Essays on Decoloniality: Volume 2

Ben Fletcher-Watson, Lesley McAra and Désha Osborne (eds.)

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LESLEY MCARA

Foreword

I am delighted to write this foreword to the second volume of essays arising out of the Institute Project on Decoloniality (IPD). The Project was instigated by Professor Steve Yearley (former Director of IASH) and Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson (Deputy Director), and ran across three years from 2021-22 to 2023-24. It aimed to address the privileging of White scholars and Whiteness in the arts, humanities and the social sciences in many institutions of higher education across the global north, including our own university, and the ways in which indigenous knowledges were generally overlooked in favour of hegemonic Western thought. As incoming Director from August 2022, I oversaw the final two years of the Project and was especially pleased that we were able to showcase the wonderful work of our IPD Fellows at the conference held to celebrate IASH's 50th anniversary.

A critical moment in the Project's intellectual journey was our decision in year 2 to launch a series of public engagement events on the theme of Future Justice. Our ambition was to bring the research undertaken by our IPD Fellows to a wider set of audiences, both within the University and beyond, and, in doing so, to promote public understanding about the erasures and injustices of the past and enjoin debate about the practical actions needed now to create more just social orders. We are thrilled that the impact of our Fellows' work has been recognised by the 2025 Public Humanities Award for Leadership in Practice and Community, given by the Consortia of Centres and Humanities Institutes (a global network of over 300 institutes of advanced studies).

This second volume of essays draws on research from the second year of the IPD programme, capturing some of the breadth of the projects which we were able to support and highlighting new creative collaborations. Grateful thanks are due to series editor Dr Désha Osborne (IASH alumna and Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Edinburgh), to co-editor Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson, and to all of our authors.

In *Essays on Decoloniality: Volume 1,* Dr Sandeep Bakshi exhorted us to 'imagine our worlds in a co-constitutive manner towards a collective movement of liberation'. My hope is that the essays in this second volume will pique the imagination of the reader and open up further dialogue about how decoloniality and decolonial praxis are necessary conditions, not only of international scholarship in the arts, humanities and social sciences, but also as fundamental to academic culture and the ways in which the scholarly community conducts itself. There is much still to learn and much still to change.

Professor Lesley McAra

IASH Director

DÉSHA OSBORNE

Introduction

The impact of decolonial scholarship over the last twenty-five years has meant that what started in the mid-twentieth century amongst global majority scholars, who, in their radical vision pointed toward what Walter D. Mignolo termed 'delinking' (Waman Puma de Ayala, Gloria Anzaldúa, José Carlos Mariátegui, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Aníbal Quijano, Amilcar Cabral, and Rigoberta Menchú among others), has spread across academic, political, social and cultural institutions (de Jong, 2022). This noticeable and significant shift in how certain academics across the world have reoriented their thinking that opens space for conversation with other epistemologies, ethics, politics, etc., rooted in radical, revolutionary, de-colonial, and often Indigenous knowledges is at the heart of these volumes produced by IASH's Institute Project on Decoloniality, known as IPD.

The IPD, which ran from 2021-2024, and its directors Steve, Lesley and Ben, were awarded the *2025 Public Humanities Network Award for Leadership in Practice and Community* by the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) in recognition of what is considered to be exemplary work in providing a space for and supporting work in the public humanities. Now more than ever, this should signal to academic institutions across the world how important it is to not lose sight of the possibilities of radical delinking and scholarly transformation. I reiterate the sentiments I expressed in the first volume and in agreement with the warnings of Patricia Noxolo: that the threat of that radical power 'becoming harnessed and domesticated in

Western academic spaces' is apparent now more than ever in the present climate (2017, p.343).

The eight chapters that comprise this second volume of research by former IPD Fellows predicate this in their dedication toward scrutinising the concerns explored in volume one. In volume two, this was done around three general themes: pedagogies of decolonial thought in classroom settings; legacies of Scotland's colonial presence, retold; and multi/interdisciplinary futures of decolonial thought.

Pedagogies of decolonial thought in classroom settings

In his anthropological study of three archetypal narratives of failure from the Mapuche people of Southern Chile, Magnus Course asks what truly constitutes failure and what 'is it that failure fails to achieve?' if we are unable to redeem those failures into something more positive (2024, p.xii). In this volume, the chapters by **Asha Varadharajan** and **Peter S. Henne** present two opposing approaches to 'decolonising the classroom.' Both chapters struggle with a topic often avoided in academia, but in varied ways: failure. Specifically, they unpick the ways failure is understood as a mistake that is learnt from and then improved upon. Yet each arrive at two very different conclusions when it comes to failure. In his contribution, 'What if I decolonized my international relations syllabus and no one noticed?' Peter S. Henne, a professor of Political Science and Director of Middle East Studies, Global and Regional Studies at the University of Vermont, offers a candid reflection on his pedagogy and the impact of decolonial theories being introduced, absorbed into mainstream academia – and with little success in the racial reckoning taking place in his field. He argues for what he terms a 'moderate' approach to decolonisation. Henne's reflections can be easily compared to Ali Kassem's chapter in volume 1 of *Essays on Decoloniality*, where the latter writes about what begins as his own perceived failures faced while teaching decoloniality in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh (Kassem, 2024). Where Kassem organises the key

source of disconnection between himself and the Sociology students at Edinburgh around the dangers of decoloniality losing its drive toward praxis, Henne appears to share the 'blame' for limitations in his own understanding of decoloniality (not to be confused with decolonisation) with his students in their unwillingness to engage. In some ways, Henne's chapter documents this failure as an unrecognition of the impact of changes being made. There is still a distinction here between mainstream and decolonial approaches, and his solution is what he calls a 'moderate decolonial approach.' Henne's underlying argument is that decolonial scholarship presents an uncompromising 'all-or-nothing' approach that challenges the possibilities of lasting change that is not simply performative or attention-seeking. It is a structural change with which some scholars teaching and researching within International Relations will fundamentally disagree – including Zubairu Wai and Yong-Soo Eun. There remains, however, a Western-centric view at the heart of his case study, and one that he does not appear to shy away from. He offers a candid critique of what he perceives as the incommensurability of the two schools of decolonial versus mainstream approaches to teaching, research and industry engagement in International Relations from an American perspective. This chapter will be of great interest to teachers of similar disciplines within political science where the majority of graduates move on to work in public, commercial and government sectors.

In stark contrast, 'A Pedagogy for the Vanquished of History,' by Asha Varadharajan, Associate Professor of English at Queen's University, Canada, works to document what is ultimately both social and institutional failure. The title clearly signals Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. It also reminds me of two other works: César Andreu Iglesias's 1956 novel *Los Derrotados*, translated by Sidney W. Mintz in 2001 as *The Vanquished*, about a plot by Puerto Rican nationals to sabotage US settlement on the island; and lines from Jamaica Kincaid's novel *The Autobiography of My Mother*:

> I am of the vanquished, I am of the defeated. The past is a fixed point, the future is open-ended; for me the future must remain capable of casting a light on the past such that in my defeat lies the seed of my great victory, in my defeat lies the beginning of my great revenge.
>
> (1997, p.215)

Varadharajan reflects on her own journey as both student and professor, as descendant of the colonised (the vanquished of history), and as an instructor with the duty of care and instruction in the shaping of young minds. She begins with reflections on life as a colonised subject in Canada, moving on to her cultivated teaching philosophy in postcolonial literary studies, and finally into a case study of teaching Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* as a 'pedagogical experiment' with a focus on decolonised reading.

Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Possibilities for Decolonial Thought

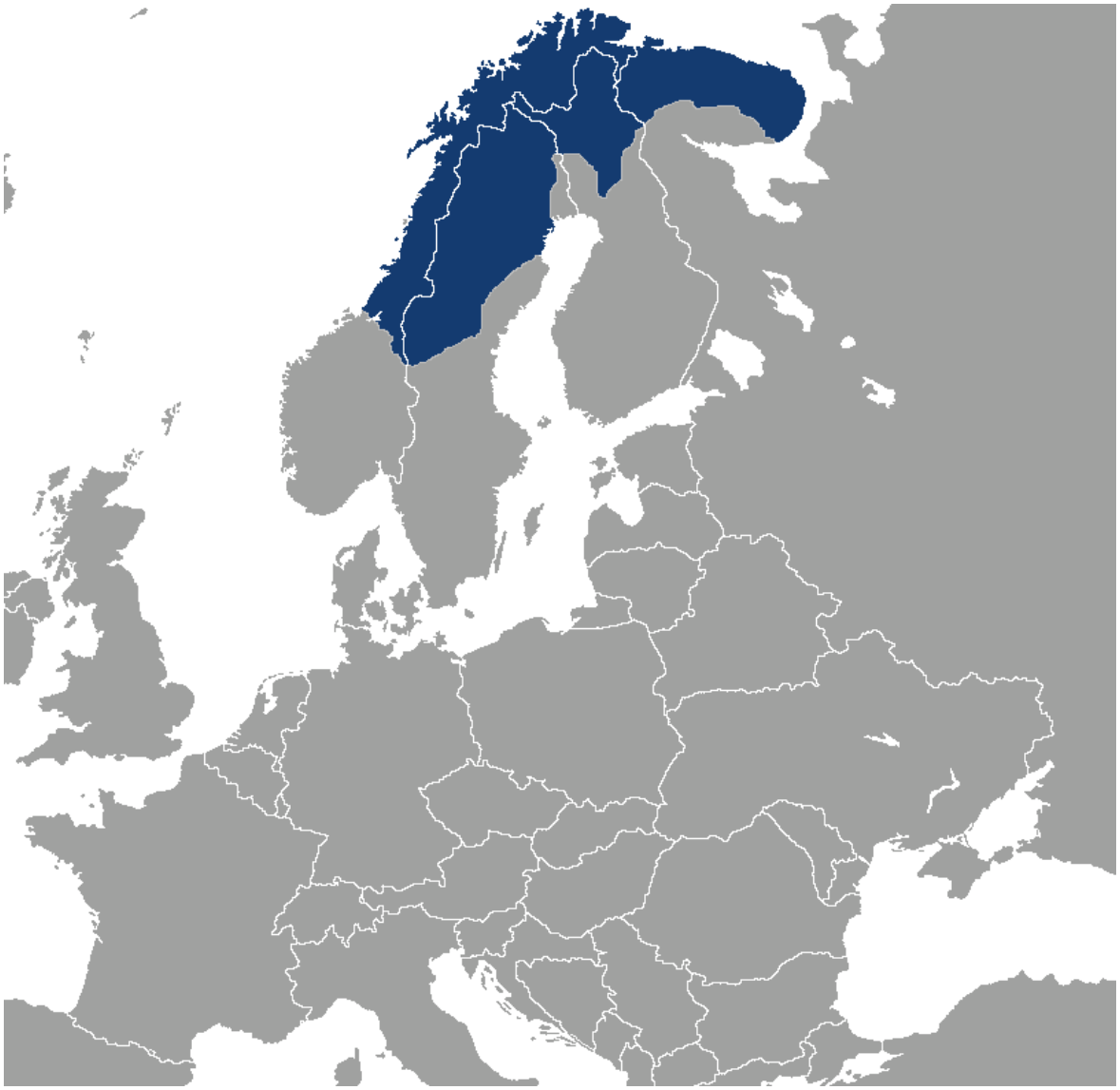
The contributions from **Anthony Neal**, **Shakeel Anjum and Thomas Metcalf**, and **Erika De Vivo** present possibilities for how critical decolonial thought revolutionises the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries. As the only philosopher in this volume, Neal, who is the Beverly B. and Gordon W. Gulmon Humanities Professor and Associate Professor in Philosophy at Mississippi State University, stands out for his invitation for readers to not only understand but also become philosophers in the process. His chapter 'Necessary Foundations for Decolonial Thought: A Process View' achieves this by calling to attention the need for scholars to envision with him the centrality and influence of the work of scholar, Prime Minister and 'Father of Ghanaian Independence' Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah, who trained as a philosopher at universities in Pennsylvania, published *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonisation* in 1970. Neal outlines Nkrumah's 'philosophy of decolonization' in order to chart the development of what he calls the 'decolonial mindset'. This is essential for

readers interested in the ways colonisation functioned as pedagogical practice.

Shakeel Anjum and Thomas Metcalf first met in Edinburgh and began their collaboration as IASH Fellows. Anjum was the RACE.ED Archival Research Fellow in 2022-23 to work on his project titled 'Frames of Sovereignty and Love: Palestinians, Jean Genet, and the Blacks.' His co-author Thomas Metcalf was the 2022-23 Junior Anniversary Fellow, working on the project 'Photography and/as Music.' In their chapter, titled 'Temptations of Temporality: The Resistance of Graphic Notation as Decolonial Thought,' their multidisciplinary collaboration intermixes decoloniality, philosophy, musicology and anthropology to explore Elizabeth Povinelli's concept-image *A Symphony of Late Liberalism*. It is a music-like text that has the effect of perpetual continuity. Povinelli recently added 'Palestine' stanzas.

Anjum and Metcalf provide a useful template for future work of this nature. In the true spirit of the IPD programme, their project is just the beginning of this expansive, discursive interweaving project. The disciplinary boundary-defining project parallels Sandeep Bakshi's ongoing work on queer theory decoloniality, as outlined in volume 1.

Erika De Vivo's chapter 'Vačče go guvlui/Walk this way: Linguistic activism at Márkomeannu Sámi festival' breaks ground within the field of Linguistic Activism, bringing together cultural anthropology and methodologies within Indigenous studies. Márkomeannu is a Márku-Sámi festival celebrating, among other things, the public and official presence of this distinct indigenous culture. Through the use of multilingual signs all over the festival grounds, the effect of the festival's presence is an active disruption of language hegemony in Norway that stages difficult questions about belonging. In reading this, it is difficult to ignore that over the last 55 years, the presence of bilingual English/Gaelic language road signs in Scotland has been not without controversy. Here in Scotland, seeing signs in both English and Gaelic offers a fascinating parallel about the power of tracing a region's 'socio-cultural history and language ecologies' that remain in many ways ignored in a European context.



A map showing the present location of Sápmi across the borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Reproduced under a CC A-SA 3.0 licence. Image by Rogper at Wikimedia.

The political function of festivals as decolonising space foregrounds De Vivo's study.

Linguistic reclamation simultaneously is protest but also acts to normalise the presence of the Sámi language and people as part of the community.

Revised Legacies of Scottish Colonialism

'Hiding in plain sight' best describes the knowledge and provocations identified in the chapters by **Emma Hill**, **Paul Newton-Jackson** and **Simon Buck**. All three confront important

ongoing discussions of Scotland's historic and sustained role in British empire, the transatlantic trade in enslaved African people and what that means the aftermath in the present post-devolved country/nation for new immigrant populations. 'Dreams of Darien at the University of Edinburgh' by Simon Buck, Research Fellow in the Decolonised Transformations project, centring on the University of Edinburgh's direct and indirect links to slavery and colonialism and led by Professor Tommy Curry (Philosophy) and Dr Nicola Frith (French and Francophone studies). His chapter begins with the stated fact: 'There is little doubt, therefore, that the Company of Scotland was a settler-colonial project that planned to plunge Scotland into the trans-Atlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans—or that it did engage in the trafficking of enslaved people across the Indian Ocean.'

Using case studies, subscriptions and detailed records drawn from the University of Edinburgh's own archives, Buck presents the links between the University and the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies. His contribution also adds to existing research around Scottish settler colonialism.

Paul Newton-Jackson's research explores, much like Buck's archival digging, the material beneficiaries of the (unquestionably) failed 1695-1706 Darien Scheme that directly caused the 1707 Acts of Union of the Two Kingdoms of England and Scotland that created the Kingdom of Great Britain. Using three objects in the possession of the University of Edinburgh, including one currently on display at St Cecilia's Hall (the University's musical performance and speaking venue), and modelling Ian Cook's 'follow the thing' approach, Newton-Jackson tracks the movement of ebony, ivory and mahogany from West Africa and the Caribbean. He also reveals information connecting the arrival of materials like ebony, ivory and mahogany to Edinburgh and nearby port cities like Leith, and as far as Greenock, Glasgow and Port of Glasgow during the nineteenth century. This chapter should be of interest to musicologists, geographers and historians of material culture. Newton-Jackson's work corresponds with that of Hannah Cusworth, PhD researcher with English Heritage and Curatorial Fellow at Royal Museums

Greenwich who investigates the history of mahogany in a number of manor houses in England and the individuals involved in the eighteenth-century Atlantic mahogany trade. Personally, Newton-Jackson's work also connects to my own past work with the National Trusts for Scotland into the production of mahogany, violently extracted using labour and skills stolen from African and African-descended peoples and which left centuries of ecological damage on those lands in the manufacture of luxury furniture and specialist objects.

Emma Hill's chapter scrutinises the ways 'multicentred decentering' engagement operates in the present-day. 'Colonial power' she says, continues in contemporary Scotland and has been obscured by scholarship that focuses too acutely on Britain's past colonial power in a way that places Scotland's role as 'parochial counterpart'. She also believes that the 'right' questions have not been asked yet – ones that do not ill-configure the ways in which Scotland enacted colonial power. Focusing on the present, Hill uses the current situation of Rwandan people living in Scotland to question how the coloniality of power operates today.

In my role as editor, I see the three chapters in many ways presenting answers to the others' questions. As a literary historian who is near completion of a project on Scotland and the Caribbean in the eighteenth century, as a Black woman living in Scotland, and in my role as editor, I view these three chapters responding to each other in surprising ways. Hill's deeper concerns are borne of frustration with the siloed nature of the current research landscape in Scotland on the subject of colonialism. She provides the groundwork here for significant expansion in her brief case study of legal battles in order to show how colonialities of power in Scotland are convergent with and divergent from structures of Britishness.

Overall, this is a wonderfully cohesive volume. There is still work to be done across all areas of research highlighted in this volume. Citation equity is perhaps where this is most apparent. One aspect that unites all of the chapters is the awareness that western academic hegemony often results in the work of 'global north' or global minority scholars being cited more than that of scholars

from Latin America, Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas (Quijano and Ennis, 2000; Mudimbe, 1994). I invite readers to share in this process, and keep an eye out for further work by the contributors. I would also like to thank the co-editors – IASH Director Professor Lesley McAra and Deputy Director Dr Ben Fletcher-Watson – for inviting me to join in this conversation and help edit volumes one and two.

Dr Désha Osborne

Series Editor

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PETER S. HENNE

What if I decolonized my international relations syllabus and no one noticed?

I began teaching in 2016 after 11 years working in international affairs in Washington, DC.[1] I looked forward to applying my professional experience to my courses in international relations, partly to enliven lectures but partly to help students in their own career searches. At the same time, I hoped to push back on some of the problematic elements of international relations I had encountered, such as its Western-centrism and narrow definition of 'what matters'. My courses have accordingly been a balance between these two impulses, teaching mainstream topics while encouraging students to debate the appropriateness of standard approaches to understanding the world.

This overlapped well with two related movements in pedagogy: calls to decolonize instruction and international relations' 'racial reckoning' (Kassem, 2024). The former involves recognition of the ethnocentric and patriarchal biases in teaching, with suggestions to address them. The latter confronts the racist origins of the Western study of international relations and seeks to reformulate

[1] I would like to thank Susanmarie Harrington, Wendy Verrai and the University of Vermont's Center for Teaching and Learning and Writing in the Disciplines Program for feedback and resources on this chapter. I would also like to thank my introduction to international relations students for inspiring this discussion.

the sub-field to better address global challenges. While my research and public engagement tend to be rather mainstream—and my demeanour is not that of an activist—these moves have led me to make concrete changes to my syllabi.

I have run into some issues, however, which reflect limitations in the decolonizing movement. Students tend not to recognize my pedagogical changes as decolonial. They also tend not to engage in classroom debates on how to decolonize the sub-field. I believe that some of this has to do with an incommensurability between mainstream and decolonial approaches to international relations, limiting the effectiveness of my efforts to find a middle ground. Additionally, some may have to do with issues in my own pedagogical style. However, it also relates to the 'all or nothing' approach of decolonial efforts, which leaves little room for compromises such as mine. More importantly, however, it makes it difficult to have productive debates on how to best advance decolonial objectives.

While some may argue one has to pick a side, I believe a moderate decolonial approach is possible. Mainstream scholars should incorporate some critical approaches into their teaching and research, ensuring students are exposed to these perspectives and using them to test the assumptions inherent in mainstream international relations. At the same time, more critical scholars should recognize these efforts as legitimate, engaging with rather than rejecting moderate decolonial approaches.

Before I proceed, I need to define some terms. International Relations is a sub-field of political science. I will therefore refer to it either as International Relations or "the sub-field." I will discuss mainstream approaches to International Relations. This refers to the dominant approach to International Relations in the United States and the United Kingdom, which relies on positivist—often quantitative—analysis and calls for a separation between the

researcher and the topics they study. Mainstream International Relations often has a relatively narrow set of topics it deems important, namely those that are of concern to Western policymakers. When I use this term, I am not intending to indicate the superiority of this approach but rather the empirical fact that it is most commonly taught and practiced. Even though the mainstream approach may be less common outside of the United States and the United Kingdom, as Kassem notes, this Westernized academic model is the norm for much of higher education (Kassem, 2024). Critical approaches to International Relations are those that reject the positivist notion that scholars can objectively study topics; they also tend to call for scholarship to take an active stance in support of deconstructing power structures.[2] I discuss decoloniality in the next section, but a useful definition is that of Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu, who define it as a 'a way of thinking about the world which takes colonialism, empire and racism as its empirical and discursive objects of study' and 're-situates these phenomena as key shaping forces of the contemporary world' (Bhambra et al., 2018, p.2). Additionally, it 'purports to offer alternative ways of thinking about the world and alternative forms of political praxis' (Bhambra et al., 2018, p.2). Throughout the chapter I frame decoloniality as one example of a broader set of critical approaches to International Relations; I will sometimes just say 'critical approaches' for the sake of brevity.

The chapter proceeds in four parts. First, I survey decolonizing efforts, both generally and specifically concerning International Relations. Next, I discuss my moderate approach to decoloniality in my International Relations courses. I then discuss issues I have run into before presenting suggestions for why this is occurring.

[2] For further discussion of critical versus mainstream approaches to international relations, see Henne, P.S., 2023. Reassembling the Social in the Study of Religion and International Relations. *International Studies Review*.

Decolonizing international relations

The decoloniality movement involves a broad array of student activism, institutional changes, and pedagogical discussions. The 'Keele manifesto' argues decolonization is not just 'integration'; it is a 'paradigm shift' and a 'culture shift' in academia (University, 2018). Specifically, Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu discuss efforts to increase diversity within academia, expand representation in content taught, and force reckonings for University's ties to colonizing forces and slavery (Bhambra et al., 2018). Likewise, Mintz argues it involves 'revamping the curriculum,' 'reimagining our syllabi,' 'reimagining classroom dynamics,' 'rethinking our pedagogies' and 'bringing all students to mastery' (2021).

Decolonizing efforts fall into a few different areas. Appleton called for instructors to look beyond their discipline's canon, to ensure diverse voices and perspectives are included (Appleton, 2019). Some call for instructors to explore the racial and imperialist biases hidden within their disciplines (Charles, 2019a; Smith, 2012). Fox argues for attention to including diverse voices, scrutiny of what is deemed important, and making race the centre point of course discussions (Fox, 2020). Many focus on the lack of opportunities for under-represented minorities and Global South scholars in Western academia, and call for that to be changed (Collyer, 2016; Rodríguez, 2018). There is also some wariness of the social scientific standard of objectivity and neutrality, with certain calls arguing it is 'impossible' (Pedagogy). Some go further and argue the point of instruction should be to oppose injustice (Charles, 2019b). Indeed, certain voices in the decoloniality movement caution against merely increasing inclusion of non-Western voices in academia, and instead call for a broader reorientation of scholarship away from Westernized university standards and towards a 'liberatory' effort (Kassem, 2024, p.29).

This decoloniality movement extends across numerous areas of scholarship, but it overlapped with specific moves within the sub-

field of International Relations. There has been a simmering movement towards recognizing and addressing the racist and Eurocentric biases within International Relations. Scholars like Vitalis have drawn on work of early political scientists like W.E.B. Dubois to highlight the role of white supremacy in the international system and the way race and empire were tied up with the development of the study of International Relations (Vitalis, 2000, Vitalis, 2010). Similarly, Acharya has called for a 'global IR' that rebuilds International Relations theory to include the voices and concerns of those in the Global South, while various scholars have discussed how to increase Africa's prominence in studies of international relations (Harman and Brown, 2013; Acharya, 2014; Bischoff et al., 2016). Other work has looked at Islam as an alternative foundation to Western-centric international relations (Magued, 2019; Adiong et al., 2016; Abdelkader et al., 2016). Some senior scholars have explored the privilege from which they benefited (Lake, 2016).

This move accelerated as protests against racism spread in the United States in 2020. In June 2020, Princeton University removed Woodrow Wilson's name from its international affairs school due to that former US President and University President's racism. As Johnson argued, his racist views on domestic US politics also extended to his pioneering work on international relations and scholars should pay more attention to the Black voices that helped give rise to the liberal internationalism with which Wilson is credited (Johnson, 2020). Similarly, Shilliam noted that early international relations work did address race, but that became less of a focus as the sub-field became defined by Cold War concerns in the latter half of the 20th century (Shilliam, 2020).

This inspired numerous initiatives to reshape the sub-field. *Foreign Policy* magazine held a forum in which numerous scholars discussed why the sub-field has ignored racism in its mainstream research (Bhambra et al., 2020). Additionally, Zvobgo surveyed international relations professors and noted more had expanded

discussions of race in their classes (Zvobgo, 2021). There have been a few special issues of academic journals exploring the role of racism in international relations (Gani and Marshall, 2022; Achiume and Gathii, 2023).

My ambivalence over decolonization

I agree with these critiques of International Relations, and with the need to change how we teach and practice in this area. Moreover, as a scholar who follows mainstream International Relations approaches but focuses on a niche topic—religion and international relations—I grow frustrated with the often-narrow focus of International Relations. Yet, I also know that students with a degree in International Affairs and Political Science are expected to understand mainstream topics and theories after graduating. As a result, I have attempted to strike a balance in how I have incorporated decolonization tools into my syllabus.

There are several concrete steps I have taken. One has to do with which scholars I include in my syllabus. International Relations, like many other scholarly areas, has 'canonical' scholars who tend to be white and male. The expectation to teach and cite these influential scholars leads to syllabi that are lacking in gender and racial diversity, while ignoring newer scholarly developments (Mitchell et al., 2013). Like many others, I have made an effort to change this. This is partly due to my desire to favour current debates over classic ones, the latter of which are arguably less relevant today; this means I draw from a more diverse set of literature. But some of it involves actively changing how we discuss International Relations. When setting the readings for a session, I try to avoid defaulting to the standard readings for a topic. Instead, I look for other voices students may not have encountered, and cover the foundations of the topic while raising interesting new perspectives. It is not hard to find such diverse voices, ensuring gender and racial parity in assigned sources. For example, a foundational concept in International Relations is the

security dilemma, which posits that efforts by one state to increase its security decrease security of other states; this can lead to war. The canonical text on this is by Robert Jervis (Jervis, 1978). However, I also assign an alternate conception of the security dilemma, dealing with 'ontological security,' by a female scholar, Jennifer Mitzen (Mitzen, 2006). While I did not choose this reading *because* the author was a woman, by broadening debates on key International Relations concepts, I increased the gender diversity of the syllabus.

Another step has to do with how I discuss mainstream theories. As I note below, I consider it my job to teach students mainstream topics in International Relations. Yet, I am often frustrated with mainstream theories for ignoring crucial aspects of the subject area. As a result, I tend to include contemporary debates over the topics in my lectures. This often provides an opportunity to discuss ethnocentrism in International Relations. For example, my lecture on Democratic Peace Theory—the idea that two democratic states will not go to war—includes critiques that it is based on a Western model of regime type and ignores Western colonial and neo-colonial military aggression (Barkawi and Laffey, 2001; Henderson, 2009). Likewise, my lecture on balance of power theory—the claim that a state rising in power will automatically provoke a counter-balancing coalition from other states—includes criticisms that the theory is based on seventeenth and eighteenth century European international relations. When scholars look to other times and places, they find different dynamics (Kaufman et al., 2007; Hui, 2007).

Additionally, I close my introduction to International Relations courses with three wrap-up sessions that explore whether the subject needs to change. One deals with my personal scholarly area, religion and international relations. I teach the students theories on how religion affects international relations and we debate a controversial US policy application, international religious freedom promotion. But the bigger theme of the lecture

is a charge for international relations to adapt to 'new' topics, and whether it can do so without massive reforms. The next lecture focuses on climate change. The bigger debate, however, is whether International Relations scholarship can help to advance international action on climate change, such as through research into optimal design of international institutions or the spread of new norms. The final substantive lecture of my course looks at the Second Congo War, or Africa's Great War. This conflict in the late 1990s and early 2000s drew in numerous central African states and led to millions of deaths but was mostly ignored by the international community. In addition to learning about this conflict, we discuss whether racism in International Relations led many to overlook it and debate whether contemporary efforts to broaden international relations' sense of what 'matters' are sufficient.

Finally, I frame each of these as debates rather than an established consensus. When we read calls to integrate religion into International Relations, I encourage students to debate whether that is necessary. When we read arguments for a shift in focus to Africa, instead of discussing whether there is racism in International Relations, we discuss whether that step will resolve the sub-field's underlying racism and whether these issues with the sub-field affect its current scholarship.[3] And while we do not debate the reality of climate change, we do debate various policy options to address it.

Depending on one's background, this is either an 'out there' syllabus or painfully conventional. For many mainstream scholars who still study the grand debates of the 1990s, it may seem revolutionary to focus on topics like religion. Critical international relations scholars, however, would see this as an overly conservative syllabus that includes a few changes to look innovative. And some advocates of a broad racial reckoning

[3] I would like to thank Caroline Beer for that pedagogical suggestion.

would argue it is dangerous to debate things like the extent of racism in international relations. I am aware of the middle ground my syllabi occupy; that is intentional.

This is primarily because of what I am preparing students for. Most international affairs or political science students will not go on to be academics, and thus will not engage with complex academic debates again. Some will work in foreign policy, but many will work in broader fields related to international relations such as international businesses, government lobbying or law. They need to enter competitive job markets with a strong grounding in the topics in which they will claim to have been educated. It is also useful for them to think critically about these topics and learn to think critically in general. I believe that by teaching mainstream topics but including debates about their racial or ethnocentric foundations, I am providing students both sets of tools.

Students' mixed responses, with thoughts on why

While students generally respond well to my classes, their reaction to my decolonial efforts are mixed. Some think they do not go far enough while others tend not to engage with them. I argue this is partly due to an incommensurability between mainstream and decolonial approach to International Relations, but also due to the 'all or nothing' framing of decoloniality.

Student responses to my decolonial efforts

Generally, students respond positively to my classes. My classes are usually fully enrolled. My course evaluations tend to be positive. More importantly, students are actively engaged in my classes; even when I teach a large section—in which it is harder to participate—I routinely run out of time in class sessions because students talk so much. Thus, while I am focusing on issues that arise with my decoloniality efforts in this chapter, my overall experience teaching has been positive.

