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Decoloniality and Tropicality: Part Two

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Abstract

The papers collected together in this special issue on the theme 'decoloniality and tropicality' discuss and demonstrate how we can move towards disentangling ourselves from persistent colonial epistemologies and ontologies. Engaging theories of decoloniality and postcolonialism with tropicality, the articles explore the material poetics of philosophical reverie; the 'tropical natureculture' imaginaries of sex tourism, ecotourism, and militourism; deep readings of an anthropophagic movement, ecocritical literature, and the ecoGothic; the spaces of a tropical *flâneuse* and diasporic vernacular architecture; and in the decoloniality of education, a historical analysis of colonial female education and a film analysis for contemporary educational praxis.

Keywords: decoloniality, postcolonialism, colonialism, tropicality, tropics

Decoloniality and Tropicality

This two-part special issue on the twin themes of ‘Decoloniality and Tropicality’ and ‘Decolonizing the Tropics’ brings together a wide variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary papers from several regions of the tropical world. The aim is to gather examples of decolonial practice, epistemology, and ontology. The special issue decentres the temperate west as the locus or producer of knowledge, and brings to the fore knowledges from the tropical regions around the planet. Between Part One and Part Two, these countries or regions include: various countries in Southeast Asia, and of Tropical West Africa, numerous states within India, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti and Hawai’i. The two issues are designed to be in dialogue, and we hope you will read papers from each issue to get a sense of their richness and resonances.

In the first issue, we were concerned with how authors position themselves in their texts and how this may form part of a strategy towards decolonizing our research practices, and academia. We also noted that in ‘decolonizing the tropics,’ it is necessary to contemplate who gets to speak and who is spoken about. We further asked whether there is a way to think and write-perform tropically:

Our academic disciplines (which discipline how we think and write) derive from the temperate zones. The term temperate also refers to a way of being—a temperate writing style, a cool and rational and objective stance. As colonialisms derive from this zone and its temperate epistemologies and ontologies, how can we think from our zone, the tropics, as a way to set forth our thinking and writing with feeling? Perhaps we need to embrace jungle text, or humid persuasion, or deltaic quandaries, or we could have monsoonal rants. Perhaps we can engage in going troppo. (Lundberg et al. 2023, p. 16)

Another way of positioning this proposal is to enquire how the theories of decoloniality and tropicality are not only discussed in the following papers but also permeate through the written texts as tropical poetics or performance. Such a ‘tropical materialism’ is also a form of epistemological and ontological decoloniality (Benitez & Lundberg, 2022).

In this introduction, we briefly present the theories of decoloniality, postcolonialism, and tropicality—acknowledging that these discussions are more richly articulated in papers across both issues—and discuss how these theories seek to decentre the

hegemony of temperate epistemologies. We follow this brief outline with short pieces from each of the special issue's editors in order to give a sense of the theories and concerns of our varied disciplines and tropical milieux.

Decoloniality—Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism formed a movement around the ideas of diasporic intellectuals of the Middle East and South Asia, coalescing around the work of Edward Said (1978), Homi K. Bhabha (1994), and the feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988). It arose from the seminal text *Orientalism* (Said, 1978) and cultural studies areas, but has addressed material culture and social concerns. Decoloniality derives from Latin America and the works of Walter Mignolo (2009), Aníbal Quijano (2007), and the feminist María Lugones (2010), among others. It is linked with critiques of development theory and world-systems theory. There is an important difference in geographic areas and time frames between the two colonial critiques. Postcolonialism's time frame begins in the 19th century, addressing the imperialist expansion around the tropical world and beyond, while the time frame of decoloniality begins earlier in the 15th century with the arrival of early colonials in the tropical Americas (Bhabra, 2014).

Both theories are concerned with the subjugation of colonized peoples and with ways of breaking free. In postcolonial theory, this is well expressed through Spivak's question: can the subaltern speak? (1988). In decolonial theory, the call is for Indigenous voices. Both moves seek to break the stranglehold of western discourses and allow a space for subaltern, Indigenous, and other marginalized peoples' epistemologies to be heard and heeded. Joining this call are the theorists Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) and Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) from Africa, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Konai Helu Thaman (2003) from the Pacific. The writings of anti-colonial hero José Rizal have influenced postcolonialism in the Philippine archipelago (Lacuna, 2021), while the work of Aimé Césaire (1950) inspired Frantz Fanon (1963), and both influenced postcolonial and decolonial thinkers of the Caribbean.

Due to the different approaches of decoloniality and postcolonialism, there has been a propensity to put the theories into contestation. The work of Gurminder Bhabra (2014) has been important in bringing the two areas into dialogue, to show how both engage in revealing the continuing pervasive effects of colonialism and neocolonialism (modernity), and how both call for counter-epistemologies and ontologies from the marginalized geographies of the tropics.

In theorising decoloniality, we must be careful not to reinscribe binary oppositions, which are the premises upon which colonial thinking is turned into practice and continues to wreak havoc across the tropical regions of the world. These binary slashes (/) are insistent, and they insert themselves in the tiniest of fissures. We

need to take care not to create a decolonial/postcolonial opposition—for all binaries are colonizing, and thus such a dichotomy is at risk of (re)instituting (neo)colonial thought. These theories are more usefully embraced and practiced in relation. This brings us to other binaries: east/west, self/other, male/female, human/nonhuman, culture/nature, and global north/global south, for instance. Binaries are always in relation; however, in colonial thought, this is premised upon a negative and violent relation of master/slave. We need other ways of being and knowing that enable us to begin disrupting and dispelling (and also de-spelling as in untangling ourselves from the magic of) these binaries, and for embracing other relational possibilities. The call for Indigenous, marginalized, subaltern, and tropical epistemologies and ontologies is therefore of urgent concern for decoloniality and tropicality. However, in this call, we also need to take care not to simply appropriate others' epistemologies.

Tropicality

Tropicality is intimately entwined with decoloniality and postmodernism. It has been well documented how David Arnold (1995) undertook a theorization of the notion of 'tropicality' through a critical analysis of Pierre Gourou's geo-exoticist discourse in his 1947 *Les Pays Tropicaux*. Inspired by Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Arnold demonstrated how Tropicality is conceived as simultaneously a conceptual and physical space. In other words, 'the Orient' and 'the Tropics' are imagined geographies (Arnold, 1995; Bowd & Clayton, 2019; Clayton, 2021; Lundberg, Regis & Agbonifo, 2022). However, the discourse of tropicality also includes a further intensely ecological aspect.

Daniel Clayton has described how tropical imaginaries reinstated Western ideas of superiority, and through colonialist and capitalist expansion and exploitation, helped produce empire:

Tropicality is the age-old discourse (or suite of ideas, experiences, sensations and representations) through which 'the West' regards itself as 'temperate' (moderate, secure, comfortable, self-controlled and staid) and 'the tropics' as alien and its opposite (a domain of allure, seduction, danger, riot and excess). This temperate/tropical opposition has been conceived foremost in environmental terms.... (Clayton, 2021, p.55)

The materiality of tropical ecologies, in all their over-profusion of splendour and hostility, feature as major components of this discourse. This alerts us to something. We must further note that in bringing tropicality and decoloniality into relation, there is an "imperative to recognize the crucial role that nonhuman materials also perform in the tropicality of this ecology.... [In other words]—it is of utmost importance to

understand how these discursive phenomena have been activated and sustained in part by the very materiality of things found in this particular worldly zone” (Benitez & Lundberg, 2022, p. 2).

