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Kyra: Thank you for tuning in to the Pedagogies for Social Justice podcast, brought to you by a student-staff partnership at the University of Westminster. This is a platform for students and educators to exchange knowledge and encourage discussion about the current challenges facing higher education. I'm your host, Kyra, and, for this episode, I'll be in conversation with Catherine Charrett, a lecturer in International Relations & Politics at Westminster. Her research explores sovereignty in IR and political theory through Indigenous and anti-colonial struggles, particularly the Palestinian Liberation Movement. In this interview, we discuss settler colonialism and sovereignty, Covid-19, her recent paper on Palestine, and how we might begin to decolonise International Relations.

Kyra: Hi Catherine. Thank you so much for being here today. I've been looking really forward to having you as a guest on the podcast. How are you doing?

Catherine: Great! Thank you for having me, Kyra. I'm doing great, yeah, enjoying the heat [...] in London. How are you?

Kyra: Very good, thank you. I wish I could say the same about enjoying the heat [laughing]. So, I like to start things off with the guest telling us a little bit about themselves. So, first things first, where are you from?

Catherine: So, well, my name is Dr Catherine Chiniara Charrett. I'm a lecturer in Global Politics at the University of Westminster. I was born in what is now called Canada, a settler colony, and I was born to a British father, settler in Canada, and an Egyptian mother, a refugee family from Egypt in the 1950s, and I was born and raised there before moving to Spain, and then the United Kingdom, where I currently reside, after some time in Catalonia and then in [Wales].

Kyra: And you said your role at the university, you're a lecturer. What is your favourite module to teach?

Catherine: I mean, I like teaching students in general, so across the board, but I designed a new module this past year called Contested Sovereignty and Territory Resistance and



Borders, and it looks at Indigenous perspectives on the question of sovereignty. I mean, I like this module because it focuses on stories of anti-colonial resistance and what can be learned from these struggles to think about [our] struggle for social justice today.

Kyra: On the Contested Sovereignty, Territories and Resistance module, one of the major things you look at is the histories of settler colonialism and how that has come to kind of shape Global Politics, including our understanding of race. I think a lot of people still see colonialism as something that is a think of a past, when, in reality, there's still cases of neocolonialism happening today, and of course, we are still living in the colonial structures and using colonial epistemologies that have existed since the past. So, for you, what makes tracing settler colonialism specifically important to the study of Global Politics?

Catherine: I mean, so this module is sort of dedicated to the question of sovereignty, and I think, as a discipline, International Relations has largely overlooked the coloniality of the concept of sovereignty, so its colonial origin, and [the sort of] decolonial scholars in legal theory, such as [Anthony Ange and Brenda Bandar] sort of trace the concept of sovereignty through its colonial past, meaning that the legal concept of sovereignty was instituted in order to legitimise dispossession of Indigenous populations of their land. It was basically the codification that said, "Here, you're awarded sovereignty in order for it to be then taken away", so it kind of creates a legal understanding for sovereignty to be removed from Indigenous populations. So, this is just but one example that I think, you know, in the discipline of International Relations, it starts – and I'm jumping ahead on your questions – it starts sort of with its history large a hundred years ago, and it neglects this actually really important understanding of the concept of sovereignty, namely, that it has never existed equally for all nation states. It has never been a fair practice of International Relations. Instead, right, we need this understanding of how its origins have always been sort of unequal. I mean, I can expand slightly, which is to deal more with the – I mean, the work of [Harold Anderson] sort of traces the concept of sovereignty through questions [of] anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blackness in the settler colonies of Canada [in the West], where this, you know, again, International Relations often talks of this idea of, you know, we need sovereign power in order to prevent citizens, civilians, from tearing each other apart because we live in this [Hobbesian] society that is nasty, brutish, and short, and therefore we require like to relinquish some of our...our rights to that of the sovereign, so [Harold Anderson] makes the argument that this understanding of...of sovereignty and the social contract emerges from this imagination of the Indigenous as the sort of savage from which we require protection from...from these situations.

