

Edward said's memoir "out of place" excerpt summary



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In Said's memoir, *Out Of Place* (1999), the author talks about his sense of alienation, of the dual parts of his conflicting western and Eastern identity and name. He has never found out where he really belongs. He is stuck in between those two contradicting worlds, ever since he was a child. Said starts by first talking about the most conflicting part of his identity, his name. “‘ Edward,’ a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic name ‘Said’” (p. 13).

For as long as he could remember, “ I [Said] have never known what language I spoke first, Arabic or English, or which was mine beyond any doubt” (p. 13) We readers can certainly sympathize with Said, but we most certainly cannot empathize with him, seeing as we have never felt the way he has felt.. Said says that he has “ retained this unsettled sense of many identities- mostly in conflict with each other- all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling... ” (p. 14).

Not many of us have had this conflict of identities, or felt despair the way he did. Said has put himself in the situation of forcing himself to choose one thing or the other. He has not considered the possibility of adapting and adjusting to being two things at once. He has created many mountains out of molehills regarding his identity. More likely than not, it was this identity that made him become one of the world's greatest and most influential cultural critics, academic and writer.