This persistent re-inscribing of epistemology and ontology alerts us to the nonhuman materials that so lushly and persistently influence the creative formation of discourses of tropicality. This material entwining of nonhuman with human also offers us a way to think through Aimé Césaire’s term “*tropicalité*.” Césaire, beginning in the 1940s, developed his term as a form of anti-colonial imagery and practice in the subversion and reversion of coloniality (Lundberg, Vasques Vital & Das, 2021). In other words, the very materiality of the tropics through *tropicalité* could offer a geographic, cultural, and political site of decoloniality. Césaire, from the viewpoint of his native Martinique, was interested in how a colonial/tropical periphery, othered by the temperate/imperial centre, could nonetheless subvert this relation and thereby open a way for different ways of knowing—a counter-tropicality (Clayton, 2021, p. 59).

As Dan Clayton tells us, “Césaire’s *tropicalité* involves a jouissance of difference as well as crushing alienation. It is partly about the potential for radical renewal of the self” (Clayton, 2021, p.71). Much of the work of *tropicalité* appeared in the literary review journal *Tropiques* from 1941 to 1945. This collection of writings invoke tropical tropes as insurrectional images to put into question and push back (return) imagery of the tropical sublime and overabundance to colonial France’s patriarchal self-image (Clayton, 2021, p.71). An example from *Tropiques* shows this potential of the materiality of the tropics in speaking back. Pierre Mabille’s piece ‘La Jungle’ declares that “tropical paradises suppose the existence of prisons’.... For Césaire this ‘sinister jungle’ was a disparaged, self-imprisoning and fatal world” (Clayton, 2021, p.71). The jungle (as both ecology and imagery) anticipated Césaire’s *Discours sur le Colonialisme* (1950); in turn, *Discourse on Colonialism* became a foundational text in postcolonialism.

Decoloniality and Tropicality at the Heart of Other Western Philosophies

— Anita Lundberg

In Part One of this double special issue, I noted that it is imperative that decoloniality embrace relationality in order that we may begin to soften the binary systems of knowing and being that are at the heart of colonialism. We also, simultaneously, need to recognize that western epistemology is not a total hegemony; there are always cracks in its carapace, and, furthermore, it is not homogenous (Lundberg et al., 2023, p. 5). Importantly, there are other western philosophies that show us different ways of being and knowing within a sensual and relational cosmos.

Thus, there is also a need to recover other marginalized philosophies within the western tradition itself. This is to enact pathways towards re-invoking marginalized western philosophies from within, and at the same time, allows us to decolonize our thought from the notion of western knowledge as a monolithic ‘thing’. Importantly, it is hoped that a re-genealogy of western knowledge will also allow us to create conversations between various other archipelagos of thought. In other words, opening up discussions and recognising resonances between, for instance, relational Western philosophies, Eastern and Subaltern epistemologies, and Indigenous sciences. Further, we need to explore ways of thinking through our worldly tropical surroundings—through material poetics and tropical materialisms (Lundberg, 2018; Benitez & Lundberg, 2022).

Let me go back to the Greeks and the origin story of western knowledge. Here I want to turn to the pre-Socratic scholar Heraclitus, who wrote in cryptic fragments. He was interested in the relation of opposites—in other words, non-duality—in which any subjective thing is only created through its relations with other things; there is nothing outside this relationality. Heraclitus also wrote on the notion of change as being at the centre of the universe, that everything, everywhere, is always in flux. All is impermanence. There is a famous description of Heraclitus’ thought by Plato in his dialogue entitled *Cratylus*. In the story, the philosopher Cratylus says Heraclitus introduced his doctrine of flux in the form of this riddle: “you cannot step into the same river twice” (Sedley, 2003, p. 19). Of course, the flow of the element of water means it is always different to itself, but so is all life. I would like to introduce another Greek scholar, Epicurus, who explored Atomism and its swerve (propensity for change), Materialism, and Cosmology. Epicureanism emphasized that pleasure or happiness is the intrinsic aim of life, but this can only come through living simply and by ridding ourselves of desire. The writings of Epicurus come to us through the epic poem *On the Nature of Things* the sole surviving work of Roman poet-philosopher Lucretius. The poem went against the tenets of the times and was almost lost—a single hand-copied manuscript was found in a remote monastery (Greenblatt, 2012). The poem richly explores Epicurus’ philosophy of atomic swerve, materialism, soul and mind, sensations of thought, the phenomena of the universe, and how these *prima materia* are guided by *fortuna* (chance).

When I read these ancestor philosopher-poets, I am always aware that other ways of knowing and being remain close. Resonating with this western tradition of thought are Eastern philosophies, chaos theory, fractals, and quantum worlds. They evoke the animist beliefs I learned about during fieldwork in Indonesia; the female ghost-vampire myth of Pontianak that arose though a traditional house during fieldwork in Malaysia; and the elaborate cosmos enacted through small daily flower offerings (*canang*) in my home in Bali. I am also reminded of the sensual traditions of some phenomenologists and feminisms, and always of the anthropologist Gregory

Bateson, who wrote the koan: “What is the pattern that connects the crab to the lobster and the orchid to the primrose, and all four of them to me? And me to you?” (1979, p. 8).

Gregory Bateson was an interdisciplinary thinker who spanned anthropology, systems theory, semiotics, linguistics, studies in schizophrenia, communication, evolution, and ecology. He was interested in the relations between things and nothings, nature and culture, human and nonhuman, and he saw them all as stories. Bateson writes,

...thinking in terms of stories does not isolate human beings as something separate from the starfish and the sea anemones, the coconut palms and the primroses. Rather, if the world be connected...then thinking in terms of stories must be shared by all mind...ours...forests and sea anemones.... Its embryology must be somehow made of the stuff of stories. And behind that, again, the evolutionary process through millions of generations whereby the sea anemone, like you and me, came to be—that process, too, must be of the stuff of stories. (Bateson 1979, p. 14)

Bateson goes on to clarify that a “story is a little knot or complex of that species of connectedness (1979, p. 14). Bateson believed that western epistemology needed to be recreated from the inside out in order to see patterns in nature—the very mind of nature—and the connection of all beings. His call was for an intellectual revolution and a spiritual and emotional rediscovery of our (western) relationality with and in the cosmos. Reading Bateson reminds me of other relational thinkers in science and technology studies, anthropology, and philosophy, for instance the *Feral Atlas* project of Anna Tsing, Jennifer Deger, Alder K. Saxena, and Fei Fei Zhou (2021). I also recall the *Rhizomatics* of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980/1987), which informed Édouard Glissant’s *Poets of Relation* (1990/1997), and which further allows for archipelagic thinking (Jerez Columbié, 2021; Lundberg, Regis & Agbonifo, 2022).

I hope that this small archipelago of other western philosophies and epistemologies, through their flows and currents, can be carried further to other tropical archipelagos of thought. And perhaps start conversations.