Kyra: Thank you. So, what is the relationship between sovereignty and then the way that kind of Indigenous populations...kind of...their sense of identity?

Catherine: Sovereignty...sovereignty, [this] understanding of self-determination, of autonomy, of having self-rule over your institutions, em, was an extremely important dimension of decolonisation, you know, throughout the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s, and onwards.



There is a literature that sort of identifies a particular focus on political sovereignty, so recognition in the United Nations, recognition of self-determination in legal frameworks, and under-estimates and under-values the importance of economic sovereignty, [and sort of] Marxist critique and [?] theory and dependency theory, identified as the problem, saying that, you know, economic sovereignty would never achieve.

Now, I think that there is some really interesting work that sort of identifies how international institutions that work to preserve and maintain it give sovereignty its shape. So, we can talk about things such as human rights [in the] international legal framework around humanitarian law, against humanitarian interventions. So, all of these...these sort of institutional structures of international relations that we can talk about now, [in terms of] international society, one of the things that the discipline of International Relations likes to talk about. So, the work of Adam [Gethenshoe] talks about how a lot of these institutions are in fact shaped by decolonial movements and practices, and like even political sovereignty should not be regarded as sort of devoid of the efforts of anti-colonial movements, and they were really important in shaping international relations today. So, I think it's a really complicated question because a lot of the institutions of the post-colonial period, my work specifically focuses on policing institutions, diplomatic institutions, that are in that post-colonial period, often inhabited by [the national groups], [...] are not fulfilling their roles of [a sort of] decolonised present or future. And I think now, you know, there is...these are the conversations that are taking place, right, how can we think collectively about, you know, creating a decolonial future.

Kyra: Do you think sovereignty is racialised?

Catherine: Yeah. I mean, I think it is definitely racialised in...in the story I told, the concept of sovereignty, em, holding within it, em, a kind of practice of...of differentiating between different populations that can perform sovereignty and others that cannot. I'll offer an example of that, that, you know, right now, the European Union has several sort of observation missions and police training missions, and, em, based in Palestine, which is my area of research, these are institutions of the European Union, of what was DFID, the UK Foreign Office, which has now been dismantled, and re-mantled, I'm sure, somewhere, but, you know, the British Foreign Service, American institutions, all involved in training the Palestinian police, policing fundamental institutions to [...] of sovereignty, and in these relationships, it is continuously performed as if the Palestinians need to improve their local and native governance structures. They need to demonstrate to the international community, the donor community, that it abides by the rule of law, that it is...has gender quotas in its policing services, that it needs to demonstrate that it is properly allocating funds to its institutions. It needs to show all of these things in order to demonstrate that it is a viable, quote/unquote, "partner for peace", that it has...you know, that it's abiding by the international institutions, that it's performing its sovereignty in a way that the donor community would regard as legitimate, and yet, those same requirements are not placed on Israel, right? It is not required for Israel to abide by [its] rule of law, the international legal



framework. It's not, you know, there is history of Palestinian, sorry, Israeli police brutalising, murdering, shooting Palestinians, in clear violation of international frameworks, Geneva Convention, etc., right? There's a long history of recording these human rights abuses. And yet, those same requirements are not placed on Israel in the international arena, right? It doesn't face sanctions. It doesn't face diplomatic review from the European Union and others, right? So, sovereignty, em, is only what states and individuals make of it, right, and the way in which it is performed is that a lot of states of a post-colonial history do not enjoy the same rights, freedoms, protections than those that have colonised and have [imperial power].

Kyra: Thank you. I'd also love to hear your take on how the pandemic has been handled. I mean, there's so much we could discuss, but I've been following kind of like vaccine distribution in Africa. You know, like this month, studies show that out of nearly 1.3 billion people in Africa, just 2% have actually received one dose of a Covid vaccine, and only like 1% are fully vaccinated, and, you know, you have countries like the US being accused of like hoarding vaccines, and it's just so...it just seems so ridiculous. And you've also had cases where some African countries who were getting the vaccine had to destroy some of their doses because they were given them so late that they didn't have time to kind of administer them before their expiry dates. And I just can't help but link it to colonialism and how kind of like the poorest countries are literally robbed of their resources, but always seem to kind of be the last to receive any kind of like aid. What is your opinion on kind of the way the pandemic has been handled, and do you see kind of forms of coloniality in that too?

