In Defense of Centralization: Climate Futures and the Forms of the University

Caroline Levine, Cornell University

Around the time of the Paris Agreement, as the warnings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change grew newly terrifying, I started to propose that universities should drop everything else and start working collaboratively to address the existential threat of climate change. I imagined all of us scholars—biologists, political scientists, photographers, gender historians, philosophers, engineers, and fashion designers—finding a common purpose in this urgent cause. Expert knowledge had its dangers, I knew, and we would need to engage with communities around the world to sketch out just solutions. I imagined classes dedicated to listening to communities worldwide as meaningfully transformative for students, who would come to grasp of long histories of racism, colonialism, and capitalism and the grave challenges these pose to global justice now.

This vision was no doubt shaped by the Cold War university, where I came of age. Whole fields had been created and grants established and students required to study something called "Western culture" as part of a surprisingly coherent effort to beat the Soviets, which included government investments not only in nuclear physics but also area studies, foreign languages, and creative writing. Among the CIA's efforts to foster the "non-Communist Left" was funding for *Der Monat*, which published work by Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt, *The Partisan Review*, where Susan Sontag's "Notes on Camp" appeared, and the Nigerian magazine, *Black Orpheus,* which published some of the most influential *négritude* writers, including Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor. Cold warrior Richard Nixon launched both the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities in part as a response to Soviet charges that the materialistic United States lacked an authentic culture. It is no coincidence that both endowments had their funding slashed in the early 1990s, right after the Berlin Wall fell.[1]

The military-industrial-academic complex of the 20th century might seem like a strange site to draw inspiration for a just future, but it is my argument here that it has some valuable lessons for us in the climate crisis. I will be focusing my attention on what I call the *forms* of the university. For critics in the arts, the word form typically refers to the patterns, shapes, and structures that organize aesthetic objects, from plot and meter to vanishing-point perspective. In my own work, I have deliberately defined form more broadly than that—as any shape or configuration of materials, any arrangement of elements, any ordering or patterning.

Politics, according to this expansive definition, is very much a matter of form.[2] Power involves imposing order on space, for example, such as segregated neighborhoods or borders around nations. Politics operates through organizations of time, too, from the age of consent to the global pace of historical progress, with Europe famously imagining itself as the vanguard, consigning the rest of the world to the "waiting room of history."[3] Many of the worst injustices take shape as a third form—the hierarchy: a vertical order, one that ranks its elements according to their higher and lower relative status, giving shape to ongoing material inequalities, including the power of white over black, masculine over feminine, rich over poor, and straight over queer. Politics involves distributions and arrangements. Or to put this another way: *politics is the work of giving form to collective life*.

Just as plots and rhyme schemes give shape to literature, zoning laws and racial hierarchies give shape to political communities. That does not mean that artistic and political orders are the same. It is clearly crucial to distinguish coercive political forms that are literally

matters of life and death from imaginative and speculative works of art. But my point here is specifically *methodological*. Just as a historical scholar can give a rich contextualizing account of many kinds of events, from diplomacy to childbirth, and just as a statistician can track patterns across many different kinds of objects, from gene mutations to income disparities, a formalist scholar can analyze the shapes and patterns of a *Bildungsroman* or a school system. And that means that aesthetic critics have methodological tools that are portable beyond the aesthetic.

Drawing on Anna Kornbluh, I argue that no human sociality can do without form.[4] Every society is organized around spaces for shelter and gathering, rhythms of food and sleep, and norms of decision-making. Although formalist criticism has long been associated with disembodied abstraction, aesthetic transcendence, and a deliberate withdrawal from politics, then, a formalist analysis that focuses on the shapes of the social and natural world, including the rhythms of labor and the contours of public spaces, is a materialist method.[5] It attends to the body, the everyday, and the social.

In one crucial respect, my own work departs from the dominant account of form found across the fields I call the aesthetic humanities—literary studies, art history, musicology, and film and media studies. Most humanists have mounted a strong resistance to social forms, setting themselves determinedly against hierarchy, stability, regulation, and centralization, and throwing their energies instead into celebrating open-endedness, resistance, innovation, transgression, irresolution, fluidity and flux.