Students tend to react positively to my addition of critical takes on mainstream International Relations topics. During the first segment of these lectures, their questions and concerns tend to focus on the limitations in the theory: the Eurocentrism in balance of power theory, for example, or the imperial impulse hidden with democratic peace theory. As a result, they are gratified when I turn to these critiques later in the lecture. These lectures tend to provoke a healthy debate between those students who see the mainstream theories as flawed, and those who accept issues with them but believe they can still usefully explain the international system.

I do get pushback from some students who want a more critical approach to the subject matter, however. This has appeared in course evaluations, which include open-ended questions for students to discuss what they like and do not like in a course. One student argued the course was too focused on the United States and not focused enough on solving global problems. Another student wanted more discussion of critical approaches to international relations. And in the fall 2023 semester—during which we frequently discussed the October 7th attacks on Israel and Israel's attacks against the Gaza Strip—one student said I was too 'stoic' in my discussions. Some of it comes up in class; one semester, a student frequently challenged me for my alleged US focus and (pedagogically) conservative bias. Despite my perception that I am adopting decolonial approaches to my international relations courses—and the fact that I do include more critical discussions than other International Relations courses my department offers—those students who support such moves do not recognize my efforts.

Moreover, I struggle to stimulate debates on aspects of decoloniality. Debates for the last few sessions of my introduction to International Relations courses, when we have broader discussions on the nature of the sub-field, are muted. Most statements are in general agreement with the claims that

International Relations needs to change. Similarly, when students write on these questions in the final exam essay—I give students a variety of prompts from which to choose—they tend to be more focused on repeating the lecture than providing an original argument. Generally, it seems as if students are telling me what they think I want to hear. Moreover, instead of critically assessing efforts to change International Relations—such as steps being taken to decrease the impact of ethnocentrism—they tend to see the fact that change is occurring as proof there is a problem with International Relations. To be fair, this is the end of the semester, when students are often exhausted, so that may factor into the response. But when students write final essays on other topics from the course, they tend to be more original and engaging, so some of it has to do with the nature of these discussions.

An attempt at an explanation

I suspect I am not the only professor in this situation, hoping to integrate some aspects of decoloniality into our courses without abandoning mainstream approaches. It would therefore be useful to hypothesize why this is the case. Some of it likely has to do with the incommensurability of these two schools, so a moderate approach will always be a compromise. Some also involves students' desire to appease what they think is their professor's preferences. And it is possible they are engaging with my more subtle decolonial efforts without realizing it. However, I would argue that part of the issue has to do with the fact that some decoloniality discourse is presented as an 'all or nothing' choice, as well as a series of 'boxes to be checked'.

First, I admit there is a basic divide between mainstream and decolonial approaches to International Relations. Some of this has to do with the difference between objective social science and activist efforts. I make it clear in my class that I believe objective analysis is possible, and teach accordingly; I then encourage students to use the knowledge gained in the class as a basis for

activism if they want. Decolonizing International Relations is more of an activist endeavour, with the ultimate goal of scholars being identifying and dismantling power structures. This divide came up in one class discussion on whether International Relations' efforts to advance solutions to climate change were effective. One student said that anything grounded in objective social science is insufficient as it lacks the requisite urgency. While I disagreed, this is a valid critique of the mainstream approach, and one could argue similarly when discussing mainstream approaches shortcomings in regard to decoloniality.

Another issue has to do with what the course covers. While I include more critical approaches than many other International Relations professors, the bulk of my course focuses on mainstream topics. I include a brief discussion of critical theory as part of the lecture on constructivism—one of the three dominant theoretical approaches to International Relations—but do not teach more than the basic definition of the approach. I include critical takes on many of the topics, but the bulk of each lecture covers the mainstream teaching on the topic. The only sessions that involve broad debates about how to change International Relations and the international system were the last few. One could thus argue that my desire to teach mainstream topics limits my ability to effectively decolonize my syllabus.

An additional issue is that students may be telling me what they think I want to hear. Educational studies have found that the perceived power of instructors shapes how they engage with courses (Delgado and McGill, 2023). Discussions of power and privilege are especially fraught in this regard, as students may be hesitant to challenge those with power on such topics (Ochoa and Pineda, 2008). If I discuss issues with the standard security dilemma and present an alternative view, students may assume that I believe that alternate is "correct" and embrace it. Likewise, if I discuss the struggles International Relations has had to grapple with religion, they may assume I think International

Relations is flawed and argue accordingly. More centrally for this discussion, if I note that racism is an issue in International Relations but the sub-field has taken steps to address it, students may assume that I think those steps are sufficient and be unwilling to challenge me. As Kassem noted, there must be a 'certain level of trust and rapport in the classroom' to engage with decoloniality (Kassem, 2024, p.22). I may have failed to establish such trust and rapport, precluding the sorts of conversations I hoped to have.

Beyond that, students are engaging with decoloniality more than they realize, and I may not be drawing sufficient attention to it.[4] The critical perspective I present in most lectures in line with decolonial efforts and, as I noted, students tend to respond well to this. However, I often present this as a sort of addendum to the topic rather than a central element of learning it. As a result, students may see it as a minor part of the course and are unable to draw connections between each discrete critical take.

A final issue involves the fact that these are introductory International Relations courses.[5] Most of the students in these courses are first-year students, while the rest are new to the study of International Relations. They therefore may not be invested enough in the nature of international relations to fully engage with advanced debate over decolonization. Additionally, even for smart and engaged students it is difficult to participate in nuanced debates. It may thus be expected that discussions on decolonizing International Relations will collapse into a dichotomous debate.

However, I would argue some of the problem lies in the way advocates of decoloniality frame it. Some discussion on decoloniality has criticized those who only implement moderate

[4] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this possibility.

[5] I would like to thank Susanmarie Harrington for suggesting this point.

reforms to their curriculum. For example, Ahmed expressed concern about 'decolonizing' initiatives that mainly amount to expressions of support for diversity, while Appleton was critical of decoloniality as a 're-branding' effort (Ahmed, 2012; Appleton, 2019). Likewise, Tuck and Yang called for a narrow definition of decoloniality to avoid 'evasions' of responsibility by scholars and institutions (Tuck and Yang, 2012).

Additionally, some decolonial guidelines are literally checklists for instructors to complete. For example, Loyola University Chicago's 'Preparing to decolonize my syllabus' includes a list of statements for instructors to agree with, including that they 'understand decolonization is an ongoing endeavor' and that they have 'asked [themselves]' how to 'move beyond…institutional requirements' (Pedagogy). Such a checklist approach leaves little room for engagement and active learning on decolonizing efforts.

However, even those decolonizing efforts that move beyond a checklist of diversity and inclusion could still be causing problems. As I noted above, scholars like Kassem have approached decoloniality as an ongoing process in which the standard Western university setting is replaced with one focused on liberation (Kassem, 2024). This may go too far in the other direction. If students are hesitant to engage in debate over discrete elements of decoloniality, they would be even more hesitant when asked to critically assess whether and how to overhaul all of the educational system. Indeed, Kassem notes the confusion and pushback received from presenting this view on decoloniality to advanced students.

The result is that students are hesitant to debate decoloniality in class, as that may be seen as rejecting it. If they are learning that decoloniality—and broader critical approaches—require a complete rejection of mainstream approaches they believe discussions involve either accepting or rejecting decolonial efforts. My attempts to prod them into debating whether steps are

necessary or sufficient would be suspect. Additionally, if they are taught that decoloniality involves 'checking the boxes' in terms of what to say and do, then they will believe that merely repeating the calls for decoloniality is a sufficient contribution to in-class debates or exam prompts.

Moreover, the very critical nature of decoloniality may be harming students' ability to engage with it.[6] When we discuss the real-world implications of mainstream International Relations theories it tends to involve how they would resolve uncertainties in foreign policy. For example, the aforementioned security dilemma could provide guidance to Western leaders hoping to avoid a clash with China. Many decolonial discussions, however, are critiques of mainstream approaches. Students may appreciate the ability to question seemingly dominant theories of International Relations, but struggle to apply it to real world issues as readily as they would mainstream approaches.

Towards a moderate decoloniality in international relations pedagogy

Some may argue that effective decoloniality requires a complete commitment to the movement. One could argue that it is good for students to reject mainstream international relations, as it is not sufficient to handle pressing issues facing the world and is tainted by its racist and ethnocentric foundations. Moreover, what I criticize as "filling in the boxes" could be argued as essential steps in altering existing behaviour and assumptions and ensuring decoloniality is properly integrated into our curriculum.

I would argue this is invalid as it limits necessary engagement on decoloniality. Approaching decoloniality as a checklist obviates debate and discussion on these efforts. This debate is necessary not just to improve and adjust decoloniality initiatives, but also to help students take an active role in learning about the need for

[6] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

decolonizing international relations. Moreover, it leads to a "preaching to the choir" effect. Those who see decoloniality as necessary will base their courses around it. Those who are sceptical of it will merely leave it out of their syllabi altogether.

Instead, a moderate approach to decoloniality in international relations may be best. By moderate I mean an approach that accepts the basis of decolonial calls but seeks to integrate them into mainstream International Relations teaching. Students will still learn mainstream international relations theories and methods to prepare them for careers in this area. However, there will be specific sessions explaining the racist and ethnocentric assumptions built into mainstream international relations, while each substantive session should include a critical take to highlight how these assumptions may affect the work done in mainstream international relations. Moreover, they should have the chance to critically engage with big questions about the appropriateness of both mainstream international relations and efforts to decolonize the sub-field.

While this is not exactly the approach desired by advocates of decoloniality, it can still advance the movement's goals. Students will gain more exposure to decolonial ideas than they normally would with a mainstream International Relations education. And while this approach will not explicitly push for the liberation of oppressed peoples, by highlighting the issues with mainstream approaches and providing information on alternative ways to study the world it will offer resources to those students who hope to take a more activist approach to International Relations. It can also help students recognize the real-world applicability of decolonial ideas by tying them to mainstream International Relations debates on foreign policy.

My current approach to teaching International Relations partly reflects this moderate approach, although there are several areas where I could improve my style. As I noted, debate on decolonial

efforts may be limited by the authority I wield in the classroom. Altering my style to encourage such debate would be helpful. Additionally, if I were to more fully integrate critical takes into lectures and present them as a grand decolonial effort students may better grasp their significance and be more engaged in the explicitly decolonial lectures.

Beyond my personal teaching style, implementing a moderate decoloniality will require a compromise from both sides. Mainstream scholars must recognize the value of decoloniality with more than token statements. They must actually engage with this movement, explaining how it can contribute to many aspects of the sub-field and giving students the chance to challenge mainstream approaches. One example of this can be found in my research on religion and conflict. My research is generally mainstream, despite dealing with a 'niche' topic like religion; I adapt standard approaches to religious issues, and study them with quantitative methods. But I note more critical approaches to these questions, and either acknowledge them as potential limitations in my work or attempt to test them as alternatives (Henne, 2012; Henne, 2018; Henne, 2023).

Of course, it also requires a compromise from advocates of decoloniality. The moderate decoloniality I present here should be seen not as a bad faith engagement with the decoloniality movement or a set of false equivalences between mainstream-led engagement and decolonial *faits accomplis.* Instead, advocates of decoloniality should accept this moderate approach—of generally teaching mainstream International Relations with readings and discussion focused on decolonial pushback on the status quo—as one variant of decoloniality. In fact, this is not in conflict with decoloniality initiatives; as Bhambra, Gebrial and Nişancıoğlu noted, it remains a 'contested term, consisting of a heterogeneity of viewpoints, approaches, political projects and normative concerns' (2018, p.2). Scholars who advocate a more expansive definition of decoloniality can (and should) still criticize

this more moderate approach. But doing so as part of a dialogue among allies rather than a defence against interlopers can both facilitate continued development of the decolonial approach and provide a model of constructive engagement for students to follow.

Conclusion

Calls to decolonize the study of international relations are necessary and overdue. Much of International Relations involves Eurocentric assumptions and implicit racism. There is also a narrow set of topics that are considered important and worthy of study. Efforts to change this situation should be welcomed.

Yet, those who hope to embrace the move towards decoloniality while still teaching mainstream International Relations—like this author—struggle at times. Students often do not recognize engagement with critical approaches as decolonial. Likewise, when sessions are explicitly focused on decolonial topics they are hesitant to engage deeply on the effectiveness and prudence of decoloniality.

Some of this has to do with the fundamental incommensurability between mainstream and decolonial approaches to International Relations, as well as potential issues with my own pedagogy. However, I argue that some of it has to do with how advocates present decoloniality. Decoloniality is often presented as either an "all or nothing" checklist of steps to be taken or an expansive restructuring of academia. Neither of these leave much room for engagement, especially among students new to International Relations.

I call, instead, for a moderate approach to decoloniality. Instructors can maintain mainstream approaches to International Relations, while incorporating decolonial themes as critiques and questions surrounding specific International Relations topics or as

a critique of the sub-field as a whole. This requires mainstream International Relations scholars to both acknowledge and recognize decoloniality as valid. It also, however, requires decolonial scholars to accept this moderate approach as part of the discourse on decoloniality, which can help spur the engagement necessary for this process to continue.

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BIOGRAPHY

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ASHA VARADHARAJAN

A pedagogy for the vanquished of history

Preface

This essay is a tactically revised and updated excerpt from a chapter in *Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning* (2019). I have retained the spirit of provocation and experiment in which I wrote the original essay, as well as its unease with the then-nascent and now-entrenched identity politics in both academic and public spheres. I wondered how the touting of authenticity and incommensurability would affect my Freirean pedagogy as a *critical* interpretation of and intervention in reality. As someone who has never understood why my friends and family in India would measure my comfort in Canada on the basis of a steady diet of *masala dosa* and Bollywood hits, I have been equally puzzled by the assumption that post or anti-colonial literatures are 'looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting' others to themselves (to borrow Virginia Woolf's words [2005, p.35]). In other words, why should both mimesis and reception be dependent on the detection of likeness and the abjection of difference? To use a more colonial and colloquial example, reading works in English growing up in India, I didn't care that I had never seen a daffodil (Wordsworth, 2008, p.303) or consumed any of the goodies in an Enid Blyton picnic that she described with such gusto.[1] Of course, there is a more

[1] Enid Blyton (1897–1968) was a staple in the reading habits of children in the colonies.

complex argument to be made about colonial enchantment and Macaulay's children, of whom I am one.[2] Nevertheless, reading a text in which it was impossible to be reflected, about characters with whom I could not identify, made it possible to dream and imagine without surrendering either my self or my habitat. Being lured out of my self was precisely the point, as was comprehending the virtues of both proximity and distance in the pleasures of reading. The struggle against stereotypical notions, I remain convinced, is futile if reading and writing are always a matter of comforting identification rather than of disturbing defamiliarisation.

I wrote the original version of this essay in a single sitting. Thus, I had no choice but to let its momentum guide me. Years of teaching and unforgiving post-mortems of its "successes" and "failures" no doubt contributed to this unwonted inspiration! I deliberately eschewed discursive logic, setting out to produce, instead, something more fractured and fractious and truer to the manner in which pedagogy is both in and of the moment. I wanted to foreground the space of the classroom, its safety and familiarity, as well as its vitality and dynamism. As all students and teachers are only too aware, however, what happens in the classroom overflows its bounds, lingers in memory, haunts writing and action, and returns to bite or reinvigorate. My writing here emulates and encapsulates my pedagogical style and personality – the mix of anecdote, musing, speculation, humour, passion, spontaneity and analytical rigour – that I hope my students find ebullient and exhilarating and that I know they occasionally also find enigmatic, polemical, difficult, and discomfiting. A head full of quotations and allusions is the hallmark of a colonial sensibility, in my view, an illustration of the manner in which a colonial subjectivity harbours that which is strange or makes intimate that which estranges her from herself. By definition, these quotations and allusions will resonate with some and not others, but they

[2] Thomas Babington Macaulay's (1800–1859) 'Minute' (1835) called for creating 'a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.'

serve to articulate a self-fashioning that is both inherited and made. I make it a point to communicate this to my students desirous of authenticity, otherness, or colour in an otherwise drab palette. My pedagogy and writing, therefore, are always unfinished rather than fulfilled quests, and evocations of a restless mind and spirit.

Disturbing complacencies

I like to think of my intellectual and pedagogical career as both unsettled and unsettling. As a scholar who resides in a settler nation/culture, I intend all the connotations the word "settle" conjures: the 'anxious proximities' (Lawson, 2004) that constitute the settler imagination, the ambiguity, illegitimacy, and historical violence of inhabiting territory that one can neither claim nor disavow, and the fraught and still underexamined relations among indigenous, migrant, and refugee populations within the contested terrain of the nation-state. The name of my university, Queen's, with its possessive apostrophe, tells its own modest tale of Empire.[3] Its campus is flanked by a park in which the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald used to abide, bearing the inimitable inscription, 'A British subject I was born/A British subject I will die.'[4] If belatedness characterizes colonial modernity, Queen's has made a rather charming habit of dragging its feet – then Prince Charles and Princess Diana graced our sesquicentennial celebrations, and 'God Save the Queen' resounded through our Convocation ceremonies. This is not, perhaps, surprising in a country which issued "domestic" stamps featuring images of the world's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, and in which an attempt to remove this benign imperial countenance from our stamps was met with a hue and cry worthy of a dominion, replete with a Governor-General, rather than a nation-

[3] Queen's University, founded in 1841, is located in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

[4] John A. Macdonald (1815–1891) was the first Prime Minister of Canada, holding office from 1867 to 1873, and again from 1878 to 1891. His statue has been removed from the park.

state. While Canada has recently produced stamps featuring King Charles III, its Governor-General is Indigenous, a contradiction Canada weathers with predictable insouciance. My citizenship required me to swear allegiance to the Queen and her progeny. And, of course, William and Kate's visits to this colony with the friendly natives are accompanied by TV shows that regale us with tales of "Prince William's Africa" – there's that pesky possessive again! I even remember the outrage the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* provoked when they refused to stand for the playing of "God Save the Queen" during the award ceremony for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002). As if the British Empire wasn't the real outrage!

While I don't deny that I write these words with glee, my intention is only partially facetious. Queen's University has been and is in the throes of a conscious and determined effort to decolonise and to diversify, to think in terms of cultures of "isms" and phobias, and systems of entrenched and pervasive inequalities, unfreedoms, and injustices. The changes, if they achieve their desired aims, will be radical and rejuvenating. As a professor who has spent most of her academic career within its limestone and ivy walls, I have witnessed all the ways in which the institution, like Orwell's elephant, both resists and surrenders to change and, in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, to what Toni Morrison describes as the claim of others upon canonical values (Morrison, 1988; Orwell, 2009). I will return to Morrison's experiment with "cannon fodder"; for now, I want to underline that pedagogy within such a terrain thrives on rather than transcends the contradictions and overdeterminations within it. If, as Audre Lorde (1984 [2007]) contended, the master's tools can never dismantle the master's house, I have spent my pedagogical and intellectual career making impossibility the condition of faith and hope. If decolonisation were easy, I wouldn't want, understand, or appreciate it. In what follows, I describe two scenes of pedagogy and performance to illustrate the challenge and joy of putting the principle of decolonisation into practice.

Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore's *Quote, Misquote, Fact* contains three pieces in which a rubbing taken from the inscription at the base of Sir John A. Macdonald's statue progressively loses words, such that in the final version of the inscription only the words 'I was born/I will die' remain (2003). In the label attached to the exhibit, Belmore's smudging, even effacement, of the inscription is described as shifting its meaning from a declaration of Macdonald's "political identity" as Canada's first Prime Minister to an 'emphatic declaration of the inevitable "fact" of subjective existence.' This is no doubt an accurate interpretation which effectively explains how Belmore takes "Johnny Mac" down a notch or two while simultaneously making him all too human or no more than a mere mortal. I'd like to suggest, however, that Belmore's "misquote" is also a nod to a biopolitical regime that gave the likes of Johnny Mac the power of life and death over Indigenous populations, the right to dispose and render disposable. Belmore, it seems to me, implies an invisible "you" haunting the "I" in the declaration 'I will die' such that the shift in focalisation reverses the dispossession of Indigenous populations and transforms a self-possessed assertion into an (Indigenous) injunction – "you will die" – to which the British Macdonald becomes subject.

Belmore's angry and poignant work has recently been vindicated in the removal of Sir John A. Macdonald's statue from the park in which the latter served as a focal point. Belmore's dissolution of assertion and inscription, dissemination of meaning, and performance of the transmutation of death into life and life into death, resist the self-possession and territoriality that underwrite claims to identity, colonial or otherwise. Decolonisation for her is a palimpsest of traces, an unfinished process of excavation and rewriting, and a necessarily asymmetrical mapping of power and resistance. Hers is an act of epistemic disobedience, as Walter Mignolo might describe it (2011), an opening onto a new and different order of *becoming* rather than being. Belmore shows that such delinking might be an aspiration but is certainly not an

accomplishment within a regime *and* an episteme that remains resolutely settler-colonial. The decolonial subject exists not as the new but the not-yet. To put it simply, she needs the complete inscription for her de-scription to appear. In this sense, Belmore refuses the 'move from the epistemological critique of ethnographic *authority* to the ontological determination of ethnographic *alterity*' (Viveiros de Castros, as quoted by Anderson, 2020, p.436; italics in original) and wrested autonomy that Mignolo's abandonment of the Western episteme advocates. The suppleness Belmore retains accords with my own penchant for adverbs rather than adjectives: decolonise rather than decolonial. Crucially, Belmore defeats the privileging of a certain settler consciousness that 'love[s] to contemplate the possibility of [its] own extinction' (Dalley, 2018, p.30) as the means to its 'moral regeneration and subjective transformation' (ibid., p.35). Dalley accurately diagnoses this tendency as 'shaped around its need to erase and evoke the native' (ibid., p.31; italics in original). Belmore boldly repudiates the trope of the "vanishing Indian" by turning the tables on the 'supposed inevitability of indigenous extinction' (ibid., p.32) by imagining the extinction of settlers instead.

Her rewriting of history and her reinvigoration of 'the relation between texts and social action' (Sara Ahmed's phrase [2006, p.105]), however, must be distinguished from the speech act that has now become routine in ceremonies and institutions, including my own. I become uneasy whenever a sober and meaningful gesture or ritual becomes merely customary or habitual and absorbed easily into the quotidian life of the institution. I refer here to the opening of ceremonies and occasions with a verbal acknowledgment that the lands upon which the buildings in question stand were once Indigenous or are still unceded. To my mind, these words and the gesture they imply function like a non- rather than a failed performative. As Sara Ahmed explains, performatives 'fail' or are 'unhappy' when conditions are not in place that would enable the action to succeed (ibid., p.105). They are nonperformatives because they 'fail to bring about what

[they] name' (ibid., p.105) – 'the issuing of the utterance' displaces 'the performing of an action' (J.L. Austin's phrases, as quoted by Ahmed [ibid., p.104]). Their reiterative and citational function reinforces the irony that Ahmed highlights. As Ahmed is aware, these non- and failed performatives have hope invested in them of a better future, but such hope cannot be realized without exposing the gap between ideals and actions, words and deeds (ibid., pp.124–125). For Indigenous populations, these performatives do not contain a promise of repatriation; they are a double whammy, not only because they fail to bring about what they name but also because the conditions that are required for them to produce the action they utter do not exist. This acknowledgment may indeed be preferable to a blunt form of settler entitlement, but it is not exactly an admission of culpability or conquest either: it presents the settler as both conscientious and gracious and ensures that Indigenous witnesses to such scruple and recipients of such grace remain quiescent.

I consider it my pedagogical duty first to indicate to my students the historical shift from ignorance and impunity to admission of historical wrongs that must be righted that these nonperformatives represent; however, I don't allow such pleasurable self-flagellation to last. I make sure that I elaborate upon why these nonperformatives also make me squirm. When I have pedagogical occasion to address questions of entitlement and dispossession in the context of Indigenous land claims, I prefer to introduce my students to 13-year-old Tenelle Starr of the Star Blanket First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada, who came to school on 14 January 2014, wearing a sweatshirt with the words 'Got Land? Thank an Indian' emblazoned on its front and back, respectively.[5] Starr was well aware that her sweatshirt supported indigenous treaty and land rights based on agreements with the Crown, and defended her actions by indicating she was doing no more than reinforcing what history lessons had already taught her

[5] CBC News (2014). See also Anthony J. Hall and Gretchen Albers (2011) for a detailed account of treaties as 'the constitutional and moral basis of alliance between indigenous peoples and Canada.'

and her classmates – that "Indians were on this land first." After receiving complaints, school authorities first asked Starr to refrain from wearing the sweatshirt or wear it inside out (a nice irony there reproducing the dishonouring of Crown treaties), before relenting and letting her don it again. Starr's youth and pizzazz, her pride and joy, are instantly appealing to the teenagers I teach, of course, but I choose her for a more sobering reason. Her age signifies *Indigenous* rather than settler futurity, and her action serves as a testament to the aims of Arthur Manuel and Kam'ayaam/ Chachim'multhnii (Cliff Atleo, Jr.), who consider their 'sacred obligations to protect the land' inextricable from 'the birthrights of future generations' (2016, p.72). Besides, Starr's classmates accused her of being cheeky and rude, a welcome alternative, in my view, to the albeit telling melancholia that pervades Belmore's art or the endurance demanded of those subjected to the ritual of nonperformatives. More to the point, the words on Starr's sweatshirt emphasize the illegitimacy of settler occupation. These words are an exhortation as well as a mischievous evocation of a gift economy rather than an (unequal) exchange economy/treaty. The sweatshirt transforms invasion and occupation into a munificence on the part of "Indians." I believe this is what Manuel and Atleo mean when they demand resistance that is not merely a nuisance and inconvenience but proceeds to 'rock the boat' (2016, pp.75–76). Atleo concludes by calling for the centring of 'the voices of Indigenous women' and I could not agree more (2016, p.77).

Giving life and making free[6]

I understand the import of Tuck and Yang's asseveration – 'Decolonization is not a metaphor' – but what does it signify? They worry that decolonisation has become an empty signifier and want to fix its signified as an 'elsewhere' (2012, p.36) that has no

[6] The epigraph to *The Bluest Eye* reads: '*To the two who gave me life and the one who made me free*' (Morrison, 1994 [1970]; italics in original). What follows is a meditation on how pedagogy mediates between and negotiates those options.

synonym. In other moments, they object to decolonisation being 'punctuated by metaphor' (2012, p.35) and call for 'the demetaphorization of decolonization' (2012, p.10). And, in still other moments, they declare that it is 'not a metonym for social justice' (2012, p.21) and 'incommensurable' (2012, p.31), and insist that it be thought 'as material, not metaphor' (2012, p.59). Based on these examples, Tuck and Yang stand by decolonisation as literal, as historical rather than symbolic, as a break from rather than only an ephemeral subversion of the colonial condition, and as designed to '[unsettle] everyone' (2012, p.7). I doubt anyone would disagree with the spirit of these claims, but would the incommensurability of their stance be perceptible outside the system of differences within which signifiers acquire linguistic value in relation to what they are not and without a prior act of translation that could find no equivalent to the decolonisation they envision? And, while I have every sympathy for the fatigue their passionate essay exudes, I cannot grasp decolonisation without the signifying chain of substitution and displacement (metaphor and metonymy) in which it is (dis)located. Moreover, postcolonial literatures, for their part, particularly Anglophone ones, need either the canon or the political economy of settlement, enslavement, and capital to write back to, which means the British Empire, Europe's civilising mission, and the "universal" logic of modernity and development can continue to sit pretty, except this time as violent and soul-destroying rather than as the standard of value and the measure of the human. In their recent co-edited volume on decolonising the literary curriculum, Ato Quayson and Ankhi Mukherjee make a similar point: Anglophone postcolonial literatures cannot, by definition, constitute the radical rupture with colonial modernity and the anxiety of its influence envisaged by both Mignolo and Tuck and Yang. Call it my professional blind spot – I teach literary studies – but my pedagogy has always been animated by not only the principle that words matter, that literacy is the product of examining 'the historical semantics of culture,' but also that law and politics might be, as Patricia J. Williams muses in *The Alchemy*

of Race and Rights, 'a matter of words' (1992, p.13). Anyone who knows me knows that I quote T.W. Adorno's 'one must have tradition in oneself to hate it properly' (1951 [2005], p.52) to anyone who will listen. This aphorism encapsulates why postcolonial scholars are surprisingly the most conservative of creatures, entrusted with the task of 'provincializing' the Europe (Chakrabarty, 2000) by which they remain haunted and which they both love and repudiate. The split enunciation of the colonial subject, 'divided to the vein' (Walcott, 2007, p.6), and for whom language is always and never anguish (Philip, 1989), defines me. Neither authenticity nor solidarity has ever cast a spell, however, which is why I don't specialise in Indian Writing in English or, unless pressed, write on the diasporic condition which I inhabit. Critique, not community, drives me.

In the remainder of this essay, I outline a pedagogical experiment – a seminar in literary interpretation focused on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The word "experiment" is deliberate. I do not claim originality for my interpretation of Morrison (the scholarship on this work is simply too vast for such hubris); neither do I deem my experiment a pedagogical model that others should follow. I hope readers will find it instructive, as my students and I did. At the very least, they will have something to work with and against in their own pedagogical practice. I cannot do justice either to what occurred in the course of the term or to the brilliant complex of affect and insight my students demonstrated, or indeed to the curiosity, wonder, and generosity their writing, art, and video evinced. I include, with her permission, a painting my student Hamdah Shabbir created as a glimpse of the "decolonisation" that occurred. Shabbir's inspiration was a class discussion in which we put *The Bluest Eye* in conversation with Louis Armstrong's rendition of '(What Did I Do To Be So) Black & Blue' (1929). I shall explain why neither solidarity nor identification was my aim, nor I believe was it Morrison's, in the writing of this, her finest novel.

‘Black and Blue’ by Hamdah Shabbir

In her afterword to the novel (it appears in a slightly different variation in her *Tanner Lectures*), Morrison describes her subject as 'racial self-loathing' (1970 [1994], p.210). The singularity and extremity of Pecola's predicament was also the means by which Morrison could communicate 'the aspects of her woundability [that] were lodged in all young girls' (ibid., p.210). My class was racially differentiated – European or Anglo-Canadian, Iranian, Pakistani and Vietnamese Canadian, South African-Australian, and mixed race – but none of them were exclusively African Canadian or African American. They had, in other words, to contend with singularity before they could recognize universality. Thus, their comprehension of the novel did not rely merely on what Tuck and Yang describe as sympathy and suffering, on the infinite substitutability of the 'everybody hurts'[7] model, but on exploring the curious mix of beauty and horror, desire and perversion contained in Pecola's desire for blue eyes. The title of the novel suggests the idealization of whiteness Morrison spent her career battling, and its concomitant connotations and denotations of blackness. Here, Morrison requires metonymy to do the work that metaphor can't; Tuck and Yang's dismissal of both metaphor and metonymy seems too hasty, in my view. That is, whiteness is an impossible object of desire that nevertheless wounds deeply. For students accustomed to thinking of racism as prejudice, Morrison's novel is a profound experience in defamiliarisation. By their own admission, it had never occurred to them to think about the *internalisation* of racial self-loathing and the violence and harm that African-American characters do to each other as a result. As Morrison puts it, 'seeing oneself preserved in the amber of disqualifying metaphors' made her novel imperative (1970 [1994], p.216); she could not write 'race-free' prose without 'race-specific' prose (ibid., p.211). Thus, students are unlikely to decolonise their imaginations without understanding how 'racial hierarchy and triumphalism' work (ibid., p.211), without engaging the 'demonisation of an entire race' (ibid.,

[7] R.E.M., *Automatic for the People*, 1992. The full line is 'everybody cries/And everybody hurts sometimes.' The song exhorts one to 'hold on,' which is, of course, an impossibility for Pecola.

p.210) that precedes them. That demonisation is precisely an effect of language, of the weight of words.

