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Introduction: anti-racist scholar-activism and the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university

The seeds for this book were planted back in 2015 as we were in the final stages of completing our PhDs. Our earnestness about the potential of academia and our role as would-be academics was quickly souring into cynicism. We were deeply frustrated by what we saw as a disconnect between the university and the urgent issues of the real world: between scholarship and activism. Perhaps most of all, we were frustrated by our inability to navigate academia in a way that bridged that gap and allowed us to put our scholarship to work in service to social justice generally, and anti-racism specifically. As we have come to know the university more intimately, much of our initial cynicism has not only endured but deepened. That said, we have become more attentive to the contradictions in the university system, the pockets of hope and possibility we might exploit. We have also become more aware of, and inspired by, the work and praxes of those who occupy the margins of the university, finding ways to combine scholarship and activism – that is, those who we might think of as scholar-activists.

It is the perspectives and experiences of twenty-nine such people that we centre in this book; a book that delves into the complexities, complicities, challenges, and possibilities associated with anti-racist scholar-activism. The book reflects growing interest in scholar-activism in recent years, as

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seen in the upswell of blogs, events, and conferences on this topic. This is not to say that the practice of anti-racist scholar-activism is new. Far from it, it has a long and rich lineage. Yet, while there are many academics involved in anti-racist activism 'on the ground' and activism has underpinned the radical scholarship of anti-racist academics past and present, very few have taken the praxes of anti-racist scholar-activism itself as their substantive subject matter, particularly beyond the US context. We think it is time to take anti-racist scholar-activism seriously as a subject of intellectual inquiry, not simply to fill a gap in knowledge, for that alone is a poor reason to do research. Rather, the current national and international higher education (HE) context demands our collective response. The advancing pace of neoliberalism; the imperial academy's long history of reproducing structural violence and its deepening commitment to its courtship with the State; its suffocating institutional racism, in particular – all mean it is time that anti-racist scholar-activism moves its resistance from the margins to the centre. We therefore build upon the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) mobilisations of 2020, and the wide-ranging activisms taking place on HE campuses across the world, to give renewed attention to the university as a site of, and space from which we can engage in, anti-racist struggle.

This book makes three key interrelated interventions. Firstly, building on rich traditions of anti-racist scholarship and activism, we offer a new empirically informed perspective on what anti-racist scholar-activism means today – one that pushes beyond simplistic common-sense understandings in order to problematise and complicate the term. We suggest that it is better to think of scholar-activism as a verb rather than scholar-activist as a noun – that is, as something we do, rather than something we are. We show that anti-racist scholar-activism is anchored by a counter-hegemonic notion of working *in service* to communities of resistance,¹ and to anti-racism more broadly. Secondly, in considering the institutional context in which university-based scholar-activism is situated, we critique what we refer to as

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the *neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university* from the standpoint of anti-racist scholar-activism. We explore how, mediated by technologies of neoliberalism, the university imposes a range of barriers, challenges, and – what we conceive of as – forms of *backlash* upon those engaged in anti-racist scholar-activism. Our contention is that despite the hegemony of these forces, there remain pockets of contradiction and possibility within the contemporary university. Applying the little-known concept of *constructive complicity* to the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university context, we show how those engaged in scholar-activism seek to exploit these pockets of possibility to (partially) mitigate, offset, and utilise the complicities that arise from affiliating with institutional power for the benefit of anti-racism. Thirdly, and related to the last point, we consider the wide-ranging ways that anti-racist scholar-activists can and do exploit the contradictions of the university. These include but are not limited to: the redirecting of resources – a praxis we call *reparative theft*; the production of work *in service* to communities of resistance; and *struggling where we are*. The latter is a concept that we develop based on a passing comment from the Jamaican-born pre-eminent public intellectual Stuart Hall in order to explore critical pedagogy, the union, and campus agitation.² Along the way, and with extensive reference to wider literatures (which we encourage the reader to follow),³ we delineate some key principles that we argue guide anti-racist scholar-activism: we return to them in our manifesto for anti-racist scholar-activism.

Despite advancing a trenchant critique of contemporary HE, this book is written with a cautious optimism about the opportunities it presents for anti-racist resistance, and specifically for anti-racist scholar-activism. We follow Stuart Hall in practising ‘pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will’.⁴ We are deeply frustrated by the state of the world and of our universities. Yet, we are committed to finding the openings that we can exploit; to fighting back; to putting our resources, status, and privileges to work in service to anti-racism. In this respect, we draw influence from

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what the American historian Robin D.G. Kelley refers to as *freedom dreaming*.⁵ To freedom dream is to embrace a politics which has 'more to do with imagining a different future than being pissed off about the present', though the latter certainly holds strong. This dreaming of a better world is not entirely abstract, but rather is built out of a long history of Black resistance. It is a recovery of the scraps and fragmentary visions left behind by revolutionaries. In this book, we combine the insights of our participants with the lessons of activists, intellectuals, and movements that have gone before us, as well as some of our own reflections forged through practice. In doing so, we seek to intersperse our more despondent arguments with the piecing together of shards of hope that map out a vision for anti-racist scholar-activism in the contemporary moment.

Although we want this book to have utility outside of academia, we recognise that it will likely be of interest to academics and students primarily. In the first instance, we hope that the ideas we present will resonate with those already involved in anti-racism, as well as other forms of radical activism. Remembering that we are all always developing, we hope the participants' accounts that we feature will encourage reflexivity and collective considerations of how we might all refine our praxes. This process of learning and refining has certainly been (and will continue to be) part of our journey. We also hope the book will be of interest to those who may not consider themselves to practise scholar-activism but nonetheless engage in, or are open to, academic approaches that cross-cut with some of the praxes we explore in this book: public intellectuals, critical pedagogues, and those involved in critical, engaged, and applied approaches to research, for example. There may be other readers who adopt more traditional approaches within academia, for whom this book may be discomforting. We only hope that it will be read with an open mind and in the good spirit with which it is intended – that is, with a view to encouraging more academics to adopt praxes that serve anti-racism, but also recognising and appreciating the small acts of good practice that

