Introduction: Decolonisation, Gender Studies, and the Nordics

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IN TIMES LIKE THESE...

This special issue of Women, Gender & Research engages the theme of "Decolonisation". It comes at a moment that calls for critical and rigorous analysis of how structures of coloniality and hetero-patriarchy continue to shape the present (Maldonado-Torres, 2007), during a time when colonisation takes on renewed and continuing forms and appearances. Despite the growing attention to decolonial gender studies, thinking, and praxis globally (e.g. Cusicanqui, 2020; De Jong et al., 2018; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Lugones, 2023), the intersections between gender and coloniality in the Nordic region – and its former colonies – remain under-researched (e.g. Keskinen et al., 2009). Yet, the continued systemic repression of racialised, gendered, trans, queer, Two-Spirit, Indigenous, Black, and people of colour, as well as other marginalised groups in the Nordic countries underscores that colonial structures are not merely historical. They continue to shape the 'political moment' (Barndt, 1989) as it unfolds in everyday life, relations, governance, and knowledge regimes, demanding critical attention and scholarly intervention.

On September 24th, 2025, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen travelled to Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), to issue an official apology for Denmark's intrauterine device (IUD) program, which from the 1960s systemically targeted Kalaallit Inuit women and girls (Statsministeriet, 2025). In Frederiksen's speech, she said: "What you were exposed to was unjust. It was a systematic discriminatory treatment. Because you were Greenlanders [Kalaallit Inuit]. And that was wrong." (Frederiksen, 2025, own translation). The apology followed the recent release of the report on the official inquiry into "Contraception Practices in Kalaallit Nunaat, 1960-1991" (Jensen et al, 2025). The report concludes that at least 4,000 Kalaallit Inuit women and girls – some as young as 11-12 years old – were subjected to IUDs, in many cases without their informed consent. The practice was executed on approximately half of the female Kalaallit Inuit population of reproductive age at the time. The IUD program was initiated and defended with reference to the Danish state's concerns over the rapidly rising number of Kalaallit Inuit and its potential "costs" to the Danish state (ibid.: 2). Although often overlooked in current discussions of the IUD program, Danish reproductive policies on the Kalaallit Inuit population unfolded through the interconnected mechanisms of colonialism, racialisation, and gendered violence. The (neo-)colonial logics of the Danish political establishment positioned the Indigenous female body at the centre of its systems of subordination, administration, and governance (Graugaard & Ambrosius, 2023; Graugaard et al., 2025).

The aftermath of the IUD inquiry has been marked by both denialism and public outcry. While the Danish official apology was welcomed by many of the affected women and families as a long overdue recognition of past wrongs, it has also been perceived and critiqued as a political strategy to escape long-term accountability, compensation, and reparation. In this sense, the apology risks functioning less as a step toward justice than as a means of restaging Danish presence and authority in Kalaallit Nunaat through a rhetoric of reconciliation. Against the backdrop of the present practices of abortion pressure on expectant Kalaallit Inuit mothers, discriminatory 'parent legibility' tests towards Kalaallit Inuit parents, and the continued disproportionate forced removal and adoption of Kalaallit Inuit children in Denmark (Hegelund & Naamansen, forthcoming; Bryant, 2025b), excusing the reproductive injustice of the IUD program as a *past* wrong quickly escapes its contemporary continuities. Indeed, the IUD program exemplifies how the coloniality of gender endures in the Nordic present. Social work and welfare policies have long served as vehicles of racialised control, across the Nordic region – from eugenic sterilisations of "unwanted" populations in Finland until the 1970s (Clarke et al., 2024) to the overrepresentation of migrant children in Norwegian foster systems today (Ursin & Lysså, 2024). Such policies reflect the broader patterns in which colonial violence is reproduced and reframed as care and welfare to sustain control over Indigenous, racialised, and marginalised bodies and lives.

More broadly, the IUD program points to how coloniality operates through narratives of benevolence: Eugenic population control is framed as care, colonial governance as welfare, and extraction as progress. This idea of "benevolent colonialism" continues to inform Nordic self-perceptions as egalitarian and humanitarian, even as its racialised and gendered hierarchies persist. As a critical example, the promise of the common good of "green transition" technology is currently used to legitimise state-supported mining expansion and land grab of traditional territories in Sápmi – and operationalised to criminalise Sámi activists resisting it, as is seen in the Fosen court case and through intensified police enforcement on Sami activists in Repparfjord (Fjellheim, 2024; Larson, 2014; Spangen et al., 2015; Tuorda, 2014). Arguably, the escalating climate crisis – and many of the measures designed to address it – risk reproducing and intensifying colonial violence and injustice (Komposch, 2025), disregarding Indigenous sovereignty and relations to land within the territories now claimed as part of the Nordic region.

