

Apostrophe
Ess¹: Meditations
on Writing and
Editing during a
Genocide
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1 This title is a riff on the title (and book cover) of a remarkable text. See: Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power and Indigenous Sovereignty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017). While Moreton-Robinson's work is situated in the indigenous Australian world, her questions of power, property, indigenous rights and sovereignty — and their possessing and possession — are at the root of global conversations of justice.



Fig. 1. A person standing next to a car — ‘walls are meant for climbing’, 2022. Image by Dylan Shaw, via Unsplash <<https://unsplash.com/photos/a-person-standing-next-to-a-car-MLYpe12tzZE>>.

A little while ago — going on almost a year now — I retracted a text that I was going to include in an academic journal. I won't relay fully what I wrote in that text (those Words² belong to me), but I will tell you why I retracted them, and what — I think — that has come to mean for me today, as of this writing (August 2024), as we have crossed over three hundred³ days of genocide, urbicide, scholasticide, epistemicide, chronocide (name your choice of '-cide', and you can pick more than one) in Gaza, the Occupied West Bank, in Yemen, in Lebanon, and Syria, and and and...

Those Words were written during the first weeks of this genocide, and they were prompted in part by the broad, deafening silence of the architectural academy — a deliberate, neo-intellectual, fake-intersectional quietude tied to the geologic hyper-speed erasure of Palestinian worlds in Gaza and the Occupied Territories. Blink and a school is gone. Blink again, there goes a hospital. Blink, blink, blink, blink. A residential

2 I don't know, really, if those words were any good, or even deserving. Nevertheless, they were meaningful and necessary words to me — so we'll capitalise them as 'Words', a proper noun. Those Words mattered, for a number of reasons, which we'll get into in the main text up above these footnotes. And during their writing, and in particular through the encounter with some of the systems of academia, many things became clear; among them was a realization that my Words would be profoundly enclosed, and therefore limited, owned, and in way — made *smaller* by their inclusion in this publication — in large part because of the entanglements with disciplinary silence. On that silence, read on, dear-reader, to the third paragraph of this text, then come back here... And, you're back — so, when the editors of *Scroope* 33 approached me, in the warm, and generous Teams faces of Jerry Chow and Nicholas Frayne, and were plural and generous in their invitation to contribute to this issue — themed around Mbembe's chapter 'Disenclosure', from his text, *Out of the Dark Night*, I felt that perhaps my Words — or some version of them — could make friends here, or at least find a tender home. See Achille Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 42–89.

3 I've been writing THIS strange text that you are now reading, for a little while now — over a few months. And each time I come back to it (this is version, I don't know, like eight? nine? ten? Each time, the number of days ticks up, and I am struck by the violent enclosure of time that academic publications require. A while ago, it was 100 days, then 150, then 190, then 200, then 300. And then, I remember, it's more than 27,000 days, if you can agree that history did not begin on 7 October 2023.

block, a town square, a mosque, a church. I wrote those Words as a Brown, Muslim academic, with family and friends — and students and colleagues — in Palestine. I wrote them while working for institutions: the architectural world, the world of higher education — that, by and large, remained (and remain) mute on the Israeli weaponised instrumentalisation of utilities, infrastructures, and architecture, to displace, erase, and destroy Palestinian life, on the use of the architecture and planning disciplines, architectural history, and scholarship to enable the genocide and the displacement of the Palestinian people.⁴

The silence is a form of closure. It is a sealing up⁵ — or an attempted sealing up, an academic silicone caulk, gorilla tape, duct tape — of the widening gaps between the steadily fraying edges of a dying empire and a supremacist world. This dying world is contained and bordered in very particular and peculiar ways. And it relies on these containments and borders to thrive, while it can, through its own greedy, gifting systems. We know this world all too well. Some of us know it better. Others know this world like their own skin. Palestine, of late, along with its attendant political, human, social, and moral ecology; urban protests; university encampments; renewed calls for boycotting; divestment from academic investment portfolios and more; have all laid bare the true scope of *this* world. And disenclosing from it, means a Glissantian *tout-monde*, a disinvestment from the world-centres that have inscribed themselves in our imagined, built, and destroyed environments, in thought, practice, and, also, in word. And so the veil is lifted, and Mbembe writes, ‘for the disenclosure of the world to happen, it is necessary to detach oneself from oneself, precisely in order to confront what is coming and what, in

4 This was drawn from a ‘Speak Out Letter on Palestine’, authored by a group called *International Architectural Educators*, and published online on 21 October 2023. That letter can be seen here: <<https://bit.ly/IAESpeakout>>.

