

## Introduction to *Resistance and Transformation in the Globalized South: A Collective Approach to Decolonization*

The *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group of scholars, which primarily consists of Latin American scholars and has taken shape in the recent decades, theorizes pathways and barriers to decoloniality from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, literature, philosophy, rhetoric, and sociology. Decoloniality in this sense refers to delinking Euro-settler epistemologies, experiences, and worldviews from the peoples they colonized (Mignolo, “Delinking”). Often conflated with decolonization, which rather describes the process through which the colonizers exit, exemplified by the independence movements that swept through the Americas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, decoloniality addresses instead a state of being and a way of knowing that endures in settler-colonial milieus. Decoloniality, then, follows decolonization, and in countries such as Canada, decoloniality offers subalterns – from women to people of colour and Indigenous peoples – a presence not easily afforded by the white patriarchy that undergirds settler-colonialism, and its political, economic, cultural, and epistemological systems (Mignolo, “On Pluriversality and Multipolar World Order” 90-116).

The Global South, which includes most of the Spanish-speaking world, has attracted critical attention from scholars belonging to the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* school of thought. They theorize about the modern-colonial condition and the means of achieving decolonization in light of the “decolonial turn” that has thrived in recent years in certain regions of the world. For Puerto Rican scholar Nelson Maldonado-Torres, the Global South implies the Third World, “incluyendo los sures en los nortes del planeta y las zonas que existen debajo del sur geopolítico mismo” (562). This manner of understanding the world implies that countries considered part of the Global South possess common characteristics, knitting together more than one South, even if the country is not located in the southern hemisphere. These characteristics include, but are not limited

to, a colonial past, colonial and settler-colonial resource extraction, labour and economic exploitation, less industrialization or technologization compared to the Global North, less wealth, poor democracies, and social issues such as the spread of preventable disease. The Global North, where a quarter of the world's population lives, supposedly represents developed and wealthy countries such as Canada, the United States, many European countries, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, many of which have a history of colonizing abroad. While the geographical implication of north and south seems less relevant when discussing developing and developed countries, it does serve to characterize a hierarchy of power whereby those with the most power and influence come first – or on top – and those with the least come below. The perception that the Global South is less modern has attracted the attention of many *Modernidad/Colonialidad* scholars and has engendered several important works devoted to the subject. Recent studies in this vein include works by Castro-Gómez, “The Missing Chapter”; Castro-Gómez, “Globalización, universidad y conocimientos subalternos”; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*; Quijano; and Walsh, “Universidades, seres, saberes y (geo)poder(es) en Ecuador y América del Sur”.

As an interdisciplinary collective, the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* collective's work brings racialization and the modern project into dialogue with the neoliberal and capitalist systems that give rise to globalization and its impacts on the Global South. Established scholars, among them Colombian philosopher Santiago Castro-Gómez, Argentine-Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel, Puerto Rican sociologist Ramón Grosfoguel, Argentinian philosophers María Lugones and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Argentinian semiotician Walter Mignolo, Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, and Ecuadorian-American scholar Catherine Walsh, among others, affiliated with institutions across the Global South and the Western world, have been contributing to an increasingly consequential body of decolonial scholarship centred on the relationship between modernity and coloniality and the means through which decoloniality can be achieved. Overarching themes emerging from the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group include the Eurocentric and settler-colonial epistemic hegemony that undergirds the worldview of mainstream Western culture; the coloniality of power; the world-system and neo-liberal capitalist interests; the white, patriarchal roots of modernity; and the relationship between modernity, wealth, colonialism, and race, among others. These themes are explored throughout the articles contained in this thematic issue devoted to decolonization and resistance to the modern project by people living in the Global South.

