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Revisiting Edward Said's contributions toward decolonising higher education

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Introduction

Our editorial's first section focuses on examining Edward Said's transformative contributions to postcolonial thought and its enduring relevance to higher education. Said's penetrating critique of Western academic institutions' role in perpetuating colonial ideologies provides a crucial framework for understanding current power dynamics in global higher education. His insights into the relationship between knowledge production and institutional authority remain remarkably pertinent as we navigate questions of epistemological justice and educational equity.

Our Editorial's second section contextualises the ongoing discourse surrounding artificial intelligence in higher education in our journal by identifying themes in the numerous articles that we have published over the past two years. Finally, we present a comprehensive overview of this issue's remaining diverse contributions.

Revisiting Edward Said

Describing key contributions of a luminary like Edward Said (1935-2003) is no ordinary task, nor is it easily accomplished. Despite, and because of, our admiration for the legendary scholar, we shall make a concerted attempt. Said is a key figure in postcolonial studies and a pioneer of postcolonial theory, an unwavering advocate for Palestine, a distinguished literary and music critic, a reflective, erudite proponent of literature's profound influence on politics, personal and public life and above all, a compassionate human being. Said navigated an extraordinary range of influential roles, from being an orchestra impresario in Weimar to sharing stories on national television – and even, at times, appearing in films as himself (Brennan, 2021). His books have been translated into 36 languages (Barenboim & Said, 2002).

Edward Said's greatest masterpiece is reputedly *Orientalism*. The Palestinian-American public intellectual and scholarly activist's magnum opus examines and exposes an ideology purported by supposed Western experts he labels as 'Orientalists'. With an intimidating brilliance, wit, and charm, Said weaves together a ground-breaking response to Western intellectual thought against the backdrop of its techno-scientific dominance, religious strife and regional conflicts in the resource-rich Middle East.

An influential literary theorist and postcolonial intellectual, Said's life is marked by a complex interplay of personal struggles, intellectual growth, conflicts, and steadfast political activism for the Palestinian cause. His critical devotion to literature and profound engagement with music reveal the multidimensional passions that shaped his thinking. We will be discussing different aspects of this in the following sections.

Identity, exile, and marginalisation

Said's early life helped shape his worldview. Born in Jerusalem in 1935, Said's early life was disrupted by displacement, as his family had to relocate to Cairo after the British Empire established the state of Israel in 1948. Said's background as a Palestinian Christian was instrumental in his scholarly activism against the Israeli occupation of Palestine (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). Being a Palestinian Christian placed him on the margins of a myriad of cultural contexts. His experiences of exile, colonialism, and cultural marginalisation informed his later intellectual work, focusing on issues of identity, representation, cultural imperialism, education, colonialism, and power.

Said's cosmopolitan education, shaped by his formative years at elite institutions like Victoria College in Cairo and later at Princeton and Harvard, was foundational to his intellectual development (Brennan, 2021). His exposure

to Western and Eastern intellectual traditions fostered the critical lens that facilitated his engagement with Western cultural hegemony. In addition, Said's early childhood experiences with displacement made him attuned to the power dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised.

Said's early life (see Figure 1) was tainted by a sense of alienation and displacement (Brennan, 2021). His challenging formative years in Anglophone institutions away from his native land led to his acute sense of not fully belonging to any one culture or place, a sentiment that deeply influenced his later work on exile, nationalism, and identity (Brennan, 2021). Victoria College's acting headmaster doubted Said's potential, seeing "no notable achievement" and only "average promise" (cited in Brennan, 2021, p. 35). Yet, despite his early teachers' perceptions of him as undisciplined and inclined toward mischief, Said was immersed in elite education, reading canonical European texts that would later shape his intellectual life (Leonardo, 2020). This exposure, though steeped in British imperial ideals and restrictive language policies, cultivated in him a lifelong engagement with the 'great books' he would eventually critique (Sellars, 2024).



Figure 1. Said with his sister Rosemarie (1940). Public Domain.

Said's father, Wadie Ibrahim, was a flourishing businessman who had spent time in the United States and eventually acquired U.S. citizenship. Anticipating the conflict and upheaval that would transpire following the United Nations partition plan for Palestine and the creation of the state of Israel, Wadie relocated the family from Jerusalem to Cairo. In 1951, Said enrolled at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts. He later attended Princeton University, earning a B.A. in 1957, followed by an M.A. (1960) and a Ph.D. (1964) from Harvard University on the life and works of Joseph Conrad. Said began his academic career at Columbia University in 1963 as a lecturer in English, and by 1967, he had been promoted to assistant professor of English and comparative literature (Said, 1999). His first book, Joseph Conrad and the fiction of autobiography (1966), expanded on his doctoral thesis, analysing Conrad's short stories and letters to uncover and discuss the tension in the author's narrative style, focusing on the cultural challenges of starting a literary or scholarly work.

Said was promoted to full professor in 1969 and was awarded the first of several endowed chairs in 1977. This was followed in 1978 with the publication of Orientalism, his best-known work and one of the most influential scholarly books of the 20th century (Brennan, 2021). Although other post-colonial writers such as Franz Fanon (1952, 1961), Albert Memmi (2021) or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2023) have significantly contributed to interrogating colonisation's contentious and detrimental effects, Said was arguably the most well-known and distinguished among them. Said's (1978) Orientalism revolutionised scholarship by critiquing Western perceptions of the 'Orient', particularly the Arab Islamic world. Said's interest lay in how the West interrogated and apprehended the Orient and examined the ways the Orient was dominated. He argued that Western scholars had constructed a biased and stereotypical image of the East, which not only distorted the reality of the Islamic world but also served to justify colonial dominance as a noble effort to save the East from the void of regression and destruction.

Exile is a persistent theme in Said's writings, both literally and metaphorically. He viewed exile not simply as a physical displacement but as a state of mind that provided a unique vantage point from which to critique dominant ideologies (Brennan, 2021). In his memoir *Out of place* (1999), Said recounts his feelings of marginalisation and fragmentation, which shaped his intellectual perspective. This sense of being between worlds, never fully at home in either the Arab or Western contexts, became a defining feature of Said's intellectual and scholarly perspective. Said's exile and displacement experience shaped his perceptions of pushing the boundaries of nationalism and challenging notions of identity while advocating for a cosmopolitan worldview transcending nationalistic and political boundaries.

