NAVIGATING THE GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE

How External Political, Social and Economic Forces Shape D&I Priorities

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Agenda

- 01 Understanding the Cycle: Economic insecurity, social anxiety and scapegoating
- 02 The Zero-Sum Myth: Why inclusion is often perceived as a threat
- 03 The Cost of Division: What happens when justice is ignored
- 04 Leading Through Uncertainty: Navigating political, social and organisational pressures
- 05 Knowledge, belonging and choosing justice

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CREATING MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE • CHALLENGING EXPECTATIONS



The International Slavery Museum



The Museum of Liverpool



The Maritime Museum



Sudley House



The World Museum



Lady Lever Art Gallery



The Walker Art Gallery

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Our Approach ABIDE- Definitions

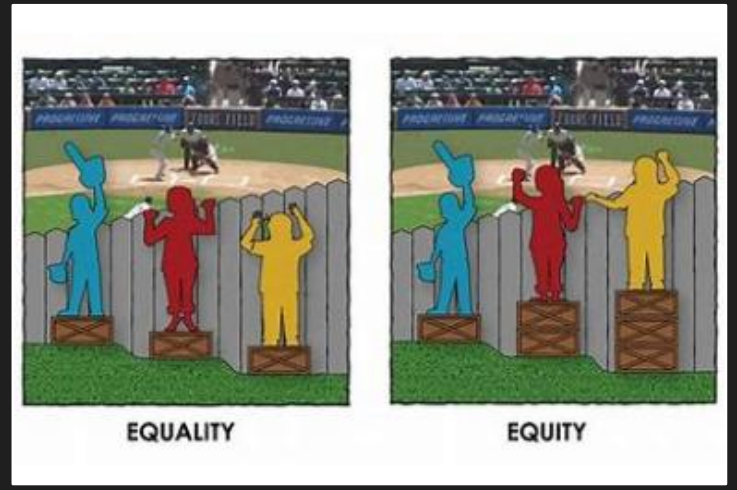
ALLYSHIP Allyship at work means thinking about how we can use our own personal privilege to support and platform those from marginalised groups.

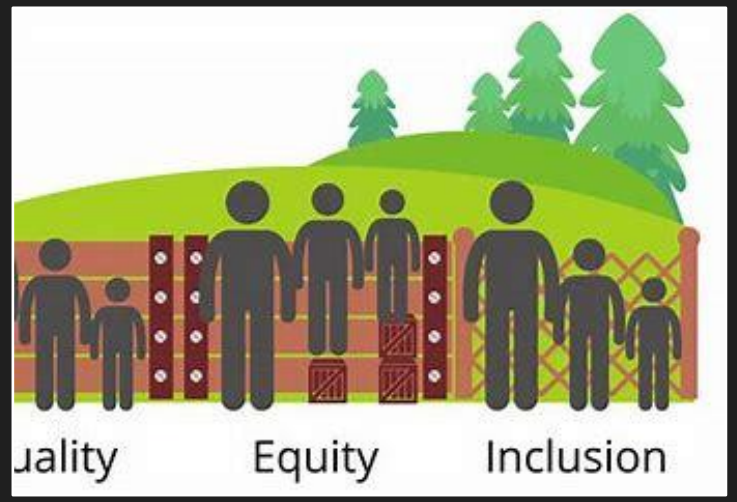
BELONGING To belong is to be valued, to connect with others and to have a sense of fitting in.

INCLUSION Creating an environment where structural barriers are being consciously eradicated. An inclusive environment can only be created once we are more aware of our unconscious biases and have learned how to manage them. Inclusion is cultural and structural.

DIVERSITY "Diversity in the workforce seeks to bring workplace harmony, growth, productivity, creativity and profitability to organizations, through the acceptance and harnessing of the individual and group differences for the corporate good." — (TETTEH, V. A. Diversity in the Workplace. Salem Press Encyclopaedia, 2021)

EQUITY Equity is the process of putting all colleagues on an equal footing in the workplace. At its core, equality means fairness.

