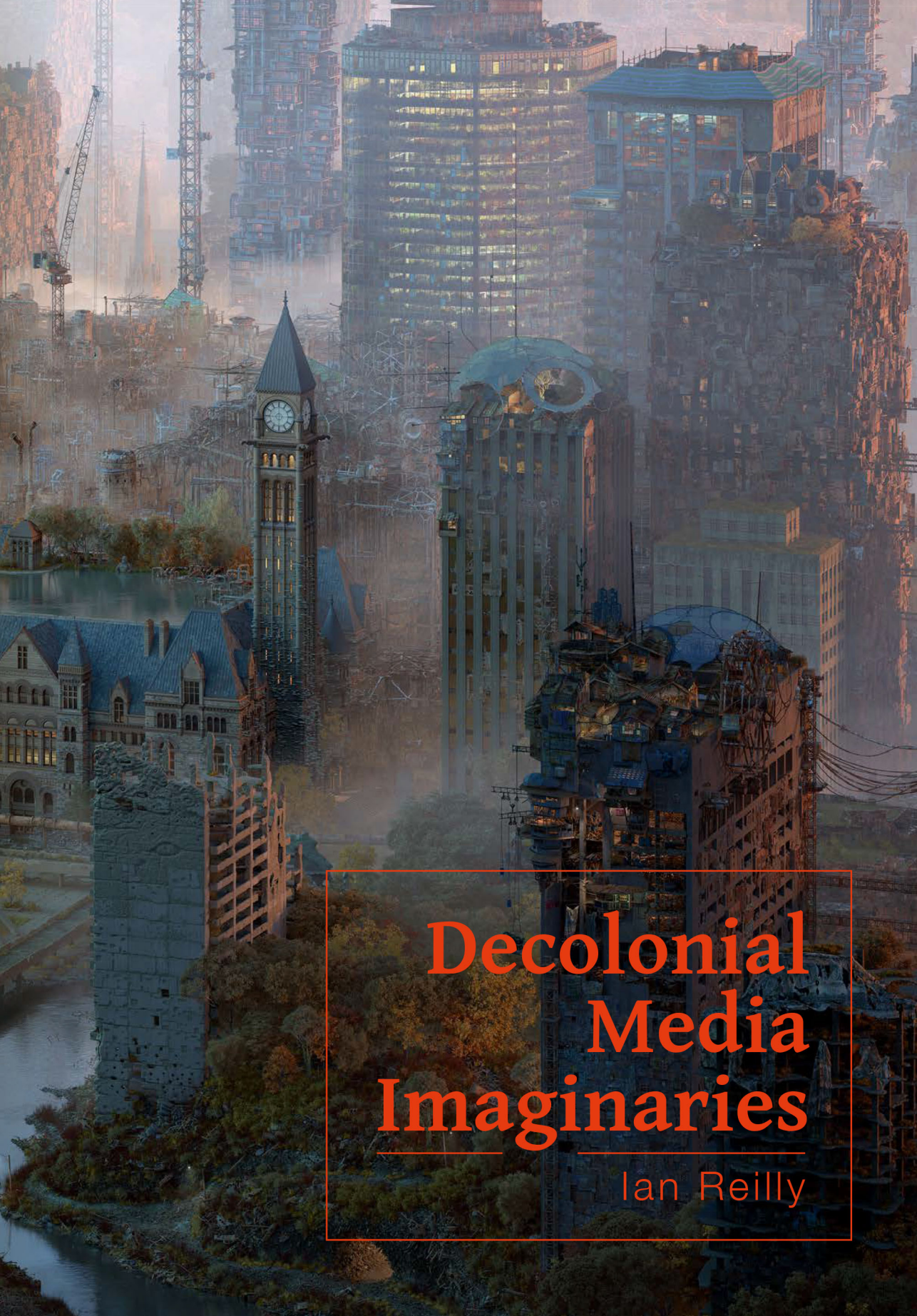




Decolonial Media Imaginaries

Ian Reilly

1

Introduction: Imaginariness-Work Through a Decolonial Lens

In July 2024, the Haida Nation and the Government of British Columbia reached a historic agreement that recognizes Haida Aboriginal title over the islands of Haida Gwaii. After decades of negotiations, over two hundred islands of Haida Gwaii (comprising approximately half a million hectares of Crown land) will be returned to the Indigenous peoples of Haida Nation as part of what has been called a ‘first-of-its-kind negotiated agreement’ (Pandey-Kanaan 2024). The Gaayhllxid/Gíhlagalgang ‘Rising Tide’ agreement establishes a process for the Haida to take over land conservation and the broader protection of the islands. According to Gaagwiis, president of the Council of the Haida Nation, the shoring up of Aboriginal title ‘moves us from an adversarial position to actually [being] able to properly collaborate and co-operate with the people of the islands who’ve come to settle and live here’ (Moran 2024). The agreement and accompanying legislation represent a watershed moment in the expression of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination on Turtle Island (Canada). Although jurisdiction over public services such as education, health, transportation, and emergency services will continue under municipal and provincial supervision, the Haida will finally see their place as custodians and protectors of the land restored. For B.C. Premier, David Eby, the agreement will not only increase prosperity for the Haida, the Haida Gwaii community, and the province as a whole, but also model a way for other Indigenous nations to have their title recognized (Cecco 2024). Put another way, this rematriation of land sets a new precedent for how other Indigenous communities across Turtle Island might go about securing greater and greater sovereignty. Under these new arrangements, Indigenous futures are given a radically different trajectory: with communities no longer having to engage by

default in adversarial, defensive, or refusal-based politics, they will be afforded greater freedom to deepen their connections to the land, history, culture, and values of their territory. Such new arrangements momentarily spark the popular imagination to conceive of nation states such as Canada and Indigenous nations such as the Haida as preparing the way for emergent forms of decolonial politics to proliferate more widely.

2024 would also mark the release of *Yintah*, ‘a documentary on a decade of Wet’suwet’en resistance’ (Yintah 2024). The film documents the ongoing struggles of the Indigenous peoples of Wet’suwet’en to protect their ancestral lands from both the Canadian nation state and some of the world’s most powerful fossil fuel companies. The film captures the decade-long resistance efforts of the Wet’suwet’en to maintain sovereignty over their lands during a period of sustained