Exile is a deeply personal theme for Said that evokes strong emotions. Said sees himself as a Palestinian exile. In his memoir, Said (1999) described his experiences of being forcefully displaced and how this affected his identity as a Palestinian. He described his experience as a cumulative tragedy where each time he tried to reconstruct a world he had lost, he found that he was losing this world further. Said described the world as one which has 'changed'

irrecoverably' in his life (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). He constantly questioned his sense of belonging to a particular nation or community and challenged established norms in these societies. This sense of displacement and the absence of belonging to a particular group allowed him to maintain a safe distance from dominant and repressive ideologies, thus facilitating the development of his resistance manifested in Orientalism. He also lamented the psychological toll of his exile, the loneliness that plagued him, and his constant questioning of his identity (Said, 1999). His reflections on exile go beyond the personal and extend to the broader Palestinian struggle for self-determination, freedom, and international recognition, positioning exile as both a lived experience and a metaphor for the broader condition of dispossession Palestinians face. Once, on a visit back to his native Palestine, when grilled by Israeli immigration officials about when he left Palestine, he firmly responded by saying that he left Palestine in 1947 and accented the word 'Palestine' (Brennan, 2021) as a show of defiance.

Said felt denied of his identity as an Arabic-speaking Palestinian Christian and instead spent most of his life in the West speaking English. His first name "Edward" was inspired by the Prince of Wales. Said "hated" his first name and "would have preferred an Arabic name" (Brennan, 2021, p. 4). Said's displaced experience extends into his broader critique of nationalism. His experience informs his advocacy for cosmopolitanism and commitment to dialogues and addressing political divides (Bessen & Bessen, 2017). He warns against the risks of adopting rigid national identities, which can advance exclusionary politics and intolerance (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000).

Although Said specialised in literary criticism, he became an influential voice for Arab causes, especially Palestinian rights. His critiques of U.S. foreign policies in relation to Israel and its foreign policies concerning its occupation generated intense public debate. These led to contentious exchanges with their advocates and political hawks (Said, 1994; Sazzad, 2017). His advocacy for the Palestinian cause was perilous. Said's office was firebombed, and he and his family received death threats and "used condoms in swastika-bedecked letters of extraordinary violence", calling him, amongst other things, a "commie sympathizer" and a "dirty, sneaky, Arab" (Brennan, 2021, p. 217; Sellars, 2024).

Palestine and nationalism

In 1977, Said was elected to the Palestine National Council, which functioned as the legislative body of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). He became increasingly disillusioned with the Oslo Accords in the 1990s and criticised the peace process as flawed and biased towards the interests of Israel (Feldman, 2023). He argued that the efforts towards a peaceful resolution were nothing more than a veil to disguise the true intention of occupying the entire Palestinian territories (Schabowska & Bartoszewicz, 2022).

Said's vocal and acerbic criticism of the formation of the state of Israel at the expense of the Palestinians and his support for Palestinian self-determination created a distinct polemic between his supporters and his detractors (Sazzad, 2017; Said, 1995). These polemics gained him admiration, controversy and infamy for going against the grain of mainstream thought. Naturally, his political stance affected and strained his relationships with colleagues, students, and the wider academic community, especially in the West.

It was evident that Said saw himself not only as a voice for the Palestinian people but as a staunch opponent of all forms of imperialism and oppression. From his works, it is clear that his advocacy went beyond the Palestinian cause to encompass broader concerns about the dispossession and disenfranchisement of colonised peoples globally. Despite being confronted with backlash and death threats, Said remained steadfast in his commitment to the Palestinian cause, as illustrated by his involvement in the Palestinian National Council and his persistent critiques of both Israeli policy and Palestinian leadership (Sa'di, 2023).

Throughout his life, Said was a vocal critic of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and a passionate advocate for Palestinian self-determination. His political writings, including *The question of Palestine* (1979) and *Peace and its discontents* (1995), provide a nuanced analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, informed by his own experiences of exile and displacement and also his intimate knowledge of both Western and Middle Eastern politics.

In the aforementioned books, Said vehemently criticises both Israeli policies and the complicity of Western powers in perpetuating the occupation. He adopts an equally accusatory tone with the Palestinian leadership, accusing them of corruption and authoritarianism hindering the Palestinian cause. In the same vein, Said argues critically against American imperialism during the Gulf War and also the 'War on Terror', boldly claiming that these campaigns were merely extensions of their imperialistic ambitions (Biswas, 2006).

Said's gifted ability to integrate rigorous academic analysis, supported with impassioned political commentary, offers a model for scholars and a keen audience seeking to engage with critical events in the world beyond the ivory tower. Said's engagement with the Palestinian struggle goes beyond mere advocacy. It is deeply rooted in his broader critique of imperialism and his commitment to justice, human rights and political activism, making him one of the most influential public intellectuals of his time (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). At the heart of Said's intellectual contribution is his ground-breaking *Orientalism* (1978), a work that altered the advocacy of Palestinian independence and postcolonial scholarship (Gani, 2022).

Orientalism and postcolonial critique

When the Middle East or Arabs are mentioned, some may picture parched landscapes of endless golden sands, air warped by searing desert heat, and the melancholic strains of an oud—its haunting, crude melody a parody of the region's supposed mysticism. These tropes, embedded in our collective consciousness, shape the images we conjure of the Middle East. They outline what Said described as

'Orientalism'.

Said's (1978) seminal book (see Figure 2) explores the subtle ways Western authors, whom he labels as 'Orientalists', have come to understand and describe the Middle East (Wilcox, 2018). It confronts the very bedrock of white supremacy and dismantles the assumptions of cultural superiority and the West's patronising view of the 'other' (Sellars, 2024). *Orientalism* exposes a tightly woven system of images that rendered European dominance over other cultures seemingly natural, facilitating colonial conquest. Said noted that, by 1914, Europe had claimed roughly 85 per cent of the earth's surface as colonies – a fact that has largely faded from common memory (Said, 1993).

