

# The Long(ing) View

## An Exploration of Modern Tensions and Premodern Longings in Latin American Decolonial Metal

Nelson Varas-Díaz, Florida International University  
Daniel Nevárez Araújo, Independent Scholar

From the moment Brazilian band Sepultura melded the metal music aesthetics of the Global North with the indigenous rhythms and imagery originating from their region, an ever-growing interest within metal music in exploring what lies outside of the European modern project seems to have been set off. In previously published work, we have argued that metal music in Latin America has engaged in a decolonial endeavor, allowing musicians and listeners to reflect on the ongoing legacy of colonialism (i.e. coloniality). This has allowed musicians to place an important tenet of Latin American decolonial thought in the spotlight: European modernity - as an ideological vision, as a myth, and as an ongoing sociopolitical and economic project - has been built on the legacy of the colonial exploitation of the Global South. In this presentation, we aim to describe how decolonial metal, i.e. metal music that challenges this colonial legacy, strategically uses the visual dimensions of music to engage in what Nicholas Mirzoeff termed countervisuality; that is, a contestation of history as told through the lens of the hero (i.e. the colonizer) thus allowing those affected by coloniality to claim “the right to look” as a tool to challenge historical issues defined by the colonial agenda. Stemming from our work throughout Latin America, we posit that decolonial metal in the region does the following: 1) establishes a visual record of the manifestations of 15th-century colonialism and its ongoing legacy as a critique of European modernity, 2) transforms the visual dimensions of coloniality by subverting historically linked themes that continue to oppress communities (i.e. indigenous/docility, environment/extractivism), and 3) revisits pre-modern imagery as a strategy to guide future interventions through an “antinostalgic mode,” the latter as defined by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. In this process we will use examples from multiple countries in the region where we have carried out ethnographic research to document the countervisual dimensions of decolonial metal music.