



CAVAL Research and Information Group (CRIG) Seminar – 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023  
**Libraries and Social Change**

*“Shaping the future: libraries, technology, and social change”*

**Keynote Presentation:**

Citational practices, decoloniality and large language models (AI)

**Dr Gurnam Singh,**

**University of Warwick, UK.**

**Twitter [@gurnamskhela](#)**

# Citational practice as discursive colonial infrastructure

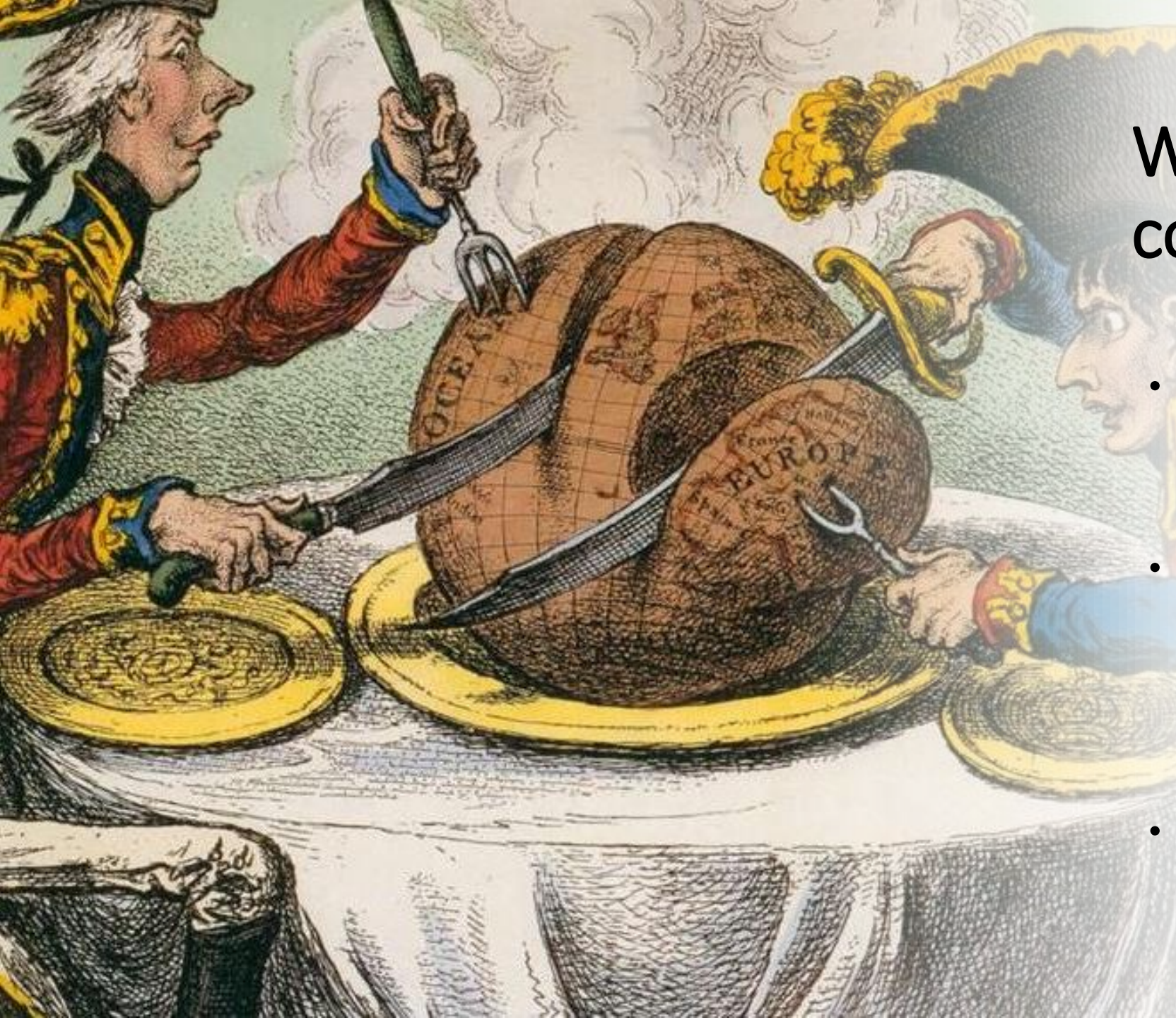
...layers of discursive infrastructure enables us to analyze the role citations play in shaping that which is built upon them...' (Itchuagiyaq and Frith, 2022 p11)