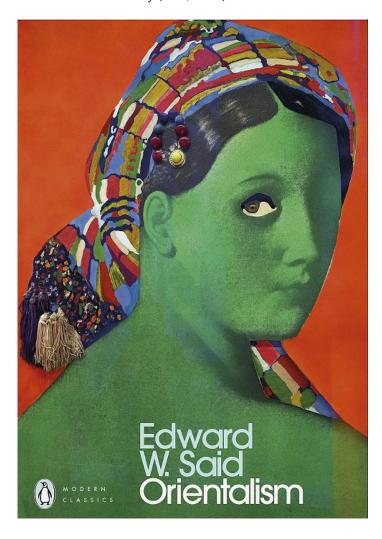


Figure 2. Book cover of Orientalism.

For all its success, Orientalism was challenged by the lack of interest from major publishers (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). Many of the publishing houses did not find the ideas forming Orientalism 'groundbreaking' (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000, p. 63) and were apprehensive at the idea that the essence and political views in the book did not resonate well with mainstream views of Palestinians, Arabs, and the Middle East as an entirety. However, to Said's surprise, his book transformed the study of literature and culture and challenged the illusory perception that the dominant Western perspective was correct and accurate.

Said's presence also looms large over the current cultural landscape. The influence of this literary scholar is so significant that an incredible number of commentaries about art, literature, cinema, music, culture, education, and history now ritually genuflect to his ideas and subscribe to his 'postcolonial' critique with religious fervour.

Said's Orientalism is a radical critique of Western representations of the Middle East. Such an endeavour can be found in earlier works such as Antonio Gramsci's examination of cultural hegemony (Forgas (Ed.), 1999; Adamson, 2014) and Michel Foucault's (1980) discourse on knowledge and power (Brookfield et al., 2022). Said drew from the concepts discussed in these works and cemented his legacy through the publication of *Orientalism*. Its publication positioned itself within the broad political landscape of anti-colonial movements, rising nationalistic sentiments, and the increasing prominence of postcolonial theory (Labelle, 2022).

Said's central argument in *Orientalism* is that the depiction of the East by Western empires was far from merely a matter of scholarly interest but instead served as an imperial instrument designed to dominate and subjugate the subalterns in the East with profound implications for cultural, literary, and postcolonial studies. The enduring relevance of Orientalism reshaped the way scholars understand, analyse, and evaluate the politics of representation, displacement, and colonisation (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000). Our admiration for Edward Said's *Orientalism* stems from how profoundly it provoked and challenged the field of Oriental and Middle Eastern studies, compelling Western intellectuals to confront their complicity in sustaining colonial ideologies (Brennan, 2021).

A distinct feature of Said's work is his concept of contrapuntal reading – a method that interprets texts within the imperial contexts in which they were created. Said's method alludes to musical counterpoint, where independent melodies align without merging into a single harmony, thus suggesting coexistence rather than dominance (Brennan, 2021; Leonardo, 2020). This approach implicitly underpins Said's (1978) approach in Orientalism of how Western powers have historically constructed and controlled the 'Orient'. The methodology of contrapuntal reading was first introduced in Culture and imperialism (1993). Said sees this as a methodological approach to further his critique of Orientalism, focusing on cultural, especially literary scrutiny. This approach involves reading texts through a critical analytical lens and an acute awareness of dominant narratives, particularly from the West, and looking out for suppressed or dismissive perspectives, likely of that of the 'Orient'.

Furthermore, Said's advocacy for interdisciplinary approaches in academia influences educational theory by encouraging the dissolution of artificial barriers between disciplines. This interdisciplinary ethos enables a more comprehensive understanding of complex cultural and social phenomena, mirroring the multifaceted critique of Orientalism that drew from literary theory, history, and anthropology. Said's assertion in *Orientalism* is that the West's depiction of the East was not an innocent or objective exercise but a deeply

motivated political act that justified and sustained imperial control. This theme underscores how orientalist discourses are still pervasive in modern representations of the Middle East, preserving dismissive and degrading stereotypes and sustaining hegemonic ideologies. In Said's critique, we can observe that examining these representations is rooted in the Foucauldian analysis of power, knowledge, and representation (Bayoumi & Rubin, 2000; Foucault, 1980).

Said's work illustrates how knowledge systems are constructed to serve imperial benefits and fulfil their colonial visions. His works reverberate across literature, sociology, anthropology, history, cultural studies, and education. Our own contrapuntal reading is critical to understanding the many layers of Said's work. Said's focus on the ideological underpinnings of Western scholarship and ideologies exposed the reality of knowledge creation and placed Eurocentric academics under scrutiny. One criticism Said was confronted with throughout his life as a professor was his deeply embedded position and presence within elite Western institutions in the United States despite being an advocate of postcolonial resistance. This often led him to have his loyalties and principles questioned by both Western academics and his Palestinian community, and he also experienced a confounding dilemma with his own identity.

Cultural imperialism and postcolonial thought

Beyond Orientalism, Said majorly contributed to literary and cultural criticism. Works such as *The world, the text, and the critic* (1983) and *Culture and imperialism* (1993) expanded on the ideas initially laid out in Orientalism, examining how cultural production in both colonial and postcolonial epochs was shaped and determined by political, military, and economic power.

One major theme Said discusses in *Culture and imperialism* is the consequences of the interaction between culture and forces of imperialism. Said (1993) argues how Western cultural artefacts – novels, literature, classical music, operas, and academic discussions – orientate, support, and justify imperial conquest and colonial ambitions. He underscores how canonical works by renowned authors like Jane Austen and Joseph Conrad reflect and justify imperial ideologies, subtly reinforcing the West's moral and political superiority over colonised communities (Said, 1993). By embedding imperial ambitions and colonial values within the fabric of European culture and society, Said contends that imperialism became normalised and legitimised.

The central theme in the book draws attention to the complicity of culture in maintaining imperialist structures. Said clearly suggests in this book that culture is not separate from policies but deeply intertwined and, in fact, could be responsible for driving ideologies and controlling sentiments (Said, 1993). Through close examination of texts, Said demonstrates how literature and art shape perceptions of otherness, often portraying colonised peoples as passive, exotic, or uncivilised. These representations, Said argues, are instrumental in justifying imperial control.