Radical Decolonial Aesthetics of the Caribbean — Hannah Regis

In the Caribbean, ontological erasure, social upheavals, and disturbances, appear to be cyclical, and a result of unjust rule that can be traced to empire. Narrative has served as a forum for interrogating history’s violent outworkings, but until the 1960s it

offered only a realist representation that resembled the western tradition in terms of structure and style. Martinican scholar and writer Édouard Glissant insisted that Caribbean people needed to engage in a “struggle against a single History for the cross-fertilization of histories” (1989, p. 93). Given that the region is marked by its multifaceted cultural heritage—Indigenous, African, East Indian, Middle Eastern, Chinese and European—it seems counterintuitive that its people should conceive of history in a linear fashion that was forged by a western sensibility. While the historical circumstances that brought each of the aforementioned groups to the islands differ immensely, the quest for an identity within this archipelagic space is nothing short of a struggle to ensure one’s very existence. Since the 1960s, creative and cultural thinkers such as George Lamming, Wilson Harris, and more recently, Grace Nichols and Erna Brodber, have undertaken alternative routes through the creative imagination and have rendered the notion of history far more elastic. The role and importance of the imagination as stimuli for creative efforts and artistic endeavours has shifted in its centrality and political force in Caribbean literatures. Harris asserts:

A cleavage exists between the historical convention in the Caribbean and Guiana and the arts of the imagination. I believe a philosophy of history may well be buried in the arts of the imagination. Needless to say, I have no racial biases and whether my emphasis falls on limbo or vodoun, on Carib bush-baby omens, on Arawak zemi, on Latin, English inheritances—in fact within and beyond these emphases—my concern is with the epic stratagems to Caribbean man in the dilemmas of history which surround him. (1995, p. 18)

Central to our concerns in this special issue is the question of how communities in the tropics engage in constructing space and identity through acts of the imagination and the decolonial aesthetics that have been put to work and continue to be rethought and applied in ways that shape non-canonical forms of cultural creativity. The decolonial enterprise implies a redefinition and a critical reconsideration of the role of cultural creators at a societal level. Kenneth Ramchand notes that the merging of politics, history, and literature must be organic “[f]or the writer who is alive to his time and in his time is automatically involved in a dialogue with the past and the future” (1971, p. 105). Ramchand believes that “there is a sense in which, even when they are concerned with contemporary reality, nearly all West Indian [texts] are engaged with history” (1971, p. 103). Paget Henry also submits that Caribbean theory encompasses unaccustomed ways of understanding its history that coalesce from Caribbean metaphysics. According to Henry, Caribbean reasonings underwent “a seismic shift in orientation” that co-opted some of the signifying practices of ancestral religious ceremonies and syncretic belief systems (2000, pp. 2-3). In this regard, African, Asian, and Indigenous Caribbean magico-religious practices became one of the primary lenses through which the consciousness of a racialized and colonized existence was

articulated and re-negotiated. Articulations of being and becoming were therefore rooted in ancestral and mythological cultural practices of the peoples who form the modern Caribbean civilization.

Tropes of possession and re-possession found literary expression in the works of George Lamming, who surmizes that cultural amnesia is equivalent to spirit theft and zombification by western values. To liberate the self, the individual must exorcize alien and alienating modalities and give place to Caribbean ancestral ways of knowing and being. Lamming provides us with the Ceremony of Souls—a Haitian Vodun ritual where the dead are summoned from the purgatory of water to impart knowledge to the living (1992, 106-7). It marks an imperative act to release the living from a cycle of wrongs that can jeopardize communal well-being. This dovetails with Glissant's observations that an ancestral pathway "is the first stage of a still-naïve historical consciousness and the raw material" for the project of a decolonial literature (1989, p. 71). Glissant's observation also finds parity in Edward Kamau Brathwaite's thinking on the relationship that Caribbean people have with their history, and his standpoint that the writer serves his or her society by acting as "mythmaker" (Glissant, 1989, p. 71).

Brathwaite, however, argues that decolonial aesthetics involving a mythic tradition should not be bound to a specific historical moment (that of postcolonial nation-building); rather, it should be seen as fertile, ongoing, radical, and going beyond the specific event of colonialism, thus informing radical futures. He proposes the framework of the tidalectic and turns to the optics of the ocean to underscore a circular movement through a pattern of language that is synonymous with the ebb and flow of the tides. This circuitous movement between communities and territories imbibes the process of Caribbean becoming that is spatialized via an experimental artistic form where meaning is constantly sought from various encounters outside of time and space (1983, p. 9–54). By this articulation, Brathwaite's tidalectic is useful, as his framework mobilizes decolonial tropes—fluid aquatic spaces, ceremonial forms of memory, and spectral history—as an ongoing radical creative repertoire shaping our global contemporaneity. Like Lamming's circuitous vodun ceremony and Brathwaite's sea tropes, which illuminate submerged networks of relation, Glissant's poetics of relation holds true to the task of constantly fashioning and constructing therapeutic interventions to historical and contemporary in/visible wounding generated by oppressive, neo-fascist systems within the Caribbean and its secondary diasporas.

Caribbean literature also saw the rise of powerful women writers who brought attention to gendered experiences, patriarchal structures, and the intersections of race, class, and gender. Works by writers such as Jamaica Kincaid (1991), Michelle Cliff (1996), and Edwidge Danticat (1998) contributed to feminist discourses and challenged colonial representations of Caribbean women. Erna Brodber turns to the education of empire and its post-colonies, which filled West Indians with knowledge and images of

the colonizer. She takes the idea further by exploring the notion of spirit thievery in which Caribbean peoples were made zombies, their minds emptied, and their spirits stolen. In her novel, *Myal*, Brodber teaches us that the first step towards liberation is to recognize zombification for what it is. She proposes that adequately reversing its impact involves a cooperation of various factions of the grassroots community in counteracting this evil through ancestral beliefs, oral traditions, and earth-based healing ceremonies, which facilitate a recognition that “the half has not been told” (Brodber, 1988, p. 99). This is a refrain from her novel, *Myal*, which invokes a radical resistance to old and new forms of colonial power (Lutchmansingh, 2018). As carriers of inevitable processes of liberation, these cultural workers—Brodber, Brathwaite, Glissant, Harris, Lamming, and others—have fashioned trajectories of healing that metamorphosed in the region’s philosophical and critical discourse. As signposts of a decolonial aesthetic, they reflect notions of how Caribbean people and those in the diaspora come into a space of ease within themselves and each other.

Decolonial Worldmaking via Queer Ecologies

— **Gregory Luke Chwala**

Emma Pérez (1999, p. 6) uses Foucauldian methodology and the work of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha to construct her concept of the “decolonial imaginary,” what she refers to as “the time lag between the colonial and postcolonial” to “decolonize otherness.” In her essay “Queering the Borderlands” (2003, p. 123), she adopts Michel Foucault’s challenge that we examine our bodies more fully to see how they have been inscribed and transformed through the impositions of laws, moralities, and customs over time to understand “how land is imprinted and policed by those traversing and claiming it as they would claim a body—both becoming property for colonizers.” The decolonial imaginary is for Pérez a “rupturing space, the alternative to that which is written in history” by a colonial imaginary that “still determines many of our efforts to revise the past, to reinscribe the nation with fresh stories that so many new voices unite to carve new disidentities...” (p.123). She proposes that we decolonize our histories and historical imaginations by uncovering and honouring multiple experiences and voices from the past to decolonize all relations of power, whether gendered, racial, sexual, or classed, to prevent the “white colonial heteronormative gaze” from reconstructing and interpreting our past (p.123). Decolonial worldmaking is truly invested in this uncovering of multiplicities. Furthermore, in much literature of the tropics, characters come to reexamine their relationship with their bodies and land more fully to reclaim that which has been taken from them in the ruins of empire (Chwala, 2019). Caribbean stories, for example, often complicate an understanding of the imaginary through decolonial ecologies by creating a “rupturing space,” an alternate history of the colonial imaginary that

reconstructs identities and forces us to confront the role that human exceptionalism has played in colonialism and the destruction of our environment.