5 ‘Airtight seals’, writes Édouard Glissant, ‘were apparently the rule of the Plantation. Not simply the tight social barrier, but also an irredeemable break between the forms of sensibility, despite each one’s efforts upon the other.’ Édouard Glissant, *The Poetics of Relation* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 65.

coming, causes other resources of life to spring up. This is why the Fanonian self is fundamentally opening, distension, and gap: the *Open*.⁶

But Before We Open: Worlds

To set the stage for this — a quick reminder: I wrote an editorial.⁷

I had written editorials before, but never during a genocide. It's hard to write in general, and it's *really* hard to write during a genocide when your communities and their worlds are being erased and, in the process, institutionally exceptionalised.⁸ As a South African,⁹ Muslim, Brown human (not just an academic), I wanted to be seen, not just 'represented',¹⁰ and waited for the familiar expressions of solidarity and care. Politicians and pundits offer 'Thoughts and Prayers', deploying their utterances

6 Mbembe, *Out of the Dark Night*, p. 63.

7 I was coediting a journal — serving as both a theme editor and as the design editor — on a call for papers (CFP) titled 'infidelities', which was developed by Aya Musmar, from the University of Petra, and Nishat Awan, from University College London, in partnership with Menna Agha, from Carleton University. In part, the CFP noted: 'As Muslim people of colour working at the margins of architecture, art and social practice, we have always felt like infidels since we are not loyal to the discipline and its institutions, but neither are we loyal to the multiple belongings of ourselves. Yet, infidelity is neither refusal, criticality nor counter politics. It is a fertile ground that emerges through a certain discomfort with institutional power, social and moral codes, and rules that attempt to regulate behaviours. It has the potential to create transversal relations across difference.' The issue was humming along, and then, apparently, history begins in October.

8 See: Marc Lamont Hill, *Except For Palestine: The Limits of Progressive Politics* (New Press, 2021).

9 I'll get to Africa soon, I promise.

10 Ruha Benjamin, the Alexander Stewart 1886 Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, and founding director of the Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab, observed in an address to students at Spelman College (a historically Black women's college in Atlanta) that: 'Black faces in high places are not going to save us. Just look at the Black proponents of Cop City in Atlanta's leadership class. [...] Just look at the Black woman's hand — ambassador at the UN [Linda Thomas-Greenfield] — voting against a ceasefire in Gaza.' *Youtube*, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=javaZtuESR4>> [accessed 3 August 2024].

like a paint splatter cannon at moments of terrifying and terrible loss. Nevertheless, you want to be checked in on. Who doesn't? Maybe, in the moment, you want the black square, the black profile picture, the *pick-a-color* ribbon, the 'are-you-okay', the 'what can I do', and so on, and so forth. You want the statement of solidarity, the signed letter, the recognition, however small, that indicates you are not *only* seen, but truly *seen*. Nothing is worse¹¹ than when someone doesn't speak up for you, with you, in public, but tells you — privately, off-line, off-the-record — 'we're really with you, we were only joking'.¹² But there was none of that, really, in the lead up to those Words. Just four Muslim editors, working through a genocide, producing work for The Institution™. And asking our contributors — many of them in similar boats (and not fresh off them) — for their work and their labour. Brown faces asking Brown and Black and Asian and Other writers to produce works for an institution that refused to say a few words: 'we see'. This wasn't a surprise, of course. Nevertheless, it was illuminating to see the degree to which the institution will coalesce and seal itself up, in order to protect property and power and, well, *itself*. Institutions gonna institute, fam; Empire's gonna Empire.¹³ There is no *tout-monde* here, only the navel-gazing of the narcissist relational self, and the glimmer and magic glamour of the sleight of hand power-up: Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity. Look here, says the institution, not *there*. See here, not *there*. These words, not *those*. Noun, verb, grammar. And I thought — and it's a small act, to be sure, but an important one — you don't see me, you don't get my Words.

11 Actually, this is not true at all. There are a lot of worse things — infinitely worse things — but this is pretty awful, so don't do this. Just. Don't. Speak or don't. If you don't, at least own the silence. It appears to have finally been recognised as a form of disciplinary practice, after all. See also footnote 47.

12 IYKYK.

13 If it walks like a coloniser, and talks like a coloniser, it's probably not a duck. 'Probably not, no', said my youngest daughter as she read this — 'although ducks ARE jerks, but for other reasons.' H. Saloojee, South Frontenac County, Buck Lake, 9 August 2024.

So I wrote, and then retracted it, just before publication. And then, because words are worlds, I rewrote it, edited to reflect the reality of time, to reflect the *not-yet* that was absent at the time of its original writing. Here is that modified version, and edited now (with a few small, new additions in a different typeface), and some footnotes too.¹⁴ I called it *Worlds*.