European culture fuelled imperialism, sustaining a Eurocentric worldview that classified and dominated non-European societies, thus undergirding political and economic expansion (Said, 1993). The drive for imperial conquest was a form of 'geographical violence' that erased local identities, forcing colonised people to reclaim their sense of place (Said, 1993). Said (1993) notes that many humanists fail to link Western culture's high achievements with its oppressive practices, such as slavery and colonialism.

Importantly, Said critiques falsely unifying labels such as 'America', 'the West', or 'Islam' that homogenise diverse groups and enable oppressive mobilisation. He argues that such simplifications should be resisted for their harmful impact (Said, 2001). Said warns against nativism, seeing it as a divisive response to imperialism that often reproduces the very stereotypes and divisions it opposes. True resistance, Said (1993) contends, requires moving beyond essentialised identities like 'Islam' or 'the West'. Instead, Said advocates a cosmopolitan vision, where one's local identity is just one layer in a broader, open engagement with the world (Said, 1993). He argues that in today's interconnected world, no one is solely defined by a single label - 'Indian', 'Muslim', or 'American'. These categories are starting points, not endpoints, as imperialism has left a legacy of blended identities that challenge pure, exclusive labels (Said, 1993). Ultimately, Said (1993) urges intellectuals to adopt a contrapuntal approach that resists hierarchical thinking and rejects both cultural chauvinism and isolationism, fostering a more concrete and empathetic understanding of the world's diversity.

Said's contrapuntal perspective on music

Music held a central place in Said's intellectual and personal life. He wrote numerous musical essays and was a skilled pianist (Guzelimian, 2002). While deeply knowledgeable, he remained a self-described 'amateur', resistant to specialisation and critical of musicology's detachment from broader social and political contexts (Barenboim, 2009; Capitain, 2024). Influenced by his mother's musicality, Said had once considered a concert pianist career but struggled with performance anxiety (Said, 1991; Brennan, 2021).

Said appreciated Nietzsche's view of music as both profoundly accessible yet inherently mysterious and viewed it as the "most silent and esoteric" of the arts, aiming in *Musical elaborations* to bridge its separation from rational discourse and social engagement (Said, 1991; Brennan, 2021; Barenboim & Said, 2002). Drawing on Adorno's ideas, he saw music as both resisting and reflecting the inhumanity of the society that produces it, lamenting its commodification under capitalism (Said, 2004).

Famed conductor and concert pianist Daniel Barenboim, who admired Said's encyclopaedic knowledge of music history, keys, tempos, and repertoire, co-founded the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin with him, bringing together Arab, Israeli, and German musicians in a setting that emphasised cultural understanding and unity. The academy, housed in Frank Gehry's 'cosmic egg' concert hall, continues under the guidance of Said's wife, Mariam (Barenboim & Said,



Figure 3. A photo from the Facebook page of the Barenboim Said-Akademie (https://www.facebook.com/BarenboimSaidAkademie/).

2002; Sellars, 2024). The collaboration between the Israeli Barenboim and the Palestinian Said was a remarkable testament to their shared belief in the transformative power of music and underscored their commitment to fostering dialogue and mutual understanding through art, creating a space where young musicians from opposing backgrounds can connect and grow together.

Decolonising education

In addition to cultural artefacts such as literature and music. another form of imperial control is through education. Although Said never produced any specific work in education, it is undeniable that many of his works are intricately intertwined with education and colonialism. Although Said never formulated an educational theory, his perspectives on postcolonial and critical theories significantly shaped educational discourse and practice. The concepts discussed in Said's (1978) Orientalism function as a helpful lens to examine and facilitate reforms to address stereotypes and imbalances in global educational policies and practices. In fact, Orientalism's ideas are relevant in our global multicultural educational contexts and have far-reaching implications. Said (1978) argued that Western scholarship systematically misrepresented and undermined knowledge and perspectives from the East, including the Middle East. He further argued that this misrepresentation created a distorted difference between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' (Said, 1978).

In educational contexts, if examined carefully, we can observe distinct disparities in many instances of the representation of dominant Eurocentric cultures as compared to non-western ones. There exist many implicit biases in the modern curriculum that laud the achievements of the imperial powers while dismissing the knowledge centres and rich history of the 'Orient' as inferior and backward (Guilherme & Picoli, 2021). Leonardo (2020) suggests that education institutions in the U.S., for example, engage in a form of 'educational Orientalism' by highlighting privileged Western knowledge systems and perspectives and reinforcing biases about the East in their curriculum and also in their pedagogical

approaches. He contends that these approaches only serve to maintain hegemonic powers within academic institutions and within the societies they operate (Leonardo, 2020). For example, the case studies used as a pedagogical approach may reflect only colonial perspectives and class discussions, which orientate towards diminishing the knowledge centres and rich history of the East.

Scholars have highlighted regimes of knowledge created by colonial rule (Gani & Marshall, 2022). Alongside Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayathri Spivak are fellow pioneers of postcolonial studies (Sawant, 2011). Bhaba (2012) argues that colonial anxiety pushes the coloniser to want to reinforce their identity constantly and emphasise the differences and superiority between the coloniser and the colonised. Bhaba (2012) describes the anxious and unstable nature of the colonial relationship as ironic. The reason is an unsettling encounter for the colonisers, as they are sharply aware that despite being in power, they are still dependent on the colonised 'natives'. The colonised becomes a mirror image of the coloniser or what Bhaba terms a 'mimicry' (Spivak, 2014). Bhaba (2012) suggests that because of this anxiety, the coloniser seeks to emphasise the difference between the colonised and the coloniser, thus creating stereotypes that are, in fact, contradictions. For example, natives are described as cunning in one place but intellectually inferior in another or as lazy and unintelligent yet are found to be efficient and skilled workers.

