

Breaching the Colonial Contract

EXPLORATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Volume 8

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Joe Kincheloe (1950-2008)

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Arlo Kempf
Editor

Breaching the Colonial Contract

Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada

 Springer

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*For my mom, Patricia E. Smith (1948-1996),
who left Tulsa running and never looked
back.*

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Foreword

Every new colonial act re-imprints old forms of domination as well as reinstalls new ones and the emerging hybridity transcodes social relations of domination and exploitation such that it can appreciably be called a collective form of subjectification, more specifically, a perpetuated neocolonialism. What is interesting about many of these new forms of colonization is that they are now legitimized retroactively as kitsch art and media spectacles that colonize our subjectivities, and shape subalternity by giving impetus to the direction of our desiring. We are living in willing captivity to our worst nightmares, ensepulchred inside a pseudo-ethnographic pornscape of the exotico-folklorico, those savage documentaries of the 1960s that have their roots in such 1950s films as *Sex Madness*, *Savage Africa*, *Mau Mau*, *Cannibal Island*, *Continente Perduto*, *Magia Verde* and *L'Impero del Sole*—documentaries who go by such names as *Mondo Cane*, *Mondo Nudo*, *Mondo Freud*, *Hollywood's World of Flesh*, *Onna Onna Onna Monogatari*, *La Femme Spectacle*. If, decades ago, we sought out the bizarre and the lascivious in the thrill of *mondo* cinema, in films that exploited the abject other, sensationalizing and mythologizing the delights of the imperial unconscious, today we no longer need to seek out the repressed underside of the representational dreck that has garrisoned our white settler ideology, our empire of normative claims, since it is fully integrated into our daily lives.

Immersed in a popular culture unswervingly saturated by endless spectacles meant to divert attention from substantive political issues and debates and to proselytize for capital, we have become silent accomplices in the ravages of corporate expansionism and imperialism and the resultant dislocation and widespread misery. In the name of the most holy acts of consumption, the state media apparatuses, powered by turbines of moral turpitude, not only have failed to resist the complete takeover of the public sphere by the logic of capital, but actively promote capitalist logic. In other words, under the guise of de-fanging the alienation produced by the social labor of capital through forms of entertainment, or making us more critically informed citizens through its mission to educate and shape the character of the *vox populi*, the media actively promote such alienation.

We are living ablaze the spectatorial gaze of imperial desire in reality television shows, in porno sites that cater to every specialized sexual desire, in sci-fi channels where we can be destroyed or saved by alien life, in the “nature” channel where we

can watch lions devour buffalo and fight hyenas and snakes injecting lethal poison into unsuspecting victims, in posted video streams where we can watch beatings of the homeless, teenage girls pummeling each other unconscious, Islamic militants beheading American contractors in Iraq or even suicides caught on videotape in sleepy suburban U.S. communities.

We know in advance that the outcomes we seek will never be realized, they will always be the same, fixed in their present absence not by their own interior logic but by the rules of the capitalist game where a grotesque inequality possesses overwhelming preponderance. But it is the act of revelation that is important—that we will be victorious and will claim the planet for our own again—because then we can, if only briefly, suspend for a moment our knowledge that nothing will substantively change, and indulge ourselves in undermining our own fears with fantasies of hope—enjoying our symptoms as some Lacanians might put it. We have become imprisoned in basic Christian fantasies that a leader will magically appear at the gates of Jerusalem and turn the world upside down, putting it back on feet of righteousness. The promise of the American Dream has not lost its currency, but it is engaged as an empty promise, endlessly deferred, and recognized—resignedly—that it is now part of post-future America, not as an immoveable horizon but still something that might survive the current economic crisis, but in reverse-form, as a lurid parody of itself, as a kind of reversal of the Weberian notion that death has become more anguishing in modernity due to a perpetual postponement of happiness. The American Dream has become a promise from beyond, like the resurrection of the flesh at some unknown time in the future, when the oppressors and the oppressed join the lions and the lambs in the Elysian Fields watching Elvira Madigan and her lover gorge on an eternal supply of raspberries and cream.

Unable to impose limits to growth that sustains the current empire or operate outside the empire's own Manichean logic of "us-against-them", the current capitalist system has lashed us to the mast of the creditor class and its bubblemeisters, to the banking system of widespread negative equity (which included gangster capitalists who headed Citigroup as well as master manipulators who ran hedge funds attached to investment banks such as Lehman Bros. and Bear Stearns), to over-mortgaged real estate, and to over-indebted corporations.

Unbridled capitalism and the juggernaut of imperialism that follows in its wake has the potential to wreak havoc upon the world in terms of further imperialist wars for resources and strategic geo-political advantage, not to mention ecological destruction of the entire planet. And now the results are starting to reach into our neighborhoods.

Towns that rely on just a few major employers—or a single industry or company—are the most vulnerable during these tough economic times and it is not uncommon to see Depression-era scenes such as food lines. U.S. Senator Hilary Clinton's healthcare package was going to cost the government \$110 billion a year, but the Federal Reserve just handed the American International Group Inc. \$150 billion, and that was just the tip of the iceberg. We continue a policy of socialism for the rich and privatization of the trauma of the poor; with the latter carrying a debt burden conditioned by unbound capital and stoked by the market's hidden hand.

Not far away from where I am writing this, in Echo Park, approximately five hundred people are gathering on the sidewalk, waiting for the weekly St. Paul Cathedral (Episcopalian) food handout consisting of beans, potatoes, onions, and cereal.

Those who suddenly become jobless often resort to suicide, murder, arson and robbery. Exurbs and suburbs are witnessing strange sights—people picking through green plastic garbage bags at home foreclosure sites as the former owners grab what they can and leave the rest.