This impulse rests on a long tradition of humanistic thought, which holds that we are so enmeshed in the contemporary forms of the administered world that our only option is to dismantle and unsettle them. As Michel Foucault puts it: "to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system."[6] For Fredric Jameson, it is crucial "to bring home, in local and determinate ways, and with a fullness of concrete detail, our constitutional inability to imagine Utopia itself; and this, not owing to any individual failure of imagination, but as the result of the systemic, cultural, and ideological closure of which we are all one way or another prisoners."[7] Jared Sexton argues against praxis, prescription, and prognosis, in favor of reaching for "an indiscernible *something* beyond" Being: "imagining it in and as the ruins of Being, after the end of the world, in an entirely other relation to the nothing from whence it comes."[8] Or as Jack Halberstam puts it,

> Revolution will come in a form we cannot yet imagine … We cannot say what new structures will replace the ones we live with yet, because once we have torn shit down, we will inevitably see more and see differently and feel a new sense of wanting and being and becoming.[9]

We cannot make new forms, or build with the old ones. And so for these, and many other scholars in the humanities, the best political path involves resisting and refusing the constraints of the present in favor of an unknowable, unimaginable world to come.

Working for the future, then, for most humanists, means undertaking a valiant struggle against existing forms, and especially the forms imposed on us by institutions. According to Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, all institutions, including universities, do the work of prisons.

> In the clear, critical light of day, illusory administrators whisper of our need for institutions, and all institutions are political, and all politics is correctional, so it seems we need correctional institutions in the common, settling it, correcting us. But we won't

stand corrected.[10]

For Dylan Rodriguez, "the university (as a specific institutional site) and academy (as a shifting material network) themselves cannot be disentangled from the long historical apparatuses of genocidal and protogenocidal social organization."[11] And Nikki Sullivan has argued that queerness works against "the straitjacketing effects of institutionalization."[12] For thinkers like these, radicalism is measured by its rupture with institutional forms.'

The environmental humanities have put a particularly powerful emphasis on unsettling forms. Stacy Alaimo invites us to "dwell in the dissolve."[13] Donna Haraway urges us to recognize our complex mutual entanglements with a range of beings—from pigeons to estrogen—in order to refuse the usual "dictates of teleology, settled categories, and function" and shift us instead to "the realm of play."[14] Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing* argues strenuously for open-endedness, deliberately refraining from identifying any particular plans or programs in favor of "an aimless aim, or a project with no goal."[15] Chelsea Frazier calls on us to "construct alternative conceptions of ecological ethics within our present world and beyond it."[16] Kyle Devine asks us to hear the environmental and political conditions of recorded music so that "we may be motivated to change them."[17] And in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*, Kathryn Yusoff urges a "destabilization of the mode of encounter" and "an insurgent geology for the end of the world."[18]

All of this has been—and will continue to be—deeply important work. There is no question that as long as dominant structures of violence, dispossession, and oppression try to pass themselves off as nature or common sense, we will urgently need unsettling and resistance. What has come to concern me, however, is that this has become its own common sense across the aesthetic humanities. I myself wrote three books that revolved around unsettling dominant structures before realizing how strange it was that I had never even *imagined* a different set of purposes. And as soon as I began to think directly about them, they seemed limiting and partial. And disturbing. What if open-endedness justifies an avoidance of planning and building, and reinforces the notion that it is not our job to find practical strategies to work against anthropogenic climate change and its calamitous and uneven consequences? That is, what if it disempowers all of us who are working across the aesthetic humanities?

