



Decolonising, Dissolving, Transcending the University.

Or what is the point of the University, after Gaza?*

Or what is the point of the University, as end times fascism unfolds?

Richard Hall | @hallymk1 | rhall1@dmu.ac.uk | richard-hall.org

*we are not living after Gaza. We are being required to live and work after its revelation



To consider the possibilities and limits of decoloniality in (and of) the academy.

- Do we abolish and start again? If so, what are we abolishing? What are we starting?
- Can we (bear to) work within systemic limitations?
- What are our values in this? For what will we stand?



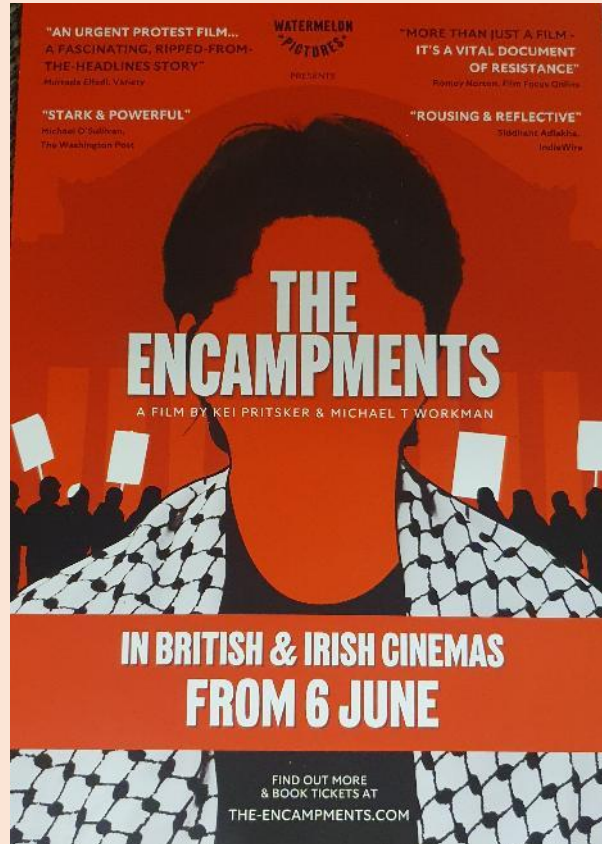
'I must begin // Begin what? // The only thing in the world that is worth beginning: // The End of the World, no less.' (Aimé Césaire 1956/1969)

'Such is surrealist activity, a total activity, the only one that can liberate humankind by revealing to it the unconscious, one of the activities that will aid in liberating people by illuminating the blind myths that have led them to this point.'

'And then I think also to tomorrow.' (Suzanne Césaire 1943)

'Our struggle is not *for* the University; it is *against* what the University has become.' (Mike Neary 2011)

- How do you feel about the University?
- What stories do you tell yourself about the University, and why?



i. What stories do we tell ourselves about the University? Might we become in-excess of them? Might we curate a new archive?



Seven steps back from:

1. your self-image;
2. your generational cohort;
3. the universalization of your social/cultural/economic parameters of normality;
4. your immediate context and time;
5. familiar patterns of relationship-building and problem-solving that you have been socialized into;
6. the normalized pattern of elevating humanity above the rest of nature; and
7. the impulse to find quick fixes and expand your capacity not to be immobilized by uncertainty, complicity and complexity.





Seven steps forward (and/or aside) with:

1. honesty and courage to see what you don't want to see;
2. humility to find strength in openness and vulnerability;
3. self-reflexivity so that you can read yourself and learn to read the room;
4. self-discipline to do the work on yourself so that you don't become work for other people;
5. maturity to do what is needed rather than what you want to do;
6. expanding discernment and attention; and
7. adaptability, flexibility, stamina and resilience for the long haul.

ii. What stories do we tell ourselves about decolonising the University?