The recent presidential election was perhaps little more than a rehearsal for a return of the same, a pretext for the restatement of business as usual in a different voice, whose message is more about timbre and pitch than policy. This is because the hope of which Obama speaks is impossible to achieve under capitalism. Even if Obama has the best intentions, and that look likely to be the case at this point in time, the rules of the game prevent the kind of difference that will make a real difference. Everything that could conceivably bring about the kind of social transformation that will dramatically change for the better the warp and woof of everyday life in America is unmasked as an impossible contradiction if we place it in the context of the persistence of capitalism as the only alternative way to organize the globe for overcoming necessity. The richest 400 Americans own more than the bottom 150 million Americans combined; their combined net worth is \$1.6 trillion. During the Bush years, the nation's 15,000 richest families doubled their annual income, from \$15 million to \$30 million and corporate profits shot up by 68 percent while workers' wages have been steadily shrinking (and the workers are not the ones who are being bailed out by the government). That scenario isn't about to change radically with the election of Obama, whose administration is as likely to enhance the rule of capital as challenge it.

Arlo Kempf's important book, *Breaching the Colonial Contract*, is about hope, but it is specifically designed to counter the false revelations of hope and bring us directly into confrontation with the enduring crisis of colonialism through an astute archeology of the present. Kempf's book comes at a precipitous time in world history, when a new anti-colonial pedagogy is emerging to challenge the limitations of cultural critique and its postcolonial and poststructuralist advocates in a broad attempt to challenge race-based oppression, economic exploitation and cultural and economic imperialism.

Leaving aside the academic gallants of cultural critique, whose laborious expositions float down to the masses from the oxygen-starved summit of Mount Olympus like metaphysical flatulence and for whom decolonizing pedagogical practices have become a pathological transgression, it remains case that the educational establishment has impounded anti-colonial research as too polarizing or too extremist at a time when we must band together like brothers and sisters and fight the war against terrorism. And at a time when universities are turning out propagandists for imperialist wars that urge us to put an "Iraqi face" on the US occupation of Iraq, and an "Afghan face" on the war in Afghanistan, we can only wonder how well these nationalist masks are able to hide an imperial Michael Myers from *Halloween*. Probably very well. As Kempf notes in the introduction:

Secure in its place at the top of the evolutionary ladder, the US is now legitimized in its inward and outward projects of civilization. America is a feminist in Afghanistan, an anti-racist in Iran, a peacemaker in Israel, a champion of human rights in Cuba and an omniscient (and worthy) big brother at home. The US is now the world's foremost expert on tolerance, and those who say otherwise must, sadly, be themselves afflicted by intolerance. This mission, like all colonial missions, is a moral undertaking infused with a pedagogy of tolerance aimed to raise the most savage racist to a higher level – the highly Islamophobic climate of the post 9–11 era is the most powerful marker of this phenomena.

We are living at a time that remains balefully oblivious to Marx's warning that the ruling ideas are the ideas of those who rule. Much of the poststructuralist attempts at rescuing difference from the process of capitalist commodification have only a contingently subversive capacity since in raising difference to a transcendental status they have too often scuttled the dialectic altogether. It is difficult to confront the notion that our pedagogies and research endeavors are worthy of the antagonistic praxis they are intended to generate when they surpass only superficially the necrophilic brand of liberal and left-liberal reformism that they try so hard to subvert. While critical and postcolonial educational critique has embraced mightily the possibility of decolonizing the conceptual, philosophical, epistemological and cultural dimensions of learning, many of these attempts have been expurgated by the flat-lined anti-politics of postmodernism.

Many post-structuralists unguardedly—and rightly—claim that we are semiotically situated in hermeneutic horizons, in gendered and racialized positionalities driven by power-sensitive and power-expansive relations of symmetrical privilege, and in social space aligned and vectored geopolitically and cross-hatched socio-culturally, and this description is accurate as far as it goes. But too often it fails to take into account the totalizing power of capital and acknowledge that this power has created an overarching matrix of exploitation in which all of these antagonisms have been accorded value in relation to the sale of human labor power in the global marketplace. And during the current structural crisis of neoliberal capital that we are witnessing today, we are experiencing a particularly vicious time where, like force-fed swine made blind and crippled in preparation for mass consumption, men and women are led to the slaughterhouse of capital hoisted on hooks of poverty and debt. While it is important to explore and celebrate the ethnic heterogeneity and heterodox temporalities that power our subjectivity and building border identities that escape the lineaments of Eurocentric epistemes we need at the same time to recognize that the totalizing power of capital creates constitutive limitations in which subjectivities are formed. This, I have argued, can be seen as a form of controlled consent made possible by the production of social amnesia both generated and enforced by the corporate media, and the deep psychology that turns the engines of mass propaganda disguised as a free marketplace of ideas (where the only free cheese available is in the mousetrap). Democracy has become synonymous with profit-making, requiring a rollback of trade union power and a generalized hollowing out of social democracy, not by military dictatorship but by an endless stream of maledictions and execrations against leftist movements and Marxist analyses that deal with the totality of capitalist social relations and address questions of

universality. Canadian theologian Gregory Baum (see Miller, 2005) has marshaled similar reservations with respect to contemporary postmodern thought:

“I have ... quarrels with the ‘linguistic turn’ in postmodern thought. You cannot eat words! The linguistic turn corresponds to middle class preoccupations: it is of interest to people who have never suffered from hunger and thus makes the material basis of human existence invisible. Unemployment is not a purely linguistic issue either. I regret that so many philosophers are unwilling to ask themselves how their thought is related to their social location and what the social implications of their discourse are. Karl Manheim in *Ideology and Utopia* says that we cannot fully understand a sentence unless its social context has been clarified. A sentence by itself has no clear meaning. You must know on what occasion it is said, to whom, and under what conditions. When I teach this, I always give the example of the German anthem, ‘Germany, Germany Above All.’ In 1848, this was the song of the German revolution, and it meant: Germany above all the feudal structures. After Germany became an empire in 1871, the same song acquired an aggressive political message. ‘We shall overcome’ was the song of the powerless who hoped that justice would prevail: if the police department adopted this song, its meaning would be quite different. Thought is always related to a social base. Philosophers sometimes think that thought floats above history and above the economic order, but this is not true. In a context marked by grave inequalities and patterns of exclusion, thought either questions the existing order or contributes to its stability” (pp 28–29).