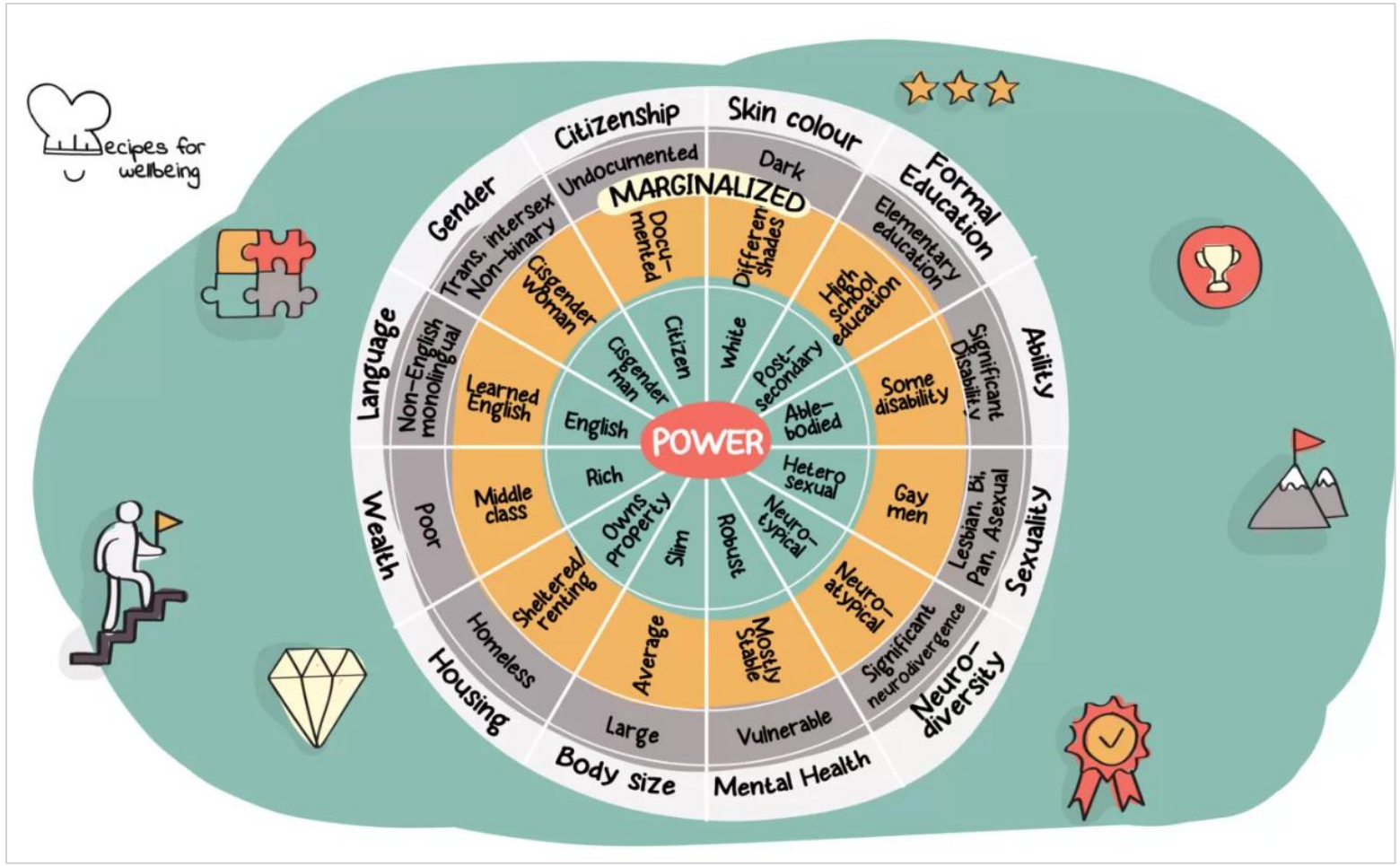






How External Political, Social and Economic Forces Shape ABIDE Priorities

- **1919** **Charles Wootton & Liverpool Race Riots**
- **1948** Post-War 'Race Riots'
- **1981** Toxteth Uprising
- **2011** UK Riots
- **2024** Southport Atrocity and Far-right Disorder