In Out of place, Said (1999) (see Figure 4) provided insights into how education shaped his sense of identity and belonging. As someone displaced and later educated in Western institutions, he was informed and shaped by his experiences in elite institutions in the West. His perspective suggests that we should be discerning when examining education materials and reflecting on learning experiences in the classroom. Throughout his works, Said argues that the relationship between knowledge and power is intricate and dynamic. This relationship is vital to the relevance of key concepts in Orientalism to global education. Said underlined how scholarship steeped in imperial values reinforced imperial power dynamics (Said, 2002). Leonardo (2020) explained this by narrating how Napoleon's occupation of Egypt was a "turning point toward a modern form of imperialism whereby an aggressor's canon is supplemented by their canons" (p. 12). In other words, Napoleon used not only weapons to conquer the Egyptians but also unique weaponry manifested through canons of knowledge through botanists, educators, historians, philosophers, and philologists (Said, 1978; Leonardo, 2020).

Said's ideas here suggest that educators should:

- 1) assist students in navigating through different and complex cultural identities;
- demonstrate sensitivity towards students from diverse backgrounds;
- 3) plan and create inclusive educational environments that embrace diversity;
- 4) use critical pedagogy to examine stereotypes and

bias in texts, during classroom discussion, and in curriculum material;

- 5) encourage material fostering multi-disciplinary knowledge and global awareness;
- motivate themselves and students to examine power dynamics in matters beyond their academic discipline; and
- 7) foster a sense of social responsibility, gratitude, and civic responsibility through education regardless of the academic discipline.

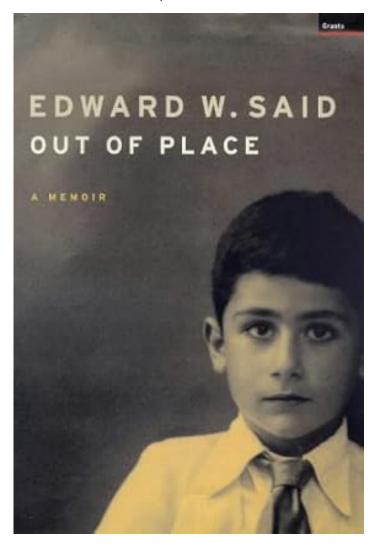


Figure 4. Book cover of 'Out of Place'.

Said's discourses in *Orientalism* inform us to examine, scrutinise, and evaluate educational policies carefully. Different educational policies continue to rely on Orientalist ideas, and their ill effects are pronounced in marginalised communities (Moosavi, 2020). For example, policies still organise and label students from underprivileged communities as 'at-risk' and 'underperforming' without them getting fair access to resources and educational opportunities (Moosavi, 2021). In some policies, educational interventions and support are framed as providing equity and education to an uncivilised population, mirroring imperial discourses and ambitions in the past (Johnstone & Lee, 2020). The voices and experiences of marginalised communities are often excluded in policy development

and considered secondary (Chowdhury, 2023). Said's postcolonial discourses provide us with a useful critical lens to unmask power dynamics within education policy and practice and counter the highfalutin values of institutions determined to uphold imperial values and sustain colonial hierarchies.

In this spirit, Said tirelessly advocated for establishing American studies programmes at universities across the Middle East while simultaneously pressing for the expansion of Arab studies in the United States (Brennan, 2021). Despite his many passions and responsibilities, Said took teaching very seriously. Although he admitted to the "uncomfortable, stomach-churning, palm-sweating anxiety" he experienced before – and even during – class (cited in Brennan, 2021, p. 242), students overwhelmingly felt that he was "the best teacher they had ever seen" (Brennan, 2021, p. 244).

Deeply rooted in Western traditions, Said regarded himself as conservative in his respect for the classical canon (Leonardo, 2020). He critiqued postmodernism's elevation of popular culture over high culture, aligning himself with the Frankfurt School's critique of the culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1997; Leonardo, 2020). For Said, an uncritical celebration of popular culture amounted to a narrow intellectual stance; instead, he held an enduring, discerning appreciation for high art, classical music, and literature, free from elitist fetishism (Said, 1993).

In *Humanism and democratic criticism*, Said (2004) builds on his *Orientalism* arguments and laments how academia now suffers from restricted intellectual perspectives and disconnection from reality that separates academics from understanding and addressing broader social and cultural issues. This results in academic insularity and detachment from real-world challenges. Said firmly believed that intellectuals should be committed to universal principles of justice, equality, and human dignity and advocated for engagement with political and social realities to transform communities.

Said (2004) advocates for a form of humanism that is secular, sceptical, and inclusive. He emphasises the need for a form of humanism that is not rooted in Eurocentrism and colonial ideas but one that is inclusive of different cultures and perspectives. Said (2004) argues that this is not an abstract idea but one that must inform educational policies and practices to challenge oppression and dominant Eurocentric ideas by encouraging dialogues that transcend social and political boundaries. Said's vision can be realised through decolonising the curriculum, applying critical pedagogies in class, and encouraging students to reflect beyond social and cultural boundaries when engaging with what they are learning. Education and humanism are likely the antidote to the schismatic Oriental-Euro divide in an increasingly interconnected world. Said's suggestion of cosmopolitanism and the development of a global citizen might allow the next generation to transcend Eurocentric labels and Orientalist divides, the very divides that Said has critiqued and challenged his entire life. We owe a debt of gratitude to Edward Said now that colonialism is critically examined in cultural and social discourse, politics, economics, and culture. The very idea that Western secular modernity represents

civilisation is now sharply challenged, and academics such as Ammiel Alcalay (1993), Judith Butler (2011), and Moira Ferguson (2014) have continued this examination and share the approach of Said's *Culture & imperialism*. As academics, we must continue this rich tradition.

Articles on generative AI in this and previous issues

The remainder of our Editorial discusses generative Alspecific contributions and others. In our fast-paced times and hectic academic lives, we sometimes forget to look back and review what has happened. Between January 2023 and June 2024, over three regular issues, we published 44 manuscripts: three editorials, two commentaries, 24 research articles, two interviews, three opinion pieces, six EdTech articles, one brief article and three book reviews (Rudolph, 2023, 2024a, 2024b). Disregarding the book reviews and a much earlier article by Samson Tan (2020), an analysis of the 41 manuscripts arrives at 18 themes (see Table 1).

Table 1. JALT Generative AI themes between January 2023 and June 2024.