I wonder what members of the Abahlali base in Mjondolo would think of reading the arrests of their members as a poststructuralist text? Or the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, and other emerging antisystemic movements? This is not to say that linguistic analysis is not important, but any social critique needs to be at the same time conjugated with class and anti-racist struggle.

The paradigmatic innovation of anti-colonial analysis in North America has been significantly impacted by what has been taking place since capital began responding to the crisis of the 1970s of Fordist-Keynesian capitalism—which William Robinson has characterized as capital’s ferocious quest to break free of nation state constraints to accumulation and 20th century regulated capital-labor relations based on some (at least a few) reciprocal commitments and rights—a move which has seen the development of a new transnational model of accumulation in which transnational fractions of capital have become dominant. New mechanisms of accumulation, as Robinson notes, include a cheapening of labor and the growth of flexible, deregulated and de-unionized labor where women always experience super-exploitation in relation to men, the dramatic expansion of capital itself; the creation of a global and regulatory structure to facilitate the emerging global circuits of accumulation; and, finally, neo-liberal structural adjustment programs which seek to create the conditions for unfettered operations of emerging transnational capital across borders and between countries. There still exists national capital, global capital, regional capitals, etc., but the hegemonic fraction of capital on a world scale is now transnational capital. So we are seeing the profound dismantling of national economies, the reorganization and reconstitution of national economies as component elements or segments of a larger global production and financial system which is organized in a globally fragmented way and a decentralized way but in manner in which power is concentrated and centralized. In other words, as Robinson notes, there is a decentralization and fragmentation of the

actual national production process all over the globe while the control of these processes – these endless chains of accumulation—is concentrated and centralized at a global level by a transnationalist capitalist class.

The transnational capitalist class, that has inherited a nocuous rationality, understands that it costs less to keep workers alive in places like China or India or Mexico than it does in the United States because it is far easier to hire non-unionized workers with no medical benefits who are frantic at finding food and shelter and can be hired at a fraction of what U.S. workers would cost.

The most urgent issue for this time, living as we are at the razor-edge of a very dangerous historical juncture is to advance the struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalism, for a supersession of capitalism, for a breakthrough into a post-capitalist future.

Initially developed to repudiate the intemperate and highly reactionary attitudes—all too prevalent within the North American education establishment and redolent of the backlash against non-White immigrants—that affluence bestows intelligence, that working-class students are responsible for their own underachievement (achievement as measured against the standardized test scores of the children of the rich)—anti-colonial pedagogy has been astute in creating an archeology of the present that can develop (sociological, anthropological, philosophical, etc.) languages of analysis such that students and teachers (‘educands’) can begin to understand their experiences and subjectivities as ‘constructed’ through the intersection of a multiplicity of forces linked to the modes and social relations of production, to spaces and places of capitalist production, accumulation and circulation, to systems of mediation that involve their families, their religious upbringing, their class and racial formations, as well as organizations and institutions linked both to the state and civil society. Initiatives involving ideology critique, de-naturalizing what is assumed to be unchangeable, de-reifying human agency, and de-objectifying the commodity culture of contemporary capitalism have helped discourage progressive educators from a sole reliance on a politics of human rights antiseptically cleaved from the issue of economic rights and unburden cultural studies of its textuality of the negative, that presumably arrived on the wings of the Angel of History (thanks to the prayers of the postmodernists) to save us from the old bearded devil: Karl Marx.

Anti-colonial criticism has helped to deepen the purpose and challenge of critical/postcolonial pedagogy and free enterprise imperialism by asking questions and raising issues dealing with what Anibal Quijano (2000) has called “the coloniality of power”: Are the transformations needed to eliminate oppression and exploitation achievable within the current value form of labor within existing capitalist economic arrangements? What are the limitations of liberal-democratic discourses of social, political, economic and educational equality when viewed in terms of the globalization of whiteness? How can we use anti-colonial work to de-commodify our subjectivities and help whom Kempf calls “people resisting erasure, amputation and genocide” fight the colonial matrix of power? How can education play a part (a necessary but, alas, not sufficient) in social revolution? These questions are far from

mere academic exercises, not only because of the severity of the current crisis, but because the crisis has been acute for the past half millennium. Kempf notes:

Almost a decade in, empire is the dominant mode of cultural production of the 21st Century. If we are unable excavate the archaeology of the present through a holistic and resistance based understanding of the workings of oppression, empire promises to be the definitive fact linking the dawn of this century with that of the next. Anti-colonial theory and practice bring such a reading to the workings of our world. Anti-colonialism responds to the system of imposition as well as to individual acts. An anti-colonial understanding is a holistic response to all, or to portions, of a given system or systems of power. While the implications of anti-colonial struggle vary in nature, and from context to context, two broad colonial trends are worth mentioning specifically when articulating an anti-colonialism of the 21st Century. First, Indigenous people are waging some form of anti-colonial struggle in every inhabited region of the world. This is the key form of anti-colonial resistance of our time. These are not abstract struggles against abstract phenomena; these are the struggles of people resisting erasure, amputation and genocide. Forced to battle the dominant narratives of historical memory, Indigenous people from throughout the world have no Israel to recover from their holocausts, and in many cases have seen no end to these holocausts. The bad guys are still winning. Although many of these struggles are old, they are phenomena of the present. In the North American, Australian and New Zealand contexts, Indigenous peoples are doing battle with the European colonialism of the 17th, 18th 19th and 20th centuries. In these contexts no new understanding of colonialism is needed to understand the perpetuated relevance of colonialism in the 21st Century. There is very little subtlety, nuance or sophistication needed to understand the injustice visited historically and currently upon indigenous peoples by colonial authorities. Subtlety, nuance and sophistication are needed instead when constructing the silence, ignorance and apathy characterizing public discourse around these injustices. It is to these processes of obfuscation, silencing and denial that we must bring a critical and self-interrogative anti-colonial approach to theory, practice, knowledge production and daily life.

