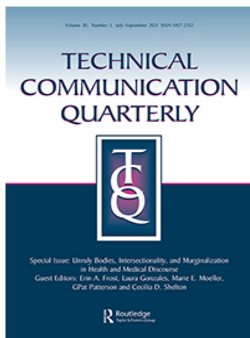

Technical Communication Quarterly

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/htcq20

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To cite this article: Cana Uluak Itchuaqiyaq & Breeanne Matheson (2021) Decolonial Dinners: Ethical Considerations of "Decolonial" Metaphors in TPC, Technical Communication Quarterly, 30:3, 298-310, DOI: 10.1080/10572252.2021.1930180

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2021.1930180

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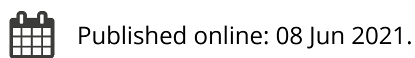
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TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION QUARTERLY
2021, VOL. 30, NO. 3, 298–310
https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2021.1930180

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Decolonial Dinners: Ethical Considerations of “Decolonial” Metaphors in TPC

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ABSTRACT
The recent uptick in TPC scholarship related to decolonial methods, methodologies, and praxis warrants careful consideration about how this framework is used in TPC scholarship. Using a critique of decolonial scholars, the authors reconsider their use of “decolonial” to describe their experience with urban foraging as a practice that subverts modern Euro-Western foodways. This article uses experiential narrative as a way to theorize about technology as it relates to decolonial perspectives on bodies and nutrition.

KEYWORDS
Decolonial methodologies; urban foraging; nutrition; technology; field narrative

Introduction

Nutritional and medicinal practices are a health issue relevant to the intersection of many marginalized communities, particularly Indigenous communities whose use of traditional knowledge of plants has been part of subsistence and medicine (Smith, 2012). These communities rely on locally sourced plants for food, health remedies, and cultural connection. Thus, urban foraging, foraging for plants and mushrooms in cities (Poe, LeCompte, McLain, & Hurley, 2014), crosses the boundaries among health, medicine, culture, and community because the identifying, gathering, and use of foraged plants has the potential to reconnect individuals to sustainable relationships with land. Further, skills such as urban foraging offer individuals and communities mechanisms by which to subvert or supplement exclusionary capitalist systems of mass-produced food and medicine. In addition, such skills might be taught and/or mediated by technology, further complicating the relationships between plants, bodies, nutrition, and land.

Though technical and professional communication (TPC) scholarship has nodded toward nutrition as a site of inquiry (Dragga, 1999; Durá & Singhal, 2010; Durack, 1997; Flynn, 1997; Hayhoe, 1999; Lippincott, 2003; Moeller & Frost, 2016; Wickman, 2014), discussion of plants, as they relate to medicine and nutrition, has been largely overlooked. However, Durá and Singhal (2010) found that it was through recognizing an Indigenous community’s relationship to local food sources that greater health issues could be addressed, signaling that colonial knowledges of food and medicine are not totalizing. In other words, the understanding of what constitutes “legitimate” food and medicine is socially constructed. Not all scholars who use Indigenous frameworks, such as decoloniality, make explicit the intertwined connections between land and bodies in relation to subsistence practices and health. This article seeks to better connect those relationships.

Further, this article acts as an interruption to a problematic pattern in the field: the co-optation of decolonial methodology to describe social justice work. We use experiential narrative to theorize about technology as it relates to decolonial perspectives on bodies and nutrition. First, we present some implications of labeling such nutrition practices as decolonial, resisting the use of decolonial as

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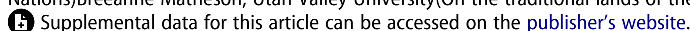

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a metaphor and emphasizing the importance of using the term correctly and responsibly in relation to Indigenous lands and bodies in socially just TPC scholarship. Second, this article lays out the ways in which individuals might learn and participate in health and nutrition practices in urban spaces through technology using a story-based field narrative. Third, we address tensions created when considering technology-assisted subsistence practices, and the nutritional subsistence activities they support, through a critical, “decolonial” lens. Though there are many ways TPC scholarship engages with decolonial methods, methodologies, and practice, we define decolonial practice as work that supports, respects, and restores the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, lands, and knowledges (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021). Anticolonial discourse, on the other hand, is understood as a “politics of action, as a way of knowing and understanding the lived experiences of the self through praxis, as a way of understanding the self beyond the governing ethic of Euro-modernity” (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p. 72). It is important to understand and embrace the difference between these two terms because we argue that one is directly linked to Indigenous lands, bodies, histories, and futures, while the other is not. They both work to understand and reject the tendrils of coloniality undergirding too many aspects of society, but their perspectives and goals are different.

