

# Confronting Climate Coloniality

Decolonizing Pathways for Climate Justice

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## **1 Urgency, Complexities, and Strategies to Confront Climate Coloniality and Decolonize Pathways for Climate Justice**

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*Farhana Sultana*

## Introduction

*A child walks along a shoreline, carefully placing items she picks up in the plastic bag she is carrying. These are treasures to her. She observes what is salvageable and what is not, rummaging through piles of items that do not make sense at first glance. Zooming in, one sees wet clothes, shattered glass, battered pots and pans, bits of disassembled furniture, debris from boats, rotting fruit, and other flotsam and jetsam. Zooming out, one can see the child surrounded by broken houses, uprooted trees, upturned fishing vessels, carcasses of animals, and watery destruction as far as the eye can see. Other children and adults rush around, picking up pieces of their lives from the shoreline. The swell of grief matches the swell of the sea, still turbulent, with the sky still rumbling, like the child's stomach. The storm surge has receded, but in its wake are destroyed villages of impoverished fishermen, the devastated lives of all those who endured yet another tropical cyclone, forced to navigate another disaster too soon. But they will rebuild again, whether in the floodscapes of their homelands or migrate elsewhere to find a plot of dry land not already occupied. But they will help each other.*

*On the other side of the globe, a child and her family walk miles in the desert searching for water. The desiccated land and cloudless sky foretell the lengthening of a drought, and the heat is unbearable. The parched backdrop matches the parched throats of humans and cattle alike. There is no new water source to be found today, so they will have to journey on tomorrow through vast deserted landscapes where prolonged lack of rainfall has destroyed livelihoods and lives. They share what water they do have, as they always have done. They work together to create survival strategies for the community, collaborating to rebuild the herd, hearth, and hope. But they need to find water, since water is life – something that is increasingly harder to find.*

Multiply such events several times. That is the reality many communities around the world are already facing, as more climate-fueled cyclones, hurricanes, storm surges, floods, heatwaves, sea level rise, desertification, and droughts become

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more frequent, stronger, and more unpredictable. At the same time, a majority of these communities contributed the least to the problems that they are the hardest hit by. The expanding disproportionate burdens of climate change and ecological disruptions have been known to scientists, politicians, pundits, and policymakers for decades. These issues have been discussed, debated, and written about globally, yet with marginal efforts to usher in sufficient shifts to halt further crises. Now, more and more communities are facing the realities of those children, as global trends in earth's warming and concomitant climate change and ecological degradations are fueled further, alongside societal devastations and political fallout. But these will remain unequally distributed and inequitably experienced. Confronting such realities requires the most urgent action of our times.

The term "confronting" carries different connotations depending on the context: it can signify challenging, encountering, exposing, defying, resisting, enduring, experiencing, transforming, or replacing. *Confronting Climate Coloniality: Decolonizing Pathways for Climate Justice* embodies all these aspects to grapple with the most critical issue of our era: the escalating concerns and lived realities of the climate and related environmental crises, and the collective responses they necessitate. Amidst growing ecological emergencies and climate-influenced worsening disasters, the need to confront systems that perpetuate and exacerbate impacts and suffering appears to be a unanimous global desire. But climate coloniality disrupts simplistic narratives of climate justice, as this chapter elaborates below. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which has provided evidence of climatic events and trends for several decades, recently identified colonialism as a leading cause of climate change in the WGII 6th report (IPCC 2022). This was not insignificant. The connections between climate change and legacies of colonialism and imperialism have been of greater interest to scholars in recent years, but these remain under-discussed, under-theorized, and under-confronted. This book aims to rectify such shortcomings and offer readers critical explanations of the histories of processes, mechanisms, and structures at play, and potential opportunities to reimagine ways forward and decolonize climate change for more meaningful climate justice (Sultana 2022a).

In what follows, this chapter first unpacks the concept of climate coloniality, a critical framework for understanding the contemporary climate crisis. This lays the groundwork to demonstrate the fundamental necessity of alternative approaches to climate justice that address the material, epistemic, and policy aspects of climate coloniality. The chapter thereafter provides an overview of the book's contributions, mapping the collective project that charts pathways for transformative action and fosters deeper understandings of the structural injustices embedded within climate governance, framings, policies, responses, and praxis. Urgent, critical, and pioneering interdisciplinary scholarship and ideas from around the world are presented to critically examine climate coloniality. The book delves into the colonial and racial tactics that geopolitically and epistemologically dominate and marginalize communities, particularly in the Global South, but increasingly across the globe. It simultaneously offers alternative framings and praxis to subvert

these injustices and decolonize climate action, moving away from ever-increasing atmospheres of violence and escalating climate-related catastrophes.

### **Understanding Climate Coloniality<sup>1</sup>**

But first, an explanation of what climate coloniality is and why it matters is in order. Understanding climate coloniality means demonstrating how legacies of imperial violence insidiously live on, not only in exacerbating environmental degradations, but in increased climate-induced disasters experienced by variously marginalized populations globally, who are disproportionately made vulnerable and disposable in the process – some more evident than others. Climate coloniality reproduces the hauntings of colonialism and imperialism through climate impacts in post-colonial, occupied, and settler-colonial contexts where climate-induced disasters and heightened risks have been prevalent for some time, while enrolling new spaces subjected to coloniality, thereby complicating climate politics at global and local levels. Climate change lays bare the colonialism and imperialism of not only the past, but an ongoing coloniality that governs and structures lives, institutions, laws, and policies, which are co-constitutive of processes of capitalism, imperialism, international development, and geopolitics (Agarwal & Narain 2012; Burman 2017; Sultana 2022b; Táíwò 2022; Bhambra & Newell 2023; Kolinjivadi *et al.* 2023). Climate coloniality is perpetuated through processes of neoliberalism, racial capitalism, development interventions, economic growth models, education, training, the media, and pop culture. The uneven and unequal vulnerabilities and marginalizations, of deaths and devastation taken for granted, draw attention to continuities from the past and into the future. It is a slow violence (Nixon 2013), it is an unbearable heaviness (Sultana 2022b). Yet alternative epistemologies, cosmologies, and resistances emerge from lived experiences that were/are devalued in Eurocentric modernity and climate coloniality. This requires decolonizing both epistemic violences and material outcomes for meaningful justice. By weaving through such mediations, climate coloniality can be theorized and grounded in lived experiences.

Briefly put, coloniality in lived experiences expresses the complexities of the coloniality of power (cf. Maldonado-Torres 2007; Quijano 2007; Mignolo & Walsh 2018), and the ongoing and enduring assaults of colonialism through modernity, capitalism, neocolonialism, imperialism, and international development. Coloniality relies on racial domination and hierarchical power relations established during active colonialism and ongoing in post-colonial times, where the colonial matrix of power persists. Climate coloniality persists where Eurocentric hegemony, neocolonialism, racial capitalism, uneven consumption, and military domination are co-constitutive of climate and ecological impacts experienced by variously racialized populations (see also Martinez 2014; Sheller 2020). The racial disposability of both those experiencing climate devastation in their homelands and those displaced as climate migrants demonstrate further the curtailing of self-determination and futurities (Gonzalez 2021).