Issues such as these, including related themes that draw attention to and frequently explode the limitations and complexities of the post-colonial approach, have been astutely raised in *Breaching the Colonial Contract*, a book that, through initiating an anti-colonial conversation, seeks a deeper means of challenging repressive and violent social structures brought into being by new incarnations of capitalist globalization. The book addresses numerous topics of major significance in the anti-colonial struggle which include the development of anti-colonial theory and practice; the discourse of critical whiteness through an anti-colonial framework; an anti-colonial approach to historiography; Fourth World liberation struggles; the organization of white settler ideologies and institutions through the lens of anti-colonial pedagogy; Paulo Freire and postcolonial criticism; the Chicana/o student walkouts and colonial schooling processes in the US/Mexico borderlands; the relationship between people of color and Aboriginal peoples in North America; the politics of African centered schools in Canada; anti-colonial trade unionism and community unionism; the politics of disability, the role of the “plantation approach” to the university and intellectual labor in Canada; and building anti-colonial spaces within classrooms. *Breaching the Colonial Contract* will help readers resist more fully the geopolitics of imperialism and to gain a deeper understanding of how such a politics gives birth to new colonial relationships. Only by re-centering ourselves with uncaptive minds in solidarity with the agency of

the colonized, can we participate to our fullest capacity in breaching the colonial contract—what Ramon Grosfoguel and Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodriguez (2002, xxviii) call a “second decolonization”:

In sum, developmentalism, Eurocentric universalist knowledges and the myth of decolonization have been crucial ideologies in concealing European/Euro-American responsibility in the fate of peripheral regions around the world. The world needs a second decolonization should address the global class, gender, racial, sexual, and regional asymmetries produced the hierarchical structures of the modern/colonial capitalist world-system.

Breaching the Colonial Contract not only assists us in undertaking a second decolonization, but provides innovative and important instantiations of anti-colonial pedagogy. Such a pedagogy stipulates that we must listen to our narratives of the self as carefully as we do our own heartbeats, from the context of the global totality, so that we can question as we walk, what the Zapatistas call *preguntando caminamos* (walking we question), a means of making the path critically by walking, facing our imperial custodians with an armed protagonistic agency. We don’t march forward, berets tilted against the prevailing ideological winds, with crescendos of Rzewski’s famous *36 Variations on Sergio Ortega’s “El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido”* animating our marching steps. We move forward without grandiose pronouncements, little by little, sometimes faltering, often invisible, but working tirelessly and consistently in every way we can—both large and small—to dismantle capital’s law of value and the coloniality of power pumping through its veins that feeds the hammer fist of imperialism.

Peter McLaren

Notes

The author drew on several recent interviews for some of the material in this Preface.

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Introduction: The Politics of the North American Colonial in 2009

Arlo Kempf

The common sense of empire is increasingly embedded in local, national, and international epistemologies. Counter-hegemonic discourse must increasingly confront and challenge dominant paradigms, research, policy, and practice. To do so requires a perspective that recognizes current discourses of “difference” and “resistance.” Across much of the planet in disparate sites, ground-up resistance is in motion. As colonial relations are variegated, extended, and intensified, so must our resistance to these relations. In the fall of 2006, I attended a conference in El Paso, Texas, and had the opportunity to meet a number of local activists engaged in various radical (anti)border initiatives, who were articulating their struggles as a response to the ongoing colonial encounter: anticolonial struggle on North American soil. It seemed at the time that the anticolonial idea, or the anticolonial moment, was generally identified as happening elsewhere and in another time – basically in Africa from the 1950s through the 1970s and in Latin America up until the 1980s. While Canada and the United States in particular are frequently and accurately understood as colonial forces, the rise of anticolonialism within these two nations has been too often overlooked, despite the ongoing struggle of First Peoples for survival, autonomy, and justice which constitute the oldest social movements in both countries. There are, of course, anticolonial resistance, theorization, and even movements in the North American context, particularly if we read the notion of the “colonial” broadly. Anticolonial and antiracist education theorist Dei (2006) argues for a radical and important reconsideration of the notion of the “colonial.” He writes: “[Colonial] refers to anything imposed and dominating rather than that which is simply foreign and alien” (p. 3). This is a departure from previous conceptions of colonialism constituted simply as various forms of territorial imperialism, or of state or cultural control through direct and/or indirect mechanisms. This radical reformulation allows for the recentering of objective assessments of power relations, of the myriad ways which colonialism has shed its skin only to reemerge in a new form – shape shifting to accommodate the needs of the colonizer (newly and broadly conceived). It is this reformulation that allows for a recentering of the agency of the colonized, alongside the accountability of the colonizer: the two pronged aim of this collection.

Although the degree to which the United States and Canada are transhistorically colonial powers is important, this work focuses on resistance and the degree to

which anticolonial activism and theory are mobilizing in different sites (discursive and physical) across the United States and Canada. The works in this collection continue an anticolonial conversation already long underway, and add perhaps a small piece to a much larger discourse. We go to press as Barack Obama assumes the US presidency, as liberals prepare to declare the United States, and by extension the world, postracial. Juxtaposed with the new freedom of white commentators to speak race has been president Obama's color blind campaign, wherein everybody but the first black president was allowed to mention the man's color. As anti-Obama calls of "string him up" drifted through crowds at republican rallies (the party that received the other half of the vote), America prepared to declare an end to racism – an end to the past. The new North American racelessness is of course not content with the present – its reaches into both past and future possibilities, asserting a pedagogy of silence and denial around race-based oppression and struggle (as well as around the existence of race and racism). The consequence is a conference of illegitimacy on contemporary antiracist and anticolonial struggle. With Obama at the helm, America's long and uncomfortable march to civilization is complete. Indeed, in 2009 the notion of a black president and the notion of America are mutually civilizing ideas – each conferring legitimacy on the other.