Experiential design

Picture this: It is a summer afternoon in Salt Lake City, Utah. Two friends walk into a park equipped with a guidebook, a basket for gathering plants, shears for harvesting, and two smartphones.

Both of us were trained in the same PhD program and are academic “sisters” who share the same mentor, though Breeanne is currently an assistant professor and Cana Uluak is a graduate student. Through discussions on Twitter, we came to realize that, on top of our academic interest in social justice research in TPC, we both shared a personal interest in urban-foraging practices. We arranged a get-together at Breeanne’s home and set off together to search for edible plants at a public park near downtown Salt Lake City. The park was busy with city residents jogging or walking their dogs. As we walked slowly down the park’s steep pathways, identifying plants in established garden beds and crouching down to closely inspect spindly weeds growing at the base of planted flowers, people openly stared. It was clear from public reaction that our behavior in the park defied what was considered “normal” for that space. Both of us expressed feelings of self-consciousness at various times, and even came up with a planned response in case we were approached by law enforcement.

In this article, we weave together our story, our argument about health and nutrition practices, and our argument about “decolonial” practices in the field in a novel way. We break away from the traditional academic article genre, focusing instead on conveying the discovery and tension that occurred during our research as it happened for us. Because of the complex nature of this project, we have incorporated our review of relevant literature within each section rather than as its own distinct section. We provide a field narrative, much in the same spirit as Moeller and Frost (2016), that works “to reexamine the impact of past approaches” to decolonial studies in TPC research through uncovering what is lost when activities such as urban foraging are mis-tagged as “decolonial” approaches to nutrition. We articulate our concern regarding the erasure occurring when researchers appropriate “decolonial” as a metaphor for social justice-oriented projects (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Specifically, we consider our own urge to use the term “decolonial” to describe our technology-assisted urban-foraging practice through the critical lens provided by decolonial studies scholars Eve Tuck and Yang (2012). We also provide an experiential narrative, a series of narrative descriptions of our individual and collective experiences (i.e., stories) that theorize how our intersecting and complex positionalities affected how we interpreted this event. Experiential narratives are useful to express the moral dimensions of experiences and “engage the imagination through accounts of lived experience and are assumed to have a factual quality” (Conle, 2007, p. 11). Further, “while narrative detail can be used in the service of several kinds of knowledge, it is particularly critical to the making of experiential knowledge, or ‘naturalistic generalizations’” (Rentz, 1999, p. 54) which foregrounds Jones and Walton (2018) description of narrative as “a promising tool for engaging explicitly with issues of diversity and

social justice because of its capacities for fostering identification, facilitating reflexivity, interrogating historicity, and understanding context" (p. 243). In other words, this article describes how two friends started out on a quirky adventure to make dinner together and wound up recognizing a problematic pattern in our field's practice.

We set out to answer the following research questions:

(1) How might individuals participate in subsistence-based health and nutrition practices in colonized urban spaces?
(2) When considering subsistence-based nutritional practices such as urban foraging, how do the concepts of decoloniality as presented by Tuck and Yang (2012) shape what is visible and important?
(3) What limitations exist in introducing networked technological practices to subsistence efforts?

The body of this article is organized into three major sections that echo our research questions. Each section begins with a brief framing of the section followed by first-person narratives developed from our field notes by each author that provide context about the research, the researcher, and the inner monologue that fuels bodily action. These narratives, we feel, provide rich insight about the theoretical work we are presenting, and, perhaps, provide a way for readers to personally connect with this research. Finally, each section contains an analysis of our urban-foraging experience through theoretical concepts expressed in our experiential narratives, relevant ideas from TPC literature, and Tuck and Yang (2012) critical framework for decolonial practices.

Unsettling decolonial metaphors

In recent years, TPC has had a rise of scholarship discussing decolonial methods. Likewise, discussions of the rhetorics of health and medicine are also on the rise. A 2018 special issue in *Technical Communication Quarterly*, edited by Elizabeth Angeli and Richard Johnson-Sheehan, engages with the nuances of narratives related to health. Edwell, Singer, and Jack (2018) discuss the use of *techne* as a method of engaging with experiences related to health, a practice that echoes our own use of experiential narratives for theory-building. Lerner (2018) warns that narratives related to health and medicine could be misleading if the narrator is misinformed. Their work aligns with our own concerns related to the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of decolonial methodologies.