Ongoing climate coloniality is expressed through insidious racism globally and continued Othering, dispossessions through colonial–capitalist extractivism and commodification, rapacious displacement and destruction, interconnected environmental degradation, creation of sacrifice zones, disproportionate exposures to harms from more powerful climate-induced hazards, and much more (Klein 2016; Mahony & Endfield 2018; Moulton & Machado 2019; Andreucci & Zografos 2022). Context matters in understanding coloniality, so it isn't just an abstract analysis of the racialization of difference, but of accounting for local, embodied, material, and lived experiences of knowing subjects.

Historical differences position colonial and imperial countries, overall, at a greater advantage over colonized, post-colonial, and occupied spaces. Colonial logics of extractivism continue through neocolonial and development interventions post-World War II (cf. Rodney 1972). The unequal ecological exchange between the Global South and Global North, ongoing extractive capitalism, and the imperial structures of global trade and domination in setting policies and ideologies – all work to maintain climate coloniality (Roberts & Parks 2009; Warlenius 2018).<sup>2</sup> Scholars have quantified this unequal ecological exchange, calling it the ongoing colonial plunder of resources from the Global South to the Global North, one that contributes to overdeveloping the latter at the expense of the former (Dorninger *et al.* 2021; Hickel *et al.* 2021; Fanning & Hickel 2023). Such processes continue various colonial patterns of harm and dispossession, including exacerbation of climate-fueled losses and damage. The racial logic of climate tragedies and cumulative impacts is ever-present. Thus, the undifferentiated humanity that is assumed in persistent narratives of the Anthropocene does not exist (Sultana 2023). Universalism of the Anthropocene obfuscates historical and contemporary power imbalances and responsibilities, and the various differentiations and racializations.

Coloniality is experienced through continued biospheric and atmospheric pollution and degradations that are both overt and covert, episodic and creeping, whereby global capitalism articulates with development and economic growth ideologies to reproduce various forms of colonial harms and risk exposures to entire countries in the Global South and communities of color in the Global North. Climate coloniality is perpetuated through global land and water grabs, deforestation for growth, neoliberal conservation projects, fossil fuel warfare, new green revolutions for agriculture, rare earth mineral mining, and carbon offsetting programs for the wealthy that are dispossessing the historically impoverished, often elsewhere. Carbon colonialism through carbon offset projects, which are increasingly ramping up instead of down, despite known critiques and resistances, has been discussed for some time (Bachram 2004; Bumpus & Liverman 2010). Extractivism propagated by global capital and state-sanctioned interventions perpetuates geopolitical climate necropolitics within and beyond borders (Charkiewicz 2009; Grove 2014; Opperman 2019; Clark 2020; DeBoom 2021; Parsons 2023).

Interventions are called by various names and have different tenors – such as green colonialism, carbon colonialism, fossil capitalism – but often with similar outcomes of domination, displacement, degradation, and impoverishment (Arboleda 2020; Ye *et al.* 2020; Vela Almeida *et al.* 2023). Colonization of the

atmosphere (Malm & Warlenius 2019) means that luxury emissions and survival emissions aren't accounted for appropriately, and increasingly less atmospheric space is left for greenhouse gas emissions and ecosystems loading for historically oppressed and impoverished communities (Agarwal & Narain 2012). Extraction and exploitation leave behind place-specific pollution, devastation, and loss, much of which is irrevocably irretrievable or recoverable. Yet after decades of evidence of escalating climate impacts, there has been little mitigation to halt ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions (Stoddard *et al.* 2021). Instead, new mitigation and adaptation endeavors can exacerbate Othering, vulnerabilities, and climate impacts (Shokry *et al.* 2023; Stock 2023) alongside the entrenchment of climate finance in maintaining certain neocolonial power relations (Ciplet *et al.* 2022).

Climate apartheid is how many have recently labeled this socio-spatial differentiation in who pays the disproportionate price of climate breakdown, is made expendable, and who is spared for now (Alston 2019; Rice *et al.* 2022; Long 2024). This form of eco-apartheid manifests between and across the Global North and Global South at multiple scales. Climate apartheid exists for those at the intersectionality of race, gender, and class exposed to ecological harm and toxic environments (Tuana 2019). There are complex forms of abjection, precarity, uncertainty, exhaustion, and trauma among those deemed disposable. At the same time, it becomes imperative to recognize the differential intersectionalities within communities in how harms can be reproduced at different scales (Kaijser & Kronsell 2014; Sultana 2014; Mikulewicz *et al.* 2023). Co-production of racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, and imperialism continue in different ways, often supported by local state, elites, and community members who can be complicit. The confluence of local power imbalances, uneven creation of vulnerabilities, and production of risks, end up merging global climate breakdown with scalar intersectional factors from the planetary to the body, thereby creating more complex tapestries of outcomes in different contexts.

Ultimately, coloniality discursively limits the terms of global debate, hegemonizes knowledge of and about climate change and related fallouts, and what actions are possible, thereby destroying other epistemologies (cf. Maldonado-Torres 2007). It appears to make choices seem impossible, or options presented as neutral when they are not, often commodifying solutions that do not deliver justice in the end. Hierarchical power relations and knowledge production are maintained in the enduring colonial matrix of power (Quijano 2000). Cognitive coloniality is maintained in the colonization of the mind in terms of what is knowable and what has valence (Nandy 1983; Wa Thiong'o 1986). This co-exists with epistemic violence in knowledge production and valuation of expertise, including devaluing feminist, anti-colonial, decolonial, and anti-racist insights drawn globally (Anzaldúa 1987; Connell 2014; Santos 2014). Since Eurocentrism internalized racism and colonialism, this system of power is hegemonic globally in how climate is talked about, the planning that is pursued, and the dominant education around it. A lack of cognitive justice and epistemic decolonization (N'krumah 1965; Mignolo 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018) is perpetuated in the reinforcement of climate coloniality along with hegemonization of narratives, epistemologies, and climate solutions.

Climate coloniality can constrain what actions are possible, often destroying pluriversal epistemologies, methodologies, and ontologies necessary for meaningful climate justice (Escobar 2018; Ferdinand 2022). However, this is not unchangeable. Decolonizing climate thereby needs to address the interlinked complexities of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, international development, and geopolitics of trade, migration, and economic growth that contribute to the reproduction of ongoing colonialities in atmospheres of violence that result in material, epistemic, and discursive injustices across the world (DeBoom 2022; Jimenez & Kabachnik 2023; Simpson & Pizarro Choy 2023).