encroachment on the part of petrochemical commercial interests. The Canadian Government’s approval in 2019 of a \$40-billion natural gas export infrastructure project – including a 670-km Coastal GasLink pipeline (Crawford 2018) – would prove a pivotal moment for the Wet’suwet’en, in that they would come to stand in direct opposition to the realization of this project. As Aboriginal title holders of the land, the Wet’suwet’en have maintained that the Coastal GasLink (CGL) pipeline project (as well as any other extractivist projects to have been proposed) have no place or legitimacy on their territory. The combined imposition and violence of the nation state and fossil fuel interests have led to the forced removal of Wet’suwet’en peoples (and their supporters) from their territory, and have accelerated the expropriation and theft of their land. Such efforts to dispossess Indigenous peoples constitute flagrant violations of a 1997 Supreme Court of Canada decision that reaffirmed hereditary chiefs’ jurisdiction over their territory (Bellrichard and Barrera 2020). Without Wet’suwet’en consent, the CGL pipeline represents the very worst aspects of settler capitalism in Canada. As Darrin Barney has shown, pipelines are more than just devices for transporting oil: ‘They are also technologies that manufacture and intensify the inequalities that are a structural characteristic of petroleum economies everywhere. This, it would seem, is who we [Canadians] are and what we do’ (2017: 94). Whereas Barney suggests that Canada is a pipeline nation, Shipley goes even further in arguing that Canada is irrefutably defined by settler capitalism and the colonial imagination, two core ideological and material premises that are ‘inseparable from what Canada is and does’ (2020: 508). The formal announcement of the CGL project would offer a glimpse of the nation state’s attempts to proliferate an ideal imaginary, one in which Canada translates the ‘single largest private investment in Canadian history’ as the means for developing an energy infrastructure that is accountable to the environment and Indigenous people, responsive to the challenges associated with climate change, and robust enough to create jobs and increase prosperity (Crawford 2018). As then B.C. Premier John Horgan stated

during the press conference, ‘British Columbians want a future that brings opportunities for them and their kids in the communities they call home, while living up to our responsibilities to guarantee clean air, land and water for the generations that follow’ (cited in Crawford 2018: n.pag.). The peddling of such an imaginary is very much informed by settler capitalism and the colonial imagination – and it stands in direct contrast with the imaginaries-work inspired by the Wet’suwet’en, who present themselves as protectors and custodians of the land, and as communities who continue to fight to secure the futures of coming generations’ title to the land.