Morrison challenges the rhetoric of survival and testimony by shaping 'the void that is Pecola's "unbeing"' (ibid., p. 215). Pecola hallucinates rather than sees a self. This aspect of the novel was the most devastating for my students because they could comprehend a fragmented self but not the impossibility of wholeness. I deployed Lady Gaga's performance at the 2016 Oscars, clad all in white and seated at a white grand piano, awaiting the survivors of abuse to emerge from the shadows. While she has indicated that she too is a survivor and I agree that the moment was a powerful one of consciousness raising and solidarity, I wanted my class to perceive the depth of Pecola's voicelessness and invisibility, the failure of her community to sustain her, and Morrison's rejection of the pat narrative arc of the *Bildungsroman* in which suffering is both redeemed and transcended. Rather counter-intuitively, perhaps, but oh so meaningfully, Morrison defines narrative as that which gives shape and texture to silence and nonentity rather than expresses voice or self-consciousness. It is this quality that communicated to my students the embeddedness of racism and the intractability of power. All of them said that their own helplessness, their inability to do something to "save" Pecola, was the hardest thing to bear. Claudia signifies hope in the story because she lives to tell the tale, but the very division of the narrative into a failed past and uncertain present and future speaks volumes.

Morrison also opts for 'co-conspiracy and intimacy' and deliberately fails to offer 'a distancing, explanatory fabric' (ibid., p.215). I asked my students why Morrison eschewed the comforts and grit of social realism, forcing them instead to piece together cause and effect in a narrative that could only begin to utter how, not why, the events unfolded the way they do. In a novel steeped in the erotic and disturbing dimensions of spectacle, my students understood Morrison's reluctance to turn them into voyeurs, on the outside looking in on the seemingly quaint and salacious

habits of African Americans. The effect of her work relies on the shock of intimacy without safety, a novelty in the current institutional climate of safe spaces and trigger warnings. It is intimacy, not incommensurability, that my students found unsettling, what Morrison describes as her simultaneous capacity to expose and sustain the painful secret of incest at the heart of the narrative. It is an intimacy they eventually embraced, however, acknowledging the necessity of a learning curve that was based on having nowhere to hide and nothing to console them.

I concluded the seminar, however, with the moment when Morrison sabotages 'the despising glance' (ibid., p.211) with race-specific prose that is also, miraculously, race-free: '[The baby] was in a dark, wet place, its head covered with great O's of wool, the black face holding, like nickels, two clean black eyes, the flared nose, kissing-thick lips, and the living, breathing silk of black skin' (ibid., p.191). I commented on how the "O's" are both aural and visual, the hole that is the womb from which emerges a whole baby, the mouth open in wonder at this new life and the exclamation of joy that escapes it, the curls implied by O as a metaphor for roundness, and the subtle transformation of the description of Pecola earlier in the novel as an emptiness, a 'nothing/ no thing to see' into the mother of an O that is substantial: kissing-thick lips, an abundance of curly hair, and living, breathing skin. As Tuck and Yang indicate, one must feel to act; this is why Morrison writes works that not only touch, but move, us (ibid., p.191). That the baby is dead and only alive in Claudia's mind's eye motivates the reader to realize what Claudia can only intuit or dream. Morrison's afterword expresses her doubts about whether her first novel achieved what she set out to accomplish. If my students' rich responses to it are any indication, she did, because she showed how language can both debase Black American culture and become worthy of its complexity and wealth (ibid., p.216).

Afterword

It has probably been obvious that I have avoided the usual forms of self-positioning common to critical practice these days. While I have been careful to introduce historicity in moments of self-reckoning throughout, I remain committed to contradiction and overdetermination in subject formation such that the self emerges in any given critical, historical, and geographical conjuncture, its intersectionality capable of both instability and metamorphosis, and its identity determined rather than determining. In this chapter, I am, by turns, (post)colonial, migrant-settler, Canadian citizen, liberal-bourgeois, educated elite, radical pedagogue, conservative and erudite scholar, racialised, heterosexual, feminist, pop culture aficionado, anti-whatever. I am, in short, all of these things and none of them, except when they trip me up or presume to name and categorise. Since this essay is concerned with the dangers of nonperformatives, I wanted to avoid an empty self-positioning that merely ensures rather than challenges business as usual or that remains sentimental rather than sceptical. The significance of this play of enunciation, identification, and affiliation was brought home to me when I read Ankhi Mukherjee's essay "Black British Literature Decolonizing the Curriculum" (2023). Mukherjee describes how Zadie Smith challenges the pieties circulating around blackness by transgressing and refusing their circumscribed character. I find Smith both refreshing and compelling for these reasons, too, but thinking about her made me realize why my students and I find Morrison fascinating and unusual. Unlike even Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall, who describe how the white gaze simultaneously imprisons the black body and renders it spectacular, Morrison explores the *in*visibility of the black, female body and, rather than make Pecola's voice loud, she makes Pecola's silence deafening. Fanon's perception that the look to which the little black boy is subject also dismembers him may come closer to Morrison's affecting portrayal of Pecola. Pecola, unlike Smith's characters, does not inhabit a field of possibilities, of blazing and vibrant

marigolds to use Morrison's metaphor. As we recall, the earth proves unyielding that year. Morrison's approach is not simply anti-racist; it is decolonising because she recognises, like Fanon, that the perception of inferiority precedes its epidermalisation. I am not unaware of Smith's sensitivity to the irony and disappointment that blackness also represents for her characters; however, words such as agency, authority, or even testimony simply cannot be part of Pecola's vocabulary.

Finally, a word about Tuck and Yang's "Decolonization is not a metaphor." I admire its political scruple, its courage in identifying the complicity of otherwise marginalised migrant populations in settler colonialism, and its uncompromising demand for Indigenous sovereignty and futurity (2012, p.35). My analysis of non- and failed performatives is intended to supplement and endorse their contentions about settler innocence. I am also on board with their rejection of loose or casual or ubiquitous uses of the word "decolonisation" without substance and their reintroduction of conflict and contention in exercises in coalition-building and in affirmations of solidarity. My chapter, however, objects to the title of the essay – "Decolonization is not a metaphor" – by arguing that decolonisation cannot not be one, as the multiple connotations of their own use of the word signifies, and by the very intractability of settler colonialism they set out to dismantle, but also to *represent* and *communicate*. They contradict their central claim by resorting to poetry as invoking the elsewhere they imagine, which means that figurative language is crucial to their enterprise. I also challenge their emphasis on incommensurability even as I recognize its necessary provocation in the self-congratulatory bubble they puncture. I deploy Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* to demonstrate how minds and bodies, as well as states and nations, need to be decolonised before a new order can emerge. Tuck and Yang rather unceremoniously and unconvincingly dismiss metaphor and metonymy, both of which Morrison wields as weapons against the gaze that belittles and despises blackness. Morrison exposes all

the damage language has wrought as well as all the wonder it can conjure, and she does so by plunging her readers into intimacy rather than holding them at bay with incommensurability. As Lorenzo Veracini asserts, 'We should reconcile a decolonial refusal and a decolonial embrace of metaphor' (2022, p.30). To return to the world of Tuck and Yang, unsettling innocence and restoring Indigenous futurity cannot begin, let alone be accomplished, without decolonising the mind and the language that bespeaks it. Morrison, for her part, does not abandon metaphor but cajoles, caresses, persuades, and demands that it speak in the name of blackness and for the imagination of beauty.

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BIOGRAPHY

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ANTHONY NEAL

Necessary Foundations for Decolonial Thought: A Process View

This paper argues that decolonial thought, decoloniality, or the philosophy of decolonization, understood as a way or schema of thinking, has certain foundational requirements or notions. Decoloniality in this sense is a process of undoing the lasting impacts of colonialism, particularly in the realm of knowledge, power, and social structures.

Decolonial thought posits that colonization is the exploitation of human value, particularly in the context of labor and creativity. The colonizer is inherently exploitative, limiting the benefits derived from their labor or creativity by the exploited. This type of exploitation hinders the flourishing of the exploited individual or community. Decolonial thinkers oppose human exploitation and perceive the world through an anti-exploitation lens. Essentially, they aim to expose exploitation and develop strategies to dismantle its power.

Philosophy of Decolonization is to be understood as Nkrumah's philosophy of Decolonization. In this sense, it is not to be taken as being coequal to the decolonial theory of Fanon, or any other contemporary thinker. In this sense, Nkrumah's conception of the categorial conversion becomes the focal point. This simply means that Nkrumah understood that colonization was not just the act

of physically exploiting and oppressing those who become colonized. It was also the act of dehumanizing or reconstituting the meaning of humanity for those who are colonized. This occurs through the implementation of a colonial educational program with the intent of framing the reality of both the colonizer and colonized. The implementation of such an educational program causes all experiences to be interpreted or framed through this colonial lens, which disadvantages the colonized and advantages the colonizer. These requirements arise from the nature of the colonizing act. To identify certain of these requirements, Kwame Nkrumah's book, *Consciencism*, which is a powerful argument for a philosophy of decolonization, rooted in the Marxist tradition, will serve as a resource from which to define this philosophy. After defining these terms, thus constructing the ontological structure, this paper will then provide a detailed exposition of the role that time, space, and perception possess in resisting a colonial mindset, and the development of a decolonial mindset.

In particular, I will expose what is required for such a shift from the colonized schema to a decolonial schema.

1

At a fundamental level, colonialism is a program of re-education, whether by force or by some other means (Ferguson, 2015, p.1). However, if I say that colonialism is a program of re-education without putting forth the aims of this re-education, then it is as if I have said that colonialism is equivalent to all other educational reforms. This is a drastic oversimplification of how colonialism operates in the real or actual world. To understand how colonialism operates in the actual world, there must be a distinction made between colonialism and other educational models at an essential level. We must ask what is different about colonialism or what fundamentally separates colonialism from all other educational reform programs? This question is not one of method but of intent. In other words, by asking this question, we have not sought to know how educational reforms accomplish their predetermined aims, but instead we are seeking to know the aims that the colonialists seek to achieve. Education at a basic level is about providing members of a community with the skill set and cultural knowledge required to thrive or flourish within a certain range of conditions for a particular space (Whitehead, 2018, p.1-3). Colonialism inverts this aim and seeks to create conditions so that the colonialist or colonial government thrives and not the colonized individual or colonized community. Of course, certain members of a colonized community may realize certain methods to flourish under the conditions created by a colonizer, but to accomplish this task they must assimilate and assist the colonizer in their aim of flourishing at the expense of the colonized community.

In an attempt to throw light on how the aim of thriving at the expense of the colonized is accomplished, I will begin with a quote from Aimé Césaire: ‘First we must study how colonization works to de-civilize the colonizer…’ (2000, p.35). In consideration of the relationship of this quote to the experience of colonization, I have struggled to determine how a civil nation of laws could so

blatantly disregard basic law and civility by colonizing another. I have found assistance from Césaire. Césaire suggests that this can only happen if the colonizer has truly become a colonizer. To put this another way, those who participate in the act of colonization recognize no binding legal authority, neither the colonized or their own. They are only concerned with their aim, which again is to thrive at the expense of the colonized. Kwame Nkrumah puts forward that to do this, the colonizer creates the conditions for exploitation to exist (2000, p.71). Accordingly, two classes of individuals develop for the fulfillment of this condition. These two classes are the exploiter and the exploited. These classes function best when the participants, particularly the exploited, are unaware that they are being exploited, or to what degree. Or, when the participants perceive that exploitation is a function of basic human nature, and is thus an unalterable condition of life. In this scenario, the participants perceive the world differently. They begin to perceive that all living things are in a constant struggle to survive and this survival is dependent upon their ability to exploit the conditions of their existence.

In order to create such uneven conditions, extreme violence is necessary and is the method generally used (Fanon, 1963, p.35-40; James, 1989, p.11-13). In societies, throughout history, when the condition of exploitation is created, violence is at the forefront of its creation. The importance of this phenomenon is that it demonstrates the fact of exploitation as not being a natural occurrence and without extreme violence or the threat of death, it becomes difficult to maintain. Violence in this sense serves to accomplish an immediate end. The end it accomplishes is to vastly decrease the amount of resistance present, whether teachers of counter narratives or those willing to physically resist. What this reduction in resistance achieves is it lessens the opportunities for the colonized minds to revert back to their notions of the world. The former schema dies with the teachers of counter narratives and often those physically resisting are many times seen as troublemakers. It is unlikely that the former schema of the

exploited, or any former schema once abandoned, can ever be regained; however, the stress of the unnatural conditions created by violence will sometimes create an attitude of resistance to develop among the exploited. This attitude alone is not enough to thwart deeply entrenched systems of oppression such as that of a colonial master, but when this attitude is coupled with a willingness to perform the reflective thought necessary to reinterpret the lived experience of oppression, a philosophy born of the struggle of being exploited can develop.

The development of such a philosophy is not an immediate solution to such conditions; however, coupled with time and an attitude of resistance, the conditions for revolutionary change can occur.

There is a difference between reform and revolution (Nkrumah, 2000, p.72-73). Many contemporary writers assume reform and revolution are both solutions to oppressions or modes of thought as it pertains to the decolonial mindset; however, reformers insist on cleaning out the house while leaving the structure intact. But the revolutionary believes that only a complete structural overhaul can do away with inherent structural flaws of the previous space. It is sometimes difficult to grasp the full measure of the distance between the two concepts when they are explained in terms of governmental political agendas. When performing a thought experiment, especially in the development or discovery of new concepts, it may be easier to appreciate. In 1517, a monk by the name of Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Saxony (Lull, 1989, p.12). This is usually understood as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Luther held a firm belief in the notion of *sola scriptura* or scripture alone. This was seen by him and others as a reformation of the basic beliefs of the church. Clearly, reformation here means a return to the fundamentals or basics of the faith. The belief was that scripture alone constituted the basic tenets of faith. I used this example to demonstrate one clear way to understand what reformation means.

Luther was not interested in changing the basic tenets which gave form and structure to the Church. This can be assumed because this is not what he was challenging. He was simply challenging deviations from these tenets. Even if followers of Luther, or Luther himself, expanded upon the basic tenets in a manner which was not a deviation from the principles, then the institution remains the same. The mentioning of the distinction between reform versus revolutionary thought is important because the decision to be a decolonial thinker is grounded in the notion that a system or institution which exploits one group to advantage another group does so because of the way the system or institution is intended to

operate. This being the case, reformation seems problematic with intent. Leaving the fundamental structure intact does not prohibit the giving of an advantage to one group over another group. The reformation may allow for more individuals to participate or even allow different people to participate; however, if the fundamental structure remains intact, then so does oppression. To achieve a shift in mindset from a colonized mind to a decolonized mind, the fundamental tenets of colonization must be seen clearly and understood in terms of the aim of any system of colonization.

It seems everyone is talking about decolonization these days, but the structures that make colonization or exploitation possible are rarely, if ever, the target of anyone's ire. Some people use the word decolonization when they really mean something akin to integration or possibly inclusion (McCall and McReynolds, 2021). Given that there is little discussion about political economy, then one can only assume that by inclusion what is meant is the inclusion of the elites. In other words, many desire their opportunity to exploit others. Colonizers, oppressors, or exploiters may inhabit a space, but they necessarily colonize and exploit people. Some people may understand these actions to be commensurate. They are not. These actions may occur simultaneously, but to exploit a group of people does not require that the exploiter inhabit the land, particularly in these times of global markets. In the past, there were notions of settler and non-settler colonialism. Past notions should not be the basis for exploiters to think that they are not the modern-day equivalent of the colonizers of the past. We must think in terms of intent, actions, and outcomes. Today we think in terms of global capitalism, the global free market, and the global market-driven economy. We also use terms like the global labor force and global resource management. In order to understand these terms clearly and in the simplest manner possible, one must think about who has what resources, while continuing to be cognizant of the connection that violence and exploitation has to the actual occurrences or the existence of these resources in the real world. If

the goal of those whose desire it is to be a decolonizer is to gain access or to gain the ability to participate in global markets based on structures as they are currently constituted, then that goal is misaligned with the goal of true decolonial thought. However, if the goal is to free oneself and others from exploitation, then participation is not enough. To participate in existing exploitative structures is to participate in the exploitation of others.

Definitions

A. Social cohesion or harmony- 'The need for subtle means of social-cohesion lies in the fact that there is a large portion of life which is outside direct central intervention' (Nkrumah, 2000, p. 68).
B. Nature/space- 'Every society is placed in nature' (ibid., p.70).
C. Exploitation- 'This is the cardinal factor in exploitation, that the section of society whose labor transforms nature is not the same as the section of a society which is better fulfilled as a result of this transformation. (ibid., p.71).'
D. Development- 'It is my opinion that when we study a philosophy which is not ours, we must see it in the context of the intellectual history to which it belongs...we can use it in the furtherance of cultural development and in the strengthening of our human society' (ibid., p.71).

The act of colonization and the development of a decolonial mindset are terms which have meaning – and implications predicated on the condition that there somewhere exists a human society which has been colonized or better yet, exploited for the benefit of another society, or in the present time a corporation. For the purposes of furthering the approach towards the necessary foundations of decolonial thought, it is a requirement to set the bounds of the quest. In this sense and for this quest in particular, this action will be performed by defining certain terms that I believe provide structure to this quest primarily. These primary terms are social cohesion or social harmony, nature as space, and exploitation. I do not take these terms to be the only terms necessary for a full understanding of decolonial thought. However, I do take these terms to be basic to a fundamental understanding of the schema of colonization. This simply means that what is needed for an individual to form a shift in perceptual

framework or schema from a colonized mindset to a decolonial mindset is readily available. A deeper understanding of the political and economic machinations that structure systems of exploitative oppression would certainly be helped through an attempt to be more comprehensive in my selection of terms, but that is not my aim. Again, my aim is to expose the reader to a basic structure so that they might understand indeed how a shift might be possible.

Philosophy, as I am practicing here, seeks to understand the world, or nature, and I also seek to understand myself or humanity within nature. This nexus of human existence within nature is something that I usually represent with the word 'reality'. I point this out because I am not clear that all who use the term reality mean the same as I do upon their use of the term. As such, it is my goal, where philosophy is concerned, to seek to move from general notions about reality as an existing set of phenomena, to full bore concepts about the same. In doing so, I am very cautious about how I proceed. This discriminative attitude is important because it is possible during the process of moving from notion to concept to become inventive as opposed to being a discoverer. I want to be a discoverer at best, but I will settle for being one who brings clarity. For I am aware that new discoveries are truly hard to find (Whitehead, 2004, p.26). In performing this task, I am reliant upon the writings of other philosophers, historians, and scientists to ground my ideas. To this end, I often refer to this type of reasoning as bound reasoning, owing to my desire to not allow my imaginative speculations to run wild. I do believe that speculations, or shall I say inductive reasoning, must be a part of the process. However, speculations must be kept circumscribed within the due bounds of reasoning. Alfred North Whitehead compared the true method of discovery to an airplane that takes off and rises to the thin air of imaginative generalization but must again land on the ground of precise reasoning (1967, p.7). My mode of thought on the matter of philosophy is important insofar as it provides a window through which to understand the

framework I consider to be my boundary. It may also provide a type of advance notice as to my reasoning for my choice of terms to define.

Social Cohesion

As humans, our development as beings in the world is relational. Everything about our development is relational and contingent on the development and existence of other things existing in the world. Even our knowledge of the world is relational, and the understanding of knowledge as defined by many is also dependent upon the relationship of two or more things. Reason and rationality have as their root word, *ratio*, which again is a type of logical relationship between two or more things. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to study human existence by studying this existence in relationship to other existing things. The major relationship to be studied is the primary relationship, that is, human-to-human. We think of this relationship through any number of occurrences, ranging from the family to society at large. In his book *Consciencism,* it seems that Kwame Nkrumah was deeply concerned about the occurrence of the human-to-human relationships known as society. As such, he took time to describe what common features make societies one or whole. He centered this discussion on ideology, which for Nkrumah was akin to morality. However, he does make a slight distinction between the two. The distinction falls along the lines of 'guidance and appraisal of conduct' (Nkrumah, 2000, p.58). To this point, while ideologies provide the principles that unite or cause a society to cohere, the morality of a society provides the tools for individuals or a group to assess acts within a society or make value claims for the future of the society. They are not mutually exclusive; however, the object is distinct enough such that they can be distinguished and it is possible for the morality of a society to be a guide in making value claims about portions of the ideology or about the ideology in total.

Nkrumah was insistent in the third chapter entitled “Society and Ideology” on the notion that all societies have a need to spread their ideology. However, he did not consider ideology to be necessarily an intentional production leading to a well-curated group of claims and propositions. In spite of this, he did accept the notion that one of the qualities of a society qua society was the development of certain ideas inherent to that particular society, as a result of the nature of people living together within a given space for a duration of time. It is consistent with the development of the cohesive quality of being a society in general. This cohesive quality or social cohesion is a distinguishing feature of all societies, regardless of whether they possess a fragile nature or not. Social cohesion extends from the need for a society to distribute and maintain its own ideology. In the context of exploitation, the actions of the exploiter disrupt or disband social cohesion. This is due to the need of the exploiter to reorient the meanings and values of the exploited such that whatever is the manner of exploitation, it is either taken to not exist, or it is taken to be consistent with the way things have been for so long that they cannot possibly change, or it is taken to be necessary for the good of all parties involved. No matter the occurrence of the exploitation, exploitation re-educates by providing new ideologies, and new moralities, while dislodging old ones. It therefore disrupts the old social cohesion, while replacing it with a more favorable social cohesion for the existing exploitative forces. In essence, exploitation shifts the perceptual framework of a society, thus changing human to human relational conditions of its members.

Nature/Space

The laws of nature affect all nations in the same way. Therefore, the manipulation of nature is possible by all societies for their own development. Nevertheless, this possibility can be impeded, especially by colonization, oppression, and exploitation (Rodney, 1974; Táíwò, 2010). Nkrumah does not set aside space for the

process of formally defining nature. He seems more concerned about the reader understanding its meaning through his use of the term. Nkrumah's use of 'nature' has several different nuanced iterations, but can be summarily understood as meaning what exists without human intervention. This also includes the existence of humans and the ability to manipulate humans for the purposes of the development of other humans. In light of Nkrumah's acceptance of Einstein's explanation regarding the nonexistence of empty space, his applied usage of the two terms would still hold despite the presence of distinguishable objects. Simply put, this explanation meant considering that space could be shaped by gravity, it was something rather than nothing, and this something was also composed of matter. Given this justification, space and nature should be understood to be interchangeable unless explicitly stated otherwise. There is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between nature and space in terms of meaning; however, Nkrumah's usage of the two terms demonstrates his maintenance of a contiguous relationship between the two. The importance of this application is found in Nkrumah's concept of the categorial conversion.

The categorial conversion was for Nkrumah a central component of his philosophy of decolonization. According to Stephen C. Ferguson II, a North Carolina State University philosopher, because of Nkrumah's repudiation of Hegel and his dialectics, Nkrumah put forward the notion of categorial conversion (Ajei, 2017, p.125). The significance of the categorial conversion is increased by Nkrumah's use of the concept to clarify his notion of the fundamental nature of matter and the way it responds during changes in states of existence. Stephen Ferguson points out two important claims of Nkrumah that are central to understanding his notions of categorial conversion. First, 'it is imperative that we see the world as dialectical, that is, as a world of processes, in order to face the apparent paradox of the emergence of consciousness from matter' (Ajei, 2017, p.127; Nkrumah, 2000, p.25). Second, 'there can be no consciousness without matter; for

consciousness is conscious matter, that is, a property of matter' (Ajei, 2017, p.127). I will have more to add concerning the connection between nature, space, and matter, specifically drawing attention to how it assists in the development of a decolonial mindset. Suffice to say here that Nkrumah was concerned with understanding and portraying the world as it really is. It was his contention that all dualist and rationalist notions of the way things have failed and have even worked against any and all attempts to develop revolutionary change owing to how they restrict individuals' and communities' ability to different states of existence as possible in all matter. Nkrumah's explanation of his categorial conversion confined the notion of dialectical change to categorical statements (2017, p.128). In this use, he explained that the world of matter could be understood through interconnections, interdependence, and its processual existence. Only through understanding nature and space as they actually exist and not through delusional pseudoscience is it possible for the oppressed to understand the nature of their oppression.

Exploitation

Some might think that there is the possibility for a positive and negative distinction to be made relevant to the manner in which the term 'exploitation' is used in common language today. As it pertains to colonialism and neocolonialism, it seems unlikely that a case can be made for such a claim. In the type of perceived uneven power relationship that exists under these conditions, to exploit creates a situation that advantages the powerful. Nkrumah's reflection on exploitation is limited to socio-economic structures. It is within this context that Nkrumah puts forward his conception of how exploitation presents in the real world. Exploitation, in this sense, does not simply exist in an oppressive socioeconomic structure. Exploitation *is* the oppressive socioeconomic structure. Put another way, to be exploitative in a socioeconomic manner is to be oppressive and *vice versa*. The two

are co-equivalent. Exploitation allows for one to gain at the expense, energy, or labor of another. Within this understanding, exploitation requires some form of perceived uneven power structure. Without the context of the perception of uneven power, the resistance to exploitation is greater. Given this understanding of the relationship between the exploiter and the exploited, the notion of good exploitation appears indefensible. For under this condition, the notions of choice and freedom are jettisoned to make space for taking advantage of others.

Above, it was mentioned that exploitation affects the ability of a community to manipulate nature for their development. If exploitation is ongoing for generations, it also becomes possible for the exploited community to believe that exploitation is fundamental to the way in which nature works and that it must always be to their disadvantage. It can also have the same effect on the exploiter, but with one difference future generations of this class usually confuse the meaning of freedom with the meaning of exploitation. As such, freedom becomes freedom to exploit and not freedom to exist. In this sense, the exploiter believes that they have a duty to develop an exploited class and to also recap the fruit of the labor. History is replete with examples of justifications for slavery and colonialism which expose a belief in the master's duty to the slave. The contrast between cooperative human relationships and exploitative human relationships is lost when these notions go unchallenged. This skews human development towards the creation of a mindset wherein there exists less value in the exploited or oppressed class and there is more value in the exploiter or oppressor class, despite the fact that the fruit upon which all rely is developed by the oppressed. Indian philosopher M.N. Roy reminds us that society is a human creation in our quest for freedom (2004, p.155). It was created originally through cooperative relationships and not oppressive ones. The French Antillean philosopher of decoloniality Franz Fanon put exploitation into perspective, providing a pertinent conclusion to this description of exploitation with the following: 'I, the man of

color, want only this: That the tool never possess the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever' (1967, p.180).

Development

Anyone who engages in the conceptualization of development must be cognizant that development embodies certain implicit aspects, one of which is the notion of potential or possibility (Thompson, 2023, p.1-21). The necessity of doing so stems from the association of development, within common use, to change or transform. When development is applied to matter, which is any time that it does not refer to qualitative changes such as changes in states of consciousness, then the change must be understood in relationship to both time and space. Therefore, development studies can be said to mean the study of potential changes in matter within time and space. However, I think it is appropriate to attach a descriptive agent to distinguish the type of development we intend from development studies in general. Here, I am specifically interested in social or communal development among humans and the necessities this type of development implies. To keep within the bounds within which I began, I must turn to Nkrumah's use of development, and launch my discussion from that point.

To do so, I will begin where he began, with matter. Matter was his starting point since as stated before, for Nkrumah all was matter. Nkrumah assigned three characteristics to matter, which were:

1. Matter has mass;

2. Matter is perpetually active;

3. Matter is coextensive with the universe.

Of these, the second and third have the most import as they connect with communal development. So then, given these conditions, an understanding of community development that arises in light of their implications suggests that all communities

have the potential for change. However, to expand upon Nkrumah's basic explanation of development, I must also increase his discussion of process as the fundamental mode of existence for matter. This increase in the basic explanation of development allows for a more robust discussion beyond a simple analysis of categories within a linguistic model. In doing so, an approach can be made towards an understanding of the possibilities for actual communal development. In order to perform this expansion, I will rely upon process thinkers, foremost of whom is Alfred North Whitehead. By doing this, I will be able to more thoroughly discuss substantive or objective material change. The significance or value of this understanding of change is determined by its temporal spatial reality.

Transformation or development is dependent upon certain concepts to form its relationship with reality. They are freedom, movement, and time, plus space. Without the existence of these concepts, it is unlikely that humans would ever recognize change. To develop is to change or progress for the purpose of thriving or flourishing. Negative change would be to regress or devolve and therefore cannot be understood to mean progress or human development. Consequently, to study community development or social transformation is always considered to be a study of the modes and methods humans have implemented in order 'to live, to live well, and to live better' (Whitehead, 1929, p.8). If we accept that 'development is basic to all biological life, but for humans, development, at least on some level, requires agency. Agency requires freedom' (Neal, 2022, p.15). Then, freedom in some form is necessary and inherent to human development. Since exploitation is used to develop the exploiters' ability to flourish and not the exploited, then exploitation must on some level restrict and deny freedom. This restriction of freedom applies to physical movement and certainly applies to changes of states of mind. Lastly, development as well as all other existences, takes place in time and space. To restrict development, exploiters also restrict space;

however, as Bob Marley said, ‘none of them can stop the time’ (1980)!

With change, there are times when the change that occurs can be perceived as quantitative change, and there are other times when the occurring change can be perceived as qualitative change. Still, if either change is actual, then it must be considered to be a transformation or development. However, what is important, if the person or community is attempting to do true and lasting community development or social transformation, particularly if the intent is to also decolonize, then perception must become as congruent with reality as possible. The connection between perception and development is paramount. Perception is not reality, and humans can only have an asymptotic relationship, perceptually, to reality at best. We do not see existence as it is, and there is much that exists that we do not see (Whitehead, 1967; Churchland, 1979). There are also things that we imagine to exist, but that do not nor cannot exist. Our eyes can only see light at a certain frequency. Our ears can only hear at a certain frequency. We can only capture certain smells. Certain poisons are imperceptible to our tastebuds and certain sensations are imperceptible to our touch (Whitehead, 1967; Churchland, 1979; Strawson, 2019; Cassirer, 1955; Rorty, 1979). Even within our social reality, there are certain phenomena which we are destined to misperceive or not perceive at all. This is especially true if the phenomena lie beyond our perceptual framework, making us non-responsive to the possibility of their existence. Responsiveness of this type derives or develops from a more expansive frame of perception. This means those who are interested in decolonial thought must place serious attention towards expanding their perceptual framework while also improving their perception. However, the expansion and improvement needed is one of the activities which the exploited have the least amount of aptitude.