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many academics – not just scholar-activists – are already engaged in. Throughout the book, we offer small examples of this good practice to show that all of us can embed scholar-activist principles into our praxis, even those of us who have until now been compelled to invest energy in simply surviving in a racist, sexist, classist, ableist, and heteronormative academia,⁶ or have had our horizons narrowed by the metric culture that is becoming omnipresent in universities across much of the world.⁷ In this regard, *Anti-racist scholar-activism* is not intended merely to demarcate and divide but to foster a spirit of collectivity that urges readers to ‘resurrect a language of resistance and possibility’.⁸

Whilst this book should be informative for those thinking about how to practise scholar-activism, we should be clear that this is not a simple ‘how to’ manual: it is not intended to be prescriptive. Although we offer some glimpses of praxes, we are deliberate in avoiding a descent into overly specific and particularised examples, or case studies. We want to resist overdetermining scholar-activism. That said, we endeavour to provide a broad set of ideas, principles, and frameworks that can be taken up, interpreted, and applied by different people, in different contexts, and in different ways. We delineate these principles throughout the book, before returning to them in our manifesto for anti-racist scholar-activism, the book’s final chapter. We are sure that some ideas and praxes will resonate with some readers more than others because there is no one way to do scholar-activism. We also recognise that some of what we map out will be up for debate. With this in mind, we look forward to seeing the ideas advanced and refined, and challenged (in good faith, of course) elsewhere.

In the following pages of this chapter, we identify three key coordinates within which we locate and contextualise anti-racist scholar-activism – that is, anti-racism, scholar-activism, and the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university. These coordinates provide the backdrop for the exploration of anti-racist scholar-activism that we go on to articulate in this book.

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We will take each in turn, and then afterwards briefly discuss the research underpinning the book and provide an overview of its structure.

Anti-racism in Britain

Anti-racism, as Scarlet Harris explains, has rarely been regarded as a subject of ‘serious intellectual interest’,⁹ despite the existence of a sizable and growing body of scholarship on race, ethnicity, and racism. It is, therefore, an ill-defined, as well as fluid concept.¹⁰ Common-sense definitions tend to construct anti-racism as the inverse of racism. Yet, despite their seductive simplicity,¹¹ these definitions are, as Alastair Bonnett notes, inadequate.¹² Such definitions narrow the scope of the complex and diverse forms of resistance that have emerged under the name of anti-racism, whilst also obscuring the loaded and contested nature of the term. Adam Elliott-Cooper points to some of the messiness of anti-racism when he notes how anti-racist academics and activists grapple with the tension that exists between confronting racial inequities on the one hand, and avoiding the reproduction or essentialising of race on the other.¹³

Anti-racist resistance in Britain has a vast and complex history, which makes it impossible to speak about anti-racism ‘as a unitary or unproblematic phenomenon.’¹⁴ What is referred to as anti-racism is characterised by heterogeneity. Alana Lentin highlights three key strands that have been formative in the development of British anti-racism. Firstly, emerging in the 1960s, was a ‘solidaristic anti-racism’ tied closely to trade unions and Left-wing movements. The concerns and foci of this strand of anti-racism were largely confined to opposing far-Right groups. Secondly, in the 1970s, came forms of anti-racism inspired by Black Power. Insistent on the self-organisation of people of colour, or *politically Black* communities,¹⁵ this form of anti-racism was key to the development of a vocabulary and framework that understands racism as an *institutional* problem that is driven and perpetuated by the State.¹⁶ John Narayan has shown how

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the anti-racism of British Black Power not only sought to unite African, Caribbean, and Asian people in Britain but also ‘conjoined explanations of domestic racism with issues of imperialism and global inequality’.¹⁷

A third key form of anti-racism emerged in the 1980s, particularly through local Labour Party administrations. This tradition, referred to by Paul Gilroy as ‘municipal anti-racism’,¹⁸ reified ethnic groups in ways that undermined the solidarity of political Blackness and pitted different ethnic groups against one another. It also advanced depoliticised, individualistic, and psychologically based understandings of racism – that is, racism as individual prejudice. Such understandings marked a stark divergence from the institutional understandings advanced in the Black Power tradition but were perhaps more compatible (in a relative sense) with the far-Right focused anti-racism of the ‘white Left’.¹⁹ As Jenny Bourne articulates, in this period ‘[t]he anti-racist struggle moved from the streets to the town halls where it became detached from the larger struggle for social justice and, under the heavy hand of management, froze into a series of techniques to achieve “equal opportunity”’.²⁰ In doing so, municipal anti-racism created ‘a cadre of anti-racism professionals’²¹ and fed a booming race relations industry.²²

Despite emerging at different moments, these three forms of anti-racism have not been discrete or isolated. Indeed, it is the coalescence and antagonisms of these traditions that make the history (and present) of British anti-racism so complex and heterogeneous. Shaped by this history, there are at least two overlapping elements that lie at the heart of contemporary British anti-racism that are worth (re)highlighting here. The first concerns proximity to the State and, relatedly, the extent to which the State is seen as part of the problem or the solution. In this regard, Alana Lentin has suggested that the key tensions in British anti-racism are perhaps not between activist groups (though there are, of course, many tensions) but between the versions of ‘anti-racism’ practised by State institutions on the one hand, and those practised by activist and

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community groups on the other.²³ The second element – relatedly – concerns understandings of racism, and specifically whether racism is understood as a problem of individual attitudes, prejudice, and bigotry, or as an institutional and structural issue. As Alana Lentin argues, ‘British anti-racism can be said to be shaped by the split between the oppositional interpretations of racism as either institutionally engendered or as a set of behavioural attitudes.’²⁴ This question of understanding racism is fundamentally important not only in its own right but because it shapes the nature of anti-racist interventions.

Reflecting on the contemporary moment, Liz Fekete – director of the radical British think tank the *Institute of Race Relations* – makes observations reminiscent of Lentin’s. She argues that whilst once established by grassroots groups, the anti-racist agenda is now largely set by a multi-agency ‘professionalised’ industry that responds to racism via hate-crime panels and anti-extremism bodies comprised of State, private, and voluntary sector organisations. This industry, like municipal anti-racism before it, operates to delegitimise ‘social movements that take a more transformative, radical approach’, and locks ‘out from the discussion all those who campaign against structural racism.’²⁵ This marginalising of those engaged in the more radical, structural, and institutional-focused anti-racist traditions has occurred over several decades but surfaced particularly prominently as we write in 2021.