The Haida Nation and Wet’suwet’en represent but two of the over six hundred and thirty Indigenous First Nations communities of Turtle Island (‘First Nations’), but their struggles to survive, thrive, and achieve full sovereignty under the oppressive settler-colonial-capitalist context that is present-day Canada have endured. Whereas the Wet’suwet’en story is indicative of a much more pernicious, corrosive, and destructive presence on the part of the Canadian nation state, both the federal and provincial governments remain deliberate in their conjuring of imaginaries that invoke reciprocity and good relations, accountability and prosperity, as well as visions of a bright future. The violent removal of the Wet’suwet’en from their territory during periods of sustained non-violent protest, in addition to the ecological destruction and damage wrought via the construction of the pipeline (as depicted in *Yintah*) serve as decisive evidence that the nation state’s imaginaries are not reserved for Indigenous peoples in Canada. On the other hand, the imaginaries and futures described by both the Haida and Wet’suwet’en offer visions of Indigenous self-determination wherein each respective community asserts its sovereignty in the protection and oversight of the land, as well as the autonomy to express their own distinct ways of living and being. The Haida’s recent path towards sovereignty and self-determination is the result of decades of struggle against, and negotiations with, the nation state. Even in their understanding of the title agreement with the province of British Columbia, the imaginary is of a different nature. As longtime Haida activist, Guujaaw Edenshaw, has affirmed:

[The title] doesn’t come from the Crown, doesn’t come from the court. It comes from our ancestry [...] The energy that has been going to fighting over the last 50 years, 100 years can turn to creating and building on our people’s strength.

(cited in Moran 2024: n.pag.)

Here the imaginary is firmly anchored in the past through the Haida’s lineage to its ancestry and also situated in the present and future flourishing of its broader community. The imaginaries-work of the Haida, Wet’suwet’en, and the Canadian nation state serve as this book’s point of departure for exploring the intersections between dominant/hegemonic imaginaries and decolonial politics.

Decolonial Media Imaginaries (DMI) begins from the basic premise that imaginaries serve an important role in the articulation and elaboration of identity, sociality, collectivity, and solidarity, especially in terms of the co-fashioning of ways of life and living. Imaginaries are designed to be inhabited and eventually to be lived in. The most dominant imaginaries of the industrialist past and late-capitalist present have been most finely attuned to expanding the influence of colonial, capitalist, and neo-liberal priorities and imperatives. One of the consequences associated with the circulation of these dominant imaginaries has been the marginalization and diminishment of other modes of representation that illuminate alternative ways of living that run counter to these powerful tools of worldmaking. *DMI* lays the groundwork to examine the power and limitations of both dominant and marginalized imaginaries, suggesting that the work imaginaries perform is ongoing, long-standing, and deeply embedded in broader historical, political, and geographical currents. As such, this book offers a more speculative, albeit theoretically and conceptually engaged discussion surrounding the future viability and vitality of decolonial media imaginaries as instruments for decolonial worldbuilding.

This book pivots away from the digital, technological, and sublime imaginaries created in the service of global capitalism to foreground the potential viability and generativity of cultivating decolonial media imaginaries. To do so, I situate the work of a wide variety of Indigenous, postcolonial, feminist, and critical thinkers to better illuminate the desire lines that lead to decolonial imaginaries and beyond. Among the decolonial desires articulated, scholars and activists have called for the rematriation of land, the regeneration of multispecies relations, the forwarding of Indigenous and Black futures, as well as the expansion of decolonial technologies and emancipatory designs. In foregrounding the vitality and necessity of these non-linear paths towards decolonial relations and arrangements, we come up against the sheer weight of neocolonial and capitalist forces which have become deeply engrained in the soil, air, water, and natural environments upon which all species depend. Indeed, to engage in the creation of decolonial media imaginaries is to withdraw and disinvest from the extractivist logics that pervade contemporary life and culture, and to invest in and deepen our commitments to sustainable life and just relations. *Decolonial Media Imaginaries* thus simultaneously grapples with the contradictions, counter-forces, and solidarities underpinning the struggle for decolonial futures.