Catherine: Yeah. I mean, actually, the implications in response to the pandemic in Palestine and Israel are actually interesting sort of microcosms of how coloniality has functioned there. In the Gaza Strip, for example, the Hamas Government were actually really quick and efficient to set up clinics, quarantine zones, about a year ago, at this time a year ago, despite... I mean, despite the conditions in the Gaza Strip, so, you know, not having access to proper infrastructure and building facilities, the Hamas Government were able to do its best in developing quarantine sites, and I think, actually – I mean, I don't know of other...I don't want to speak in general terms across the Global South, but I think, actually, the institutional response and government response has actually excelled a lot of places. I mean, I don't like this comparison, but, you know, excelled, and we shouldn't be surprised, right, that it excels from Europe, because that's a side-point. But, so, despite these efforts, you know, I mean, despite this, it was able to construct clinics and... Those clinics and many of those vaccination sites were bombed by Israel this year. In May of 2021, Israel launched yet another bombardment against the Gaza Strip. I mean, it's mind boggling, right, that during...? I mean, let alone during a pandemic, at any time, right, to sort of use the Gaza Strip as...as this, you know, target practice, em... Then, in the West Bank, with the terms of the vaccination, so, em, Israel was...you know, Israel was able to, em, excel in having the vaccine developed. It has a small population, has a strong economy. It then proceeded to engage in a kind of vaccine tourism that Europeans were allowed to come and get vaccinated in Israel, while, at the same time, it prevented Palestinians from receiving the



vaccine, so it wasn't distributing the vaccine into the West Bank. And then, to add another layer to that, it agreed I think with the PA, the Palestinian Authority, the current government, the current attempt at a government in Palestine, em, that...this, I've heard through word of mouth, but that it was receiving vaccines, expired vaccines, or vaccines that were about to be expired, from Israel to use on Palestinians. This [news was released], em, also [with the] assistance of a Palestinian human rights activist, who was then murdered and killed for releasing this information. So, I think this is a really important example of, you know, how colonialism, and settler colonialism, as exists in Palestine, has not only created a relationship of inequality between settlers and the Indigenous Palestinian population, em, and...which goes on today, right, the racialised distribution of the vaccine, and bombing of the Gaza Strip. So, not only has it led to that sort of inequality but also what it does for the fabric and structure of Indigenous societies and of Indigenous governance structures, right, where you have a defunct PA that is working for the occupation, em, and then the outcome is the murder of this Palestinian activist, em, and the outfall of that, right? So, I think it is a really important story, which...which shows the different dimensions at work.

Kyra: I wanted to dedicate this section of the interview to talking about your amazing most recent article, 'The wheel that lost its chair or how they came to bomb Palestine', where you explain kind of the European response to the 2006 Palestinian Election, specifically how they come to portray the Hamas as a threat. When did you begin kind of like piecing this paper together, and what inspired you to study threat specifically and how it's kind of constructed?

Catherine: So, this article is sort of an offshoot of my book, which is called – with a less snappy title, but 'The EU, Hamas, and the 2006 Palestinian Election: A Performance in Politics'. The origins of that project, you know, I had mentioned earlier in the interview that I lived in Catalonia, in Spain, and when I was living there, I was working for an institute called the International Catalan Institute for Peace, and this was in 2007/2008, after Hamas was elected to government. In this post, I did a lot of work with...the European diplomats and Israeli diplomats, historians from Palestine, Palestinian historians, and there was a sort of common consensus among all of these voices, I think 100% of them men, as usually the case, in these high profile, high level, positions within institutions, and the sort of common consensus was that it, you know, it made no sense for Hamas to be outside diplomatic discussions. The Hamas had won the election, quote/unquote, "fair and square", more explicitly, through fair and transparent means. It was...it was an election monitored by the European Union. It was... I think someone described this to me as it was "as boring as having elections in Denmark", right, as in nothing happened. Anyway, the – I mean, my book dedicates a lot of time to kind of looking at all these press statements and releases, and it describes the sort of fairness of these elections - the model for the region is what the European Parliament President, Edward McMillan, describes them as. And yet, despite all of these things, right, the election result was not to the favour of the European Union – I mean, I could unpack that statement, but... And, in the end, a series of conditions were placed on Hamas, that you had to abide by these conditions, and if you didn't, you would