### **Decolonizing Climate Coloniality**

The urgent need to decolonize climate enhances our efforts towards climate justice and propels reframing narratives around climate change, but also in intentional political mobilizations and points of action. Epistemology and materiality simultaneously are central in decolonization – i.e., both knowledge production and epistemological framings, but also engaging with the praxis of material politics, outcomes, and lived experiences. Decolonizing climate means rethinking and addressing various institutions and processes at multiple intersecting scales. To decolonize climate at a basic level is to integrate more decolonial, anti-colonial, feminist, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and ecosocialist critiques and struggles into mainstream climate discourses and practices to redress ongoing oppressions and marginalizations. *Fundamentally* though, decolonizing necessitates the critical interrogation of complexities of empire, imperialism, and capitalism, and then how to de-center and dismantle them, and not do so metaphorically (Cusicanqui 2012; Tuck & Yang 2012). It thus confronts and addresses material outcomes of framing and reframing, internalizing a material praxis that takes co-production seriously. It is not about just recognizing the problems, but working towards distributive justice, reparations, and restitution (Táiwò 2022).

Decolonizing accounts for reflecting on the past and present, to configure future pathways to remove colonial and imperial powers in all their forms. This requires confronting and dismantling colonial ideologies and racisms baked into power hierarchies, including those that create and maintain climate breakdown. In tackling climate coloniality, the need arises to be mindful of the goal of not only undoing centuries of harm and ongoing devastations through policies, finance, events, media, and the insidiousness of everyday life, but also rebuilding and reconstituting in different ways, in more capacious and equitable ways. Thus, research, pedagogy, activism, and policymaking need to be more critically reflexive of methodologies and methods used, and the cognitive biases that persist (Tuihawai Smith 2012).

However, unreflexive celebration of transformative potential does no one any favors. It would be impossible to deny the conformity and uniformity that development and capitalism try to systemically instill everywhere, or how capitalism reinvents itself through the crises it produces – both materially and discursively. The shrinking spaces of being otherwise and doing differently need to be acknowledged (Simpson & Pizarro Choy 2023). Still, it is increasingly evident



that maintaining racial and class privileges at a global scale is impossible in decolonizing climate justice. That is one of the tasks at hand. Liberation comes from destroying colonialism's impact on lands, bodies, and psyches to overcome the apocalypse that continues to be coloniality – or borrowing from Frantz Fanon, moving from alienation and dehumanization to self-realization to decolonize colonial traumas (cf. Fanon 1963, 1967). Healing the colonial wounds through transformative care, empathy, mutuality, and love holds possibilities (cf. hooks 2000). We desperately need to heal colonial wounds everywhere.

To achieve this, concerted work is needed on two parallel aspects simultaneously – first, the material and political; and second, the discursive and epistemological – while recognizing that these are but analytical categories intricately intertwined in everyday life in spatio-scalar ways.

### ***The Material and Political***

It is valid to ask why there are persistent challenges to achieving decolonized climate governance, ideologies, and practices. Structural changes are necessary in international governance for equitable recognition and distributive justice to occur across and between countries (Benjaminsen *et al.* 2022). While desires for transforming inequitable and exploitative systems are reiterated by different constituents and countries regularly (for instance, as seen at the Conference of Parties on Climate Change, COPs), this remains elusive. The reason is that contemporary governance systems are underpinned by centuries of colonial and imperial power structures and ideologies, whereby now a global network of international/supranational institutions, nation-states, corporations, and elites dominate discursive framings around climate and the material outcomes therein. Thus, challenges to and changes in this system are resisted. Opposition to empire dying is manifested in the resistance to shared governance, accountability, and giving up control, as these threaten the loss of existing and future power and material wealth.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, different material solutions and outcomes have been imagined and insisted upon thus far. Demands have been made for debt cancellation as part of climate reparations for countries of the Global South, who have historically been impoverished and indentured through colonial and imperial finance mechanisms and capitalist extractivism fueled by neoliberal global trade. The debates around climate reparations remain contentious, as loss and damage acknowledgment has not been followed through with sufficient financial support (McNamara & Jackson 2019). But reparations are more than that, they are about supporting worldmaking and material changes that account for histories of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism across Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Ghosh 2021; Táíwò 2022).

Material decolonization would require that imperial extractivist logics that fuel the unequal exchange and plunder be first stopped and then compensation or reparation made. Efforts would also seek ways to discontinue practicing and preaching endless growth on a finite planet and pursue enhancing well-being otherwise. This necessitates active efforts towards decommodification and de-imperialization. For this to occur, decolonizing climate would have to rethink and address various



institutions and processes at multiple intersecting scales that lead to various entanglements. One would be the role of the state, where it sits *vis-à-vis* the rise of mutual aid, calls for agroecological sovereignty, energy sufficiency, anti-capitalist and anti-neoliberal development. Decolonizing climate is largely meaningless if it doesn't accompany measurable shifts in law, policies, institutional frameworks or material distributions. Material outcomes are adjudicated, governed, and filtered through co-constitutive processes that need collaborative work and sharing of power. Publicly-accountable funding, technologies, and policies, whereby there is necessary transformation of public institutions and capacities, become central to this across the post-colonial, settler-colonial, and occupied worlds.

Scalar geographic analyses and critiques are essential both in confronting crises and in imagining co-created solutions. A reworking of relationships becomes necessary across geopolitical scales but also in human/non-human relationships. Valuing Indigenous and traditional knowledge and sciences worldwide is essential to this (Emeagwali & Shizha 2016; Acabado & Kuan 2021). Indigenous work in the US, Canada, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Palestine point to the ways that internal colonization has been resisted in settler-colonial contexts, offering insights into border crossings for abolition justice. These are by no means the only examples, since anti-colonial movements across Africa, Asia, and Latin America are replete with struggles and reconstitutions. They are linked to ongoing global Indigenous and peasant-led resistances against extractive exploitative practices.

What is evident is the urgent need for solidarities across frontlines for decolonization, reformulation of institutions and power matrixes across scales, and geopolitical shifts in advancing the valuation of a livable planet for all. This includes epistemic decolonization and (re)commitment to collective action that crosses borders and boundaries.

### *The Discursive and Epistemological*

In conjunction with the material injustices, securitization of profit, and geopolitical planetary control, addressing discursive and epistemological climate coloniality becomes important. Imperialism is underpinned by colonial forms of racialization and race science, devaluing Othered knowledges and expert voices from marginalized populations, often undergirded by Orientalism (cf. Said 1978) and patriarchy (cf. Mohanty 1988; Shiva 1989). Epistemic violence rooted in colonialism and Eurocentrism is not simply rooted in ideology, but material harms in the creation of the Other (Spivak 1988). This raises the urgency to decolonize knowledge production on climate change (Bronen & Cochran 2021; Schipper *et al.* 2021). The same talking heads (often Global North, white, male experts) tend to dominate climate conversations, rather than those experiencing longstanding climate devastation or producing place-based knowledge (see also Tandon 2021). The whitewashing of climate discourses and intellectual spaces is increasingly being critiqued. Thus, decolonizing climate is very much about knowledge production (who is cited, which epistemologies, whose ontologies, and so on), but also who

is invited to speak, who is heard, and who helps set agendas. It is not just about having a seat at the table (e.g., participation at the COPs) but determining what the table is, i.e., the terms of the debate or framing of the conversation and having actual decision-making powers (Sultana 2023). Ultimately, it is a shifting of the critical geopolitics of knowledge production as well as re-evaluating expertise and experts (cf. Walsh 2007).