THE **STUDENT**

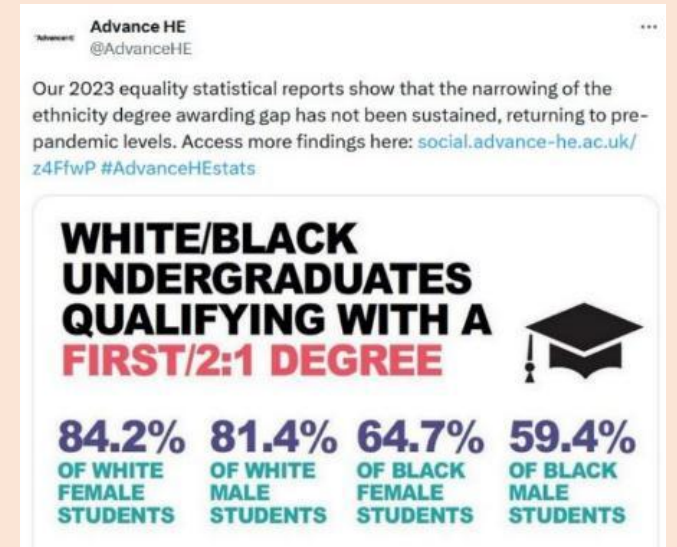
International students no longer able to bring dependants on UK student visas

From January 2024, international students travelling to the UK will no longer be able to bring dependants on their student visa, unless they are studying a research postgraduate programme



What is your understanding of decolonising?

How do you feel about decolonising?





1. Racial inequality in Britain originates from colonialism and processes/logics of coloniality.
2. Creating an anti-racist university which allows all to succeed, and celebrating the rich diversity and heritage of DMU.
3. Against deficit, blame and shame, recognising inequality reproduced by hegemonically/patriarchally.
4. This reproduces systemic disadvantage, which fails to recognise the rich history and world contributions of the global majority.
5. The challenge examines the everyday norms of university life, and requires all DMU staff and students to acknowledge and discuss the issues.

[Decolonising DMU, working definition 2019](#)



Defining decolonising: dignity of difference*

Diversify the syllabus, canon, curriculum, infrastructure and staff

Decentre knowledge and knowledge production away from the global North

Devalue hierarchies and revalue relationality

Diminish some voices and opinions that have predominated, and magnify those that have been unheard

*beyond EDI/REC
[DDMU Working Position](#)



Colonisation: a material and historical relationship of exploitation and domination (generally nations/peoples).

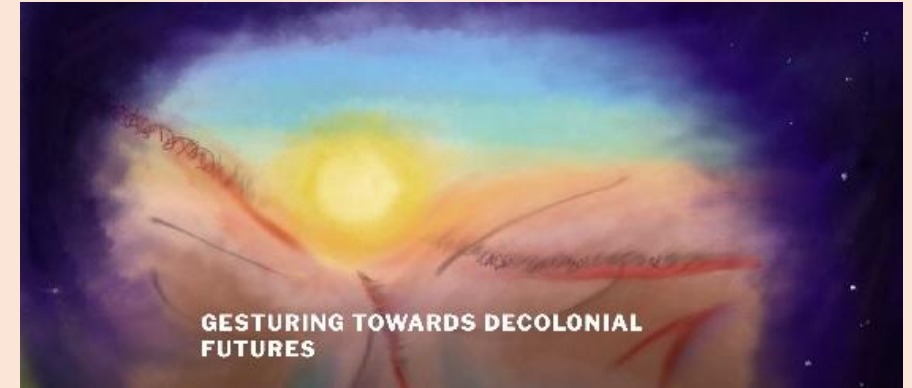
Coloniality: the ongoing relations of (settler-)colonial injustice that continue to structure, permeate and pervade our lives today. Ongoing processes of exploitation, expropriation and extraction.

The coloniality of power, defining relations and forces of production, and flows of capital/surpluses beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations.

Coloniality survives colonialism: in knowledge, performance, cultural patterns, common sense, self-image and aspiration, in culture wars.

“In a way, as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and everyday.”

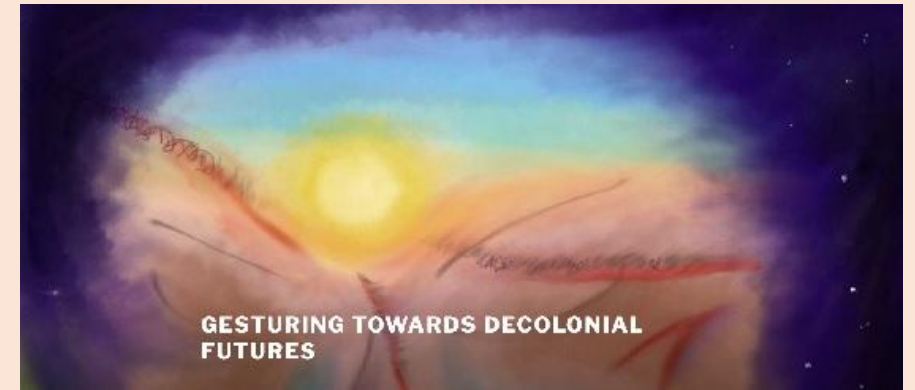
Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162548>