It is in this context that I want to propose a different starting point. In this moment of neoliberalism and climate catastrophe, the unmaking of forms, so often the goal of artists and humanists, has become strangely consonant with domination and exploitation. A world unconstrained by regulation, for example, is one of the right's grandest dreams. Fossil fuel companies have insisted that the future is open-ended, and they have deliberately unsettled hierarchies of scientific knowledge and policy proposals in order to keep on mining and drilling, while Silicon Valley continues to imagine that technological innovation, left unconstrained, will swoop in and save us—or at least some few of us—from climate catastrophe. Meanwhile, open-endedness and unpredictability are no pleasure to those increasing numbers unable to find their next meal or a safe place to sleep. Indeed, as vast numbers of people around the world—and especially Black and Brown communities across the Global South—become increasingly vulnerable to droughts, floods, fires, and storms, the unpredictability of access to basic goods like clean water and safe shelter will be a growing cause of sickness, migration, exploitation, and conflict. In short, a freedom from formal constraint is not the same as justice.

This thinking has prompted me to reconsider the work of the university and its forms. Critics often understand universities as ideologically coherent institutions, organized today by

the "monoculture" of neoliberalism.[19] There is certainly merit to the critique of the neoliberalization of higher education, but a formalist analysis of the university reveals not a single unified ideology but rather a complex heaping of forms that afford different experiences of collective life: multiple arrangements of space, from seminar rooms and lecture theaters to dining halls and theaters; temporal patterns like class periods, semesters, research grants, and teaching contracts; hierarchies of degrees, labor, and budgetary authority; and networks, such as student clubs, university committees, interdisciplinary colloquia, music ensembles, and elected assemblies. The form that tends to attract the most notice from academics is the arrangement of knowledge into disciplines; we regularly debate the reorganization or expansion of existing fields and the emergence of new transdisciplinary knowledges.

All of these forms are political in the sense that they give shape to collective experience: a laboratory led by a principal investigator supported by post-docs and graduate students enacts a hierarchy organized around expertise, while a "common read" brings a whole campus together around a single book for shared study, discussion, and debate. But none of these forms automatically or always dominates, in part because many forms get in the way of others: a classroom organized in rows frustrates discussion; a three-year grant cycle is not long enough to support a graduate student through the PhD. Forms can also be mobilized against each other deliberately—and dramatically—as when the University of Missouri football team went on strike in 2015 to protest a sequence of anti-Black incidents on campus, which led to the ousting of the university president.[20]

In the past few decades, driven in part by dramatic cuts to public funding, universities have adopted a neoliberal logic that favors "nimbleness," "innovation," and "flexibility," undoing existing forms—including traditional disciplines—in favor of an increasing individualization of choice and consumption. As students have shouldered increasing debt, instructors, departments, and whole disciplines have lost their institutional security and become precarious. Nimbleness has entailed the undoing of forms. But even the most flexible universities are not altogether unconstrained by forms. Some forms, like research rankings and calculations of student time to degree, have become more firmly entrenched in our own time, while others, such as tenure and foreign language requirements, are widely under threat.

Among the most important organizing forms for the university are budgets, which distribute financial resources according to hierarchies of priorities. In the past three decades, most institutions of higher education in the US have replaced their traditional budget models, which granted each department a predictable number of faculty lines, with "activities based" budget models, where each academic unit is held responsible for managing its own expenses and revenues through student enrollments, grants, and profit-generating programs like professional masters' degrees. The new model shifts resources wherever the action is—toward a rapidly growing student appetite for computer science, for example, and away from mathematics.

Most of this has been disastrous, but there is an irony here. Many of us—myself included—have long wanted the university to be less conservative, less rigid, more radically open. We have struggled to make higher education more responsive to the experiences and demands of those who had been traditionally excluded from its walls: poor, female, Black, Brown, Indigenous, queer, trans, and disabled people. And that has meant calling for something like institutional flexibility and disruption. In this respect, neoliberal forms have sometimes served progressive, even radical, political ends. In the name of nimbleness, for example, universities and funding bodies have increasingly restructured research around interdisciplinary projects that seek to develop new solutions to pressing social problems. Columbia University's

Research Cluster in the Historical Study of Race, Inequality, and Health, for example, invites experts to tackle racial disparities in healthcare, a problem that cross traditional disciplines, and calls for a knowledge of history and culture as well as medicine and law. The cluster works closely with the No Health=No Justice decarceration campaign, which strives to prevent people from being "prosecuted and criminalized for their health needs," providing them instead "with real access to care."[21]