Climate coloniality is thereby perpetuated through mundane and institutionalized ways of subalternization of non-Eurocentric, non-masculinist, and non-capitalist understandings of climate, ecology, and nature-society relations (Escobar 2018; Mitchell & Chaudhury 2020; Chakraborty & Sherpa 2021; Ferdinand 2022). As a result, decolonizing educational systems is fundamental, as this is where systemic cognitive injustices often begin through formal Eurocentric education that has gone global. Epistemic violence and colonization of the mind need to be acknowledged and undone across universities, training centers, non-governmental organizations, and state institutions (Sultana 2019; Nxumalo & Montes 2023; Stein *et al.* 2023). At the same time, it is an understanding of each of our complicities in perpetuating harms and actively working to redress them through everyday praxis and re-education.

Similarly, concepts of ecocide and epistemicide help further clarify how various knowledge systems were erased and devalued, but need recovering and reconstituting (Grosfoguel 2013; Santos 2014). The decolonization of the mind remains critical for epistemic justice and pluriverse, where recuperation of collective memory and cultural practices to foster conviviality, care, and commoning are important to overcome the colonial matrix of power (Sultana 2022c; Sheller 2023). Deconstructing climate coloniality allows for an understanding of how climate change continues to condition the material realities and discourses not only around nature-society relationships, but also the epistemic violences that follow in their wake. It is the undoing of this that is at stake, and then the remaking of futures not haunted by the past and present. Decolonizing knowledge systems to confront climate coloniality requires the indigenization of knowledge and politics. Throughout history, this has been not only ignored, silenced, and resisted in dominant discussions on climate, but often violently oppressed or erased.

### **Solidarities, Urgencies, and Praxis**

Yet power exists in the shadows, forging solidarity and cultural continuity against great odds. Climate coloniality can splinter us apart, but it can also bring us into solidarities and collectives. It has united and galvanized various coalitions across spaces and scales. Since climate coloniality is a violence requiring care-full (full of care) resplendent climate revolutions to counter it, care and ethics of care can be the revolutionary vehicle for abolitionist climate praxis (Williams 2017; Bond & Barth 2020; Ranganathan & Bratman 2021; Sultana 2022c). Care here embraces but goes beyond the radical care of the self to encompass others, both human and more-than-human. It is carework that sustains resistance movements, cultural continuities, alternative politics, and new formulations.

Therefore, while climate coloniality temporally and spatially causes eroding and erasure, there are also fissures that rupture through its weight, resist its imposition, and rework it. Multiple forms of knowledge may be excluded in hegemonic climate discourses and practices but are valuable cosmologies of decolonial knowledge and resistance that center accountable, reciprocal, and ethical relations and processes across the globe. There are many different ways that decolonization is enacted, ranging from direct action, law, care networks, leapfrogging alliances, cultural resurgence, alternative media, and more to center on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color's (BIPOC) futures.

For instance, blockades, resistance movements, and land back claims are community claims-building for liberatory praxis (Estes 2019). Speaking in one's native tongue, collective memory, culture rebuilding, retelling historiographies, and celebrating human-nonhuman kinship are some of the strategies (Todd 2017). Native singing and dancing are resistance (Simpson 2021), and valuing storytelling is a decolonial action (Mignolo & Walsh 2018). Reclaiming sacredness is anti-colonial (Wane *et al.* 2019), and counter-stories and counter-mapping are fecund strategies of opposition (Tilley 2020). Defending territorial ontologies is decolonial politics (Cifuentes 2021). Recognizing relational entanglements and healing fosters well-being and convivialities (Escobar 2018). To celebrate the resurgence in cultural practices of art, literature, oral traditions, poetry, and dance is to claim agency, desire, futurity, and spirit. These examples are all simultaneously coping mechanisms, refusals, and decolonial actions. Indeed, many years ago Arundhati Roy had stated powerfully:

*Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.*

(Roy 2003)

This remains true today.

However, it is vital to not fetishize histories as frozen time or culture as magical solutions to systemic oppression, but to recognize how they *propel* further decolonization, collectivity, and revolutionary resistance. Decolonial and anti-colonial cultural praxis foster fleshing-out theories and grounding concepts. It is an affirmation of the humanity of the oppressed, and of fostering radical equality and mutuality. In other words, the agency and corporeality of the colonized come to matter. The realities and concerns of those caught up in epistemic entanglements and friction (Tsing 2015) need to be worked through, where reconciling may not be entirely possible, but differences can coexist. That is the point of pluriversality instead of universality (Escobar 2018; Paulson 2019). It is to make visible and draw attention to knowledges and lived experiences, to ground theory in places geographically and ontologically. This involves valuing transgressive oppositional gaze from those within (hooks 1992). It insists upon not just engaging with scholarship

and bearing witness to harm and violence but accepting on their terms, the lived experiences and testimonials of self and family members, of kin and ancestors, among those subjected to coloniality. This process validates and gives agency to the enunciating, embodied, and knowing subjects whose lived experiences, praxis, and cosmologies matter. It involves deep listening through the roars, whispers, and silences that exist.

Through such processes, ethics of care, care networks, and prioritizing collective well-being instead of only individual well-being become more clarified. This accounts for embodied, ecological, economic, cultural, and political safety from harm and fosters flourishing. Healing the colonial wound through transgressive love and solidarity becomes possible. Alienation is fought against by reclaiming sacredness and relationalities, in moving towards liberation and self-determination without apolitically or ahistorically fetishizing or romancing the local, communities, or cultures. There is increasing recognition that resurgence and renewal are possible, seeded through the fertile grounds of the colonial wound, to move beyond its conscriptions towards strategies of revival (Ahenakew 2019). We need to dismantle colonial oppressive institutions and apparatuses for true liberation. Collective liberation, not just emancipation, is thus necessary (Fanon 1963).

In such ways, anti-colonial, decolonial, and collective care and care ethics hold the possibility for the revitalization of revolutionary potentialities against atmospheres of violence of climate coloniality. It is thereby restorative but open to transformation (i.e., not only restoring to what was, but nurturing towards better). It is an iterative process and nonlinear. Intentions and politics are reassessed throughout, requiring critical self and group reflexivity of being-in-community (Guha & Martinez-Alier 1997; Martinez-Alier *et al.* 2016; Sultana 2021). The processes are thus dialogic and praxis-based. It is recuperative in its nature against the violence of the mind. It is a renewal and restoration of dignity (Fanon 1963). Collectivity can foster pathways of decolonization that allow for the oxygenation of multiplicities of revolutionary potentialities in the psyche. This is an affirmative nourishing of revolution through care and being in the world through others (Walsh 1994; Dowler *et al.* 2019). Revolution here does not gesture towards endless cycles of violence or never-ending protest and resistance, but rather creates peace and well-being, conviviality, and pluriverse (Fanon 1967; Kothari *et al.* 2019). Political action can be revolutionary when it leads to fostering recursive care-full and collective well-being that is simultaneously social and ecological. Anti-colonial or subaltern work requires hope and solidarity amidst traumas.