I struggled to go about my business. I struggled to be an editor and an academic — an *African*,¹⁵ Brown, Muslim one — during an ongoing genocide. Here, Brown people who are my family, who say the same words I do, the same prayers I fall into, the same litanies and invocations I recite; the men who look like me, with names like mine and my father's and my grandfathers', and my brothers' and cousins' and uncles' and nephews', are slaughtered, villainised, blamed, stripped naked, executed, mutilated. *But, well, you know, it's complicated. How are you doing? I hope this e-mail finds you well. I'm fine. Jesus, this is APA, not Turabian.*

I struggled to fulfil my editorial duties. Be good to your colleagues. Be good to your contributors. Be good. Be good to your responsibilities, and your accountabilities. Be good. Be good to The Deadline™. Show up. Do the Work™. Wordsmith ~~the~~ the statement. Publish it. Don't publish it.

14 1) Writing, and editing, are a form of witness. As such, they are ongoing. We know that texts are not static, and are in relation to a *tout-monde* larger than themselves, and; 2) Just as this text was edited to keep pace with the time of genocide (30 days, 50, 100, 150, 300, now 304), I know that at some point, this text will be fixed (if its published), so it's important that this witnessing is, in itself, a *tout-monde*, a disenclosure. Here, beyond these callisthenics, I think of Nicki Kattoura, writing on the futility and necessity of writing. See: Nicki Kattoura, 'A Thousand Eulogies Are Exported to the Comma: Of Syntax and Genocide', *Literary Hub*, 12 February 2024 <<https://lithub.com/a-thousand-eulogies-are-exported-to-the-comma-of-syntax-and-genocide>> [last accessed 19 October 2024].

15 I know I said I'd get to Africa, and I will, I promise. This 'African' was written well before the Africa referenced in Footnote 9.

Look, there's one for Ukraine.¹⁶ *I mean, legally, we can't call it a genocide, yet right? It's not quite a concentration camp. And human shields, amiright? We have to stand up for Western values, amiright? Amiright, amiright, amiright.* As Ben said, may all the words turn to ash in your mouths.¹⁷

I struggled to be an editor — a Brown one — when The Institutions™ (pick your poison — political, intellectual, artistic, legalistic...) will affirm many humanities except, well, Palestine. Palestine, we know, is always the exception, and it has united a planet in two remarkable ways: One is a dying empire of greedy settler grifting, US, Canadian and European imperial and colonial munitions and the avarice-hungry desperation of power, capital and the Almighty Whitey. And Whitey,¹⁸ he's on the moon — trying to claim

16 It's still up, as of this writing. You can read it here: <<https://www.acsa-arch.org/acsa-supports-eaae-statement-on-ukraine/>> [accessed 14 July 2024].

17 Ben Ehrenreich, the American writer, tweeted, on 7 December: 'Writers who are silent now: stay silent. May all words turn to ash in your mouths.' *Twitter* <<https://x.com/BenEhrenreich/status/1732871048561844376>> [accessed 1 March 2024].

18 Gil Scott-Heron released 'Whitey on the Moon', a spoken-word poem on his debut album titled *Small Talk at 125th and Lennox*, released by the Flying Dutchman record label in 1970. Scott-Heron's poem is a reflection on the exorbitant costs of the Apollo Moon landings, and the medical debt and poverty faced by African Americans at the time. Fifty years later, Jeff Bezos spent \$5.5 billion dollars to be in space for four minutes, reported *Global Citizen* in 2021. See: Joe McCarthy, 'Jeff Bezos Just Spent \$5.5B to Be in Space for 4 Minutes. Here Are 7 Things That Money Could Help Solve', *Global Citizen*, 20 July 2021 <<https://bit.ly/SpaceBezos>> [accessed 4 June 2024]. Since 7 October, 'the United States has enacted legislation providing at least \$12.5 billion in military aid to Israel, which includes \$3.8 billion from a bill in March 2024 (in line with the current MOU) and \$8.7 billion from a supplemental appropriations act in April 2024'. Jonathan Masters and Will Mellow, 'U.S. Aid to Israel in Four Charts', *Council on Foreign Relations*, last updated 31 May 2024 <<https://www.cfr.org/article/us-aid-israel-four-charts#:~:text=Since%20the%20start%20of%20Israel's,appropriations%20act%20in%20April%202024>> [accessed 6 July 2024]. Since 1970, if my maths is correct (and you can check the chart on the website above to be sure), the US has given over \$230 billion in military aid to Israel. For that amount, we could have launched 41.8 Bezoses (Bezii?) into space.

that too, for pipelines and gas, probably. The only olive he knows is in his dry martini, shaken, not stirred. The other way is Palestine. From the River to the Sea.