Shifting tectonics in geopolitics also reconfigure the political moment in the Nordic region that expose contemporary colonial structures; the global rise of the far right; ongoing genocides in Gaza, Sudan, and Yemen; land grab for the supply of natural resources and critical raw materials in Amazonia, and the new scramble for and militarisation of the Arctic, to mention a few. Simultaneously, we witness intensified repression of refugees, activists, and Indigenous peoples, accompanied by growing restrictions on academic freedom and dissent. Scholars, students, and journalists who critique colonial violence and racialised gender regimes face delegitimization, censorship, and even threats to their safety. This has been clearly evident in the context of faculty and student mobilisation for Palestine (Achenback et al., 2024; Alqaisiya & Perugini, 2024; Zisakou et al., 2025).

At the same time, this moment has also been the time of increased grassroot-based mobilisation for Indigenous rights, anti-racism movements, freedom flotillas, and feminist solidarity in the wake of the MeToo movement. The re-initiation of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 in the United States against police brutality and systemic racism (kennedy-macfoy & Zarkov, 2021) led to global mobilisation against structural inequalities (Amesu, 2021). These struggles demonstrate that decolonisation is not just an academic project but a lived and collective practice (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

Rather than treating colonialism as a phenomenon of the past, this special issue begins from the recognition that we inhabit a "world shaped by colonial histories" (Ahmed, 2006, p. 126), which continue to orient our relations to bodies, land, and knowledge. These orientations are never neutral; they shape how gender and sexuality are understood – from the enforcement of heteronormativity to the Eurocentric framing of queerness itself. The concept of *coloniality*, as developed by Aníbal Quijano (2000), remains a useful lens to capture these enduring power structures, even as feminist and Indigenous scholars have expanded his work to centre the constitutive role of gender in colonial knowledge regimes (Bohrer, 2020).

Bringing together decolonial, postcolonial, and Indigenous scholarship in conversation with gender studies, this special issue seeks to interrogate how the colonial archive of knowledge continues to shape the Nordic present – and what other epistemic forms challenge it. The contributions collectively ask how coloniality organises knowledge, subjectivities, and sexual, racial, and gender identities (Tlostanova, 2023) in the Nordic region and beyond. Drawing on diverse positionalities and experiences of colonialism and decolonisation, the contributors offer situated, relational, and deeply relevant insights into the entanglements of coloniality, gender, and power, while proposing decolonial feminist alternatives to the existing dominant knowledge practices, thereby demonstrating how knowledge production itself becomes a site of struggle and renewal. At the same time, the issue reflects that much work remains to be done within Nordic scholarship: It calls on us to continue practicing decolonial thinking within feminist studies – and feminist thinking within decolonial

work. We understand this issue not as a conclusion but as the beginning of an ongoing conversation, one that we hope will foster future scholarship and collective practice toward epistemic justice, relational accountability, and healing within and beyond the Nordic region.

THE NORDIC COLONIAL LANDSCAPE

To situate this issue and the articles within their historical and geopolitical context, we turn to the colonial landscape of the Nordic region. The Nordic nation-states – Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland – have extensive and prolonged colonial histories that manifest in the present in different ways. This includes imposed national borders on Sápmi and political constructions such as the Danish Realm (Rigsfælleskabet), reflecting the ongoing colonisation of Indigenous people in the Nordic countries and the Arctic (Graugaard, 2020; Fjellheim, 2020).

Nordic colonialism extends beyond the Nordic area. Nordic countries emerged as global empires actively participating in slave trade, plantation economies (Naum & Nordin, 2013), resource extraction, and settler colonialism (Sverdljuk et al., 2020). Denmark held colonies in the Caribbean, West Africa, and the North Atlantic, as well as trading posts in India (Naum & Nordin, 2013). Sweden gained an international reputation for its contributions to transnational European pseudo-scientific debates on "race" (Mattson, 2014). Meanwhile, Nordic countries that were themselves under foreign rule – Norway, Iceland, and Finland – were also engaged in colonial activities. They conducted missionary work, produced and reproduced racist and colonial discourses (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012), and participated in settler colonialism (see Huhta, 2020; Eyþórsdóttir & Loftsdóttir, 2016).