From all sides of the political middle, Barack Obama's body – his color – is seen to heal a sick America. If any pop culture figure can be said to speak for (and to) the mainstream left, it is Jon Stewart, and his highly popular *The Daily Show*. Speaking on Obama's victory, Stewart declared:

[T]here are very few countries in the world that live up to their creed, that live up to the documents of their founding that all men are created equal, and tonight, America has proven itself on a world stage as a show country, not a tell country. They have shown that we have lived up to our creed. We are what we say we are. ... America tonight lives up to its promise. (Comedy Network 2008)

Mission accomplished then – cheers to a job well done – this from a leading "critical" voice. As the bombs continue to rain down in Iraq and Afghanistan; as American policy, money, and weapons kill Palestinians, Somalis, and Columbians; as millions of Americans fall further down the economic rabbit hole of late capitalism; as people of color continue to face criminalization and impoverishment at disproportionately high rates; as people socialized as disabled struggle against social and economic marginalization; as American women continue to face gendered violence at alarming rates across the country; as the word "queer" remains a loaded weapon for most who use it – America is redeemed.

Canada is of course above this pedestrian struggle with race and inequality. Canadians have watched, both smug and surprised, as the United States elected an African-American man as president. Underlying such presumptions about US voters lay the implication that Americans were caught in a struggle to correct historical wrongs, get over a racial hump, and catch up. For many Canadians, Canada is above and beyond such a struggle, both currently and historically. The Canadian narrative insists that Canada is tolerant, inclusive, and intrinsically multicultural. Canadians watch contentedly with their feet up – resting on these assumptions – as the United States finally comes around. Slavery, segregation, lynching, and other

red flag markers of racism are for many Canadians phenomena associated only with the United States, despite the historical presence of each of these in Canada. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X are embraced by Canadians as heroes and healers of a sick nation whose disease, however, was never contagious and certainly never made its way north. Canadians are raised on an ontological diet of “mosaic” (not melting pot) and “multiculturalism” which serve to disguise colonial privilege and punishment. This dovetails with the myth of Canada as an international force for peace and tolerance (particularly in contrast to the United States), and defines the very notion of what it means to be Canadian as a conceptual paradigm which simultaneously takes credit for some degree of inclusion and good will, while working to exclude many (by virtue of race, class, gender, disability and sexuality) through an “us” (white middle-class) and “them” (everybody else) framework.

The Canadian narrative tends to see the absence of popular and powerful black leaders in Canada as an indication that such leaders, as well as a public discussion of race and inequity, are somehow unnecessary. While Canadians have their eyes trained keenly on race relations in the United States, their 20/20 vision fades when it comes to their own backyard. The ongoing assault on First Nations and First Nations People by the Canadian settler/occupier state remains the elephant in the room of Canadian left-wing politics. As Churchill (1996) and others have argued, the struggle for equity and equality among all of North America’s immigrants proceeds on Indigenous land. In the United States, Barack Obama’s historic fulfillment of America’s promise is indeed unprecedented: no person of color has ever been handed the keys to the stolen castle.

As is the case in the United States, the election captured the Canadian racial imagination (and imaginary) as well. Almost overnight Canadians were talking about race, representation, and politics. As the Canadian federal election proceeded simultaneously, race and inequality, however, were kept neatly in the closet. A look at the racial breakdown of the candidates in each of Canada’s four federal parties reveals that the racial laurels on which the Canadian narrative rests are perhaps less inclusive than commonly thought – particularly by racially privileged Canadians. Of the approximately 1,232 candidates who ran for Canada’s 308 federal parliamentary seats, only 132 were people of color (10.7%). Highly underrepresented were Latino and black Canadians, with almost no candidates in most regions of the country. As for Canada’s great black hope to the south, and whether or not Canadians would elect him, they probably would not get the chance. Obama would have a near impossible time finding his way to the leadership of any federal Canadian party. The paucity of black candidates at all levels was striking: 16 of 1,232 (1.2%) in total. In Canada, Mr. Obama would have a hard time finding a seat, to say nothing of the country’s highest office. While Canadians may love the notion of black leadership as well as racial progress, they seem to do so only at a comfortable distance. The same holds true in the United States in its historical mission of exporting values and discourse in its various internal and external civilizing missions.

Secure in its place at the top of the evolutionary ladder, the United States is now legitimized in its inward and outward projects of civilization. America is a

feminist in Afghanistan, an antiracist in Iran, a peacemaker in Israel, a champion of human rights in Cuba, and an omniscient (and worthy) big brother at home. The United States is now the world's foremost expert on tolerance, and those who say otherwise must, sadly, be themselves afflicted by intolerance. This mission, like all colonial missions, is a moral undertaking infused with a pedagogy of tolerance aimed to raise the most savage racist to a higher level – the highly Islamophobic climate of the post 9/11 era is the most powerful marker of this phenomenon. While overseeing a campaign of domestic and international targeting of Muslim groups and individuals, former President Bush reassured us in 2004 that “[t]here’s a lot of people in the world who don’t believe that people whose skin color may not be the same as ours can be free and self-governing. I reject that. I reject that strongly. I believe that people who practice the Muslim faith can self-govern. I believe that people whose skins [*sic*] aren’t necessarily ah, are a different color than White, can self-govern” (White House Web site 2004). Although these ideas are rarely expressed so blatantly, they clearly underpin the current US and Canadian recolonization of parts of the Middle East. They also speak to the shock and hope that surrounds Obama’s success in a game heretofore belonging entirely to whites. Bush’s quote implies that Muslim self-governance – or a non-white self-governance – is a wild idea that, well, just might work. The former president locates the West and (himself) as visionary on the subject, all the while engaging in the destabilizing of Muslim governments, communities, and individuals in various parts of the world (Dei and Kempf 2007).

For this experiment to work, however, the worthy must be separated from the heretical. In the finest colonial tradition, the battle of good and other operates with the United States at the helm, burdened with the Manichean task of separating barbarian from hero, good Muslim from bad Muslim, moderate from militant, tolerant from intolerant. Publicly cleansed and separated from his Church, his activism as a community organizer, and from any discussion of the saliency of race, Obama is pronounced by the electorate (and his party) as ready to lead. The good (his good) separated from the other (his other). This did not, however, stop me or thousands of others from crying when we watched his acceptance speech. Despite the power of colonial hegemony expressed through racial, capitalist, gendered, embodied, and sexualized logic, another form of commonsense persists: that of resistance on the one hand, and to borrow a phrase, hope, on the other. Our bodies, our spirit, and indeed the rich history of anticolonial struggle tell us that another story is possible. The rise of the new left in South America tells us that it is possible. The activism of our marginalized communities tells us it is possible. Emerging scholarship reflecting a rich tradition of anticolonial thought tells us it is possible. The fact that no oppression goes unresisted tells us it is possible.