Reciprocity commitments:

- interrupting modern-colonial addictions [of the consumption of knowledge, of self-actualization, of experiences, of critique, of alternatives, of relationships and of communities];
- ..
- dis-investing in desires for unrestricted autonomy, authority, certainty, control, protagonism, purity, popularity, superiority and validation.
- Creating space for accountabilities, for response-abilities, for exiled capacities and for deeper intimacies

Shared responsibilities in intellectual and affective labour: Relational; Trans-local; Pluri-vocal; Intergenerational; Experimental; Self-reflexive; and Improvisational.



We are living off expired or expiring stories. Stories that expire can no longer dance with you. They are lethargic or stuck, they can't move things in generative ways any more, but we often feel we cannot let them go. (Andreotti 2021, xiv)

iii. Is this a story of dissolving and resolving?

The perception of religious institutions as bloated, religious life as needing renewal/re-imagination, and spiritual communities as inefficient/ineffective

'[f]or Cromwell, for his commissioners, for the regular communities and for the society that looked on, the narrative for a dissolution of monasteries was ready-made.'
(Clark 2021, 384)





For Marx (1852), the Parisien proletariat moved against the National Assembly (1848/49) as one node in its wider revolutionary movement. It was seeking:

to negate its existence forcibly, to dissolve it, to disintegrate again into its constituent parts the organic form in which the proletariat was threatened by the reacting spirit of the nation.

A living, desiring, loving metabolic energy, able to help us to process or compost or sublate the piss and shit of this world.

A living, desiring, loving metabolic energy, able to help us to be in-against-beyond our social forms.



A neocon narrative of dissolution: ideological

we need wisdom, and there is a wisdom in what Richard Nixon said approximately 40, 50 years ago. He said, and I quote, 'the professors are the enemy.' (Vance, quoted in Hett 2025)

Trump could also easily expedite the approval of additional accreditors. These accreditors could provide a much more streamlined, cost-effective, outcomes-oriented paradigm than the existing set... Musk University? Thiel Technical College? (Eden 2024)

[t]he Trump administration's approach to the policing of pro-Palestine dissent is ruthless, but not much more than that of universities like Columbia. (Shatz 2025)

Yarvin is calling for something simpler and more libidinally satisfying: to burn it all down and start again from scratch. (Kofman 2025)



Cathedral and its Academy:

- in thrall to emasculating, anti-capitalist and woke diversity strategies;
- academic life shapes 'a quasi-religious structure that functions hegemonically to suppress dissent';
- what is needed are 'hyper-neoliberal, technologically deterministic, anti-democratic, anti-egalitarian, pro-eugenicist, racist and, likely, fascist ideas' (Burrows 2018).

[o]ur enemy is the ivory tower, the know-it-all credentialed expert worldview, indulging in abstract theories, luxury beliefs, social engineering, disconnected from the real world, delusional, unelected, and unaccountable – playing God with everyone else's lives, with total insulation from the consequences. (Andreessen, 2023)



A neoliberal narrative of dissolution: financial

University operating models may also need to evolve to become more effective and efficient. This cannot just be about 'doing more with less'.

Reform may open opportunities to do things differently and to focus on areas of real strength. This may create the impetus to try things that would otherwise have appeared impossible, or to collaborate where previously there was no reason to do so, resulting in a stronger sector.

But it also means hard choices about what universities should stop doing.

Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change (UUK 2024)

OfS analysis finds continued pressure on university finances

The OfS's annual financial sustainability report shows that the financial performance of universities and colleges is forecast to decline in 2024-25 for the third consecutive year.

