

One of France's most high-profile writers and the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957, Albert Camus experienced both public adulation and acrimonious rejection during his career, which was cut short by a fatal car accident in 1960 when he was only 46 years old. Born in 1913 to a working-class family in colonial Algeria, Camus was, from an early age, confronted with contradictions, not only within his culturally limited home life, which contrasted with his bourgeois education and peer group at the lycée, but in the disparities of a life lived in colonial North Africa and later in France during a time of worldwide political and social upheaval.

'I do not guide anyone', Camus pleaded in his final interview, reinforcing the paradox of a leading figure in fiction, journalism and political activity who privately wrestled with the challenge of pursuing his craft as a writer in an age of philosophical and ethical conflict. *Albert Camus* unravels the life of a complex personality, providing, above all, a nuanced exploration of Camus' relationship with his native Algeria – a connection which would be tested in the 1950s as France's conflict with the anticolonial movement there became increasingly violent and untenable.

From his best-selling novels *The Outsider* and *The Plague*, to his complicated political engagement in a post-war world of intensifying ideological conflict, this critical biography offers a fresh look at the life and work of one of the most iconic writers of the twentieth century.

**Edward J. Hughes is Professor of French at Queen Mary University of London.**

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