The foundations for this school of thought arise from postcolonial theory and critical race studies of the twentieth century. Some works that have influenced the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group include Martinican poet and author, Aimé Césaire, whose *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1950) dissects colonization's harmful practices given the ongoing exploitation of marginalized groups at the hands of a capitalist economic system; Martinican philosopher Franz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952) explores the author's lived experience of racism and dehumanization, with a particular focus on colonial violence, and his *Les damnés de la terre* (1961) proposes social movements to decolonize both an individual and a people. Palestinian-American Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) problematizes the Western gaze and the construction of the "Orient," which includes much of the Global South, in addition to Asia. Bulgarian-French historian Tzvetan Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (1984) complicates the European invasion and challenges notions of progress and the benefits of colonization. In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (1993), Paul Gilroy deepens the concept of transatlantic culture as being more than a container for white colonialism, whereas Mignolo, in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (1995), explores textual forms of colonization and colonial violence. Moreover, Indian-American historian Dipesh Chakrabarty, in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), argues against the notion of Europe as the location of modernity's origins with respect to modernity's relationship with colonialism, relocating those origins to regions such as the Global South.

The *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group has produced several critical and influential works of scholarship that have given rise to the "decolonial turn" in recent years. We will highlight a few instances of particular interest for this thematic issue. Dussel published one of the earliest works identified with this school of thought, *1492. El encubrimiento del otro. Hacia el origen del mito de la modernidad* (1994). Based on a series of lectures, this book consolidates theorizations and conclusions borne from postcolonial theory to lay down some foundational questions that the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group would later pursue. These range from the Eurocentrism of the modern worldview, the invention of the concept that the so-called New World had been discovered, and the concept of conquest vs colonization and the transition to intercultural encounter, the myth of modernity, what an Indigenous and non-Eurocentric vision of world history might look like, and the concepts of transmodernity and *encubrimiento*. As Dussel has observed, for Indigenous people in the Americas, "Su 'lugar' es otro y el

‘descubrimiento’ se interpreta ahora no sólo como ‘encubrimiento’, sino como genocida ‘invasión’” (112).

Many works from the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* bring group members into dialogue with one other. In his edited collection of essays written by several members of the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* group titled *La reestructuración de las ciencias sociales en América Latina* (2000), Castro-Gómez addresses the structural issues facing academia in Latin America. The work stems from a conference that had taken place the previous year at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, one of a series of gatherings that gave rise to the school of thought under discussion. Key themes emerging from this collaborative publication are broached in an essay by Mignolo. In it, he explores the effects of coloniality and globalization on social sciences disciplines – most of which emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the creation of modernity was at its peak. The essays in this volume highlight the importance of considering positionality while undertaking research and imparting education whose foundations are colonial, white, Eurocentric, and informed by the Enlightenment. A second volume of essays also sheds light on globalization and capitalism as engines that power the modern/colonial matrix of power. Edited by Grosfoguel and Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez, *The Modern/Colonial/Capitalist World-System in the Twentieth Century: Global Processes, Antisystemic Movements, and the Geopolitics of Knowledge* (2002) is a volume of essays that theorize the world-system and anti-systemic movements. The volume is organized around three mythologies: objectivist/universalist knowledge, decolonization of the modern world, and developmentalism. These themes pervade Euro-settler thought and its incompatibility with decolonization, thereby exposing the hierarchies embedded in a world-system where Western exploitation of non-Western regions is rampant.

Building upon these efforts to destabilize our thinking about modernity and allowing us to better apprehend its ills, Mignolo pursued a similar end in his questioning about the nature of Latin America in *The Idea of Latin America* (2005). In this monograph, Mignolo traces the problematic lineage of the term Latin America and its imperial and colonial foundations that imply racism. The second of the three essays, whose epigraph refers to the work of Césaire, explores how Latin America, in Mignolo’s words, “is not so much a subcontinent as it is the political project of Creole-Mestizo/a elites,” one that “lifted up the populations of European descent and erased the Indian and Afro populations. Latin America was not – therefore – a pre-existing entity where modernity arrived, and identity-related questions emerged. Rather, it was one of the consequences of the remapping of the

modern/colonial world” that took place after decolonization in the nineteenth century (59). Accordingly, people are choosing to no longer live in Latin America and rather express their connection to *Abyayala*, which offers a powerful means of remapping the region known as Latin America using terms such as South America, the geo-cosmovision and toponymy of Indigenous groups, such as *Abyayala*, or that of Afro-descendant people in the Andes, such as *La Gran Comarca*.