Number	Theme	References	Occurrences
1	Future of Higher Education (HE)	Ifelebuegu, 2024; Luckin et al., 2024; Popenici, 2023; Popenici et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023a; Rudolph et al., 2023c; Rudolph et al., 2024	7
2	Benefits and Challenges of Al	Gamage et al., 2023; Ifelebuegu et al., 2023; Kouam & Muchowe, 2024; Ogunleye et al., 2024; Rasul et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023a; Van Wyk, 2024	7
3	Ethics	Huang et al., 2023; Luckin et al., 2024; Popenici, 2023; Xames & Shefa, 2023	4
4	Academic Integrity	Mohammedkarimi, 2023; Sevnarayan & Potter, 2024; Sullivan et al., 2023; Van Wyk, 2024	4
5	Al Plagiarism Detection	Chaka, 2023; Chaka, 2024a; Chaka, 2024b; Hassoulas et al., 2023	4
6	Literature Reviews	Ismail et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2024; Stracke et al., 2023; Tilli et al., 2023	4
7	Graduate Employability	Popenici et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023c; Rudolph et al., 2023d; Waring, 2024	4
8	Scholarly Research and Publishing Ethics	Perkins & Roe, 2024; Sobaih, 2024; Xames & Shefa, 2023	3
9	Assessment	lfelebuegu, 2023; Khademi, 2023; Ogunleye et al., 2024	3
10	Technology Awareness	Ahmad et al., 2024; Joseph et al., 2024	2
11	Developing Countries	Adarkwah et al., 2023; Joseph et al., 2024; Kouam & Muchowe, 2024	3
12	Big Tech Critique	Popenici et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023a; Rudolph et al., 2023b	3
13	Al Literacy	Rasul et al., 2023; Waring, 2024	2
14	Perceptions of AI (Students and Academics)	Firat, 2023; Limna et al., 2023	2
15	Student Voice	Sevnarayan & Potter, 2024; Sullivan et al., 2023	2
16	Chinese Al	Huang et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023b	2
17	Chatbot Testing	Rudolph et al., 2023b; Santandreu Calonge et al., 2023	2
18	Open Educational Practices	Mills et al., 2023	1

Due to limitations of space, we only focus on the top seven themes but cross-reference other themes in the following high-level summary. First, the *future of higher education* is poised for significant transformation as it confronts the generative artificial intelligence (GAI) hype and students' rapidly increasing use (Ifelebuegu, 2024; Rudolph et al.,

2023a). The question of whether to integrate GAI into higher education and how it will reshape teaching, learning, and assessment raises fundamental queries about the role of education in an increasingly automated world (Rudolph et al., 2023c). As AI tools like ChatGPT continue to evolve, their impact on graduate employability, the traditional roles of educators, and the broader purpose of higher education will become increasingly pronounced (Popenici et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023c, 2023d; Waring, 2024). While GAI offers the potential to enhance educational outcomes, it also necessitates rethinking curricula to ensure that students are equipped with the critical thinking and ethical decisionmaking skills necessary for a technology-driven job market. As educators and institutions adapt to these changes, the future of HE will likely be defined by how effectively it balances the benefits of AI with the preservation of humancentred education (Luckin et al., 2024; Popenici, 2023; Popenici et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023c, 2024b).

Secondly, AI in higher education presents a double-edged sword, offering significant benefits and notable challenges (Rudolph et al., 2024a). On the one hand, AI has the potential to revolutionise educational practices by enhancing learning experiences, personalising education, and streamlining administrative tasks, thereby increasing overall efficiency within institutions (Gamage et al., 2023; Ifelebuegu et al., 2023). However, these benefits are tempered by challenges such as the potential for widening the digital divide between and within countries, ethical concerns regarding data privacy, and the risk of over-reliance on technology at the expense of critical human interactions (Adarkwah et al., 2023; Joseph et al., 2024; Kouam & Muchowe, 2024; Rasul et al., 2023; Van Wyk, 2024). Furthermore, the implementation of AI in assessments and other academic processes raises questions about fairness and the integrity of educational outcomes, requiring careful consideration and adaptive strategies (Mills et al., 2023; Ogunleye et al., 2024; Rudolph et al., 2023a, 2023b). Assessment, in particular, needs to be rethought and made more authentic, practical, and intellectually stimulating (Ifelebuegu, 2023; Khademi, 2023; Ogunleye et al., 2024; Rudolph et al., 2023a, 2023b).

Third, the integration of artificial intelligence (Al) into higher education raises critical ethical concerns that must be carefully addressed. Key issues include the potential for GAI Large Language Models (LLMs) to perpetuate biases, the handling of sensitive data, and the broader implications of replacing human judgment with algorithmic decision-making (Huang et al., 2023; Luckin et al., 2024; Popenici, 2023; Xames & Shefa, 2023). These ethical dilemmas underscore the need for a thoughtful and responsible approach to Al adoption to enhance rather than diminish the human elements of higher education. Furthermore, educators and institutions must develop frameworks that promote transparency, fairness, and accountability in the use of Al, safeguarding the integrity of higher education (Luckin et al., 2024; Popenici, 2023).

Fourth, the rise of AI in higher education presents significant challenges to maintaining academic integrity. With AI tools capable of generating human-like text, the potential for misuse in academic settings has grown, raising concerns about plagiarism, cheating, and the authenticity of student

work (Sullivan et al., 2023; Mohammedkarimi, 2023). To address these issues, higher education institutions must promote a culture of academic honesty and ethical behaviour among students (Van Wyk, 2024). In addition, educators need to rethink assessment strategies and incorporate Al literacy into the curriculum to prepare students for ethical engagement with Al technologies (Ifelebuegu, 2023; Khademi, 2023; Ogunleye et al., 2024; Rasul et al., 2023; Sevnarayan & Potter, 2024; Waring, 2024).

The fifth point is directly related to maintaining academic integrity. The increasing sophistication of Al tools has led to growing concerns about Al-facilitated plagiarism in higher education. As students gain access to Al-driven platforms capable of producing high-quality, human-like text, the challenge of detecting such content has become more pressing (Hassoulas et al., 2023). Research indicates that existing plagiarism detection tools are often inadequate in identifying Al-generated material (Chaka, 2023, 2024a, 2024b).

