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Dreaming of a Pluriversity: Collective Approach to Decolonial Knowledge Cultivation

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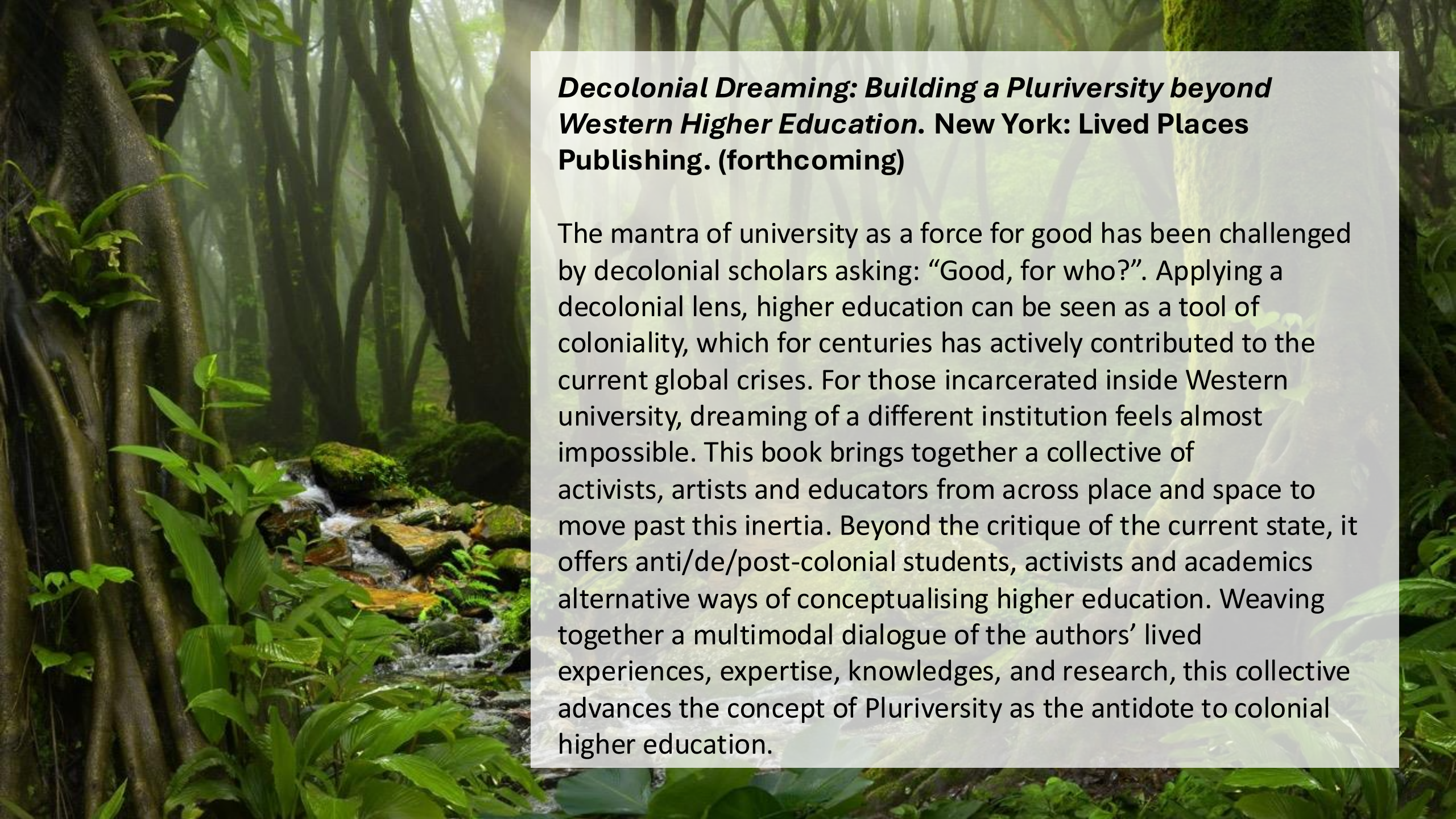
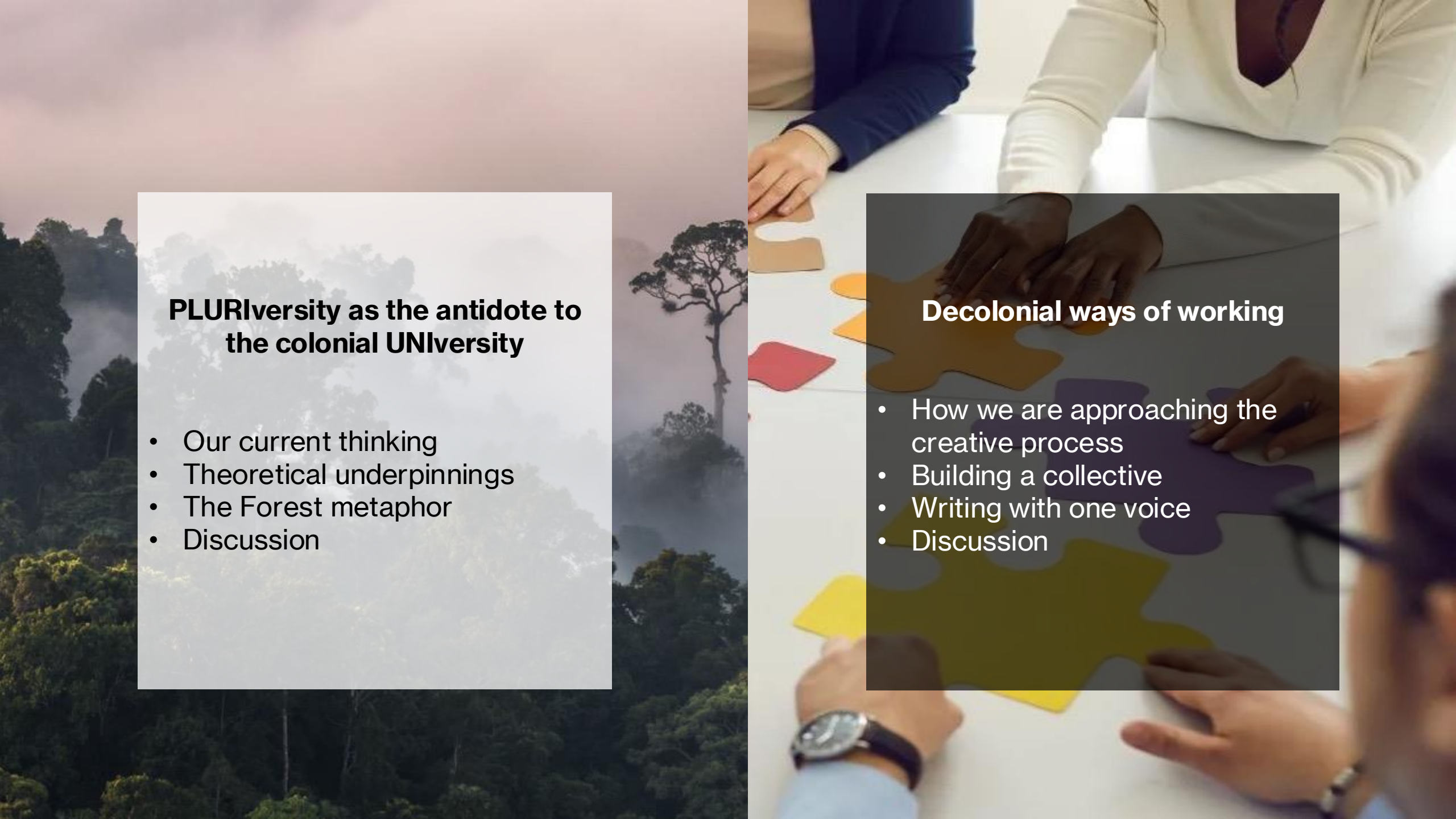