The foreign rule of (some) Nordic countries lead to ambiguous positions. Finnish people were historically categorised within race science as inferior and 'not fully white' (Keskinen, 2019). Likewise, Icelanders were portrayed as 'not fully civilised', and Iceland became a site for European science tourism and resource speculation during the 19th century (Loftdóttir, 2024b). In response to Danish colonialism, Icelandic intellectuals sought to position Iceland as 'civilised' by reproducing racist discourses on other colonised peoples (Loftdóttir, 2019). Early twentieth-century Icelandic politicians even debated if Iceland had a legitimate claim to Kalaallit Nunaat as their "ancient colony", disregarding the presence and sovereignty of Kalaallit Inuit (Réttindi íslendinga á Grænlandi, 1948).

When acknowledged, Nordic imperialism has often been framed as benign and benevolent (Naum & Nordin, 2013, p. 10), differentiating it from other European forms of colonialism. In Denmark, the longstanding narrative of Danish economic benevolence in Kalaallit Nunaat has permeated Danish-Kalaallit relations (Lynge, 2006; Petersen, 1995). Such narratives have rendered Nordic colonial repression of Indigenous peoples largely invisible (Fur, 2006), when in reality, administration of different aspects of Indigenous people's lives was a key aspect of colonisation: Nordic nation-states presumed the right to determine what was "best" in terms of land use, culture, economic activity, and social structures (Aikio, 2022; Graugaard, 2018). These were also policies of elimination, as exemplified in Danish assimilation policies in Kalaallit Nunaat and in the assimilationist practices of the Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish states towards Sámi people, in which Indigeneity was relegated to a bygone past (Dankertsen, 2022; Graugaard, 2018). The Nordic refusal to recognise (settler) colonialism in Sápmi and Kalaallit Nunaat has been crucial to maintaining the Nordic self-image of innocence and exceptionalism (e.g. Fur, 2006).

A recent example of this dynamic is the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's removal of the Kalaallit-Danish documentary, *Orsugiak – The White Gold of Greenland* (Pilehave & Rosing, 2025), from its public streaming platform only ten days after release. The documentary uncovers a largely untold history of how Danish wealth was generated through cryolite extraction in southern Kalaallit Nunaat, and the se-

rious, long-term consequences this had for the local Kalaallit Inuit community. In response, Danish politicians, newspaper editors, and large segments of the public swiftly sought to delegitimise the documentary and its sources – labelling it as 'misleading', 'fraudulent', and 'a mess', and as 'biased' due to its Kalaallit perspectives[1]. While the film was framed in Danish media as harmful to the relationship between Denmark and Kalaallit Nunaat – amidst geopolitical tension and Trumpian politics – the reception and subsequent removal were, in Kalaallit Nunaat and across the Arctic, widely experienced as the actual harm: an instance of colonial censorship of Inuit history. The immediate mobilisation of Danish affective defence and aggression echoes broader dynamics of white fragility, colonial denial, and silencing, underscoring that there is nothing exceptionally benign or benevolent about Nordic colonialism (Andersen, 2025; Bondebjerg, 2025; Bryant, 2025a; Danbolt, 2025; Gaïni, 2025; Juselius, 2025; Juselius & Koch, 2025; Sartini & Chahine, 2025).

Colonial denial remains a defining feature of Nordic exceptionalism. It manifests not only in public and political discourse – where racism is routinely denied or minimised (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Johansson et al., 2024; Hübinette, 2012; Loftsdóttir, 2017) – but also in western epistemic authority through which Nordic colonialism has been studied and remembered. While postcolonial research has contributed important analysis of imperial and colonial history, it has often overlooked intersections of race and gender as constitutive of Nordic colonial modernity. As recent scholarship demonstrates, racialisation in the Nordic region is deeply entwined with ideas of civilisation, morality, and sexuality, where whiteness operates as a silent norm and as a measure of modern belonging (Andreassen & Ahmed-Andresen, 2014; Bjørlig, 2021; Guschke et. al, 2023; Graugaard et al., 2025; Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Colonial hierarchies in the Nordic region were thus reproduced not only through political and economic domination but also through gendered and racialised discourses that have positioned Indigenous peoples, and particularly Indigenous women, as subjects of governance and objects of moral concern. A decolonial feminist framework invites renewed attention to these intersections and the power structures that have rendered them invisible, urging scholarship to address how colonial hierarchies of race and gender continue to shape knowledge production and contemporary Nordic self-understanding (Frankenberg, 1993).

