

(Mungwini 2013: 79) – is thus a key element of decolonizing. For Polynesians such as Tupaia, the world encompasses knowable relations between stars, ocean currents, waves, humans and other entities, which form a coherent knowledge system. In another example, non-Indigenous freshwater scientists at a Canadian research centre sat down together with Indigenous people to learn about each other's knowledge systems – a sometimes awkward process that nevertheless allowed the whole group to co-define the research undertaken (Bozhkov et al. 2020). The process of decolonizing geography occurs through these kind of transformations of power dynamics (de Sousa Santos 2014; **Chapter 1.VI**).

Due to global interactions and westernizing education, epistemologies do not exist in discrete, separate domains. Encounters – at times forced, often voluntary – continuously shake up ways of knowing and complicate the boundaries between standard ways of knowing the world and alternative ways. Tupaia's ocean chart, for instance, illustrates how formerly separate Pacific and European geographies interacted to generate a new way of thinking spatially. Tupaia's star-based system and his chart for Cook represent two facets of modernity-coloniality. Neither can be defined as 'tradition' or as irrelevant in the present because they exist(ed) alongside each other within colonial-modernity, although the Tahitian system was treated dismissively. This chapter argues that plural ways of knowing the world are lying in plain sight, and that geography can nurture a decolonial kaleidoscope of analysis by respectfully listening to and learning from path-breaking geographers.

II 'Alterable Geographies': Ways to Decolonize Geography

Having established that geography has been constructed through sanctioned ignorance, what persuades geographers to embark on decolonizing? Three issues have become central: first, geography's problematic status as an academic discipline; second, the need to work horizontally with plural forms of geographical knowledge; and third, demands for

social justice. Together, these issues make the case for decolonizing across geography as a whole, as it is in urgent need of change.

Arguments for decolonizing rest on wide-ranging critiques of the discipline's colonial biases and presumptions. The fact that colonial impacts are durable and damaging was documented in the 1960s and 1970s by geographers focused on global anti-imperialism. They highlighted colonialism and dependent development, informed by geographical knowledge centres that actively sought to think differently to north Atlantic modalities. David Slater, for instance, worked at the University of Dar es Salaam in the 1970s, and throughout his career engaged with Brazilian, Spanish American and French geographers. At this time too, geographers identified colonial relations of territory and difference in 'fourth world' enclaves, where state and capital had expropriated Indigenous resources (Stea and Wisner 1984). Current debates around decolonizing geography highlight the challenges of changing colonialist thinking, undoing colonial epistemologies and facilitating plurality and horizontality (Noxolo 2017a; Esson 2018). The geographical status quo is maintained by the existing institutions of knowledge, largely (but not exclusively) north Atlantic, European and Australasian universities and institutes. Colonial-modern geography is grounded in powerful minds and places, whose epistemologies are supported by governments, elites and sectors of the public. By contrast, the voices, experiences and thinking of individuals and groups with plural, alternative understandings of the world and its geographies are either excluded entirely or hold less powerful positions in these institutions. Latinx, Black and Muslim geographers are minorities in English-speaking geography.

Decolonial arguments extend these concerns and ask how and why geography remains oblivious to and complicit in the colonial present. For Patricia Noxolo, we must answer two questions: 'first, how are geographers now inserting ourselves into ongoing dynamics of coloniality, and second, which particular aspects of the present moment are geography academics well placed to address?' (Noxolo 2017b: 318).