The development of decolonial thought, which in this paper has been put forward as a framework or schema of thinking, has certain foundational requirements. These requirements are exposed above and they are brought to the fore by the necessity of struggling against acts of exploitation and oppression, which are equated to the past notion of colonization. Since exploitation relies so heavily on the manipulation of the exploited, and their ability to perceive reality as it is, any development of a decolonial mindset must begin at this point. Therefore, the major question transitions from the possibility of undoing colonial structures to the proposition of restructuring perceptual frameworks. This is because it is easy to see, upon philosophical reflection, that exploitative or oppressive structures are never permanent; however, the exploited often find little time for such endeavors as performing the work necessary to make cognitive shifts. Whitehead's comment concerning the limited nature of human thought is meaningful here: 'We have to remember that while nature is complex with timeless subtlety, human thought issues from the simple-mindedness of beings whose active life is less than half a century' (2019, p.29). This being the case, what can be done to mitigate the gap between perceptual frameworks riddled with fallacies and vulnerabilities and the perceptual frameworks which approximate facts based on the best science and logic of the present; which also predisposes one to behold truth and to comport themselves towards the ability to resist falsity? This process must begin with a true liberal arts education. This educative process must be premised on the condition that what is necessary for a flourishing life is to know oneself in one's condition, which requires knowledge of the world as it really exists. It must also demonstrate logically that to be human is to be free, but to actualize freedom one requires such an education. Of course, this is not an end in itself, but it is a necessary foundation!

5

A decolonial mindset requires conscious acknowledgement of things as they are. The knowledge of things as they are, or reality, is equivalent to an understanding of the relationship between time, space, and matter. As this relationship applies to resisting exploitation and oppression, the knowledge of the interconnection of time, space, and matter exposes, how freedom is experienced in the world, what restricts freedom, and why we should be concerned about impositions, legal or otherwise, on any or all three. Of course, the ability to make this type of acknowledgement subsequently requires the knowledge of things as they are. As this applies to an exploitative relationship, the knowledge of things as they are demands an understanding of social conditions and the ability to distinguish between exploitation and cooperation. The presence of past and present occurrences of exploitation would seem to say that there have been, at minimum, some moments where this knowledge was not present. However, I want to state that the presence of this knowledge will not alone extricate an individual or community from oppressive conditions. As I have stated earlier, it is foundational, but it is only the beginning.

Systems of oppression and exploitation are typically very committed to remaining intact and usually dedicate some attention towards reducing the exploited individual's or community's knowledge of reality. Usually this is done by limiting the ability of the exploited to properly interpret the exploitative phenomena they experience in the world. All phenomena are experienced as sensory perception and then interpreted through mental apperception. There is no such thing as bare experience (Whitehead, 1967, p.22). All sensory experiences are interpreted. Interpretation occurs through the use of frameworks. These frameworks rely upon certain necessary human mental abilities, which are imagination, memory, and perception. Of the three, imagination may be the most important, but it may also present

the largest problem. Human interpretation of reality requires that we also represent our experiences through the use of symbols. Our symbolic representations are only asymptotic and never equivalent to reality. This means that there is always distance between what is and what is known. Our imagination fills in the distance. Our imaginations are always at work. When we have better knowledge of the world, our imaginations are better able to close this distance. An education which enriches the individual with this ability to shift towards a resistance or decolonial mindset is central.

6

The possibility of developing a resistive mindset to exploitation is always already present within humanity, but so is the ability to exploit and to be exploited. Possibility cannot be exchanged for probability without the existence or development of certain conditions. There are abilities within systems of oppression that are not permanent and some that are not real. Without proper education, these remain tools for the exploiter. An education which makes way for this type of resistive mindset and discloses things as they are is not only necessary for the oppressed, but it is also good for the oppressor.

This education, in ancient times, was codified within the simple statement, “know thyself.” Because we now understand that the lack of knowledge can make us a slave to exploitation and oppression, I would like to modernize this statement to address this knowledge: know thyself and be free!

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SHAKEEL ANJUM & THOMAS METCALF

Temptations of Temporality: The Resistance of Graphic Notation as Decolonial Thought

A Symphony of Late Liberalism is a 'concept-image' initially appearing in anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli's *Economies of Abandonment* (2011) as a critique of liberalism, further expanded in *Geontologies: A Requiem for Late Liberalism,* one which demonstrates 'a strange way of periodizing that creates 'an even stranger geography' visible in the image of the *Symphony* (2016, p.169). Povinelli charts global events through localised 'stanzas', e.g. America, Palestine, Aboriginal Australia, with the diagram demonstrating how these interact over time, and thus showing points of confluence and divergence. Povinelli explains that:

> The *Symphony of Late Liberalism* was inspired by the compelling diagram that introduces Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Mille Plateaux* [1980] and the haunting Gregorian chants of my Catholic youth. Less complex than the rhizomatic nature of Deleuze & Guattari's score [sic], but more haunted by the figurative power of late liberalism, the *Symphony of Late Liberalism* was always intended as a score in process open to the recomposition of

each stanza, desirous of more stanzas, wishing to be written over and against.

(Povinelli, cited in Anjum and Metcalf, 2023, p.6)

This 'compelling diagram' from *Mille Plateaux* is taken from 'Piece Four' of composer Sylvano Bussotti's *Five Piano Pieces for David Tudor* (1959), one of the most iconic graphic scores of all time. A notable assessment from Ronald Bogue describes the piece as a 'rhizomatic artwork' which 'celebrated passion and Bussotti's open homosexuality' (2014, p.470). The visceral visual extremity of Bussotti's work in comparison to other contemporary examples of the graphic score – the New York School of Morton Feldman, John Cage, Earle Brown – already begins to tease out a concept of resistance, in this case, one of sexual identity within a conservative Italian cultural landscape. At once, Bussotti states that he 'does not exclude the outside world when composing' whilst describing his style is a 'mirror of myself', encompassing the awareness of a personal or cultural disjuncture, whilst also demonstrating the boldness of Piece Four (Bussotti in Vargas, 2011, pp.38-39). When considering the socio-political subject matter of power and liberalism, it is not surprising that Povinelli's *Symphony* is represented as a graphic score also: a musical text used for performance which prioritises indeterminacy, pictorialism, and/or abstraction, suffused with a heightening of the performer's agency (in lieu of the traditional composer-performer hierarchy).[1]

For this commentary, we are interested in how the musical *Symphony* appears from the standpoint of decolonial philosophy, exploring the crossover of these intertwined phenomena. This builds upon the initial work carried out through a workshop on 12 April 2023. Featuring discussants from the fields of anthropology, musicology, visual studies, Palestine studies, and decolonial

[1] In the traditional approach to musical performance, there is a high level of determinacy. The musical score strictly controls aspects such as rhythm, time, pitch, volume, etc. In graphic scores, some or all of this control is relegated to the performer who, in turn, creates these elements through a visual response to the image of the score. For an introduction to the graphic score and its relationship to music and visuality, see Metcalf, 2023, pp.193-204.

theory, the workshop attempted to unpack the *Symphony* in its most recent iteration (which added a Palestinian 'stanza').[2] We acknowledge that we lack the full interdisciplinary expertise to do justice to all nuances of Povinelli's symphonic image and, therefore, the purpose of this collaborative writing is to think about the tensions and counterpoints between universal concepts such as sovereignty, music and decolonial thought.

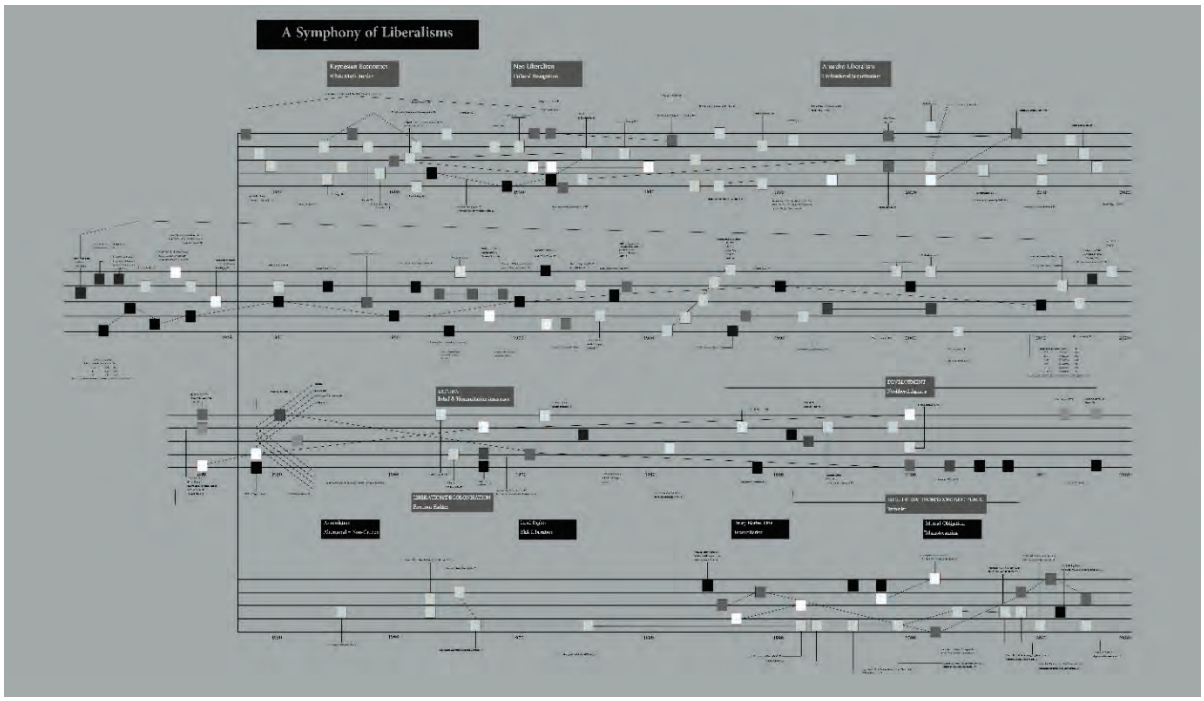

Image credit: Elizabeth Povinelli

We interpret the Symphony as a space for the articulation of post-sovereign utterance, as the voicing of the decolonial common that seeks to demonstrate the heterogenous gatherings of decolonial resistances in terms of musical performance that responds to the limit of settler-colonial worldmaking. In this context, if the sonic is understood by Elizabeth Povinelli as a performative site whereby the 'demos' (popular will) is pitted

[2] See 'Notation, Decolonial Resistance, and the Political Sovereignty of 'Late Liberalism'', *Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities*, 27 April 2023, https://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/news/notation-decolonial-resistance-and-political-sovereignty-'late-liberalism' and the accompanying programme: https://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/SM%20Workshop%20Programme.pdf

against the 'logos' (read here as carceral rationale of liberalist, capitalist ontology), does it suggest that revolutionary, decolonial thought is outside the vision of music, or could it be read as the limit of the *Symphony* itself owing to its grounding in global history as logocentric, and its existence as a texted (albeit malleable) form?[3] Talal Asad locates Anthropology's beginnings as a 'holistic discipline' in 'bourgeois society' and as such is 'rooted in that complex historical encounter between the West and the Third World which commenced about the 16th century' (Asad, 1975, p.101). Given Anthropology's roots in Orientalism ('othering' of the Arab and Islamic world at large) on the one hand and its construction of a racist image of the African tradition, on the other (as suggested by Asad), Anthropology from the standpoint of the colonized is an affliction marked by torture and genealogies of genocide. As decoloniality is an interruptive utterance contra traditional anthropology centred on the concept of 'sovereignty' (that pertaining to the act of governance and collective agency), how can the disruptive possibility of the decolonial appear as musical notation in the *Symphony?* How does the revolutionary praxis of the decolonial world (as a new sounding of geography and world-building) disrupt or upset the musical performance of ideas?

In *Geontologies* and interviews on the *Symphony*, very little information is offered as to the choice of the graphic score as means of conveying both musical and non-musical knowledge, and its role as performative text. Similarly, mentions of 'melody', 'consonance' and 'dissonance' are used in ways which subscribe to orthodox ideas of music deriving from the Western canon – as such, additional scrutiny would be useful. Further, what do the

[3] This is perhaps where the field of Sound Studies, rather than an historical musicology or analysis, may be better suited. The sounds of global protest and revolution have been discussed at length (see Tausig, 2019; Söylemez, 2022; Vik, 2023; López Lerma, 2022), amalgamated with neighbouring disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography. Povinelli's *Symphony* differs in its presentation as a 'texted' and therefore ontologically-fixed 'score', which places it within a codified system of operations related from composition, to performance, to reception.

arrangement of selected world events and the implied narrative mean when the *Symphony* is notated from the viewpoint of an abstracted, dispassionate pictorial grammar intended to instruct a performer? What is it about the formal ontology and textual design of the *Symphony* that can further the understanding that Povinelli poses on late liberalism and decoloniality?

Our aim in this brief chapter is not to provide definitive answers, but to provide provocations to enable further discourse on the intertwining of music, notation, and the processes of decoloniality.

How to read *A Symphony of Late Liberalism* as Music

Povinelli provides no instructions as to the how this work should be performed, with some interpretations existing online.[4] There is no instrumentation, nor number of players provided, tending towards what is known as 'open score' in music. To one familiar with the grammars of indeterminate, graphic notation, there are possible indicators as to how the work may be performed. As the x-axis is labelled with ascending years, it is strongly suggested that depicted events flow from left to right, in the same way one might read a traditional musical score or English-language text. The iconographic use of musical stave-lines, which denote the position of pitch elements, further suggests that the musical space exists in a standard up:high/down:low orientation – again, an orthodox approach. The use of uniform geometric symbols to denote global events within the discourse of a temporal x-axis similarly aligns with the use of noteheads on a normal score, i.e. positioning sonic events in a linear flow of time. As such, one could deduce that each of Povinelli's chosen global events corresponds to the sounding of pitches of uniform duration, since they are the same size throughout. A final consideration may concern the use of

[4] For example, Nicole Marchessau's *Variations on the Symphony of Late Liberalism* (2022) https://chenilletartar.com/2022/02/09/variations-on-the-symphony-of-late-liberalism-by-e-povinelli/

shading of these boxed events. By using colour, Povinelli implicitly suggests difference between events of varying colours, and similarity between those of the same colour. This could, hypothetically, represent the level of musical dynamic (volume) that each sonic event denotes (e.g., darkest = loudest; palest = quietest). This is one interpretation, which admittedly introduces binary associations, antithetical to the inspiration behind the work itself. However, it is important to consider how one would immediately confront performative challenges associated with the score, considering that it is has explicit ontology as an instructional text with no paratextual performative information. Its gesture towards abstraction and the rhizomatic multiplicity of Bussotti, Deleuze, and Guattari is hampered through the decision to introduce tertiary relationships of colour – a temptation of visual/structural design as much as a temptation of interpretation and reading.

In the *Symphony*, the division and control of time becomes difficult to manage due to the number of events present throughout, and at any one time. The lack of barring (the standard division of musical time and rhythmic groupings) further suggests a resistance to comprehending the *Symphony* as something distillable into a fixed grid of pitch and time, indeed echoing the overflowing of information in the construction of such a denoted decolonial global political landscape. In this sense, this score resonates with other experimental music of the twentieth century, for example John Cage's *Etudes Australes* (1974-75), which traces star maps onto manuscript paper, sometimes resulting in an impossible number of representable events in a fixed time space, and necessitating the use of appendices at the end of the score to elaborate on dense clusters of stars in greater detail.[5]

[5] Due to copyright, an excerpt of the score cannot be reproduced, but the authors wish to note that images of the score can be freely found online, with a complete performance with score listed on YouTube as of January 2024:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21siGmjyAfk

Both these works use 'real things' – global events versus stars – as generators of musical material. It could be seen as a relegation of the composer's own agency in creating a specific, fixed musical outcome; and therefore places a greater emphasis on the performer to best realise the notation due to the lack of a strict authorial control: this concept forms the basis of indeterminacy in music. However, in the case of the *Symphony*, we must acknowledge that this is not an objective rendering of the real world, but a reading from an anthropological, decolonial standpoint: the *selection* of elements that resonate with concepts of resistance in the context of a (late) liberal, capitalist framework dominated by the West. The fusing of indeterminacy as graphic notation with these concepts positions this score as inherently political, aiming to articulate a seemingly incomprehensible global discourse in a detached, yet pointed, way.

Fused Readings

By using musical notation as the articulation of sound in the anthropological sense, Elizabeth Povinelli brings two distinct and yet controlled universal visions together, woven into a combined textual form. The historic discipline and discourse of music[6] (its composition, performance, and reception) offers a mostly structuralist, consolidated vision of the episteme, with strict codes and adherence to classical formulae in the western canon with limited roles of transgression. Traditional approaches to the discipline of anthropology arise from mastery of knowledge *of* the people, centrally positioning the gaze on the body of the other (primarily the colonised). The social, performative element within the mastery of these two distinct yet overlapping knowledge procedures, seen as emblematic of Walter Benjamin's 'continuum of history' (1968, p.261), marks the production of ideology with a

[6] The texted form and semantics of the *Symphony* place its discourse within so-called 'art music', also commonly known as 'classical music', and as such the commentary offered here focusses mostly on this area, rather than popular or media music.

display of conquest, both of bodies and minds, whose dissemination was to be seen as universal.[7] Anthropology as a discipline has colonial beginnings and as such its rendering and interpretation to explain variegated anti-colonial resistances graphically or musically is further complicated by the fact that its philosophy and methods are bound by the colonial telos it seeks to erase. By the middle of the twentieth century, when colonised and subjugated people began to study their 'masters' well, the emergence of formerly-closed knowledge opens up Benjamin's revolutionary 'open air of history' (ibid.) into the philosophies of liberation, its preparation long imagined and thought almost everywhere simultaneously and vigorously.

Musically, the mid-twentieth century denotes the beginnings of the graphic score tradition, often attributed to Morton Feldman's *Projection I* (1950), but it should be noted that this was a response to highly visual and artistic concerns relating to music's relationship with abstract expressionism in the USA (see Cline, 2016, p.28) – and such, diverges from the socio-political aspects of resistance in the anthropological sense, nonetheless acting as a form of iconoclastic subversion which lays the ground work for the co-opting of these forms to political ends, [8] as seen through Bussotti's 'Piece Four' discussed earlier. Indeed, the shifting praxis of art music in this period to indeterminacy, improvisation, and the emergence of an experimental music movement allows for the barriers of entry to be re-written, as was the case with the emergence of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians in 1965 in Chicago. This group carved out a space for Black artists traditionally excluded from the realms of art music, with one prominent member, George Lewis, becoming one of the best-known composers, improvisers, and scholars today.[9] Both

[7] Indeed, this was suggested by Dr Morag Grant in her contribution to our workshop, noting how homophony (melody and accompaniment) developed in tandem with the displacements of peoples and the advent of heightened colonialism by Western civilisations.

[8] See Metcalf, 2023.

[9] See, for example, Lewis's seminal documentation of the AACM (2007).

strands, political and musical, hold the similarity of using the dominant power structures to subvert and disrupt the status quo, whether through physical revolution or through aesthetic hybridisation. In this light, we can see the enactment of Houston Baker's concept of the 'deformation of mastery', used in his work on the Harlem Renaissance (1987).[10] Lewis has tackled this concept directly through his composition, *The Deformation of Mastery* (2022), stating in an interview that 'you distinguish, you don't conceal' (Lewis, 2022a), and suggesting that the work's aim is to 'remind its hearers of our endemic condition of instability, fostering not only a subliminal psychological discouragement of complacency, but also a celebration of mobility' (Lewis, 2022b, p.8).

The form of Povinelli's Symphony as resisting a fixed, standardised reading (both in terms of its flexibility of form, and the emergent potential to add new stanzas in or remove them) is based upon its insistence on distinguishing each selected event and attributing it equal importance with the others – in this sense, concealment is not possible. The Symphony breaks down political hierarchies through the form of the graphic score, suggesting a flattened ontology resemblant of Deleuze and Guattari in *Mille Plateaux*. This is a deformation of mastery in relation to the articulation of decolonial anthropological thought, achieved through the graphic form.

Counterpoint

In reading the *Symphony*, we highlight the interpretive tool of 'contrapuntality' as envisaged by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism.* For Said, contrapuntal thought brings 'overlapping histories ... the spheres, the sites of intensity' of metropolitan or

[10] Baker's work has been used in the context of rap music, notably in his own *Black Studies, Rap, and the Academy* (1993) and more recently in a European context in J. Griffith Rollefson's *Flip the Script: European Hip Hop and the Politics of Postcoloniality*, particularly Chapter 7, '"Wherever We Go": UK Hip Hop and the Deformation of Mastery'.

colonial history and the political and cultural resistance of the colonised into play (1993, p.19). Contrapuntality semantically links to the concept of counterpoint, a notion fundamental to Western functional harmony which dominates art music and its discourse from at least the thirteenth century. It refers to the movement of one musical line, the 'point', against another, the 'counterpoint'. As Said suggests, musical counterpoint is about bringing together, overlapping, layering, etc. in order to make a product greater than the sum of its parts, as demonstrated in the archetype of J. S. Bach's *Preludes* and *Fugues* (1722; 1742), for example. Povinelli's *Symphony* is, in its visual design, strongly contrapuntal, carefully positioning elements in relation to one another: point vs. counterpoint (further suggested by the initial single stanza before all four sound together).

Localised narratives of decolonial resistance are added to the *Symphony*, e.g. the recent Palestinian stanza, while the liberal difference of governance and market appears as a hegemonic and accepted reality across the spatial and temporal frames, i.e. positioned along the x-axis of time. By the merging of anthropological and musical thought, these objective events become 'interruptions' in the Symphony's fixed temporal space. In other words, the articulation and compounding of resistance – its iterative inclusion into the Symphony's meta-narrative – complicates the counterpoint, making it more unwieldy for any performer in having to represent these events as sounds in an unrelenting, fixed timeline. It thusly articulates the limits of a universalised temporal scale, which is also bound to historic and linear concepts of 'progress' (often interpreted in a colonialist, technocratic, or capitalist manner). There is nothing to stop further stanzas being added to the Symphony, and indeed this is encouraged; there exist previous editions with three, rather than four. It poignantly suggests the innate temptation of reading left to right, of accepting the standardized interpretations of time itself, but is complicated when acknowledging the plurality of decolonial resistance that becomes entangled in articulating any

globalised history of the dominant liberal system. This is where Raja Kahlidi suggests that Palestinian resistance is difficult to contain in the Symphony owing to its historical contingency and determination of the Palestinians not to accept the sovereignty of the late neoliberal order. If the Symphony shifts its gaze from the universal grammar of sovereignty to the more specific notion of settler colonialism, global capital and the specificity of Palestinian resistance, then it becomes legible. Simultaneously, the afterlives of the temporal sounding of the 1960s from Vietnam, Algeria, Black America, Africa, South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Palestine, etc., lives on in the anterior of the indistinct as 'anthropology of the name', to use Sylvain Lazarus' concept (1996 [2015]). As a counterpoint, these indistinct anthropologies of resistance seem to exceed and overwhelm the scale of the universal from the standpoint of decoloniality, mirrored as performative challenges in the *Symphony*.

If we look at the Palestine Stanza in the *Symphony* from the standpoint of Palestinian history and revolutionary thought, the musical rendering of settler colonial structure is brought into crisis as Palestinian resistance is seen to be interrupting its formal ontology. As Palestinian historian and critic Fawaz Turki notes in the context of Palestinian desire, the dissonance between universal sensibility and the Palestinian imagination is 'unbridgeable', not because of the radical procedures of meaning, but because the semantics of Palestinian context are 'irreducibly Palestinian, irreducibly eccentric to our own pictorial and tonal anticipations of the future, to our cumulative impressions of the present, to our stylized dossiers of the past' (Turki, 1981, p.383). In this light, the idea of adding up stanzas may not clarify the distinctive senses of the variegated decolonial histories, but yet ironically point attention to this very fact through its rhizomatically-inflected origins and existence as performative text.

Palestinian, Black, and other insurgent cultures, such as indigenous liberation practices in Australia, Canada, the United

States and elsewhere have disseminated themselves as visions, texts, strategies, forms, and structures quietly yet forcefully into the bodies and minds of people across the geographical frontiers of the Earth. Not only were the nature and contexts of these struggles one step outside established sovereignty, they were also intertwined in many ways. Take for instance, the formation of Dalit Panthers in India, or the poetry and intellectual imaginaries of the Palestinian resistance in South Asia and Africa at large. The works of Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Ghassan Kanafani, Mahmoud Darwish, Kwame Ture, Edward Said, Eqbal Ahmed, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Audre Lorde and Angela Davis still resonate as 'transcoding'[11] the past into the living present, breaking the frontiers of sovereignty - seen recently in the renewed work of decolonial internationalism after the death of George Floyd in 2020.[12] Conversely, the shifts from late liberalism to 'late fascism'[13] as the ethno-nationalist construction of religion, race, and capital brings Israeli Zionism and what Amit Singh describes as the emergence of India's 'Nazi conscience' of Hindus[14] together as counter-revolutionary philosophies paradoxically.

A work departing from the conventional narrative and fetishization of white revolution, Jean Genet's *Prisoner of Love*, contains a rupture where Palestinian philosophies of resistance and the Black Panthers' unfinished knowledge of insubordination[15] are narrated through musical analogy. Genet, a white queer man, writes that Palestinians and Black Panthers were great composers that let him 'hear a song that has always been shut up silent'

[11] The word 'transcoding' first appears in the writing of the historian M.S.S. Pandian in the context of modernity in India, where the upper caste uses coded vocabularies and caste habits to align their caste practices with modernism. Conversely, 'transcoding' can denote solidarities of the colonized and racialized as an international practice of resistance to sovereignty. See Pandian, 2002.

[12] See Johnson and Lubin, 2017, and Erakat, 2020.

[13] See Toscano, 2023.

[14] See A. Singh, 2023.

[15] See Bryan and Williams, 2016.

within him (Genet, 1986, p.47). Resistance to sovereignty also produced spaces of intersectionality where an outcast writer like Jean Genet gets affectively pulled into the revolutionary poetics of Palestine and Black radicalism. Events in themselves produce their own sonic gestures and it is difficult to synthesize them into a universal, formalised logic.[16] Genet goes on to suggest that the tonal impacts of resistance of the Palestinian *fedayeen* in the underground affect him as a European body laden with the 'tapeworm' of 'Judeo-Christian morality' (ibid., p.52). The radicality of Black Panthers and the Palestinian revolution initiated another perception of the world, described as a musical experience, and inspired figures like Genet to abandon the logos of the imperial world.

That's what a composition, or a de-composition, may look like from a decolonial point of view. The metaphorical 'unleashing' of 'silent songs' writ large has not only allowed the formation of radical communities to take indistinct form in themselves through historic and international solidarities, but has also insinuated its philosophy into the works of writers and critics of empire who wanted to break free from the penal grammar of sovereignty. We may argue that in this sense, the composer of the *Symphony* becomes similarly indistinct, or silent, not only through the curation of real historical events (rather than constructing abstract organic material), but in the delegation of nearly all musical and interpretive choices to a performer. There is a paradox in that it is this distance that becomes fundamentally important in the propensity to create a space to explore decolonial resistances in a novel and poignant way through sound as a result of the *Symphony*. Povinelli *shows* us the overlapping contrapuntal events, but it is not until the moment of realisation *as sound* that we can have a physical, sonic experience of what these resistances can mean. Whilst in no way comparable to the

[16] Indeed, different forms and ontologies of sound have found their own classifications. Take for example, the concept of the 'belliphonic' suggested by J. Martin Daughtry (2015) to suggest all those sounds associated with war (both domestically and abroad).

real-world events themselves, the textual design creates an emergent energy that invites the listener to hear a multiplicitous global counterpoint of resistance, experienced through the vibrations in the air to our bodies, changing time after time.

Conclusion

> **Elizabeth Povinelli:** I chose this graphic form to indicate that there is something about the movement of power and its formations that is not equivalent to logos and its formations, that is to reason, explanation, propositionality, concept, and rhetoric in a linguistic sense. I was thinking about the sonic as one of the conditions and rebellions of the demos against logos.
>
> **Raja Khalidi:** Do you hear it when you look at it?
>
> **Povinelli:** Yeah, I hear it. I have never had it played and I think it would sound less than melodious but that is my point. The sonic force of governance does not correspond to the rationale of logos. But the second thing is that the top bar, in the way in which I conceptualize the Symphony, is not static: the top bar is written from the bottom bar's perspective.
>
> (Khalidi, Povinelli and Ziherl, 2016)

The graphic score, and musical indeterminacy more generally, can be a useful tool to articulate concepts of decoloniality due to their resistance against traditional logocentric models of knowledge. The truest exploration, however, could be said to be in improvisatory, text-less practices, to fully embrace the non-linear

aspects of thought, and embrace the phonocentrism that can transcend language and grammar, thus giving the best possible chance of resisting dominant power structures, such as late-stage liberalist capitalism.[17] It is the temptation of temporality that will naturally affect all texted forms, both written and sonic, in our conditioning by a dominating Western culture to see, hear, and read in a certain way. Povinelli's choice of a temporal graphic structure, the timeline, has its own colonial origins. For example, the work of eighteenth-century British scientist Joseph Priestley, *A New Chart of History* (1769), shows a self-proclaimed 'universal history' of 'all nations' (1797, p.6). Further, the practice of charting an expanding empire in post-revolution America for nationalist world-building can be seen in the work of David Ramsay (c.1815).[18]

As noted, however, this temptation can be exploited in a kind of deformation of mastery, using these assumptions to critique and extend knowledge structures. The *Symphony*, as graphic score suffused with historic global events, asks *us* to create its sound (whether in our heads, known as 'audiation',[19] or practically performed), not just interpret it. Its pictoriality and its form resonates with W.J,T. Mitchell's rhetorical question, 'what does the picture lack; what does it leave out? [...] what does it need or demand from the beholder to complete its work?' (2005, p.49–50).

How does it sound? Does it sound as it looks, and does this matter? Unless taking a geometric approach to the division of space (as was offered by Metcalf in the workshop),[20] it will be difficult to truly create a total correspondence due to its

[17] For an exploration of an alternative ontology and dialectic of material sound, see McEnaney, 2019.

[18] A comprehensive study on the concept of the timeline can be found in Rosenberg and Grafton, 2013.

[19] See Gordon, 1999.

[20] See 'Geometric Transcription' at https://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/news/notation-decolonial-resistance-and-political-sovereignty-'late-liberalism'

complexity, unless changing its textual form from graphic score to traditional staff notation. It will lack any ordered sense of tonal, harmonic, or rhythmic structure. It may sound to the general listener as 'noise' (Povinelli's 'less than melodious'), since it does not correspond with the culturally dominant understanding of music as 'beautiful' or 'harmonious' (concepts cemented through the qualities of highly canonised musical works in the West, themselves rooted in religious, colonial, and subsequently capitalist narratives). Christoph Cox notes that:

> Noise is not simply negative, an entropic force of destruction, disorder, and so on; it is positive and productive as well. In [Jacques] Attali's sense, 'noise' expresses the tendency of any system toward deterritorialization and decoding, opening it up to the reservoir of possibilities that overflows any given form.
>
> (2018, p.46)

This is precisely what is at stake in Povinelli's *Symphony*, and in the potential of graphic scores to articulate new forms of decolonial sonic expression, invoking the deterritorialization of Deleuze and Guattari, which influenced Povinelli's initial conception of the work. Said shows synergy with this concept, possibly suggesting that contrapuntal overlapping ultimately becomes Attali's 'overflowing' of the fixed boundary of form and structure: '[t]he difficulty with theories of essentialism and exclusiveness, or with barriers and sides, is that they give rise to polarizations that absolve and forgive ignorance and demagogy more than they enable knowledge' (Said, 1993, p.35). As a multidisciplinary epistemological tool in itself, the *Symphony*'s form as variable, ever-changing, and selective provides linkages with the comparing of decolonial variables (e.g. the relationship between two countries and people, or three, or four etc.). As such,

the sounding of the totality of contrapuntal events, and their individual interpretations, can elucidate further understandings of tensions in the late liberal age.