CULTIVATING DECOLONIAL FEMINIST THINKING IN THE NORDICS

Part of Nordic exceptionalism has been the notion of the region as uniquely gender equal (Holli et al., 2005), an image actively mobilised by Nordic governments to brand the Nordics internationally (Jezierska & Towns, 2021). Predominant narratives of the Nordics as "gender-friendly" welfare states – based on ideas of uniform "equality" – are exported as unique contributions to international development (Elgström & Delputte, 2016; Keskinen et al., 2021). These discourses on Nordic progressiveness around human rights and gender equality obscure the region's colonial histories and their continuities (Lundström & Teitelbaum, 2017). What, then, would it mean to interrogate these gendered dimensions, and to cultivate decolonial feminist thinking in the Nordics? *What would it mean to decolonise Nordic Gender Studies?*

Feminist and Gender Studies have long examined how gender is socially constructed and tied to power. Intersectionality – coined and developed by Black feminist scholarship (Crenshaw, 1989) – has become foundational in revealing how gender operates through race, class, sexuality, able-bodiedness, and age. Yet, as intersectionality has gained traction across different disciplines, white Eurocentric and mainstream Nordic feminists have often failed to interrogate whiteness as their own epistemic standpoint, thereby reproducing colonial patterns of authority (Cho et al., 2013; Guschke et al., 2023; kennedy-mcfoy & Zarkov, 2021). Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes* (1988) was an early and important critique of the failure of Western feminism to engage with realities beyond the white, Western feminist experience, framing it instead as part of an ongoing

colonial discourse.

Colonial histories have not only produced enduring constructions of "race" and processes of racialisation but have also conditioned the very terms through which gender, sexuality, and subjectivity are understood. Decolonial feminist thought approaches colonialism not as an external factor that intersects with gender, but as constitutive of it. María Lugones' theorisation of *"the coloniality of gender"* (2023 [2008]) demonstrates that binary logics and categories such as "man" and "woman" are European colonial constructs. Through what she termed the *modern/colonial gender system*, colonialism intertwined racial, gendered, and capitalist hierarchies that positioned white, bourgeois, heterosexual men as the standard of humanity, while relegating colonised peoples – particularly women of colour – outside the boundaries of "proper" gender. Race and gender thus emerged as co-constituted fictions that naturalised inequality, defining ideals of white femininity in opposition to the racialised caricatures of colonised women, while suppressing Indigenous gender and sexual identities (e.g. Cusicanqui, 2020; Robinson, 2020; Williamson, 2012).

Queer Studies, too, have been criticised for insufficient engagement with racialisation (Cohen, 1997; Ferguson, 2003), as well as ignorance toward Indigenous Two-Spirit and Trans epistemologies (Gill-Peterson, 2024; Presley, 2020; Robinson, 2020; Snorton, 2017). These omissions are not incidental but can be understood as a colonial continuity that reproduces the very exclusions decolonial approaches seek to challenge. Colonial logics are embedded not only in how race is constructed, but also in how sexuality is categorised, disciplined, and politicised. Jasbir Puar's concept of *homonationalism* (2007) exposes how queer inclusion becomes a nationalist tool, differentiating the "modern" white citizen from the racialised "other." Even amidst anti-gender backlashes, such logics persist across Europe, reinscribing colonial hierarchies of morality and belonging (Puar, 2013).

In the Nordic context, the concept of homonationalism has also proven useful in analysing queer-friendly national self-representations (e.g., Kehl, 2024; Nebeling Petersen, 2016). Yet, scholarship has given little sustained attention to the specific colonial continuities that undergird these progressive narratives. Lunau and Schröder (2025) explore how the assessment of 'genuine' queerness within queer asylum in Denmark and Germany works through logics of "colonial surveillance". In Iceland, queer migrants from the global south navigate multiple discriminations – recognised as queer yet racialised as perpetual "foreigners" (Sólveigar Guðmundsdóttir & Skaptadóttir, 2018).