This idea of a second decolonization, or a decolonial turn initiated after European colonizers left the Americas, was formed throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, giving rise to references to the “primera descolonización,” which implies that a second one is to come. *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global* (2007), edited by Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, identifies early modern structures that ordered racial, ethnic, sexual, epistemic, and economic relationships, and which continue to impact the present despite decolonization. It contains essays by the likes of Juliana Flórez-Flórez (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana), Maldonado-Torres, Mignolo, Quijano, Eduardo Restrepo (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana), and Walsh. They collectively theorize how the decolonial turn elevates the subaltern experience, fomenting articulations of different spaces and locations of enunciation, worldviews, and epistemologies, creating, in Grosfoguel’s contribution, “un mundo en el que quepan muchos mundos” (“Descolonizando los universalismos occidentales” 75). This way of thinking gives rise to the pluriverse where the experiences of the intersectional can thrive.

In the last ten years or so, the group has articulated several works that highlight methodological approaches to decolonial thinking and that will be useful for supporting and achieving decoloniality. In a thematic issue of *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* (2012) guest edited by Maldonado-Torres, several authors contributed articles on the decolonial turn. The journal’s title gestures toward Dussel’s theorization of transmodernity. One of the guest-edited issue’s articles, by Walsh, engages with the “souths” of Latin America through the writings of Andean and Afro-descendant intellectuals and movements in order to understand as well as model the epistemologies that inform their political movements and projects. In Grosfoguel’s contribution, he examines the Zapatista resistance movement, the Other Campaign, that responds to what was the modern/colonial Euro-settler paradigm from ‘convert to Christianity or I’ll kill you’ in the 16th century, to ‘civilize or I’ll kill you’ in the 18th and 19th centuries, to ‘develop or I’ll kill you’ in the 20th

century, and more recently, the 'democratize or I'll kill you' at the beginning of the 21st century" ("Decolonizing Western Uni-versalisms" 97).

For many *Modernidad/Colonialidad* authors, resistance is a key ingredient to overcoming the oppression experienced in the Global South as a result of settler-colonialism and modernity. It allows marginalized groups to push back against mainstream settler-colonial culture. Mignolo and Walsh, in *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018), elaborate on the origins and inner workings of the colonial matrix of power at its intersection with decoloniality. They identify several ways through which we can delink from the modernity/coloniality paradigm to embrace decolonial ways of being and thinking, for example by severing our reliance upon and engagement with global capitalism by embracing localism. Lugones has published several works relating to resistance and gender, including *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions* (2003), and "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System." Works such as these highlight gendered forms of violence and oppression while pointing to ways that they may be transgressed through visible acts of resistance, which are vocalized by everyday women across Latin America in the form of protests, through social media, and online networks that allow women to forge connections and grow the movement against femicide in places such as Mexico. Recent movements, such as the *Día de Muertas* protest, overshadow the *Día de los Muertos* festivities in that country; according to the movement's website, "Bajo el lenguaje neutro de nuestro idioma, el Día de Muertos, de carácter festivo, esconde otra realidad, exclusiva de las mujeres. Por eso creemos necesario sacarla a la luz más allá del lenguaje inclusivo y crear el Día de Muertas." This movement illustrates the ways in which online networks are bringing women together from across the country to raise awareness and vocalize their anger over ongoing violence against women.

The articles contained in this thematic issue explore resistance in the hands of marginalized people, ranging from Indigenous peoples and women to racialized and impoverished people, of the Spanish-speaking Global South. The essays build upon these theoretical foundations to explore pathways toward decolonization and decoloniality through resistance to the colonial condition in the region now known as Latin America and in other places colonized by Spain, including the Philippines and Equatorial New Guinea. The essay by Sol Rojas-Lizana, "Fallas epistemológicas en la traducción inglesa del pensamiento decolonial y no-colonial latinoamericano," seeks to understand how translation invites the opportunity to introduce changes in meaning that can have historical and ideological consequences. She analyzes how, in the process of translating

Indigenous concepts and terms, decolonial thinking often falls victim to epistemological barriers that can silence decoloniality; as she points out, this was noted by Grosfoguel, who raised awareness about this issue in other regions of the Global South. According to Rojas-Lizana, the modern paradigm thus impacts the translation of concepts such as *Sumak Kawsay/Suma Qamaña* ("Buen Vivir") when they are translated into English, on the one hand, or into Spanish, on the other – particularly in the Ecuadorian and Bolivian constitutions, which have been translated by the Max Planck Institute. This article considers how the universalizing and anthropocentric vision imposed by modernity through translating Indigenous concepts into Western languages imperils the biocentric and local posture of decolonial thinking.