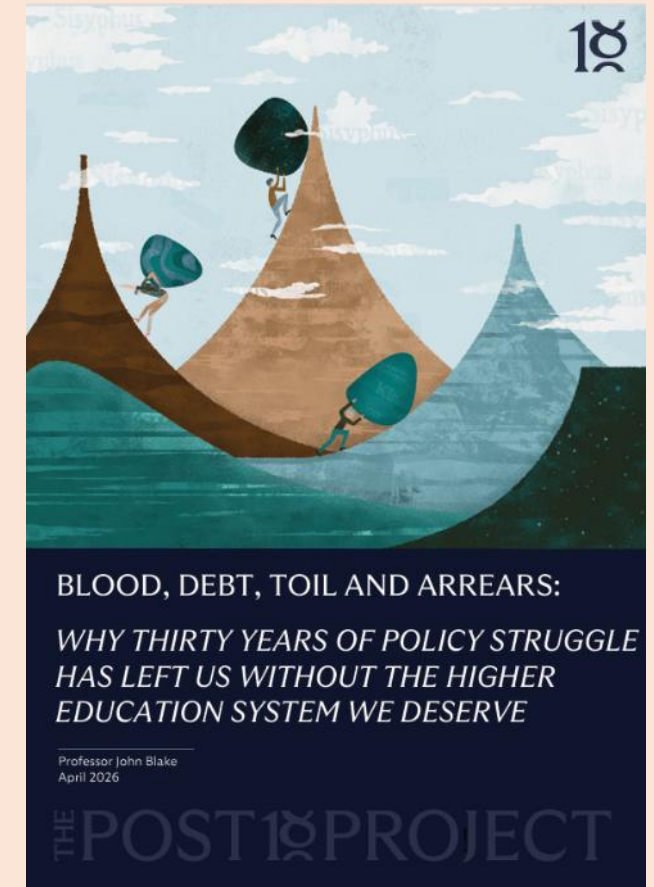
HEPI

Debate

45

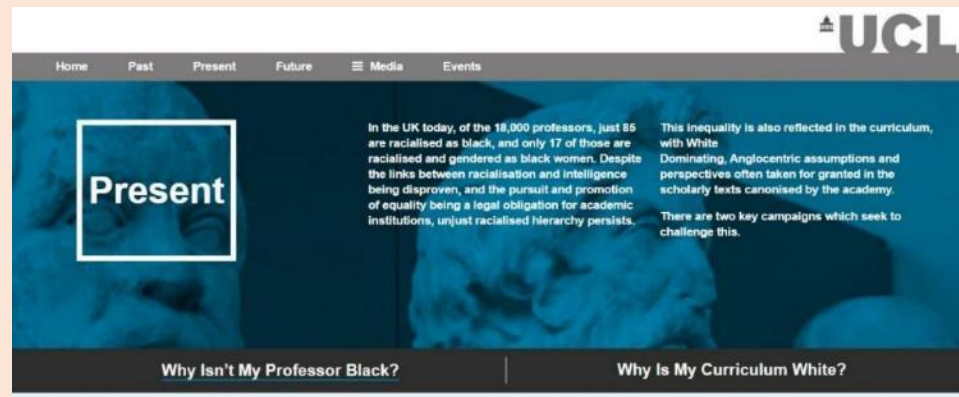
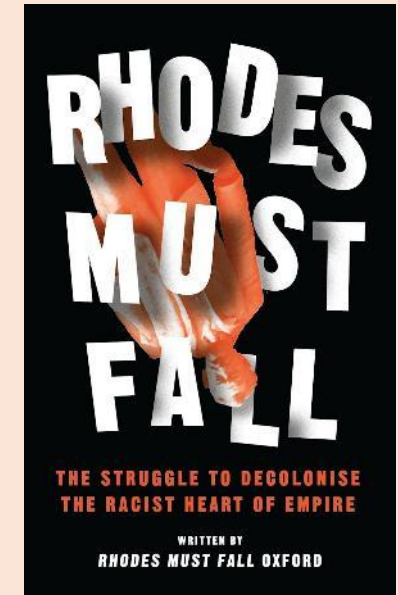
A degree of regulation: Building a more financially sustainable and resilient higher education sector