Commissioned in response to the BLM protests of 2020 and published in the Spring of 2021, the UK government’s Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report (the Sewell Report) provoked strong criticism from anti-racist communities (and beyond) for, alongside other reasons,²⁶ its attack on the concept of institutional racism. It came as little surprise to many that the report reached conclusions that pushed strongly against the concept, and thus the thrust of the global BLM movement which, at least in part, centred on the persistence of institutional racism. After all, the report’s author (Tony Sewell) and the influential Conservative tasked

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with setting up the Commission, Munira Mirza, had both previously downplayed, if not outright denied, the presence of institutional racism.²⁷ Though we are reluctant to give much attention to such a problematic report, the implications of its findings are instructive of the contemporary landscape for anti-racism. As the *Institute of Race Relations* notes, 'where racism in Britain is acknowledged in the report, the emphasis is placed on online abuse, which is very much in line with the wider drift in British politics and society away from understanding racism in terms of structural factors and locating it instead in prejudice and bigotry'.²⁸ The downplaying and denial of institutional racism diverges notably from the findings of the 1999 Macpherson Report, commissioned by the then UK Home Secretary Jack Straw into the police (mis)handling of the murder of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence. The Macpherson Report, limited as it was,²⁹ highlighted institutional racism in the investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence and, in doing so, brought institutional racism into the mainstream of political and popular discourse on race in Britain. The Sewell Report is but the latest example of a concerted effort to lash back against the findings of the Macpherson Report, the concept of institutional racism, and the radical anti-racist tradition.

To be clear, we are not suggesting here that the Sewell Report is an anti-racist report in even the more municipal anti-racist sense. Rather, we are suggesting that the report is instructive because, although it may represent an attack on anti-racism more broadly, it is an attack on more radical, institutionally focused forms of anti-racism in particular. It attempts, therefore, to confine the scope of anti-racism, if not absolutely, at least to its individual-focused forms. But whilst the report's symbolic (and the likely ensuing material and political) implications paint a pessimistic picture for the more radical institutionally focused anti-racist traditions, this is only a partial picture. The widespread opposition to and rejection of the report, particularly amongst anti-racist activists and organisations, is indicative of an enduring tradition that holds more critical (structural)

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understandings of racism, a tradition evident to a certain extent in the 2020 BLM protests. Our point here then is that although anti-racism is fraught and complex – and though more liberal, municipal anti-racism may be in the ascendency – the radical tradition forged through the Black Power era lives on.

Given the ascendency of municipal anti-racism in the 1980s, it is perhaps no surprise that Paul Gilroy, writing in the 1990s, decried ‘the end of anti-racism.’³⁰ It was in a similar vein that the UK-based intellectual, activist, and once director (1973–2013) of the *Institute for Race Relations*, Ambalavaner Sivanandan, urged us to take up Black Liberation as ‘a richer and more long-term project of emancipation than that offered by what was perceived as the narrow confines of anti-racism.’³¹ Despite these fervent critiques, and the complex history of anti-racism in Britain, we feel strongly that ‘anti-racism’ should not be abandoned as a term. It need not be reduced to its more narrowly defined and depoliticising incarnations, and there are a multitude of examples of activism and scholarship that continue in its radical spirit. Moreover, its declining use in municipal and institutional settings – often overridden instead by discourses of diversity, equality and inclusion, and unconscious bias – increases the opportunity for its reclamation.

As we will go on to demonstrate throughout the book, despite some nuanced differences in understandings of anti-racism, each of the twenty-nine participants situates their work in the radical, self-organising, and emancipatory traditions of anti-racism – that is, traditions that view racism as a structurally and institutionally embedded phenomenon that is State-driven, historically rooted, and intimately tied to legacies of imperialism and colonialism. Following our participants, the anti-racism to which we refer is also one that is inextricably linked to other resistance movements – a point we consider in more depth, and through a Black feminist lens, in the next section of this chapter. Like Fekete, we understand anti-racism to be most powerful when it is cross-community – when solidarity cuts

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across race and class divides, and is local, national, *and* international in nature – and to be most persuasive when it is ‘tailored towards specific interventions.’³² Our participants are involved in interventions focused on a range of issues and areas, including: policing; prisons; immigration and the hostile environment;³³ education; Islamophobia; legal frameworks such as the UK government’s counter-terrorism strategy, Prevent;³⁴ housing; work and labour rights; and a range of others. Although we avoid descending too deeply into specific and particularised examples in this book, the nature of these interventions no doubt informs the perspectives of our participants and the arguments we set out in *Anti-racist scholar-activism*.

Anti-racist scholar-activism: tracing its foundations

In existing literature, (university-based) scholar-activism refers to the dual role occupied by academics who combine scholarship and activism in the pursuit of social justice.³⁵ In some respects, it describes an approach that is vastly different to, perhaps even antithetical to, traditional approaches within academia; one which seeks to harness the power and resources of universities for activist groups and/or communities,³⁶ and is embedded in and forged through involvement in resistance movements.³⁷ Yet in other ways, specific praxes of scholar-activism might overlap with other approaches within academia. With this in mind, we tread a fine line in the pages that follow between employing a definition of scholar-activism that is so narrow it draws upon idealised versions of activism and one that is so broad it overinflates the concept, making it vacuous and empty of definitional power.

We use the term scholar-activism in this book because it is both commonly used and widely understood. Moreover, despite its problematics – which we come to in the next chapter – scholar-activism was the term most favoured by our participants. We acknowledge, however, that what is invoked through the term scholar-activism, and what we have described

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above, overlaps significantly with a range of other terms in existing literature and discourse. As such, we adopt ‘scholar-activism’ in an expansive sense in order to capture something of the essence of a range of related terms, including Patricia Hill Collins’s *intellectual activist*,³⁸ Walter Rodney’s *guerrilla intellectual*,³⁹ Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s *subversive intellectual*,⁴⁰ and a range of variants including *activist scholar*,⁴¹ *academic activist*,⁴² and *activist academic*.⁴³ We use the expansive term scholar-activism to also capture the even more subtle distinctions that are drawn, often through punctuation, to signify different emphases.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the nuances and different inflections of these terms, there are significant similarities in their defining characteristics and the forms of praxes they encourage. Furthermore, some of the conceptual work underpinning these other terms, as you will see, informs our theorisation of anti-racist scholar-activism in this book. Although this literature is instructive, our task in this book is to explicate more clearly the particular forms that *anti-racist* scholar-activism takes. In order to do this – and to locate the work of our participants in a longer genealogy that extends beyond those using related terms – here we want to touch upon some of the key tenets that underpin the radical scholarship and praxes of some of the seminal figures whose work has shaped the vision of anti-racist scholar-activism that we go on to capture in this book.