Addressing Noxolo's first question, geographers increasingly take note of the discipline's imbrications with all aspects of colonial power and of the inconvenient truth that geography actively sustains colonial relations (Holmes et al. 2014; Jazeel 2017). Responding to student and activist pressure, geography has to face up to its routine complicity with power, expressed in the one-world world and racialization. With respect to Noxolo's second question, geographers are well placed to pluralize geographies and analyse coloniality from human and physical perspectives (Mignolo 2000). For instance, as environmental geographies draw on geophysical and social science they can contribute decolonial insights regarding the kinds of voices and motivations behind discussions of the Anthropocene (Knitter et al. 2019; Dhillon 2020). To combat institutionalized exclusion, path-breaking geographers began to diversify geographical thinking beyond standard epistemologies. For example, the critical development geographer Janet G. Townsend worked closely with rural Mexican and Colombian women, documenting their lives from within a pluralized feminist framework (Townsend and collaborators 1994). Such engagements forge more horizontal, reciprocal relations in dialogues outside the university with publics and silenced groups. Re-centring the world on plural knowledges creates deeper engagements with non-metropolitan geography scholars, and facilitates learning from **Southern theory** to reformulate frameworks around non-western situations. This type of engagement requires of western geographers a thorough area-specific understanding and the ability to establish trust across differences (Jazeel 2014).

A third impetus towards decolonizing geography is the call for justice in light of colonial-modern inequalities and material inequities. In arguments that foreground geography's moral and ethical basis, decolonial debates express the urgency of solidarity and socio-environmental justice. These decolonial and ethical arguments energetically seek to minimize the boundaries between university geography and place-based activism, between scholars and diverse publics (Daigle and Ramírez 2019). For physical and human geographies, such

commitments work in two directions: on the one hand, by supporting less powerful groups they validate demands for reparations, structural change and dignity (Fanon 2004; Esson et al. 2017); on the other, they redirect geography's purpose to 'enable liberation' (McKittrick 2019: 244).

In summary, arguments for decolonizing geography are based on a recognition of the institutionalized nature of colonial-modern knowledges, calls to work outside the university to create respectful and horizontal ways of learning with plural Other geographies, and action for social justice. In this sense, geography is not rigidly fixed in coloniality, but can be and is being altered and reoriented (McKittrick 2019). Decolonizing thus ultimately presents a hopeful agenda, holding out the possibility that by decolonizing *itself*, the discipline of geography can expand its anti-colonial actions and critiques, a point we turn to now.

III Turning the Decolonial into Geography

Having identified sanctioned ignorance and the rationales for decolonizing, diverse geographers have undertaken to develop a distinctively *geographical* lens to understand present-day colonial geophysical and social relations. While decolonizing 'work[s] to understand the world well beyond geographic disciplinary norms' (Holmes et al. 2014: 557), the skills and insights of physical and human geographers can map the operation of colonial-modernity. Coloniality-modernity produces 'multiple geographies, bodies and scars' (Pierre et al. 2020: 408), which in turn highlights the significance of the *spatial* dimensions of modernity-coloniality. Physical geography has begun to interpret 'stochastic and complex physical processes [that] shape the earth' (Knitter et al. 2019: 452) in relation to historic and contemporary political and social forces (Chapter 4.III). Decolonial human geography translates lessons from postcolonial, participatory and feminist geography into a critical lens to discern and analyse the socio-spatial dynamics of colonial-modernity across scales and spaces (Naylor et al. 2018). By making

these moves, geography provides a discipline-specific analysis of coloniality's ongoing epistemic, embodied and material impacts.

Colonial representations of non-western people and places have been critically deconstructed by postcolonial geographers, who identify how visual content and discourse together uphold western self-identity and validate Eurocentric power. Inspired by Edward Said (**Chapter 2.I**), geographers demonstrate that imaginative geographies 'both legitimize and produce "worlds"' by and for geopolitical interests (Gregory et al. 2009: 369–71). Through texts and symbols, imaginative geographies dehumanize people and places 'elsewhere', making them intelligible through the western lenses of race, geopolitics and development (Gregory 2004). Paying close attention to geographical imaginations helps us to understand how hierarchies of difference (between the west and its Other) are produced relationally and become 'common sense'. For instance, North American projects to diversify food production and consumption draw upon (unacknowledged) white ideals, landscapes and histories originating in settler colonialism and Black plantation slavery and food provisioning (Guthman 2008; Ramírez 2015).