I struggle to remove myself from a world that doesn't really want me anyway. Only my work, and the gloss and veneer of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity that Brown can bring. I think EDI is a bad joke, but no one's gotten the punchline yet. Why am I giving my world to you, so you can take what you like of it? You take an EDI polish and apply it to your face and your skin, like a shimmer cream that wipes off in front of a mirror, in the green room, after the press conference, or the song and dance. And then we are rendered as invisible as the white phosphorus you can't, apparently, see. *They have the right to defend themselves, amiright?* Talking heads nod. Numbers into the footnote. No, not numbers, never a footnote.¹⁹ *Let it bring hope. Let it be a tale.*²⁰

19 See footnote 20 for the last words of Refaat Alareer's poem.

20 Because my Words often fail, I turned to Refaat Alareer, a Palestinian poet, author, and English Literature teacher at Gaza University — which has been completely destroyed. Alareer was murdered in Shujaiyah — the neighbourhood of champions — on 6 December 2023, the day before Ben Ehrenreich wrote of words and ash. Just a few days before his death, Alareer pinned this text to the top of his Twitter timeline.

*If I must die,
you must live
to tell my story
to sell my things
to buy a piece of cloth
and some strings,
(make it white with a long tail)
so that a child, somewhere in Gaza
while looking heaven in the eye
awaiting his dad who left in a blaze—
and bid no one farewell
not even to his flesh
not even to himself—
sees the kite, my kite you made, flying up
above*

Whose world do we struggle for? The predatory, animalistic, self-absorbed, silent and silencing world of capital-run-amok, of intellect-worshipped, but absent of any soul? This is not a world — the kite you made, flying up above ... an angel is there bringing back love.²¹ Whose world and archive do we hold up, hold dear, cast down and incinerate? Motaz Azaiza's? Refaat Alareer? Wael al-Dahdouh's? Ismail al Ghouh and Rami al Rifi?²² The men who gather in a ruined building in Gaza, for a *majlis* of *dhikr*, and sing, *جئت شرفت المدينة* — *you have brought nobility to this city*.²³ The worlds of prophets buried in land under

*and thinks for a moment an angel is there
bringing back love
If I must die
let it bring hope
let it be a tale*

Refaat Alareer (@itranslate123), 'If I must die, let it be a tale. #FreePalestine #Gaza' *Twitter*, 1 November 2023 <<https://x.com/itranslate123/status/1719701312990830934>>.

21 See footnote 20, line 17 of his poem.

22 The Israeli Occupation Forces have since murdered, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 113 journalists and media workers. See 'Journalist Casualties in the Israel-Gaza War', *Committee to Protect Journalists*, 6 August 2024 <<https://cpj.org/2024/08/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/#:~:text=As%20of%20August%206%2C%202024,began%20gathering%20data%20in%201992>> [accessed 6 August 2024]. You can read their names here — and I would encourage you to: <<https://cpj.org/2024/08/journalist-casualties-in-the-israel-gaza-conflict/>>. The unofficial number — as of today, now — when all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed, is much higher.

23 A group of Palestinian journalists gathered, one evening, in the ruins of a bombed building. You could see fragments of concrete, blue-tarp, torn metal. I didn't save the video, but I wish I had. It reminded me of another recent image, showing Bangladeshi students standing atop a light pole, with a Bangladeshi and Palestinian flag, in front of Louis Kahn's Houses of Parliament in Dhaka. The meetings of these two images were a study in architectural contrast: one of destruction and another of nationhood, but both a demonstration of what we know today (in its non-intellectualised fetishisation) as *ṣumūd*. These Palestinian journalists — some wearing their press vests — were hosting a *majlis* — a gathering of Prophetic remembrance (*dhikr* in Arabic, is a practice of Divine remembrance), and were reciting a particular *nashid* — a poem or song, usually lyrical — that some Islamic scholars note, was sung by the Medinan community to welcome the Prophet Muhammad into their city.

state-boots? Abraham/Ibrahim, Ishaq/Isaac, Yaqub/Jacob, Yusuf/Joseph?

What about the world of families and friends with families and friends and worlds over there, too? The world of my Palestinian student on a West-Coast campus looking out to a river, mountains, and a sea? To another, in Ramallah with her family, waiting? To the olive trees burning under phosphorus bombs in Palestine and Lebanon? To the Omari *masjid*,²⁴ a 600-year shattering; today, on a Friday — on *Jumu'ah* — our day of gathering hearts in mosques.