The Wheel of *Privilege*

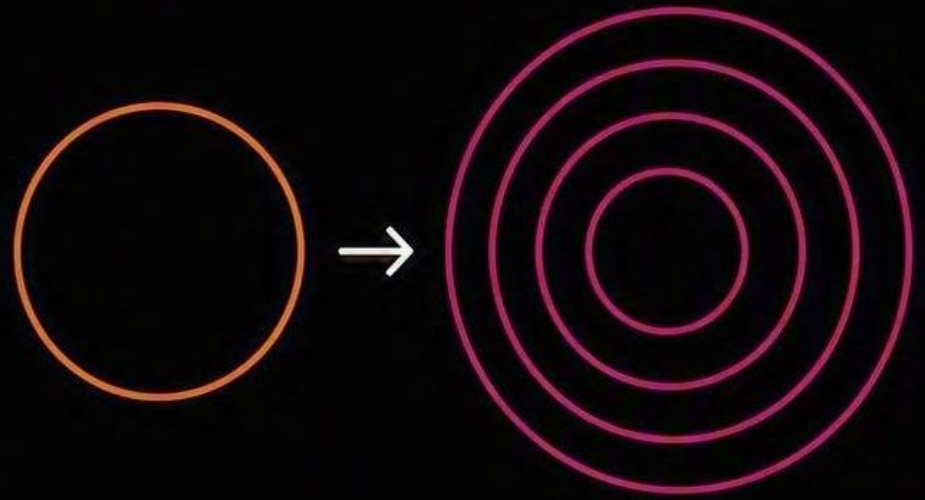
"

Outcomes are created by **ENVIRONMENTS,** not simply individuals.

THE ZERO-SUM MYTH

THE MYTH

- Opportunity is finite
- Inclusion means loss
- Progress for one group harms another.



THE EVIDENCE

- Increased workforce participation
- Educational expansion
- Economic growth
- Greater innovation

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Equity or Competition?

RESEARCH PROGRESSION

Norton & Sommers (2011)