be, em, sanctioned, and...and, basically, the kind of...the refusal to engage with [...] Hamas, the conditions that have followed from that, have largely led to what we see now, as sort of incarceration of the Gaza Strip. People can't leave. It's largely regarded as a sort of hostile territory. A whole series of issues came from those elections, and came from the international decision, or [...] the sort of [former] imperial decision to refuse to recognise the Hamas Government. And so... Oh yeah, and so it was, you know, while I was doing this research that I kind of...was observing what were essentially leaders of diplomacy and security policy, all sort of disagreeing with their own politics and their own position, and I was a bit curious, by this, em, very detrimental but also interesting dynamic.

Catherine: Yeah, and then, I guess the subtitle of 'The wheel that lost its chair', that's what I do in a lot of my work, which is I kind of aspect [...] global politics, of global politics in general. So, when I say "How they came to bomb Palestine", I kind of tell the story of, you know, the European, as I described, the European Union refusing to recognise the Hamas Government, and what that meant for Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. I was there in 2012 when the Gaza Strip was bombed by Israel, and, em, the wheel is from a European Parliament bombsite, which I took with me, and so it's the wheel of a chair, that would have been an office chair, that was destroyed. So, you know, in the article, I think, I...by using sort of inspiration from the work of Fanon and Toni Morrison and I kind of tell this...what I hope is an affective story of, you know, the wheel that...that lost its chair.

Kyra: Like you just said, throughout the article, you refer back to kind of theories of performativity, gender, and queerness, you know, from the work of Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, but how did you actually come to discover the link between these topics and those theories in the first place?

Catherine: Oh right. So, I mean, the link...the link is actually, you know, quite...quite a straightforward academic journey, em, just a straightforward academic journey. But, em, you know, I would sort of – this sounds funny to say, but like I was trained in digital securitisation theory, and I did my Master's at the London School of Economics, [...], and I think I wrote a paper a long time ago which was about a sort of...a theoretical critique of securitisation theory, and then, as I was doing this research, em...and, as I mentioned, my question that fascinated me about international diplomacy and the European Union's response to the Hamas Government was this idea that you had political actors that were...that seemed to be sort of trapped within their institutions, trapped within their ritualised framework, and I felt that the securitisation theory dealt with this in a really poor way. It was uninspiring, the way in which it didn't really seem to account for the pressures on [diplomats], institutional pressures, institutional rituals. And so, em, I kind of traced the theory of performativity kind of back to some of its origins, [and] that of [Austin], which the Copenhagen School of Securitisation Theory look at in more detail, and, also, [?] and Judith Butler, which I think that they don't deal with in their work, and Judith Butler's repertoire [of incredible] texts, I think account for these questions, em, through a particular reading of [Austin] and Althusser, which I think are really important for understanding agency in



International Relations. Althusser talks about ideologies in institutions shape subjects' positions, which I think that the Copenhagen School doesn't address, and, yeah, so that... Oh, and yeah, sort of I just worked through tracing the story, and then I largely looked at rituals and practices around the question of gender, and gender performativity, to explore these limitations on agency within international diplomacy.

Kyra: Thank you. I picked up on it and I just found it so interesting how you were able to just kind of like embed it so fluidly throughout, and I was...even like as I was reading, I was like, yeah, it's like this...this really makes sense!