Resisting the urge to merely theorize and/or dream up what a decolonial media imaginary might most closely resemble, this work also invokes the terrain prepared by decolonial scholars, settler academics, artists, and collectives to draw attention to the strategies, tools, tactics, and praxis that may be useful in bringing decolonial futures more closely within reach. Indeed, this project weaves together strands from existing scholarship to illuminate the already active and vibrant work on decolonial radical politics and infuses the latter in the largely undertheorized realm of decolonial

media imaginaries. Some of the most important work to emerge of late has been firmly situated within the confines of colonial institutions (namely, places of higher learning), and this research continues to place a great deal of emphasis on subverting capitalism, delinking from Western epistemology, advancing knowledge from the Global South, and sustaining pedagogical drives towards reparations.

Decolonization and the decolonial as invitation to reckon

The book's core area of inquiry – decolonial media imaginaries – cannot be easily separated or untangled from questions pertaining to power, epistemology, ideology, infrastructure, land, labour, politics, and imagination. The book begins with an acknowledgement of the devastating legacies associated with colonialism and empire. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report (2015: 44–45), the early European-based colonization period is best characterized as an era of military conquest, mass migration, unbridled expansion, massive land expropriation, and wealth generation – all of which constituted disastrous outcomes for Indigenous peoples the world over. Of particular note here is the degree to which colonialism as a near-totalizing system of oppression would enable European colonial powers to lay claim to most of the earth's surface, including land mass and the seas (Howe 2002: 62). According to Ashley Dawson, imperialist ideologies of domination used to 'justify European expropriation of Indigenous people and their land, also established an exploitative attitude towards flora and fauna in the colonies' (2022: 62). As Gord Hill explains in *500 Years of Indigenous Resistance*, the very foundations of colonialism saw its purest expression in the interrelated projects of 'exploiting the lands and peoples to the fullest' (2010: 15) – so much so, Hill suggests, that the period beginning in/around 1492 in the Americas is most clearly distilled through the exercise of economic expansion, land exploitation, and human extermination. In terms of the genocidal scale attributed to European colonial powers during a 100-period beginning in the sixteenth century, the populations of Indigenous peoples were decimated, declining from approximately 70–100 million to around 12 million; the Aztec nation, for example, saw its population reduced from 30 million to 3 million in a 50-year period (Hill 2010: 17). European (or Western) colonialism is thus a form of imperialism that deploys strategies of colonization in the interests of conquering populations, administering distant territories, and exploiting the local populations' resources and labour (Beaule 2017: 6).

It is during the early colonial era that the idea of modernity would begin its ascendancy as 'a discourse that promises happiness and salvation through conversion, progress, civilization, modernization, development, and market democracy' (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 142). The onset of settler colonialism (a foundational

element of both colonialism and modernity) would bring about the elaboration of an enduring structure predicated on the elimination of Indigenous peoples and on the usurpation of land; as Patrick Wolfe has argued, it created the conditions for ‘settler colonizers [to] come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event’ (2006: 388). Promises of wealth and class status served in part to cement settler commitments to the project of colonization, as would ‘a particular realization of the imperial imagination’ (Smith 2021: 26) through the proliferation of images/imaginaries about the future nation state. Whereas colonialism represents a practice and ideology that extends globally across time and space that is centred on Western conceptions of land regimes, settler colonialism is not a historical epoch but rather ‘a hegemonic bloc of time that still persists today’ (Harjo 2019: 65). For Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson, ‘colonialism survives in a settler form’ (2014: 7) predicated on the ongoing elimination of Indigenous people, the theft of their land, and their assimilation within a white settler colonial context. Importantly, settler colonialism would have an even greater and more extensive impact – dispossessing Indigenous communities of ‘futures imagined on their terms within their ways of knowing’ (Harjo 2019: 10). In having painted such a dire picture, the question remains regarding how best to challenge and overturn settler colonial structures.

One of the most important conceptual tools for making light of the impacts, spectres, and hauntings associated with colonialism was introduced by Peruvian scholar Aníbal Quijano. For Quijano, the concept of coloniality or *colonialidad de poder* (‘coloniality of power’) was first introduced to describe a ‘form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed’ (2007: 170). The concept of coloniality or coloniality of power has been used to describe ‘a matrix of power that produces racial and gender hierarchies on the global and local levels, functioning alongside capital to maintain a modern regime of exploitation and domination’ (Maldonado-Torres cited in Gongora 2022: 47). For Nelson Maldonado-Torres, coloniality not only survives colonialism, it persists as an undeniable constitutive element of modernity. The persistence and ubiquity of coloniality is upheld through a variety of ordinary everyday rituals, practices, and processes:

It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath[e] coloniality all the time and everyday.