Tom Richmond

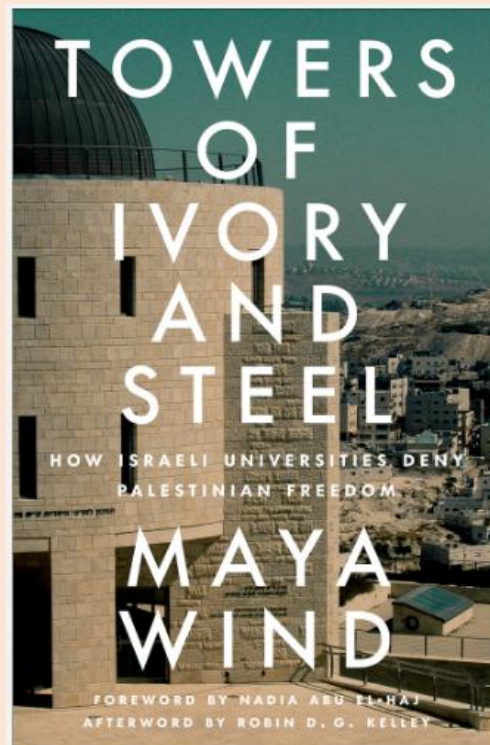
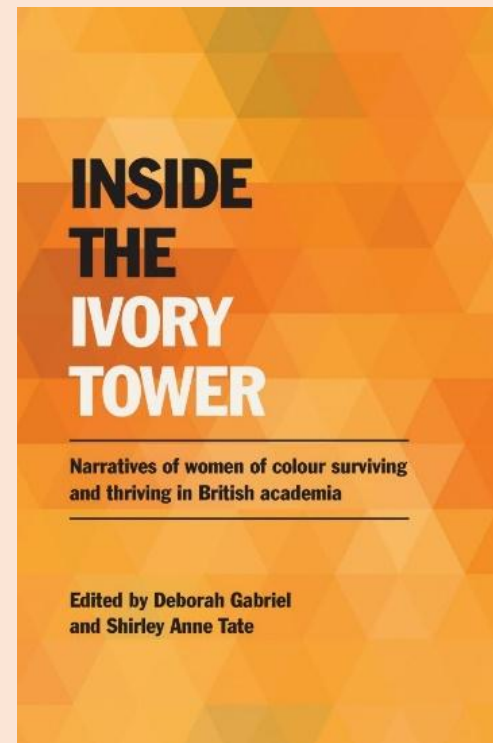
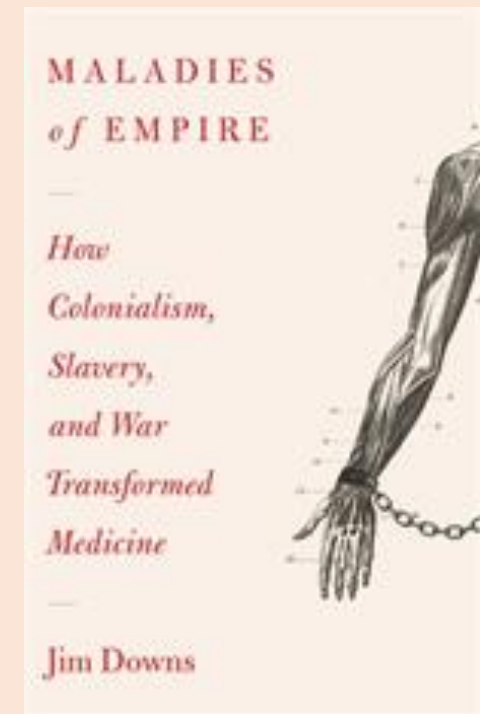




- Abolition, sublation, dissolution: a critique of the relationship between the University and value (capital in motion).
- Labour understood as a social mediation must be confronted in anti-capitalist organising and not reified.
- This is a categorical analysis that recovers subjectivity and objectivity, pointing towards an emancipatory dynamic.
- The historical development of a differentiated totality gives grounds for decolonial, indigenous and social movement analyses.
- At issue is how to develop a useful critique of the social forms that erupt and are shaped in-and-against value, in order to germinate the communist world.



iv. Counter-narratives against what the University has become: being in-excess.



Articles

Academia in a time of genocide: scholasticidal tendencies and continuities

Basma Hajir  & Mezna Qato 

Pages 1163-1171 | Received 11 Sep 2024, Accepted 18 Dec 2024, Published online: 02 Jan 2025

 Cite this article  <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2024.2445855>



The impact of the current student loans regime on Muslim student engagement and retention in English higher education

Richard Hall , Yusraa Maryam, Sumeya Loonat

First published: 03 April 2026 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.70142> |  VIEW METRICS

The University is in crisis because it *is* the crisis.

