

**SPECIAL ISSUE**  
**THE (DE)COLONIAL PEDAGOGICAL**  
**POSSIBILITIES OF FILM AND FILM**  
**FESTIVALS**  
**(PART 2)**

**VISUAL GRAMMARS AND DECOLONIAL**  
**PRACTICES IN CONTEXT**

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*Unceded Territory of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) People<sup>1</sup>*

This two-part Special Issue focuses on the role films and film festivals play in representing the relationships between diversity, modernity, and coloniality, from perspectives of diverse people involved in filmmaking and film festival engagement. The aim is to centre the perspectives of racialized, Indigenous, women and marginalized minoritized peoples within the film and education fields. Part 1, published in *Postcolonial Directions in Education*, Volume 8, Issue 2 (2019), unpacked the ontological and epistemic

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<sup>1</sup> The x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) is a “traditional hənqəminəm’ speaking people”. Their “ancestors have lived in the Fraser River estuary for thousands of years. Today, portions of Musqueam’s traditional territory are called Vancouver, North Vancouver, South Vancouver, Burrard Inlet, New Westminster, Burnaby, and Richmond” in what is currently referred to as the Province of British Columbia, Canada. For the full texts of the parts quoted here, refer to the following website: <<https://www.musqueam.bc.ca>>.

problematics that underpin audiovisual artistic forms as historically and politically situated narratives. Contributors engaged the challenges associated with pushing back on hegemonic modes of visual representation prevalent in film and cinematic encounters. Simultaneously, contributors delved into the decolonizing poetics of visual sovereignty and how these could be leveraged to effect social and political learning and transformation. Dr. Dorothy Christian captured this double-struggle by referencing the work of Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay. She pointed out that Barclay’s notion of “talking in/talking out” is central to a decolonizing “Indigenous gaze” that shifts and flips the camera’s lens around, offering new horizons on knowledge and being (conversation of Dr. Christian, with Medel & Mazawi, 2019, p. 165).

In this issue, Part 2 pursues the conversation regarding the relationships between diversity, modernity, and coloniality and considers their implications for adult learning and education. The contributions do not focus on what images or footage show. That is all too obvious. They seek to uncover, reconfigure, imagine, re-introduce, and re-collect from within the image or footage traces left – inadvertently or not – in the form of ruins and colonial destruction, erasure, and obliteration. By excavating the image, and the assumptions that underpin it, the contributions open up a space of decolonial imagination that does not seek to ground its authority in claims to objectivity, however understood. Rather, they aim to make visible the fractures and erasures contained in the cinematic footage and in media creations in which these artefacts are irremediably entangled.

The issue includes contributions by scholars deeply committed to decolonial approaches to filmmaking and film festivals within different contexts of practice and struggle.

In her article, “Return. Recollect. Imagine: Decolonizing Images, Reclaiming Palestine”, Farah Atoui examines the works of Palestinian filmmaker Kamal Aljafari and of visual artists Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme. She considers their decolonizing approaches to media arts. By delving into the audio-visual techniques they deploy, Atoui illustrates how these works—despite their marked differences—decentre colonial constructions of images and cinematic footage of Palestinian land, history, and society. She further shows how, by reworking Israeli cinematic footage and museum curated images, the artists’ filmic and audio-visual works expose Zionist ideological assumptions, re-introducing into them the silenced subaltern and expunged sounds and sights of Palestinians. The significance of Atoui’s contribution lies in its emphasis, not on the image or footage as an objective conveyor of a reality, but on their authenticity precisely as subverted and exposed artefacts. Atoui shows that, paradoxically, it is by subverting and distorting the image or footage, that the fractures and ideological erasures that underpin media creations are exposed, bringing back into them the Indigenous epistemic and ontological experiences which were expunged.

Quite differently, in their paper “Learning To Be ‘Good Enough’: Hollywood Film’s Role in Standardizing Knowledge and the Myth of Meritocracy”, Stephanie Glick and Allyson Dean examine the cinematic articulations of three quite different films that narrate the school journey of students

from marginalized and racialized social backgrounds in the United States. By delving into the ways in which scenes choreograph the academic journeys of minoritized students, Glick and Dean expose the neoliberal, patriarchal, and racializing assumptions that underpin the cinematic choices made by filmmakers and scriptwriters in two of the films produced in Hollywood. In their analyses, Glick and Dean re-read and critically re-view these films, and their educational uses, in ways that open the cinematic choreography to the subdued, subaltern, and normalized voices of racialized American students. By doing so, they reveal how two of the films analyzed, which are Hollywood films propagate the ethos of a meritocratic school system in the United States. Based on their analysis, Glick and Dean call for a careful consideration, not only of questions of representation, but also how cinematic stories are told and narrated. They thus offer a number of alternative ways in which the scenes and scripts could be re-imagined and their relationship with a neoliberal political economy critiqued and exposed.

If the first two papers focus on the critique of the image and footage as material sites of decolonial practices, Neil Bassan repositions the problematic associated with film watching as part of public screening. In his paper, “Festivals of Films, Decolonial Spaces, and Public Pedagogy: Some Preliminary Reflections”, Bassan approaches film festivals as collective sites of experimentation. He conceives of film festivals as a foundational pillar of participative democracy. He eclectically – yet purposefully – draws on the works of Jacques Rancière, Paulo Freire, Sara Ahmed, and Stuart Hall, to interrogate the role festival programmers can play in

articulating a sound pedagogical approach to collective film viewing that moves an audience from the lethargic state of passive consumerism to that of an actively engaged and committed public. The significance of Bassan's contribution lies in inverting the notion of "film festival" into that of "a festival of films". In doing so, the paper breaks away from the festival as a cultural leisurescape of sorts to emerge into a generative space of engaged and solidary politics.

The three articles are followed by an artist's perspective on Third Cinema and its underlying cultural politics in diasporic Latin American communities. Mexican visual artist Carlos Colín expands on an exhibition displayed during August 24 to September 1, 2019, at the Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, that was meticulously and supportively curated by Colombian visual artist Juliana Silva. Colín interrogates the role that could be played by Third Cinema and its possible contributions to fostering solidary diasporic communities. What then follows is a review by Selina Crammond who focuses on the protocols and pathways involved in working with Indigenous communities and cultures in the field of media production. Crammond calls for acknowledging the impact of colonialism on media arts, discussing how media producers could recognize "Indigenous ownership and control over their rights to their intellectual and cultural property and heritage." Equally significant, Alessandra Santos' completes this issue with her review of a book on feminist art and media in post-1968 Mexico City. In her review, she emphasizes the role educators can play in "promoting the main tenets of equality and equity...[when] fighting against gender oppression" through the teaching of art history.

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With the publication of Part 2, we are bringing this two-part project to completion, but not necessarily to closure. We hope that conversations regarding the intersections between decolonial approaches, cinematic and media production, and pedagogical praxis continue and expand into vibrant exchanges. Submissions were once again not only numerous, but unique and powerful—several submissions remain grounded in decolonial work—making the very editorial process transformative by establishing much soil for the future cultivation of film and film festival scholarship. Indeed, this is just the beginning of marginalized-minoritized voices working within or in close relation with the film industry. This is also the beginning of new scholarly relationships of arts and culture advocacy gaining long overdue publics and taking centre-stage in both film production and academia. Thank you all!

## **Reference**

Christian, D., with Medel, S., and Mazawi, A. (2019).  
‘Talking in/talking out’: Indigenous knowledge,  
filmmaking, and the decolonizing poetics of visual  
sovereignty. A conversation with Dr. Dorothy Christian.  
*Postcolonial Directions in Education*, 8(2), 155-184.