Catherine: Yeah! No, no, [it's good of you] to say that because I think, sometimes, it seems like the disjuncture is...you know, it seems like they don't relate, but I [do get] good feedback – lots of people...people feel that it...it relates and it speaks to the work importantly. So, I think there is a very specific intellectual sort of journey which gets us to that, that point, which I think is important.

Kyra: Absolutely. And even just like this, you know, the fact that...about the wheel and the chair, like I think it's also very touching just...it shows just how close this kind of topic and just, you know, this writing, this work that you do, is just...how close it is to you. I think that's really important as well.

[Thank you.]

Kyra: And, in the article, you say that, when you were listening back to your interviews from Gaza with the Hamas, you could hear your voice kind of repeating the questions, you know, "Did you do this?" "Did you do that?" and I guess you could call it kind of like "interrogating" kind of in a sense. Why do you think we often kind of internalise the views of Western powers when it comes to foreign politics? Why do you think [we] kind of take this position?

Catherine: Yeah, so this is an awesome question. So, this sort of internal monologue, which is, you know, me kind of, em...and not just me, I mean, that...that...certain conditions were place on Hamas in international diplomacy in order for it to, quote/unquote, "be recognised" as a suitable sort of partner for peace – you know, did you abide by previous accords between Israel and the PA, do you accept the de facto recognition of Israel, etc. And I kind of say that I already knew that they had done all of these things, and despite all of those things, did not receive recognition. And the point that I make in the book is, because the conditions were never designed in order to award Hamas full recognition as a representative of the Palestinian people – that was never the point, right? The point was actually to try to keep them...to stigmatise them, to keep them out of the frame, international legal framework – and this goes back to our very initial discussion around the concept of sovereignty, right? If you look at sovereignty as a concept of international law, it was never designed in order for Indigenous persons and states that were achieving decolonisation to have equal status, right? They are concepts and [rationales] that are



meant to say, you know, now you are...if you abide by these certain practices – for example, this was [very unfortunate the mandate period], you know, when it looked at European, [and specifically sort of British], mandates over places such as Palestine, although Palestine has a distinct history in this regard, but, you know, if you abide by certain conditions, you can then be recognised as a full-fledged member of the international community. So, these practices are designed to kind of reinforce that power imbalance between coloniser and colonised, and, actually, just kind of bringing it back to our conversation on sex and gender, similar critiques have been waged against this idea in the politics of coming out, right, that sort of identify, you know, what it means to have to come out in order to be recognised, and what are the political arrangements around that.

I was actually, recently, at a really interesting event for looking at the relationship between queer activism around...in Europe and queer activism in Palestine, I think it was called [Stone Wall to] Palestine, just this past weekend. And I think, actually, it does provide us quite an important analogy, I think, to International Relations – and more than analogy, but anyway – that...you know, the politics of coming out and what it means in order to ask for rights, ask for recognition, these things are really important to having protection within a nation state, especially if you live somewhere in which those rights are not protected. So, you know, we can think about places where sodomy has become illegal, for example, or queer persons or LGBT persons are targeted by states, [for example], in Egypt, and face repercussions and issues around them. Now, you can critique the kind of colonial history of that, and you can critique the politics of having to come out in order to be recognised, and you know what that means to kind of repeat a logic that might have its origin in the West, the logic of coming out. So, you know, again, this idea of what we were saying about, you know, having to perform, recognition of your sovereignty, international relations, in order to be recognised, em, while at the same – you know, so you can kind of critique those practices, and critique the way in which those sites were governed by the colonial history, while also recognising that it is important to have sovereign states recognised. It is important for LGBT [actors/activists] to be recognised, to have their rights protected, right? So, I think that there are both of those things happening at the same time, and I think, you know, like the work of Adam [?], who I spoke about before, you know, clearly identifies how these institutions shouldn't be just reduced to the way in which they [uphold colonial structures], right? They also have a really important story of anticolonial resistance, of Indigenous struggle, that it's important to [hold on].