Our desires must shift towards dissolution or sublation as a materialised, negative critique of the wrongness that we face; this is never simply destruction, rather a dissolving of bonds between things, such that they might be resolved through a new appreciation, or a new metabolic function.



A/HRC/59/23: From economy of occupation to economy of genocide - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

PUBLISHED

02 July 2025

UN SYMBOL

A/HRC/59/23

- Students in the SOAS Liberated Zone (2026) 'organising to end our university's complicity in Israeli apartheid, settler-colonialism and genocide'.
- Protests at Trinity College Cambridge calling for the College to divest from arms companies (Bratton 2025, Vall 2024), within an ongoing critique of its multi-sector investment portfolio.
- 12 British universities to pay Horus, a private firm run by former military intelligence officials, to monitor student and academic protesters (Walawalkar 2026).

At issue is whether this energy of protest might halt the authoritarian disintegration or dissolution of the University in the name of value, and instead reimagine intellectual work as a progressive, social-useful form.

Can this be done from inside-and-against the University, or is something more radical required?





10 PROTESTERS WERE CONVICTED OF AGGRAVATED TRESPASS. WE TAKE YOU INSIDE THEIR TRIAL AND WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR STUDENT ACTIVISM

Reports Aaron Walawalkar and edited by Sam Gelder for Liberty Investigates and Dazed Magazine.

v. Narratives of acceleration:
towards the singularity



Higher
Education
Policy
Institute

Policy areas ▾

Reports

Blog

Partnerships ▾

Events

About us ▾



Home / Blog /

With Reform UK on the rise, what impact would their higher education policy have?

Research articles

Management consultants and university futures: Academic capitalism and the capture of UK public higher education

Cris Shore 

Pages 212-221 | Published online: 06 Jul 2024

 Cite this article

 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2024.2364284>





'higher education must serve the public good and, in times of trouble, must be reformed.'

Reform, not revolution: dissolving the institution as-is, because 'universities have brazenly, deliberately, and repeatedly violated their compact with the American people.'

Usurpations, abuses, evasions 'have moved our society toward a new kind of tyranny—one in which ideology determines truth, and the university functions as a political agent of the Left.' (*ibid.*)

Manhattan Statement on Higher Education (Manhattan Institute 2025)

Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, First Floor, 55 Tufton Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3QL. For enquiries, please contact Jim McConalogue or Jack Harris.
Tel: +44 (0)20 7799 6677. Email: jim.mcconalogue@civitas.org.uk



Academic Freedom in Our Universities: the Best and the Worst



REPORTAGE in our series [Special Investigation & The War on Ideas in British Institutions](#)

The Peter Thiel-Linked Race Science Network that Penetrated Cambridge University and Targeted Jason Arday

The media's coverage of the academic's life was fuelled by the campaign of an established far-right network

Nafeez Ahmed 18 August 2026

 **GOV.UK**

[Home](#) > [Defence and armed forces](#) > [Military recruitment, training and operations](#)

Press release

Boost for skills and research as 35 universities across the UK partner in new defence alliance

A new Defence Universities Alliance with 35 UK universities will help strengthen defence research, build critical skills and support the UK's future defence capability.

From: [Ministry of Defence](#) and [Luke Pollard MP](#)

Published: 13 July 2026

FT Magazine Reform UK

James Orr and the gospel of the new British right

Reform's policy head is a Cambridge theologian with an enviable contact book and a belief in 'faith, family and flag'



Stephanie Lamy

Féministe, chargée d'enseignement,
chercheuse

Abonné·e de Mediapart

36

Billets

0

Édition

BILLET DE BLOG 24 AOÛT 2026

Comment un réseau d'élite a chassé Jason Arday

Le racisme scientifique est une pseudoscience qui abreuve la propagande d'extrême-droite, dont masculiniste. Longtemps relégué aux marges, il s'installe dans les universités et cherche à imposer ses promoteurs comme arbitres du savoir. La chasse qui a conduit à la mort de Jason Arday montre comment la machinerie de légitimation opère — et qui lui la normalise.

