

Timothy Mitchell

Short Bio

Timothy Mitchell writes about colonialism, political economy, the politics of energy, and the making of expert knowledge. Trained in the fields of law, history, and political theory, he works across the disciplinary boundaries of history and the social sciences. Many of his writings explore materials from the history and contemporary politics of Egypt, where he has conducted research over many years.

He recently finished a new book, to be published in 2026 under the title *The Alibi of Capital: How We Broke the Earth to Steal the Future on the Promise of a Better Tomorrow*. Starting from the observation that we live in an age in which extraordinary wealth seems to arrive from unfathomable sources, as when tech firms that have never made a profit are valued at billions of dollars, the book argues that this mode of acquiring unearned wealth is in fact commonplace. It is a key to understanding how capitalism came into being and a clue to grasping why the catastrophe of climate collapse has come upon us.

Mitchell is the William B. Ransford Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Columbia University. His is based in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies, for which he served as chair from 2011 until 2017.

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