There have been 42 scholarly works (scholarly monographs, journal articles, and conference proceedings) published since 2010 that actively engage with decolonial methodologies by explicitly discussing decolonial methods, methodology, or practices in the body of the text, and 22 of them have been published since 2018 [**Link to Supplementary File A here**]. This uptick in decolonial research in TPC has employed a wide range of working definitions of decolonization largely alongside related ideas such as feminism, social justice, and critical race theory (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021). This range of efforts to define and employ decolonial methodologies necessitates a consideration of existing critiques of decolonial scholarship in order to determine the efficacy of these efforts. Decolonial studies scholars Tuck and Yang (2012), offer a critical lens to the growing use of the term "decolonial" in cultural studies, education, and other fields as a synonym for social or racial justice. Tuck and Yang, in their highly cited article (cited 2,729 times at the time of the writing of this article), argue that, "[d]ecolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" and cannot be supplanted by definitions that simply use decolonization as a metaphor for using Indigenous knowledges or traditions to improve systems or ideas" (p. 35). Using Tuck and Yang's critical lens, we can better understand both our practice of urban foraging as a supplement to Western dietary practices and our impulse to consider our urban-foraging practice as decolonial. As we headed into the park, our predisposition toward considering decoloniality as a synonym for social justice came with us.

Cana Uluak: At one point we laughed and called our foraging adventure “decolonial nutrition practice.” Our rationale was that our actions in the park picking “weeds” to eat subverted Western cultural norms of nutrition. Plus, it sounded catchy. Our jokes about using this experience for an article started to take a serious tone as we realized how heavily we relied on technology to teach us what we could and couldn’t safely eat from this landscape. As we began taking diligent notes and planning our research in earnest, I got a weird feeling about (ab)using a decolonial framework to sell what we were doing; I’d studied and written about decolonial methodology enough to recognize that while this foraging seemed decolonial, it was only partially so at best. Here’s the thing, though: I knew we could get away with it. Because of my Indigenous body, it seems like whatever scholarly work I do is tagged as “Indigenous” or expected to be “decolonial,” even if it’s something completely unrelated to Indigeneity. People might even consider this a decolonial project simply because of my Indigenous involvement with it. And besides, decolonial scholarship is sought-after in our field; I knew I could get away with it. I struggled with my ambition; my face reddened and I felt ashamed.

Breeanne: Though we had set out an endeavor to learn about urban foraging, thinking of it as an effort to decolonize our nutrition and food practices, based on our training and acculturation into the field of TPC and its growing concern about such matters, my unease about the utility of such a term grew as we engaged with the plant-identification technologies and their inherent colonialist-capitalist underpinnings. In addition, the way we joked and made light of our project as silly or unworthy of serious consideration pointed to real internalized colonial attitudes about the validity of foodways that didn’t rely on colonial and capitalist methods of food production and access. Further, my own cultural background and whiteness provides inherent limitations of the extent to which I can, or will ever be able to, engage in food practices that are truly decolonial by the very nature of my existence in a place where Indigenous people are displaced to make room for people and cultural practices that reflect my own background.

Decolonial studies scholars warn that research must not treat decolonization metaphorically:

> When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future … Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn’t have a synonym. (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3)

As we both discussed in our narratives, we, too, felt compelled to frame our urban-foraging experience (and this resulting article) as decolonial. This impulse surfaced despite knowing that our work did not actively contribute to the rematriation of land or knowledges of the traditional Indigenous stewards of this land. This urge does not at all indicate that we *want* to contribute to the cultural erasure of Indigenous peoples. Instead, it indicates that the field has *trained* us to think this way via its scholarship and teaching. Tuck and Yang (2012) strong caution – literally the opening words to their article’s abstract – is a reaction to issues found in their own fields of critical race, Indigenous studies, decolonial studies, education, and critical ethnic studies, and clearly demonstrates that TPC is not alone in this issue:

> Our goal in this article is to remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization. Decolonization brings about the [rematriation][1] of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to “decolonize our schools,” or use “decolonizing methods,” or, “decolonize student thinking,” turns decolonization into a metaphor. As important as their goals may be, social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches that decenter settler perspectives have objectives that may be incommensurable with decolonization. (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1)

There are two related, but vastly different, concepts relating to opposing colonization which could be a cause of missteps in the use of decolonial theory. “Colonial” is understood in the sense of not simply “foreign or alien,” but more profoundly as “imposed and dominating”” (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p. 74). While decolonization is concerned specifically with the rematriation of Indigenous lands, life,

and knowledges, anticolonial theory "works with the idea that all knowledge must purposively serve to challenge colonial imposition" (p. 74). In TPC scholarship, the use of decolonial theory to discuss social justice and active resistance to colonial structures, but without working toward rematriation efforts, could be instances of conflating decolonial and anticolonial theories.