To the mother who holds her shrouded child in a dark hospital filled with soldiers and American guns? To the grandfather — his name is Khaled — who holds his dead granddaughter — her name was, **is**, Reem — and says *you are the soul of my soul*, and wears one of her earrings on his

24 A *masjid*, in Arabic, is a mosque. Etymologically, the word is related in its root structure to the word *majlis* — gathering — and to the word *Jumu'ah* — the Arabic word for Friday, when Muslims would gather in a mosque, for the Friday prayer, to stand and worship in *jama'ah* — collectively. Bombing a mosque is abhorrent. Bombing it on a Friday is especially evil. The Omari Mosque was Gaza's Great Mosque — destroyed on Friday 8 December. Built in the seventh century, it exists now, in part, in the past-tense on Wikipedia and the internet. Kate Wagner, writing in the *Nation*, wrote, 'In times of war, we cling to art, architecture, and other forms of culture for many reasons: to show that things and people mattered, that culture was meant to endure, that the evisceration of something priceless is a shameful crime. We are shocked by losses such as the Great Omari Mosque not only because they are terrible and sad, but also because we believed that those in power might have more respect for art and for history deemed legitimate by their own institutions than they do for human life. But, of course, this is not true: If human life is worth nothing, then neither is architecture, itself the cumulative achievement of and testimony to countless human lives. In a campaign of uricide, nothing matters. The end goal is a blank slate.' See Kate Wagner, 'What Israel's Destruction of the Great Omari Mosque Means', *The Nation*, January 2024 <<https://www.thenation.com/article/world/great-omari-mosque-urbicide-gaza>> [accessed 4 May 2024]. The blank slate is the key, right? Erase that *tout-monde*, and cue all those developers and politicians touting all that beachfront property soon to be available for grabs along Gaza's coast — not the least of which includes the famous political operative, noted author, and smooth operator: Jared Kushner.

green robe. What about the world of ~~the~~ the son who begs to see his father — *let me kiss him*, he shouts — and unwraps white plastic over a face that looks like mine?

Which worlds, institutions, educations, and architectures are we building now?

What is this world that is written-on and written-in, in mine, our, and your hands?²⁵

*See the kite — the kite you made.*²⁶

Opening

What, on our little blue earth, does this have to do with architecture? Everything. Every. Thing. *Tout le monde*. Why? Because almost everything is an attempt to seal us up in the usual systems, infrastructures, familiarities, canons, beliefs, grammars, words, conventions, curricula, and jargon that are institutional caulk. Institutions, and Empires, in turn, don't *like* gaps. They don't *like* openings. They don't *like* loopholes that undermine the 'apostrophe s' of their worlds and their attempted worlding. Can you start a sentence with a Twitter handle? Here goes. @BabadookSpinoza, said, recently, on Twitter that 'You don't want a better world; you want a better liar to sell you this one. You want to go back to believing the lies. But it doesn't work like that, not really. You can't unsee it. You'll never fully believe it. You'll just be useless long enough to doom the rest of us.'²⁷

25 Palestinians would write their names on their hands or arms, so they could be identified in case of their deaths.

26 See footnote 20.

27 @babadookspinoza, *Twitter*, 22 July 2024 <<https://x.com/babadookspinoza/status/1815392595515670750>> [accessed 24 July 2024].

Who owns the world, or the right to make it? The ‘apostrophe s’ of that right and property is the rub — the need to maintain the old world order of extractive racial capitalism, settler-colonial expansionism, and the shareholder’s fiduciary entitlement to forever war — even if it’s dressed up as something new. Empire and its lapdogs of white supremacy and grifting capitalist inhumanity is the apostrophe — the possessive carceral enclosure of every other world except its own. It doesn’t matter who the captain is. It’s not that its de-rigueur to pooh-pooh Kamala Harris and the Democratic Party, and there’s been a lot made of the announcement that the Democratic Nominee for the next President of the United States of America selected Minnesota governor Tim Walz as her vice-presidential pick. And, it’s worth remembering, that Governor Walz, after refusing to meet with Palestinian Americans for ten months, cancelled a meeting with Palestinian families when they informed his office that they wanted to discuss divestment and real solutions.²⁸ Voice, but only when it’s expedient, advantageous; silence — a closing up of the throat, the tongue, the lips, the jaw, the pharynx — when it’s not. Only certain canonical positions deserve recognition, sound, power, and words. ‘If you want Donald Trump to win, say that. Otherwise, I am speaking,’ said Vice President Harris to protesters who interrupted her speech at a campaign rally in Detroit on 7 August.²⁹ Only particular words, epistemes, only particular processes, only certain and enduring configurations of power are silence-free. And it’s a smoke-screen. As Zoé Samudzi noted, ‘If the health and future of your democracy is constantly hanging in the balance and held up by either a crime-bill-writing, genocide-enabling segregationist, or a giggly cop who refused to empty CA prisons because they’d lose out on the free labour,

28 AMP MN, *Instagram*, 9 July 2024 <<https://www.instagram.com/p/C9Nnz4DJfml>> [accessed 6 August 2024].

29 ‘Here’s Why Two Protesters Interrupted Kamala Harris—In Their Own Words’, *Mother Jones* <<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/08/kamala-harris-hecklers-protest-detroit-rally-interview-gaza-michigan>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

perhaps consider you don't actually have a democracy.³⁰
Only certain things speak, or or are spoken for.