(2007: 243)

The reverberations of coloniality are thus experienced through the organization of the social as they are expressed through our ways of learning, feeling, and knowing

(Gongora 2022: 48). It is precisely due to coloniality's ubiquitous standing that the concept of coloniality would function as a decolonial concept (Mignolo 2021b: 8). As Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh suggest, coloniality will likely never disappear ('coloniality is not over; it is all over' [2018: 119]), and as such, the concept of decoloniality has been advanced to signal 'calls for radical change in the dominant order and in its foundational base of capitalism, Western modernity, and ongoing colonial power' (2018: 58). As scholars of the Global South have often stated, decoloniality must be situated within the context of ongoing coloniality, and it bears repeating that the 'the political and epistemic foundations of decoloniality have been in place for over five decades' (Chiumbu and Radebe 2020: 6).

Sara Ahmed cautions us to be weary regarding the use(s) of certain words – 'the more words circulate, the less they seem to do' (2019: 149) – pointing to the limits/dangers involved in deploying a concept such as *decoloniality* and/or *decolonization*. As Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang argued now over a decade ago, decolonization is not a metaphor – it involves nothing less than the 'repatriation of Indigenous land and life' (2012: 21). Decolonization also refers to the 'double movement of anticolonialism and rematriation [of land]' (paperson 2017: xv, xxii). At its worst, decolonization is taken as mythology (Grosfoguel 2007: 220) or commodified and 'stripped of its connection to the vital work of Indigenous people' (Risam 2022: 137). Thus, in confronting the immensity of the actual work of decolonization, that is, in recognizing decolonization as a long-term process that involves not only the repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples but also a wholesale divestment from colonial power and colonial frameworks (Brah 2022: 11), decoloniality offers a useful option, path, analytic, and praxis for living and being otherwise (Mignolo and Walsh 2018). As Pavitra Sundar and Debashree Mukherjee insist, decoloniality represents an 'invitation to reckon with ongoing epistemic and material harms wrought through the nexus of coloniality, racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and the academy' (2022: 7). Reckoning here serves as an acknowledgement of these ongoing harms, as reorientation away from the colonial matrix of power, and as a move towards exploring decolonial options: 'the task is to delink from modern/colonial praxis of living and knowing, and to walk toward re-existing in the borderland and the borderlines in decolonial praxis of living, knowing, sensing, and of loving' (Mignolo and Walsh 2018: 223).

For Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, we must engage in hospicing modernity and coloniality as a means of doing away with systems built upon and maintained through 'expropriation, dispossession, destitution, genocides, and ecocides' (2021: 244). To do so involves enacting a widespread severance from modernity via disidentification, dis-ease, disenchantment, and disillusionment (2021: 214). This can also mean reckoning with, and delinking or disinvesting from modernity, a process that demands the decolonization of our unconscious. These activities are

representative of the extremely difficult processes at the root of the decolonization project, undertakings that offer no incentives or rewards for doing so (2021: 239). The double bind she identifies relates to how ‘decolonization is impossible when our livelihoods are underwritten by colonial violence and unsustainability’ and how it is equally ‘impossible to imagine decolonial futures from where we stand, having our livelihoods underwritten and unconscious mostly occupied by modernity/coloniality’ (2021: 244, 181).

Su-ming Khoo and Anique Vered (2020: 233) have referred to this liminal moment as the ‘invisible middle’ of decoloniality, a period in which decolonial efforts can just as easily ‘reflect and reproduce colonial hierarchies of power and control’. But just as the concept and practice of decoloniality can be redirected (unwittingly or not) towards colonial ends (Moyo 2020; Yates 2020), the term remains useful in grounding the problem of dehumanization under ongoing coloniality and in contextualizing the ‘existence-based struggles of peoples historically subalternised by race, gender, and geopolitical struggle’ (Walsh 2020: 605–06) who have endeavoured, over the last 500 years, to re-humanize and re-exist beyond the confines of colonial rule. One of the main areas of inquiry for decolonial thinkers has materialized through the question of epistemology as an exit strategy away from coloniality/modernity. As Macarena Gómez-Barris explains, ‘decoloniality moves away from singularity and the reduction imposed by the European gaze toward the proliferation of epistemological possibility’ (2017: 3). It is precisely the cultivation and proliferation of this epistemological possibility that animates calls for, and expressions of, decolonial politics today. Rather than positioning decoloniality as a set of practices or processes that atomize and individualize human struggles, the concept is most useful when conceived of as a shared process underpinning individual and collective action towards the transformation of structures and institutions (Mafie’o et al. 2022: 548). As Rolando Vázquez has argued, decoloniality represents the ‘recovery of relationality’ and an awareness that life is sustained through this ‘net of relations’ (2020: 155–56). In this light, decolonial politics as a form of collective expression seeks to move beyond colonial haunting in favour of cultivating ‘other ways of being bound-together’ (Khoo and Vered 2020: 225). The next section attends to questions of epistemic possibility and of being bound together through the proliferation of decolonial futures and imaginaries.

