are undergoing a revival, the criticisms of an intellectual like Said are sorely missed.

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