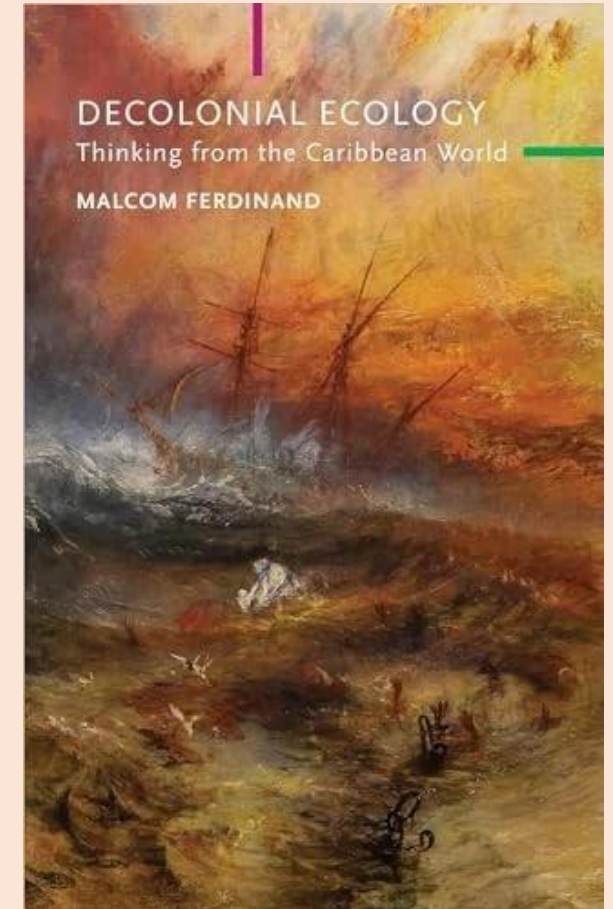
[Signalez ce contenu à notre équipe](#)

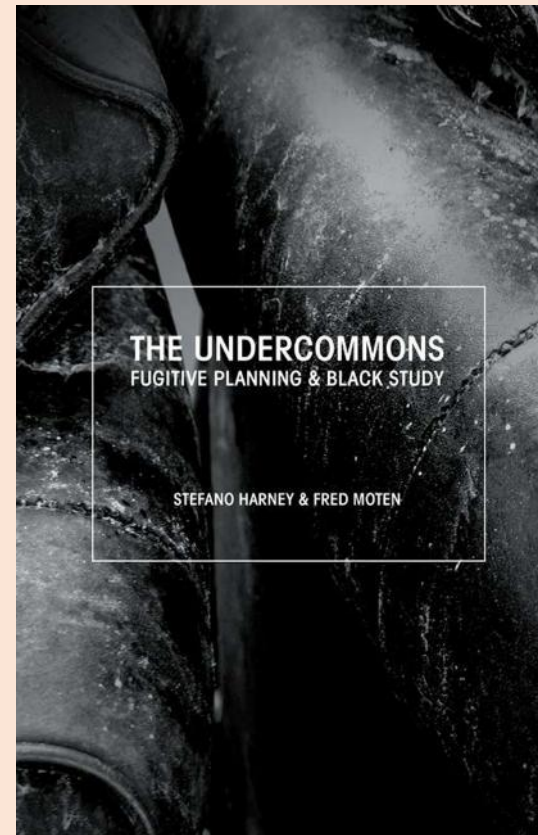
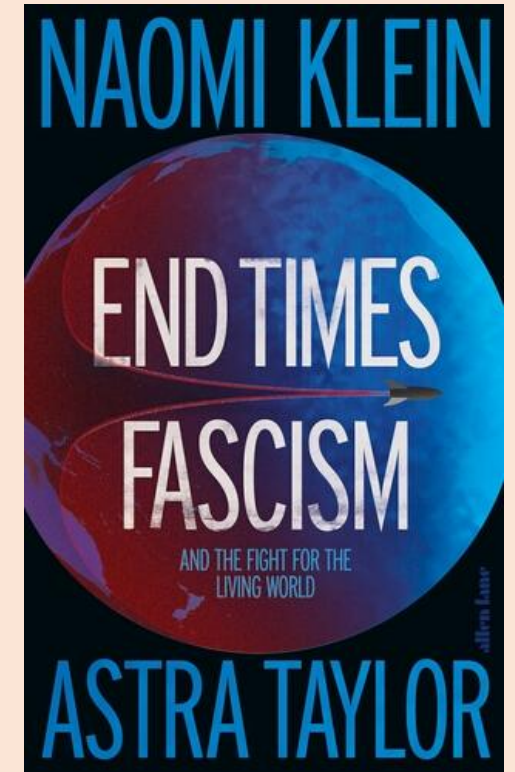
vi. a world-ship in the face of the Tempest?

being done with this vertical universalism that makes the West the measure of all culture and history, one that looms over, establishes, and dominates, in favour of a 'truly universal universal,' as Souleymane Bachir Diagne imagines it, a universal that gathers, that listens, and that celebrates encounter.