Performances of the *Symphony* will be influenced by the performer's own biases, history, and values, thus generating a further layer of interpretation (and indeterminacy) within the music of the *Symphony*, taking the focus back to musical analyses with respect to the score in order to compare, contrast, and derive meaning. Interpretations will oscillate, ever-changing, and provide further layers of interdisciplinary discourse as to the role of the images and music in highlighting concepts of decolonial tension in the febrile global politics of history and the present, stimulated by the temptations of temporal sonic and textual forms.

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ERIKA DE VIVO

Vačče go guvlui / Walk this way: Linguistic activism at Márkomeannu Sámi festival

> Ii leat beare dat ahte sámegiella galgá leat vuosttaš mainna min festiválaguossit deaivvadit, muhto midjiide lea maiddá dehálaš ahte sis guđet ráhkadit Márkomeannu galgá leat sámegiella okta sin bargogielain. Jus sámegielas galgá leat makkárge vejolašvuohta birget boahtteáiggis, fertet mii álgit iežaineamet. / Ikke bare vil vi at samisk skal være det første våre festivalgjester møter, men for oss er det også viktig at de som lager Márkomeannu har samisk som ett av sine arbeidsspråk. Skal samisk som språk ha noen sjanse i fremtiden, må vi starte med oss selv[1].
>
> (Markomeannu, 2017)

Introduction

Driving along the E10 from Bjerkvik towards Harstad, people encounter stunning scenery: bays, beaches, lakes, streams, woods,

[1] "Not only do we want Sámi to be the first thing our festival guests encounter, but for us it is also important that those who make Márkomeannu have Sámi as one of their working languages. If Sámi as a language is to have any chance in the future, we must start with ourselves" (original text first in North Sámi and then in Norwegian. Translation from Norwegian by the author).

colourful little boathouses and small cabins. Majestic mountains tower over the Ofotfjord, their peaks covered with snow all year round. Thousands of tourists travel through this area each year, most of them heading either to the celebrated nearby Lofoten archipelago or to the North Cape, the northernmost point of mainland Europe. Along the road at bus stops, public noticeboards and café posters advertise local events. Most tourists pay little if any attention to these announcements, focused as they are on reaching their destination. On the way, some stop at a small open-air farm museum called Gállogieddi. Tucked away some 300 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle, Gállogieddi lies in Norland, a few hundred metres from the Norland-Troms border, and a few kilometres from the Norwegian-Swedish one. The museum, open only in summer, offers glimpses into locals' way of life when the farm was still operating[2]. The complex comprises the old main house, a barn, a storage room, a well, other small outhouses, and a reconstructed goahti (turf hut) and lavvo (tent). Period objects collected throughout the region enrich the museum, documenting the old ways. On a few days in late July, foreign tourists discover that the museum is closed only when they reach its fully occupied parking lot along the main road, finding the usually-quiet area bustling with life: young people wearing colorful gakti (Sámi dress) rush to and fro; heavy equipment is carried up and down the hill on all-terrain-vehicle trailers; dozens of tents dot the uphill fields. From there, chatting and singing resonate across the area. The noticeboard next to the parking lot exhibits posters of the museum and its cultural trail. For some days prior to and during the closure of the museum, an additional poster is pinned on the board. This is the same poster exhibited along the road and in local public places and often unnoticed by tourists.

Those tourists who decide to walk up the hill to find out what is happening on the museum premises come across hand-made

[2] This institution, founded in 1992 by members of the local Sámi association Iinná ja Biras Sámiid Searvi, was established to document and transmit to younger generations the local Sámi culture and its farming dimension.

wooden signs which are not usually there. To most of them, some of the terms painted on the signs appear completely unintelligible as they are entirely different from all the words they have encountered so far. These signs though usually carry additional text in Norwegian or English or both. The first sign visitors meet reads:

VEAHKAGOHTTEN SADJI

FAMILY CAMP

BE QUIET

ORO JASKA

Close by, along the uphill trail, a directional sign says only in English: FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY DO NOT WALK THIS WAY. Beside it, a small right-facing arrow says “CAMP” and a larger board bears the letters MM and an arrow pointing in the same direction. A few meters further on a simple fountain hand-made with a hose and tap is indicated by a blue-painted wooden plaque. On it, in bright yellow, are written the words:

ČAHCI

VANN[3]

Proceeding along the path, visitors and tourists come across a small marquee where people queue for tickets. Next to it, a wood-pile stands next to yet another wooden sign reading:

BOALDINMUORAT

FIRE WOOD

Proceeding along the trail to the museum, people encounter a growing number of these multilingual signposts. Among them, next to a fenced field covered with camping tents, a sign signals the entrance to the main camping site with the words:

GOHTTENSADJI

[3] *Čahci* is North-Sámi for water, and *vann* is its Norwegian equivalent.

FESTIVALCAMP

The festival hinted at is the same one advertised by the poster on the board by the road: Márkomeannu. People from all over Sápmi have gathered at Gállogieddi since 2002 to attend this local Márku-Sámi festival, held annually at the end of July. For the period of the festival, the museum area hosts celebrations, performances, concerts, a market fair, workshops for children, a temporary library, and a fully operational kitchen. The permanent festival's stage, built in 2010 at the edges of Gállogieddi, becomes the focal point of the whole event. Water fountains, the kitchen, the staff's area, the camping sites, the library, the waste-sorting stations, the toilets, and all other significant elements are signalled by hand-written wooden signs. The words on these signs are in Norwegian, North-Sámi and its local variety, and in English. For foreigners and most Norwegians alike, the Sámi terms are strange-sounding words. For the Sámi who attend the festival though, these words are acts of linguistic activism and cultural pride. Planted in the environment through these plaques, Sámi words become part of the local linguistic landscape.

First delineated by Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.23), linguistic landscape refers to the 'visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region.' A place's linguistic landscape conveys ideas and notions about local language ideologies but also cultural and linguistic belonging (Coupland and Garret, 2010). To grasp the relevance of a multilingual sign, it is essential to contextualise it by considering the region's socio-cultural history and the language ecologies. In this chapter, based on data gathered during fieldwork between 2018 and 2023, Márkomeannu's linguistic landscape is addressed through the lenses of cultural anthropology and Indigenous methodologies. While I acknowledge that letter style, spacing, colour, and shapes play an important role in conveying information, in this contribution I shall address their symbolic function rather than their design.

Fig. 1. Multilingual directional sign. Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

Sápmi, a historical overview

Gállogieddi is located in Northern-Norland (Norway) but it is also part of Sápmi, the ancestral territories of the only recognised Indigenous people of continental Europe: the Sámi (Kuokkanen, 2006). The centuries-long colonisation of Sápmi divided the Sámi peoples through the imposition of colonial national borders. Today Sápmi is partitioned among Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sámi are a minority in all of these states even though, in a few areas, they constitute the majority of the local population (Henriksen, 2008; Lantto, 2010).

Sámi communities have undergone distinct historical trajectories based on the state in which they reside. Nevertheless, they shared similar experiences marked by colonial oppression and subjugation. Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries,

ecclesiastical authorities attempted to eradicate Indigenous worldviews and rituals, to the extent that some Sámi ritual specialists were prosecuted and executed for practising their craft. Ritual objects were confiscated and either destroyed or shipped away while sacred sites, when located by missionaries, were desecrated or completely shattered (Hagen, 2014). Sámi individuals were subjected to taxation, at times from more than one state. The institution of state borders represented a hindrance to the mobility of those Sámi engaged in reindeer herding. In 1761, the Kingdoms of Denmark-Norway and Sweden (then including Finland) signed the Lapp Codicil, allowing Sámi and their herds the right to cross the border unimpeded and exempting Sámi men from military service. Acknowledging Sámi neutrality, the Codicil implicitly recognised the Sámi as a separate people (Karppi, 2001). Since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars gradually racialised the Sámi, depicting them as culturally and even biologically inferior (Kyllinstad, 2012). The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries witnessed further manifestations of colonisation: the imposition of the hegemonic language upon Sámi-speaking communities[4] when dealing with authorities, compulsory education conducted in hegemonic languages with Sámi languages banned in schools (Minton, 2016), the imposition of hegemonic-language surnames (Lehtola, 2015), erosion of Indigenous authority, exploitation of local natural resources (Ojala and Nordin, 2015), and toponymic subjugation and substitution (Helander, 2014). Enforced assimilation eroded Indigenous Sámi

[4] The Sámi languages belong to the Finno-Ugric language family, and are spoken across a wide transnational area ranging from the Eastern Kola Peninsula and north-/ central-Finland to southern Norway/central Sweden. They constitute a language continuum characterized by gradual linguistic variations between distinct but mutually intelligible language groups. Differences in lifestyle, worldviews and subsistence activities can be identified along this cultural-linguistic continuum. National borders are transversal to Sámi cultural-linguistic areas, a fact that played a major role in the colonial fragmentation of Sámi cultures (Lantto 2010). Linguists have identified ten different Sámi languages (each encompassing various dialects) divided into four groups: Western Sámi languages (divided into Southern Sámi and Ume Sámi), North-western Sámi Languages, (comprising Pite and Lule Sámi), Northern Sámi (which includes Duortnus, Finnmarku, and Sea Sámi), and Eastern Sámi languages (mainland Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi, peninsular Kildin and Ter Sámi). The eastern Sámi languages Kemi, Akkala, and Kainuu are recorded in historical documents but are currently considered extinct (Kejonen, 2020).

languages leading to a dramatic language shift from local Sámi languages to the local hegemonic one, resulting, in some areas, in a nearly-complete language loss. Local language ecologies, i.e. the social, cultural and ecological factors in which a language was situated, shaped different experiences of language shift (Grenoble and Osipov, 2023). State-led assimilation policies (in Norway known as fornorsking, or norwegianisation) had influenced individual linguistic ideologies shaping language attitudes at the community, family, and individual levels throughout Sápmi. While Sámi languages were constantly denigrated, state languages increasingly acquired social prestige in a growing number of social domains, putting pressure on Sámi speakers to adopt the hegemonic language as their main one. Many in Sámi communities chose to shy away from their heritage and their ancestors' language, relegating them to the privacy of their inner circles[5]. Some even chose not to socialise their children in their mother tongue, hoping to shield them from the stigma and discrimination they had endured as Sámi. In some instances, ethnic affiliation became such a closely guarded secret that many belonging to the younger generations only discovered their family's ethnic background later in life—if they learned of it at all. Given the specificities of each district, each village, and each family, generalisations are to be avoided as they erase individual and collective experiences and context-dependent histories.

[5] Today, Norway recognizes two forms of written Norwegian language: Bokmål and Nynorsk. The history of written Norwegian begins long before Norway became an independent country in 1905. Denmark's position of power towards Norway during the time of the Kalmar union (late fourteenth-early sixteenth centuries) and afterwards led to the development of a Norwegian language heavily influenced by Danish. During the early nineteenth century, Norway sought to establish a distinct national identity, and embarked on a process of nation-building shaped by national romanticism. This sparked a quest for a Norwegian identity and language free from Danish influence. A distinct national written language was considered essential for asserting national independence and sovereignty. In this context, linguist Ivar Aasen documented and formalized rural Norwegian dialects, in an effort to preserve them. He regarded Danish-influenced urban and literary forms of Norwegian as not representative of the language spoken by the majority of Norwegians, while he considered rural dialects as expressions of Norwegian identity. Aasen used these dialects as the foundation for creating a standardized written language. His efforts culminated in the creation of "Landmål", which later evolved into "Nynorsk". Bokmål, today the most widely used form of Norwegian, developed from Danish through a gradual process of Norwegianisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through a series of language reforms aimed at adapting the Danish-based written form to Norwegian speech.

Nevertheless, given the fact that the harsh, transversal assimilation policies they had to endure were very similar, most Sámi communities across Sápmi partook of a shared history marked by intergenerational trauma (on intergenerational trauma in Sápmi, see Ossbo, 2021; Fjellgren and Huss, 2019; Magnani and Magnani, 2022).

Despite pervasive colonial oppression, Sámi cultures and languages survived in numerous communities and, within pockets of language users, Sámi was the language of daily life. For decades though, in many contexts only part of the respective communities recognised Sámi ethnic and linguistic identity as their own. Conflicting attitudes toward Sámi languages and cultures originated from the harsh assimilation policies which planted in many people the seed of internalised shame of their ancestors' culture.

A changing language ecology in the Márku

In the Márku (Stuornjárga peninsula[6], Norwegian side of Sápmi), these dynamics led some families to reject their Sámi heritage and embrace a new Norwegian identity while others maintained the Sámi language and culture in their domestic life. Scholars identified the early 1940s as a chronological turning point regarding local language attitudes. While World War II was raging across Europe – affecting significantly Northern Norway and the areas around Narvik, close to the Márku – many Márku-Sámi consciously chose to refrain from using the local Duortnus/Torne variety of North Sámi[7] in public. While older generations continued to use Sámi among themselves, many Sámi-speaking parents opted to use Norwegian when interacting with their children. Aware of the social stigma associated with Sámi identity at the

[6] Stuornjárga (meaning "big peninsula" in North Sámi) is the name of a peninsula situated between the Ofotfjord and Astafjorden, spanning the Troms and Nordland counties. The Márku- Sámi geo-cultural area is located in the inland Stuornjárga.

[7] Márku-Sámi belongs to the Čohkkiras Sámi variety of Duortnus-/Torne-Sámi language (itself a variety of Davvisámegiella/North-Sámi) (Kejonen, 2020).

time, they decided to raise them in the dominant language. This linguistic choice interrupted the intergenerational transmission of the local Sámi language[8], making Norwegian the mother tongue of the next Márku-Sámi generation, and leading to a language shift in the community. Although the post-war generation was not socialised in Sámi, it grew up overhearing elder relatives speaking this "secret" language. Many acquired passive knowledge of Márku-Sámi. What many refer to as "kitchen Sámi"[9] — an idiom strictly tied to the domestic and private sphere — became, for many born during and after WWII, the "language of the heart," and the language of their childhood memories. (author's fieldnotes, 2019-2020).

In Norway during the 1970s and early 1980s, the political climate regarding Sámi issues was slowly changing, with awareness being raised about Sámi peoples' rights. Protests against the damming of the Alta river in central Finnmark – with all the ramifications such an infrastructure would imply – led to renewed interest, at national and international levels, in the Sámi's conditions (Nykänen, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Stuornjárga, some of the members of the post-war generation returned to the Márku after attending university and worked to raise the status of local Sámi language and culture. Among them, in 1986 two sisters trained as teachers decided to establish a Sámi-speaking day nursery they named Sáráhká Sámemánák (the Sámi children of Sáráhkká, a Sámi non-Christian goddess). The kindergarten functioned as a language nest where young children were surrounded by, and interacted with, Sámi language (Grenersen, 2009). Thanks to their efforts, the local

[8] In sociolinguistics, the intergenerational transmission of a language is regarded as the most essential factor in determining the vitality of a language (UNESCO, 2003).

[9] The expression "kitchen Sámi" can be traced back to the expression "kitchen language" used in socio-cultural linguistics to refer to a language that, in a context of language shift, is no longer used in public contexts but has retreated to domestic domains (Wertheim 2009). The domestic dimension of such languages is embedded in the word "kitchen", which potentially carries a duplicity of meanings. It can simultaneously refer to a devaluation of the language, relegated to a humble sphere, but also to a positive affective dimension of the language connected with the domestic dimension (Graber, 2017).

school also included Sámi as a curricular subject, aiming to familiarise school-age children who opted for this course with their heritage. The sisters' own children were among the first kids in the Márku to enrol in these language programmes (author's fieldnotes, 2021).

Márku-Sámi children in the 1970s and 1980s were able to grow up in a cultural context where, despite some resistance, positive attitudes towards Sámi culture were becoming more accepted (Skåden 2020), as the establishment of Gállogieddi museum demonstrates (see Finbog, 2013). By the late 1990s, some of those who had access to education in Sámi, now in their late teens and early twenties and attending university, engaged in activities which can be considered instances of activism. In 1999, they established the local Sámi youth association Stuornjárga Sámenuorak (the Sámi youth association of Stuornjárga). Márkomeannu festival, one of their many initiatives,[10] became a lasting element in the cultural life of this part of Sápmi. The festival, also established in 1999,[11] focused on the celebration of the long-denigrated local Márku-Sámi culture, as revealed by its programmatic name. A compound noun, Márkomeannu consists of two North-Sámi terms: Márku refers to the region and its culture while Meannu means "noise", "party", "riot", or "scene". Márkomeannu can then be translated as "Party (or Riot) in the Márku" (author's fieldnotes 2019, see also https://www.Márkomeannu.no/). As the festival's name suggests, activism in its multiple manifestations has been a central feature of Márkomeannu since its inception. This is not surprising since, in the words of one of its founders, those who established Márkomeannu were "children of activists" (Emma Skåden, Márkomeannu opening, author's fieldnotes, 2019) who had fought

[10] Before founding SSN and Márkomeannu, some SNN members had arranged casual get-togethers: intimate gatherings among friends and family and/or fundraising events for charitable purposes. As a deliberate act of provocation, they even organized a fake festival, going so far as to invite journalists from neighbouring towns (author's fieldnotes, May 2019).

[11] Márkomeannu was first held near the local airport before being moved to its current location in 2002.

to revive the Márku language and culture and to bestow them with social prestige.

When the festival was inaugurated, the Márku articulation of Sámi identity was still stigmatised by Norwegians living along the coasts of the peninsula and those with a Sámi heritage who chose to identify as Norwegian. At the same time, the wider Sámi community had looked down at Márku culture as "not Sámi enough". As Márku-Sámi author and cultural activist Sigbjørn Skåden, who was also among the festival founders, explains, Márku-Sámi culture had long been excluded from the Sámi public sphere (2020, p.52). The reasons behind intra-ethnic stigma can be traced back to Márku-Sámi culture itself. Historically Márku-Sámi way of life was based on small-scale farming rather than reindeer herding (Storm, 1993), an economic activity that, through processes of cultural essentialisation, had long been regarded as the quintessential Sámi way of life (Mathisen, 2004). Even within the local community, Sámi identity was often considered as something negative and many families either actively hid their background or denied their ethnic affiliation (Skåden, 2020). It is against this backdrop that Márkomeannu developed as a festival and as a site of activism.

Cultures to be celebrated: Sámi festivals as sites of Indigenous efflorescence

Throughout the years, Márkomeannu has become an integral part of contemporary Márku-Sámi culture while bearing relevance for Sápmi as a whole. In celebrating local and long-stigmatised identities, Márkomeannu's history resonates with other Sámi festivals, such as Riddu Riđđu (Pedersen and Viken, 2009). Festivals in Sápmi have proved useful in counteracting some of the long-term consequences of colonisation, becoming crucial

venues of cultural revitalisation and pride[12]. Sámi festivals[13] are deeply connected with heritage, but they do not simply uphold traditional customs: they serve as platforms for the discussion, updating, adjustment, and negotiation of traditions in accordance with new cultural trends (see Skogvang, 2016; Pedersen and Viken, 2016; De Vivo, 2024). Consequently, festivals enable younger generations, their primary target audience, to identify with and connect to contemporary and nuanced Sámi ways of life. This, in turn, contributes to the preservation and transmission of (reinvented) local knowledge and traditions, making Sámi festivals centres of cultural creativity while promoting a favourable attitude towards the local gákti (Sámi garments), duodji (Sámi craft), and local Sámi languages (Skogvand, 2016). They also have a political dimension in conveying particular meanings through their artistic presentations and the stances they endorse. Sámi festivals, like other Indigenous festivals, are also political because their very existence challenges the established order. They create safe social spaces where individuals can meet, engage, and contest prevailing ideologies, ultimately paving the way for pragmatic changes (Picard and Robinson, 2016). As platforms for cultural creativity and socio-political transformation, festivals can play a pivotal role in empowering communities. Those with a Sámi profile have emerged as unique spaces where Sámi individuals and communities can exercise their agency, serving as platforms where decolonial practices are carried out. In doing so, they play a vital role in affirming the identity of marginalised communities (Frost, 2016).

As exemplified by Márkomeannu, Sámi festivals do not occur in a cultural vacuum; they rely on the collaboration of activists,

[12] The Sámediggi (the Norwegian Sámi parliament) acknowledges the festivals' role as important actors and collaborators in the development of Sámi art and culture (Sámediggi 2023).

[13] Besides the long-standing Jåhkåmåhke Márnána/Jokkmokks Marknad (dating back to 1605) and festivals such Påskefestivalen (Kárášjoga), Sámi beassášmárkaniidda (Guovdageaidnu) or Vuonnamárkanat (Unjárga) commemorating ancient market fairs, most Sámi festivals are relatively recent institutions established in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

grassroots associations, cultural institutions, and personal-community networks within complex contexts where various, often conflicting, dynamics come into play. Sámi festivals are closely intertwined with, and form an integral part of, a growing inclination within Sámi communities to preserve and promote their culture. This virtuous cycle not only enhances the visibility of Sámi cultures but also serves as a testament to the enduring strength of Sámi cultural and ethnolinguistic vitality despite the oppression endured. For these reasons, contemporary Sámi festivals are sites of Indigenous creativity, epitomising a process which Roche, Maruyama and Kroik (2018) define as 'Indigenous efflorescence'. Efflorescence, a concept deriving from chemistry and later adopted by the social sciences, illustrates a process through which an initially imperceptible element, lying deep beneath the surface, emerges when stimulated by external factors. In social contexts, such factors encompass a range of aspects, including a renewed sense of awareness and pride. According to Roche, Maruyama and Kroik, Indigenous efflorescence positively draws attention to the inventive, creative, dynamic nature of modern Indigenous cultural expressions which are not mere re-enactments of the past, but rely on it as a repository of meaning in shaping contemporary Indigenous identities. Roche (2018) explains that, in colonised contexts, Indigenous efflorescence is informed by an element of surprise arising from outsiders' expectations that Indigenous cultures currently undergoing efflorescence were destined to disappear. Efflorescence contradicts the notion of indigenous societies' crises, a focal point of discourses on indigenous peoples since colonial times. Among the diverse expressions of Indigenous efflorescence, linguistic revitalisation and toponymic activism emerge as interconnected cultural phenomena, embodying acts of decolonisation. Over the years, Márkomeannu has engaged in both linguistic and toponymic activism (see De Vivo, 2023 and 2024), contributing to the decolonisation of the local linguistic and cultural landscape.

Multilingual signs as acts of linguistic activism

Each year in late July, a few days before the official opening of Márkomeannu, the festival staff put up a series of temporary wooden signs which are repainted and rewritten almost on an annual basis due to wear. In 2022, one of the first visitors encountered read: “Vačče go guvlui” above and “walk this way” below, and behind it the Sámi flag fluttering in the breeze (fig. 1). The previous year, more or less in the same spot, the same sign read: “Vačče go guvlui” above and “Ga denne veien” below. As this example shows, if English and Norwegian are used interchangeably, North-Sámi is consistently kept on the signs.

Fig. 2. Multilingual sign by the family camp. Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

The signposts inform people how to navigate the festival, signalling among others, fountains, toilets, camping sites, bar, recycling areas and the festival’s kitchen and library. The signs go beyond their informational function: they – like leaflets and festival materials – are multilingual, some being bilingual and

other trilingual (fig. 2). Instructions or indications are written in North-Sámi, Norwegian, and English, with North- or Márku-Sámi usually placed higher unless the texts are juxtaposed. The presence of Sámi on these signs is not a tokenistic use of language but the result of a conscious choice ascribable to linguistic activism and deeply enwoven in the ideological premises of Márkomeannu itself. Since its first edition, the festival has engaged in practices ascribable to linguistic activism, resorting to Sámi whenever possible, making it visible (and audible) where it was once the local population's daily language.

Linguistic activism has been a defining feature of the festival since Márkomeannu's earliest editions as the festival has always had a strong focus on the valorisation of the local Márku-Sámi culture. Sámi has always been included in the festival's linguistic landscape and has been promoted through its linguistic policies. During a conversation on linguistic activism and its influence on the process of language revival in the region, I asked the festival founder Sigbjørn Skåden the reason why those who started Márkomeannu chose to write in Sámi on festival signs. He answered: "For this reason: for the status, visibility and normalisation of the language in the local community" (Skåden, personal communication, September 2024).

Throughout the years, the festival organizers developed several initiatives aimed at increasing Márku-Sámi visibility: in 2010, the installations of the art-project/linguistic protest Lihkausak contributed to making Márku-Sámi a prominent feature of the local linguistic landscape (De Vivo, 2024). In 2017, Márkomeannu launched Giellabargit *2.0 Kurssas duohtavuhtii/ fra kurs til virkelighet* (from course to reality). This project, implemented with support from the Sámi Parliament, aimed at encouraging the use of the local Sámi language in daily interactions. As part of Giellabargit, which literally translates as "language workers", the festival tried to increase the visibility of the Sámi language at the festival through new signs and other visual representations. An

official bilingual statement (in North-Sámi and Norwegian) referring to Giellabargit on the festival website reads:

> Sámi is Márkomeannu's heart language. Not only do we want Sámi to be the first thing our festival guests encounter, but for us it is also important that those who make Márkomeannu have Sámi as one of their working languages. If Sámi as a language is to have any chance in the future, we must start with ourselves. Therefore, over several years, Márkomeannu has worked actively with a language strengthening project within Márkomeannu's staff, our Čávva. Čávva is a Torne Sámi dialect word for a person who likes to work a lot and for a long time, a very fitting description of Márkomeannu's staff. The purpose is to make Sámi the working language in Márkomeannu. This year you will be able to see more signs, stickers and perhaps items of clothing around the festival grounds. All words and concepts are written in the local dialect used in Sør-Troms and Ofoten. This is one part of our language investment, and we hope the festival's guests can also benefit from the investment.
>
> (translation from Norwegian by the author; markomeannu.no accessed on 15/9/2024)

As this text shows, at Márkomeannu each signpost carrying Sámi words stands as a localised act of decolonisation and empowerment. Signs in Sámi are instances of linguistic reclamation. The festival, in the wake of previous initiatives such as the establishment of the Sámi kindergarten and the inclusion of Sámi in the local school's curriculum, along with other local Sámi institutions such as the Várdobáiki Sámi centre, has contributed in changing individual and collective perceptions regarding the

prestige of Márku-Sámi language and the heritage it encapsulates. The visibility, normalisation and legitimisation of this once-persecuted language encourages people to learn and/or use it, counteracting language shift a word or a sentence at a time.

Through waymarks and signs, Márkomeannu has given visual and material form to something otherwise abstract and often removed from sight because of colonisation: Márku-Sámi language. Through the display of this language, the festival contributes to the building of a sense of community and shared identity among the festival-goers. For those who grew up speaking Sámi in their daily lives, Márkomeannu's linguistic landscape offers the chance of having their language displayed and used in public just as Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian are in their respective countries. For those who did not have the opportunity of learning Sámi in their childhood, and are either learning it as a second (or third) language or consider it as their heritage language without speaking it, the linguistic landscape at Márkomeannu offers the opportunity to see the language used in its context. Festival-goers also have the chance to hear and listen to Sámi language since many people speak it among themselves. Additionally, inaugural and other speeches are often delivered in both North Sámi and Norwegian, and occasionally in English.[14] The

[14] It is not surprising that English is a prominent part of the linguistic landscape and soundscape at Márkomeannu. Given the colonial pressure on Sámi cultures, the linguistic diversity intrinsic to the various Sámi languages, and the consequences of linguistic assimilation, many Sámi people do not share any Indigenous language. Hence, they often use either a shared or a mutually intelligible hegemonic language (Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Russian) or English to communicate among each other. The rise of English as a *lingua franca* in contexts like Sápmi reflects the broader impacts of globalization. For decades, English has been a compulsory subject studied by children in the Scandinavian Sápmi (Pietikäinen 2008). The importance of English as a language of communication within Sámi communities is demonstrated by the multilingual publications aimed at a pan-Sámi audience. Such publications are often trilingual, with the text being in the Sámi language of the community it primarily addresses, then in the hegemonic language of the same community and then in English, to allow people from other areas of Sápmi to read the volume. An example of such trilingual publications is Hætta's 2021 volume *Riddu Riđđu 30 Jagi/År/Years-Mearrasámi Dolastallamis Riikaidgaskasas Festiválan/Fra Sjøsamisk Fest Til Internasjonal Urfolksfestival/From Coastal Sámi Gathering To International Indigenous Festival*. Besides enabling intra-ethnic communication, the use of English in various spheres allows foreigners to understand what is happening and grasp basic information concerning the festival and its location. Even though Márkomeannu is not an event targeting an

festival has managed to bring Sámi, the heritage language of many festival-goers, into new contexts, making it not only accessible but also relevant – and fun to use – in daily interactions that go beyond institutional settings. For those who did not grow up with the language because of the long-term consequences of linguistic assimilation, schools are privileged sites where they can learn their ancestors' language. Similarly, for many Sámi-speaking children who use their language either at home, with relatives or at school, the hegemonic language dominates interactions in most other social domains. By bringing Sámi outside the classroom and into the sphere of leisure activities, Márkomeannu strives to enable Sámi to regain its place as a language of daily communication through fun and use in informal contexts[15].

The multilingual signs dotting Gállogieddi during Márkomeannu allow festival-goers to see Sámi languages normalised in the public and help people familiarise themselves with the local Márku-Sámi language. An example of this use of the linguistic landscape is the festival's kitchen: the Sámi word boaššu dominates the structure and it is apparent even to outsiders that the building is a kitchen. Nevertheless, the choice of naming it boaššu and making the name so visible is more important than one may initially think. In the festival context, the word boaššu works as a transposition of ancient Sámi daily life into the contemporary one. This North-Sámi term does not translate to "kitchen" (which is kievkkan/gievkkan) but actually refers to a delimited area in ancient Sámi dwelling places: the boaššu was opposite the entrance and behind the fireplace. Here, food was once stored and the area was considered sacred. At the festival's Boaššu, the coffee carafes are labelled with a tag displaying the festival's symbol and name, beneath which appears, in capital letters, the Marku-Sámi word for coffee: čimŋak. By displaying this

international audience, in the last few years a growing number of foreigners (neither Sámi nor from the Nordic Countries) has attended Márkomeannu as festival-goers or volunteers (author's fieldnotes 2023).

[15] Márkomeannu's engagement with linguistic activism extends beyond its temporary linguistic landscape, as Sámi is also used on their online platforms and social media.