This trend is so common that Breeanne quickly spotted it in her own work. For example, Matheson and Petersen's 2020 article "'Speaking so that we are heard:' A Zulu comic book as women's social action in 1990s South Africa" analyzes a comic written by the Women's National Coalition (WNC), a racially integrated women's activist group, in South Africa in the mid 1990s. The comic was written to mobilize Indigenous South African women to get involved in social activism in post-apartheid South Africa. The article argues that while the comic was a colonial document, created to fill a need inside a colonial frame, the comic also used decolonial strategies because it aims to build restorative justice for racially marginalized individuals. This brief excerpt from the text illustrates the way that Matheson and Petersen attempted to deploy decolonial frameworks:

> Therefore, we argue that in addition to understanding activism through comics, we must include "decolonial approaches . . . for revealing the ways that colonialism continues to operate and to affect lives in new and innovative ways as well as to show the unmitigated damage inflicted by past colonial practices" (Agboka, 2014, p. 298). Decolonial work requires more than diversifying perspectives in the field, a move that only relieves settler discomfort. Instead, decolonial work must center itself in restorative justice, breaking down unjust systems and remaking them to side with the most marginal (Makhubela, 2018). Efforts to conduct decolonial scholarship are often impeded by academic structures and practices; decolonial work may never be fully possible inside these contexts. We have, however, made efforts by approaching this work with a focus on social justice, the recognition of difference when it comes to issues of equality and equity, sensitivity to the social construction of identities, and the consequences of globalization (Agboka, 2014, p. 303). (Petersen & Matheson, 2020, p. 274)

The collaboration between Petersen and Matheson consisted of two white women writing about Indigenous women in South Africa. As such, it is important to note that the project in this case study was fraught with inherent challenges related to privilege and positionality. Even with the help of an Indigenous translator, their work is embedded with the complexity of white, Euro-Western gaze. Compounding these complexities is the secondary Western gaze of peer reviewers who often impose their own ideological preference onto the works they review into their revision requests. Such requests are by necessity anonymous, but the anonymity eliminates the possibility for frank discussion between authors and reviewers about the positionalities imposed on the project by all parties. In this case, in the review process of the above article, reviewers requested that Petersen and Matheson use a decolonial framework for evaluating the source texts despite the reality that both authors lacked both the positionality and the resources to responsibly complete such a task (for more information about positionality and respectful research involving Indigenous knowledges and communities, refer to Itchuaqiyaq, 2021). Though we aimed to work toward social justice and engaged with Indigenous issues, this scholarship cannot be considered decolonial because it lacks connection with and responsibility to the needs of Indigenous communities. Further, it fails to engage with rematriation of land or knowledges and instead prioritizes diversity, inclusion, equity, and access for women. Such scholarship still serves an important social justice function, but that function cannot be interchanged with notions of decoloniality.

Tuck and Yang (2012) state that "decolonization is not a metonym for social justice" (p. 31). Conceptual metaphors include the use of metonymy where "one entity is being used to refer to another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 36) and parts of that entity can stand for the whole. Using Tuck and Yang's example, decolonization is a part of social justice efforts that is called to stand for social justice. The same also works in reverse, where social justice is considered a part of decolonization, and that small portion too often stands for decolonization's entirety. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) continue, "which part we pick out determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on" (p. 36). In the case of Tuck and Yang's 2012 critique, scholars who focus on the convenient portions of decolonization instead of the unsettling ones perpetuate cultural violence via appropriation and erasure, even if unwittingly. They state,

> The absorption of decolonization by settler social justice frameworks is one way the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore. (p. 9)

Our own urge to flippantly use a decolonial frame as a way to describe our urban-foraging adventure suggests that the colonial underpinnings of society and academia can compel us to forget to consider whose stolen lands our bodies occupy and to forget whose knowledges and concerns we were taught to co-opt or ignore. We suggest that TPC scholarship that aspires toward decolonization might be measured by Tuck and Yang's definition that decolonization must work to bring about the rematriation of Indigenous land and life. Scholars doing work that concerns social, racial, and other kinds of restorative justice should then select theoretical frames that more accurately represent their work and that do not appropriate ideas of decolonization as a metaphor for purposes that do not serve the framework's intention toward Indigenous rematriation.

Wild greens vs weeds: a matter of perspective

Our shared goal in the park was to identify and collect as many edible plants from the urban landscape near Breeanne's home as possible and to prepare a foraged meal to be served along with the fresh salmon Cana Uluak had recently netted in Alaska. Neither of us were experienced with urban foraging in this particular area, though Cana Uluak grew up participating in Indigenous subsistence foraging activities on her tribe's traditional lands, and Breeanne grew up practicing Western subsistence gardening and food storage practices in and around Salt Lake City, Utah. We both participated in settler colonialism to varying degrees because of our uninvited occupation of the traditional lands the Shoshone and the Goshute, a reality that reciting a land acknowledgment could not erase. Tuck and Yang describe the importance of land:

> Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5)

Discussions of land and its relationship with the daily violence of settler colonialism was something that was missing in our experience reading TPC scholarship (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021). Such absence limited our ability to understand foraging (and to write about it) and its potential relationship to decoloniality clearly and effectively.