Among the contributions to this issue, explicitly decolonial queer analyses remain largely absent. It is a perspective that sometimes appears at the margins – for instance, when a student in Chandra and Sigurðardóttir's study (this issue) reflects: "Learning about colonialism also teaches us that trans groups have always existed". Such insights remind us that intersectional, decolonial approaches remain vital for future feminist and queer scholarship in the Nordic context.

While Nordic decolonial feminism is still in formation, important groundwork has been laid. Indigenous and Black feminist scholars have introduced decolonial perspectives into critical debates on gender, racism, colonialism, and knowledge creation (e.g. Diallo & Yohaness, 2024; Hunter, 2023; Tlostanova et al., 2019; Knobblock & Stubberud, 2021). Their interventions highlight persistent omissions within mainstream Nordic feminism – particularly its reluctance to address racism and its entanglement with coloniality. As Knobblock and Koukkanen note, "the dismissiveness of white liberal feminism takes shape in the form of non-recognition, indifference, or plain ignorance" (2015, p. 278).

Such patterns persist where intersectionality and structural inequalities are treated as secondary to gender (e.g. Dahl, 2021), and where whiteness remains the unmarked point of departure (Graugaard,

2020; Hübinette & Lundström, 2014; Loftsdóttir, 2024a). Despite a growing emphasis among white non-Indigenous Nordic feminists to "include" Indigenous feminist voices, Nordic gender studies have often failed to acknowledge the erasure of Indigenous people in Nordic societies (Dankertsen, 2021, p.145). As Knobblock and Kuokkanen (2015) argue, Indigenous feminism has frequently been sidelined, even though it challenges the foundations of colonial nation-states and their gendered hierarchies.

Articulated by thinkers such as Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017), Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2015), and Rauna Kuokkanen (2019), Indigenous feminism insists that gender justice cannot be separated from struggles for land, language, and collective continuance. It disrupts the liberal feminist narrative of progress by centring relational accountability, community well-being, and connections to land – principles that challenge the very notion of the male, sovereign nation-state. Bringing Indigenous and decolonial feminist thinking into dialogue therefore not only unsettles Nordic exceptionalism but opens pathways for relational, land-attuned, and accountable feminist practice in the region.

We suggest that advancing Nordic feminist theory requires confronting these absences – not as individual failings, but as epistemic and structural effects of colonial modernity. Cultivating decolonial feminist thought in the Nordics thus requires more than critique – it calls for renewed attentiveness to alternative knowledge systems, to the ongoing coloniality of gender and sexuality, and to the possibilities of feminist scholarship grounded in relational accountability and collective transformation.

REFLECTIONS ON POSITIONALITY AND THE EDITORIAL PROCESS

Undertaking this special issue has been a project shaped by and within decolonial aspirations, which have guided our approach in the different stages of production – from composing the editorial board and issuing the call for contributions, to the collaborative writing and editing process, and the development of our ethical guidelines. Working decolonially is and should not be a "metaphor" (Tuck & Yang, 2012), and it is not a checklist to be ticked off (Gani & Khan, 2024). It requires ongoing reflexivity, attentiveness, and accountability. We consider it essential to reflect on our positionality as editors to resist claiming to speak objectively from nowhere in particular (Haraway, 1988), and we have encouraged all contributors to similarly situate their positionality within their work. In our editorial work, working reflexively has been approached as a necessary practice for destabilising colonial knowledge hierarchies, challenging the centring of whiteness as 'neutrality', and holding our work accountable to its particular perspectives and potential blind spots.

As editors of this special issue, we are a group of scholars from, or residing in, different national contexts, territories, and colonial experiences in and beyond the Nordic region, including Denmark, Norway, Faroe Islands, Iceland, Kalaallit Nunaat, Germany, Columbia, and Canada. We are: Annika Isfeldt (Aarhus University), Èva Cossette-Laneville (The Arctic University of Norway), Josefine Lee Stage (DPU, Aarhus University), Julia Suárez-Krabbe (Roskilde University), Kristín Loftsdóttir (University of Iceland), Lars Jensen (Roskilde University), Naja Dyrendom Graugaard (University of Copenhagen), Rieke Schröder (University of Münster), and Turið Nolsøe (University of Southern Denmark). We work across different disciplines, institutions, and Nordic contexts (and beyond), with varied academic conditions and positionalities in relation to the colonial histories and structures of the region. While our perspectives differ, we share a commitment to advancing decolonial feminist approaches in the Nordics.