There is thus a need to recuperate a recognition of co-produced emergence and its impermanence. It's a becoming, not an ending. The very possibility of this occurring is often when radical and revolutionary care work is most visible, sutured into anti-capitalist acts or anti-colonial struggles. The mutual responsibilities that emerge through debate, critique, and action for care-full climate praxis allow for a further radical revolution of planetary mutuality to also be sites of critical hope (cf. Freire 1970). Indigenous scholarship demonstrates the importance of self-determination and ecological kinship, more-than-human relationality, and multi-species justice. Recognizing and valuing living complex ecosystems and

agroecology, instead of marketized nature as a commodity, become vital. Indeed in many instances, ecological struggles and decolonial struggles are often linked (Pulido & De Lara 2018).

What is evident is that political liberation from climate coloniality will rely on alliances and solidarities in intentional anti-colonial and anti-imperial projects across peoples of occupied, post-colonial, and settler-colonial contexts – particularly among BIPOC communities across continents. Political consciousness informed by anti-colonial politics is necessary for decolonization and abolition. Kinship building can be fraught, it needs humility and humanity, overcoming alienation, and acknowledging differences and commonalities to build shared goals (Dhillon 2019). The worlds we inhabit are full of complicity, compromise, and contradictions, of maintaining white supremacy and racial capitalism, and of moves to innocence and guilt (Wekker 2016). Desires for radical transformation may or may not bear fruit (Morrison *et al.* 2022). Collective endeavors are arrived at through intentional, concerted, and reflexive work (Whyte 2013; Haverkamp 2021; Sloan Morgan *et al.* 2024). It may be challenging, but this is critically necessary.

Decolonization thus must build political community and practical solidarities that foster pluriversality and reparative relations to restore humanity and agency in the battle against climate change and its related ecological destructions. The ruthless extractions and dispossessions from across territories showcase the connections between place-based materialities to broader extractive ideologies and colonial-capitalist greed. In other words, it is essential to pursue decolonization that is not some uncritical celebration of transnational solidarity devoid of material politics, intersectional analyses, or lived experiences (Crawford *et al.* 2023; Tuana 2023).

Ultimately, there is no single blueprint for decolonizing climate, as decolonization is a process and not an event. It's in the many acts, small and large, acting in constellations and collectivities over time and place that bear results. This is because colonialism still haunts the past, present, and future through climate coloniality in multiple ways. Imperialism continues through neocolonialism, racial capitalism, development interventions, education, training, and the media. Climate coloniality is expressed in various forms, such as through fossil fuel capitalism, neoliberal growth models, and hyper-consumptive lifestyles, but also through structures and systems built and held in place by powerful alliances globally. Climate coloniality seeps through everyday life across space and time, weighing down and curtailing opportunities and possibilities through a toxic mix of global racism, rapacious extractivism, colonial dispossessions, climate debts, and patriarchy. Being aware of these aspects results in developing abilities to continually confront them and (re)configure and (re)imagine justice-oriented pathways forwards.

Thus, while the dominant discussions around climate tend to make climate change seem apolitical, as a physical phenomenon to be fixed only with technology and finance, it is instead a restructuring of relationships to ecologies, waters, lands, and communities we are intimately, materially, and geopolitically connected to. While lived experiences are embodied complex processes and fraught conditions, they are legitimate sites of geopolitical knowledge and counterbalances to hegemonic framings and structural forces. To decolonize is to reveal, reassess, and

dismantle colonial structures and discourses, make them non-universal, and demonstrate the hegemony deployed historically and through particular racialized colonial practices, and everyday tactics of oppression and empire-building. Decolonizing climate justice, therefore, needs to tackle the complexities of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and development in the reproduction of ongoing colonialities through existing global governance structures, discursive framings, material outcomes, and imagined futures. It also thereby requires care, commoning, and ethical praxis in nature–society relations.

### **Mapping the Collective Project**

By critically interrogating climate coloniality, this collection opens pathways for transformative action and fosters a deeper understanding of the structural injustices perpetuated by climate change and interconnected ecological degradations. The contributors in this volume reveal the urgent need to decolonize climate change narratives and embrace a systemic shift toward distributive justice, reparations, and restitution. They offer concrete examples of climate justice in action, illustrating how marginalized communities are critiquing dominant framings, reclaiming agency, and challenging existing power dynamics. Building on emergent scholarships such as the complexities and endurances of climate coloniality (Sultana 2022c), climate reparations (Táiwò 2022), worldmaking (Ghosh 2021), Indigenous resistance and cultural resurgence (Simpson 2021), and numerous related bodies of scholarship and wisdom, this collection elaborates upon and interrogates how to advance decolonization of climate coloniality in critical geographical and interdisciplinary dialogues along discursive, material, political, and embodied pathways. Collectively, the book asks and engages with a variety of concerns to confront climate coloniality, some of which include: What are the manifestations of climate coloniality in different contexts, and what constitutes confronting it? What collective/collaborative processes can be envisioned and fostered for decolonized climate justice? How do we understand reparations, worldmaking, and healing in the current conjuncture? In what ways can reparative relationships to human and more-than-human communities be reconstituted, both near and far? What power relations are involved in desiring, designing, creating, and sustaining relationalities and resistances, and at what levels? How can we theorize/teach/grow resplendent climate revolutions of being otherwise that are necessary in the current moment?

The book offers urgency, interdisciplinarity, and grounded analyses from diverse contexts in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Pacific to elucidate the ongoing structural and systemic issues involved in climate breakdown. Framing the interlocking, interdisciplinary, and intersectional contexts of the climate crisis – by exploring themes of colonialism, imperialism, racial capitalism, extractivism, policy failures, social movements, governance, greenwashing, and more – the collection offers sharp, insightful, and valuable analyses that advance academic scholarship and also provides concrete examples of climate justice in action that are established and emerging globally.



By centering Global South and BIPOC perspectives and lived realities, the collection further challenges dominant framings and narratives on climate change, climate adaptation, and climate resilience, offering alternative keywords, vocabularies, and conceptual handles. Together, these provide critical insights and interventions to foster more necessary conversations that confront climate coloniality, expose harmful forms of ongoing colonialism and imperialism, and help nurture radical care-full climate justice. Deeply informed by ongoing emplaced and interconnected injustices globally, the authors leverage their diverse positionalities and histories in a tapestry of kinship, liberation, self-determination, and rooted networks. As a result, the collection is informed by pluriversal ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and praxis.