Only certain universities deserve to be universities — and certainly not the universities of encampments, of Hind Hall (Columbia); Sidra Hassouna Hall, Shireen Abu Akleh Hall, Hind Hall (Harvard); Hind Hall (Berkeley); Mahmoud's Hall (Melbourne University); Gaza House (University of Waterloo); Reem Hall (Queen's University). Only certain institutions deserve to be institutions, and they will be closed up with fences, with a hyper-militarised police, with cameras, with injunctions against students and faculty — with a tolerance only for theory, but not praxis; only for abstraction, not material transformation. Sam Catlin, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at the State University of New York at Buffalo, offers, in his essay 'The Campus Does Not Exist', an initial theory, in five points, of The Campus,³¹ namely that (and abbreviated here): 1) The campus is a fantasy and a media trope; 2) The campus is no institution, and it is every institution. But it is some institutions more than others; 4)³² The essential components of the campus, therefore, are not the classroom, the library, the laboratory, or even the dormitory, but rather the security camera and the cruising police SUV; 5) The campus has essentially to do with students. [...] Professors figure into campus panic only insofar as the media takes their research and public statements to indicate something about their relations to, influence on, students.³³

These are all compelling theses, but his third thesis really hits home — and hard. He writes:

30 Zoé Samudzi (@babywasu), *Instagram*, <<https://www.instagram.com/stories/babywasu/3417688741059988701/>> [accessed Monday 22 July 2024].

31 Capitalised. The Campus is not a University. 'It is the campus', writes Catlin, 'which we have collectively cathected—not the university, not higher education.' Sam Catlin, 'The Campus Does Not Exist: How Campus War is Made', *Parapraxis* <<https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/the-campus-does-not-exist/>> [accessed 29 July 2024].

32 I skipped #3 on purpose. I'll come back to it shortly.

33 Catlin. 'The Campus Does Not Exist: How Campus War is Made'.

The campus is the fantasy of an inside. There is the campus, and then there is the outside. On campus/off campus. But the boundary between the campus and its outside is a permeable membrane. The quadrangle, with its gated walls, is, after all, not really where the space of the university ends. The empirically existing campus is integrated into its environs, so that it is difficult to say just when one is off campus. An *enclosure* [emphasis mine], the campus is never quite closed enough. For this reason it must be policed. There lurks always the possibility that the real world will penetrate the campus, violate the campus.³⁴

The enclosure is the policing. The policing is the protection of property, and its names, and certain words, and most definitely not THOSE words. The property is power. Power must be protected. Power must be enclosed. That's The Campus, and we can project — because we are not stupid or foolish or thoughtless, that The Campus — as no institution, is also *every* institution.³⁵

34 Here's Catlin's 3rd thesis — and the citation... Ibid.

35 I use Catlin's 'campus' here in two ways: the first is his definition of it — as all institutions. It becomes a proxy for all enclosure politics, ontologies, practices, epistemologies, at all scales: relational, disciplinary, professional, diplomatic and so on. The second form of The Campus is as the academy — the so-called landscape of higher education — the university — which, as Amy Wong positions in her brilliant essay in *Parapraxis*, is not as constructive as we've been told to believe. 'The North American university — despite what the Right would have you believe of its woke mobbishness — remains the gateway into leaving important parts of your personhood behind to become the kind of person that could belong to the "we" that insists that the way we live (work) now is the only life worth anything at all.' Amy R. Wong, 'The University is Making Us Unwell', *Parapraxis* <<https://www.parapraxismagazine.com/articles/on-dear-elia>> [accessed 2 August 2024]. 'That university's just a dump', declares Aunt Oumy, in Djibril Diop Mambéty's *Touki Bouki* (1973). Mambéty's character is not referencing a North American university, but I laugh (and cry) all the same, and in turn, I despair, and wonder, and hope, that another university is possible. See la paperson, *A Third University is Possible* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). The dedication in la paperson's text ('la paperson' is also a nom de plume of K. Wayne Yang. Yes! THAT K. Wayne Yang — coauthor of 'Decolonization is not a Metaphor', with Eve Tuck) is a banger. la paperson writes: 'For you, who

And therefore, all must be enclosed, lest they be encamped upon, lest they be opened. They, and their affiliates and clients and agents must be defended. These particular institutional client inheritances — schools, systems, pedagogies, processes, and so on — carried by smallpoxed boats and books and declarations from Europe and France and England, exported by American warships, dropped by Raytheon and Elbit bombs, or by false infrastructural piers, by hands raised in Global North Halls of Power and ratified by Very Important (but lowercase) words, by the Institutional Powers-That-Be, these must, at all (shareholder profit) costs, be defended, lest civilisation, and our democracy collapse.