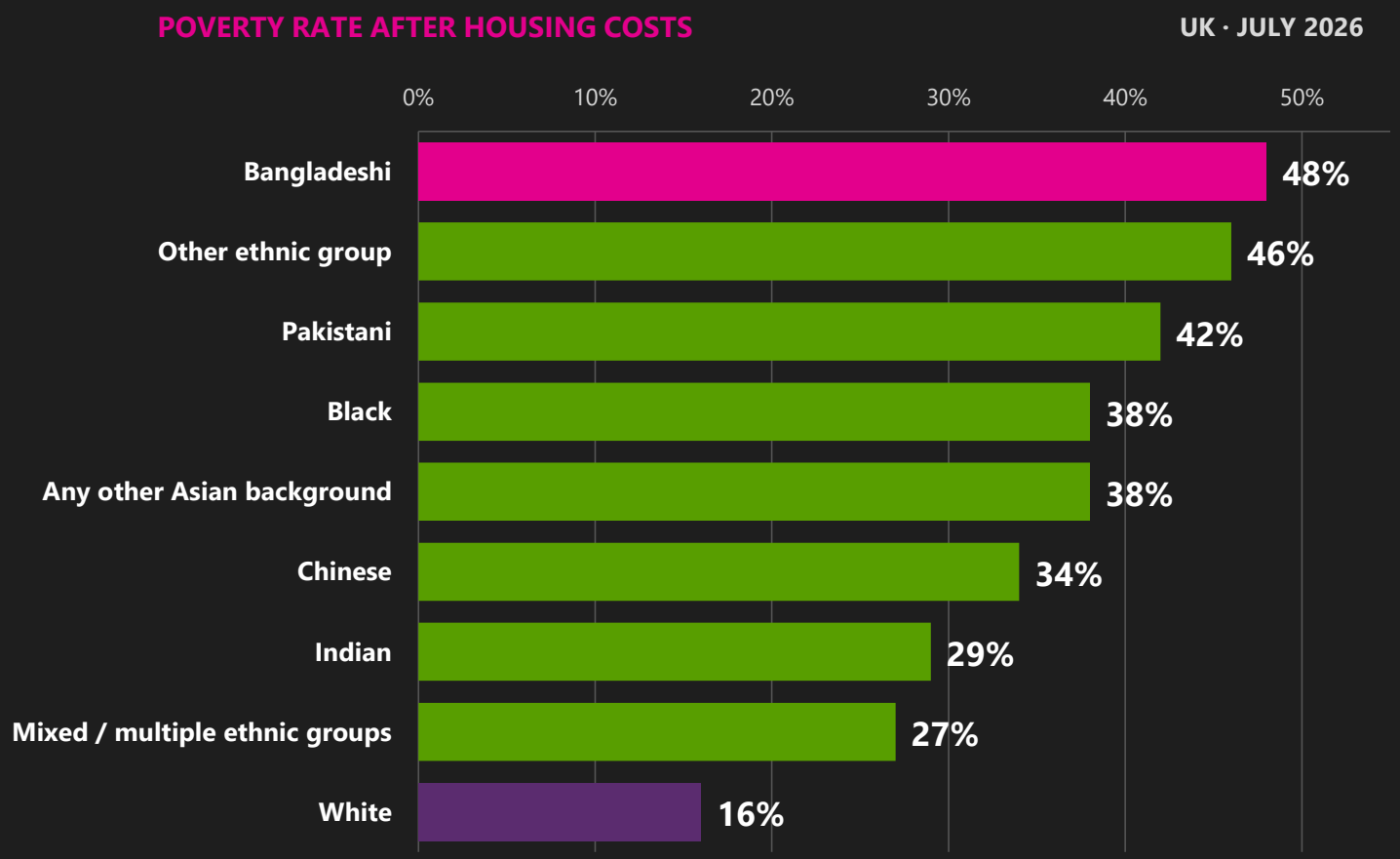
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Rasmussen et al. (2022)

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EQUALITY GAINS

= PERCEIVED LOSSES?



Source: UK Parliament, poverty statistics briefing (July 2026).

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15 Years of Economic Stagnation





THE AFTERSHOCK NEVER ENDED

THE LONG AFTERSHOCK

2008 — 15 YEARS — 2023

FLATLINED
Real wages after 2008

≈ £11,000 / YEAR
Average worker below the pre-2008 trend

16% | ≈ £300bn
UK economy smaller than expected

PAY FREEZES
Public sector austerity

£17m
Real-term loss at NML

–35%
Arts investment

THE 2008 CRASH

broke the engine of British income growth.

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Dog Whistles, Media & Misdiagnosing the Problem



WHEN ECONOMIC CAUSES DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW

HOW THE NARRATIVE WORKS

Philo, Briant & Donald (2013)

01 **Migration linked to jobs, housing and welfare pressures**

02 **Public overestimates migration levels**

03 **Perceptions influence voting behaviour**

04 **Economic causes often absent from coverage**

DOMINANT NARRATIVE

> *"The biggest threat to workers like you are workers who do not look like you."*

Tankersley (2020)