Moreover, decoloniality lies at the heart of many efforts to address the global climate crisis, and several subaltern groups have been pushing back against powerful corporations and international agreements largely made without consulting such groups. This has compelled Roberto H. Esposto to turn to the situated thinking of a marginalized Argentinian intellectual, Rodolfo Kusch (1922–1979). Esposto's article, titled "La crisis ambiental como crisis cultural: Un aporte desde el pensamiento geoculturalmente situado y decolonial de Rodolfo Kusch," explores how Kusch treats the environmental crisis brewing in the twentieth century as a cultural and existential problem. As Esposto highlights, Kusch's works have been quoted by thinkers such as Grosfoguel, Eduardo Mendieta, Mignolo, Quijano, and Walsh, making Kusch an important influence on decolonial theory. The objective of Esposto's study is to reflect on this problem through the unique language of this Argentinean thinker, whose conceptual categories for the climate crisis express a critical decolonial position. Esposto examines each of Kusch's categories, which range from being someone and causal thinking to the garden of objects, mere being, and the economies of abandonment and protection, in order to understand what a decolonial approach to climate change in Latin America might look like.

Some pathways toward decoloniality draw upon the tools of another period in order to resist the harms of modernity. Lauren Beck, in her article, titled "Resistance, Protest, and Knowledge: Indigenous Appropriation of Medievalism in Ibero- and Latin America," argues that scholars have yet to consider how medievalism offers a potent retreat from the settler-colonial project precisely because the Indigenous Middle Ages excluded Europe, and vice versa, through the mechanism of nonmodernity. She builds upon José Rabasa's contention that nonmodernity offers an important space and time for resisting the modern project. By considering how modern Indigenous authors and artists reach to medieval-nonmodern Indigenous and

European forms of expression in Ibero- and Latin America, Beck theorizes how medievalism was and remains a significant tool of resistance throughout the colonial and settler-colonial periods. This approach will allow us to find ways of undermining the modern-colonial matrix of power's temporality at its intersection with decoloniality.

While literature offers potential for expressing resistance, it also comprises a significant tool of oppression, as Reindert Dhondt explores in "Tras las huellas de Humboldt: El occidentalismo y el arte pictórico de Johann Moritz Rugendas en las novelas de César Aira y Patricia Cerda." As he points out, Mignolo has theorized, in works such as *The Dark Side of the Renaissance* (1995), that literature and textual culture more broadly have fortified the modern project in ways that continue to harm subalterns. In his article, Dhondt approaches the novels *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* (2000), by César Aira, and *Rugendas* (2015), by Patricia Cerda, which focus on the South American voyages of the nineteenth-century German painter Johann Moritz Rugendas. The author notices that Rugendas's artworks are characterized by a tension between a scientific view and a Romantic-exoticist perspective of Latin American reality. Focusing on this tension, the article seeks to analyze the coloniality of the pictorial work of Rugendas and its narrativization in the novels by Aira and Cerda. Intermediality and the distance of time allows these twenty-first-century authors to critique and parody Rugendas in an attempt to reclaim a mediated space that had been constructed through the outsider's gaze and experience.

Film also reconstructs our present through what Ross Swanson and Nae Hanashiro have called imperial nostalgia and amnesia. Their article, titled "Remembering the Empire: Imperial Nostalgia and Amnesia in *1898: Los últimos de Filipinas* (2016) by Salvador Calvo," examines how, in contemporary film, the Spanish Philippines has been romanticised while its violence has been ignored. The Spanish film, *1898: Los últimos de Filipinas* (2016), by Salvador Calvo, dramatizes an episode of the Spanish-American War. The authors show how several critics have read the film as a nuanced and anti-patriotic adaptation of this historical event, in contrast to the Francoist propaganda film *Los últimos de Filipinas* (1945) by Antonio Román. Drawing on the concept of imperial amnesia, they argue that Román's film patriotically highlights the heroism of Spanish characters while downplaying the violence of the colonial relationship. This narrative enacts a fantasy of reconciliation between Spain and the Philippines.