### **Overviews and Entanglements**

The complex set of arguments and provocations that are contained in this book is presented in three entangled groupings that demonstrate the ongoing endurences yet fractures in climate coloniality and the various ways to confront it. Part I offers analyses of what confronting and decolonizing climate governance would entail, the challenges involved, and the imbrications of systems and structures. Part II delves into confronting and decolonizing the different spatial, scalar, and social registers of climate framings and policies. Part III examines confronting and decolonizing climate responses and praxis in different contexts and sites. The Afterword brings the chapters together with an overview and critique. Collectively, these demonstrate how people of color, including Black, Latinx, and Indigenous groups, are often the most marginalized and suffer the brunt of climate and ecological crises in a range of different ways, such as green gentrification, loss of Indigenous lands and coastal systems, air pollution, decarbonization, climate solutionism, displacement, denial of knowledge, policy fragmentations, scalar exclusions, production of sacrifice zones, racial capitalism, and much more. Those who have contributed the least to the climate problem stand to suffer the most, yet also are resisting and demonstrating ways to decolonize climate coloniality to configure new pathways for meaningful climate justice. Deep critiques, reflexive engagement, and excavation of truths across the book avoid proffering reductionist solutions or uncritical celebrations, but rather invite considerations of potential points of interventions, connections, and processes for liberation and decolonization.

Opening the conversations in Part I, Joshua Long demonstrates how mainstream climate action is mired in “patterns of marketization, extractivism, and exploitation that promote a Eurocentric view of economic development while simultaneously serving as a guardrail against resistant politics and interventions”. The chapter argues for a more thorough engagement with the coloniality of power to avoid worsening climate apartheid, noting how colonialism continues through geopolitics, climate governance, and development. Long finely threads the ongoing legacies of colonial tactics and discourse through the development industry in impacting climate action – such as in climate finance, through the intrusion of private capture of resources, “green structural adjustment” programs, and



climate adaptation and resilience programs. The ways climate actions reproduce colonialities of power are demonstrated with an examination of resource and land grabs, as well as financialization and implementation of climate projects. However dressed up, the various climate mitigation and adaptation programs reveal both the ongoing North–South colonialities of power and hierarchies of ideologies. Climate crises thereby continue not only in neocolonial logics through different mechanisms and strategies, but also in spatial and socioecological differentiation of sacrifice zones through the pervasive logics of coloniality (see also Valayden, Butt, in this volume). Thus, climate apartheid is further expanded through various climate actions. Nonetheless, Long notes how understanding and excising these tactics mean “such a moment offers countless opportunities for disruption, intervention, resistance, and reimagination”.

Responding to such a call with an investigation of one of the important global institutions of climate governance, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Jamie Haverkamp showcases, via ethnographic study, the ways that colonial relationships are maintained and reproduced within the UNFCCC despite efforts to improve participation and collaborations with marginalized groups. Tracing the ways that knowledge is produced and extracted, its spatial registers, and counter-hegemonic possibilities, insights are provided on how and why global policy spaces continue to create uneven and hostile arenas. The chapter provides rich data to investigate the colonialities of power between Indigenous nations and nation-states in post-colonial global climate governance by focusing on the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP). Through engagement in various governance structures and events, the author draws out how colonized spaces exist through different logics and practices. Yet, decolonial praxis is possible and strategically being built against ongoing hegemony (see also Carlson; Rivera and Breder, in this volume). Haverkamp poignantly demonstrates how “the relational production of space and knowledge emerge as central domains in which the struggle for de/coloniality is being waged within the UNFCCC”.

Drawing attention to the ways fossil imperialism is another way coloniality is shaping climate governance, Bernardo Jurema and Elias König elaborate on how fossil fuels and other resources are foundational to ongoing capitalism by states and corporations amid escalating resistance. The authors demonstrate how fossil imperialism clarifies and connects fossil capitalism to imperialism, positing that “under fossil capitalism, a central task for imperial states is to ensure and control the flow of cheap fossil energy in the interest of their respective fossil economies”. They do so by tracing five key mechanisms of control that link collusion between imperial states to fossil capital’s extractive exploitation and retrenching of colonialism and domination globally. The mechanisms – colonization; projection of military power; suppression of anti-extractivist movements; economic warfare; and domination of the global (financial and political) institutions that regulate the trade and distribution of fossil fuels – combine to reinforce climate coloniality via fossil imperialism. Similar to the chapters by Long and Haverkamp, the authors here point to the urgency of creatively designing non-fossil anti-imperialism strategies to counter ongoing exploitation, drawing from the “long history of anti-imperialist

resistance and the quest for a more just and sustainable world system” (see also Kuhl *et al.*, in this volume).

Part II focuses on the different registers of climate coloniality to further clarify the framings and policies that exist. Diren Valayden guides readers toward political and historical nuance on how climate coloniality disparately affects marginalized communities. Framing “heaviness” as a quintessential political category of the climate emergency, the chapter develops an analysis where the concept of heaviness offers abilities to identify different modes and sites where dehumanization persists, and subjectivity is constituted. Valayden poignantly argues that heaviness results in a collective life that involves “lived experience of daily emergencies for different populations, and how through those experiences, people can identify commonalities that allow them to struggle together for a new form of political organization (decolonization)”.

The chapter develops the argument along four pathways of heaviness – as condition, as sociality, as ethics, and as materiality – to demonstrate points of interventions for climate justice. In elaborating on the *longue durée* of colonial domination and the subjectivities it produces, the chapter offers a granular problematization of how heaviness operates through capitalism, racial configurations, resilience, risk, and responsibility. Valayden goes on to elaborate how decolonizing along the four pathways thereby offers fecund strategies to confront the modes and sites of ongoing dehumanization for those forced to constantly endure hardship. The chapter thus offers insights into the ruptures of the homogenizing tendencies of the discourse of “climate emergency” (in ontological, temporal, and methodological ways). The expansion of sacrifice zones and sufferings can thus be challenged more fully (see also Anantharaman, Carlson, in this volume).

Such arguments are further demonstrated by three subsequent chapters that examine colonial and neo-colonial responses to the ecological crisis by centering Indigenous and traditional knowledge to counter the ongoing coloniality of framings and policies. At the heart of the issue is the question of land, resource management, Indigenous populations, and knowledge systems. Bilal Butt’s chapter focuses on the unintended consequences of interventions that fail to consider the historical context and the specific needs of the communities they target. Drawing from framings of climate coloniality, necropolitics, and radical interventionism to answer questions on the conceptualization of livestock off-take schemes by state and non-state actors, and the efficacy of these programs in alleviating climate change effects, Butt takes us through the colonial history of these practices that persist in exploiting herders in Kenya. The lack of knowledge of Indigenous grazing systems and herds meant that there was no basis for initiating these colonial practices of livestock off-take. However, the same logic has now taken root in state policy, with the help of international NGOs and funding from international development organizations. Neoliberal market forces have taken precedence over systems of risk aversion making off-take a mainstream method of coping with drought. Yet, such schemes do not address the root causes of climate change or its effects. Butt details the ways “pastoralists who are already disproportionately affected by the vagaries of climate change are further marginalized by institutional

lacunae, corruption, and a fundamental misreading of the pastoral landscape”. The chapter argues for alternative solutions that respect herders’ knowledge and land rights (see also Rivera and Breder, Carlson, in this volume).