Maria Lugones' (2010) decolonial feminism scholarship addresses the effects of colonialism on gender and sexuality in similar ways. For Lugones, understanding the various impacts of European colonial exploitation is useful for dismantling constructions of gender and sexuality that influence our engagement with our environment. Lugones (2007) notes that prior to European colonialism many Indigenous populations had different, less-destructive agencies and relationships with their environments, including different perspectives of gender and sexuality. She furthermore posits that the modern colonial gender system did not impose "precolonial" arrangements but a new form of heterosexualism which disrupted preexisting colonial agencies:

Colonialism...imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than [even] for white bourgeois colonizers. Thus, it introduced...gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing. (2007, p. 186)

Lugones, moreover, argues that for many Indigenous peoples, gender was not biological, that sexuality was more liberating, and that in many cultures there were not even gender and sexual categories. European colonizers often dehumanized and animalized Indigenous genders and sexualities solely because these genders and sexualities transgressed the binary categorical boundaries of the colonizer. Realizing this is a starting point for queering decolonial ecologies.

Walter Mignolo's discussion of the Andean civilizations can likewise act as a starting point for queering decolonial ecologies. His careful study of the Andeans is useful for showing how decolonial goals can be goals that also sustain our environment. The Andeans have a word for our environment that is not quite what we think of when we think of nature. Their view of the environment insists on the inseparability of humans from all collective ecosystems, what they call *Pachamamaan*. Approaching a reading of speculative fiction from this understanding of nature moves us toward a process of decolonization by dismantling a hierarchy of humans over the environment. Building on the idea of *Pachamamaan*, Mignolo (2011) writes that decolonial options should focus on: (1) the right to life (each person, ecosystem, plant, and animal); (2) the right for nature (*Pachamamaan*) to be able to regenerate its bio capacity, as opposed to production and recycling; (3) the right to clean life (the elimination of pollution with emphasis on limitations of using resources at the expense of profit); and (4) the right to harmony among all and with all—that is to be part of an interdependent system

among both human beings and *Pachamamaan* (pp. 310-11). These four focuses of decoloniality drive environmental sustainability, and when we consider that there is an advocacy for each type of person here, we might be reminded that this includes queer individuals, a breakdown of hierarchies of race and class, and a dismantlement of the colonial matrix set in place by the logic of coloniality. Collectively, these are the goals of decolonial queer ecologies, a framework that offers a way by which Mignolo's decolonial options can be met, Lugones's decolonial feminism employed, and Pérez's decolonial imaginary explored.

Decolonizing ecologies can be met by queering ecologies, and the imaginative worlds created by writers of speculative fiction offer platforms for decolonial queer ecocritique. In other words, moving from a European colonial logic that informs relationships with our environment to more sustainable ways of thinking, living, and being can be accomplished through decolonial worlding. Such a shift may occur by critiquing and reimagining the ways that sexuality, race, and gender inform notions of environment and/or nature. Deconstructing and resituating new knowledges—that is critiquing, reimagining, and worlding through queer ecologies—implements Mignolo's call to decoloniality. Decolonizing human and nonhuman ecologies can be pursued through a lens of decolonial queer ecologies to discover new ways of becoming. Mortimer-Sandilands and Erikson (2010) write, "Connections, assemblages, and becomings form central concerns for many queer and nature writers, and possibilities offered by models and metaphors are truly quite limitless" (p.39). Queer ecologies offer rich material for considering how new conceptions of becoming may promote a social activism that can decolonize relationships amongst humans and nonhumans, and between humans and their environments.

Ecodrama of the Niger Delta

— **Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah**

In one of his critical works, Johnson (2021, p. 41) argues that "our current crisis of environmental degradation is inextricably linked with capitalist and colonial exploitation." In other words, the shift in the environmental landscape, especially in the tropics, stems from the promotion of the western capitalist economic system. Johnson's notion of colonial exploitation is the presence of the west in former colonized territories even after independence. The colonizer also consists of internal actors who implement policies that are beneficial to external neocolonial agents. Thus, the colonial force persists in a new form that promotes investment and development. In the Niger Delta, environmental colonialism and western-centred environmental policies were made possible under the mantra of development. Resource extractivism began in the Niger Delta in the guise of the development of oil producing communities while *Black Gold* was being extracted. According to Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016, p.

29), “the colonial oil companies promised the host oil producing communities to provide all basic social amenities for them. In fact, the gospel was that of a fully fledged development.” Today, the Niger Delta is characterized by oil spillages and gas flares. The environment is radically polluted.

Ecological entanglements began when the people of the region came to the realization that the Western oil companies were not ready to fulfil their promises. The oil extraction enterprise had drastically cut down the production of farm goods, displaced local agriculturalists from their source of livelihood, and thereby increased the gap between the rich and the local middle class. This socio-economic dysfunction, coupled with an upsurge of youth restiveness from the loss of jobs, culminated in armed militancy by youths and peaceful protests by environmental activists. The aftermath of the above responses to environmental neocolonialism was the government, in conjunction with the oil companies, instituting ingenuine environmental justice frameworks. The payment of climate finance by the extraction companies to the government and some elites in the host communities is a colonial environmental (in)justice framework. It promotes the extractor colonizer’s and internal colonizer’s possession and exploitation of the lands and rivers of the people, and thus their economic, social, and spiritual space. To let go of one’s lands and water bodies is to become disconnected from one’s roots, the graves of one’s ancestors, and one’s identity.

This politics of dispossession and exploitation is what gives rise to the Niger Delta narrative. The creative narrative of the Niger Delta is a response to the inability of the colonial frame to solve the challenge of environmental crisis. In the words of Howitt (2020, p. 1), “neither colonial nor conventional post-colonial frames that leave the deep colonizing of Indigenous domains unrecognized, unacknowledged and unchallenged will allow actions to address those impacts safely and sustainably.” In other words, western initiatives applied to combating climate change will serve nobody. The minimal impacts of the UN Conference of the Parties (COPs) on the global climate crisis attests to this.

The Niger Delta narrative is geared towards decolonizing colonial environmental policies, structures, and systems. The new century ushered in the influx of this corpus of creative works. These works discuss environmental degradation and (neo)colonialism: plays, novels, and poems capture the scourge of oil spillages, their impact on women and young children, the acceleration of armed militancy as a result of the crisis, black soot, ocean encroachment, and pollution induced ill-health. Dramatists, theatre directors, poets, and novelists in the Niger Delta present the potential of creative texts in creating awareness of environmental colonization and resisting western-centric policies and structures. They see that decolonization of

environmental policies is needed to achieve the desired environmental justice in the tropical oil producing region of the Niger Delta.