Cana Uluak: Growing up in a traditional Indigenous family living and subsisting on our homelands in northern Alaska, I've never considered the greens we picked and ate there as "weeds" before. As an Indigenous person who currently lives, without permission, on the traditional lands of the Shoshone people, my "settler" identity is complicated by my body and my experiences. At once I am wholly Indigenous and wholly an invader participating in settler colonialism. In this park in Salt Lake City, I don't quite know how to reconcile these two selves. I grew up relatively sheltered from colonial garden philosophy and practice, and instead came to understand all plants/flowers/trees/weeds as potential food/medicine for my body. But here, picking greens in this manicured garden on stolen land, it feels different. I recognize the power of those sterilizing labels placed on the traditional Indigenous foods and medicines poking defiantly through the mulch: a tactic to characterize our sustenance as something strange and forbidden.

Breeanne: Although I was born in Salt Lake City, where we were gathering our meal, I descend from colonial tradition shaped by Western migration that displaced many of the Indigenous communities in the area where I reside. The colonial culture in which I was raised places a distinct emphasis on self-sufficiency around matters of health and nutrition with relation to the settled land we inhabited. As

a result, I grew up learning colonial gardening skills: pulling weeds, planting crops, and harvesting and preserving food for colder months or harder times. Still, these skills came with distinct colonial and capitalist ideologies that demand a conquering and manipulation of the lands on which my family has lived for several generations. Further, such practices also encourage or require participation in the broader capitalist system including buying supplies, seeds, starters, equipment, and land during almost every step of the process. More recently, I found myself becoming a frequent visitor of public lands where I often walk or hike and began to develop a curiosity about the plants that grew along the trails. Many of these plants might have been considered "weeds" inside the colonial gardening communities in which I was raised. Further, I began to notice that other wild plants shared similarities to the plants I had been raised to cultivate and harvest. These experiences led me to develop a growing curiosity about Indigenous foodways native to my hometown that prioritize a symbiosis of land and people. This increasing awareness and concern for the traditions of the peoples who preceded mine shaped the exigency and collaboration between myself and Cana Uluak to learn more about subsistence-based nutrition in the places where we live.

Together, we worked to identify and use local plants – typically considered "weeds" in colonial garden practices – as a source of food and medicine in order to understand how such skills have the potential to subvert colonial, capitalist notions of health. Though these skills have historically been passed down through shared-collective knowledge, technology has the potential to "change our social reality" by enabling these skills to be taught through distributed networks (Gurak & Bayer, 1994, p. 263). In other words, when access to localized knowledge is not available, such as the subsistence skillshare (Driskill, 2015) of identifying traditional Indigenous edible and medicinal plants, downloadable apps have the potential to fill that gap.

Bodies are shaped by nutrition and food practices, and these practices are often governed by technology. "Normal" parts of Western food practices include digital and print advertising, online ordering, digital purchasing technologies, retail outlets, food storage, cooking appliances, and recipe books and websites. Though many of us have been trained to rely on technology to provide sustenance for our bodies, there are still norms that dictate the "right" ways to use food technologies, making other uses "weird," kitsch, or other. As we worked to use technologies for purposes other than their intended purposes, we began to clearly recognize how bodies are colonized by Western foodways.

Our consideration of urban foraging as "decolonial" indicates foraging's conceptual relationship with anti-capitalist practice, which is another metaphorical use of decolonial. In searching out weeds to eat instead of searching out weeds to pull, we adopted an anticolonial stance, not a decolonial one. Our urban-foraging practice, while it aimed to legitimate and enact Indigenous subsistence practices by pushing through our social discomfort while picking greens in the park, in reality it was only a "rebellion to colonizing forces and being made to remember what it means to resist the hegemony of the Euro-West" (Simmons & Dei, 2012, p. 85).

Technological practices in urban foraging: tensions between colonialist-capitalist practice and decolonial skillsharing

Although technology can provide a vital and convenient means to learning subsistence skills, technological tools also present complex ethical and theoretical issues that may also undermine decolonial efforts by imposing a colonial ethos onto the user. As Tuck and Yang observed, "Capitalism and the state are technologies of colonialism, developed over time to further colonial projects" (p. 4). Efforts to unsettle nutrition practices must be viewed critically to understand the implications of how technological agents work inside decolonial and anticolonial frames.

