

## Towards Black and Indigenous Futures

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In the midst of a global pandemic that is exacerbating conditions of uncertainty, precarity, and increasing death-tolls, the murder of George Floyd by four Minneapolis police officers has prompted a global uprising against police violence. Throughout the past several weeks, communities across the world have taken to the streets in support of the Movement for Black Lives and against the death-seeking institutions of the state. What has felt especially monumental about this movement is the increased attention upon the failures of policing that subject Black, Indigenous, and brown peoples to extreme brutality and surveillance; and the heightened awareness that policing, along with accompanying institutions, must be dismantled.

It feels as if we are on the brink of a changed world, but the question still stands: *what is the world we are working towards?* Underlying every social justice project, there rests a theory of change; that is, how change happens and what futures are desired.

The question of what world we are working towards is at the heart of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's edited volume *Towards What Justice?* This is a book that cares about diverse desires for the future, overlaps, and incommensurabilities. This is also a book that refuses justice projects that rely upon the state or any society founded on domination. Our current moment urges us to move beyond reform, which has only proved to be unsatisfactory and harmful, time and time again. Tuck and Yang (2018) turn to abolition and decolonization as projects that are more promising for Black and Indigenous futures. Although sometimes siloed, these projects share interests in contesting the state (nationalism), property (capitalism), and humanness (anthropocentrism and humanism). They demonstrate the relationships between Black and Indigenous futures.

Tina Campt, Black feminist theorist and artist, offers a tense of possibility that goes beyond a future perfect tense -- i.e. that which will have happened prior to a reference point in the future -- towards a future real conditional: that which will have *had to* happen (2017, p. 17). In a similar sense, Tuck and Yang (2018) explain that abolition and decolonization are not endpoints, nor "a promised land or future"; they are imperatives (p. 10). Abolition and decolonization are *what will have had to happen* prior to our futures. Indeed, they are what is *already happening* towards that future. Despite renderings of abolition and decolonization that are perceived as impossible, unimaginable, and philosophical, these projects are undeniably practical, living, and tangible. As evidenced in the current uprising, "these projects are happening right now" (Tuck and Yang, 2018, p. 10).

We are witnessing public interest in defunding the police and redistributing these resources into communities. Political education resources have sprung up in the form of webinars, teach-ins, reading groups, and infographics. Mutual aid networks that have always existed have strengthened amidst COVID-19 and during the protests, modeling a different way for us to be in relation and to support each other in times of ongoing state violence and neglect. Abolition and

decolonization projects have and continue to imagine and build towards a world in the absence of the state.

We return to the question, what is the world we are working towards? We desire a world where [Black lives matter on Indigenous lands](#); where Black lives and Indigenous lives are free of antiblackness, settler colonialism, and capitalism. We believe that Black liberation is impossible without the rematriation of Indigenous lands, and that Indigenous freedom is impossible without dismantling antiblack institutions, i.e., the state. This shapes our work on [The Henceforward podcast](#), a platform that considers the relationships between antiblackness and settler colonialism, and, more importantly, the interrelated work of getting free. The Henceforward features activists, artists, and scholars who are thinking beyond a settler colonial and antiblack world, and understand abolition and decolonization as always already happening and ongoing. The Henceforward is a platform where Black and Indigenous peoples consider varying visions of justice together, in real time, knowing that justice and freedom are an impossibility without thinking and sharing ideas with one another. The Henceforward is an ethic and practice of keeping each other in mind.

We are pleased that Routledge is sharing resources on abolition and decolonization, including *Towards What Justice* and *The Henceforward Podcast*. Abolition and decolonization do not simply hold currency right now -- these projects have been happening across generations and places. And they will continue to happen. We hope these resources elicit thorough engagement, and reveal both the urgency and necessity of these movements.

Prison abolitionist and Black feminist geographer, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, has said and written at different times, "[where life is precious, life is precious](#)". For us, we see her words as one possible answer to the question, what is the world we are working towards? Abolition and decolonization are projects that understand life to be precious. This is their starting place, and this is what will carry these projects into the future.

### **Works Referenced**

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