Ahmed Yerima's *Hard Ground* (2011) is a narrative on armed militancy in the Niger Delta and the response of youth to a corrupt society. The play more broadly explores environmental justice frames that were inappropriate to the context of the region. Nimi, the protagonist, is a young man who takes to arms with other youths to fight against environmental colonization in his oil-producing community. He is critical of the monetization of oil spillages and gas flaring. In other words, the oil companies pay money as compensation to elites in communities and to the government while pushing those more vulnerable to the effects of the crisis to the margins of the economic circuit. Nimi is pitted against the Don, who is representative of the comprador eco-colonist and agrees to the colonization of the environment in exchange for money. The Niger Delta narrative critiques reconciliation, a practice used by the colonizers to pacify host communities that are degraded, and advocates for incommensurability, which, according to Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 1), focuses on "an acknowledgement of cultural distinction and implementing policies that respects this."

Respect for Indigenous epistemologies that protect the environment, and sustainable modes of creating and consuming, are the primary path towards decolonizing western environmental justice frames. Decolonial ecology, according to Chaillou, Roblin, and Ferdinand (2020, p. 4), is environmentalism that recognizes "culture and colour, rather than simply addressing environmental issues through technical environmental management." This is where the narrative of the Niger Delta rests. It advocates for a resuscitation of traditional ways of human and nature relation that were eroded by epistemologies and systems of the global north. These narratives are framed around what Pickens (2021, p.81) refers to as an "efficacious performative response to socio-ecological crisis." In *Wake Up Every One* (2014), the playwright recommends mass action as imperative for decolonizing the environment. The resultant effect of colonial environmental degradation leads the farmers of Ndoliland, a fictional community in the Niger Delta, to march into the house of the Local Government Chairman to present their grievance against him for not averting the environmental crisis and sparing the harvest when the opportunity presented itself. The dramatist-ecologist understands that the creative narrative is imperative for the journey towards decolonial ecologies.

Decolonial ecology, as May (2007, p.104) suggests, "exposes the mythic underpinnings and consequent repercussions of unsustainable resource extraction and exploitation" created by western-centric methodologies. This is what the creative narratives concerned with the environmental crisis in the Niger Delta come together to do (Okpadah, 2023). The employment of creative narratives by artists is premised on the fact that the arts have the capacity to promote eco-literacy and facilitate some transformations in the environmental space.

Colonial Persistence through Archaeology, Heritage, and Architecture in Africa — Ashton Sinamai

The colonial history of Africa largely depends on the archive, totally ignoring the African narratives about colonialism. In cultural heritage, decolonization should be accompanied by the realization that the heritage experience was shaped by the colonial project, and that to present a fair interpretation of that heritage, local narratives are crucial. The priority for those who engage with decoloniality should be to bring out the silenced voices, knowledges, and perceptions that have been suppressed or subsumed by mainstream knowledge systems. These are not always brought out within the environs of the academy, but by listening more to those communities whose voices have been muffled.

Decoloniality can also question the power of unreformed colonial disciplines and institutions like museums and academic institutions that still operate in the postcolony. Many collections in colonizer states, (Europe) colonial nation-states (Australia, Canada, USA, Brazil for example), and former colonies were created through a long history of imperial looting of 'aesthetic' objects from and within colonized worlds. Many of these cannot be returned because it is believed and argued that: "many stolen works had, over time, *simply become part of the heritage of the nations which house them*" (Lucas, 2022) and demands for return shows a "lack of understanding of its [the British Museum's] proper function as a *universal museum which plays a unique role in international culture*" (Wilson, 2002). This selective appropriation of things African cannot be extended to Africans adopting western 'things'. Western-centred knowledge rescinded the legitimacy of African ways of knowing, and yet adopted some of them and subsumed them within western traditions to claim them as their own. There are many examples in pharmaceuticals (Ndhlovu, 2018), as well as in art. Western art has heavily borrowed concepts from the colonized world (e.g., Picasso, Cubism, and African Mask traditions) and claimed them for western civilization, but the colonized world cannot adopt anything from western culture, innovate it, and claim it to be theirs. Such a thing will always be colonial (for instance colonial architecture), and in this way, coloniality denies innovation in the former colonized societies.

Coloniality also creates contexts where colonized people don't know themselves and each other. As Aimé Césaire stated, "[w]hat Africa knows about itself, what different parts of Africa know about each other, have been profoundly influenced by the West" (1972/2000, p. 32). This also extends to the knowledge, or lack thereof, that Africans have about African Americans. Currently, no university in Africa offers African diaspora studies, and the level of understanding between Africa and its diaspora is at the lowest level. Decoloniality is not only a process but a series of actions that open up new

enquiries about people of and from the tropics outside mainstream knowledge systems, and this needs to be respected, while decoloniality within the academy should include the recontextualization of disciplines that reconfigure how people of and from the tropics, that zone that underwent severe colonization, understand themselves and each other.

Decoloniality should not be discussed as if it can be universally applied to every colonized people. From colonies emerged postcolonial settler nation-states (USA, South America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and partly South Africa) that maintain the colonial infrastructure with token special rights for the Indigenous. Post liberated-nation states are still dealing with the problem of how the nation-state is created out of European needs rather than local identities (van Meijl, Goldsmith, 2003). There should be multiple decolonialities to cater for every colonial condition.

A Postcolonialist in Colonial Williamsburg

— R. Benedito Ferrão

I can only describe the person I saw on the other side of the street as being straight out of Dickens, his long nightshirt unmistakably at odds with the broad daylight. His ensemble was completed by a nightcap that drooped sadly to one side, slumpy like his gait and the workworn expression on his face. It had already been a challenging first day on the job. Surely, I must still be jetlagged I thought to myself, having only recently decamped from the settler-colony of Australia for the eastern shores of settler-colonial America as a then-itinerant postdoctoral scholar of postcolonial literature. Nevertheless, a fortnight hence, I saw the man again, this time propping up the bar at the pub a colleague had invited me to for an after-work drink. It was light outside, but the glum chap was still wearing the aforementioned nighttime garb and, on this occasion, his floppy cap—echoing his lethargy—threatened to fall into his beer.

Concerned about why this apparition continued to be visited upon me (surely I could not still be jetlagged!), I whispered to my new workmate: “Please tell me you also see the strange man at the bar?” He took a quick look and shrugged. “Probably works down the street.”

“Meaning?”

“You know, at Colonial Williamsburg. They do reenactments of the old times. You know, early America...”

No, I did not know.

They had left that part out during the video interview. Undoubtedly, this is something a postcolonialist should have been made aware of before they took the job. But then why had said postcolonialist not been clued in from the name of the town: *Colonial* Williamsburg, Virginia?

While the question above is central to my pedagogy and scholarship, it also informs (as it is informed by) my own residence in the American South. New to the region, I continually ask myself what it means to be in the midst of a settler-colonialist project (as I will explain) while being a postcolonialist with investments in transoceanic/continental literary and cultural studies. In what follows, I aim to demonstrate how these various vantage points bear continuities. Likewise, in participating in this special journal issue, it is with the view that the present decolonial turn cannot be construed as a new phenomenon. Rather, postcoloniality's reading of anti/coloniality must be seen as the elements from which a contemporary decolonial stance in the study of the tropics can be evinced.