Almost a decade in, empire is the dominant mode of cultural production of the twenty-first century. If we are unable to excavate the archaeology of the present through a holistic and resistance-based understanding of the workings of oppression, empire promises to be the definitive fact linking the dawn of this century with that of the next. Anticolonial theory and practice bring just such a reading to the workings of our world. Anticolonialism responds to the system of imposition

as well as to individual acts. An anticolonial understanding is a holistic response to all, or to portions, of a given system or systems of power. While the implications of anticolonial struggle vary in nature, and from context to context, two broad colonial trends are worth mentioning specifically when articulating anticolonialism of the twenty-first century.

First, Indigenous people are waging some form of anticolonial struggle in every inhabited region of the world. This is the key form of anticolonial resistance of our time. These are not abstract struggles against abstract phenomena; these are the struggles of people resisting erasure, amputation, and genocide. Forced to battle the dominant narratives of historical memory, Indigenous people from throughout the world have no Israel to recover from their holocausts, and in many cases have seen no end to these holocausts. The bad guys are still winning. Although many of these struggles have a significant and long history, they are phenomena of the present. In the North American, Australian, and New Zealand contexts, Indigenous peoples are battling with the European colonialism of the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. In these contexts, no new understanding of colonialism is needed to understand the perpetuated relevance of colonialism in the twenty-first century. There is very little subtlety, nuance, or sophistication needed to understand the injustice visited historically or currently upon Indigenous peoples by colonial authorities. Subtlety, nuance, and sophistication are needed instead when constructing the silence, ignorance, and apathy characterizing public discourse around these injustices. It is to these processes of obfuscation, silencing, and denial that we must bring a critical and self-interrogative anticolonial approach to theory, practice, knowledge production, and daily life.

Second, alongside economic imperialism, cultural Americanization and even tourism or cultural performance dynamics of global imperialism, we can also identify the globalization of whiteness. This is a process whereby, as a constituent part and function of the exportation and spread of mainstream Euro/American cultural values, a colored epistemology is produced and reproduced in varied contexts around the globe. Production occurs when local sociocultural practices are displaced either partially through a devaluation of those practices, or completely by way of an entirely new set of practices. Reproduction occurs when global cultural capital formation works with and reifies existing systems of whiteness. By existing, I refer to the historical and/or transhistorical presence of, and context for, a currency of whiteness. The widespread pursuit of straight hair and lighter skin cannot be separated from the cultural aspects of globalization. It is related as well, however, to the historical context of the European (British, Dutch, Swedish, and Spanish) whites, having committed mass murder, mass exploitation, and mass colonization of Ghanaians. The globalization of whiteness is linked to other social locations (e.g., class and gender) and should be understood as an interlocked and intersecting element of the continuing colonial project. The resultant cultural hierarchy comes with gender and sexuality strictures that are equally as problematic. In many colonial contexts the culture of the dominant, or whiteness, takes on a commodity form, with economic and cultural implications. The motivation to retain and pass down local languages and cultural practices is diminished in many

colonial settings. The language of the dominant or colonizer takes on the form of a currency to which value is assigned. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes:

The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language. ... A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by the language. ... What we are getting at becomes plain. Mastery of language affords remarkable power. (1967, p. 18)

With telemarketers in India trained to mimic the accents of people in certain US and Canadian regions (so that incoming calls sound “local” to First World ears), we can see that with the intensification of the global market comes an intensification of cultural and economic imperialism. Much of the current colonial impulse – the current colonial project – is ultimately generated in the European–American homelands of the dominant. Alongside an analysis of anticolonial struggles around the world, we have to look at oppression and resistance here and now. If we cannot bring home “our” troops, at least we can bring home our analysis, our struggle, our hearts, and our minds.

With contributors from a variety of academic and professional fields from across the United States and Canada, this work offers an anticolonial analysis of a broad spectrum of topics and contexts. Although postcolonialism as an area of research and writing is widely taken up, anticolonialism offers a relevant critique of the limitations and complexities of the postcolonial approach, and serves to challenge both the persistence of colonial imposition and the ways in which that persistence is understood and misunderstood.

Chapter 1, *Contemporary Anti-colonialism: A Transhistorical Perspective* by Arlo Kempf, sets out the theoretical landscape of contemporary anticolonialism, arguing for the relevance of anticolonialism for twenty-first-century North America. By looking at the transhistorical nature of anticolonial struggle, this chapter also situates current anticolonial moments within a broader chronological context, one that we may both learn from and upon which we may improve. Beginning with an introduction to anticolonialism and its contemporary implications, this chapter provides an explication and investigation of both colonialism and anticolonialism, including an examination of some of the key concepts and mechanisms at work in each. The chapter then fleshes out the implications of articulating a discourse of critical whiteness through the anticolonial framework, and stresses the need to investigate the implications of anticolonialism for dominant accountability. The final section of the chapter looks briefly at anticolonialism in history, and as well examines the anticolonial approach to historiography. A very brief conclusion follows.

In Chapter 2, *Self-determination and the Fourth World: An Introductory Survey*, Ward Churchill counterposes the idea of Third World liberation to that of the Fourth, tracing the development and implications of both Third and Fourth World struggles. Churchill’s highly annotated piece maps the terrain of the struggle of Indigenous peoples around the globe against myriad aspects and elements of the ongoing colonial encounter with attention to the North American, African, Asian, the Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Oceanic contexts. Churchill sets out the current and historical trajectory of the discourse surrounding the Third World and

Fourth World struggles, with attention to the degree to which Third World liberation has come largely at the expense of the peoples of the Fourth World. Churchill also challenges the postcolonial (mis)understanding of Indigenous peoples. In addition to providing a comparative analysis of global Indigenous resistance to colonialism, this exhaustively referenced chapter is a source guide for anyone interested in the contemporary Fourth World struggle.

