

I first heard the name of Edward W. Said in a university seminar two years ago. His name was mentioned by one of my American teachers and not many of us knew who Edward Said was. After trying to find out who he was I was amazed that I had never heard about one of the most widely known and controversial intellectuals of the twentieth century. I was very surprised that this influential author within the fields of literary theory, post-colonial and cultural studies is so little known within the Czech academic sphere. One of the most striking facts is that as of September 2007, there were only five entries by Said in the Czech National Library!. Similarly, only three of his brief essays were translated into Czech?

Thus the purpose of this thesis is to grant appropriate attention to Edward W. Said and present an interpretive overview of his work which is necessary before one can begin to place Said in proper perspectives as the individual whom many have claimed as a centrally important twentieth century figure. It will explore Said's contribution to many disciplines ranging from literary theory and criticism to cultural history to postcolonial studies, as well as the literary, cultural, social, and aesthetic roles he has played as an academic intellectual. It will also attempt to interpret the key moments in Said's thinking and explore his change from a literary critic to a cultural theorist, political commentator, aesthete, and public intellectual. It will focus on the literary and cultural aspects of Said's works and it will purposefully leave out Said's engagement in the practical political life.