Of Williamsburg, its use of colonial drag/cosplay (as evidenced by my encounters with the bedgown-wearing Dickensian character), and the re-enactment of a supposed history of the beginnings of white(ned) America, its British origins are what are best known. Both named for English monarchs, the city of Jamestown in the state of Virginia (which commemorates Elizabeth I, known as the Virgin Queen) was America's first British settlement, created in 1607. Later in the seventeenth century, Williamsburg (also christened for an English ruler) would take over as Virginia's capital. Apart from claiming these lands for England, such naming practices also contributed to erasing Indigenous histories.

However, the town bore the destructive wrath of the divisive Civil War of the 1860s. Famously funded by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Williamsburg's reconstruction in the 1920s would bring about the Disneyland-like version that exists today. In part an effort to promote the republic, the repairs were also likely aimed at salving the wounds of the internal war. In *Creating Colonial Williamsburg: The Restoration of Virginia's Eighteenth-Century Capital*, Anders Greenspan describes the "restoration [as representing] the glorious antebellum period that many Southerners longed to revive [, even if] ... it might have been a 'Yankee reconstruction'" (2009, p. 38). Similarly, for the rest of America, Colonial Williamsburg "would be preserving the values of the colonial era and with it the lure of the antebellum South" (Greenspan, 2009, p. 39).

This vision of a nation united, predicated on the simulacra of a re-enlivened past, is also markedly the coherence of an American identity that is white. Dependent on a remaking of the antebellum period, such nostalgia produces whiteness by investing in what makes that moment of American history distinct, and that is the ownership of enslaved Black people. Reenacting white supremacy as Americana, Colonial

Williamsburg may gloss over the harshest aspects of the lives of the enslaved, but is still a tourist destination seeking to profit from parlaying some version of the pre-Civil Rights past. “The means and modes of Black subjection may have changed,” Christina Sharpe notes in *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, “but the fact and structure of that subjection remain” (2016, p. 12).

Yet, this is not to suggest that no resistance is sounded within Colonial Williamsburg itself. At this site and other historically sentimental ones, Native American, Black, and other “interpreters” of colour (as historical reenactors are known), attempt to reveal little know stories while “walk[ing] a corset lace-thin line between informing audiences and alienating them; between self-preservation and showcasing the vulnerable lives of minorities” (Barger & Davis, 2020, par. 16).

What I have offered so far is a decolonial reading of Colonial Williamsburg, one that surfaces the white supremacist engendering of the site via its links to a history of British settlerism. Even so, Virginia has an even older colonial history, and a pre-British one at that. Placing the region within a hemispheric nexus of trade, weather patterns, and geopolitical entanglements of the early modern period, one that involved the tropics—Iberia, the Caribbean, and Latin America—Anna Brickhouse

[draws] from a series of Spanish colonial writings about a sixteenth-century Jesuit settlement on the Chesapeake Bay that was established in preparation for a Spanish attempt at colonization of the area. The archival record of this Jesuit mission exposes the fictionality of Virginia as the site of what the English themselves, first in Roanoke and then in Jamestown, often imagined as an originary moment of European-indigenous encounter. (2007, p. 19)

In identifying non-Anglo-American/non-English sources that narrate how Indigenous peoples resisted colonialism, Brickhouse challenges “the United States as the default center of the scholarly narratives we create” about the making of the nation (2007, p. 32).

By unsituating the United States as solely being bred of (and severed from) England, then additionally locates it within its tropical entanglements across oceans and continents. In other words, to tell America’s story postcolonially, what is required is a greater panoply of colonial-era sources, linguistically and geographically diverse ones. This work is incomplete without considering different forms of storytelling, oral and otherwise, carried by the marginalized. What are the overlaps, and schisms, between these chronicles? The work of decoloniality can be done more effectively in tandem with post/(anti)colonial legacies, ones that are as varied as they are illuminative.

Decoloniality and the field of Anthropology—A view from the Pacific**— Sophie Chao**

Following my discussion in Part One of this twin special issue on positionality and citational politics, here, in Part Two, I turn to the spaces of teaching and theory-making as decolonial praxis. My field of study is anthropology, but these practices are pertinent to other academic fields.

If there is one place where the academic canon tends to show its true colours, it is in the humble classroom. And by the same token, it is in the realm of teaching that some of the most interesting and necessary moves towards decolonial praxis are happening. Such moves are led often by Indigenous and critical race scholars, who may not self-identify as anthropologists, but whose tactics for unsettling established centres of authorship/authority are vital to the discipline. A powerful example of such decanonization in the sphere of pedagogy pertains to the emergence of open-access, periodically updated, and often collectively compiled bibliographies, syllabi, and reading lists. Examples of such resources include “101 Ways to Disrupt Your Thinking” (First Nations Initiative, n.d.), the “Syllabus for a Progressive Environmental Anthropology” (Guarasci, Moore, & Vaughn, 2018), “Plantation Worlds” (Sapp Moore & Arosoaie, 2022), and “The TransPacific in Relation” (Ikehara et al. 2021; see also Tsing et al., 2021).

Often organized around themes rather than authoritative figures, these and other resources bring into the fold and foreground intellectual genealogies and geographies absconded from conventional anthropological canons—notably scholarship produced by intellectuals, activists, and practitioners who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. They invite critical interrogations of the intersections of academia, art, and activism through the inclusion of multi-modal resources beyond the written text—podcasts, visual art, poems, comics, and more. Framed from the outset as “invitations,” “experiments,” and “points of departure” they are “ever-evolving and open-ended,” rather than set in stone or exhaustive. In expanding, challenging, and transforming how, and through whom, students come to understand and shape anthropology and consonant disciplines; these progressive teaching resources bring us to critically consider who is included and excluded from the “we” of anthropology and academic knowledge. In doing so, these resources provide fertile ground for the classroom to remain, in African-American activist-scholar bell hooks’ (1994, p.12) words, “the most radical space of possibility in the academy.”

Allow me to now turn to a word on theory-making. Following Māori education scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and American anthropologist Carole McGranahan (2022), I understand “theory” in the broadest possible sense to encompass the diverse ways

in which people interpret the world, and, in doing so, make a claim in and about the world (see also Teaiwa, 2014). To decolonize the field involves centering the experiential and speculative forms of theorization produced by the people upon whose cultures we build our careers and capital. Acknowledging our interlocutors in the field as theorists counters challenges to the (often hierarchical) positioning of theory as apposite to, and distinct from, everyday practice, activist engagement, and grassroots discourse (Hau'ofa, 1975; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2002). Such a move demands that we attend to the creative, critical, and innovative ways in which people articulate their worlds within, against, and beyond, colonial-capitalist relations.