In Chapter 3, *Making Explicit the Jurisprudential Foundations of Multiculturalism: The Continuing Challenges of Colonial Education in US Schooling for Indigenous Education*, Dolores Calderón argues that a major issue facing educational research in the United States in general and multicultural education in particular is the lack of interrogation of the Western metaphysics, or worldviews, that shape and define the parameters of how we conceive and talk about education. Indigenous educational issues are thus placed in the same context as the challenges faced by black, Asian-American, and Latino/Latina communities. This collapsing of “minority” educational issues into a standardized, “colonial blind” discourse of multiculturalism ignores native self-determination, its accompanying nation-building projects, and does not take into account the importance of native culture and knowledge in maintaining native sovereignty. She traces this collapsing of “minority” treatment to jurisprudence, examining central legal sources of Civil Rights and Federal Indian Law to explore how colonization has organized white-settler ideologies and institutions in the United States. Calderón investigates how multicultural frameworks in education reproduce these ideas through promotion of concepts such as citizenship, equality, and diversity, which preclude engagement with Native-informed frameworks. Therefore, to encourage anticolonial practices in education, she concludes that serious reassessment of the common racial remedies offered by Civil Rights law, embodied in multicultural education, is required.

Chapter 4, *Paulo Freire and the Politics of Postcolonialism* by Henry A. Giroux, argues that, increasingly, Freire’s work has become the standard reference for engaging in what is often referred to as teaching for critical thinking, dialogical pedagogy, or critical literacy. His scholarship has passed from the origins of its production in Brazil, through Latin America and Africa, to the hybrid borderlands of North America – frequently appropriated by academics, adult educators, and others who inhabit the ideology of the West in ways that often reduce it to a pedagogical technique or method. What has been increasingly lost in the North American and Western appropriation of Freire’s work is the profound and radical nature of its theory and practice as an anticolonial and postcolonial discourse. Giroux argues that Paulo Freire’s work must be read as a postcolonial text and that North Americans, in particular, must engage in a radical form of intellectual and pedagogical border-crossing in order to reconstruct Freire’s work in the specificity of its historical and political construction. Specifically, this means making problematic a politics of location situated in the privilege and power of the West and how engaging the question of the ideological weight of such a position constructs one’s specific reading of Freire’s work. At the same time, becoming a border crosser engaged in a productive dialogue with others means producing a space in which those dominant social relations, ideologies, and practices that erase the specificity of the voice of the other must be challenged and overcome.

Chapter 5, *Disrupting the Colonial Present: Chicana/Chicano Student Walkouts, United States Colonialism, and Disciplinarity in El Paso, Texas* by Antonio Reyes López, provides the initial spark for the idea of this book. Within the spatial confines of missions, boarding schools, and public school classrooms, colonized youth in the US–Mexican borderlands were targeted by colonial regimes for cultural transformation. Seeking to create ideal citizens that consented to colonial relations of power, state-sanctioned educational facilities functioned as an effective space of disciplinarity. Through a theoretical discussion of the central location of colonized youth in colonial regimes of power, the silencing of US colonialism in scholarly and popular discourses, and the disciplinary function of the colonialist classroom in the region, López examines the student walkouts that took place in El Paso, Texas, in March 2006 as acts of anticolonial resistance that disrupt colonial disciplinarity in the city. The author evaluates historical sources, oral histories, participant accounts of the student walkouts, and public reactions in the city to evaluate the persistence of colonial relations of domination and how a discursive regime of truth serves to silence US colonialism and manage anticolonial resistance in El Paso, Texas. In examining US colonialism in the borderlands through the lens of disciplinarity, this chapter argues that power relations, public discourse, and student activism have to be analyzed within the context of ongoing colonialism.

López's look at colonial schooling processes in the US–Mexico borderland communities illustrates the parallels in colonial processes from one region as well as time to another. While the US and Spanish authorities were snatching Mexican and Indigenous children from their homes, Canadian and British authorities were busy with the same processes of kidnapping 3,000 miles to the north. The complex material and discursive web involved in colonial education in Canada was also at work in the borderlands López describes so eloquently with the notion of colonial disciplinarity. López also looks at the gender reformation necessary for the colonial imperative to proceed. His analysis powerfully demonstrates the ways in which the mobilization of different sites of oppression were constituent elements of US and Spanish colonialism. His parallels to contemporary education in the border region remind us that many of these same processes are at work in the twenty-first century and govern contemporary colonial relations in that region and elsewhere.

Chapter 6, *Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?* by Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence, addresses the current and historical implications of the relationship between people of color and aboriginal peoples in North America. In Canada, recent attempts to delineate the relationship of people of color to aboriginal people have concluded that despite sharing experiences of racism, people of color maintain a settler relationship with aboriginal peoples. However, the ambiguities of this relationship are nowhere more complex than between African-descended and aboriginal people. The relationship is complicated by the fact that generations of African descendants are here not as settlers but as descendants of enslaved people brought here by force, and that more recent African-descended peoples come as migrant workers and refugees who have been massively displaced by colonialism and racism on an international scale, by the uniqueness of the semi-colonized marginal position that most African nations still

occupy globally, and by the fact that black people are the only racialized people who have extensively intermarried with aboriginal people, and indeed, for years, in many parts of the Americas, were given refuge in Indigenous communities. In the interests of alliance-building, the authors explore the tensions and points of connection between black and aboriginal communities, in Canada, with reference to the United States and other settler nations in the Americas. They also begin to explore the struggles of people who are both black and aboriginal to express their identities as black Indians.