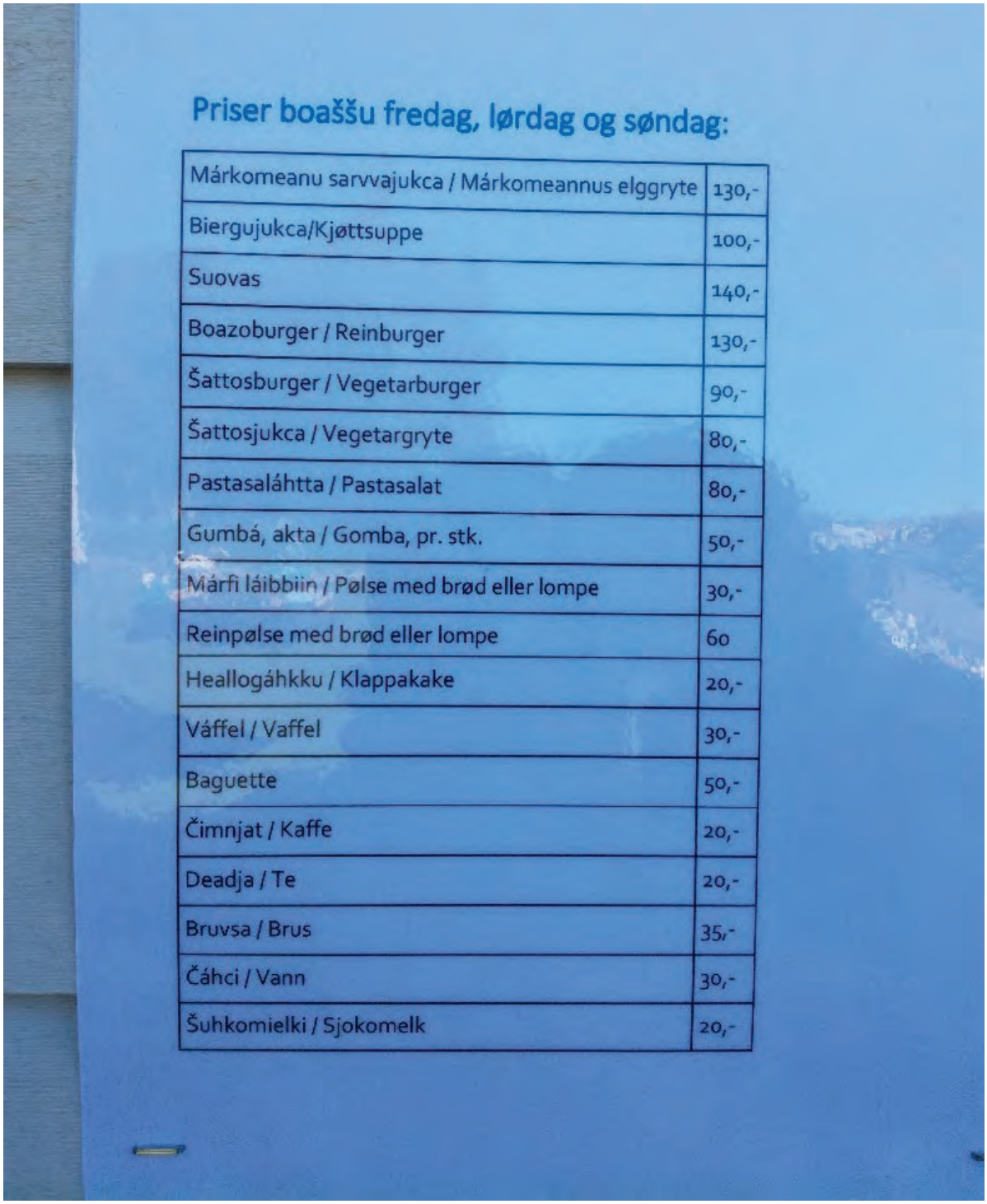
term, people are encouraged to order čimŋak instead of coffee. Similarly, in 2022, on the menu board, the dishes available to purchase are written in chalk. Some of the dishes are named both in Sámi and Norwegian, while others are only in one of these languages. In the case of Sámi, the word may sometimes be specific to the local area. To help clarify the ingredients of certain dishes named in Sámi, a small illustration or a short Norwegian word is occasionally added afterward (fig. 5). In previous editions, menus available at the boaššu had all items listed in both Sámi and Norwegian (fig. 6a and 6b). As the menu board suggests, the festival showcases how languages of daily life blend into one another, with Sámi taking a place of prominence. By highlighting the presence of both the written and spoken language in the area, even a menu can serve as an act of decolonization.

A further element contributing to the valorisation of Sámi at Márkomeannu is the temporary festival library. Installed with the support of the Norland library system, it features its own program of readings, book launches, and events, while providing literature in Sámi or by Sámi authors for visitors of all ages, with a particular focus on children's books. Among its titles, the library also displays books and materials to self-learn and teach the language. For example, in 2022, the library displayed the evocatively-titled volume: *Jeg Tar Tilbaka Mitt Språk* (2013). Written by cultural worker Jane Juuso, manager at the Isak Saba Giellaguovddáš (the Isak Saba Language Centre) in Unjárga, this volume is specifically aimed at silent speakers (i.e. passive speakers) who understand already Sámi but are hesitant or afraid to speak it (fig. 4). The title, meaning “I take back my language”, is an open reference to the act of reclaiming one’s heritage language taken away by colonisation and resonates with the language policy of the festival.

Fig. 3. Multilingual sign at the festival library. Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

Fig. 4. The festival library, detail. Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

Fig 5. Multilingual menu board by the festival kitchen. Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author



Priser boaššu fredag, lørdag og søndag:

Márkomeanu sarvvajukca / Márkomeannus elggryte	130,-
Biergujukca/Kjøttsuppe	100,-
Suovas	140,-
Boazoburger / Reinburger	130,-
Šattosburger / Vegetarburger	90,-
Šattosjukca / Vegetargryte	80,-
Pastasaláhtta / Pastasalat	80,-
Gumbá, akta / Gomba, pr. stk.	50,-
Márfi láibbiin / Pølse med brød eller lompe	30,-
Reinpølse med brød eller lompe	60
Heallogáhkku / Klappakake	20,-
Váffel / Vaffel	30,-
Baguette	50,-
Čimnjat / Kaffe	20,-
Deadja / Te	20,-
Bruvsa / Brus	35,-
Čáhci / Vann	30,-
Šuhkomielki / Sjokomelk	20,-

Fig. 6.1. Bilingual festival menu, Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

Fig. 6.2. Bilingual festival menu, Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo by the author

Conclusion

Activism, often context-bound, manifests itself in various ways and forms. In Sápmi, there have been numerous instances of locally articulated, bottom-up, cultural and linguistic activism. Márkomeannu resorted to activism to challenge power relations, making the invisible visible, deconstructing what has been normalised by highlighting the structural violence behind language ideologies. The festival is held in an area where state-led language policies greatly influenced local language ideologies. Assimilation policies implicitly hinged upon the idea that Sámi languages and cultures had no place in a modern state since they epitomised Indigenous Sámi epistemologies. Such policies led to a growing imbalance in prestige and power between Sámi and the hegemonic language of the dominant

culture, leading to a language shift from Sámi to Norwegian and the disappearance of Sámi from the public sphere.

Márkomeannu has engaged in decolonial practices by making the language visually accessible through its multilingual signs, reclaiming the dignity of the local heritage, language and culture, and by legitimating it in public spaces. Through the many initiatives it offers, Márkomeannu, like other Sámi festivals, functions as an infrastructure for language revitalisation and valorisation of local in/tangible heritage, often offering creative opportunities to engage with Sámi language and culture. Throughout the years, the festival's linguistic policy, which has shaped the area's linguistic landscape, has contributed to creating a sense of belonging and fostering commitment and dedication among local festivalgoers towards their past, their community's history, and its future. Linguistic activism can be considered an act of transgenerational responsibility towards both ancestors and descendants, demonstrating the resilience of Indigenous Sámi languages, cultures and epistemologies. For these reasons, I argue that Márkomeannu can be considered a site of Indigenous efflorescence where contemporary Márku-Sámi identities are moulded through engagement with contemporary creative Sámi cultural expressions drawing from the past but looking towards the future.

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BIOGRAPHY

Erika de Vivo is an early-career researcher specializing in Sámi studies, cultural anthropology, and critical museology. She is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) postdoctoral fellow at the University Museum of the University of Tromsø (Norway). Her MSCA project focuses on Sámi people's experiences during colonial encounters in the late 19th century. The project aims to shed light on the individual life stories of women and children photographed by two Italian anthropologists between 1879 and 1886.

In 2023, she completed a 10-month postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH) at the University of Edinburgh. During her time at IASH, Erika worked on the linguistic landscape of the Márku-Sámi festival Márkomeannu. In 2021, she defended her PhD dissertation, "Putting the Márka on the Map: An Anthropological Perspective on Cultural Efflorescence in Stuornjárga, Norwegian Side of Sápmi" (University of Torino).

SIMON BUCK

Dreams of Darien at the University of Edinburgh

The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies (1695-1707) was a joint-stock company established by an Act of Scottish Parliament, best known for attempting to establish the colony of New Caledonia (1698-1700) on the Isthmus of Darien in present-day Panama. Intended to create a trading entrepôt in a strategically important region, what is commonly referred to as the Darien 'scheme' was Scotland's most ambitious and truly 'national' settler-colonial project prior to the Acts of Union with England (1706-7). The Company of Scotland ultimately failed to sustain its colony: disease, environmental conditions, issues with food supplies, and competing European imperial interests in the region—particularly Spanish claims to the territory—turned the Company directors', colonists' and investors' dreams of Darien into a nightmare. Scotland's aborted colony has long captured the attention of historians, particularly its influence on Scottish economics and politics, not least the Union (Insh, 1932; Insh, 1938; Prebble, 1969). Drawing on underutilised archival collections in Scotland, England, Spain, the Caribbean, and the United States, scholars in recent years have begun to resituate New Caledonia within the wider 'entangled Atlantic World' (Orr, 2018, p.4) of the late-seventeenth century, casting attention on, amongst other topics, the wider context of the Spanish *asiento* and English and Dutch slaving interests in the region and the strategies of the

region's Indigenous Cuna (Orr, 2018; Gallup-Díaz, 2015), and the backgrounds and post-Darien colonial careers of the Scots who supported and financed the 'scheme' (Watt, 2007; Jones, 2011; Armitage, 1995; Bennett, 2020; Claridge, 2015; Jones, 2001; Sandrock, 2021, pp.130-185). The Darien 'scheme' cannot be sufficiently understood without consideration of earlier Scots-run colonies in South Carolina (Moore, 2020) and East New Jersey (Landsman, 1985) in the 1680s; the involvement of Scots in English and other European colonies (Macinnes, 2007, pp.172-181); the development of the Scottish financial sector (McDiarmid, 2023); and an enduring preoccupation in early modern Scotland with 'improvement'. As Alasdair Macfarlane writes, by the late seventeenth century, the 'drive for the "improvement" of Scotland and the creation of a distinct Scottish economic identity around colonial enterprise' had become 'deeply entwined' (2018, p.28).

Some aspects of the Company of Scotland's history, however, such as its links to trafficking and enslavement, remain understudied. As Stephen Mullen writes, the Company of Scotland has frequently been characterised in Scottish historiography as a 'tragic disaster for Scotland rather than a failed attempt at settler-colonisation intent on the exploitation of enslaved labour' (2022a, pp.6-7). In 1698, a Company vessel, the *Nassau*, purchased enslaved people in Madagascar, and in 1701 and 1708 the Company 'initiated or licensed' slaving vessels in the Indian Ocean (Insh, 1924, pp.xxi-xxii, p.260; Duffill, 2004, p.115). The Darien colonists, meanwhile, recorded their desire to introduce enslaved Africans to New Caledonia. A letter from the Council of New Caledonia to Company directors in Edinburgh in 1699 assured them that a 'firm settlement may be made' on the Isthmus, including adequate 'planting and improvement', but that 'no great stress can be laid for reimbursing the adventurers [investors], unless negroes be procured, white men being unfit for that work, more costly in their maintenance, and so only fit for defending the settlement and overseeing the work' (Burton, 1849, 216). A ballad about Darien, published anonymously in Edinburgh

in 1697, illustrates similar expectations about the colony held by those back in Scotland:

> There every Man may choose a plesant Seat,
> Which poor Men will make Rich, & Rich Men Great
> Black Slaves like bussie Bees will plant them Canes
> Have Juice more sweet then honey in their *Veins*
> Which boil'd to Sugar, brings in constant gains
> They'l raise them *Cotton*, *Ginger*, *Indigo*.
> *Luselons*, *Potatoes*, and the rich *Coco.*
>
> [italics in original] (Anon, 1697)

There is little doubt, therefore, that the Company of Scotland was a settler-colonial project that *planned* to plunge Scotland into the trans-Atlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans—or that it *did* engage in the trafficking of enslaved people across the Indian Ocean.

In recent years, several UK schools, colleges, universities and other institutions have commissioned research into their historical connections to slavery and, to a lesser degree, colonialism (Mullen, 2021).[1] Aside from some notable exceptions (Mullen, 2022b; Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, 2021), few of these projects in Scotland have highlighted links to the Company of Scotland. This chapter examines one such Scottish institution's links to the Company of Scotland: the University of Edinburgh (UoE). It first highlights how some professors, administrators, and one student invested ('subscribed') financially in the Company of Scotland, and situates their 'subscriptions' as part of a national craze. Utilising the UoE's own historical records and collections, this study secondly outlines non-monetary support which UoE staff gave

[1] Other UK universities (or colleges within them) which have undertaken similar projects since the University of Glasgow's pathbreaking study in 2018 include the University of Strathclyde, University of Nottingham, King's College London, Liverpool John Moores University, University of Bristol, University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Cambridge, University of Manchester, University of Liverpool, University of Aberdeen and University of Oxford (Exeter College and Balliol College).

towards supporting the scheme. It appears that UoE professors, as well as seeking financial returns on their investments, invested in and promoted the scheme not only for their financial gain, but because they believed it might benefit their academic careers and disciplines (namely Mathematics and Philosophy). Emerging from a wider research project under the direction of the UoE's Research and Engagement Working Group tasked to confront the UoE's legacies of slavery and colonialism, and echoing the work of Rachel Scally (2024) in the first volume of this series, this study aims to centre Scottish colonialism in UoE history, and to call for greater consideration of the mutually beneficial relationship between the Company of the Scotland and Scottish (educational) institutions.[2]

University of Edinburgh-linked Subscribers of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and The Indies

In early 1696, after the Scottish banker and financial 'projector' William Paterson and other London-based Scots failed to secure support for the Company of Scotland in England because of opposition from English joint-stock companies and the English Parliament, Paterson and his colleagues drummed up interest in their Company in Scotland through conversations in coffee-shops, the sharing of promotional propaganda, and the writing of letters. A subscription book was opened for the first time on 26 February 1696 in Edinburgh. The table below highlights several individuals at the UoE who became subscribers in the Company of Scotland over the next five weeks (Edinburgh Subscription Book, 1696).

[2] The Company of Scotland's project to establish the colony of New Caledonia was commonly referred to at the time as the 'Darien scheme' (or similar) and is still often referred to as such. Throughout this chapter, I use the phrase with caution, acknowledging that while the term 'scheme' is historically speaking correct, its historical usage has arguably served to obfuscate the endeavour's settler-colonial context. Additionally, during this period the UoE was typically still referred to as the College of Edinburgh. To avoid confusion, I will refer to the institution as the UoE unless quoting an original source.

University of Edinburgh-linked Company of Scotland subscribers, 1696		
NAME	*DATE*	*AMOUNT*
Robert Chieslie, Lord Provost of Edinburgh [*ex officio* Rector]	26 February 1696	£2,000
Alexander Rule, Professor of the Oriental Languages	2 March 1696	£100
James Gregory, Student of Medicine	20 March 1696; 31 March	£200
James Gregory, Professor of Mathematics	23 March 1696	£200
Gilbert Rule, 'doctor of medicine' [Principal]	28 March 1696	£100
William Scott, Professor of Philosophy	31 March 1696	£100
TOTAL		**£2,700**

Most subscribers typically invested the minimum amount required (£100); a sizeable minority contributed anywhere up to £3,000. The early subscription of Lord Provost Robert Chieslie (*c*.1650-*c*.1705)—whose provostship made him *de officio* Rector of the UoE—was thus relatively large. The three subscribing professors invested average-sized sums, though comprised a majority of the UoE's faculty, which at the time contained only five formal academic chairs.[3] Two subscriptions in the Edinburgh book were signed by 'James Gregorie': one as 'a student' and the other as a 'student of medicine'. If these are presumed to be two subscriptions from the same person, it would appear likely that

[3] The University of Edinburgh in 1696 had Chairs in Divinity (est. 1620), Hebrew and Oriental Languages (1642), Mathematics (1674), Medicine (1685), and Ecclesiastical History (1694).

the subscriber was James Gregory (1674-1733), who studied medicine at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Leiden (later becoming Professor of Medicine at King's College, Aberdeen), and was the nephew of another UoE-based subscriber, Professor James Gregory (Stewart, 1901, p.84). Another subscriber, Gilbert Rule, listed only as 'doctor of medicine', is likely to be the UoE's then Principal, a nonconformist Church of Scotland minister who had earlier gained his MD at Leiden in 1666 and retained the use of his medical title in later life. These individuals are only the subscribers currently active in the UoE: a later Principal, William Wishart *primus*, Minister of South-Leith, also invested, and UoE-linked wealth also flowed to the Company of Scotland via the £100 subscription of Elizabeth Pillans, daughter of James Pillans, UoE's 'late Professor of Humanities'.

It is perhaps no wonder that the Company of Scotland, a 'distinctly Scottish joint-stock effort, based in Edinburgh and funded solely by Scottish subscribers' (Orr, 2018, p.6), attracted subscriptions from the university nearest to the Company of Scotland's base. One of the two 'subscription' books was kept in Edinburgh (the other was kept in Glasgow and then briefly in Ayr) and more subscribers came from Midlothian than any other Scottish burgh. Scotland's capital city even made its imprint known across the Atlantic: the major settlement planned for New Caledonia was christened New Edinburgh. The UoE was a notable if hardly unique case. Other Scottish educators beyond the UoE also invested in the Company of Scotland. W. Douglas Jones (2011, p.28) counts a total of nine professors and two students from across Scotland who identified themselves as such in the subscription lists, who collectively contributed nearly one per cent of the entire capital invested. Subscriptions came from individuals across the Scottish education system, including James Martine, late Regent of the College of St Andrews; Thomas Darling, a 'doctor' of the grammar school at Edinburgh; Robert Trotter, President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and

William Dunlop, Principal of the University of Glasgow (known as Glasgow's 'Old College').

Academic Advocacy for the Darien 'Scheme'

Why did UoE professors, administrators, and one student subscribe? We can presume that they, like others across Scotland, were influenced by the promotional fervour surrounding the project; like subscribers in other joint-stock companies of the time, or shareholders today, they likely assessed the market and weighed risks against rewards. Evidence of the UoE academics' advocacy for the Darien 'scheme' suggests they believed that their careers and disciplines would benefit from the Company of Scotland's success. The process of reform at Edinburgh's 'Tounis College' over the 1690s (Mijers, 2011; Emerson, 2022, pp.212-230), and a wider culture of 'improvement' in Scotland, provides some context as to why some of its professors might have chosen to involve themselves in the colonial enterprise: the Company of Scotland had the potential to develop Scotland's education system.

When Professor James Gregory (1666-1742) subscribed, he possibly held the belief that Scotland's ambitious settler-colonial project, if successful, could entail a stimulus for his field of mathematics. In 1696, the same year as the Company of Scotland's subscription drive, James Gregory's brother, David Gregory (1659-1708) wrote a seemingly unpublished proposal for the establishment of a 'Navigation and Writing School' in Edinburgh (Gregory, 1694). David was an Oxford professor who had preceded his brother as Edinburgh's Professor of Mathematics (a role their uncle, also James Gregory [1638-1675], had been the first to hold in 1674). David believed such a school would be necessary in light of Scotland's 'fair prospect of a considerable foreign trade to the Indies, Africa, etc.'. He explained how:

> It is well known what advantages our neighboring nations draw from their schools of navigation, it being almost impossible to find an able seaman fit to carry a ship a long voyage without a competent knowledge of numbers and the mathematical parts of navigation; for want of which 'tis to be feared many ships have been lost.
>
> (Gregory, 1694, p.1)

David Gregory proposed that the Company of Scotland's directors sign a contract with Heriot's Hospital, a charity school for orphans in Edinburgh, to teach 'capable' boys (between the ages of thirteen and sixteen) for at least three years in 'fair writing, drawing, arithmetic, and mathematical sciences'. Under the plan, the UoE's Professor of Mathematics would examine the boys and its mathematics students would provide tuition. As well as a 'considerable addition to the charity of the hospital and a useful improvement to that noble [cause]', such a school would be 'useful to nation' in creating a solid 'stock of able seamen' to be bound as apprentices on Company of Scotland ships.

It is not known whether David Gregory's brother James, who had replaced him as the UoE's Professor of Mathematics, was made aware of the proposal (the text is not addressed to anyone, and it is unclear whether it was sent to anyone). James did, however, invest a generous proportion of his wage in the Company of Scotland: his annual salary was £50 per annum plus students' fees, meaning his £100 subscription was equivalent to two-years' fixed wage (Stewart, 1901, p.85). It would seem likely that he had either read or heard about his brother's proposal, or had come to his own conclusion about the Company's potential impact on Scottish mathematical learning and research. Dreams of Darien likely animated the mathematicians because the settler-colonial project, if successful, would have greatly enhanced Scotland's maritime economy. The transoceanic shipping of cargo (including enslaved people) would necessitate ever-more precise and cost-

effective maritime technology and advanced mathematical theories and training (e.g. navigational, statistical, calculational) that would, in turn, require improved educational infrastructure in Scotland. For the Gregory brothers (and possibly the student James Gregory), Darien thus represented both an intellectual frontier and a funding avenue for their mathematical family's scholarly pursuits. Ironically, the Gregory brothers ultimately benefitted from the Company of Scotland's *failure*: David Gregory was one of the mathematicians hired to help calculate the 'Equivalent', while James Gregory co-authored the report that proved his brother's calculations (Watt, 2007, p.361; McDiarmid, 2021).

Another subscriber, William Scott (1672-1735), Professor of Philosophy, evidently saw the settler-colonial endeavour in a similar light to the Gregorys. He used his position at the UoE to defend the legal, theological, and philosophical foundations of the Darien colony. In June 1699, the *Edinburgh Gazette* reported on the UoE's graduation ceremony that year:

> Munday last being the Day appointed for the publick Graduation of such Students of our University as were to take their Degree as Masters of Arts, the Magistrats of this City in their Formalities, and several other persons of Note met about ten a Clock in the Colledge hall, where Mr. William Scot, Professor of Philosophy, and Promoter for this year (after Prayers said) declaim'd an Elegant Harange on an unusual Subject for that place, Viz. Our Indian and African Company's settlement in America. Our said Colony was likewise the Subject matter of some more discourses on this occasion, and there are two paragraphs in the Printed Theses, Maintaining the Legality of the said Settlement, against other pretenders whatsomever. For which and several other Agreeable Passages, too tedious to be here inserted, it is observed, That as the Schools and Pulpits Rings

> with it at home, so many Persons of considerable Quality do daily offer their service to maintain it abroad, which are reckoned good pressages of further Success to that Noble Undertaking.
>
> (*Edinburgh Gazette*, 26-29 June 1699)

In the late seventeenth century, Edinburgh students were required to defend a set of 'theses' before they could graduate. Drawn up in Latin by a Professor, these 'theses' were a series of single propositions rather than what we'd recognise today as full-length theses. The theses drawn up by Scott for students to defend in 1699 rebutted Spanish claims to Darien (Scott, 1699). Thesis XVIII first established definitions of different kinds of rights: liberty, the power over oneself; empire, the power over others; and dominion, the power over a thing. Recognising that the 'universal topic of discussion at present' was Darien, thesis XIX articulated how UoE staff and students were 'not afraid to state publicly and deliberately that our people had the best possible right to take possession of the said place'. Spanish claims to Darien (based on their having 'discovered' the territory and papal authority) were rejected by Scott on the basis that they had no prior 'possession' (e.g., a garrison) there. The theses contended that 'the natives of that place [the Indigenous Gunadule people] when the Spaniards arrived (if, indeed, they ever were there) had, though infidels, possession of and dominion over their property'. Thesis XX concluded with an unequivocal statement on the validity of the Scottish claim:

> On these grounds, therefore, we give it as our verdict that the Isthmus of Darien is ours by well-merited right. And if the Spaniards attempt to support their unjust and unreasonable claim by military operations, we shall feel at liberty to repel their force with force. Nor have we any doubt that, under the auspices of our serene and invincible king, this Colony of ours will

> be able to stand four-square against the unjust attacks of them or of any others, for Scots today, even as of old, are as brave in defence of their gains as in the making them.

As well as his own financial gain as an investor, Scott likely saw the graduation ceremony and theses as an opportunity to promote his expertise on theories of natural law, with one eye perhaps on the members of the Town Council (the UoE's patrons) in attendance at the graduation (Finlayson, 1955). G. C. McBain (2018) contends that the theses largely borrowed from Hugo Grotius's defence of colonialism. John W. Cairns (2007), likewise, highlights that Scott had previously suggested that Edinburgh should create a Chair of the Law of Nature and Nations, a position that was eventually instituted in 1707 (although the post was ultimately filled by Charles Erskine and not Scott).

Scott's 'full-dress natural law defence of the colony' in 1699, writes historian David Armitage (1995, pp.110–11), was one manifestation, along with the pamphlets, sermons, ballads, and poems that circulated the country, of the 'wave of enthusiasm' for Darien which helped to carry the second party of Darien colonists across the Atlantic later that year, only for them to find an abandoned settlement. Watt (2007, p.140) contends that this kind of '"spill-over" of a financial event into the general culture' is a 'classic sign of a financial mania'. It is possible that one UoE-based subscriber fell victim to such 'mania'. It is claimed in UoE historiography (Dalzel, 1862, p.249) that Alexander Rule (d. c. 1745), Professor in Hebrew and Oriental Languages (1694-1701), and son of UoE principal, Gilbert Rule, resigned from his post due to 'insanity'. Alexander Rule later met financial difficulties: he was jailed twice in 1715 for outstanding debts, and described by a contemporary as a 'very naughty and abominable person' because of his debts ('Hebrew Chair', 1847; West, 1766, p.69). Edinburgh Town Council secured a quarterly pension of fifty marks for the former Professor in 'consequence of his having resigned, and in consideration of his

circumstances' (Dalzel 1862, p.293). Whether those 'circumstances' were connected to any losses incurred by the Company of Scotland's collapse remains unclear.

Beyond the financial support and advocacy for the Company of Scotland among UoE administrators, professors and students were more indirect connections between the UoE and the colonial corporation. UoE professors, for example, educated future Darien colonists. Archibald Stobo (d. 1741) graduated in 1697 before joining a small group of clergy whom the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had tasked with establishing a Presbytery of the Scottish Kirk in Darien and the conversion of the region's Indigenous population (Ramsay, 1959). Specimens of Darien's flora were transported to Edinburgh. The UoE's first Professor of Botany, James Sutherland, received 'a very acceptable parcel of Dried Specimens of Exotick Plants, by my friend and countryman Mr Archibald Stewart then come from the Scotch plantation in Darien in the West Indies' (Sutherland, 1700). Stewart had likely trained under Sutherland at the UoE or as an apprentice in the city's botanic gardens (Emerson, 2001, p.188). Further research would likely uncover other alumni and 'friends' of the UoE among the Darien colonists.

Some investors in the Company of Scotland later became benefactors of the UoE (Buck, 2025, p.51). In 1714, Sir James McLurg of Vogrie (c.1626-1717), a dean of Gild of Edinburgh, who had invested £1,000 in the Company of Scotland in 1696, left an endowment of 3,000 Scots merks (c.£166) to the UoE to found the McLurg Bursary for Divinity students. In 1725, William Wardrop (c.1660-1724), a litster (cloth dyer) and occasional Deacon Convener of the Crafts of the City of Edinburgh, who had also invested £100 in the Company, bequeathed £2,000 Scots merks (c.£111) to the UoE to support a bursar in philosophy or divinity. The UoE awarded the McLurg and Wardrop bursaries until the mid-twentieth century when the remnants of the endowments were merged into combined funds.

Conclusion

Better recognition of the Darien 'scheme' as a settler-colonial project with links to enslavement has connotations for Scottish organisations reckoning with their legacies of slavery and colonialism. In particular, it shifts historical focus back towards Scotland's pre-Union history. The relationship between the UoE and the Company of Scotland in the late 1690s is reminiscent of what in present-day Higher Education parlance might be called an 'academic-corporate partnership'. UoE-linked individuals contributed financial and human capital to the joint-stock company's settler-colonial venture; those same individuals, in return were set to gain from the 'scheme' as colonists, investors and academics. One can only speculate how the UoE would have continued to serve Scottish imperial ends if the Company of Scotland had been 'successful'. Would Gregory's Navigation and Writing School have been established at Heriot's Hospital? Would UoE professors and students have examined and provided tuition for the School's pupils, preparing them to work on Company of Scotland ships bound for Asia, Africa and the Americas? Might New Caledonia have become home to a sister college, the University of New Edinburgh? Counterfactuals, if provocative thought experiments, nonetheless tend to obscure actual historical trajectories: in reality, untold numbers of Scots over the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries—including numerous UoE administrators, professors, students, and alumni—embraced the imperial careers and financial rewards that accompanied Scotland's emergence as a junior partner of the British Empire.

Upon the publication of the UoE's Race Review in July 2025, Principal Sir Peter Mathieson formally acknowledged the UoE's 'role not only in profiting materially from practices and systems that caused so much suffering but also in contributing to the production and perpetuation of racialised thought which

significantly impacted ethnically and racially minoritised communities' (2025). One of the UoE's aims now, Mathieson stated, is to 'strengthen [its] global partnerships, recognising that we do not have all of the answers ourselves and that building progressive, consultative and equitable relationships is crucial' (ibid.). A recent online exhibition I helped to curate with the UoE's Library (Buck, 2024) illustrates, in a small way, how such relationships can be nurtured through a critical examination of the UoE's own history. The exhibition draws on the research presented in this chapter, as well as on work generously shared with us by other academic researchers. Panels on Darien's Indigenous and sovereign Gunadule people, co-produced with a Gunadule leader and filmmaker, help to re-centre an historically marginalised people and their culture in the story of the Darien 'scheme'. Likewise, a community consultation, conducted during the design period, positively influenced the exhibition's final content, structure and tone. The success of the exhibition's collaborative approach highlights not only the (obvious) fact that UK-based academics and heritage professionals 'do not have all of the answers', but also the tangible and intangible value that comes from 'building progressive, consultative and equitable relationships' with communities outside of academia and with partners in the Global South.