More broadly, decolonizing theory calls on us to interrogate, rather than take for granted, what theory does in the first place, how it is distributed, and who gets to decide what lies within and beyond its ambit. The intention here is to unsettle, enrich, and expand what Australian-British feminist theorist Sara Ahmed (2017) calls the “citational chain” of academic theorizing that determines and delimits whom we see ourselves in conversation with. To adopt this framing pushes against the (W)hite intellectual monopoly and ownership over theory as a particular and privileged mode of knowledge production and academic capital, conditioned by structures that govern who can theorize *or* be theorized about. Instead, it recognizes the complex, transforming, and praxis-based frameworks through which our interlocutors in the field, as active knowledge producers, understand, explain, and evaluate the nature of, and relationship between, local realities and global forces, as these arise through their identification of meaningful connections, resonances, gaps, and contradictions—some lived and remembered, others imagined and speculative.

The question of citational representation and voice in turn raises the question of (self-)identification as a practice towards decoloniality in the field of anthropology. I am referring here not just to the ways in which we identify ourselves by disciplinary formation within our texts, but also as members of particularly and situated communities, as inheritors of historical legacies, and as gendered, racialized, and otherwise inflected beings and relations. My thinking around self-identification is informed first and foremost by the work of Red River Métis/Michif feminist geographer Max Liboiron. In their book *Pollution is Colonialism* (2021, p. 3, fn. 10), Liboiron critiques the tendency in scholarly texts to introduce Indigenous authors with their nation/affiliation while leaving settler and white scholars unmarked. This approach, Liboiron notes, is problematic because it “re-centers settlers and whiteness as an unexceptional norm, while deviations have to be marked and named.” Struck by Liboiron’s words, I attempted to put their model into practice in a work-in-progress monograph.

This proved challenging. Very few scholars, I found, explicitly self-identify through their relation to land or settler-colonialism on their websites, or in their publications. Trawls

through the internet sometimes yielded identifications, but these were often of uncertain source and date. Some of the scholars I was citing had long since passed away and had been writing at a time when doing anthropology and being an anthropologist was something admittedly quite different. At what point, I wondered, can a lack of self-identification be justifiably translated to the status of “unmarked”? With these questions in mind, I ended up adapting Liboiron’s methodology by contacting scholars directly to explain my citational approach and seek out how they wished to be identified. To my surprise, every one of the thirty-five scholars I wrote to responded within the week, with offerings of self-identifications, but also with many questions and caveats that were just as valuable to engage with. These included, for instance, the potentials and pitfalls of reducing any identity to a cultural, racial, geographic, or disciplinary affiliation—or the difficulties in self-identifying across the multiple spheres of action and thought that animate who we are and what we do. Putting into practice Liboiron’s methods thus led to incredibly rich and unexpected conversations that in turn opened up space for new kinds of connections around identity and identification with a diverse community of interlocutors. It radically changed the tenor of the text, along with the textures of the social and intellectual relations that made this, and all other texts, possible.

The strategies I outline above are neither exhaustive, prescriptive, or exclusive. Their relevance and import are situated and contextual, relative to the setting and positionality of researched and researcher. Their sources of inspiration, too, are plural and particular. They offer modest but actionable forms of everyday decolonial practice and reflection that might move us beyond spaces of individuated incapacitation, and into spaces of coalitional possibility. I invoke them in the spirit of abolitionist love and radical freedom summoned by Queer Black Troublemaker and poet-activist Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2008) in the hope that they may gain ground and grow.

The Papers: Offerings from the Tropics

The works presented in this second issue address the theories and/or the concerns of decoloniality, postcolonialism, and tropicality through research from various disciplines and areas of the tropics. In the following papers, we encounter a deep reading and translation of philosophical reverie through Cixous’ rumination on the *philippine* (twin almond kernel). Two papers on tourism follow, one in the Philippines on the anthropology of sex tourism vs ecotourism and ‘tropical natureculture,’ and another on the literary analysis of militourism (military tourism) set in Hawai’i. This leads to a further group of papers undertaking literary analysis, including discourses of the anthropophagic movement for nation-making in Brazil, an ecocritical literary reading on extractivism and environmental injustice in a fictitious tropical West African country, and a South Asian ecoGothic analysis of a novel set in a fictional Indian slum. We

continue further into South Asia via architectural spaces, including the meanderings of a tropical *flâneuse* in a novel set in an Indian metropolis, and an architectural study of the material culture of the vernacular dwelling of the Rakhaine diaspora in Bangladesh. We close with two papers on education, one on the history of female education in colonial Asante in what is now Ghana, and a final paper that brings us into the present through a film analysis of the multiversal *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

Decoloniality and (non)Tropical Reverie

Christian Benitez and Phrae Chittiphalangsri's essay, 'Philippine *philippine*, or the Tropics in Cixous's Dreaming True,' takes us deep into the complex tropicality of reverie. The authors reveal how Hélène Cixous' book, entitled *Philippines*, is an exploration of that intimate entanglement experienced during love in which self entwines with other, and we can never say where one begins or ends. Cixous evokes this relationality through the notion of the twin kernel within a single almond shell, the *philippine*. Through translating Cixous' text between French and English, the authors invite readers to slow down in order to follow the weave of Cixous' ideas and the author-translators' play on homophony and the etymological relays of words (the same technique for which the French feminist is herself famous) until they lead us to that *other* Philippines, the tropical archipelago, which strangely never appears in Cixous' book entitled *Philippines*. The authors undertake a delicate material poetics in which words themselves have agential power, carefully following the entanglements of these words and etymologies as they reveal decoloniality in practice.

Decoloniality, Postcolonialism, Tropicality and Tourism

In her article, 'Tropicality and Decoloniality: Sex Tourism vs Eco Tourism on a Philippine Beach' Rosemary Wiss centres the imaginary of a tropical beach and the idea of tropical natureculture. The beach is Aplaya, in Puerto Galera, where local industries of sex tourism and ecotourism vie over policies of development and preservation. Wiss' 'tropical natureculture' brings Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing's term natureculture into relation with tropicality in order to indicate the entanglement of nature, culture, the tropics, and colonialism. While always remaining close to the beach, Wiss takes us back through the long 400-year history of colonialisms in the Philippines—Spanish, American, Japanese—and the return of the Americans to set up 'decolonial' academies and military bases. The author shows how sex tourism at the beach is linked to the former military bases and how ecotourism links to land grabbing by a family of the Filipino super-rich. All are involved in creating images of the beach as an isolated paradise—despite its long cultural history of human occupation going back to pre-colonization. In this Utopia, male tourists speak of

Philippine women as naturally sexually available, and wealthy Filipinos plant palm trees down to their fenced-off white sand beaches.

Kristiawan Indriyanto, in 'Decolonizing Discourses of Tropicality: Militourism and Aloha 'Āina in Kiana Davenport's Novels,' takes up Teresia Teaiwa's portmanteau 'militourism,' which she uses to signify how tourism is perpetuated through an imaginary of tropical paradise that is simultaneously a cover-up of the continuous exploitation of the islands of Hawai'i. Western discourses of exotic nature and harmonious Natives serve to veil the violence of American militarism, nuclearization, and rampant tourism development. Indriyanto argues that under this persistent tropical-colonial rendering of the archipelago, the agency and subjectivity of nature and culture—the environment and Indigenous people—are subsumed and denied. In order to move towards a decolonial understanding of the islands, Indriyanto engages in a reading of Kiana Davenport's novels. These works are set in a Hawai'i in which contestations of nature are fought out between western knowledge based on instrumentalism and *Kānaka* epistemology of *aloha 'āina*. Through a decolonial stance, the novels reveal the active agency of the landscape and how it supports Indigenous peoples' resistance against neocolonialism and their fight for the freeing of the land.