In comparison to other disciplines, geography brings a strongly contextualized and process-based understanding of dynamic, multiscalar, interconnected spatial processes in specific locations. To understand interlocking, mutually influential colonial-modern dynamics, interdisciplinary decolonial accounts track global processes over centuries, while geographers explain the multifaceted dimensions of spatial transformations across and within scales (Haesbaert 2021). For the Brazilian geographer Walter Cruz, decolonial geography analyses colonial-modernity 'on the ground', linking concrete multiscalar and specifically located processes (Cruz 2017). Studying climate change through a decolonial lens, for instance, means looking at political institutions and socio-cultural diversity, and how their interactions with complex geophysical processes shape the Earth. Human geography delves into how hegemonic geo-historic processes of coloniality shape the making of space and place (**Chapter**

4.I). For instance, Black people's experiences of housing, health and environment are rooted in enduring processes of enslavement, displacement, racial capitalism and the denial of Black agency (section 3.IV). Decolonizing geography withdraws from universalizing scientific approaches to refocus on situated spatial processes combining plural non-human entities, geophysical dynamics, life-worlds and multiple knowledge systems.

This means that what counts as decolonial geography is geographically differentiated, varying with location and situated geo-histories. Peoples' understandings of the world in relation to colonial-modernity and decolonizing are many and varied, as they arise from specific places and associated knowledges. In this sense, as two North American geographers suggest, 'The decolonial shapeshifts depending on the land you stand upon, including the differential decolonial desires layered into a place' (Daigle and Ramírez 2019: 78). Decolonial geographies counter modernity-coloniality by providing spatially disaggregated and contextualized accounts of dominant power, knowledge and subjectivities and spaces where coloniality is contested. Decolonial geographers often identify and affirm the place they speak from, as I do in this book's Preface. To challenge Eurocentric universalism, a geographer's institutional, social-political and epistemic positions are acknowledged. This recognizes that we each speak from a particular location, social milieu, institution and scholarly tradition. Two Canadian human geographers write: 'Michelle is Cree, a member of Constance Lake First Nation located in the Treaty 9 territory, and a new and uninvited guest on Musqueam territory. She is a new assistant professor in the UBC geography department ... Juanita is a white settler and uninvited guest on Musqueam territory. She is a tenured associate professor in the UBC geography department' (Daigle and Sundberg 2017: 341). Geographers' self-descriptions can change with dynamic shifts in social and personal positions, but they always avoid speaking from 'no-where'. Locating oneself in knowledge-power dynamics involves recognizing the awkward, compromised relations within coloniality and intersectional experiences.

What geography adds to decolonizing

This section has argued that geography's discipline-specific frameworks contribute in distinctive ways to decolonizing Eurocentric and colonial-modern processes and knowledge. Geography is a powerful tool both for analysing modernity-coloniality and for engaging respectfully with plural geographies and knowledges. Four geographical tools are important in this regard:

- Examining landscapes as geophysical and socio-cultural spaces which are powerfully shaped by colonial-modernity, and thus contested by different groups
- Understanding the enduring power of colonial-modern imaginative geographies
- Understanding modernity and coloniality as multiscalar and interconnected hegemonic processes that are spatially differentiated and geo-historic
- Acknowledging the insufficiency of exclusively western scientific approaches, and entering into dialogues with diverse forms and locations of knowledge

Decolonizing geography has begun to 'critique and reimagine decolonial theory through a geographic lens' (Naylor et al. 2018: 2). The next section builds on these insights by outlining the synergies between specific strands of critical geography and decolonial thinking.

IV Decolonial Kaleidoscope

How do we begin to think about geographical theory outside a Eurocentric worldview, consisting of mostly white geographers and philosophers, to not only learn but also honour other perspectives and worldviews that would include an engagement of both Black geographies and Indigenous knowledges? (Mahtani 2014: 365)