Sixth, literature reviews in the context of Al in higher education are becoming increasingly crucial as the field evolves rapidly. Transparency and methodological rigour in conducting these reviews ensure that they provide a comprehensive and unbiased overview of existing knowledge (Tlili et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2023). Given the rapid advancements in GAI, systematic literature reviews must be regularly updated and standardised to maintain their relevance and accuracy in informing educational practices and policies (Stracke et al., 2023). As the body of literature grows, these reviews will continue to play a pivotal role in synthesising research findings and guiding future studies (Ismail et al., 2024a, 2024b).

Finally, the advent of AI is significantly reshaping the landscape of graduate employability, challenging traditional notions of the skills and attributes needed in the workforce. There is an increasing demand for graduates who possess advanced problem-solving and decision-making abilities, and who are adaptable, creative and critical thinkers (Rudolph et al., 2023c; Waring, 2024). Therefore, educational institutions must adapt their curricula to focus on these competencies, ensuring that graduates are employable and equipped to thrive in an AI-driven job market (Popenici et al., 2023). Moreover, there is a growing discourse around the potential of AI to replace certain job roles, further emphasising the need for graduates to cultivate uniquely human skills that AI cannot replicate (Rudolph et al., 2023d).

Our above approach addressed the challenge of keeping track of the overwhelming volume of articles on Al and higher education published in JALT alone. In the following, we connect the new pieces in this issue to the previously identified themes while uncovering an additional theme along the way.

Our Editorial is succeeded by Damaševičius's "Commentary on Artificial intelligence and graduate employability: What should we teach Generation AI?", which highlights the impact of AI on graduate employability, urging curriculum reforms for Generation AI. Building on Waring's (2024) advocacy for moving away from rote learning to enhance analytical skills, it

proposes integrating Al literacy in higher education to foster ethical decision-making and critical analysis, suggesting empirical studies to refine Al's educational integration.

The first Al-specific research article in our current issue is Broadhead's "Insidious chatter versus critical thinking", which warns that generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools risk perpetuating Eurocentric biases in higher education. By showing how Al can reinforce these biases in syllabus creation, Broadhead calls for caution in adopting Al technologies, particularly in decolonisation efforts within academia. Broadhead's important contribution is arguably located in the Big Tech critique (Table 1, theme 12).

Second, Neupane et al.'s "Threading the GenAl needle" explores GAl's impact on higher education. They reveal that while students and educators see potential in GAl's personalised learning features, administrators express concern about over-dependence and declining student proficiency. In a related piece, Kutty et al.'s "Generative Al in higher education" examines perspectives from key stakeholders – students, educators, and administrators – on GAl's role in education. Their findings highlight benefits like personalised learning and language support but also reveal a need for more research on the administrative challenges of Al integration. Neupane et al.'s and Kutty et al.'s articles belong to themes 14 (perceptions of Al) and 2 (benefits of challenges; see Table 1).

The next three articles fall largely into the Al literacy discourse (Table 1, theme 13). Al-Ali et al.'s "LAIK your classroom" proposes the LAIK framework for integrating GAI into teaching and learning activities. The LAIK framework (Laying the foundation, Assembling GenAl-friendly classes, Investigating and monitoring, and Keeping the teacher informed) offers a practical approach for teachers to manage Al's implementation before, during, and after its adoption, ensuring smoother transitions in educational practices. Complementing Al-Ali et al., Sullivan et al.'s "Improving students' generative AI literacy" demonstrates that even a short workshop significantly enhances students' confidence and understanding of GAI. The authors suggest that ongoing Al literacy training is essential for helping students navigate AI tools responsibly. Saliu's "Navigating media literacy in the AI era" critiques classic media literacy texts by Potter and Baran for overlooking key concepts like Al's role in online communication, mob censorship, and social media literacy. Saliu calls for a more holistic media literacy approach to better equip learners for today's Aldriven, digitally mediated landscape.

In this issue, there are several contributions that specifically look at how certain disciplines or skills can be aided by GAI. In "On feedback from bots", Taylor and Marino examine the use of AI in providing feedback for writing. While acknowledging AI's potential to assist students, they highlight the importance of human oversight, particularly in developing students' critical thinking and metacognitive skills. Alvarez and Cress's "The uses of digital technologies in dissertation writing" looks at the role of digital tools in the writing process for Argentine graduate students. The study shows that AI and other digital technologies are transforming academic practices in a pandemic-accelerated

digital age. Both Taylor and Marino's and Alvarez and Cress's contributions could be located in theme 13's literacy discourse (see Table 1). They also partially belong to theme 8's scholarly research and a previously unidentified theme that can be termed "teaching and learning applications".

Next, Sabbaghan's "Exploring the synergy of human and Aldriven approaches in thematic analysis" investigates how Al can enhance qualitative research in education (Table 1, theme 8). By combining Al's efficiency with human interpretive skills, the study reveals that a collaborative approach can produce richer, more nuanced analyses.

Jayasinghe's "Promoting active learning with ChatGPT" offers strategies for leveraging ChatGPT to transform traditional teaching methods in resource-constrained environments such as those experienced at Sri Lankan higher education institutions. The study provides practical solutions for integrating Al to foster critical thinking and collaborative learning and falls into a new theme of "teaching and learning applications".

In the 11th research article, "Can instructors detect Algenerated papers?", Murray and Tersigni assess instructors' ability to distinguish between Al-generated and student-written essays. Their findings reveal that while Al essays often score higher on technical aspects, they lack depth in argumentation, highlighting the challenges in detecting Al use. Murray and Tersigni cast serious doubt on the reliability of GAI detection and arrive at conclusions similar to those of previous JALT authors (Table 1, theme 5).

The 12th and 13th contributions discuss the use of GAI in learning languages. Kamali et al.'s "Exploring the challenges and affordances of integrating ChatGPT into language classrooms" adopts an ecological perspective to assess the integration of Al in teaching languages. The study identifies the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT, particularly in balancing AI with traditional methods. Thanh Khoa and Tran's "Al-assisted learning applications in English courses in Vietnam" explore how students' motivations to use AI tools are influenced by factors such as social and technological gratifications. Their research shows a positive correlation between these factors and students' enjoyment of Al-assisted learning. Both articles are located somewhere within the benefits and challenges of AI (theme 2), AI literacy (theme 13) and the new theme of "teaching and learning applications".