Whilst myths of objectivity and neutrality characterise traditional academic practice, more radical work, particularly within feminist and anti-racist traditions, has insisted on the importance of rejecting neutrality in favour of taking up the side of oppressed communities. This is the first tenet we want to highlight. The African American intellectual and activist W.E.B. Du Bois captured this orientation most powerfully when he reflected that ‘one could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist while Negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved’.⁴⁵ The message that Du Bois conveys is that there is simply too much at stake to engage in pretensions of neutrality. Moreover, such pretensions are ignorant (in the

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racial epistemological sense)⁴⁶ to the unequal nature of the status quo. It is this to which the US revolutionary Black activist and academic Angela Y. Davis refers, in her oft-cited words: ‘in a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist’. As we go on to argue in this book, rather than undermining academic rigour, the explicitly political and partisan nature of anti-racist scholar-activism offers a higher level of integrity and honesty than scholarship that purports to be objective. It makes clear – rather than hides – the assumptions and positions that underpin scholarship. It represents a stronger conviction for ‘fact finding, bearing witness and truth telling’⁴⁷ that is tested and refined through engagement in resistance. This brings us to our next point.

The relationship between theory and action is central to the tradition that we want to delineate here and is, therefore, the focus of our second tenet. As Sivanandan urged us, we must not simply think for thinking’s sake, but think in order to do.⁴⁸ This emphasis on doing was similarly central to Frantz Fanon’s assertion (referencing Marx) that ‘what matters is not to know the world, but to change it’,⁴⁹ as well as to the claim made by Fred Hampton – the former chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party – that ‘theory with no practice ain’t shit’. These statements should not be misread as disavowals of theory. Rather, they point to a particular approach to theorising. The work of the Black feminist intellectual bell hooks is particularly instructive in this regard: she reminds us of the importance of theory, pushing us towards a richer understanding of the liberatory purpose that theory can serve.⁵⁰ With the relationship between theory and action in mind, and drawing upon the Brazilian critical pedagogue Paulo Freire, we use the concept of *praxis* throughout this book in order to capture the dialectic between ‘reflection and action.’⁵¹ Always with a view to social transformation, the concept of praxis is underpinned by and informing of theorisation.

Related to the understanding that better scholarship is produced when it is informed by struggle, the third tenet we want to put forward pertains

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to embeddedness. As the Guyanese Pan-Africanist Walter Rodney insists, spending time outside of university campuses with those engaged in resistance is of fundamental importance: sitting down with, listening to, and learning from – that is, grounding with – one another.⁵² Antonio Gramsci pushes this a little further in his vision of the *radical organic intellectual*.⁵³ Whilst the conservative intellectual acts as an agent of the status quo – identifying with ‘the dominant relations of power’ in society and in turn becoming ‘propagators of its ideologies and values’⁵⁴ – the radical organic intellectual is directly involved in counter-hegemonic struggle on the side of the oppressed. Such involvement can lead to greater recognition that knowledge is produced by ‘the people’, as the Colombian early adopter of action research Orlando Fals-Borda insists.⁵⁵ Similar lessons can be drawn from Black feminism.⁵⁶ Central to scholar-activism, therefore, is theorisation ‘from below’. In this regard, anti-racist scholar-activism should not involve doing work *on* oppressed communities. Rather, as we discuss in [Chapter 2](#), it should entail meaningful engagement *with* and embeddedness *within* what Sivanandan calls communities of resistance.

A fourth tenet informing the vision of anti-racist scholar-activism that we are articulating relates back to some of the issues we noted earlier in relation to the history of anti-racism. Here, we advance an understanding of race as being internal to and intersecting with other structures of oppression. As Stuart Hall once said, ‘I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory. I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialised.’⁵⁷ In this sense, race is better understood not as a ‘thing’ in and of itself, but rather as internal to all social processes.⁵⁸ Conceived of in this way, race ought not to be seen as a ‘rival’ variable to class. Indeed, as the Pan-African Marxist revolutionary C.L.R. James teaches us, race is not incidental to class any more than class is incidental to race.⁵⁹ Thus, just as Western Marxism should continue to be challenged for its failure to understand the struggle of Black people globally,⁶⁰ so too should the ‘growing number of self-styled activist-intellectuals’ who adopt

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‘racial politics that reduce the structure of the modern world to a single immutable antagonism: between blackness and anti-blackness.’⁶¹

A consideration of racism and its intersections is foundational to Black feminist thought, which points us towards more incisive forms of anti-racism that are better equipped to grapple with the complexities of the task at hand. Black feminism rejects ‘additive approaches to oppression’⁶² in favour of analysis that considers how race, gender, class, and other structuring forces form an ‘overarching system of domination,’⁶³ in what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as the *matrix of domination*. This concept is integral to our arguments in this book. By rejecting the reduction of people to ‘one category at a time,’ an intersectional lens engenders recognition of the relationality of social positions, as well as the power relations that are constituted by and are constituent of those positions.⁶⁴ This approach is essential in anti-racist movements since, as the radical thinker and activist Andaiye reminds us through her reflection on the Working People’s Alliance in Guyana, too often our movements privilege male and middle-class leadership over women’s and working-class leadership. This is despite the fact that, as contemporary work attests, anti-racist campaigns are often led by Black women.⁶⁵

A fifth tenet that we want to spotlight here is the importance attributed within scholar-activist traditions to communicating knowledge outside of the academy. Once again, we can take our instruction from the late Stuart Hall who saw the ‘communication of ideas to as wide an audience as possible’ to be a paramount necessity.⁶⁶ Central to scholar-activism is a repudiation of the locking of knowledge into the university and the simultaneous mechanisms of exclusion that function to lock communities out. A similar level of attentiveness is paid to communication by Patricia Hill Collins, who, in her theorisation of intellectual activism, urges us to adopt two key strategies. The first relates to *speaking truth to power*, which requires us to use the power of knowledge to ‘confront existing power relations’ within society.⁶⁷ The second, *speaking truth to the people*, involves

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bypassing the powerful – and thus, conserving energy – to speak with those whom Collins calls ‘the masses’.⁶⁸ Key here is the idea of operating on multiple registers – that is, of maintaining a focus on challenging the matrix of domination, without losing sight of how the greatest potential for social justice resides not with those occupying positions of (institutional) power but within communities of resistance.