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BIOGRAPHY

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PAUL NEWTON-JACKSON

Ebony, Ivory, and Mahogany: Tracing the Journeys of Colonial Materials in Eighteenth-Century Scottish Keyboard Instruments

During the early modern period, Europe's networks of resource extraction in colonised territories operated on ever-expanding scales.[1] The demand for valuable materials mobilised vast numbers of people, with long-lasting effects on the political and ecological landscapes of those lands where sought-after products were procured, processed, shipped, and traded. By the eighteenth century, it was common for middle- and upper-class households in Europe to contain objects and furnishings incorporating materials from Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the New World. European owners of these commodities were usually well aware of these materials' distant origins: indeed, such 'exotic' connections might add to an object's allure while signaling the worldliness, sophistication, and good taste of its owner. Yet the commercial labels of the end products—terms like ebony, ivory, and mahogany—also functioned to erase the precise identities of the plants and animals from which the materials ultimately derived. At the same time, viewing these materials simply as finished commodities could obscure—for

[1] I would like to thank the team at St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh for their encouragement and expertise during the research phase of this project, in particular Jenny Nex, Jonathan Santa Maria Bouquet, Sarah Deters, and Sabine Klaus. I am grateful to David Irving, Rowan Bayliss Hawitt, Ben Fletcher-Watson, and the anonymous peer reviewer for valuable feedback on draft versions of this chapter.

early modern consumers and modern scholars alike—the lengthy and complex journeys by which they reached their final destinations. In many cases, these multi-continent journeys were made viable (from a European financial perspective) through the exploitation of colonised and enslaved peoples and their environments. The political and ecological implications of these highly mobile materials are increasingly being brought to bear in studies of early modern objects, and this chapter is positioned as a contribution to this important and growing field.

My chosen objects are three eighteenth-century spinets (small, plucked keyboard instruments, similar to harpsichords) held in University of Edinburgh's Musical Instrument Collection at St Cecilia's Hall. These instruments embody a striking juxtaposition between local and global: all three were manufactured in Edinburgh for the domestic market in the 1780s, yet all three also incorporate luxury plant- and animal-derived materials sourced from Europe's colonies: ebony, ivory, and mahogany. By shedding light on the human and environmental entanglements of the eighteenth century's global networks of resource trade, this study participates in wider decolonising conversations taking place across museums in the Global North. At St Cecilia's Hall, there is ongoing work to better understand the historical acquisition of musical instruments from Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Pacific, as well as research into the museum's financial links with the slave trade and other colonial enterprises in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[2] By telling the stories of global materials in European-made instruments within the collection at St Cecilia's Hall, I seek to illuminate 1) the ecologies of the species from which the materials derive; 2) the methods by which the materials were extracted and processed; 3) the means by which the materials were brought from the point of extraction to Europe; and 4) the circumstances under which the materials were

[2] A recent example of this was the public event "Uncovering Uncomfortable Truths: St Cecilia's Hall and the Slave Trade", which took place at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, in November 2023, and at which some of the preliminary findings from this project were presented.

sold to instrument builders in Edinburgh and fashioned into finished instruments.

Methodologies: following historical things

This chapter draws inspiration from an approach in the field of radical geography known as 'follow the thing', pioneered by Ian Cook (2004) and others over the last two decades. Cook set the field in motion by following a papaya fruit from a supermarket shopper in London to a farm in Jamaica, and subsequent studies have followed such diverse sorts of 'things' as West Indian Hot Pepper Sauce, money, and even data. As Cook explains, this methodology involves 'multi-site ethnographies exploring the hazy relations between commodity producers, consumers, and those in between', thereby revealing 'a constellation of people, plants, bugs, diseases, politics, trade agreements, and histories, whose multiple, complex entanglements and disjunctures animate this "thing" and its travels' (Cook and Harrison, 2007, p.40). In other words, at each stage of a material's journey, there is a story—or multiple stories—to tell. Recently, some researchers have applied follow-the-thing methodologies to present-day musical commodities, including guitars and sound recording media (Gibson, 2019; Devine, 2019).

However, there still remains significant scope for following *historical* things such as the Scottish spinets considered here. And while there is an extensive—and growing—literature on the "global lives" of early modern objects, this scholarship tends of focus on the mobilities and afterlives of finished objects, rather than the raw materials from which they were made (see Gerritsen and Riello, 2015). This is not to suggest that there is a lack of scholarship on the raw materials themselves; although, as I show later, there is much we still do not know about the early modern ebony, ivory, and mahogany industries (see Walsh, 2018; Anderson, 2012). Rather, there remains important work to be done in linking specific objects, in as much detail as possible, with the

global mobilities of their constituent materials. Musical instruments are, as Kyle Devine points out, a class of object that are often subject to a 'highly intoxicating form of mystification [...] which discourages us from thinking about the conditions of music at their most expansive' (2019, p.13). Nonetheless, musicologists and organologists are increasingly attending to the materialities of historical instruments beyond the technical and aesthetic elements which have traditionally been their purview: my chapter also builds on this work.[3]

Tracing the material origins of early modern objects comes with several unique challenges. There, of course, limited opportunities for direct ethnographies of the kind which lie at the heart of present-focused 'follow-the-thing' studies such as Cook's. Source records are often fragmentary, and crucial information can be hard to find, or even missing entirely. Even where detailed records survive, they typically privilege certain voices and priorities, making it difficult to find information about those whose labour was vital for the journeys of luxury materials from their origins in colonised territories to their destinations in European drawing rooms. On the other hand, followers of present-day things face hurdles that are absent when dealing with eighteenth-century objects. In seeking *Acacia koa* trees—whose wood is prized for guitar making—in the rainforests of Hawaii, Chris Gibson was repeatedly thwarted by problems of access and private property; and a vinyl manufacturer's desire to safeguard their trade secrets meant that Devine's attempts to get inside a factory in Thailand were ultimately unsuccessful (Gibson, 2019, pp.198-99; Devine, 2019, p.7). By contrast, all the surviving information necessary to trace the journeys of colonial materials in eighteenth-century keyboard instruments is, at least in theory, declassified and available for scholarly inquiry—provided it can be found.

[3] See for instance, the discussion of colonial materials in Joseph Haydn's English-made pianos in Mathew, 2022, p.39; Irving's exploration of early modern European receptions of non-European instruments and their materials (2009, pp. 372–98); and Dennis, 2017, pp.371–382.

The instruments and their makers

Late eighteenth-century Edinburgh was by no means a major centre for the manufacture of musical instruments. Many of the first generation of local keyboard makers, active c.1780–1800, had either received training in London, or were originally from there. The earliest of the three bentside spinets under consideration in this chapter was made in Edinburgh by Christian Shean in 1782 (Figure 1, right).[4] Its lid is fashioned from a solid piece of mahogany, and its pine case is almost completely covered by a mahogany veneer. The natural keys of the Shean spinet are capped with thin slices of ivory. The second spinet was sold under the name of Neil Stewart in 1784, though was probably built by another contemporary maker, Andrew Rochead (Figure 1, left).[5]

Fig. 1. Shean (R) and Stewart (L) spinets, at the University of Edinburgh's off-site storage location. Photo by the author.

Like Shean's instrument, that of Stewart has a solid mahogany lid, uses mahogany for much of the case veneer, and has natural keys which are topped with ivory. On the Stewart spinet, some parts of the front panel above the keyboard are also decorated with a

[4] Accession number 4334. See https://collections.ed.ac.uk/mimed/record/16904 [accessed 26 February 2024].

[5] Accession number 4318. See https://collections.ed.ac.uk/mimed/record/15589 [accessed 26 February 2024]. That this instrument was actually built by Rochead is suggested by the internal signature 'A. R. for N. S. 21', and the fact that the Stewarts were principally involving in selling and hiring, rather than manufacturing, musical instruments (see Cranmer, 1991, p.380).

veneer of satinwood. Chronologically-speaking, the latest of the three instruments was built by Richard Horsburgh in Edinburgh in 1786. Once again, it features a solid mahogany lid, a case veneer which is primarily of mahogany, and ivory for the key-plates of the naturals (Figure 2).[6]

Fig. 2. Bentside Spinet, Richard Horsburgh (Edinburgh, 1786, Accession number: 4350). Image from https://collections.ed.ac.uk/mimed/record/17311

The Horsburgh spinet is presently on display at St Cecilia's Hall, and the other two are kept at the University's off-site storage facility. An inspection of the two off-site instruments determined that the spinet built by Shean also utilised a small amount of ebony (Klaus, 2024). While the accidentals (the raised sharp and flat keys) of all three Edinburgh spinets all appear to be made of a

[6] Accession number 4350: See https://collections.ed.ac.uk/mimed/record/17311 [accessed 26 February 2024].

very dark wood, the Stewart/Rochead and Horsburgh instruments achieve this through applying a black stain to a lighter hardwood, possibly pear (Figure 3, right). On the Shean spinet, by contrast, a thin slice of ebony is glued to the top of each accidental, the rest of which is made from stained hardwood, possibly oak (Figure 3, left).

Fig. 3. Annotated photographs showing a comparison of materials used for the accidental keys of the Shean (left) and Stewart (right) spinets. Images by the author

The makers of these three instruments primarily operated alone (sometimes with a single apprentice) in small workshops-cum-dwellings in Edinburgh's cramped and densely populated Old Town.[7] Figure 4 below shows the approximate locations of the workshops of Shean, Rochead (for Stewart), and Horsburgh, as given in newspaper advertisements and street directories from the period (see *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 29 February 1772; Cranmer, 1991, p.377 and 382).

[7] We do not know the names of any apprentices who worked for Shean, Rochead, Stewart or Horsburgh. However, one possibility is the otherwise unknown 'William Johnson, aged about 30 years', described 'by trade a spinnet-maker' in a 'Description of Deserters from His Majesty's 81st Regiment of Foot', published in a contemporary Edinburgh newspaper (see *Caledonian Mercury*, 7 April 1779).

Fig. 4. John Ainslie, *The City of Edinburgh* (1780), annotated to show approximate locations of the workshops of Shean, Rochead, and Horsburgh during the 1780s

Getting raw materials in Edinburgh

At present, little is known about where keyboard makers in Edinburgh purchased their raw materials. Although all three spinets have ivory natural keys, ivory-working may have required specialist skills, such that the instrument makers sourced ready-to-use pieces from dedicated artisans. If this was the case, then Shean, Rochead and Horsburgh could have bought thin slices of this valuable material from ivory workers with premises in Edinburgh's Old Town such as William Allan (Potter Row, 1780–90), James Murray (Blackfriar's Wynd, 1784–90), or Andrew Wauchope (Castle Hill, 1784–88) (Bamford, 1983, p.39, p.90 and p.125). Alternatively, our instrument-builders might have purchased unworked ivory, and carried out the cutting themselves. A

preliminary study of newspapers printed in Edinburgh during the period 1778–86 reveals a small number of advertisements for the sale of whole ivory pieces. For instance, in September 1782, comb-maker Alexander Sivewright Junior of High-School Wynd, Cowgate, notified the public that he wished to sell 'two fine large Elephant Teeth', and requested that 'those who have occasion for ivory of the sort, please apply immediately, as if they are not purchased in a few days, they will be cut up for combs' (*Caledonian Mercury*, 9 November 1782). Another, perhaps more likely option, is that Edinburgh's instrument-builders purchased ivory directly from merchants at nearby ports. In March and April of 1779, the merchants George Buchanan Junior, and John Buchanan Senior of Glasgow placed three advertisements in Edinburgh's *Caledonian Mercury* for a recently arrived shipment of goods from the Caribbean, which included '11 small Elephants Teeth'.[8] The fact that these merchants chose to advertise in an Edinburgh newspapers suggests a practice whereby potential buyers would travel to Glasgow, make a purchase, and either bring back their wares to Edinburgh overland, or arrange for them to be shipped to a port on the Firth of Forth, closer to Edinburgh.

References to the sale of mahogany timber are even more numerous in Edinburgh newspapers from this period. Many of the advertisements refer the reader, as was the case with ivory, to shipments that had arrived in Glasgow. However, it is clear that mahogany was also being stored and sold at Leith, Edinburgh's largest and closest port. For example, an advertisement placed on Monday 28 April 1783 states that 'there is to be exposed to sale, by auction, at the Timber Bush in Leith, a Quantity of very fine Mahogany' (*Caledonian Mercury*). Figure 5 is an image of part of Timber Bush, a small complex of streets situated right next to the Leith Docks, as it appears today.

[8] This advertisement appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* on Saturday 27 March 1779, Wednesday 31 March, and Wednesday 4 April 1779.

Fig. 5. Timber Bush, near the Port of Leith, as it appears today. Photo by the author

We can also learn about how instrument-builders might have acquired their materials through modern scholarship on Edinburgh-based furniture makers, who are likely to have used

some of the same suppliers. We know, for instance, that during the 1730s the furniture-maker Charles Douglas travelled to Cockenzie (a small port east of Edinburgh) to select pieces of mahogany for a substantial commission at Yester House in East Lothian, and that in the 1760s the timber-merchant James Blaikie of Leith was contracted to supply timber including mahogany to Sir James Clark of Penicuik (Bamford, 1983, p. 13 and 44). There were no advertisements for the sale of unworked ebony in the *Caledonian Mercury* for the period 1778–1786. Further research, with more comprehensive access to contemporary newspapers (and other sources), will help us better understand the networks through which the raw materials of ebony, ivory, and mahogany were traded within Edinburgh and its surrounds.[9]

Shipping ebony, ivory and mahogany to Edinburgh

Although it may not be possible to trace the precise pieces of wood and tusk used in the spinets of Shean, Stewart, and Horsburgh, we can look at importation records from the 1780s to find clues as to how such materials might have entered Scotland during this period. An examination of *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* (customs documents covering the years 1742–1830) for Leith reveals only five shipments of mahogany—and none whatsoever containing ebony or ivory—between 1778 and 1786. Three of these shipments originated in Jamaica:

1. On 9 November 1778, the *Ann* (captain: Andrew Mason) unloaded 59 pieces of mahogany for the agents John Sime and John Staple of Leith. Five days later, a further 24 planks of mahogany were unloaded from the same ship for Ellis Martin and Company (*CQA: Leith*. E504/22/23, 10v and 12v).

[9] One potential avenue for future investigation into these networks might be court proceedings, which have been recently used to illuminate relationships between makers and suppliers in eighteenth-century London (see Nex and Whitehead, 2005).

2. On 28 June 1781, the *Sally* (captain: 'Mr Bell') unloaded 25 planks of mahogany for James Russell (E504/22/25, III, "General Goods", p.8).
3. On 25 September 1786, the *Rosella* (captain: Thomas Hog) unloaded 549 pieces of mahogany for Sibbald & Company on behalf of Bell & Rannie. Nineteen days later, a further 47 pieces were unloaded for the same company on behalf of Thomas Carmichael (E504/22/30, 95v and 98v.).

The other two shipments of mahogany into Leith during this period came from continental Europe:

1. On 17 November 1780, the *Sloop* arrived from Hamburg (captain unknown) and unloaded 60 pieces totaling 2000 feet of mahogany 'which was carried out from this port in said ship 13 July last, now returned for want of sale'. The agent was John Smith (E504/22/25, I, "General Goods", p.7).
2. On 28 April 1785, the *Adventurer* arrived from Rotterdam and unloaded 8 pieces at 1¼ tons of mahogany for James White (E504/22/29, 65v.).

The Hamburg shipment reveals a crucial limitation of the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* for gaining a complete picture of goods moving in and out of a given port. Only those shipments originating outside Britain are recorded in the *Quarterly Accounts*: domestic trade is not included. Because there is no mention of the *Sloop* carrying 2000 feet of mahogany into Leith in the records for July 1779, we can deduce that the mahogany must have been brought to Leith from another British port. While such shipments were not recorded directly, information about British ports of origin is occasionally given in the "Outgoing Goods" section of the *Quarterly Accounts*. From this, we learn that, throughout the 1780s, ships from Scotland's western ports of Greenock and Port

Glasgow frequently unloaded goods at Leith on their way to Hamburg and Rotterdam.[10]

Looking at the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* for these two western ports, it becomes clear that Greenock and Port Glasgow were by far the most important entry-points for mahogany into Scotland during this period, with major shipments arriving almost every month between 1778 and 1786. Mahogany chiefly came into Greenock and Port Glasgow from ports in Jamaica, St Kitts, Tobago, and St Lucia, though some shipments also came via the North American ports of Charleston and New York. The ships which carried mahogany also contained other goods of Caribbean and Central American origin, such as sugar, rum, tobacco, pimento, and woods used for dyeing (fustick, logwood, and brasiletto). Moreover, unlike in Leith, the Glasgow ports did witness the direct import of ivory and ebony, as the following selections from the *Quarterly Accounts* of Greenock show:

1. On 7 July 1781, the *Jeanie* (captain: James Young) from Basseterre in St Kitts unloaded "7 Elephant's Teeth" for John Crawford (E504/15/33, 1v.).
2. On 4 March 1784, the *Glasgow* (captain: John Bowie) from Montego Bay in Jamaica (via Charleston) unloaded "2 tons Ebony" for James McDowall, William Bell, John McLean, Robert McKay, John Kippen, John Smellie, Robert Gordon, and James Miller (E504/15/39, 27v.).

It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that while a small amount of mahogany was brought directly into Leith from Caribbean ports, most of the mahogany which came into Edinburgh would have first made landfall at Greenock or Glasgow.

[10] For instance, the *Engel Magdalena* (captain: Andrew Ferrier) left Leith for Hamburg on 9 January 1782, having entered into Greenock from St Lucia on 1 October 1781. The same ship had also called at Port Glasgow two days later to collect goods that had been brought there from Antigua. See E504/22/25, III, 'Outgoing goods', p.27.

Ebony or ivory is likely to have entered Edinburgh via the same route.[11]

Most entries for incoming goods in the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* record the date on which the shipment was signed off by officials at the ship's port of origin. Assuming the ships departed shortly after, these dates indicate that most direct journeys from Caribbean ports to the west coast of Scotland took between two to four months, while the ships which went via Charleston and New York could take up to seven months. Unpredictable weather conditions and dangerous shipping routes could mean that these materials were at sea for much longer, and sometimes resulted in surprising and non-linear journeys. For example, on 14 October 1784, the *Jenny* (captain: Robert Muir) arrived in Greenock having departed Grand Cayman on 24 July that year, carrying mahogany, dyewoods, pimento and sugar. This mahogany was, however, originally 'part of the cargo of the *Rodney John*, bound from Savanna-la-Mar [in Jamaica] to London [and] wreckt on the Grand Caymanes' (*CQA*, E504/15/40, 29v.). While records such as these give us the names of the ship's captains, the agents at the Scottish ports, and even the officials at ports in Jamaica, Tortola, St Kitts, Tobago, Grenada, and the Cayman Islands (typically the Deputy Collector, Comptroller, and Chief Naval Officer are named), the identities of the many free and enslaved people who worked at the docks and on these ships remain as yet unknown. Other types of primary source material, such as court documents from Scotland and the Caribbean, may prove valuable in telling their stories.

[11] It is, of course, also possible that materials such as these could have been brought into Leith (or another Edinburgh-adjacent port such as Cockenzie) via British ports located outside Scotland which traded extensively with Britain's overseas colonies. Adam Bowett has noted that the ports of Liverpool and Lancaster in England's northwest often traded with those of southwest Scotland (1996, p.57). I did not find direct evidence of goods of English origin in the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* but, pending further research, this cannot be ruled out. High-value low-bulk items such as ebony and ivory may even have been transported and traded overland within Britain.

Sourcing mahogany in the Americas

The word 'mahogany' can refer to the timber of several botanically unrelated trees from around the world. Knowing, however, that the shipments of mahogany entering Scotland came from ports in the Caribbean suggests that the wood in question comes from one of two commercially-harvested species in the genus *Swietenia,* called the "true mahoganies". The first, *S. mahogani* (known as "West Indian" mahogany) is native to the Caribbean islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and the Caymans, as well as the southern tip of Florida. The second, *S. macrophylla* (known as "Honduran" or "Big-Leaved" mahogany) is native to the Central and South American mainland.[12] The earliest records of European exploitation of *S. mahogani* date from the sixteenth century, when its timber was used by the Spanish, initially for buildings and ships. By the late seventeenth century, however, its timber was increasingly sought-after in Europe (especially Britain) and North America for use in furniture: exports of West Indian mahogany from the Caribbean peaked in the early eighteenth century. Due to over-exploitation, West Indian mahogany was, by the middle of the eighteenth century, becoming more difficult to access:

> While the mahogany tree grew in the more convenient parts of [Jamaica], it furnished another very valuable branch of its exports; [...] there is, however, some still exported, tho' obtained with great difficulty; or the produce of a foreign soil, and not so good. [...] it is chiefly imported here from the *Muskeeto-Shore,* and other neighbouring parts.
>
> (Browne, 1756, p.17)[13]

[12] A third species, *S. humilis* (known as "Pacific Coast" mahogany) was not harvested for its wood on a significant scale during the eighteenth century, on account of its much smaller size than the other two members of the genus.

[13] The "Mosquito Shore" (also known as the "Mosquito Coast" or "La Mosquitia", taking its name from the indigenous Miskito Nation) stretches across the present-day Republic of Honduras and Nicaragua.

Thus, exporters increasingly relied on harvesting the less valuable mahogany from the mainland to satisfy the insatiable demand of furniture makers in Europe and North America. As a result, we cannot assume that the departure ports listed in the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* indicate the ultimate origin of the mahogany: in many cases it may have already been shipped within the Caribbean (or beyond) on smaller vessels.

The *Quarterly Accounts* often specify, for tax reasons, that the imported mahogany was harvested 'within the British Plantations', thus indicating that the timber originated from territories under British control. British Honduras (the former name of the territory known since 1973 as Belize) was not established until 1783, while British Guiana (renamed Guyana in 1966) was not established until 1796. This might seem to rule out a mainland origin for most of the mahogany shipments entering Scotland before 1783, if not for the fact that Baymen (white woodcutters inhabiting the Bay of Honduras) had, in contravention of the law, been cutting and selling mahogany from the mainland since at least the 1760s (Anderson, 2012, pp.104-108).[14] Merchants in the Caribbean looking to sell Honduran mahogany to a European market were thus doubly motivated to re-label their goods as having originated in the West Indies: West Indian mahogany was deemed by furniture makers and consumers to be of a higher quality; and any mahogany sourced from mainland was, before 1783, of dubious legality (or subject to higher importation charges). Given that the spinets of Shean, Stewart, and Horsburgh were all made in the 1780s, when *Swietenia mahogani* was becoming increasingly scarce across its natural range, it may be more probable that the mahogany used was the timber of *Swietenia macrophylla,* harvested from trees growing around the Bay of Honduras, and then shipped to Scotland via the

[14] The first explicit mention of mahogany from the Central American mainland in the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* for Greenock is an entry dated 19 December 1783, when the *Mary* (captain: Thomas Boyd) unloaded 100 logs of mahogany for William & John Dunlop and Hugh Coulter, having departed from St Georges Quay in the Bay of Honduras (see E504/15/38, 139v).

Caribbean's major ports. An examination of customs records for these ports, if and where they survive, would enable eighteenth-century mahogany shipments to be traced in more detail.[15]

Harvesting mahogany: human and environmental impacts

In order to extract large trees of *S. macrophylla,* enslaved people were brought to the Bay of Honduras from West Africa, typically via Jamaica. In fact, the common name "mahogany" may itself be an emblem of the movement of people from West Africa to the Americas: one proposed etymology derives from *m'oganwo*, a word used by Yoruba and Igbo peoples to describe trees in the West African genus *Khaya*, which are related to—and resemble—the Caribbean mahoganies (Lamb, 1963, p.217). According to Jennifer L. Anderson's detailed study of eighteenth-century mahogany harvesting, the operation began with a specialist enslaved person known as the "huntsman", who was tasked with locating prime specimens deep in the Honduran rainforest; once the trees had been found, they were felled and squared by large groups of up to fifty enslaved people (2004, p.58). This, however, was only the beginning of the hard labour, for in most cases a track then had to be cut though the dense rainforest to the nearest waterway (sometimes many miles away), down which the logs would be floated to port (ibid., p.59). The drawings shown in Figure 6 give some impression, albeit from a mid-nineteenth-century British perspective, of the methods by which the trees were felled and transported.

[15] The customs documentation for the ports of Jamaica may be the most useful, given that many of the shipments arriving in Scotland originated there. Unfortunately, these records are likely to have been destroyed by an earthquake and subsequent fire in downtown Kingston in 1907. Some eighteenth-century legal records from Jamaica do survive, as apparently do more complete customs archives for other locations, such as the Cayman Islands. I am grateful to James Robertson at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, for sharing this information with me.

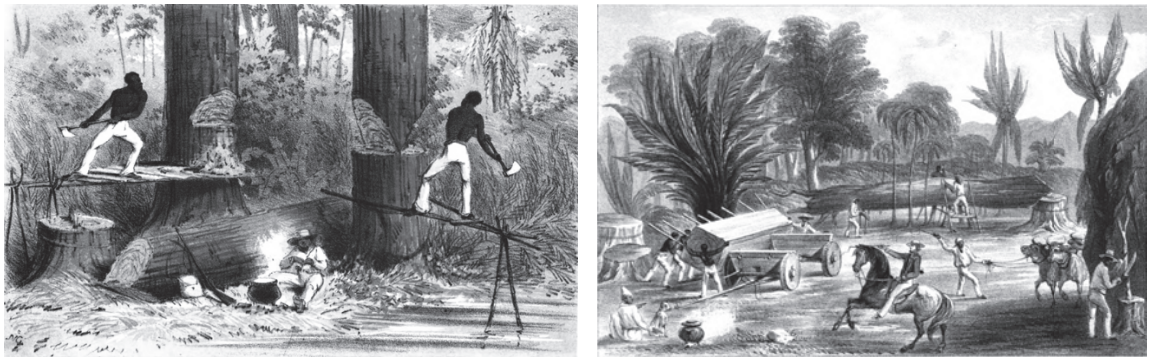

Fig 6. “Felling Mahogany” and “Cutting and Trucking Mahogany in Honduras”, from Chaloner & Fleming, *The Mahogany Tree* (Liverpool: Rockcliff & Son, 1850)

Harvesting mahogany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was also inextricably linked with slavery on a far greater scale than implied by those people on whose forced labour the locating and extracting of the trees relied. The deforestation brought about by felling and transporting mahogany formed a vital part of a systematic conversion of rainforest to sugar plantations (at least in the Caribbean), thereby driving an increasing demand for enslaved people from West Africa.[16] These rapid landscape-level changes also brought about significant shifts to the region’s climate—an effect that was noticed even at the time. According to one witness in 1740, the diminishing rainfall in Jamaica could be ‘ascribed to the cutting of the Woods; for, without Doubt the Trees gathered and retained large Quantities of Vapours, which again were diffused in Dews and Showers’ (Leslie, 1740, p.23). It is also worth bearing in mind that old-growth *Swietenia* trees—which could live for over three hundred years and can reach a height of sixty metres—were complex ecosystems in their own right: a host of other flora (mosses, ferns, epiphytes and lianas), fauna (birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals) and fungi relied on mature trees for habitat, shelter, and food. One of these dependent lifeforms can be seen in a botanical illustration of 1747 by naturalist Mark Catesby: Figure 7 shows an unnamed mistletoe species (probably the critically-endangered “mahogany mistletoe”, *Phoradendron rubrum*) growing from a mahogany

[16] The establishment of plantation crops on the mainland was prohibited under the treaties between Britain and Spain of 1783 and 1786.

stem (Bradley, 2004, p.2). Once a mature tree was cut down, it was not easily replaced, a fact which was poorly understood in the eighteenth century. Catesby claimed, incorrectly, that mahogany was able to grow ‘on solid Rocks’, and that ‘with this little nutriment the Tree increases to stupendous Size in a few years, it being a quick grower (1747, p.81).

Fig 7. “The Mahogany Tree”, from Catesby, The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahamas, vol. 2 (London: The Author, 1743), Plate 81

Sourcing ebony in the Caribbean and beyond

As was the case for mahogany, the word "ebony" was—and still is—widely used to describe many unrelated timbers of exceptional density and dark colour. This means that, without the use of microscopy, it is difficult to determine the precise origin of the material used for the accidental key caps of the Shean spinet: trees yielding wood known as ebony can be found in the Americas, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, and the Pacific. However, although Britain had colonies or trading posts in all of these regions by the 1780s, the *Collector's Quarterly Accounts* for Scottish ports in this period contain no mention of direct trade with Africa, Asia, or the Pacific. That is, the only non-European ports of origin for ships arriving into Scotland during the 1780s were in the Americas, and these are the very ships whose cargo is recorded as containing ebony. If the ebony used in the workshops of Edinburgh artisans such as Shean entered the city through Scottish ports, we should first look to the Caribbean as a potential source for this material.[17]

Browne, in 1756, refers to "Jamaica Ebony", a tree in the legume family with 'a fine timber-wood, [which] has a smooth even grain and takes a fine polish'. As Browne described it as having a stalk which 'seldom exceeds three or four inches in diameter', the species in question is probably *Brya ebenus* (commonly known as Cocuswood). Although the diminutive stature of *B. ebenus* meant that it did not require large groups of enslaved workers to extract and process, as was the case for mahogany, Jamaican ebony was linked with slavery by another, even more brutal means, for Browne noted that:

[17] As noted above, the *Collectors Quarterly Accounts* suggest—but cannot prove—that ebony used for Edinburgh-made objects entered Britain by sea through the ports of Greenock and Port Glasgow. As was the case with mahogany, it is also possible that ebony reached Edinburgh having first landed at another British port, outside of Scotland (in which case it would not appear in the Scottish importation records).

> the slender branches of this shrub, are very tough and flexile: they are, for this reason, frequently used for riding-switches; and generally kept at all the wharfs about *Kingston*, to scourge the refractory slaves.
>
> (1756, p.300)[18]

It is possible that the material used in Shean's spinet is *B. ebenus*: although not naturally as dark in colour as "true" ebonies in the genus *Diospyrus* of Africa and Asia, it could nonetheless be stained black and was often used as a cheaper replacement (see Mole, 2009, pp.316-17). However, the fact that Shean used extremely thin (and apparently unstained) slices of ebony over a stained hardwood base suggests that the material was the expensive "original", rather than any substitute. If this is the case, these slices may have originated from trees of *Diospyrus crassiflora* (known as West African ebony). An African origin has important implications for the ethical entanglements of this material, as the primary means by which West African ebony reached the Caribbean would have been on slave ships sailing the Middle Passage of the infamous Triangular Route. The valuable heartwood of *D. crassiflora* was one of the Gulf of Guinea's earliest global exports. Yet, as Vincent Deblauwe has recently pointed out, 'despite millennia of exploitation and trade [...]. our knowledge of the basic biological characteristics of the tree species which produce this emblematic wood is at best rudimentary' (2021, p.1).