As we headed into the park, smartphones and guidebook in hand, we viewed these technologies as *the* answer to our own lack of urban-foraging experience. Such technology offered us a connection to knowledge we otherwise lacked on our own and presented such knowledge in an immediately accessible way.

Cana Uluak: As we practiced urban foraging together, we slipped in and out of understanding our experience as an embodiment of traditional Indigenous subsistence practices because, quite frankly, it felt out of place and even vulnerable in a city park surrounded by joggers and dog walkers. It was safer to think of this activity as an academic exercise about technology rather than a reconnecting to the land and embodied sustenance practice. It was in that particular form of seeking safety (through justifying our social digressions via the colonial academic structures of research) that our project lost its decolonial nature despite my Indigenous involvement. By referring to Indigenous involvement, I am pointing to the ways that having an Indigenous body can dominate how its interactions with the world are coded. As I stated before, my participation (as a scholar who is Indigenous) in a scholarly activity often compels others to tag that activity as somehow decolonial or Indigenous in nature, even if it is clearly not. This is an act of tokenism and objectification, where my multifaceted human existence is erased in order to highlight, and (ab)use, my Indigenous identity for "woke" inclusion points.

Breeanne: As we flipped through the wild plants book, searching fruitlessly for specifics about each plant we encountered, I remembered the app I'd downloaded to my phone earlier that spring when my new garden plants were blooming, and I needed help telling the difference between tiny seedlings and new weeds. My brother had suggested that I might have better luck identifying new plants in my garden with a new app, and it turned out that the app was also incredibly helpful for foraging. We used the trial version of the app to identify park plants to such great success that after a few minutes I happily paid 20 USD for the year to subscribe to the app right there in the middle of the park. While we were having great success using a combination of this colonial garden app and the book, I also started to worry about other issues, such as data privacy and location tracking that were governing and shaping our bodily experience of foraging. These capitalist factors complicated our understanding of this work as "decolonial" and led us to question what it means when colonial and capitalist factors shape efforts to move beyond a colonial frame.

Upon setting out to gather food in a neighborhood park, we saw ourselves as engaged in a decolonial activity primarily because of the training we've received via TPC scholarship and pedagogy. Likewise, in accordance with Tuck and Yang, we were actively engaged in an effort to embody and repatriate Indigenous knowledges about food. We aimed to learn about and perpetuate foodways that were developed by Indigenous traditions. Still, our methods required use of tools governed by a colonialist-capitalist system. As noted in the accounts above, we used two primary resources to successfully and safely collect edible plants: a plant-identification app that used a mobile phone camera and a printed guidebook that listed common edible wild plants in the region. It quickly became apparent to the both of us that we had stumbled upon a TPC practice though we were still unsure how exactly that practice was shaping our experience. We began to keep field notes in a notetaking phone app just in case this adventure started to take a form that piqued our scholarly interests. We laughed and glibly called our project "decolonial nutrition practices," a naming impulse that revealed our belief in decoloniality as a metaphor for resisting Western norms. From those notes, we developed a field narrative describing the process by which we researchers identified edible and medicinal plants found in an urban neighborhood park, then prepared and documented a meal using the locally sourced ingredients we had gathered.

As we set out in an effort to identify edible plants, we aimed primarily to use a print text as our guide. We carried Caleb Warnock's 2017 guidebook, *437 Edible Wild Plants of the Rocky Mountain West*, with us, but within a couple of attempts to identify plants we encountered, we quickly found this method to be difficult. Without a baseline knowledge that might lead us to the right category of plant, the time required to identify plants by leafing through pages of photos became increasingly difficult. As a result, Breeanne produced an app already installed on her phone for gardening purposes called PictureThis.

Stated on its own website, PictureThis was created with the following intended purpose:

> PictureThis is capable of identifying 10,000+ plant species with an accuracy of 98%, better than most human experts. With the revolutionary artificial intelligence engine, it's constantly learning from experts and specialists [to] identify more and better every day. And now it's all at your fingertips! Picture this plant, and discover a new appreciation for the natural world together!

As promised, the app allowed us to take photos of the plant and the app automatically returned a plant name and information about the plant. However, we found that the information it provided was limited; although it offered much information about the plant (and even an opportunity to purchase a printed poster of the plant using our own photographs), it gave little to none about the edible or medicinal uses of the plants, making it clear that we were using the app beyond its intended purpose. Fortunately, once we had the English name of the plant, we were able to return to Warnock's book for more specialized information regarding edibility and medicinal uses. These limitations between our two primary resources shaped our procedure in which we used the app to locate the name of the plant, making it easier to identify in the book, where we learned more about the edible and medicinal uses of each plant.