Imaginaries/futurities

The history of colonization in/across Turtle Island is one of unquenchable violence directed towards Indigenous peoples and the Earth. The ongoing injustices of the long colonial period into the present have foregrounded the need

to bring new decolonial imaginaries into being. If, as Stuart Hall has argued, postcolonial/decolonial theoretical approaches have created room for former imperial grand narratives to be decentred and rewritten into new diasporic ones (Glück 2018: 6), the articulation of imaginaries-work may meaningfully contribute to the fashioning of alternative decolonial futures. As Vilashini Cooppan suggests in her conception of the work decolonial imaginaries could perform, the latter may illuminate

what it means not just to live on/live after but to live *with*, with others, in solidarity, in an affinity that is not a sameness, in an aftermath consciousness that recognizes multiple, interlinked, and layered histories of dispossession, violence, and loss.

(2019: 413, original emphasis)

At stake is a sense of being bound together in the co-creation of futures other than those of the colonial past and present, futures rooted in emancipation and liberation struggles the world over. In his recent work on radical futurisms, T. J. Demos reminds us that ‘the emancipatory imagination of the not-yet must be grounded in the traditions of the oppressed’ (2023b: 86) precisely because we have yet to escape the hauntings of colonial oppression.

In the face of unrelenting oppression, it is heartening to read work by Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson that insists on ‘the visionary love work of worldmaking’ (2022: 173) as a tool for designing decolonial imaginaries and as a driver of decolonial politics. As far as other decolonial tools are concerned, imagination and storytelling have been gaining momentum in discourses on decoloniality and decolonization (Mafle’o et al. 2022: 548) – they have even been cast as ‘the raw material from which to build just futures’ (Sundar and Mukherjee 2022: 3). If futurity is something that can be practiced, moulded, and given shape via community engagement in order to imagine ‘unactivated possibilities’ (Harjo 2019: 216), the power of imaginaries-work may hold significant promise in the realm of decolonial politics. Writing on the powerful lessons to be drawn from Afrofuturism, Jenna Hanchey points to the notion of a ‘radically inclusive liberation’ (2022: 285) for all (human and more-than-human species) as the foundation upon which just futures must be actualized. Nicole Furtado’s research on Indigenous Futurisms explores how tapping into the power and promise of ‘the imagined space of the future becomes an ideological battleground with consequences for our cultures, the planet and the next generations to come at stake’ (2024: 28). Rather than follow the colonizer’s scripts that envision the future as ‘free from Indigenous peoples’ (Kinder 2021: 71), the imaginaries-work of Indigenous Futurisms centres Indigenous peoples in depictions of the not-yet. An essential facet of imaginaries- and futurities-work is tied to the creation,

circulation, and viability of sustaining decolonial visions that are decidedly for epistemic liberation/freedom and for the diversity of related struggles and lived realities (Khoo and Vered 2020: 237). Catherine E. Walsh captures this best when she speaks of a ‘decolonial *for*’ – a set of ‘initiatives, strategies, and practices that fissure and crack colonial power’ (2023: 164) – of which decolonial media imaginaries-work represents a shining example.