1. Inclusiveness: writing, which might include automated data outputs,
2. Relationally defined: How it serves different interests
3. Alliance Brokering: Writing creates alliances amongst groups
4. Mission Critical: essential to the function of the end-product it shapes and supports. (Read, 2019)

Itchuagiyaq, C. U., & Frith, J. (2022). Citational practices as a site of resistance and radical pedagogy: positioning the multiply marginalized and underrepresented (MMU) scholar database as an infrastructural intervention. *Communication Design Quarterly Review*, 10(3), 10-19.

Read, S. (2019). The infrastructural function: A relational theory of infrastructure for writing studies. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 33(3), 233-267.





# What is colonialism?

- **Settler Colonialism.** Large numbers of settlers claim land and become the majority. Employing a “logic of elimination”.
- **Planter Colonialism.** Typically associated with the Transatlantic Slave trade, here the colonizers institutes mass production of a single crop, such as sugar, coffee, cotton, or rubber.
- **Extractive Colonialism.** Here the primary aim is to build wealth by extracting raw materials and goods found in a particular locale.

# What is a decolonial lens in education?

Draws attention to the continuation of destructive colonial legacies, both philosophical and material, that contribute to the production and reproduction of epistemic, psychological and material that can result in unequal outcomes in relation to access, retention, awarding/assessment and employment prospects.



# How has Western scholarship and academia become implicated in the colonial project?

Oxford Martin School  
formerly Old Indian Institute



"terra nullius" or "territory without a master."



# The role of libraries in colonialism

- *“Western academic libraries — emerging as they did from Enlightenment-derived epistemology and premised on Euro- and Christian-centric knowledge structures — retain the legacy of imperialism, whether we consider biased Library of Congress classification and subject headings, the enculturating role of library collections, or our libraries’ very physical presence on Treaty – or stolen – land.”*
- Michael Dudley (2013) Welcome to The Decolonized Librarian, Posted on May 30, 2013.  
<https://decolonizedlibrarian.wordpress.com/2013/05/30/welcome-to-the-decolonized-librarian/>
- *“Librarianship has been complicit, if not responsible for perpetuating colonial approaches to knowledge by replacing traditional knowledge with Western knowledge, especially in physical libraries established under colonial regimes, by failing to maintain the authority of the [I]ndigenous people who produced the knowledge, or by stealing or appropriating the knowledge without appropriate compensation. (p. 132)’*
- 
- Sandy, H.M. & J. Bossaller. (2017) Providing Cognitively Just Subject Access to Indigenous Knowledge through Knowledge Organization Systems. *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 55 (3), 129-152.



# Colonialism and Eurocentric citation practices.

## Arborescent thought



## Rhizomatic thought





# CHAT GPT



Enter Large Language Model (LLM) AI systems.

- These models are trained on huge amounts of text data to discern patterns in the language. LLMs can perform many types of language tasks, such as translating languages, analyzing sentiments, chatbot conversations, and generate text.
- While traditional AI aims to perform specific tasks based on predefined rules and patterns, generative power AI goes beyond this limitation and strives to create entirely new data that resembles human-created content.

What does this mean for the challenge of decolonising education?

**Phaedrus**



**Plato**

# How do we move forwards?

1. Recognise citational systems for what they are and are not!
2. Strategize in order to break the '*chains of binding conventions*'.
3. Reimagine the 'field' or 'terrain' on which scholarship is done.
4. Need to remind ourselves that humans have a 'deep history'.
5. Rationalism and reason were not invented European Enlightenment.
6. Shift from hierarchies to ecology of knowledges

