EDITORIAL

Conjuring up Decolonial Alternatives: Subversive Navigations of Transnational Colonialisms

Section One: Introduction

Decolonial thinking and doing focus on the enunciation, engaging in epistemic disobedience and delinking from the colonial matrix in order to open up decolonial options—a vision of life and society that requires decolonial subjects, decolonial knowledges, and decolonial institutions.
—Mignolo 2011, 9

The world with which we were once familiar no longer exists. A new reality has been enforced upon us, demanding a novel lens and perspective to engage with. In the face of accumulating injustices, imbalanced power relations, genocides and massacres, the necessity of compiling an issue on decoloniality became immediate.

Decoloniality has emerged over the past few decades as an academic concept, or rather as a mode of thinking geared toward dismantling colonial structures that have shaped our ways of thinking and knowledge production. At the core, it is a politically charged intellectual movement that aims to subvert and demolish all the lingering residue of colonialism. Its primary focus is, thus, to delink from the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP), thereby reclaiming indigenous knowledge and a pre-colonial *Weltanschauung*. With the rise of the Global South, as a strategic label for solidarity and understanding, decoloniality gained momentum and space in academic circles and scholarship.

Rereading and rethinking the world through a decolonial framework has become a refuge from the incessant atrocities that defy even the most fundamental principles of logic and thought. Although colonial imaginings and practices have spawned varied forms of independence (the niche of postcolonialism), the enduring presence of transnational colonialism in our world has prompted calls for decolonial alternatives and practices to resist power dynamics and interrogate its discontents. In an epoch defined by a transnational flow of power, knowledge and capital, contemporary global relations are still shaped by the intricacies of colonialism. The reshuffling of power dynamics and shifts in geopolitical landscapes, that have been witnessed lately, besides the enduring legacies of colonial rule and the rise of

new forms of empire, dictate a reevaluation of the theoretical, conceptual, and analytical frameworks that have traditionally defined our understanding of colonialism, decolonization, and resistance.

Decolonial thinking has emerged as a critical tool for reimagining a future beyond the confines of the "colonial matrix of power." According to Mignolo, decolonial thinking demands a radical reconfiguration not only of territorial sovereignty but also of how knowledge is produced, legitimized, and disseminated (Mignolo, 2011). Against this backdrop, decolonial practices offer more than the removal of the colonizer. They seek to break down the epistemological and ontological foundations of modernity itself, and hence, the global order is forced to make room for these 'other' ways of knowing and being. Decoloniality calls for a world where pluralistic systems— epistemological, ontological, political, and environmental—can thrive equitably and where indigenous cultures can restore their revered position.

Building on the foundational work of scholars—such as Walter Mignolo's call for "delinking" from Western epistemological traditions and Aníbal Quijano's vision of an extrication from colonial power structures that continue to govern the global order—this volume engages scholars and researchers in an exploration of a potential decolonized future (Mbembe 2017). It seeks to pave the way for a radical rethinking of these knowledge-power relations, and the local, global, and glocal neocolonial powers. Contributing to a subversive dialogue on established / conventional theories of colonialism (one which endorses an elaborate "multiple colonialisms" theoretical framework, and as a continuously present condition), the papers engage with diverse perspectives, voices, and contexts prevalent in different parts of the world, spanning a diverse array of genres and foci, from plays to novels, from podcasts to statements, from fictional settlers to real settlers, from Marx to Dipesh Chakrabarty, from genocide to epistemicide, and from postcolonialism to decoloniality.

This issue interrogates the intersections of power, race, and knowledge by engaging with the persistent and multifaceted nature of transnational colonialisms. Edward Said's exploration of the colonial gaze in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) and Achille Mbembe's analysis of postcolonial subjectivities in *Critique of Black Reason* (2017) provide crucial touchstones for understanding the mechanisms by which imperial powers continue to operate across borders. As Said contends, colonial ideologies justify the domination of racialized Others through a process of expansion that privileges one race as inherently superior. This process is not confined to the past but persists in contemporary power relations, which continue to manifest in new forms, such as data colonialism and neoliberal economic exploitation. Mbembe's critique of the enduring effects of racial capitalism underscores the transnational persistence of these colonial structures, challenging us to rethink

how colonialism is experienced in the present and how it shapes the contours of global capitalism, migration, and identity.

Expanding on this framework, the volume turns to the pressing need for a decolonization of knowledge. Walter Mignolo (2011) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argue that decolonization must go beyond dismantling political and territorial structures to also challenge the epistemic violence embedded in Western knowledge systems. The ongoing negotiations of power between colonizers and colonized, in the context of the Global South, are informed by historical processes of dispossession, violence, and resistance all of which shape contemporary global hierarchies. The volume seeks to highlight the agency of colonized communities primarily through the lens of anti-colonial movements, settler colonialism and indigenous epistemologies. It does this by exploring how indigenous and decolonial scholars resist and reshape the very ways in which knowledge is produced and disseminated across the globe.

