

**Call for Papers: Decolonizing Energy**  
**Abstracts Due: December 1, 2024**

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“Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different.” So writes Frantz Fanon in his conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*. In declaring an end to the “European game,” Fanon envisions a decolonial imaginary founded on energy transition and a radical re-humanization of the conditions of work. Fanon’s work figures centrally in nearly any canon of decolonial/anticolonial thought, and more recently has been examined through the lens of environmental justice, environmental philosophy, and ecocriticism. We suggest that Fanon’s writings, along with a wider set of texts from the decolonial and anticolonial canons, may be productively read through an energy humanities framework, in the process developing a strategy for practicing critical energy humanities oriented toward and located in the Global South.

In this special issue, planned to appear in *South Atlantic Quarterly* issue 126.1 (January 2027), we invite contributors working in the energy humanities to identify and unpack key scenes for theorizing energy in classic decolonial/anticolonial thought—including the work Fanon, W. E. B. DuBois, Aimé Césaire, Sylvia Wynter, Gloria Anzaldúa, Patrice Lumumba, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Husain al-Rahhal, among others. Though the contemporary “canon” of decolonial theory is deep and broad, we propose to return to and address classic and foundational works of the late twentieth century. Our aim is to produce a special issue that lays the groundwork for a new intellectual history of energetic liberation, by inviting energy-focused readings of influential keystone texts.

By revisiting the decolonial project through the perspective of energy, this special issue seeks to address the colonial legacies of the spatial and historical development of energy systems, while foregrounding ecpolitical visions of “taking back power” and energy justice. As such, it aims to:

- foreground the relationship between energy, ecology, and settler colonialism,
- engage with intellectual genealogies to help us understand past, present, and future relationships between energy systems and decolonial political imagination
- study global struggles for energy justice against colonial regimes of energy apartheid in the Global South,
- develop critical and theoretical frameworks for understanding how energy can be conceived in relation to anti-colonial epistemologies and politics.

The issue and its contributions will thus have a somewhat nontraditional structure: the issue will offer 10-12 shorter essays (of roughly 4000 words) rather than a smaller set of full-length articles. In each of these essays, a contributor will select a particular decolonial theorist and offer an energy-inflected reading of a scene, thematic, or feature of that theorist’s work, explaining how their reading opens new avenues for the study of energy systems in their imbrications with forms of life.

As necessary, this project will support new translations of essential de/anticolonial works that have not been previously published in English. Any potential contributor who will benefit from such support should make a note in their proposal so that the editorial team can help to coordinate the translation logistics. As an ongoing part of the project, we hope that these works can be made accessible to a wider group of scholars and students, and aim to use the special issue as a step along the way to producing a critical anthology of de/anticolonial theory targeted for use in energy humanities pedagogy.

The special issue will build on a growing body of scholarship in the interdisciplinary energy humanities which increasingly conceives of early modern colonialism's plantations—rather than the industrial revolution's coal piles and cotton mills—as the origin of the extractivist logics of contemporary energy systems. This new location is not a denial of the importance of fossil fuels, but rather a recognition of the role of colonialism and racial capitalism in their social production and technological emergence. It also underscores the necessity of decolonial approaches to decarbonizing energy systems. But, as Fanon suggests, a critical energy studies located in and oriented toward the Global South also invokes the importance of new ontological considerations of energy and its study. We propose this re-reading of the decolonial and anticolonial canon not only to “find” energy in these texts, but also to expand the kinds of intellectual, political, and cultural work that energy studies can do, and the kinds of questions it can help us to answer.

### **Steps and Timeline**

Interested contributors should submit proposals of no more than 300 words to [energyhumanities@georgetown.edu](mailto:energyhumanities@georgetown.edu), identifying the theorist and text that will be the subject of your reading, and explaining in brief the energy studies intervention. Proposals will be accepted through December 1st, 2024, and we will respond to submissions in January 2025. Early submissions and/or inquiries are encouraged.

Selected contributors should expect to commit to the full development process for the special issue, which will be supported by the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University in Qatar, and includes the following steps:

- Winter, 2025: contributors will attend a remote workshop. This will be a structured opportunity for participants to workshop one another's essay concepts and to collectively discuss the framing questions of the special issue.
- August, 2025: contributors will submit complete drafts to the co-editors and to one another.
- Fall, 2025: contributors will attend an in-person symposium to collectively workshop the essay drafts. All costs for attendance will be covered by Georgetown University in Qatar, though remote attendance can be accommodated if needed.
- January, 2026: contributors will submit revised drafts to co-editors for submission to *South Atlantic Quarterly*.