The last tenet we want to draw upon here emerges from Black Studies, and particularly Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s formative work on *The Undercommons*.⁶⁹ Pointing to the contradictions and tensions associated with working in the university, Harney and Moten emphasise the importance of being ‘in but not of’ the institution. As they do so, they nod to the possibilities brought about through our affiliation with the university,⁷⁰ whilst more forcefully urging the *subversive intellectual* to remain critical of the university as a neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist space. We are to remember not only that our priorities lie outside of the university, but that they are often oppositional to those of the university. With this in mind, the task of the subversive intellectual is to undermine the university or, in Harney and Moten’s terms, to ‘spite its mission.’⁷¹ As the US sociologist Steven Osuna implores, we should ‘exploit the contradictions of the system in order to ... organise against it’;⁷² we should put our affiliation with institutional power to good use.

Although these tenets are non-exhaustive, and there are others that we draw out as the book progresses, they offer an insight into some of the key influences on contemporary anti-racist scholar-activism as we conceive of it. We do not intend to suggest that each of the tenets are unique to anti-racist scholar-activism. Indeed, commonalities exist between anti-racist and other forms of scholar-activism, such that we hope some of the ideas contained in this book will resonate with those engaged in resistance movements that centre gender, disability, class, and sexuality. We and our participants have certainly taken lessons from these other movements. Indeed, taking intersectionality seriously requires approaches that are attentive to each

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of these issues and we hope that the anti-racist scholar-activist praxes we unpack are demonstrative of such attentiveness. Moreover, scholar-activism is also not alone in its counter-hegemonic approach. Critical or applied approaches to scholarship have strong foundations not only in the social sciences and humanities but across a range of disciplines, and yet, in ways both fundamental and subtle, are different to scholar-activism, as should become clearer throughout the book. The same could be said of public intellectualism. As important and overlapping as such approaches are, they are perhaps less insistent on the 'talk-plus-walk'⁷³ of scholar-activism – that is, its engagement in struggle and embeddedness within communities of resistance.⁷⁴ Some might argue that what we have articulated in this section and what we go on to unpack across the book is simply good academic practice. Though we would not disagree, we hold that such good practice rubs against the hegemony of, and hegemonic practice within, the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university.

The neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university: an overview

Throughout this book, we refer to British universities as neoliberal, imperial, and institutionally racist, or as neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist. In this section, we begin to set out why. Despite their outward projection as spaces of enlightenment and bastions of progressiveness, universities are neither democratic nor meritocratic spaces.⁷⁵ They are not – and never have been – open, equal, or levelling. Rather, as Osuna – writing in the Black Radical tradition – reminds us, they are a key apparatus in the maintenance of a deeply unequal order.⁷⁶ Fundamental to the contemporary maintenance of that order is neoliberalism: that which 'seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market.'⁷⁷ Neoliberalism has had, and at an accelerating pace continues to have, a profound impact upon HE. As the hegemonic discourse, its reach extends beyond the economy

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into social, cultural, and political domains, disseminating ‘market values and metrics to every sphere of life.’⁷⁸ Neoliberalism’s ubiquity and deep-embeddedness in HE means that it is taken for granted as the norm, making its various manifestations difficult to pinpoint.⁷⁹ There are, however, several elements that are worth highlighting for the purposes of this book.

Perhaps most fundamental to the neoliberalisation of universities is the attack on and subsequent demise of the concept of the ‘public good’ (a concept that we will go on to trouble shortly), such that HE – subjected to the market – has been repositioned as a commodity.⁸⁰ The effects of this shift are far-reaching. In particular, the devastating impacts of the introduction of student fees in the UK in 1998, and the subsequent hikes in 2004 and 2012, cannot be overestimated. The message behind the removal of public funding, as Holmwood explains, is that education should be regarded as an investment, the rewards of which will be returned upon graduation into the labour market.⁸¹ Yet in reality, university becomes a financial risk that, for some, is not worth taking. Other young people find themselves saddled with crippling debt, made worse by the abolition of grants for low-income students. They graduate into a saturated labour market. Through fees, and tangled up with the erosion of the notion of ‘public good’, students have become customers, their education a service that they purchase, and universities and the academics that work within them the service providers.⁸²

This consumer–producer dynamic is reified further still by the omnipresence of ‘performance indicators linked to customer satisfaction and human capital formation.’⁸³ In the UK, students are encouraged via the National Student Survey to rate the ‘quality’ of their teaching, their course, and their university, with the broader neoliberal context of HE making value for money an implicit consideration. The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), following a 2016 UK government White Paper, promised to promote teaching excellence and empower student decision making around which course to enrol on.⁸⁴ Institutions are

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incentivised to perform well in the TEF through the promise that the best performers can raise tuition fees.⁸⁵ As Liz Morrish argues, however, as a neoliberal technology of surveillance and control, TEF 'is only marginally interested in teaching quality'.⁸⁶ Rather than improving the experiences of students in HE, these metric-driven processes have been shown to discourage pedagogical practices that facilitate deeper and more democratic learning, depoliticise the classroom, and lead educators to become preoccupied with metrics to the detriment of promoting real learning.⁸⁷

The role of metrics in HE is 'extensive and wide-ranging', even beyond those related to teaching, such that Feldman and Sandoval suggest that 'metric power' is a dominant structuring logic.⁸⁸ Much like its predecessor the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF) represents another technology of neoliberalism which attempts to make universities and academics accountable via the market. Coordinated by the funding councils of the devolved nations,⁸⁹ the REF 'produces a powerful league table by which British universities' fiscal and reputation health is (re)produced'.⁹⁰ Despite its dominance, criticisms of the REF abound; not least of these concerns its vast cost in economic terms (£246 million for REF2014), and in terms of academic time and labour.⁹¹ Other critiques focus on its attempt to 'impose a single set of narrowly defined norms' to measure the 'success' of all academic research.⁹² As such, those working at the margins of academic disciplines and those producing 'non-traditional' research are disadvantaged,⁹³ a point that is significant in terms of our focus on anti-racist scholar-activism in this book. As Olssen notes:

Not only does it place too much emphasis on research productivity and performativity, it militates against 'blue skies' research, encourages dubious research tactics and strategies for maximising publications, citations and team-based research, and from the individual researcher's viewpoint over-encourages conformity to the system of external expectations concerning research.⁹⁴

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Unsurprisingly, then, the REF reproduces a culture of high-stakes competition amongst HE institutions and academics, which is understood to stymie scholarship, and negatively affect staff morale and well-being.⁹⁵

The most significant difference between the REF and its predecessor the RAE is its *formally required* assessment of non-academic ‘Impact’, which refers to the (social, economic, political, cultural) effects or ‘benefits’ research has beyond academia.⁹⁶ As we explore throughout this book, institutionalised notions of the REF Impact and the embedded ‘bottom-up’ approach to research adopted by scholar-activists may at times – often fleetingly – cross-cut, but we want to be clear here that we do not claim that these things are one and the same. We see Impact as a further attempt to marketise research. There are, for example, significant problems with how Impact is defined and measured, which in turn encourages ‘gaming’⁹⁷ whereby the successful *performance* of Impact is prioritised over the real benefit to communities and publics. As Horton argues, institutionalised Impact leads to a valuing of ‘unabashedly substantial, muscular, large-scale, self-confident’ forms of Impact that are ‘readily narratable as such.’⁹⁸ Given that the REF is often directly tied to career prospects,⁹⁹ the Impact agenda also shapes what is researched and dictates ‘what researchers must do,’¹⁰⁰ encouraging short-termist approaches and ‘safe topics.’¹⁰¹

Problems with HE did not, however, merely arise from the neoliberal turn. Western universities have historically been, and continue today to be, located within a ‘network of state apparatuses of control, discipline, surveillance, carcerality, and violence.’¹⁰² It is in this regard that we, following the educationalist Darren Webb, regard HE to be imperial in nature. To say that the university is imperial is to reject the myth of exceptionalism which sees the university as sitting above the unequal power relations that pervade society. It is to recognise the university as an active reproducer of those power relations, particularly as they manifest along racial and colonial lines. An imperial rendering of the university dispels any illusions that HE exists for the public good. Instead, the university is:

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a site for trialling new forms of oppression and exploitation, an institution intimately involved in the reproduction of inequalities ... a corrupt and criminal institution complicit in patriarchal, colonial and racist systems and processes; a criminal institution comparable to the police as a racialized, gendered and class-based force of authority, surveillance, enforcement and enactments of everyday patterns of structural violence.¹⁰³

Whilst an imperial rendering of the university dispels any illusion that the contemporary university exists for the public good, a historically attentive rendering also begins to contest the notion that the university *once* existed for the public good. As Dalia Gebrial urges, if we engage critically with ‘how the university has historically produced, sustained and justified violence and domination across the world’, we can begin to understand that universities have never been truly public, or at least have only been good for some publics.¹⁰⁴

Seeing the inequalities that pervade HE as part of a historical process enables us to better recognise the imperial and colonial origins of Western universities. It allows us to see HE institutions as key sites ‘through which colonialism – and colonial knowledge in particular – is produced, consecrated, institutionalised and naturalised.’¹⁰⁵ After all, Western universities served both as incubators for and propagators of theories of ‘scientific racism’ which sought to preserve and improve the genetic quality of the white race, and establish the ‘positional superiority’¹⁰⁶ of Europeans. As Bhambra, Gebrial, and Nişancıoğlu argue, Western universities in turn also provided the ‘ethical and intellectual grounds’ for colonial endeavours that supported the ‘dispossession, oppression and domination of colonial subjects.’¹⁰⁷ If we avoid constructing colonialism narrowly as settler-colonialism, we can also see how research and knowledge became a colonial commodity. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith shows, the ‘collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West,

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back to those who have been colonized.¹⁰⁸ In this sense, the knowledge of indigenous peoples was transformed into ‘new’ knowledge – new scientific discoveries – by the West, reaffirming the West’s self-construction as the governor of legitimate knowledge.¹⁰⁹

Though the British Empire has largely fallen, in its formal vestiges at least, the legacies of imperialism and colonialism continue to fundamentally shape the academy (as well as wider society) today, including through its institutional and disciplinary cultures, values, practices, and processes.¹¹⁰ Indeed, as Bhambra, Gebrial, and Nişancıoğlu contend, ‘knowledge remains principally governed by the West for the West’ and continues to ‘reproduce and justify colonial hierarchies’. We also continue to see the multitude of ways (some of which we outline below) in which the university remains a key site in the enactment of structural inequalities and violence. It is particularly effective in doing so precisely because of its hegemonic construction as a liberal, progressive institution.¹¹¹ The academy maintains this construction in spite of – perhaps as a consequence of – its sanitisation and inhabitation of social movements and dissenting voices¹¹² – an observation particularly pertinent to our focus in this book. Yet we must be clear, the imperial university has long since been a site for struggle.

Whereas we use ‘imperial’ to look outwards from the university, to locate it within a web of oppressive forces and as an actor in the maintenance of racial capitalism’s structural inequalities, we use ‘institutionally racist’ to describe the conditions within the university.¹¹³ Of course, this separation is rarely so clear in practice – the imperial may capture the power dynamics within the university too. We use ‘institutionally racist’ and ‘imperial’, however, to maintain an emphasis on both these internal and external elements. Institutional racism is a concept introduced by Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton in their 1967 seminal work, *Black Power*, and subsequently taken up by activists – in the radical anti-racist tradition – in the British context. It was popularised further still – albeit in an inadequate form¹¹⁴ – following its inclusion in the findings of the

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aforementioned Macpherson Report into the police (mis)handling of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. As Ture and Hamilton contend, compared with interpersonal racism, institutional forms are 'less overt, far more subtle, [and] less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts.'¹¹⁵ Sivanandan adds that they reside 'covertly or overtly ... in the policies, procedures, operations and cultures of institutions ... reinforcing individual prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn.'¹¹⁶

In the early 2000s, the State pressured HE institutions in the UK to address the disadvantages faced by both 'BME' (Black and Minority Ethnic) staff and students. Yet despite race equality legislation and widening participation initiatives, HE continues to be a deeply unequal space.¹¹⁷ Indeed, pointing to how processes of racialisation shape hiring and promotion practices, people of colour remain underrepresented amongst academic staff generally and the professoriate specifically. They are more likely to hold temporary contracts, and Black staff face a pay gap of 14% compared to their white colleagues.¹¹⁸ Students of colour are underrepresented at 'elite' universities, continue to face an awarding gap on their degrees,¹¹⁹ and are less likely to study at postgraduate level. A report by Leading Routes – a UK-based initiative that aims to strengthen the academic pipeline for Black students – found that of the almost 20,000 UKRI¹²⁰ scholarships for PhD students awarded between 2016 and 2018, only 1.2% were awarded to Black or Black mixed-race students.¹²¹ Both staff and students of colour are also subject to racialised securitisation and surveillance, including as part of the hostile environment on university campuses and under the UK government's counter-terrorism duty, Prevent. Creating a climate of fear, the latter functions as a form of censorship of critical discussions around racism, Islamophobia, and counter-terrorism policy.¹²² All the while, HE continues to be dominated by white US-Eurocentric scholarship.