Book overview

Decolonial Media Imaginaries deploys a straightforward structure and organization: the book begins with an overview of both dominant/hegemonic and decolonial imaginaries, moves to a discussion of the elements and move(ment)s needed to bring decolonial futures into being, transitions towards a more sustained exploration of how artists, institutions, and media participate in the expression of decolonial politics, before offering some concluding remarks on the potential significance of media imaginaries-work for decolonial futures. Chapter 2 engages the question of imaginaries as a point of departure for exploring the work imaginaries perform in the realm of everyday life. The imaginaries we come to know hold enormous power in shaping and moulding into view the ways in which we perceive, understand, and make sense of our immediate environments and corresponding realities. Despite the impressive array of imaginaries that materialize – and have materialized – over time, space, and geography, only a small and persistent cluster of imaginaries maintain their foothold in the popular imagination. Just as various imaginaries simultaneously compete for legitimacy and acceptance, the fact remains that not all imaginaries succeed in gaining traction, winning favour, or expanding influence. To highlight the ways in which imaginaries do and do not materialize more broadly, I introduce two examples that illustrate the promise, challenges, and shortcomings of imaginaries-work – slow living and post-work – before turning to a more deeply resonant historical example: the World’s Fair. The World’s Fairs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries establish a useful framework for contextualizing the defining features of imaginaries – and also for establishing a relay towards discussing media and technological imaginaries of the present. The chapter ends with an encapsulation of both the generative and problematic features associated with dominant imaginaries, highlighting the need to consider the proliferation of new imaginaries in the articulation of decolonial futures.

Just as the preceding chapter ends with a discussion concerning some of the more problematic features of dominant imaginaries, Chapter 3 begins with an exploration of how the latter imaginaries have contributed to the creation, expansion, and acceleration of destructive cycles of worldmaking. With technology and

media imaginaries serving as consistent, decipherable, and ubiquitous touchstones for progress, prosperity, and human flourishing, this chapter pivots away from the digital, technological, and sublime imaginaries created in the service of global capitalism to foreground the potential viability and generativity of cultivating decolonial media imaginaries. This chapter describes the vitality and necessity of rendering visible and creating anew the desire lines that lead to decolonial futures and beyond. Because the current historical moment has been shaped by the weight of neocolonial, capitalist, and neo-liberal forces, this section of the book presents decolonial media imaginaries as a form of withdrawal and disinvestment from the extractivist logics that pervade contemporary life and culture, and as a form of investment in and commitment to sustainable life and just relations. Through two separate but related case studies, the focal point of the discussion emerges through an engagement with solar infrastructure, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous community relations. In drawing upon Indigenous-led infrastructural solarities projects in Turtle Island and the running of the salmon community revitalization efforts in Mi'kma'ki, I point to an alternative form of imaginaries-work that centres relationality, collectivity, community sovereignty, and just futures as powerful counter-forces to the more deeply entrenched and dominant media and technology imaginaries of the present.

Chapter 4 builds on the notion of alternative imaginaries-work, as expressed through the infrastructural and community-centred examples of the previous chapter, to examine another site of potentially generative decolonial possibility: the modern-day university. More specifically, this chapter emphasizes institutional critique and reform within and beyond the university as potential sites for decolonial change and transformation. The labour of academics, researchers, scholars, and arts and culture workers is foregrounded as a more elaborate case study for reflecting on the cultivation of new desire lines and the implementation of new lines of flight for challenging, subverting, or steering institutions towards decolonization efforts. This chapter situates the work of Indigenous, postcolonial, feminist, and critical media studies thinkers to put forward a more coherent picture of the contradictions, counter-forces, and solidarities that underpin the struggle for decolonial futures. This chapter revisits the terrain prepared by decolonial scholars, *scyborgs*, and settler academics to draw attention to the strategies, tools, tactics, and praxis that may be useful in bringing decolonial futures more closely within reach.

Chapter 5 shifts away from the university as a potential site for decolonial media imaginaries-work to the contemporary art world as a representative case study for reflecting on this section's core question: Can alternatives to capitalism, occupation, and settler colonialism be conceptualized with, through, or across media, and, by extension, can media imaginaries of any kind serve the larger project of bringing decolonial futures into being? Through an exploration of

Afrofuturist and Indigenous exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, MSVU Art Gallery, and Royal Ontario Museum, the curatorial interventions of a South Asian collective at documenta fifteen, and the Indigenous-led handover of SBC Gallery in Montreal/Tiohtià:ke, I examine the fraught and convivial ways in which artists and institutions collaborate to bring new decolonial imaginaries into being. I argue that the imaginaries-work emblemized through these examples present decolonial futures that advance Black and Indigenous sovereignty, all the while casting settler futures as undesirable and incompatible with these projects' larger visions of freedom and emancipation.