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Racism Costs Everyone



FROM TARGETED HARM TO GLOBAL CONSEQUENCE

HOW RACIALISED HARM BECAME SYSTEMIC RISK

01 BLACK & LATINO COMMUNITIES

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02 PREDATORY LENDING

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03 IGNORED WARNINGS

↓

04 FINANCIAL CRISIS

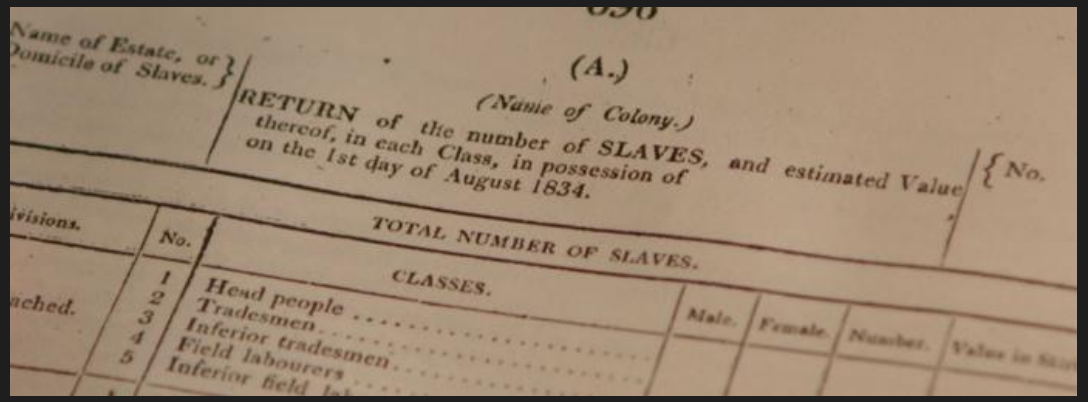
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05 GLOBAL RECESSION

"The financial crisis hurt people of colour first and worst, yet the majority of those ultimately damaged were white."
Heather McGhee

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Who Is Rescued — and Who Pays?



(A.)

(Name of Colony.)

RETURN of the number of SLAVES, and estimated Value thereof, in each Class, in possession of on the 1st day of August 1834.

Name of Estate, or Domicile of Slaves.

No.

Divisions.	No.	TOTAL NUMBER OF SLAVES. CLASSES.	Male.	Female.	Number.	Value in $
ached.	1	Head people				
	2	Tradesmen				
	3	Inferior tradesmen				
	4	Field labourers				
	5	Inferior field				