Following Sivanandan's understandings of racism, we must view the institutional racism in HE policies, procedures, and cultures outlined above

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as being reinforced by, and reinforcing, the everyday interpersonal racism that is so widely evidenced as being endemic within the university setting. Yet there is also a need to resist the (narrow) defining of racism in HE as acts of bigotry and the ascription of culpability at the level of the individual, as is commonplace in the neoliberal 'post-racial' epoch.¹²³ Indeed, if we view racism only in its explicit forms, the structuring conditions of race are readily repudiated and the 'complex entrenched institutionalised'¹²⁴ racism within HE becomes easier to ignore. As Harper shows, there is a widespread culture of dismissal of racism within HE, with scholars relying on 'anything but racism' to explain away the racialised disparities that manifest in policies, procedures, and working practices.¹²⁵ This is symptomatic of a trend in liberal societies in which 'colour-blind' logic abounds.

The anti-racist scholar-activist praxes we explore in this book are no doubt shaped by the particularities of the institutional context we have outlined in this section. As intimated, our use of hyphenation in describing the 'neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist' university represents an attempt to resist a simplistic narrative and to note the simultaneous, overlapping, and interconnecting ways in which these forces operate. Whilst it is essential that we avoid glossing over the particularities that arise from the British context, we expect that the experiences of anti-racist scholar-activists documented in this book will nonetheless resonate with those in other parts of the world. This is particularly the case in countries where the grip of neoliberalism has also tightened on HE, such as those in which frameworks similar to the REF are used to evaluate and govern research,¹²⁶ as well as countries where the legacies of colonialism and imperialism continue to shape the contemporary social order.

Our research

The twenty-nine participants in our research worked, or studied as doctoral researchers, in British universities and were involved in anti-racist activism.

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Our focus on academics is not intended to privilege them or to reproduce notions of ‘legitimate knowledge’ – that is, the myth, reproduced by and within the academy, that universities are *the* site of knowledge production.¹²⁷ Far from it, we argue in this book that knowledge derives from anti-racist struggle, and is therefore produced, often collectively, within communities of resistance. We focus instead on academics involved in anti-racist organising to, on the one hand, observe the call to action from those who have come before us – from Rodney, Andaiye, Harney and Moten, and many others – and, on the other, to restate and further amplify this call to action. This book should, therefore, be read as an incitement. We also focus on university-based academics because we are interested in the university as an institution, and specifically the ways it enables and constrains anti-racist scholar-activism.

With this in mind, and in the context of a dearth of empirical work on the topic, we conducted semi-structured interviews with participants between the summers of 2018 and 2019, lasting between one and three hours. Reflecting the diversity of perspectives (which we discuss in [Chapter 1](#)), those we spoke to either self-identified as scholar-activists (or with scholar-activism as praxes), were identified as scholar-activists by others, or were active in scholar-activist networks. All participants were committed to anti-racism and this inflected their scholar-activism. Whilst the interviews form the basis of the book, our conversations with many of these (and other) anti-racist activists have taken place over a more protracted period. This book is therefore not only based on interview data, but also on our learning from (often far more experienced) scholar-activists. It is based upon long conversations and debates with our co-conspirators and comrades, and our learning through our own anti-racist organising – participant observation or perhaps some form of quasi-ethnography, in social scientific terms. The knowledge we gained during this process, albeit difficult to attribute to its source, has no doubt informed this book in untold ways. The book has also been shaped by ongoing feedback from

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participants, some of whom read their transcripts and provided annotations and elaborations, and through written comments on chapters of this book from critical friends and comrades as part of an informal process of peer review. In many ways, therefore, the ideas contained in this book, and the contributions it makes, are collective: there are many to whom we are indebted.

The majority of the people we interviewed were people of colour, though we also spoke to several white people. There was considerable variation in career stages, ranging from the very late stages of completing PhDs, to full professors. Throughout the book, we provide ethnicity and career stage information whenever a participant first appears in a new chapter. The ethnicity information provided is non-standardised as we have used the information given to us by participants. This means, for example, that some ethnic identifications are more specific than others (e.g. Bangladeshi versus person of colour), and that some identifications reflect political views and personal preferences manifest in terminological choices (e.g. Black versus African). Some of these choices are also to respect participant concerns about anonymity.

In addition to ethnicity and career stage, there was also diversity in the specific issues that our interviewees worked or organised around, and interviewees were from a range of academic disciplines within the social sciences and humanities, including (but not limited to): sociology, criminology, psychology, education studies, geography, law, social work, business, anthropology, international relations, history, and linguistics. To protect their anonymity, we do not outline the academic discipline of individual participants alongside the accounts that feature, particularly because the whiteness of academia means that many of our participants are among the only people of colour in their departments. Nevertheless, as much as possible, we try to remain attentive to noteworthy disciplinary differences. Whilst disciplinary conventions, frameworks, and traditions no doubt influence our work in (often) unseen and unknown ways, the

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heterogeneity that characterises anti-racist scholar-activism – a theme we return to time and time again in this book – does not appear to be forged primarily along disciplinary lines. Indeed, in many respects, and as we go on to explore, anti-racist scholar-activist praxes are perhaps informed more by communities of resistance outside of the university than by academic convention within it. This is not to say that academic convention is completely eschewed; after all, our work is structured, to varying extents and in different ways, by the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university, as much as we might try to resist its structuring forces.