There are two other discipline-specific articles in our current issue. Leite's research article "Generative Artificial Intelligence in chemistry teaching" reflects on the broader challenges of teaching in the AI age, proposing several recommendations for effectively incorporating AI into education, particularly in STEM fields. Divino's opinion piece "Hey, ChatGPT: How should we teach law to Generation AI?" proposes strategies for teaching law to a generation raised with AI. He suggests that legal education must adapt by integrating AI into the curriculum, ensuring students are equipped for an AI-driven future.

There are two more research articles on GAI in higher education that use quantitative research methods. Ofem et al.'s "Curriculum factors and sustainable artificial intelligence (AI)-driven classroom assessment" examine the role of digital literacy and curriculum innovation in ensuring sustainable AI-driven assessments, highlighting the importance of integrating AI into the educational infrastructure (Table 1, theme 13, AI literacy). Finally, Hasanein et al.'s "Examining Google Gemini's acceptance and usage in higher education" explores student perceptions of Google Gemini in Saudi universities, revealing both positive and negative factors influencing the adoption of AI tools in higher education settings Table 1, theme 10, technology awareness).

There are a total of three opinion pieces on GAI, including Divino's above-discussed contribution. Giray's "Negative effects of Generative AI on researchers" focuses on three potential harms: publishing addiction, the Dunning-Kruger effect, and skill erosion. He argues that over-reliance on AI may cause researchers to prioritise quantity over quality, leading to a decline in research rigour (Table 1, theme 8, scholarly research and publishing ethics). Barrera et al.'s "The personalising power of error" advocates for leveraging AI to transform mistakes into learning opportunities. By using AI to analyse errors, the authors argue that educators can create personalised learning environments that encourage students to embrace failure as a catalyst for growth (Table 1, theme 1, future of higher education).

The remainder of the issue

The remainder of the issue presents a diverse collection of studies, opinion pieces, and reviews that engage with contemporary topics in higher education. Roe et al.'s research article "Paraphrase or plagiarism?" investigates ESL students' approaches to paraphrasing in an EAP context, revealing a reliance on sentence-level adjustments and cautious language use to avoid plagiarism. Participants showed low confidence in generative AI, underscoring the need for refined EAP instruction.

Costabile et al. propose a micro-model taxonomy for effective simulation-based learning design, adaptable to any software, with guidance grounded in the ASSURE and Design Thinking frameworks to enhance learning outcomes in STEM and health sciences. Teague and Hudson's study on data analytics for non-STEM students highlights gains in technical confidence and digital literacy, contesting stereotypes about non-STEM students' tech skills and underscoring digital literacy's role in employability.

Calonge examines situational engagement in statistics classes, finding that social interaction boosts engagement and effort while individual tasks decrease them. Insights into test anxiety and intrinsic motivation provide valuable implications for curriculum design. Ng et al. explore the impact of an eight-week metacognitive intervention on career resilience among young and mature employees. Findings underscore the role of metacognitive strategies in workplace adaptability and resilience. Namaziandost et al. investigate peer support's effect on language learning among Iranian undergraduates, with results showing

reduced anxiety, improved performance, and greater enjoyment among peer-supported learners.

Barlas et al. reveal Afghan graduates' perspectives on their education's relevance, noting gender disparities in employment outcomes and advocating for entrepreneurship training to empower female graduates. Ridley and Fynn evaluate the efficacy of Digital Community Health Awareness Training (DCHAT) for nursing education, demonstrating its positive impact on addressing unconscious bias and enhancing nurse-patient relationships in digital and global contexts.

Mariyam and Karthika explore posthumanist pedagogy through wordless graphic assemblages, showing how this innovative approach in an Indian ESP classroom enhances students' speaking skills, motivation, and agency. Lawthong and Thepsathit validate the Online Learning Scale (OLS) in Thailand, providing robust psychometric data and establishing effective cut scores to assess online learning quality. Chan and Ismail examine gratitude in higher education, linking it to enhanced well-being and engagement. The authors suggest integrating gratitude intentionally into curricula to foster a positive academic environment.

The issue also contains an interview, and in addition to the previously discussed three opinion pieces, there are another two. In "The oxymoronic pursuit of pleasurable academic writing," we interviewed Helen Sword, who discusses her research methods and the creative potential within academic writing, offering valuable insights for academics seeking to write more engagingly. Kefalaki's opinion piece on strategic management in Greek public universities highlights the importance of innovative leadership for institutional success, collaboration, and a competitive global position. Or discusses competency-based education in Singapore, focusing on its role in cultivating a future-ready workforce through initiatives like SkillsFuture, which enhance adaptability and lifelong learning.

The issue concludes with five book reviews. Lim reviews Cointelligence: Living and working with AI by Ethan Mollick, advocating for a shift in AI perception from a tool to a collaborative partner, reshaping human-AI interactions in professional and educational settings. Hulpke's review of Daniel Bell's The Dean of Shandong offers insights into academic life in China, highlighting the importance of non-Western perspectives in business education and the global relevance of China's influence.

Rohmatulloh and Winarni review Johnson's Becoming a more assertive teacher, discussing strategies for teachers to assert themselves in ways that strengthen their professional presence and foster constructive classroom dynamics. Mahendra and Tampang examine the Handbook of teaching competency development in higher education, focusing on the framework's applicability for adapting to digital transformations like 5G and Al in teaching. Finally, Dinata et al. assess the Handbook of technical and vocational teacher professional development in the digital age, offering insights into practical strategies for digital integration, though noting repetitive language as a critique.

This issue brings together forward-thinking research and reflections that tackle complex issues of teaching and learning within the global higher education context. While we would not presume to second-guess Edward Said, we believe this issue honours his spirit by presenting an array of international scholars offering contrapuntal, critical analyses. By offering cutting-edge insights into educational practices and digital literacy, our issue equips educators to critically engage with the challenges and opportunities in creating a more inclusive, reflective, and innovative academic landscape.

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