Kyra: Thank you. You also talk about this kind of concept of an inherited history, where, you know, if it's internalised by the subject, it forms their orientation to the world and how they recognise people, and vice versa, but, obviously, a lot of the time, this inherited history is harmful, especially if we think about the kind of inheritance of whiteness. Do you think it's possible to kind of detach ourselves from inherited history?

Catherine: Em...I mean, I don't think it's [tacit], right? So, I think that, you know, so inherited whiteness is from Sara Ahmed's work, and Sara Ahmed was looking at, em, how institutions,



but also our orientation towards certain objects and ideas, they explore the question of the family, and how the family...different ways of understanding how relationships to family are shaped by these big questions of inherited whiteness. And can...I mean, can we begin to unlearn these histories? I mean, I think a lot of this has to do with confronting questions of colonial trauma and what that has meant for the institutions that we currently have, and how they shape subject positions within them. Fanon talks about the International Relations scholars that have used the work of Fanon, such as Raoul Raoul, Randy Pursaw, em, look at this question of...of trauma, and how it's shaped current international institutions. And I think, you know, that is...that is one way to kind of begin to explore the way in which these institutions, em, have that inherited history and what that means. In my own work, I've tried to use different methods and pedagogies to explore I think some of that psycho-affective trauma. One of the tools I use in my writing is trying to critique the sort of ideological foundation we were talking about before, about Althusser, and how that shapes the subject positions, but trying to kind of...sometimes make fun of... You know, so I try to write satirically, sometimes also to highlight questions of melancholy, of sadness, of, you know, these residues, these traumatic residues of colonialism, which I argue are cast aside, [evaded] from, from current practices [and experience and] engagement in International Relations, and so I try to highlight some of those aspects as dimensions in my writing. I try to write sadness, to write questions of pain, and maybe that's, you know, [a small] contribution to trying to highlight some of those, those traumatic [residues].

Kyra: I think that this kind of links well to my final kind of section of the interview. Most modern disciplines have disciplinary practices and use literature and interpretations that are rooted in colonialism, so I obviously wanted to just dedicate some of this time to seeing what it means to kind of actually decolonise International Relations, and what can be done to make that a kind of possible future, and I'd love to hear your take on this. So, in what ways is the study of IR still very much kind of colonial to you?

Catherine: Yeah. So, I think, I mean, as...as...I think there are slow changes that are taking place. I think, as a discipline, that, for a long time, we regarded its sort of origins being that of the post-World War I era, is the first sort of sign that...that inherited issue of whiteness is...is going to be [...], which it was for a long time. And then the story of International Relations as a discipline, it felt, I mean, as a student, you know, felt that it was largely dominated by theories of Cold War politics, you know, multi-power relationships, that really didn't want to activate some of those things we were just talking about, in terms of the coloniality of knowledge, the question of colonial trauma and how it's shaped some of these questions. I think, you know, moves toward addressing that history – you know, Tariq Barkawi has an excellent article which I love to teach, which is called 'A Decolonising War', and it really just interrogates the way in which International Relations, and his focus on this idea of Cold War politics, has largely neglected not only different sites of war and conflict in other parts of the world, but also largely neglected the story of the contribution of post-colonial forces to the Wars, World War I and World War II, right? It was largely a story of white soldiers, white European soldiers, fighting. When I teach it, I often teach it through



the film 'Dunkirk', right, which is an important, but a really obvious, target, right? You know, there was a lot of criticism of that film because it completely told an untrue story of history which was neglecting the contribution of...of colonial forces. And [Marxist] critiques of International Relations have tried to address these questions, at a time – you know, there have been some issues that a lot of sort of Marxist critiques have under-estimated and under-valued the importance of race, right, and how that contributes to the questions of dividing the working class. I think the work of Robbie Shillion has been really important in highlighting exactly that, that point, right, through the work of Dubois, [...] the importance of race in dividing the working class, and he does an excellent analysis of Brexit through the question. The work of Gurminder Bhambra also looks at the critique of British exceptionalism in the welfare state through colonial history. So, I think, you know, actually, building off Bhambra's point, that understanding history, that [histories are] connected, em, you know, as you were saying, you know, how do we have the capacity to...to, you know...to build institutions for Covid vaccination development, you know, [well, to run these tests], right, how did Europe under-develop, em, [the African], right, and really asking these interrogating questions about International Relations as a discipline and as a site of politics which upholds some of those inequalities.