Whereas the previous chapter examines the extent to which artists and institutions participate in the elaboration of decolonial media imaginaries, Chapter 6 focuses more intently on medium-specific manifestations of decoloniality through the lens of Indigenous Futurisms. Through an exploration of video simulations, virtual reality, and a multimedia website – by way of an extended discussion of the Indigenous media art of Skawennati, Lisa Jackson, and Jennifer Wemigwans – I suggest that the lens of Indigenous futurity that animates these projects offers an essential window through which to conceive and elaborate decolonial media imaginaries. Through their respective endeavours, each artist foregrounds the representation and articulation of Indigenous futures as counterpoints to the perceived inevitability that settler colonialism will prevail, and as robust examples of Indigenous resistance and sovereignty. One important through line these art-based interventions share is a commitment to present and future Indigenous flourishing, as well as a desire to include non-Indigenous people/communities in the future elaboration of decolonial futures. This chapter ends on an optimistic note, suggesting that the creation and circulation of media imaginaries informed by Indigenous Futurisms could participate in the future popularization of decolonial politics.

The book's final chapter offers a more exploratory appraisal of the future promise and potentialities associated with decolonial media imaginaries. In framing media imaginaries-work through a decolonial lens, the book invites readers to shift their gaze away from dominant imaginaries that serve capitalism, settler colonialism, and other forms of oppressive dominance, in the interests of activating new desire lines towards decolonization. More than merely situating media imaginaries-work within the realm of media production and circulation (e.g. television, film, video games), I attempt to redraw these conceptual lines by invoking spectacle, infrastructure, community, social movements, pedagogy, praxis, and art (among other things), as fruitful areas of decolonial media inquiry. Although I remain optimistic regarding the prospect of decolonial media imaginaries in provoking wide-ranging critiques, reflections, and dialogue in relation to settler capitalism and neo-liberalism, and in pushing forward a new variety of decolonial

agendas, I also acknowledge the future layers of political struggle to come. The conclusion thus points to imaginaries-work as a tool for inciting action on urgent questions tied to the politics of reckoning, incommensurability, and solidarity. Prefiguring decolonial futures is never a given in the realm of media, politics, or social movements, and as such, the groundwork must be laid for imaginaries-work to assist in cultivating deeper forms of solidarity across difference. More than this, a broader disinvestment in the project of modernity must go hand-in-hand with a deeper commitment to decolonial politics on the long road to decolonization ahead.

To conclude, the vast majority of the introduction has been reserved for establishing the context and introducing core ideas to be explored in this book. To be more specific, I have paid much closer attention to (de)coloniality and imaginaries-work as organizing frameworks, with very little attention given to media. The media component in *Decolonial Media Imaginaries* is crucial to the work presented in these pages, but I have been deliberate in de-emphasizing and even de-centring the role media has played in the social, symbolic, formal, and representational formations discussed above. Following Roger Silverstone, I situate media

as process, as a thing doing and a thing done, and as a thing doing and a thing done at all levels, wherever human beings congregate both in real and in virtual space, where they communicate [...] where they seek in a multitude of ways, and with varying degrees of success, to connect one to the other.

(1999: 4)

I draw on Silverstone, more specifically, to conceptualize media as part of the ‘general texture of experience’ (12) – an approach that grounds my integration of ‘media’ examples and case studies, ranging from media events (World’s Fair), media corporations (AT&T), material infrastructure (solar panels, pipelines), social media movements (#RhodesMustFall), media curriculum, museum and gallery exhibitions, and Indigenous media art, among others. In conceiving of media along these lines, I have opted to stray from disciplinary conventions that might push me to too narrowly define decolonial media imaginaries, or sway me to only study certain kinds of media or cultural forms. In choosing to elide a certain kind of disciplinary rigour, I have aimed to produce a work that is more in dialogue with decolonial thinkers and decolonial thought, and less aligned with new and emergent currents in Communication and Media Studies. My approach has been informed by both Julietta Singh’s (2017) and Lauren Fournier’s (2021) calls to re-orient ourselves away from mastery, and by Natalie Loveless’ (2019) invitation to engage in ‘disciplinary promiscuity’ or ‘polydisciplinamory’. This

research project began with a very basic speculative question: what role will media play in the decolonial future? A more generative and interesting question has been formulated more recently by Sasha Crawford-Holland and Lindsay LeBlanc, who ask: ‘In developing a more complex understanding of media and its entanglements, how do we reconcile the increasingly colonizing force of technology with its potential as a site of decolonial creation?’ (2023: 341). In what follows, I explore the intersections of (de)coloniality, media entanglements, and future-oriented imaginaries in the hopes of contributing to the growing calls to build otherwise worlds rooted in radical liberation for all.