To my mind, this an exciting model—research-based, genuinely interdisciplinary, focused on realizing racial justice. But for those defending traditional disciplines, this budgetary priority undermines another core mission. Jonathan Kramnick argues against research clusters that try to solve social problems because these necessarily marginalize and devalue humanities disciplines. Humanists refuse the very logic of "solutions," he says, posing open-ended questions rather than trying to develop actionable answers. To press us into work for social ends is to surrender us all to the regime of "instrumental reason."[22] To undo some of the most established forms of the university, by this account, is to enforce the dominant ideology of our neoliberal moment.

Or to put this another way: any familiar opposition between conservative and radical has now come thoroughly undone. There are actually two distinct models of conservatism at work in the university. The first I will call *conservation*—the preservation of a whole range of orderings that come down to us from the past, from traditional canons to classrooms organized in rows. The other way of organizing resources we call "conservative" is *capitalist economics*—which insists on flexibility, innovation, and precarity: in short, precisely the opposite of conservation.[23] These two models are often in fact used against the other, as when a university closes a traditional department on the grounds that it is not economically viable—using the logic of the market to shut down a time-honored field of study. By the same logic, but coming from the opposite direction, some scholars argue that the most robust alternatives to the market can be found in what Raymond Williams called "residual forms," bits of culture preserved from the past, like ancient Greek philosophy and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.[24]

In general, institutions skew conservative in the first sense. According to social scientists James March and Johan Olsen, an institution is defined as "any relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances."[25] Although institutions adapt to change all the time, then, their forms often prove surprisingly resilient over time, even in the face of other radical upheavals.[26] And we can see that universities have actually been very good at conserving old forms: sabbatical leaves have their roots in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus; libraries, dining halls, and symposia have ancient and medieval roots; and archeologists have found Mesopotamian clay tablets with student writing covered with teachers' corrections.

Kramnick argues that the humanities are on the side of openness, while the plans and programs of the social sciences keep us trapped in oppressive business as usual: *Realpolitik* as opposed to Utopia. But I am arguing that this is a false opposition on three grounds. First, because the openness of the humanities was so much more highly valued in the middle of the twentieth century than it is now not because the era before neoliberalism was so much better or freer but because the study of culture was pressed into the service of another instrumentalizing and violent regime—the Cold War. Second, because humanistic openness has always been sustained by a whole range of constraining institutional forms, including centralized budgets, disciplinary rankings and journals, national grants, class schedules, and curricular requirements.

And third, and perhaps most importantly in our own time, because the work of doubt and irresolution, the desire to get in the way of plans, norms, and predictions, has become consonant with neoliberal economics and climate destruction and, ironically enough, the undermining of the humanities in the university.

I start instead from the claim that no form is always or necessarily good or bad. Not all hierarchies are troubling. I myself would not want an amateur to perform brain surgery. And not all networks are liberating: the informal social network of "old boys" has foreclosed many an academic opportunity for women and people of color in the academy. Some forms organizing higher education are restrictive and unjust—like high costs that throw students deep into debt or preclude them altogether from attending—while other university forms are restrictive but also foster equality—such as programs to recruit women to engineering fields or financial aid that redistributes wealth.

If no organizing pattern or arrangement is intrinsically good or bad, if restrictive forms can serve just ends, if breaking free from forms can undermine both climate justice and the humanities, and if the university is composed of a vast range of orders and arrangements, some old and some new, nested inside one another, sometimes reinforcing and sometimes colliding and undoing one another, then a formalist analysis can help us to move beyond a simplistic binary between oppressive constraint and liberating disruption. The real question is what ends—what values—we are trying to serve, and which forms help us to create, maintain, and foster those ends. I am arguing here that if we pay a formalist's attention to the many ways that institutions of higher education are organized, we can mobilize forms effectively for a just future.