Importantly, this issue prioritises authorship and expertise that is grounded in and foregrounds lived experiences of colonisation, recognising that these insights are central to breaking with epistemic erasure in feminist scholarship. This has included conscious attention to editorial governance that supports diverse, Indigenous, and other marginalised authors

and forms of knowledges. We recognise that various forms of knowledge – artistic, embodied, practice-based, and collaborative – contribute crucially to understanding both colonisation and decolonisation (Cusicanqui, 2020) in the Nordic region. We hold that integrating these epistemologies is crucial to challenge dominant academic hierarchies and to affirm the necessity of plural, relational approaches to knowledge production. Our aim has been to foreground Indigenous epistemes, feminist methodologies, and alternative scholarly praxis through collaboration and co-creation, treating processes of knowledge production itself as a site of decolonial intervention.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions gathered in this special issue bring together a diverse constellation of voices interrogating colonial legacies and decolonial possibilities in and beyond the Nordic region. Working across disciplines, geographies, and methodologies, the authors engage critically with intersecting regimes of gender, race, and coloniality. Collectively, the contributions highlight how decolonial, feminist, and Indigenous perspectives can unsettle the epistemic hierarchies of the (Nordic) academy while offering transformative ways of knowing and being.

The articles are grouped into four interrelated thematic clusters: Histories and memories; Colonial continuities and Nordic complicities; Coloniality (and gender) in the welfare state; and Collaborative and artistic methodologies.

Histories and memories

Elizabeth Löwe-Hunter reinterprets the lives of Victor Cornelins and Alberta Roberts, Black colonial subjects from St. Croix who were 'transplanted' to Denmark in 1905. Using an Afrofeminist lens, she reveals how their stories unsettle Danish national memory and contribute to decolonising historical knowledge.

Signe Arnfred reflects on her experiences in Mozambique in the 1980s to examine how Nordic equality feminism, grounded in Enlightenment ideals, often reproduced colonial hierarchies. She situates this within a broader genealogy of Western feminist thought and its entanglement with capitalism, modernity, and empire.

Colonial continuities and Nordic complicities

Regine-Ellen Møller analyses sealskin production in Kalaallit Nunaat, demonstrating how gender-fluid practices resist colonial constructions of modernity while highlighting Indigenous economic resilience and community-based sustainability.

Patricia Lorenzoni exposes how Swedish media representations of "uncontacted" Indigenous peoples in Brazil reproduce colonial fantasies and Swedish exceptionalism, connecting media narratives to global structures of domination.

Juan Velásquez Atehortúa critiques Swedish media portrayals of Black women's activism during the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, showing how intersectional practices of resistance are rendered invisible by racialised regimes of representation.

Coloniality (and gender) in the welfare state

Ruben Hordijk, Lene Myong, and Sophie Withaeckx theorise adoption as a colonial technology of severance, linking Nordic welfare-state governance to global hierarchies of family, race, and belonging.

Nezihat Bakar-Langeland interrogates the temporal and spatial dimensions of racism in the Norwegian welfare system, revealing how unequal access to time and care reproduces colonial hierarchies.

Amani Hassani examines Danish housing policies as racialised instruments of exclusion and displacement, showing how "racial banishment" fragments communities while simultaneously generating new forms of collective belonging and resistance.

Saleh Abdelaziz, Lina Mukhtar Mohageb, and Merethe Riggelsen Gjørding discuss carceral feminism and penal humanism in the Nordic context, proposing abolition as both a decolonial analytic and an activist methodology for dismantling intersecting systems of oppression.

Greta Jiménez explores Faroese early childhood education, identifying how Danish administrative frameworks sustain colonial temporalities, while pedagogical practices of hesitation and dwelling create everyday sites of resistance.

Sólveig Sigurðardóttir and Giti Chandra analyse Icelandic students' perspectives on decolonising higher education, emphasising the university's role in reproducing colonial knowledge and calling for curricular transformation.

Collaborative and artistic methodologies

Dorothy Amenuke, Julie Edel Hardenberg, La Vaughn Belle, Bernard Akoi-Jackson, Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld and Daniela Agostinho present an artistic collaboration that reconnects the geographies divided by Danish imperialism, showing art's potential to forge decolonial solidarities across the Global South and Nordic region.

Gry Lind Merrild Hansen and Ikimaliq Pikilak reflect on their curatorial collaboration for *Inuit Dimensions*, using collaborative autoethnography and the Mi'kmaw concept of "two-eyed seeing" to navigate asymmetrical power relations and explore the ethics of Indigenous/non-Indigenous co-creation.