And we know, because we are not so blinkered, and so provincial, and so small, that ‘Europe is indefensible’.³⁶ And we nod, as the Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène says, as he leans forward in his suit, on that beach, and says ‘Let’s be very clear. Europe is not my centre. Europe is on the outskirts. After one hundred years here, did they speak my language? I speak theirs. My future does not depend on Europe.’³⁷ And we know, as Djibril Diop Mambéty shows us, and tells us, in *Touki-Bouki*’s famous scene, that ‘France? Nothing good comes of it.’³⁸ And because Africa is not a country, we go from Mbembe’s Cameroon, Sembené’s and Mambéty’s Senegal to Youssef Chahine’s *An Egyptian Story*, where the actor Mohamed Mounir, in conversation with Nour El-Sharif’s protagonist — the high-strung filmmaker, Yehia Choukry Mourad — declares: ‘the world is not America or England’.³⁹ In Mark Cousins’ 2011 documentary, *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, Chahine, in

are the business.’

36 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review Press, 2001), p. 31. Originally published in 1950, Césaire was a poet, a writer and politician, and President of the Regional Council of Martinique (1983–1988).

37 *Camera d’Afrique: Filming Against the Odds*, dir. by Féréd Boughedir, 1983. See, I told you we’d get to Africa.

38 *Touki-Bouki*, dir. by Djibril Dion Mambéty, 1973.

39 *An Egyptian Story* (حدوة مصرية), dir. by Youssef Chahine, 1983.

response to a prompt about ‘the Third World’ says, ‘Jesus Christ. I’ve been around seven thousand years ... and we’ve proven that we were civilised seven thousand years ago. Are we so underdeveloped? That’s not civilisation. Civilisation is how you contact the other people. Do you know how to love? You know how to care? This is civilisation.’⁴⁰

Do You Know How to Love? You Know How to Care?

Writing that editorial, and not publishing, and then rewriting it, and publishing it online, then editing it, and thinking and reflecting on it here with all of you,⁴¹ was a disenclosure, and a disclosure (of a sort). I learned, and continue to learn, the degree to which I was, am, and might still be, if I’m not careful, sealed up and closed in, and made to *be civilised* in a continuing, but more pretty (and less overt) version of John Gastian Progress. I want to resist and refuse these ontological, intellectual, and canonical sealings that tell me what questions I can and should be asking, and thinking through; that tell me what writing I can do, and what Words I can consider — or even put to paper or thought. I want to resist the sealing up of images and the tyrannies of teaching and pedagogy that demand very particular forms of drawings, visualisations, and models, of endless abstraction. I’m profoundly opposed to the sealing up in bureaucratic processes that underpin and undergird so much of the extractive institutional worlds we inhabit — and as an academic (as many of you are, or as students who inhabit the world of The Academy, you will know some of this), the landscape of higher education is, frankly, a little worrisome. It is designed, in many ways, to maintain and sustain itself, at the expense of all else,⁴² including students.⁴³ This sealing

40 *The Story of Film: An Odyssey*, dir. by Mark Cousins, 2011.

41 Thank you, by the way, for reading through those Words and these other ones too.

42 This is of course, not always the case.

43 See a post-university encampment near you. See the payment processes

up is meant to close a world that is, in many ways, secretly toxic, dressed up like the Wizard, in tokens, glamour, distractions. Professor and architectural historian, Samia Henni, describing the process of her book, *Colonial Toxicity: Rehearsing French Nuclear Architecture and Landscape in the Sahara*, writes (*italics added*):

My question as an historian is, what do we do if an institution doesn't allow you to write about certain histories? Do you obey or disobey? If you disobey, then you have to find other ways to gather information, data, evidence, reports and so on. That's what the book is doing ... It's *against secrecy*, as there are many things here that we can see: the landscapes, the testimonies of witnesses and survivors. For me, these are tools to *open* the conversation.⁴⁴

This enclosure — unless we resist it — keeps us moving between the fragments of our lives.⁴⁵ In turn, these fragments are also a form of silencing that de-emphasise a continuous world, a world-anew, and in turn, we become sealed up in a world that is not ours

for those who are asked to contribute labour to a university (and universities make it VERY hard to pay people), including requiring 'vendors' to sign agreements to, for example, not support an Israeli boycott — and of pay being withheld, unless one does sign. Consider these words — on the Columbia University website (and on many other US academic institutions websites, too): 'U.S. federal regulations prohibit the University or its personnel from agreeing to participate in any international boycott not supported by the U.S. government, such as the Arab League boycott of Israel. Violation of these regulations could result in fines being imposed by the U.S. government.' 'International Boycotts not Supported by the United States Government', *Columbia Research* <<https://research.columbia.edu/anti-boycott#:~:text=U.S.%20federal%20regulations%20prohibit%20the,imposed%20by%20the%20U.S.%20government>> [accessed 9 August 2024]. Agree with us, this world says — and sign it to prove your loyalty.