The exploration of places outside of Latin America that experienced Spanish colonization is also broached in the article "La interrelación entre colonialidad y decolonialidad en *Palmeras en la nieve* (2015)," by Carmen



Herrero. Turning to Equatorial Guinea, which was the final colony that Spain relinquished in 1968, Herrero uses the theoretical framework of (de)coloniality developed by Quijano, Mignolo, Maldonado-Torres, and Walsh to analyse the interrelatedness of colonial and decolonial discourses in Fernando González Molina's *Palmeras en la nieve* (2015), a film based on Luz Gabás's novel. In this article, Herrero argues that the historical epic drama exposes how a colonial legacy continues in the coloniality that permeates the conflicts portrayed in the film, which are located in the historic present. The colonial condition explored in the film stains ideological, ethical, and cultural attitudes related to the Spanish colonial past in Equatorial Guinea.

Films also provide a powerful platform for exploring subaltern experiences. In "The Teacher's Rhetoric of Liberal Democracy and *Minori'ethage* in *La patota* (Argentina, 2015): An Open Decolonial Debate," Ana M. Fernández analyses the experience of Paulina, a young lawyer who teaches in a civics program in a rural school close to Posadas (Misiones, Argentina). Following the plot of the original film from the 1960s on which this remake by Santiago Mitre is based, the lawyer is raped by a gang - *patota* - comprising some of her own students. Consequently, Paulina becomes pregnant. Then, she decides not to have an abortion. Fernández argues that in this fictional reality the boundaries between justice and injustice seem to overlap so much so that they can be difficult to gauge or even become indistinguishable. In her socio-critical study undertaking a decolonial stance, the author applies the neologism *minori'ethage* (Fernández "Minori'ethage Memories") as a heuristic tool to disarticulate how the 2015 remake problematizes five centuries of coloniality as evidenced in the complexity of the themes depicted in the plot. In tandem, the article highlights the patriarchal environment in which everybody becomes trapped, underscoring the dangers of "playing fake democracy," as one of the students suggests to the teacher in Mitre's proposal, in the so-called modern world in which social institutions get corrupted.

Concluding this thematic issue is a consideration of more recent forms of colonization, which may take the form of democracy, as explored by Consuelo Martínez Reyes in her article, "From Alienation to Revolution: Female Characters as Decolonial Tools in J.L. Torres's *The Accidental Native*." The article examines Torres's novel published in 2013, whose protagonist Rennie moves back to his native Puerto Rico after being raised in the USA. There, he meets his biological mother. As Martínez Reyes explains, Rennie's ignorance of her existence and Puerto Rico's colonial situation interweaves the maternal figure with the island of Puerto Rico. Furthermore, their reunion reconfigures the birth of Rennie's decolonial

consciousness. This analysis dovetails with representations of the United States as an oppressive patriarchal figure to the island, the latter conceived as an inept child. Her decolonial interpretation of J.L. Torres's work proposes a familial organization in which maternal forces function as a tool of epistemic liberation against imperialist and patriarchal powers.

This thematic issue offers innovative and insightful contributions to understanding decoloniality and the pathways along which it may be achieved in light of the *Modernidad/Colonialidad* school of thought. Whether read individually or as a body of scholarship, these articles collectively expose the meaningful ways that subalterns in particular resist the modern-colonial condition in the Global South. This thematic issue also offers, for the first time, an explicit engagement of decolonial theory with the broader Spanish-speaking Global South. Most articles work to expose the colonial moorings of the modern condition, which today prevent citizens of the Global South from enjoying the rights and prosperity seen in other parts of the world. The articles also offer solutions and ways forward so as to overcome the limitations that modernity has imposed upon the Global South. Each article therefore articulates a roadmap toward decoloniality through the prism of resistance, innovation, and determination. Collectively, these articles make a significant contribution to critical thought about decoloniality.

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