1833 SLAVE-OWNER COMPENSATION

£20m paid to slave owners

≈5% of 1833 GDP

≈£17bn in today's money

≈£147bn if scaled to the same share of modern GDP

2015 legacy debt redeemed

ENSLAVED PEOPLE RECEIVED NOTHING

2008 BANKING BAILOUT

£137bn public money injected

£955bn peak guarantees and support

£23bn estimated net UK cost

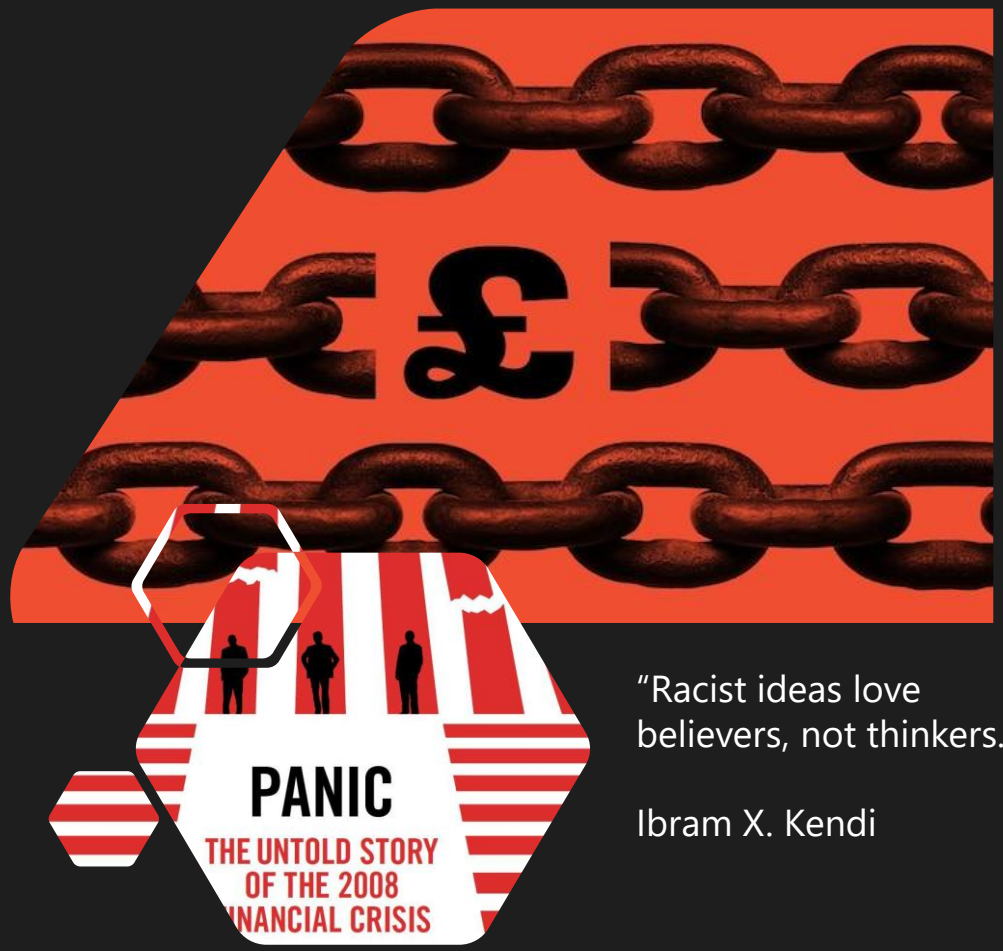
$22tn estimated wider US crisis impact*

WE ALL PAY

Sources: HM Treasury; UCL; House of Commons Library; National Audit Office. *Wider-impact estimate; not direct bailout outlay.

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SYSTEMIC PRESSURE, PUBLIC CONSEQUENCE



"Racist ideas love believers, not thinkers."

Ibram X. Kendi

What This Means for ABIDE Leaders

FOUR FORCES SHAPE LONG-TERM LEADERSHIP CREDIBILITY

- ✓ 01 POLITICAL FORCES
- ✓ 02 SOCIAL FORCES
- ✓ 03 REGULATORY FORCES
- ✓ 04 LONG-TERM CREDIBILITY

LEADERSHIP IS JUDGED ACROSS ALL FOUR

Professor Jason Arday



CAMBRIDGE MILESTONE

Youngest Black professor ever appointed at Cambridge

Appointed Professor of Sociology of Education at age 37

CONTRIBUTIONS

01 RACE & HIGHER EDUCATION

02 BLACK ACADEMICS

03 MENTAL HEALTH

04 SOCIAL MOBILITY

05 WIDENING PARTICIPATION

06 DECOLONISING CURRICULA

Sources: University of Cambridge Faculty of Education; Arday et al. (2020–22)

Who Gets to Shape Knowledge?



JUSTICE SHOULD BE TRANSFORMATIVE

Intersectionality describes that no human being exists exclusively as a representative of one class, gender, race, sexual orientation, or other limited identity, and it is impossible, without bad faith, to see a human being as manifesting only one of these identities. How they all converge, however, affects the options available to them, including whether they are recognized as having rights before the law

Lewis R Gordon, 2022.

FOUR QUESTIONS OF POWER

01 WHO GETS TO PRODUCE KNOWLEDGE?

02 WHO GETS RECOGNISED AS AN EXPERT?

03 WHO BELONGS IN ELITE INSTITUTIONS?

04 WHOSE MISTAKES BECOME PUBLIC DEBATES?

THESE ARE QUESTIONS ABOUT POWER — NOT MERIT ALONE

Jason and I

“DO NOT BECOME

INVISIBLE

FOR ANYBODY

A statement to hold onto.



PROFESSOR JASON ARDAY

DO NOT DISAPPEAR.

Recognise the Cycle. Choose Justice.

1919

CHARLES WOOTTON

A name history must not erase

THE CYCLE

→

What changes?
What repeats?



PRESENT

PROFESSOR JASON ARDAY

RECOGNISE THE CYCLE. THINK CRITICALLY. CHOOSE JUSTICE.

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