Aby Sène goes further to assert the need for re-centering African ecological thoughts and practice as a site for epistemic knowledge to counter climate coloniality in her chapter. Both Sène and Butt underscore the role of pastoral communities in maintaining the biodiversity and ecological resilience of the land and center their Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems as a valid response to the climate crisis. Sène’s chapter demonstrates how racial colonial ideologies of wilderness are reproduced in nature conservation projects in Africa as part of controversial climate solutions. The author centers African epistemologies on resource governance, kinship, and food sovereignty to counter the colonial–capitalist land grabs for carbon offsetting in fortress conservation and protected area programs, ones that dispossess people from their historical land and resource access and control. A robust case is made against the ongoing coloniality of climate finance projects that operate against grassroots self-determination and life-centered commoning social relations. By critiquing the greenwashing of conservation and continued green colonialism, the author demonstrates how conservation and the climate movements continue to sit firmly within the Eurocentric ideological apparatus (see also Haverkamp, Carlson, Jurema and König, Rivera and Breder, in this volume). At the same time, Sène provides rich insights from traditional and Indigenous scholarship to showcase African Indigenous worldviews and resource governance systems to underscore “anti-imperialist ecological thoughts and praxis as epistemic sites to break from the neoliberal environmental agenda and to inform alternative pathways for resource sovereignty, development, and ecological resilience”.

Similarly, Andrew Kalani Carlson takes us to the shores of Hawai‘i, where carbon sequestration occurs in Indigenous coastal and oceanic spaces of Hawai‘i via Blue Carbon projects that rely on coastal vegetation to capture carbon. Grounded in his community and Kanaka ‘Ōiwi (Native Hawaiian) worldviews, Carlson demonstrates how these projects are part of a wider nexus of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) approaches that attempt to remove greenhouse gases, despite the critiques of their inefficiencies, perverse logics of keeping greenhouse gas emissions rising, and colonial practices of land/water grabs (see also Haverkamp, Sène, Valayden, in this volume). Blue Carbon subverts Indigenous coastal sovereignty in carbon offset projects that receive funding and support, but displace and worsen local approaches that draw upon Indigenous epistemologies of holistic socio-ecological health. The global rush to find quick fixes for climate change thus further entrenches colonial–capitalist capture of coastal areas to dispossess communities. Carlson argues that “restoration of coastal Indigenous sovereignty should be considered a more truly effective climate change mitigation strategy, and therefore, all funding allocated for Blue Carbon and marine CDR projects should be diverted to Indigenous coastal stewardship”. The chapter offers a tangible example of “AlterNative” (cf. Trouillot 2002) to trace what is possible with Indigenous stewardship, sovereignty, and subjectivity, with a reminder that “these ongoing and

practical Indigenous alternatives to Blue Carbon and climate coloniality must be urgently prioritized to achieve a decarbonized and decolonized world”.

In Part III, the authors build on these critiques to further explore the outcomes of confronting and decolonizing various climate responses and praxis in different contexts. Manisha Anantharaman excavates further the politics of green climate solutionism at different scales, whereby performative environmentalism by environmentalists and other elites stigmatizes the poor and reproduces unequal power relations and climate coloniality. This chapter delves into who gets to set the terms of debate on environmental or climate action, and whose voice counts by theorizing performative environmentalism in the urban sphere in India. The author argues that

*performative environmentalism turns climate change, a structural problem, into a moral one, foreclosing and preempting a reckoning of structural contradictions. Instead, it acquires popular consent to co-opt and divert environmentalism into diverse forms of green accumulation, where elites can accumulate cultural capital, and corporations can set up new circuits of accumulation by dispossession to deliver green lifestyles to the well-off.*

Wealthier groups promote “green” solutions while they enjoy the imperial mode of living and hyperconsumption but exclude the concerns of a racialized poor (see also Lomotey, Long, Kuhl *et al.*, in this volume). This reinforces colonial and racial oppression in environmental governance and perpetuates climate apartheid across scales, whereby decarbonization becomes a disciplining tool of coloniality. Through an investigation into urban environmentalism, meaning-making, and intersectional political relations, Anantharaman demonstrates how tokenistic and band-aid solutions are offered to structural problems. This chapter warns readers to be cautious in celebrating “tweaks at the edges of empire” through discourses of “sustainable capitalism” without confronting underlying problems. The author gestures towards possible avenues of decolonial climate actions that counter these systems through a “commitment to seeing the material deprivation of the majority world and over-consumption of the polluter elite as ontologically linked and ethically unacceptable is essential to a decolonial climate politics”.

Rivera and Breder follow on to advance how hyper-capitalism, neocolonialism, and Indigenous displacement go hand in hand at the US–Mexico border. Through an ethnographic analysis of SpaceX and its launch site of Starbase in Boca Chica State Park in Texas, the authors excavate “how hyper-capitalism (like SpaceX) spatially situates itself through land control to enact/further/entrench climate coloniality”. Storiating and documenting demonstrate the invalidity of the *terra nullius* (empty land) concept used to perpetuate neo-colonialism by capital to further entrench climate coloniality and land dispossession. The false ideology of emptiness allowed colonization of full lands to advance racial capitalism, but hyperconsumption and land control have severe consequences for local peoples, biodiversity, and ecosystems. Against this backdrop, community narratives of “fullness” are a powerful form of anti-colonial resistance, protest, healing, and

historical revisionism, providing counter-narratives to disrupt dominant epistemologies and colonial narratives as part of decolonial praxis (see also Long, Haverkamp, Butt, Carlson in this volume). Rivera and Breder argue that these are “examples of not merely how these theories are enacted in real space, but how colonized peoples resist these climate colonialities through a ‘taking back’ of the narratives regarding their presence, histories, and ecologies”. Methodologically, this chapter demonstrates the importance of storytelling as a counter-hegemony, of rich qualitative research with deep commitments to communities that scholars research with (as also demonstrated by other chapters in this volume: Anantharaman, Butt, Carlson, Haverkamp, Lomotey, Sène, Kuhl *et al.*).

Moving the locational gaze from the current to the former heart of Empire, Michael Lomotey explores ethnographically the ways antiblackness, racial capitalism, and coloniality play out in disaster preparedness, risk, and response (DRR) in the United Kingdom. Drawing from research in the city of Hull, the chapter connects local legacies of slavery and antiblackness to wider realities across the Global South, where racial discounting is part of the endurance of climate coloniality. Floods impact racialized communities inequitably in Hull but race-blind approaches by environmental NGOs in disaster management further compound marginalizations. The environmental racism that underpins global to local climate hazards risks assessment and institutional responses are critiqued, highlighting the problematic prioritization of class over race/ethnicity as a frame of analysis, resulting in a denial of systemic racism and entrenching of power and privilege (see also Anantharaman, Butt, Valayden, Haverkamp, Sène, in this volume). The author in effect asks whether “climate change has become a surrogate for the war/weapons/killing of Mbembe’s necropolitics”. Lomotey deploys the epistemology of fugitivity, which “envisions justice-led flooding responses, and emancipatory futures, whereby fugitivity – as theorized by Black critical scholarship – is a move to freedom from the violent domination of the anachronistic slave plantation”. The author advocates for centering racialized voices in the practice of DRR to avoid the reproduction of climate coloniality.