Anne S. Chahine, Nina Hermansen, Nina N. Döring, and Jan-Erik Henriksen theorise affective spaces of collaboration between Sámi and non-Indigenous scholars, emphasising co-creation as a practice of epistemic justice.

Valerie Triggs, Shannon Leddy, Michele Sorensen, Nicole Rallis, Rita L. Irwin, and Ching-Chiu Lin undertake a 100-day inquiry into land-based learning, drawing on the Medicine Wheel teachings from Turtle Island to reimagine education as a relational, embodied, and decolonial practice.

Creative interventions, essays, and reviews

In line with our commitment to unsettling colonial structures of knowledge productions, the special issue also features other forms of knowledge such as art, multi-modal storytelling, poems and political speeches.

Henriette Bertelsen's poem voices intergenerational trauma rooted in the Danish IUD program in Kalaallit Nunaat, while **Aka Hansen's** poem reclaims Inuit matriarchal heritage and futurity.

Julie Edel Hardenberg's *Trophy - pearls* (2019) on the front cover and **Camilla Sejberg's** two pieces of artwork inside the issue visualise different aspects of Inuit feminist solidarity and collective mourning across contexts, including Palestine.

Klaudia Petersen's essay *Inuit for Palestine* links Danish colonial complicity in Kalaallit Nunaat to contemporary solidarity with Palestinians, while **Sophia Zisakou's** essay critiques claims of academic neutrality amid genocide, advocating for situated, resistant objectivity.

Finally, **Nina Cramer and Qwin Werle's** interview with **Tina Campt** explores Black diasporic archives and the radical possibilities of listening.

Three book reviews conclude the issue: **Anders Riel Müller/Yeonjun Song's** review of *Decolonial Sweden* (McEachrane & Faye, 2025) and **Kjerstin Uhre's** review of Eva Maria Fjellheim's PhD dissertation *Resisting Unfinished Colonial Business in Southern Saami Reindeer Herding Landscapes* (2024, The Arctic University of Norway), both of which offer new critical scholarship from the Nordic region to global decolonial debates. While **Rieke Schröder's** review of *Boundaries of Queerness* (Kehl, 2024) appears out of issue, the topics of homonationalism and racial politics in Sweden relate to the themes of this issue.

Complementing these contributions, the debate section features a statement from **Feminists against Genocide.**

Taken together, these contributions demonstrate the breadth of decolonial feminist scholarship emerging across and beyond the Nordic region. They illuminate how colonial histories persist in institutions, knowledge systems, and everyday practices, while also revealing possibilities for resistance, repair, and relational accountability. In the last section of this introduction, we want to turn to the possibilities.

LOOKING AHEAD: DECOLONIAL FEMINIST FUTURES

Decolonial feminist futures are grounded in the recognition that ways of knowing, being, and imagining precede and extend beyond colonial structures. As Mignolo and Walsh (2018) note, decoloniality involves undoing hierarchical structures of race, gender, heteropatriarchy, and class that continue to shape life, knowledge, and thought within global capitalism and Western modernity.

Looking ahead, decolonial feminist praxis in the Nordics – and globally – requires attending to plural possibilities: centring Indigenous futurities, embracing alternative epistemologies, and ensuring that racialised, gendered, queer, trans, Two-Spirit, Black, Indigenous, and other marginalised voices shape both the stories we tell about the past and the futures we imagine. This includes institutionalising these perspectives within research, policy, and education, to resist erasure and create space for collective, relational accountability.

By embracing counter-narratives, critical fabulation, and Indigenous narrative sovereignty, we open pathways beyond dystopia and beyond the limits imposed by the present system of racial capitalism (Davis, 1998; 2016, Hartman, 2008a; b). In doing so, decolonial feminist thought not only interrogates the legacies of coloniality but actively constructs futures rooted in alternative value systems, relationality, and justice (Svendsen, 2024). The contributions in this issue gesture toward these possibilities, reminding us that decolonisation is both an ongoing struggle and a creative, futuristic project: one that demands imagination, care, and solidarity across difference.

NOTES

[1] One of the editors of this special issue was a lead character in *Orsugiak - The White Gold of Greenland*, and became one of the main targets of the subsequent Danish media storm, accused of being academically incompetent, girlish, too emotional, and biased due to her Danish-Kalaaleq Inuk background.

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