Before we outline the chapters that follow, we want to take a brief moment to reflect on our positionalities, in the spirit of reflexivity – a praxis that we argue throughout this book is hegemonic in scholar-activism. Remi is a Black mixed-race cis-man, a sociologist whose work focuses on race, ethnicity, and (anti-)racism, often in the context of education, as well as in relation to policing. He works at a UK ‘Russell Group’ institution in a largely research-based role but has previously worked at a teaching-intensive university. Laura is a white cis-woman, working within criminology and sociology. Her work focuses on race, gender, migration, and processes of criminalisation, often in the context of the sex industry. Her academic role combines research and teaching, and having recently become a Programme Leader for three undergraduate degrees, she works increasingly closely with students but also increasingly encounters university administration and bureaucracy. We both come from working-class backgrounds but in many ways, particularly material, are now middle class. Although we understand ourselves as contributing to wider anti-racist movements, we both currently organise within two anti-racist collectives: the *Northern Police Monitoring Project* – a grassroots, abolitionist group based in Greater Manchester, UK that builds (local, national, and international) community resistance against police violence, harassment, and racism; and *Resistance Lab* – a collaboration between anti-racist activists

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and technology experts to resist State violence and create more equitable communities. Remi also owes a lot of his learnings to his time at the *Racial Justice Network*, a UK-based anti-racist organisation.

The structure of *Anti-racist scholar-activism*

The book is presented in six substantive chapters, followed by a manifesto. Each chapter contributes to our task of understanding anti-racist scholar-activism. In [Chapter 1](#), we argue that although there is some value in ‘scholar-activist’ as an identification, it is more useful to speak of scholar-activism as something that one *does* – a form of praxis – rather than something that one is. Using the accounts of participants, we build on some of the discussion around terminology touched upon in this introductory chapter. In doing so, we demonstrate both the heterogeneity of participants’ views, and the terminologically and conceptually contested nature of scholar-activism. After exploring the perspectives of participants who see utility in adopting scholar-activist identities, we look at accounts that problematise the constitutive elements of the scholar-activist label. We also consider participants’ concerns around the currency the label carries, which in turn makes it susceptible to institutional co-optation and to being overclaimed by academics.

Drawing upon Sivanandan’s work, [Chapter 2](#) explores the notion of working *in service* to communities of resistance, and to anti-racism.¹²⁸ We argue that this represents a counter-hegemony which disrupts the logic of working *for* the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university, as well as the power dynamics that can elevate academics who organise within communities of resistance. Specifically, considering questions of accountability (are anti-racist scholar-activists accountable, and if so, to whom?), usefulness (is our work useful, and if so, to whom?), and accessibility and reach (is our work accessible and reachable, and if so, to

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whom?), we contend that the in service orientation provides an important anchoring for the praxes of anti-racist scholar-activism, one that we build upon throughout the book.

In [Chapter 3](#), we introduce the concept of *reparative theft*. We do so by bringing Harney and Moten's seminal work on *The Undercommons*¹²⁹ into conversation with a reparations framework.¹³⁰ We argue not only that theft is a key component in anti-racist scholar-activist praxis but, particularly given the harms caused and perpetuated by the university, such theft is morally and ethically justifiable: it is a form of repair. This chapter continues to develop the notion of working in service to communities of resistance but focuses specifically on how scholar-activists can redistribute the university's material resources, and use the social and symbolic capital accrued by academics to the benefit of communities of resistance and wider anti-racist movements.

Picking up on a theme that emerges from the preceding chapters, [Chapter 4](#) considers how the values and orientations of anti-racist scholar-activists are different from – if not fundamentally oppositional to – those of the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist academy. Advancing a theoretical framework of *backlash*,¹³¹ we consider the consequences of the ensuing clash. We examine how anti-racist scholar-activism is devalued by colleagues and managers, both within our institutions and our wider academic disciplines, and how the matrix of domination makes backlash particularly acute for some scholar-activists. We show, however, that in the context of this backlash, anti-racist scholar-activists have developed a range of strategies to survive in the academy.

'Struggle where you are', said Stuart Hall.¹³² Expanding upon this brief instruction, [Chapter 5](#) explores possibilities for anti-racist scholar-activist praxes within a system of HE that is constitutive of, as well as constituted by, inequality and injustice. To do so, we first focus on the classroom and critical pedagogy. We argue that despite wider pressures and surveillance

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within the neoliberal-imperial-institutionally-racist university, the classroom offers some space for autonomy, allowing us to drop the seeds of anti-racism. This is particularly so if we are able to construct – what we call – a *classroom-to-activism-pipeline*. Next, we look beyond the classroom to wider acts of resistance in the university such as speaking up and pushing back, and union activism. At several junctures in this chapter, however, we reflect on the risk that our anti-racist scholar-activism is constrained within the academy, leading to it becoming reformist in nature – devoid of its radical potential.

Chapter 6 considers this risk much more by exploring how, by virtue of our academic status and affiliation with power, anti-racist scholar-activists are entangled in the reproduction of interlocking forms of domination within, and beyond, the academy. In this respect, we conceive of the university as engendering dissent, as in Chapter 5, but also complicity. Expanding Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of *constructive complicity* by applying it in a new setting,¹³³ we contend that whilst meaningful reflexivity is important in enabling us to recognise, document, and minimise our complicity – and although this politics of declaration might be seen elsewhere in the social sciences and humanities as good practice¹³⁴ – anti-racist scholar-activism implores us to put our complicity to work in service to communities of resistance. As *constructive* complicity begets, rather than letting our complicity constrain and inhibit us, we must exploit our affiliation with power both for the benefit of anti-racist movements, and to dismantle the inequitable university and rebuild it in the vision of our freedom dreams.

Our final chapter is a manifesto for anti-racist scholar-activism. Instead of a traditional conclusion, we adopt the form of a manifesto to point to the explicitly political nature of scholar-activist praxes. We do so to signal that we see the conclusion of the book not as the end of a conversation but as a primer for further conversation and collective action. The ten points we include in the manifesto are key themes (some explicit and

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some more tacit) throughout this book. These themes might be thought of as broad, guiding principles for anti-racist scholar-activism. We hope for this manifesto to be a live document that will be picked up, discussed, challenged, adapted, and expanded. We hope it is filled with the scribbles of 'intelligent graffiti'.¹³⁵ The manifesto is our attempt to use the wisdom of the anti-racist scholar-activists that we interviewed to think more concretely about the praxes of anti-racist scholar-activism.