44 'PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE: In conversation with Samia Henni and Yasmin Abdu Bushra', *koozArch* <<https://www.koozarch.com/inter-views/practice-practice-practice-in-conversation-with-samia-henni-and-yasmin-abdu-bushra>> [accessed 9 August 2024].

45 See Lindsay Bremner, 'Border/Skin', in *Against the Wall: Israel's Barrier to Peace*, ed. by Michael Sorkin (The New Press, 2005), pp. 122–137.

— not even *close* to ours. Epistemicides, scholasticides, chronocides, genocides, urbicides... — pick a -cide, any -cide. Pick a -cide as long as it's elsewhere, not here. Those -cides (and that specific 'side') are, in turn, ways of maintaining a world, a world-order, words, and a word-order. To resist this is to resist the silencing possession — the white possessive — of a work-space, a proves-space, a mind-space, a heart-space — that this so-called normalisation demands of our allegiance, time, life, and world. This silencing, I am increasingly convinced, is a form of architectural theory, and practice.⁴⁶

I keep (personally) returning to *Reconsidering Reparations* by Professor Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò because it's just so damned good. It's so good that I'm going to spoil it for you.⁴⁷ At the top of his text, he writes:

Most worrying, we spend so much time and energy responding to others' mistakes that we lose the ability to distinguish their questions from our ours. While we produce constant criticism of aspects of the material economy that we don't like, we systematically underproduce or rush through scholarship on questions that are infinitely more important and worthy of our time and analysis. For example, what forms of social life are compatible with our flourishing? What are the root-causes — in a material and institutional sense, from a rigorous perspective — of our current problems, and which of them are alterable? How can we build algorithms, institutions, rules, laws, social movements or revolutions that do the altering?

And he ends it with this:

46 But that is a text, essay, meditation, for another time, perhaps.

47 #sorrynotsorry

Some generations plant the trees, leaving it to others to build the barrels and taste what they brew. If we can do better than this, we should. But this is enough. If we want to achieve justice, in our lifetimes, or anyone's, we should act like ancestors. For better or worse, our ancestors constructed this world in their image. We owe it to our descendants to rebuild it, in a new one.⁴⁸

So. Build a new, open world — a new *tout-mode*, a new *tout-civilisation* — and not just 'architecturally', either. Build solidarities. Build canons. Build *just* processes. *Just* transitions. Build citational justice and referential justice, and in doing so remember Chahine, 'the world is not America and England'.⁴⁹ And, I would add, neither is the *word*. Build a new logos. Build not just to be decolonial, but anti-colonial.⁵⁰ Build by refusing to scaffold the enclosed and enclosing world — and its words. Build bravely.⁵¹ Build to disenclose. Build to see. Build — and write — so that, just maybe, please, we can know how to love.

48 Olúfemi O. Táíwò, *Reconsidering Reparations* (Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 208.

49 *An Egyptian Story* (حدوتة مصرية), dir. by Chahine, 1983.

50 Max Liboiron's position on being anti-colonial rather than decolonial (which has been so broadly and limply applied to everything that it has lost its meaning) is useful. In the same interview when they assert this, they also emphasise practising values-based research. I think that this is also true for writing. See: Max Liboiron, in conversation with Spoorthy Raman, 'What it means to practise values-based research', *Nature*, 7 June 2023 <<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-01878-1>> [accessed 9 August 2024]. I was also inspired by Liboiron's disenclosure of footnoting convention, hence my own attempt at it here in re-worlding, and re-wording. See Max Liboiron, *Pollution is Colonialism* (Duke University Press, 2021).

51 See Cruz Garcia and Nathalie Frankowski, 'Cowardice as Architectural Theory', *Avery Review*, 68 <<https://averyreview.com/issues/68/cowardice-as-architectural-theory>> [accessed 11 October 2024]. Garcia and Frankowski write: 'During times of extreme colonial violence, architectural theory that systematically disengages with the critical questions of the times functions as an accessory to these unspeakable crimes. As the necropolitical architectures of human and ecological destruction — with their settlements, embassies, campuses, and checkpoints — are deployed, no position is neutral...'

Blink. The day that I wrote the last Word — *love* —
above, the official death toll in Gaza surpassed 39,722.⁵²

⁵² As of this edit (14 October 2024), the ‘official’ death toll is 42,877. Unofficial counts (through projections by *The Lancet*, for example) have it at 186,000. Others as high as 400,000 or more. 400,000 might mean, going back to Nicki Kattoura, at least 400 commas, no apostrophe s.



Fig. 2. A sign reading 'To Gaza' pointing to the left in front of a bus, 2024. Image by Emad El Byed, via Unsplash <<https://unsplash.com/photos/a-sign-pointing-to-the-right-in-front-of-a-bus-Li2i1cNzKy0>>.