In addition to having significant limitations around its ability to identify and explain the uses of any given plant, the app also gave us both some pause about the capitalist ideologies we had invited into our project by using it. We found that the use of the technology, embedded in the capitalist marketplace, kept pulling us away from our original mind-set (which sought to challenge Western foodways through seeking Indigenous wild plants) and back into status-quo colonial food mind-sets. Repeatedly, when the technology failed to offer us information about how to safely cook or eat a plant, it reinforced our sense that the task we had set out on was weird or unruly. Further, this technology offered us only Western ways of thinking about plants, providing us only English or Latin names, omitting the histories and traditions of Indigenous people and their relationships to these plants. With our technological tools reinforcing colonial ways of thinking about land and food in these ways, we found ourselves constantly having to reorient ourselves to Indigenous ways of thinking about plants, food, and our bodies. We did this by first noticing the absence of Indigenous knowledges in these technologies and then focusing on talking and thinking about plants in ways that engage Indigenous names, uses, and histories in order to reinforce Indigenous practices rather than colonial ones. In order to do so, we relied heavily on Cana Uluak's embodied knowledge of plants and their medical and food uses. We also used our phones to Google the plants we had identified to learn more about their Indigenous histories.

As we considered the complex, colonial, and capitalist implications of using Western technologies to assist with "decolonial" practice, we reached back into TPC literature about the ways that technology has the ability to both empower and disempower. In this moment, we considered decoloniality as a metaphor for empowerment. Coole and Frost (2010) suggest that such technological development moves us out of the realm of human and into the "posthuman" (p. 17). This move toward immersion in non-human materials which can possess agency themselves "may further perpetuate injustice" (p. 17). Rose and Walton (2018) also observed that even when we cannot know the intention of the designers of a technology, we can recognize the effects of such design. The effects of such designs inside the app challenge our ability to do work that prioritized the futurity of Indigenous knowledges. Specifically, our food choices were mediated by technological intermediaries that prioritized generating profit rather than knowledge sharing or promoting anticolonial nutrition practices.

In addition, it became eminently clear that the concerns expressed by Haas (2012) about the way our work can be saturated with "white male culture" which has inherently capitalist implications does indeed have the ability to oppress audiences of TPC (p. 8) by virtue of technology's ability to demand payment, disregard issues of intellectual property, and discount notions of privacy and security. Likewise, Frost and Haas (2017) observed that much of our desire for technology comes about in responses to a desire to "acquire 'new' knowledge" and that such technologies, often developed by colonial and dominant culture can reinforce normative understandings over "infinitely diverse embodied experience" (p. 92). As Dyer-Witheford (1999) points out, even spaces that exist as scenes of subversion and insurgency such as gathering places for food, can be dominated by capitalism (p.

91). Our app fit directly into this model, utilizing the impulse to subvert and reform capitalist models of health and nutrition by packaging the exchange of information in such a way that fed the capitalist system, despite our efforts to resist.

Our endeavor might have been smoother had we been taught local foraging practices by an Indigenous teacher rather than by technology, suggesting that decolonial work might be best facilitated when localized Indigenous bodies, rather than market-driven technology, serve as knowledge keepers. Itchuaqiyaq reminds us that, “even when we are socialized in a marginalized community, we are also socialized into the dominant systems, and perhaps, may enact [in this case, colonial] values according to convenience” (Itchuaqiyaq, 2021, p. 37). In the absence of a teacher sharing embodied knowledge, we found ourselves acting as unruly bodies, using technology in ways that directly contradicted the technology’s own stated purpose, and reinforced our sense of subsistence nutrition practices as “other.”

Conclusion

We consider it vital that we observe and name our positionality to this project. We have found this work to be incredibly unruly, difficult to pin down, and often challenging to our own ideologies. After much thought and struggle, we report that our work here is not decolonial in nature. Our ability to do decolonial work in this instance was limited by several factors which included our positionalities, our embodiment of Western paradigms, and our use of colonialist-capitalist technology instead of learning from local Indigenous knowledge keepers. Further, the entire endeavor of writing and publishing in an academic space, producing knowledge that will eventually live behind a paywall, inhibits any possibility that such a project could ever be an act of Indigenous rematriation.