Response to disasters can, additionally, lead to disempowerment through post-disaster energy transition processes. In the penultimate chapter, Laura Kuhl, Marla Perez-Lugo, Carlos Arriaga Serrano, Cecilio Ortiz-Garcia, Ryan Ellis, and Jennie C. Stephens investigate how disasters, often seen as opportunities for the creation of just or sustainable energy transitions and inclusive processes, instead can foreclose them with more colonial entrenchment of the energy system and exclusionary political processes. Ethnographic analyses from Puerto Rico before and after Hurricane Maria, a disaster that collapsed the energy system, demonstrate how people’s visions of energy futures shifted through the experience of the disaster. The authors showcase how “in contrast to the optimistic technologically driven visions discussed pre-Maria, post-Maria visions were more pessimistic and attentive to power dynamics, reflecting a collective disillusionment consistent with understandings of climate coloniality”. Disaster capitalism combined with the peripheral experience of a settler-colony resulted in not just energy transformations as expected but more disempowerment of communities and increasing entrenchment of colonial power relations in energy transition (see also Jurema and König, Long,

in this volume). Participants articulated a decolonial understanding of an energy transition driven by local priorities, with a call for a transformation of Puerto Rican society, including the colonial and power relations that were seen to drive the Hurricane Maria disaster. The authors conclude: “Until structural changes focused on redistributing the benefits and costs (economically, environmentally, and politically) of energy production and consumption are prioritized, coloniality will be reproduced and reinforced, thwarting climate justice”.

The Afterword from Mimi Sheller provides a concluding commentary to the collection, bringing together the ways the chapters collectively challenge ongoing forms of climate coloniality and offer generative pathways to decolonize it. Sheller highlights the importance of noting the different strands of analysis – historicity, sociology, political economy, and ontology – that braid together in the collection to confront climate coloniality. It is vital to elevate the critiques therein, alongside the strategies and tactics possible, to counter ongoing racial capitalism, different forms of dispossessions, and manifestations of colonial, neocolonial, and imperial violence. By analyzing and interweaving the chapters, the author provides further insights into the political insurgencies necessary for collective solidarities. Sheller concludes thus: “Only by joining others in the ongoing practices of relational ethics of care might we hold open a place for immanent ongoing life”.

By way of closing this chapter and inviting readers to engage with the remainder of the volume, I end with words from yesteryears, notes from an incomplete autoethnography that helped plant the seed that sprouted into the journey this project has taken over decades. So here are the words of myself as a young woman in drowning homelands, in the aftermath of one of the most powerful tropical cyclones in history that hit my ancestral community in the Bengal Delta, urging me/you/us to keep confronting climate coloniality across time and space.

কি এই ভারীতা, যে আমি অনুভব করি, যেটা আমাদের ভারাক্রান্ত করে, যেখানে অনেক শব্দ ছুটে আসে কিন্তু আমি স্পষ্টতার সাথে প্রকাশ করতে পারি না? [*What is this heaviness I feel that weighs us down, where many words rush in that I can't quite articulate into sentences with any clarity?*] Words like struggle, oppression, anger, pain, suffocation, rage, emptiness, suffering, trauma, grief, gloom, anxiety, abandonment, being trampled upon, erasure, erosion, weight of poverty, degraded environments, constant need to shoulder burdens, internalized oppression. মনে হয় সারাক্ষণ প্রতিরোধ করি আমরা, লড়াইকরে যাচ্ছি কত কাল [*It feels like we are constantly resisting, having to battle for so long*]. It requires a constant oppositional resistance, a fightback, a protest. It beckons inner strength, endurance, resilience, political solidarity, action, collectivizing when possible, not individualizing suffering/despair but seeing us in others, retrieval of lost wisdom, parsing out (lost) Indigenous knowledge/practice from imposed and colonized knowledge/practice, recognizing cultural genocide and epistemicide, shifts in internalization of colonial and developmental ideologies and desires. So many words and thoughts and feelings – yet I feel I have insufficient words, inadequate clarity through the roars and whispers of emotions, memories, witnessing, living. These are such visceral



fleshy things. I keep wondering what the emotionally embodied geographies of climate change are for the racialized and sidelined brothers and sisters across the globe – can we talk about traumas and wounds without it being seen as trauma porn or damage narratives, available for extraction and misuse by others? Do we have to dress it up in dispassionate palatable language for wider consumption and academic traction? How does one speak of lived experience or bear witness without accusations of causing more harm? Do we always have to pretend to be resilient, show how we've overcome difficulties, display the positive sides of our humanity, showcase our vitality, make nice – when do our complex realities and emotions matter beyond positive spins of strength and resilience? আমরা কি দুঃখ, স্নিগ্ধতা, দুর্বলতা, ক্লান্তি, আতঙ্কপ্রকাশ করতে পারি, যাতে করুণা, পরিত্যাগ, ভয়, অবহেলা, বিচ্ছিন্নতাপাশ কাটা যায়? [Can we be sad, soft, weak, weary, and terrified, without being pitied, discarded, feared, ignored, sidelined, alienated?] Can we be all those things or none? I'm tired of this historical necessity to endure and be strong, and to not be simultaneously pathologized or fetishized. So many of us are exhausted. But still, indeed we do endure and survive, and we will thrive and flourish. I have to remind myself how far we have come, what we have lost, and what we have gained. We speak in our native tongue, we sing, dance, pray, rejoice, create, celebrate. We protest and persist and resist and honor and remember. We are one and many, of the past, present, and future. We seep into soil and stone, soar into skies, flow with waters. We are one and many, fragments and collectives, accomplices and kin, across time and space, we learn and teach, we share and do, we listen and raise our voices. So, giving up is not an option because it never was. This heaviness cannot last forever. But I still have so many questions, with no clear answers. I worry about such things all the time. আমি চেষ্টা চালিয়ে যাবো, শিখতে থাকব, আর কাজকরবো; কোনশেষ নেই, এটিএকটি অবিরাম কাজ [I will continue to put effort into this, learn more, I must do better. There is no conclusion; this is endless work]. লড়াই চলবে [The struggle continues].

(Fragments of notes from the author's incomplete autoethnography)

## Notes

- 1 This section and the next contain abstracted and revised excerpts from Sultana (2022b and 2022c), used with permission from Elsevier.
- 2 Here I use Global South and Global North as analytical categories, but also geographical spaces marked by heterogeneity and historical differences, recognizing they are controversial and incomplete terms.
- 3 Unfortunately, the hegemony of fossil fuel–military industrial complex remains a stranglehold (Belcher *et al.* 2020) and confronting this to reconfiguring alternative and just energy transitions remain a challenge (see also Jurema and König in this volume).

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