Chapter 7, *Resistance from the Margin: Voices of African-Canadian Parents on Black-Focused Education* by Paul Adjei and Rosina Agyepong, investigates the colonial and anticolonial underpinnings of the struggle for Afrocentric public schooling in Toronto, Canada. For many, the recent call for Afrocentric schools as an alternative form of education for African-Canadian youth in Toronto has amounted to a call for racial (re)segregation of schools in Toronto. This objection rests on the illusive assumption that the present arrangement is devoid of segregation and exclusionary practices. Unfortunately, the coded messages engraved within curricula and classrooms are administered to criminalize black students. While much of the African-Canadian community believes that schools have the best of intentions for every student, available research findings clearly show that many black youths do not feel welcome in schools in Toronto due to racism, classism, and other inequitable practices. The authors bring an anticolonial reading to the philosophy and politics of Afrocentric schools. Adjei and Agyepong use original research findings alongside historical documents to argue that the African-Canadian community cannot afford to rely on the current school system to address problems facing black youths. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the pedagogic relevance of having such alternative education in Toronto. Grounded in the voices of African-Canadian parents, those who are living this controversy, the authors place an emphasis on resistance and agency in the epistemological formulations of the community involved.

Chapter 8, *Through the Lobby and into the Streets: Toward a Pedagogy of Anticolonial Trade Unionism in Canada* by Peter Sawchuk, brings an anticolonial lens to the context of union movements in Canada. In Toronto today, where hotel workers have turned a new page in their own lives, they have also begun to turn a new page in the collective life of the trade union movement – they are organizing. In Canada, these efforts represent a movement of distinction: at the center of a coalition of largely female and largely immigrant workers of color, an increasingly coherent, increasingly militant form of organizing has moved north and taken root. In this chapter Sawchuk explores one of a growing number of examples in which the logics of race, gender, and class – systematically and at great material and ideological effort kept isolated from each other – converge. It is an example of a moment of undeniable possibility in which what Raymond Williams has referred to as “commitment” is overcome by raw “alignment” of subaltern forces. In order to assess these events and possibilities, here the author draws on a potentially unifying marxist, anticolonialist social analysis. The colonization process, in this sense, describes the simultaneity of race, gender, and class reproduction across

individual mental life, groups and community practice, and economic institutions. Colonized experience, then, is understood as a potential unifying analytic method with the potential to detail the confluence of alienation, exploitation, and oppression across a range of lived forms. In so doing, and in keeping with the tenor of this collection, it challenges conceptions of postcolonial thought as a form of nostalgia, traced through lives lived well within the walls of advanced capitalist development of a country open and proud in its claim of multiculturalism. Outlining first the state of the hospitality sector in conjunction with the state of the urbanized, demographic landscape of twenty-first-century Canada, Sawchuk offers a critical review of social movement theory with special attention to the emerging scholarship on Community Unionism. What we see is a picture of an accelerated economic apartheid, an emboldened colonizing project of the First World as well as its challenger: a pedagogy of social movement building; a pedagogy through which one of the most potent forces for transformation beyond capitalism, the union movement, must necessarily learn a new identity; a pedagogy that necessarily must march past the classroom, through the lobby and into the streets.

Chapter 9, *The Anguish of Power: Remapping Mental Diversity with an Anticolonial Compass* by Katie Aubrecht and Tanya Titchkosky, argues that an analysis informed by anticolonial principles “challenges the normalizing gaze of the dominant in the construction of what constitutes valid knowledge and experience” (Kempf, chapter One). This chapter aims to participate in that challenge by exposing how, at the level of embodiment, colonization has worked to oppress diversity and to make the possibility of valued bodily, sensorial, and mental differences all but disappear. Moreover, the ordinary ways that embodied responses develop in relation to the violence of prevailing discourses of power are often assimilated under colonial knowledge regimes. The authors explore mental illness as both a form of devalued embodiment and as an assimilated response. As a way to pursue this examination, this chapter conducts a textual analysis of the way disability is defined and studied by the World Health Organization and the World Bank. Specific attention is cast on how mental differences and anguish are framed by the normalizing gaze of dominant health agencies. This normalizing gaze makes ways of experiencing embodied differences appear invalid while distancing people from the need to reflect on power. By exposing how colonial power is at work organizing how disability can and cannot be known, this chapter aims to demonstrate the generative potential of conceptualizing embodiment otherwise. Aubrecht and Titchkosky demonstrate how embodiment is a space of knowledge and experience where power relations can be revealed and rethought.

Chapter 10, *The Harvesting of Intellectuals and Intellectual Labor: The University System as a Reconstructed/Continued Colonial Space for the Acquisition of Knowledge* by Patrick S. De Walt, provides a critical analysis highlighting the multiple roles university intellectuals enact as both colonized and colonizer, using a fusion of Du Boisian, Fanonian, Gramscian, Marxian, and anticolonial thought. The author argues that this phenomenon occurs within the colonial university’s capitalistic mission to plant and harvest knowledge through the exploitation of faculty and student labor. This exploitation begins in K–12 school models, creating

a transition from an emphasis on physical labor, that is, the workforce, to what is sought by universities, intellectual labor. The author identifies and maps a “plantation approach,” with which the university works to sustain and reproduce itself by developing a “university brand” for marketing and recruiting future intellectual laborers. Once within colonial universities, hierarchical institutional power dynamics (HIPDs) emulate the psychosocial mechanisms occurring on US antebellum plantations. Tracing the historical development of education for African descendants in the United States, De Walt draws a powerful connection between plantation labor formations and the current “colonial” university system, raising multiple key questions on the nature of duality and involuntary hybridity, as created by colonial labor formations both currently and historically.

Chapter 11, *Building Anticolonial Spaces of Education: Challenges and Reflections* by Jonathon Langdon and Blane Harvey, takes as its starting point the challenging process of building anticolonial spaces within classrooms, without reapplying new forms of dominance and imposition. More specifically, the chapter focuses on a particular example of an undergraduate course in “Global Education,” where the authors sought to both introduce and model anticolonial pedagogy. This classroom was constituted in a democratic way, where team teaching and collaborative activity attempted to open up space for different truths, and for debate around these truths – opening up alternative narratives to dominant colonial legacies around knowledge construction. Together with a group of student teachers from this class, the authors reflect on the successes and challenges that arose in using an anticolonial pedagogy. The chapter concludes by underscoring the need for critical reflection to be linked with concrete action, and argues that anticolonial education must conceptualize the classroom as only the starting point to action.

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