***Decolonial Dreaming: Building a Pluriversity beyond Western Higher Education*. New York: Lived Places Publishing. (forthcoming)**

The mantra of university as a force for good has been challenged by decolonial scholars asking: “Good, for who?”. Applying a decolonial lens, higher education can be seen as a tool of coloniality, which for centuries has actively contributed to the current global crises. For those incarcerated inside Western university, dreaming of a different institution feels almost impossible. This book brings together a collective of activists, artists and educators from across place and space to move past this inertia. Beyond the critique of the current state, it offers anti/de/post-colonial students, activists and academics alternative ways of conceptualising higher education. Weaving together a multimodal dialogue of the authors’ lived experiences, expertise, knowledges, and research, this collective advances the concept of Pluriversity as the antidote to colonial higher education.

The Constellation of Decolonial Dreamers



PLURIversity as the antidote to the colonial UNIversity

- Our current thinking
- Theoretical underpinnings
- The Forest metaphor
- Discussion

Decolonial ways of working

- How we are approaching the creative process
- Building a collective
- Writing with one voice
- Discussion

Areas the book will discuss:

- knowledge production/ cultivation;
- the interactions between the physical and the epistemic spheres
- Relationships of care
- The feasibility of moving toward a decolonial pluriversity

Current theoretical underpinnings/ guiding philosophies

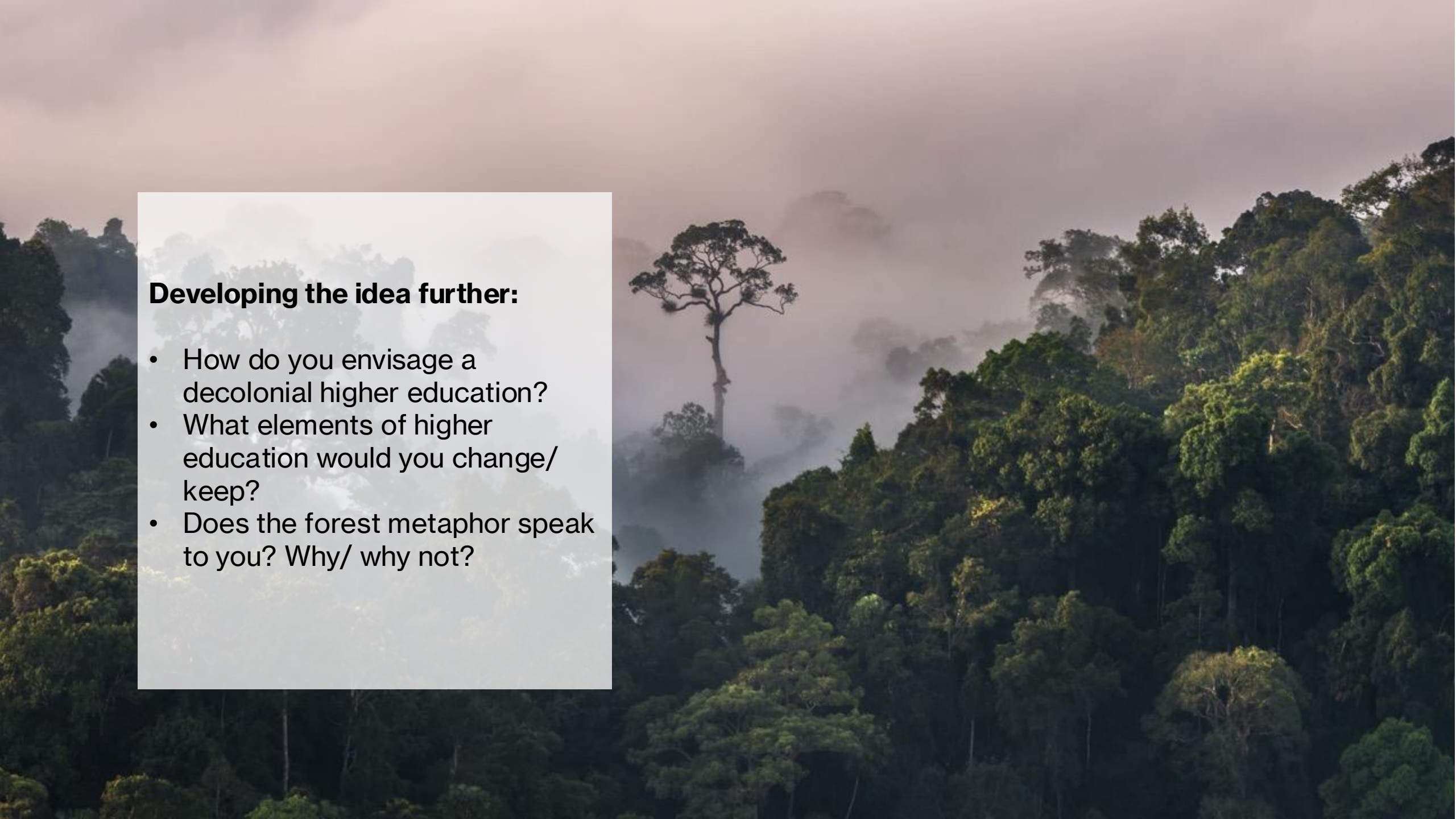
- A variety of decolonial thinkers: Modernity/Coloniality Group; Indigenous philosophies (Anishinaabe, Krenak, Geni Núñez, Tynan), Freire, Tuck & Yung,
- Relationality, connectedness (to land, community, humanity, knowledge), reindeginisation, horizontal/circular hierarchies, pluriversality (vs monoculture), radical rehumanisation, political nature of all knowledge

Pluriversity as a forest

- The antithesis of monoculture
- Symbiotic diverse ecosystem
- Collaboration not competition (sun, nutrients)
- Connectedness (Sahara-Amazon link; mycelial networks)

Monoculture

- Crop fields serve capital production – often disregarding local needs
- Leave the earth exploited and exhausted
- Maintenance is resource intensive



Developing the idea further:

- How do you envisage a decolonial higher education?
- What elements of higher education would you change/ keep?
- Does the forest metaphor speak to you? Why/ why not?

Decolonial ways of working

- Co-creation of proposal
- Creating a community - getting to know one another
- ‘Working-together’ document
- Monthly meetings
- Writing with one voice
- Creative freedom – traditional academic writing, storytelling, poetry, drawings, any other artistic expressions

- What hasn’t worked

Reflections for your practice:

- Would that model be beneficial for you? Could you adopt this model?
- What challenges and opportunities do you foresee?
- What would you change if you were to adopt this model?
- What other ways of decolonial academic working could you think of?