Decoloniality and Literatures: anthropophagic, ecocritic, ecoGothic

Paola Karyne Azevedo Jochimsen's 'Decolonizing Literature: The Absence of Afro-Brazilians in the Anthropophagic Movement' takes us to postcolonial Brazil and the 1920s avant-garde movement to create a national identity. Using postcolonial insights from theorists Frantz Fanon and Boaventura de Sousa Santos in a close reading of the *Manifesto Antropofágico* (Anthropophagic Manifesto) and essays published in the journal *Revista de Antropofagia*, Azevedo Jochimsen reveals how Afro-Brazilians were othered and absent in the *Movimento Antropofágico* (Anthropophagic Movement). The elite avant-garde, based on the Indigenous ritual in which the flesh of the enemy was consumed to acquire their skills, had conceived of the consumption and ingestion of foreign European culture into a national Brazilian culture. In this elite ritual practice to create a national identity, while the ceremonial practices of the Indigenous were appropriated, the legacies of Afro-Brazilians were disappeared.

In their article, 'Extraction and Environmental Injustices: (De)colonial Practices in Imbolo Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*,' Goutam Karmaker and Rajendra Chetty take the fictitious village of Kosawa as the site of their analysis of the escalating ecological crisis in tropical Africa as the result of extractivist industries, environmental injustices, and structural racism, which are enacted under the neocolonialist mask of progress and development. Taking up an ecocritical reading of Mbue's book, in which the Cameroonian American novelist portrays the village's decades-long struggle against

an American oil company called Pexton, this article maps across land, ecology, race, economics, and epistemology to show how the ordinary village people in the novel are subjected to "slow violence" and "testimonial injustice," which foregrounds the necessity of "epistemic disobedience." Karmaker and Chetty reveal, through the text of Mbue's *How Beautiful We Were*, the ongoing effects of colonialism and neocolonialism, which promote extraction, monetarization, and subjugation of tropical lands and bodies. As they note, the tropics experiences climate crises, ecological disasters, and environmental degradation in specific ways, and these remain linked with colonialism.

In their paper, 'Decolonial and ecoGothic Tropes in Deepa Anappara's *Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line*,' Sanghamitra Devi and Esther Daimari take us into a fictional slum in India. They use a decolonial South Asian ecoGothic sensibility to explore some of the major tropes that arise throughout the novel, including an analysis of "bhoot," a ghost that transverses across the religions of the subcontinent; "djinn," spirits in Islamic mythological traditions that can transfer between good and evil; and "smog," as a Gothic environmental trope that is sometimes toxic and at other times transforms into a djinn. The novel follows a small group of young boys who go in search of the children disappearing from their local *basti* within the slum. The children suspect a malevolent djinn, but they will uncover atrocities of child kidnappings and murders connected to the 'hifi' gated community across the other side of the toxic waste dump and the purple line of the railway. Devi and Daimari show how the novel conveys the lives of marginalized communities—the poor, diasporic, Dalit, and Moslem—and their exposure to violence, corruption, and environmental hazards within neocolonial urban India.

Decoloniality through Tropical Architectural Spaces

In 'A Tropical *Flâneuse* in Ahmedabad: *Flânerie* as a Decolonial Act,' Sayani Konar and Punyashree Panda take us on a perambulation of the history and postmodernism of the metropolis of Ahmedabad. Undertaking a reading of the book *Ahmedabad: City with a Past*, the scholars follow the author Esther David around her city as she ventures out on excursions in an autorickshaw (because the hectic tropical city is not conducive to walking). They reveal how Esther David, as the decolonial tropical *flâneuse*, uncovers ancient myths and histories of Gandhi's anti-colonial independence movements, encounters the phantasmagoria of shopping malls filled with commodities and fast food, and enters the cool spaces of old kitchens where generations of women have handed down traditional recipes. Konar and Panda's tropical *flâneuse* ventures into interiors where Baudelaire and Benjamin's *flâneur* never went, but these interiors are always connected with exteriors and the globalized flows of goods in the neoliberal, neocolonial order.

Antu Das and Nur Mohammad Khan, in their article 'Vernacular Dwellings of the Rakhaine Diaspora in Bangladesh: Decoloniality, Tropicality, Hybridity,' undertake a qualitative case study of the traditional stilt house of the Rakhaine people, a diasporic ethnic group whose ancestors migrated to southern Bangladesh over two centuries ago. The Rakhaine are originally from the former Arakan state, now part of Myanmar. The Rakhaine are a minority group in Bangladesh, and their Buddhist religion, cultural practices, and vernacular dwellings differ from those of their local Bengali neighbours. The authors outline how perspectives from decoloniality and postcoloniality, applied to tropical architecture, allow for an investigation of cultural identity and hybridity in both material and non-material forms. In order to understand how the Rakhaine have adapted aspects of their culture to this different social, cultural, and environmental context, the architects undertake a comparison of two examples of their stilt house design: the first, a traditional house, and the second, built in the last two decades. Through a series of finely drawn architectural plans and accompanying explanatory descriptions, the authors compare the vernacular dwelling with the hybridized dwelling, tracing aspects of adaptability not only in the material culture but also in the socioculture. While transformations in vernacular architecture are mostly described in negative terms, Das and Khan's study demonstrates a more nuanced and positive way to approach change and thus offers a valuable contribution to decolonial tropical architecture.

Decoloniality and Educational Practices

Samuel Adu-Gyamfi and Helena Osei-Egyir's 'A Decolonial History of African Female Education and Training in Colonial Asante, 1920-1960,' explores the complex history around Asante women's changing roles during colonialism due to the introduction of Christian female education and the rapid spread of cocoa plantations and production in the area of what was then known as the Gold Coast. The article takes a decolonial approach to mapping female power relations during this period, showing how colonial education created opportunities for women at the same time as disempowering their traditional matriarchal roles. Christian education emphasized training young women for domestic duties and preparing them as wives, especially for men who were being educated for clerical positions. A decolonial focus also leads the authors to challenge the notion that education in Africa only arrived with colonization; instead, they argue that pre-colonial Africa had education systems for both men and women. The introduction of missionary education and a cocoa economy changed gender roles in Asante in unexpected ways.

Sheng-Hsiang Lance Peng's exploratory paper, 'A Multiversal Adventure in Decolonising Education: *Everything Everywhere All at Once*,' takes us into the matrixial space of the hit film and its potential for introducing decolonial thought in the classroom. The paper starts with the author demonstrating how the film breaks with

racialized stereotypes of Chinese Americans while at the same time revealing that the two main actors are in fact part of the Chinese diaspora of colonial Southeast Asia. Michelle Yeoh was born in a mining and rubber plantation area of Malaysia and Ke Huy Quan is Chinese Vietnamese from Saigon. Through a close analysis of the film, the author takes up several motifs that he believes are particularly good to think with decolonially. These include the “everything bagel,” “googly eyes,” and the “rock universe.” Reading aspects of the film through Taoism, Buddhism, quantum physics, and the multiverse, Peng sets out a pedagogy of liberation through small, provocative, and always engaging steps.

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