For a working definition of justice, I turn to Potawatomi political philosopher Kyle Powys Whyte. Whyte coins the term "collective continuance," which he defines as "a society's overall adaptive capacity to maintain its members' cultural integrity, health, economic vitality, and political order into the future and avoid having its members experience preventable harms."[27] In order to prevent foreseeable wrong to future generations, a just society will work not to overharvest a food supply, for example, or to store water to get through an unpredictable dry spell. From this perspective, justice depends not on breaking free from oppressive constraints but on organizing conditions to keep collectives going over the long term. These conditions will be constraining, such as rules preventing a small group from hoarding food or prohibitions against mining and drilling for fossil fuels. But these constraints are also crucially *capacitating*, allowing communities the basic means to flourish in a vast variety of ways into the distant future.

This brings me to centralization, the arrangement of forms around a single core mission or purpose, which has been out of fashion in all corners—right, left, and liberal—for decades now. Political theorist Rodrigo Nunes argues that we are right to be wary of the dangers of centralized power—the consolidation of authority in the hands of a small number, who may well exploit, silence, exclude, and dominate others. But we are so haunted by the traumas of authoritarianism, Nunes claims, that we miss the more affirmative affordances of centralization, the pooling of energy and amassing of power around a shared purpose. For example, for the systemic change on the scale needed to prevent the vast suffering brought on by environmental catastrophe, we cannot depend on dispersed, individual actions. Small, localized groups cannot make massive change on their own. But separate actions can have major structural impacts if they can be linked and coordinated, amplifying and extending each other to shared ends. This does not mean that a single leader needs to unite everyone, nor that we all need to agree on methods, strategies, or values. But coordination builds power, while endless dispersal defuses it.

Coordinating forms can thus help us to do the crucial work of joining people in sufficiently large numbers to make a substantial difference.[28]

Higher education is already organized around a number of coordinating forms. Within disciplines or areas of research, scholars coordinate knowledge through journals, conferences, and organizations that often join people who are widely dispersed geographically. Within an institution, interdisciplinary clusters, curricula, and committees bring people together from different fields and ranks around shared problems. And the climate crisis has already substantially reorganized research and teaching, including the launching of new journals, like *Sustainable Chemistry and Pharmacy,* new courses, such as Sustainability and Fashion, grant opportunities, environmental studies majors, climate change symposia, and interdisciplinary research clusters on climate finance, sustainable cities, and food security, among many others. Much of the impetus for this work has come from the ground up—as scholars and students have wanted to connect their work to environmental justice—and some has come from the top down, like grants from the US Environmental Protection Agency or the South African National Research Foundation.

If right now some forms of the university help us work against climate destruction, others narrow knowledge—with potentially perilous consequences. A number of existing interdisciplinary research and teaching clusters dedicated to climate and environment tip toward specific disciplines and exclude others, meaning that environmental scientists may never encounter an attention to "septic racism" or histories of socio-technical violence. In one especially troubling example, predictions about financial performance in peer-reviewed economics journals dramatically underestimate the costs of climate change because economists have not bothered to consult climate science.[29]

If some forms keep disciplines separate and so re-entrench certain norms and assumptions, other university forms actively obstruct climate justice. Researchers funded by fossil fuel companies are less likely than their peers to favor renewable energy conclusions.[30] Precarious labor contracts keep untenured scholars from publishing or teaching topics that threaten powerful interests.[31] Many universities maintain endowments and retirement funds filled with investments in fossil fuels at the same time that Big Oil has deliberately and knowingly undermined scientific research, while radically undermining one of the other basic missions of higher education, which is to prepare students for flourishing futures.

Susan Wright asks how we might "develop universities as responsible institutions producing knowledge and citizens with a sense of care for the future not just of humanity but of the globe itself."[32] The answer, I am arguing, is that we should be working to support, strengthen, and extend the coordination of the forms that work for climate justice—within, between, and across institutional boundaries—and to remake the forms that stand in its way. The administrative term for this work—and one that will no doubt repel my humanist colleagues—is "alignment." This does not have to mean a rigid or top-down agenda. It can indicate a clear sense of shared mission or values, articulated across ranks, which brings different forms in concert. It does not have to carry the devaluing of some disciplines in favor of others, either. The current decentralized model allows fields to ignore each other if they wish, with humanists and artists are often altogether left out of influential discussions among environmentalists, our critiques of technocratic solutions or histories of racial capitalism not even making it to the table. Cornell's Environment and Sustainability major is a promising formal model in this respect, requiring students to take core courses in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and to conclude with an interdisciplinary capstone course. No student can graduate without having

thought both about historical injustices and ecosystem management. In short, centralized forms can actually foster more dissent and critique at the heart of environmental research and teaching.