It further expands decolonial theory by delving into the entanglements of colonialism, patriarchy, gender, and the ecological legacies of colonialism. The colonial logics of gender in this respect-mostly with regard to the Global South-offer a variant perspective for considering the detailed and often hidden forms of violence that shape postcolonial identities. Ann Laura Stoler's concept of "duress" (2010) highlights how colonial power operates through intimate and everyday forms of violence, producing racialized and gendered bodies that continue to suffer under the weight of historical oppression. Similarly, the ecological legacies of colonialism are explored, addressing the ways in which colonialism has shaped environmental exploitation and the ongoing struggles for land and resources in postcolonial nations.

Conjuring up Decolonial Alternatives: Subversive Navigations of Transnational Colonialisms engages directly with these imperatives by exploring the multifaceted dimensions of decolonial thought and practice, aiming to illuminate the subversive potential of reimagining our world beyond colonial frameworks.

We have approached this issue fully aware of the challenges associated with the practice of decoloniality as a methodological approach. However, the realization that such challenges stem from the deeply internalized and even normalized ideological and material manifest of colonial thought, the dominance of Eurocentrism, and the hegemony of capitalism has made "delinking" the central objective of this issue. Delinking is not merely an intellectual exercise but a practical, ongoing process that demands dismantling of entrenched power structures and reimagining knowledge, identity, and social relations outside of colonial frameworks. By actively engaging in this process, we seek to break free from the colonial legacies that continue to shape both our collective and individual realities.

Section Two: Contents

The volume begins with an exploration of the innovative role of diverse digital realms in reinscribing erased histories. Interweaving theoretical frameworks from decoloniality, digital humanities and new media studies, "'*Siyada Asliya Falastiniya*' in the Digital Narratives of "PreOccupation Podcast" and "Sbeih.jpg,"" explores strategies for leveraging social media and podcasts to document their realities and assert their agency, thereby contesting a biased narrative perpetuated by Western and Zionist media outlets. This focus on alternative epistemologies paves the way for a deeper inquiry into the exclusionary colonial systems addressed by the second paper.

The second paper, "Migrant and Refugee Uprisings in Lebanon and Tunisia: A comparative study of failed south solidarity," focuses on citizenship, border-crossing and delegitimization of migrant/refugee and non-national/non-citizen presence. This paper brings to light the perception of bodies trespassing borders as aggressive/temporal/backward as a modern trend in transnational organizing, rather than a phenomenon limited solely to the Global North or authoritarian states. Based on two case studies-the 2023 witch hunt against Sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia and the moral panics against the Palestinian demand for civil rights in Lebanon during the 2019 Camps Movement, the paper identifies moral panics, discrimination, erasure, and an impediment of South-South solidarities as the consequences of a centering of citizenship and an exclusion of non-citizens such as migrants and refugees. It eventually calls for "the necessity of South-South horizontal comradeship.".

"Decoloniality and Nomadic Cosmopolitanism in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*" connects theories of mobility, decoloniality, and nomadic cosmopolitanism in an analysis of Mohsen Hamid's *Exit West*. The study ties a dislocated nomadic cosmopolitanism in Hamid's novel to Walter Mignolo's idea of "epistemic de-linking." This paper looks at how nomadic cosmopolitanism, a manifestation of decoloniality, challenges and disrupts the established norms of Western cosmopolitanism. Similarly, but with a pluralization of possible modernities at stake, the potential for pluriverse, "Interrogating Encounters: Reconstructing Power in the Chaos of Cairo" draws on theories of decoloniality and connected sociologies to deconstruct an Orient / Occident binary.

With an eye on the geopolitical reality of Palestine, "*In Ishnā lan nansā wa-lan nusāmiḥ*: Transitioning from a Necropolitical Today to a Decolonial Tomorrow" explores the temporal and spatial scopes of Israel's occupation of Gaza; and argues that violence and occupation reflect a longstanding genocidal pattern since 1948. Advocating for "pluriversal sovereignty", the paper investigates the death of forgiveness as a paradoxical form of survival through memory, and links ethno-nationalism to systemic dispossession, challenging the conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism while exposing

the ways such narratives reinforce Zionist hegemony. This notion of transnational solidarity extends to "Decolonial Narratives of Knowledge and Defiance in Brian Friel's *Translations* and Muin Bsesio's *Shamshūn wa Dalīlah*" which draws parallels between the colonial histories of Ireland and Palestine, both subjected to British and Israeli settler colonialism, especially through partition. The study lies at the juncture of discourses of identity, memory, displacement, colonial continuity and resistance. Through Mignolo's lens, the paper explores Brian Friel's *Translations* and Muin Bsesio's *Shamshūn wa Dalīlah* as tools of epistemic disobedience, challenging a hegemonic colonial discourse with disruptive alternatives while envisioning possibilities for decolonized futures.