Cana Uluak and Breeanne: Despite the complexities we encountered over the course of our outing, we ultimately completed our goal successfully. After nearly three hours of foraging, we returned home and carefully prepared each of the items in our basket as part of our meal. The preparation phase was equally full of successes and failures; for example, though our tea made of cotoneaster berries was technically safe to consume, its bitter flavor rendered it difficult to actually drink. In contrast, the dandelion greens became part of a flavorful salad. In addition to learning a new skill relevant to the land we inhabit, we spent time together laughing and connecting over land and food. Through this whole process, we struggled with our desire to do this complex work without doing harm and the realization that we didn’t know how. We had to unsettle what we learned in our academic training and the results felt messy. Decolonial methods are not meant to be flexible to bend to settler-academic will.

Our experience writing this experiential field narrative, specifically our process of attempting to apply a framework via the field’s working definition and then personally reckoning with the problematic ways that the field has (re)interpreted and (ab)used these frameworks (Itchuaqiyaq & Matheson, 2021), provided us the opportunity to capture the rich data points involved with our foraging experience as well as the ethical complexities of such an effort. These narratives suggest that subsistence health and nutritional practices can be difficult to self-teach and may be assisted by technological tools alongside seeking assistance from local Indigenous knowledge keepers. Further, such projects might become easiest when individuals have access to more than one learning resource. For example, printed guides were more useful once a plant had already been identified, allowing us to learn more about potential uses of the plant, whereas mobile identification technology made the process of quickly and correctly identifying plants much easier for inexperienced users. However, such tools also embody concerns expressed by many technofeminist scholars that such technologies are often aligned with colonialist-capitalist priorities that can easily be leveraged in ways that harm the marginalized bodies who use them (Frost & Haas, 2017). Careful considerations about how technology can assist with subsistence efforts are vital to continued work in the field to move toward more inclusive, socially just practice.

Although our actions in the park had interesting implications about bodies, subsistence, nutrition, and technology, our actions in the park cannot be considered decolonial. By applying Tuck and Yang's definitions to our work, we can better recognize the way that several factors caused our project to appear decolonial without actually being disentangled from its colonial components. First, and most importantly, while our work was intended as an embodiment and rematriation of Indigenous knowledges, it has significant limitations. First, our work cannot be considered decolonial because (despite Cana Uluak's involvement as an Indigenous body) our work was not designed to benefit the traditional Indigenous stewards of the land currently called Salt Lake City, Utah. Secondarily, our work required the use of capitalist technology to achieve anti-capitalist or anticolonial ends. Although we considered these material tools with a critical lens and made efforts to acknowledge and resist the colonial underpinnings implicit in the technology, such tools shaped our efforts in significant, unavoidable ways. Finally, we acknowledge that the writing and creation of this article primarily involves investigations of technology and definitions in the field. This process, while an important effort in investigating decolonial ideology, also fails to meet a critical definition of decolonial work because it does not in any way contribute to Indigenous rematriation even though aspects of it can be considered anticolonial because it actively resists colonialism.

We acknowledge, however, that urban-foraging practices do, in fact, have the potential to be decolonial. Such efforts might be decolonial in instances which directly include and perpetuate knowledges of Indigenous practitioners in traditional subsistence activity. True decolonial urban foraging would require practices that actively acknowledge, promote, and strengthen Indigenous rematriation efforts that restore and respect their relationships to traditional lands and food practices. Decolonial urban foraging requires more than decolonial intention, it should strive toward actual decolonization.

As we have worked through the complexities of the term "decolonial" in TPC scholarship, we acknowledge that other marginalized frameworks inside the field may also have been decontextualized or co-opted in ways that are harmful to marginalized people. We believe that further work is necessary to investigate the usages of such frameworks as a form of restorative justice, moving the conversation back toward frameworks that directly improve the systematic issues faced by marginalized individuals.

We built this project from the understanding of "decolonial" scholarship that came before us, thinking that this work was relevant to existing definitions. We appreciate and value the work that other scholars have done in grappling with issues of agency, emancipation, cultural inquiry, social justice, and Indigenous concerns. Haas (2012) observes that decolonial definitions are dynamic which means that this grappling is understandable. However, our investigation into the many definitions of decolonial inside the field revealed some significant limitations and illustrated the ways that ideas said to be decolonial were still functioning via colonial underpinnings. As the field works toward inclusivity, we as a field have a responsibility to ensure that such inclusivity is appropriate and complete, that it doesn't co-opt fragmented ideas from marginalized bodies and populations and instead considers complete frameworks. We suggest that scholarship that considers itself as decolonial might reevaluate, in an effort to understand whether such work is in fact decolonial instead of anticolonial, social justice oriented, or driven by another related framework. As a result, we urge the field to build upon the work of many other scholars and lean toward a definition that reinforces the restoration of sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, lands, and knowledges as central to the concept of decoloniality.

Note

1. The use of rematriation rather than repatriation is in line with the calls of Indigenous scholars. Please refer to Tuck (2011) for further information.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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