Sourcing ivory

If the African origin of the ebony entering Scotland's ports in the 1780s is uncertain, that of the ivory—perhaps the ultimate 'global,

[18] It is probably the same species that is described by Hans Sloane in his *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Berbadoes, Nieves, St Christophers, and Jamaica* (1725, p.32). Sloane distinguishes Jamaican ebony from 'the true black Ebony from the East Indies, whence, and particularly from *Madagascar*, [...] it comes'.

mobile, and colonial material' of the early modern world—is in little doubt (Grimes, 2021, p.242). Given the absence of documented trade with Asia at this time, shipments of "Elephant's teeth" originating in Jamaica that were unloaded at Greenock and Port Glasgow were the tusks from individuals of the species *Loxodonta cyclotis* (the African forest elephant) or *L. africana* (the African bush elephant). If the ivory used in the keyboard-making workshops of Shean, Stewart, and Horsburgh reached Edinburgh via Scottish ports, then we can be almost certain that this ivory travelled alongside enslaved people captured and bought in West Africa and transported under horrific conditions to the slave markets of the Caribbean.[19] The human cost of this trade must have been well-known to consumers in Edinburgh. The *Caledonian Mercury*—the same newspaper in which readers during the 1770s and 80s saw ivory products, including spinets and other musical instruments, advertised for sale—also published brief reports of notable events in the world of international shipping, for instance, that:

> The ship *Minerva*, Captain Hicks, from Africa, and bound for Pensacola [...] was unfortunately lost on a reef of rocks a little to the eastward of Portland Point. The captain, chief mate, second mate, and gunner, with fourteen of the hands, and five slaves, were saved in the boats. The doctor, carpenter, boatswain, cooper, and five of the crew, together with 236 slaves, perished with the vessel. She went down in less than twenty minutes after her striking. There were likewise on board 1800 weight of ivory, near three tons of bees wax.
>
> (*Caledonian Mercury*, 4 November 1778)

[19] Eighteenth-century British shipping reports, such as *Lloyd's List*, frequently list ivory as travelling alongside enslaved people from Africa to the Caribbean. Excerpts from *Lloyd's List* were often published in local newspapers, including Edinburgh's *Caledonian Mercury*.

Even for those slave ships which did reach their destination in the Caribbean, the voyage was a deadly one, with a total mortality rate of enslaved people on British ships sailing the Middle Passage of approximately 13 percent (Royal Museums Greenwich). Thus, while mahogany typically relied on slave labour for its actual harvesting, the shipping of ivory along two sides of the Triangular Route (from Africa to the Americas, and from the Americas to Europe) depended directly on the economics of the slave trade for its logistical viability (see Coclanis, 2010, pp.490-91; Feinberg and Johnson, 1982, p.435). Figure 8, an English map from 1721, shows a European "extractivist" conceptualisation of this region of West Africa; the territory is divided, from west to east, into the "Grain Coast", "Ivory Coast", "Gold Coast", and "Slave Coast" (Bosman, 1721).

Fig. 8. "A New and Exact Map of Guinea", from Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Knapton, D. Midwinter, B Lintot, G. Strahan, J. Round & E. Bell, 1721).

Several eighteenth-century European descriptions of West Africa mention the importance of the ivory trade, and provide some insights into how the elephants' tusks came into the hands of

European traders. According to Henry Meredith (c.1777–1812), governor of the Royal African Company's slave fort at Winneba (in modern-day Ghana), ivory was not hunted near the coast but rather 'entirely [....] brought from the interior' (1812, pp.206-7). The methods by which ivory was transported within West Africa seems to have shifted over the course of the century. An account of the Coast of Guinea published in 1705 describes canoe-loads of ivory being brought downriver by locals to be bartered and sold aboard European ships at the coast (Bosman, 1705, p.478 and 487). By the late 1770s, as the slave trade was reaching its peak, European writers described how local people were rarely willing to board European vessels, for fear of being abducted and sold into slavery (Benezet, 1771). This same source, written by the French-American abolitionist Anthony Benezet (1713–1784), but quoting an earlier English writer, contains a description which shows how closely the overland movement of ivory was linked with the transport of enslaved people, sometimes over vast distances:

> There are a number of Negroe traders, called *joncoes*, or merchants, who follow the slave trade as a business; their place of residence is so high up in the country, as to be six weeks travel from James Fort [Kunta Kinteh Island, in the Gambia River] which is situate at the mouth of that river. These merchants bring down elephants teeth, and in some years two thousand slaves, most of which, they say, are prisoners of war. [...] Their way of bringing [the enslaved people] is tying the by the neck with leather thongs, at about a yard distant from each other, thirty or forty in a string, having generally a bundle of corn or elephants teeth upon each of their heads.
>
> (1771, pp.111–12)

As for the extraction of ivory from *L. cyclotis* and *L. africana*, further research is required to understand how and where the elephants were hunted, by whom, and how the ivory came into the possession of local merchants. Even those Europeans who lived and worked in West Africa seem to have been remarkably ignorant of these processes: Bosman, who was spent fifteen years on Dutch Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana) pondered 'whether all those [tusks] are taken from slaughtered Elephants, or some of them are found in the Woods', and he even suggested that elephants might go produce, and shed, multiple sets of tusks in their lifetime (1705, p.244). Thus, European traders who wanted to acquire ivory were completely reliant not only on the labour of enlaved people, but also on specialist indigenous knowledge of the ecology, distribution, and behaviour of the two species of African elephants. Local inhabitants of inland West Africa were surely aware of an interesting ecological linkage between ivory and ebony in Africa, which mirrors the materials' close association in European keyboard instruments: seeds of *D. crassiflora* have been found in the dung of *L. cyclotis* in the Republic of the Congo (Deblauwe, 2021, p.8). Fruits of the ebony tree are thus an important food source for forest elephants, who in turn benefit the tree by spreading its seeds.

Conclusions

Tracing colonial materials such as mahogany, ebony, and ivory, back to their origin means not just identifying the species from which they ultimately derive and the waypoints on their journeys to Europe, but also exploring the ripple effects of their extraction, processing, and transportation on the many lifeforms with which they are interlinked. This chapter has shown that the spinets manufactured by Christian Shean, Neil Stewart and Richard Horsburgh are intimately and materially bound up with early modern deforestation and climate change in Central America, species loss in West Africa, and—in multiple overlapping ways—with the mass enslavement and transport of African peoples from

their homelands to the Caribbean and beyond. By focusing on instruments built in Edinburgh, these findings build on recent work which highlights Scotland's role in the British Empire and the Atlantic Slave trade, a role which has historically been underplayed (Mullen, 2022). Despite the importance of these findings for understanding the material histories of these—and other—keyboard instruments, this chapter has also revealed several priority areas for future work. Chief amongst these is looking to a more diverse range of primary sources (as well as reading *against* and *within* those sources which are written from a European perspective) to tell the stories of the many people whose lives enabled—and in turn were shaped by—the journeys of these colonial materials. As I show in a study which forms something of a companion to this one, there remains a great deal of research still to be done into the interrelation of present-day and early modern ecologies of the plants and animals from which mahogany, ebony, and ivory are derived (Newton-Jackson, 2025). Such research needs to account for local and indigenous forms of knowledge about these species, alongside botanical and zoological literatures in the European tradition.

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EMMA HILL

The multicentered decentering of the coloniality of power: a view from Scotland

How do we conceptualise, map, critique and undo the colonialities of power, citizenship and bordering that operate in contemporary Scotland? The question may appear to enter familiar terrain, since in recent years, substantial scholarly work has been undertaken to trace and analyse the consequences of Scottish colonial activities both in the locations of former colonies, and within the Scottish 'metropole' (Liinpää, 2018; Mullen, 2009a, 2009b, 2022b). Ongoing anti-racist, anti-bordering scholarship and activism also brings a familiarity with critique of these topics. However, across these two strands of criticism, the function of *coloniality* in Scotland remains under-addressed; either superseded somewhat by ongoing debates over Scottish roles in historic colonialism, or under-theorised in attempts in the ongoing present to address the urgency of contemporary injustices in Scotland.

*

This essay sketches out answers to its opening question in two parts. In the first, it considers *how* colonialities of power operate through racialised, bordered and migrantising processes in contemporary Scotland. In the second, it builds on research on

Somali-Scottish colonial entanglements to consider how the consequences of different 'species' of coloniality might be identified and traced. Discussion of both these topics inevitably raises questions about the specificities of the Scottish case and the extent to which it has wider empirical and theoretical significance. Across its argument, the essay therefore engages in a discussion about the positioning of Scottish colonial(ities of) power in the British colonial context, of navigating opposing precedents of parochialism and exceptionalism, and of theorising the operation of the coloniality of power in the contemporary UK as not only 'polycentric' (Mignolo, 2011, p.38) but also as engaged in a 'multicentered decentering'.

An old adage which has been energetically dismissed in recent years is the once frequently quoted "it wisnae us" in relation to the role of Scottish individuals and institutions in the projects of the British Empire (Liinpää, 2018; Mullen, 2009a, 2009b, 2022b). This debunking of Scotland as a colonial ingénue – as well as work which addresses and disputes the once-prevalent 'nae problem here' attitude towards racism (Arshad, 2003; Davidson et al., 2018; Meer, 2015) – has gone some way to unearthing, mapping and critiquing the webs of colonial power and domination in which Scotland took an active part during the era of colonialism and its immediate aftermath. This work has included the scholarship of Stephen Mullen (2022b) and others (Devine, 1990) on the role of Scottish individuals and institutions in the Atlantic colonial economy, the work of academic and public figures in highlighting the active role and/or complicity of Scottish male figureheads in the Atlantic slave trade (Charette, 2023; McCarthy, 2022; Mullen, 2021b). It has also included research activities by various Scottish universities (including the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow) on the legacies of colonialism (see Buck, 2023), decolonial activism on the coloniality of knowledge (University of Edinburgh, 2023), as well as the reparative work begun by the University of Glasgow on the effects of the entanglements of the institution in the economic and human violence of Empire (Mullen, 2021a).

This work has also occurred apace outwith Scotland. Those unfamiliar with the Scottish context will have heard of similar work that has happened elsewhere, including the Balfour University campaign for reparations in Gaza, the activism surrounding the removal of the Colston statue in Bristol, and the Rhodes Must Fall movement, the South African roots of which branched out around the world (Bhambra et al., 2018; Shilliam, 2019), with a similar purpose to that undertaken in Scotland; namely, to critique the ways in which the operation of colonial power (past and present) created violent and uneven social relations during the era of colonialism, the unchecked effects of which continue to shape social, political, epistemological and economic inequalities today.

This latter point – that colonial power continues to circulate in contemporary socio-political environments – may, on the face of things, present something of an illogicality, since 'the era of colonialism through colonial administration' has abated (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), and the structures – predominantly in the form of settler colonialism – and objectives – the imposition of sovereign power of the colonial through the seizure of people and territory – no longer provide the active scaffolds of how this form of power operates in the world. However, as the body of work summarised above attests, the fact of colonial power in a contemporary iteration remains in Scotland and in diverse locations elsewhere, raising the question, how? And in what form? Here, recourse to literatures on the 'coloniality of power' (Quijano, 2000) is useful, because they make the case that though the era of 'colonialism through colonial administration' is ended, the 'global hierarchies of power put in place during the 450 years[1] [...] of Western colonial administrations on a world-scale that articulated the relationship between European/Euro-American metropoles and non-European peripheries did not disappear with

[1] Defined here as 1492–1945.

the end of colonial administration' but rather adapted into a less formalised, more diffuse form (Grosfoguel et al, 2015, p.641).

In the Scottish context, however, what is needed more than an analysis of 'coloniality' at large, which has been done with rigour by decolonial theorists elsewhere (Grosfoguel, 2011; Lugones, 2016; Mignolo, 2007; Mpofu, 2013; Wynter, 2003), is an extended conversation about how 'colonialities of power' operate in the socio-politically distinct and governmentally complex environment of contemporary Scotland. To date, this has been obscured by two dominant representations of Scottish relations to colonial power. The first occurs across a range of scholarship, which has normatively retained British colonial power as its dominant focus and infers the Scottish case to be a parochial counterpart to the behemoth of centralised colonial power of the British state, with ill-defined colonial agency of its own.[2] The second can be found in debates about so-called 'internal colonialism' (see, for instance, Hechter, 2020) which have diverted analysis into a discussion of *whether* rather than *how* Scotland functioned as a colonial power. Responses especially to the latter of these positions has necessitated the historiographical labour undertaken by Mullen (2009a, 2009b, 2022b) and others to highlight that, although internal governmental imbalances between Scotland and an Anglo-British government persisted throughout the colonial era, this did not preclude the involvement of assemblages of Scottish power (including its religious, legal and educational institutions) in projects of colonialism and (British) Empire. This scholarship has added clear value and necessary clarity to a sometimes muddied field of enquiry; however, its historical focus does not necessarily encourage an analysis of colonial power in the present; or, if it does, it frames it as colonial 'legacy' tracing (for example, Mullen 2021a)– an approach which can create the impression that the complicity of Scottish individuals and institutions is a completed process, and that

[2] This includes literatures on bordering, citizenship and colonial power, and critical migration scholarship.

colonial power in Scotland is something that happened in the past, with an originating event which is long-finished (albeit with ongoing legacies and ripple-effects).

Redirecting enquiry towards the operation of the colonialities of power in operation in Scotland leads to a more 'live' analysis of ongoing colonial dynamics and consequences; and certainly, in this regard, there are plenty of entanglements to unravel. There is, for example, by virtue of the reserved/devolved settlement, the fact of ongoing Scottish governmental entanglements with the work of the British state on citizenship and immigration, which routinely has been roundly critiqued for its reproduction and repurposing of 'strategies of population management and control first developed in the colonial era' (Mayblin et al., 2019). Here, and despite Scottish Government approaches espousing 'divergent' migration strategies to those espoused by Westminster (Mulvey, 2015), Scottish institutions and organisations both participate and are co-opted into processes of bordering and migration management which, at their worst, replicate the 'necropolitics of the postcolony' (Mayblin et al., 2019; Mbembe, 2001).

However, it is not only the case that Scottish assemblages of power produce conditions of coloniality solely on account of their structural relation to the British state. Rather the operation of colonialities of bordering and citizenship are also present in the actions of Scottish institutions, both before and after Devolution. For example, even if Scottish powers are disentangled (as far as they can be) from reserved/devolved tensions, patterns of institutional racism and racial violence in Scotland-specific institutions show evidence of the violent logics of the 'racial state', logics, which, as Nadine El-Enany (2020) has argued are in part the result of a colonial process of (b)ordering, in which the category of race is used to hierarchise citizenship and humanity. Here, such cases as Sheku Bayoh, who died in police custody of injuries caused during his arrest (Akhtar, 2022), and Axmed Abuukar Sheekh, whose killers went unconvicted following the

'loss' of key evidence (Hill, 2023), bear witness both to the fact of racist violence in Scotland, and to the complacency and complicity of Scottish justice systems in its institutional entanglements, so that across institutions closely involved in the governance of Scottish populations, race is utilised as a 'key organising principle' which delineates access to justice, power, and being: a dynamic which is rooted in colonial power (Grosfoguel et al., 2015, p.641). However, it is important to emphasise here that these patterns are not entirely faithful reproductions of expropriative models of population control developed in the former colonies of the British Empire, but are characterised by the 'coloniality of power': adapted and adaptive to their circumstances beyond the era and infrastructure of colonialism, charting their own courses through the 'decentred' power structures of the British state and its devolved governments, and creating new matrices of complicity, and modes through which its circulation is sustained.

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The discussion above provides a series of examples of how the circulation of coloniality is abetted by the way in which assemblages of power and sites of governance of Scotland are multiply located within sociopolitical structures in the UK: as subject to (and co-opted in) the coherence of the reserved state; as devolved and divergent, but not entirely unattached. The status is such that it is not possible to trace one single genealogy of the way coloniality works its way through British, British-Scottish, Scottish-reserved and Scottish-devolved pathways, as much as it is not possible to provide one single response to enquiries about where power is located, and its direction of travel: devolved, dispersed, centripetal, centrifugal? Within this environment, the colonialities of power in operation in Scotland are both entangled in the architectures of British statehood and divergent from it, producing and reproducing conditions of coloniality that are both well-worn results of state-led processes

of domination, and also distinctive iterations of Scotland-based dynamics of power and complicity.

The bordered and racist violence of the coloniality of power has not gone unchecked in Scotland. Indeed, in the last decades, a burgeoning culture of anti-border activism has won a series of victories against Home Office policies. This has included action against Home Office Dispersal policies, campaigns to improve housing conditions for asylum seekers, protests against Hotel Detention policies and sustained action against the UK Government's restriction on asylum seekers' right to work (Hill, 2018; Meer et al., 2018; Maryhill Integration Network, 2023). In this arena, the last two decades are bookended by successful community action against Home Office detention and deportation practices: first, in the form of the Glasgow Girls campaign (Hill & Nic Craith, 2016), and more recently by the Kenmure Street action (White, 2021) – a pattern that is at once remarkable for the longevity of community commitment against the issue, and disheartening for the fact it is needed, two decades apart. A lengthy history of anti-racist action also provides precedent for protest against the racism of Scottish institutions, including the anti-racist protests of the Lothian Black Forum in the 1980s (Arshad, 2021) following the Axmed Abuukar Sheekh case (Dee, 2020), lengthy campaign work by the family and legal team of Sheku Bayoh, and long-running public activism by the lawyer Aamer Anwar (see Brocklehurst, 2023). Anti-racist and anti-border activism have therefore gone some way to challenging patterns of injustice, abjection and complicity that have arisen through the ongoing operation of the coloniality of power in the Scottish context. However, though this work has been vocal, informed and effective, and despite the apparently increasing willingness of the SNP Government to acknowledge the Scottish role in British colonialism the arguments against the topics they protest (Mullen & Gibbs, 2023) – racist and bordered violence – *as products of (the) colonial(ity of) power* has arguably not substantively been made. One question this raises, therefore, is the potential of the

possible: could inspiration be taken from the work done on historic colonialism here, which has spurred considerable public interest and created a simmering social justice movement? What would a reframing of these patterns of violence as actively colonial do to their public reception and political response?

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Where this opening section of the essay addresses gaps in existing critiques of how the contemporary operation of colonial power in Scotland is conceptualised, it does not address the topic of the *form(s)* of colonial power in operation. Indeed, one of the consequences of the high profile of scholarship on the Scottish involvement in the Transatlantic slave trade is that it has the effect of positioning to the public at large the specific geographies, types, and histories of colonialism and colonial power as universal, or at least, as the dominant forms of colonialism with which Scotland should concern itself.

This, of course, is not the case. The operation of colonial power across the Atlantic Ocean was a major but constituent part of the British colonial project, and was distinct for the geographies it involved (Central and West Coast Africa, North America and the Caribbean), the populations and cultures it disrupted and exploited, and the *species* of colonial power that it employed to do so. I use the term 'species' here, in something of a spin-off from George Perec's (1997) theorisation of 'space', of which he conceptualised different 'species' according to the way it produced and was a product of distinctive material, phenomenological and political qualities; here, I apply the same idea to distinct formations of colonial power. In the context, for instance, of Transatlantic colonialism, the exertion of colonial power was orientated towards the exercise of sovereign British colonial power through the necropolitical economies of plantationism and settler colonialism, establishing 'relational entanglements' (Boatcă, 2021) between the colonial centre and

the locations it colonised. These entanglements were characterised by the multiscalar social/economic/political effects of the construction of humans as chattel, thus creating a distinct set of relations between the centre and the colonies, which inscribed themselves on the people and places of both the former colonies and the colonial centre in the material, economic and social forms detailed at the beginning of this article, and against which much recent de- and anti-colonial action (rewriting urban space, un-naming buildings, deplatforming memorials to colonisers, reparative justice) has been set. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the histories and legacies of Atlantic colonialism are critiqued (Mullen, 2022a); however, they are not the only histories and respective legacies that require analysis; it would be pertinent to ask, what of other histories, geopolitics and species of colonial power in Africa in which Scotland is imbricated? And what are the consequences for contemporary iterations of the coloniality of power?

In this context, the essay might look to bodies of work on the impact of settler colonialism on the East of the African continent and its connections to Scottish institutions and individuals, including historiographies of missionary expansionism – in which Scottish agents were heavily involved. It might also look to scholarship on the work and life of David Livingstone, a Scottish philanthropist operating in colonial-era Malawi (MacKenzie, 2017; Lusaka, 2023). My own research has focussed on colonial relations between Scotland and the Horn of Africa (Hill, 2017, 2024; Hill et al., 2018; Hill, 2025), and particularly Somalia, a context which not only provides a different geography of colonial power, but also a distinctive history, which is not in the least characterised by the lengthy campaign fought by Northern Somalis against British colonising forces until 1920. It also offers a distinctive account of different entanglements and species of colonial power, and their implications for resulting dynamics between the Somali territories and their colonising ‘centres’.

The circulation of colonial power in what is today known as the Republic of Somalia was shaped by a series of distinct factors. Colonial intervention in the Horn of Africa was divided between several European powers, resulting in different colonial timelines, methods of rule, and species of power. What is now the Somali South was colonised by the Italian Empire, which established a settler colony fuelled by plantationism along the Southern Somali coast (Eno & Kusow, 2014; Kusow, 2004; Tripodi, 1999). In the North, the lengthy resistance by Darawiish activists eventually gave way to the British Empire, whose interest in the Somali territories was geopolitically-motivated and related to its positioning at the boundary of the Red Sea/Indian Ocean, a convenient outpost from which to manage its Indian colony (Samatar, 1989). In the North, therefore, the British did not establish a colony, but instead set up a Protectorate – a mode of colonial power which co-opted existing Somali power brokers to work in the interests of the British state, and which provided colonial 'administrators' to assist them in doing so (McPherson-Smith, 2021).

This system of colonial administration was supported by a tailored colonial imaginary. Leveraging the history of Darawiish resistance to the British Empire, British colonists established racist and derogatory discourses about Somali people as unusually 'ferocious', unruly and uncompliant (Aidid, 2015b; Mire, 2020; Samatar, 1989a). These representations had concrete effects, which included a neglected and woefully under-funded Protectorate (Samatar, 1989b), and the consolidation in the British public imaginary of Somali people as 'wild', 'savage', and 'uncultured' – and among other things, worthy of epistemological expropriation (see Aidid, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). This was formally supported by the Protectorate arrangement, which positioned Somali people as "British Protected Persons" – a status less than that afforded to the "Colonial Subjects" of other British colonial territories, which bequeathed a reduced set of rights to the extended colonial state, with consequences for Somali capacity

for making claims on the colonial centre. The case of Ali Mohamed, a Somali sailor in the British Merchant Navy, evidences this, when, upon approaching the British Colonial Office for the means with which to alleviate the conditions of destitution in which he was living, a puzzled response was elicited from civil servants, who were unsure about who, in the colonial/governmental infrastructure of the 1930s, should take responsibility for the novelty of a Somali man with British Protected Person status living in Glasgow (Omar and Hill, 2018; Hill, 2025).

As British colonial involvement in the Somali territories formally ceased in 1960, it did so well before the creation of a devolved Scottish government, leaving the question of distinct Scottish governmental traces in Protectoratism without clear foundations. However, this does not negate Scottish involvement in British-Somali coloniality. Rather, there is precedent of Scottish individuals and institutions being embedded within the systems of governance and representation that created the distinctive colonialities of power associated with British colonial power in Somalia. These include the involvement of Scottish regiments in enforcing British administration of the Protectorate, the sponsorship of the Scottish Royal Geographical Society of the expedition of Commander F.G. Dundas to 'explore' the 'undiscovered' territories of Southern Somalia (Dundas, 1893), and the later work of colonial administrator-cum-academic I.M. Lewis from the University of Glasgow, whose highly influential anthropological work on the 'pastorialist' lifestyle of Northern Somali populations formed the foundations of the contemporary discipline of 'Somali Studies' (Kapteijns, 2004).

Where this form of involvement in the British colonial project in (then) British Somaliland therefore does not represent the *same form of* colonial violence as (for example) the plantationism put in force by Italian imperialists in the Somali South, it nevertheless created patterns of representational violence that were

intertwined with ideas of how Somali people should be 'managed'. For instance, Dundas's characterisation of Somali locals as 'hostile' and 'opportunistic' in his account of his journey along the Jubba River, serving as justification for his recommendations for future, armed trade incursions into the area. In the meantime, I.M. Lewis's representation of Somali people as at the mercy of an ethnodeterministic 'clan' system paved the way for its use as the explanatory factor in any future analyses of Somalia (Kapteijns, 2004; Samatar, 1989a): a framework which enabled analysts to forgo other factors in the tragedies suffered by Somali people (civil war, drought, famine and state collapse), such as the effects of colonialism itself, and the consequences of international intervention. Meanwhile, his representation of Somali people as 'wild', 'uncultured' and anti-order was illustrative of a well-established particular pattern of colonial Othering; for instance, a few decades earlier, when a Human Exhibition – sometimes known as a 'human zoo' – containing a 'Somali Village' arrived in Edinburgh's Portobello Pleasure Gardens in 1910, its 'novelty' proved particularly popular with the public (Omar and Hill, 2018).

There are, therefore, a series of points to be made in the consideration of this case study. First, consideration of British Protectoratism in Somalia highlights that, as in other colonial contexts, though there were no formal trappings of Scottish government involved in the exercise of colonial power, Scottish individuals and institutions were nonetheless imbricated in the development and sustenance of colonial power in its contextually-specific form. Second, that in the Somali context, the form of colonial power they developed was distinctive from 'species' of colonialism in place in other locations, and that this had consequences for the way in which colonial power materialised and lingered in the Somali territories. Third, that though these consequences were more immediate and pernicious for Somali people in colonial-era British Somaliland, they remained so after Somali independence, *and* outwith the spatial parameters of Somaliland. In other words, though Scottish

imbrication in British Protectoratism in Somalia did not crystallise in the material infrastructure or the shape of the economies of wealth and trade in Scotland *in the same way* that it did as a result of plantationism or settler colonialism elsewhere, it did nevertheless gain a foothold in the infrastructures of knowledge and representation in ways that socially and materially impacted Somali people during the era of 'colonialism through colonial administration' (see the examples of Ali Mohamed, and of the Somali Village above). The same can also be observed of the so-called post-colonial context, where, for instance, it is possible to map three decades of sporadic news articles claiming that Somali migrants in Scotland are a 'forgotten' population (Hill, 2023) – a repurposing, perhaps, of the logics of British Protectoratism in Somalia, which purposefully neglected Somali populations which it saw as 'troublesome' – or at least, in which it saw less expropriative potential. Similar effects can also be observed in other examples – for instance, during the 'Africa Bus' project of the late 1990s, organisers found it appropriate to raise awareness of the lives of Somali people who were then seeking asylum in Edinburgh by creating a 'nomad tent' and locating it in a site in Edinburgh Zoo (Hill, 2023).

*

What, I would therefore argue, can be observed in these more contemporary examples is the adaptation of a legacy of particular form of decentred British colonial governance in (then) British Somaliland to the contemporary environment of (post)colonial Scotland by Scottish institutions and organisations, which, though they may not have direct knowledge of the genealogies of the representational forms they mobilise, nonetheless participate in the ongoing circulation of colonialities of power, being, and knowledge. However, what might also be observed, I would suggest, are the consequences of the decentring of colonial power, both outwards from its seat at Westminster, and into other sites of power and government within

the British state – including the Scottish Government – and outwards from the 'centre' of Scottish power to Scottish individuals and institutions. Here, I think, it is possible to find an explanatory framework for patterns of 'forgetting' about Somali asylum seekers in Scotland, who are subject to two cycles of outsourcing: the first from the UK Government, which takes inspiration from the arms' length preferences of Protectorate-style management and pursues a strategy of distanced management of an 'undesirable' migrant population, and the second from Scottish logics, which dissemble that they have neither power nor responsibility over the operation of the colonialities of bordering or citizenship within their borders, without addressing the fact of the power they retain over the colonialities of being and knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Moreover, there is a case to be made that Somalis are a 'forgotten' population precisely because public British imaginaries of Somalis – in which Scottish institutions and individuals played a key role during and after the colonial era – have represented them as 'wild', and 'ungovernable', and therefore best kept at as much physical and symbolic distance from the state as possible. In the Scottish context, this is given additional currency by the 'it wisnae us' discourse (Mullen, 2009b), which distances itself from the coloniality of its own operation and its complicity in 'migrantising'/citizenship processes by framing Westminster as the only centre of colonial power: a case of 'it's them, not me' for the latter and 'it's you, not me' for the former.

Here, then, the coloniality of power functions through the decentring of colonial power from the 'centre' of the state to institutions, locations and governments it positions as extraneous, which themselves subsequently create other sites from which the coloniality of power circulates, and which have also, *at the same time,* developed their own infrastructures and patterns of coloniality, which, though not entirely independent of the British state, are sufficiently divergent to be considered distinctive sites of colonial power. At the scale of the British state, therefore,

patterns of the decentring, distancing, and dispersing of colonial power therefore act as a distraction and something of a smokescreen for the fact that (and despite efforts to appear otherwise), its power is not strictly centralised and sovereign, but diffuse and multicentred. At the scale of Scotland – and what the Somali case makes particularly visible – patterns of representational violence, national 'forgetting' and proclamations of colonial innocence indicate how well practiced its institutions are at dissembling over the coloniality of their operation in relation to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, whilst assembling its apparatus of the coloniality of knowledge, being and citizenship around them. Across these entanglements of power and governance, what therefore emerges is evidence of what could be observed to be a 'polycentric' (post)colonial ecology – an environment defined by how the coloniality of power establishes multiply-located and multi-institutional sites of diffusion (Mignolo, 2011, p.38). However, as this essay has traced, it is the imperative of the (post)colonial British state not only to create a profusion of 'centres', but also to simultaneously (and contrarily) decentre them, establishing a (post)colonial ecology which leverages, crosses, and consolidates its (internal and external) borders, even as it denies their operation. The result is what I might term a multi-sited decentring by the agents of disaggregated British colonialities of power, a sleight of hand that distracts from its operation, even as it pulls more power to its chest.

Postscript

It is possible that the content of this essay could be identified as an example of what Chakrabarty (1992) has termed 'provincialisation' – the analytical result of the observation that colonial power extended into all facets of Empire, all facets of (former) Empire should be examined for its (ongoing) influence. The strength of this conceptualisation is its analytical focus on a form of coloniality *which is also locatively specific*: which promotes

attention to locative detail, but does not exceptionalise it. Such a framing enables a rejoinder to a series of questions that can be anticipated to be asked of a Scotland-focussed study of colonial power, including, for example, enquiry over the extent to which they provide 'regional' insight into the operation of British colonial power, or the extent to which they provide evidence that environments in Scotland are 'exceptional' from those in other parts of the UK. These enquiries are particularly generative for revealing normative assumptions about hierarchies of governance and power across the nations of the British state (i.e. what is constructed as 'regional' and what is not), and the normative positioning of their relations (i.e. defined through national opposition rather than the merits of their own qualities). These are efficiently undone by 'provincialisation', which, against a focus on regionalisation, holds equitable status for locations at the centre and the margins of colonial governance, and against a focus on location-based 'exceptionalism', situates 'provincial' coloniality in a broader matrix of colonial power. Where a 'provincialisation' frame is perhaps more limited in this context, is that its imperatives to map and trace colonialities of power are not necessarily accompanied by action. In this regard, we might take heed of Ndlovu-Gatsheni's work (2018), which argues that processes of provincialisation should be used to facilitate processes of *deprovincialisation.* To do this is imperative, to map the un-'regionalised' and un-'exceptionalised' extents of the multiple forms, locations, species and genealogies of the colonialities of power, since it is only through this that the work of undoing their entanglements can begin.

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