You might object, of course, that university administrations, in love with rankings and profits, constrained by lawmakers, and answerable to funders and trustees, are unlikely to embrace this shift. It is utopian—unrealistic. But so many of the forms are already in place. What we need is not radical overhaul but deepening coordination. And an alignment of forms around climate justice will serve the institution's interests, too. At a time of widespread mistrust, anxiety, and climate despair, students, staff, and faculty are burning out not only from overwork but also from feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and cynicism.[33] We know that record numbers of students suffer from anxiety and depression, a trend which shows no sign of slowing down.[34] Mental health struggles strain university resources, and hinder student learning. One antidote to burnout and anxiety is a shared sense of purpose and meaning.[35] Even those not particularly focused on the climate crisis might well feel more hopeful for knowing that leaders, curricula, and funding streams are coordinated around not profits or power but a socially urgent mission. In my own anecdotal experience, students and colleagues alike often mistrust university leaders, feel isolated and adrift, and crave a sense of collective purpose. A deliberate alignment of forms to serve public goods would deepen both the meaningfulness of academic work and the impact of academic knowledge, which could in turn increase our productivity and our engagement. Call it a Marshall Plan for climate justice.

Notes

[1] See Michael Hochgeschwender, "*Der Monat* and the Congress for Cultural Freedom: The High Tide of the Intellectual Cold War, 1948–1971," in *Campaigning Culture and the Global Cold War*, eds. Giles Scott-Smith and Charlotte Lerg (Palgrave, 2017), 71-89**;** Peter Benson, *Black Orpheus, Transition, and Modern Cultural Awakening in Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1986), 23, 31; Peter Kalliney, "Modernism, African Literature, and the Cold War," *Modern Language Quarterly* 76: 3 (2015): 337; Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: The State, the Foundations, and Area Studies during and after the Cold War," in *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies,* eds. Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian (Durham: Duke UP, 2002): 261-302; Eric Bennett, *Workshops of Empire: Stegner, Engle, and American Creative Writing during the Cold War* (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2015); and Donna M. Binkiewicz, *Federalizing the Muse: United States Arts Policy and the National Endowment for the Arts, 1965-1980* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2004), 147-78.

[2] I lay out this case at greater length in my book, *The Activist Humanist: Form and Method in the Climate Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2023).

[3] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000), 8.

[4] See Anna Kornbluh, *The Order of Forms: Realism, Formalism, and Social Space* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2019).

[5] Formalism has long been associated with apolitical abstraction, immateriality, and universalism. Within the academy, this account of form grew especially influential in the 1970s. In literary studies, we might think of Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1976) and Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology* (U of Chicago P, 1983); in art history, see Stephen C. Foster, "Clement Greenberg: Formalism in the '40s and '50s," Art Journal 35:1 (autumn 1975), pp. 20-24.

[6] Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1977), 230.

[7] Fredric Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future* (New York and London: Verso, 2005), 289.

[8] Jared Sexton, "Affirmation in the Dark: Racial Slavery and Philosophical Pessimism," *The Comparatist* 43 (Oct 2019), 105, 106.

[9] Jack Halberstam, "The Wild Beyond: With and For the Undercommons," in Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study (*Brooklyn, NY: Minor Compositions, 2013), 5.

[10] Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study (*Brooklyn, NY: Minor Compositions, 2013), 20.

[11] Dylan Rodríguez, "Racial/Colonial Genocide and the 'Neoliberal Academy': In Excess of a Problematic," *American Quarterly* 64: 4 (December 2012), 812.

[12] Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (NYU Press, 2003), v.