Kyra: Thank you. So, it sounds like, for you, I guess like a pedagogical practice that you like to use is, you know, presenting the kind of fundamental text to your students, but then also providing kind of like solid critiques of this as well. Do you feel like that is something that kind of more IR lecturers should kind of learn to kind of adopt in their teaching?

Catherine: Yeah. I mean, em, so I love this question and I think it's a nice way to end. I mean, Robbie, who was a mentor to me, and I think he just tweeted recently – I think he came back on Twitter because he was gone for a while – but he recently tweeted, you know, I think, you know, we should teach our students...or we should teach our students, em, the world that we desire to see in 10 years, rather than the old and tried theories of 20 years ago, right? This echoes, you know, pedagogies from proponents of social justice, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis. How do you teach your students the tools they need to have an emancipated future? And that's our job as educators, is to do that, right, to think about, you know, what kind of tools do we need in order to have a better future, emancipated future, decolonised future, with these questions of social justice, right? And if educators are not taking those questions seriously, then they're doing what Robbie is saying, is teaching the theories of the past, which really students might not have much need for. And so, you know, it's building on that tradition that, em, there is an important part of education in our pedagogy which is taking those questions seriously. Also, I think, you know, pedagogies in the abolitionist tradition, such as the work of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, which, you know, how do you...? And this is like one of the...I think, for me, one of the most important take-away points of abolitionist work, and decolonial work, which is, you know, how do you put front and centre this idea that life is precious, right, that life can be more, em, than seeing it as sort of, you know, subjects of capitalist exploitation, subjects of dispossession. You know, we know we have these inherited histories of whiteness, and we have to deal with them,



right, but we also have to think about how to build abolitionist futures, right, and how do we work collectively to create communities, you know, like you're doing with this podcast, you know, to create communities with our students and with each other, with members of staff, to really create better institutions going forward, right, or no institutions going forward, something else, right, some other kind of arrangement maybe?

Kyra: Yeah. Absolutely. And, unfortunately, we are at the end of this podcast, but there is a question that I like to end every podcast on, which is: what is something you'd like to see happen or see develop within higher education in the next 10 years?

Catherine: I mean, yeah, this is a great question. So, one thing that I think is important is...collaborations across universities. So, I think like...and I think this shows my true colours as a sort of scholar-activist, but I think, you know, the UK Government, em, has...I think has a history of bullying UK universities, and they have largely, em...I think failed in many regards with regards to prevent, with regards to the [IHRA] definition, to stand up to these things. So, that's on the activist front, in terms of the collaboration between universities and creating a consolidated front against the pressure of especially the current government, but also the kind of learning can take place between universities, right, the kind of sharing of ideas, I think is really important.

Oh, and I'm doing some work with an excellent colleague of mine, Iphsita Basu, and we've been looking at, you know, [this] question of decolonising in the university, and one of the things that came out of that work that we've been doing together is really the importance of building communities. And so, I guess lasting relationships, right, with students. I think, you know, I'm more interested in providing students, which echoes what I was saying before, the tools to feel empowered when they leave the university, and I think a lot of that comes from building strong foundations that kind of come from, you know, good partnerships while they're here. So, I really appreciate the work you're doing – it's excellent, and, yeah, that's my answer!

Kyra: Well, I just wanted to say thank you again for joining me on this episode. It's been so nice just getting to know a bit more about yourself and obviously have an opportunity to discuss your most recent work. I highly recommend both students and educators give that paper and your book a read, so links on where to find your article will be added into the description. And, hopefully, you know, in the next 10 years or sooner, we'll start to see more kind of cross-collaboration with other universities and obviously more work on student-staff partnership. Thank you so much for being here.

Catherine: Thanks, Kyra, thank you so much – thanks for inviting me.

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