Ferdinand, 2022, 244

decolonial ecology: to process (bridge) a double fracture – the separation of colonial history from environmental history, and the erasure of the Other or other histories





'Surrealism provided us with the necessary alchemy to explode the stifling confines of colonial rationality. It was never merely an aesthetic exercise; it was an indispensable weapon of liberation to resurrect our suppressed Caribbean consciousness.'

'And then I think also to tomorrow.' (Suzanne Césaire 1943)



- an acceptance of the need to grieve the wrongness of the world, in order that we might enact a process of *preguntando caminamos* (asking, we walk)
- connecting struggles across social goods to resolve a new society
- our social forms/institutions are sites of struggle, contestation, and potential dissolution, because they contain resources (skills, ways of knowing and capacities or capabilities) that act as nutrients able to provide energy for catalysing new social forms
- dissolving or decomposing the University challenges the grounds of its fetishised intellectual work, commodified for the market: a metabolic interaction at the level of society
- an ecosystem of life that appears reimagined to accelerate capitalist social reproduction: is it possible to negate, abolish and transcend it?



My real movement to abolish the present state of things, as my life process:

- weaving life beyond value;
- connecting with the possibilities for integrating diverse struggles as a new universal and revolutionary subjectivity;
- activating a will to community beyond whiteness and its objectification of alienated labour;
- enacting a pedagogy of [being in] excess as a revolutionary science, beyond the violence of abstraction;
- centring contradiction, and negative critique of unfolding ontological categories, as generative and metabolic;
- desiring our reclamation of the general intellect of society, in order to resolve forms of mass intellectuality at the level of society; and,
- an acceptance of the need to grieve the wrongness of the world, in order that we might enact a process of *preguntando caminamos* (asking, we walk).

Date	Governmental/policy/Reports	Trade Union-related	Acts of refusal and revolt (dominant)	Acts of refusal and revolt (counter-hegemonic)
2005			Reinvention Centre	
2007	Response to Lehman			
2009	Browne Review			Gaza sit-ins
2010		NCAFC		Student occupations #Occupy Alternatives (e.g. ROU, SSC)
2012	The Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, with EIA			3Cosas Campaign of migrant workers at UoL
2014				Marine Warner: Why I Quit Stefan Grimm: Imperial
2015	GE Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act (LEO)			Rhodes Must Fall #feesmustfall UCL: Why Is My Curriculum White? UCL: Why Isn't My Professor Black?
2016	Brexit			Sara Ahmed leaves Goldsmiths 1752 Group Founded
2017	HERA GE		Awarding Gap/EDI work	
2018	Amended Plan 2 Schedule for Loans	USS Pensions Strikes		
2019	GE EHRC Report on Tackling Racial Harassment	Four Fights	Decolonising Work Nicola Rollock: Staying Power	
2020	Higher Education Restructuring Regime Reducing bureaucratic burden in research, innovation and higher education UUK Achieving stability in the higher education sector following COVID-19	UCU: Precarious work in UK HE		#blm responses to George Floyd Rent Strikes
2021	Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities		Kathleen Stock/Freedom of Speech	
2022	Plan 5 Loans	List of precarious employees: Outsourcing at Surrey		
2023	Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act.			
2024	LLE GE UUK Opportunity, growth and partnership: a blueprint for change	QMUoL: UKHE Shrinking		Gaza Encampments
2025	OfS Financial Sustainability			Expulsion of Haya Adam at the School of African and Oriental Studies Prosecution of students at the University of Leicester in 2025 for aggravated trespass
2026	International levy/Graduate Route Universities Defence Alliance	Unison and UCU strike action	Sussex wins Judicial Review	Responses to Jason Arday and race realism
Other stuff of note <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No ASF delivered Role of OfS, CMA (regulatory and governance) Role of consultancies, policy wonks, venture capital, private equity, vendors (efficiency and finance) Ongoing restructuring, outsourcing, internationalisation, mergers, debt/bonds 11 secretaries of state for education Ten different individuals responsible for universities. Work of [INSERT NETWORK] Educators 				