[13] Stacy Alaimo, *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

[14] Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*: *Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 23–24.

[15] Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2019), 201.

[16] Chelsea M. Frazier, "Troubling Ecology: Wangechi Mutu, Octavia Butler, and Black Feminist Interventions in Environmentalism," *Critical Ethnic Studies* 2:1 (spring 2016): 40.

[17] Kyle Devine, *Decomposed: The Political Ecology of Music* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 189.

[18] Kathryn Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 111.

[19] In *The Reorder of Things*, Roderick Ferguson makes the powerful argument that universities absorb new fields into their own existing ideological structures rather than being transformed by them (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Zoe Hope Bulaitis uses the term "monoculture" in *Value and the Humanities: The Neoliberal University and Our Victorian Inheritance* (Springer, 2020), 13.

[20] Philip Bump, "How the Missouri football team just took down its university president," *Washington Post* (Nov 9, 2015): https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/11/09/missouri-football-players-and-the-untapped-political-power-of-the-college-student-athlete/

[21] https://scienceandsociety.columbia.edu/content/research-cluster-historical-study-race-inequality-and-health

[22] Jonathan Kramnick, *Paper Minds: Literature and the Ecology of Consciousness* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2018), 27.

[23] Chad Wellmon describes the broad shift from the medieval academic emphasis on the preservation of existing knowledge to the Enlightenment focus on discovery and innovation in *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2015). The modern university does, however, continue a tradition of stewardship, as Keri Facer argues: "The University as Engine for Anticipation: Stewardship, Modelling, Experimentation, and Critique in Public," in R. Poli, *Handbook of Anticipation* (2018), 5-6.
[24] Cornel West, for example, blasts Howard University's decision to close its Classics Department as "a sign of spiritual decay," a "massive failure across the nation in 'schooling,' which is now nothing more than the acquisition of skills, the acquisition of labels and the acquisition of jargon."
[25] James G. March and Johan P Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, eds. R. A. W. Rhodes et al (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006), 3.
[26] See Kathleen Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve* (CUP 2012).
[27] Kyle Powys Whyte, "Food Sovereignty, Justice, and Indigenous Peoples: An Essay on Settler Colonialism and Collective Continuance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*, eds. Anne Barnhill, Mark Budolfson, and Tyler Doggett (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2018), 353.
[28] Rodrigo Nunes, *Neither Vertical nor Horizontal A Theory of Political Organization* (London and New York: Verso, 2021), 29, 76-78, 86-89.
[29] Steve Keen, "Loading the DICE against Pension Funds: Flawed Economic Thinking on Climate has Put Your Pension at Risk" (Carbon Tracker Report, 2023): https://carbontracker.org/reports/loading-the-dice-against-pensions/?fbclid=IwAR0yJCYwnwYCfdamwSuewBTI9YH_Hi3veEUi_qRBl28DxjoQlsErl99drWM
[30] Douglas Almond et. al,, "Favourability towards natural gas relates to funding source of university energy centres," *Nature Climate Change* 12 (2022), 1122-1128.
[31] Columbia University's "Silencing Science Tracker" lists bills in US legislatures that aim to suppress or curtail the teaching of climate change: https://climate.law.columbia.edu/content/silencing-science-tracker
[32] Susan Wright, "Can the University be a Liveable Institution in the Anthropocene?" in R. Deem and H. Eggins, eds. *The University as a Critical Institution?* (Brill, 2017), 18.
[33] Erin E. Sullivan et. al. "Moving the Needle on Primary Care Burnout," *Healthcare* 9:4 **(**December 2021).
[34] Sarah Ketchen Lipson et. al., "Trends in college student mental health and help-seeking by race/ethnicity: Findings from the national healthy minds study, 2013–2021," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 306: 1 (June 2022), 138-147.
[35] C. P. West et. al., "Physician Burnout: Contributors, Consequences and Solutions," *Journal of Internal Medicine* (5 March 2018). See also Sarah E. O. Schwartz, et. al. "Climate Change Anxiety and Mental Health: Environmental Activism as Buffer," *Current Psychology* (January 2022).