The psychological dimensions of settler colonialism are foregrounded in "The Colonizer Within: Exploring Facets of Internalized Oppression in Palestine." Merging psychological inquiry and a Phenomenological approach rooted in decolonial theory, the paper pivots on the psychological impacts of settler colonialism. Conducting semi-structured interviews with Jerusalemite Palestinians, the study uncovers horizontal hostility, suppressed rage, and helplessness as three key manifestations of *Internalized Oppression*— revealing the ways internalized aggression fractures Palestinian communities, redirecting violence inward. The paper contributes to broader decolonial strategies for healing, offering a path to reclaiming agency and dismantling internalized colonial power. Extending this psychological focus, "Alienation and Aloneness in the American West: Masculinity and Colonial Loneliness in Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*" engages with settler colonial history of America as an intrinsically lonely one. Placing the focus on "the cowboy identity," that was forged in the wake of the colonization of the American West, the paper ties it to both masculinity and solitude-arguing that it is both a product of colonial expansion and a symbol of its existential toll. Exploring the concept of "loneliness", the paper examines the devastating impact of American colonialism on both the indigenous people it sought to eradicate and the colonialists themselves. A close reading of two fictional settlers of the American West, the kid in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* and Ennis Del Mar in Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain*, posits that in each respective text the protagonist's cowboy-like identity, due to its roots in colonialism, complicates American masculinity and makes the life of the "masculine" cowboy an inherently lonely one.

This trajectory of psychological reparation resonates with "Feminist Solidarity and Decolonial Struggles: A Critical Reading of Global Feminist Statements on Palestine." The paper explores the rising global feminist solidarity with Palestine, arguing that Palestine is a feminist issue. Drawing on decolonial transformational feminist thought and Walter Mignolo's notion of a "decolonial option", the study discusses how feminist collectives from the

Global North and Global South embark on the task of challenging the coloniality of power that dichotomizes the world into human/nonhuman and subject/object and thus allows and legitimizes colonial forms of dehumanization and epistemicide, while starting to de-link from abstract universalism. Through an analysis of several feminist statements of solidarity with Palestine, the light is thrown on the ways feminist thought and activism shape a decolonial path, shedding light on the indispensability of a decolonial feminist framework not only for dismantling existing power structures but also for envisioning alternative futures.

Venturing down a different path, "Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Islamism: A Marxist critique" dismantles the notion of a return to an idealized authenticity shifting the focus to a dynamic engagement of the past as a living tool of resistance and emancipation. The paper explores the intersections between the postcolonial and decolonial search for authenticity, and the Islamist project of a return to an original, inherited, precolonial belief system; attributing the three framework's rejection of Marxism, both theoretically and politically, to a disenchantment in the left. The study draws connections between the current global neoliberal stage of capitalism and a racialized colonialism, arguing that racism is ingrained in the very structure of the neoliberal globalized capitalism. At the heart of the free market and the neoliberal globalized capitalism, as the argument runs, lies a framework of systemic dehumanization and violence, as evidenced by the current slaughters in Gaza.

Aligning with the issue's primary aim of unraveling subversive reimaginations of colonial legacies, a review of Nouri Gana's *Melancholy Acts: Defeat and Cultural Critique in the Arab World* (2023) has been deemed pertinent. The book bridges the emotional and cultural dimensions of colonial resistance, redefining melancholy as a dynamic and politically potent force of decolonial critique; one that transcends passivity and offers a means of resistance to entrenched sociopolitical and cultural systems, envisioning alternative futures for oppressed communities.

The interview with Dipesh Chakrabarty, whose scholarship resonates profoundly with the focus of this special issue, enriches it deeply by offering a broad perspective on many of the ideas, queries and issues raised across the articles. The discussion encompasses: the intersection of postcolonial and decolonial thought, (underlining in each its shared, yet distinctive, entanglement with European intellectual trajectories), the ways social media functions in historical construction; and the challenges faced by gender studies in the Global South. The possibility of reimagining pluralistic trajectories, as alternatives for hegemonic epistemologies, is also harped upon—emphasizing the urgent need for nuanced, interdisciplinary trajectories that join decolonial

thinking with ecological sustainability, addressing both the epistemic and material inequalities that define our global moment.

As a final note, it remains to be said that this issue aspires to be an utterance contributing to a wider discourse, which while rethinking colonial epistemologies through the complexities of transactional power dynamics, challenges dominant narratives and provides alternative pathways for envisioning just futures; namely, one that subverts transnational colonialisms with the aim of conjuring up decolonial alternatives.

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