The Occupier and the “New” Occupied
Haiti and Other Oppressed Nations
Under Western Neocolonial, Neoliberal, and Imperialist Dominations
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In this book, the author critically analyzes the wide-ranging effects of western neo-colonial and neo-liberal
economic and political policies on Haiti and other oppressed nations. The author’s overarching argument is
that western colonization of these countries has taken a different form with a disguised mask. Further, the
author contends that this form of colonization and “new” occupation has been made possible through the
control of the economic and political apparatus of these disfranchised nations and the ideological domination
of people living there, often maintained through canonical texts and institutions such as schools, the army,
the media, and churches. The author situates this new form of occupation of Haiti by western imperialist
powers in the context of western neo-liberal economic and political policies. Finally, critically analyzing the
Haiti’s school system, which he argue is colonial-based, the author demonstrates how students living in
this island have been mis-educated to internalize and reproduce western values, beliefs, and norms at the
expense of their own.

Interspersing the perspectives of subject and critical observer, Pierre Orelus reveals multiple dimensions of
the material and psychological devastation left in the wake of Western imperial conquest. His ruminations
focus on his native Haiti, once the world’s richest colony, severely punished for daring to become the first
free country of free men in the hemisphere, now its most deeply impoverished and brutalized society. But
his thoughts and their implications reach well beyond, yielding valuable insight into the pain and suffering
of the traditional victims, and their resilience and hope. Noam Chomsky, Emeritus Professor at Massachusetts
Institute of Technology, author of hegemony or survival.

The voices of those brutalized by the twin inequities of neocolonialism and imperialism have long been silenced. In this personal narrative, Pierre Orelus, a Haitian immigrant and educator, shares his
reflections, hopes, and dreams for the future. It is time for a voice such as Pierre’s to be heard by teachers,
teacher educators, and others concerned with social justice. Sonia Nieto Emerita Professor at University of
Massachusetts at Amherst, author of dawning Diversity.

In this age of the corporate university, where academic trends shift as fast as youth fashions, it’s a breath of fresh air to have a book like “The Occupier and the “New” Occupied – Haiti and Other Oppressed Nations
Under Western Neocolonial, Neoliberal and Imperialist Dominations” that fearlessly grounds itself in a vast history of anti-colonial theory and research while expanding these horizons with a cutting critique of neoliberalism’s imperialist agenda. Orelus’ book is a must read for
anyone interested in understanding the dark side of globalization. Pepi Leistyna Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and Cultural Studies at University of Massachusetts-Boston, author of Cultural Studies: From Theory to Action.

In this book, a daring and caring teacher conceptualizes and considers a problem that escapes many: how do schools become sites of occupation? Thinking of ways to explain this problem to the reader, the
author slowly builds an argument that children can learn best in schools that are liberated from occupation, and suggestions are made about how this could be accomplished. Anyone who wants to help students grow will want to reflect on arguments set forth in this book. Dr. Enoch Page Associate Professor at University of
Massachusetts at Amherst.
Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positional knowledge, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy’s (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity—youth identity in particular—the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some “touchy-feely” educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
The Occupier and the “New” Occupied

*Haiti and Other Oppressed Nations under Western Neocolonial, Neoliberal, and Imperialist Dominations*

Pierre W. Orelus
*New Mexico State University, USA*
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all oppressed people living under occupation, especially to those who have been resisting western occupation of their countries. It is also dedicated to resilient teachers and students who are teaching and learning in occupied and neo-colonized lands.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface.............................................................................................................................. ix

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................... xi

Introduction: Interrogating the Western World-Toward a Better Understanding of the Third World: A Historical Inventory ................................................................. xiii

1. Imagine the Life of the Neocolonized in the Third World .............................. 1

2. The Occupier and the “New” Occupied ....................................................... 11

3. The Third World: From Western Colonial to Western Neocolonial Domination .................................................................................................................. 23

4. Noam Chomsky and Pierre Orelus: A Dialogue about the Impact of Colonialism and Imperialism on Third World Countries ........................................ 37

5. Education Under Occupation ........................................................................ 47

6. De-Westernize World History: Toward an Alternative Understanding of World History through the Oppressed Voice ............................................. 65

7. The Subaltern Language Under Western Siege ............................................. 73

8. Intellectuals: The Redefinition of their Roles in a Neocolonial and Post-Enlightenment Era ....................................................................................... 89


10. Transnational Migration to the West: What is at Stake? ............................... 115

11. The Rest Inside the West: Haiti vs. New Orleans during Katrina ............... 127

Conclusion: Going Beyond......................................................................................... 135

References ................................................................................................................... 143

About the Author ........................................................................................................ 149

Index ......................................................................................................................... 155
Why add a new chapter to and expand the preface of the second edition of this book? A major reason prompted my decision to do so. After revisiting and reading carefully the content of the first edition of this book, I realized that its previous title and subtitle, *Education under Occupation: The heavy price of living in a neocolonized and globalized world*, did not fully capture the content and focus of the book. Therefore, with the approval of the publisher, I decided to attribute a different title and subtitle to the new edition that I feel better reflect the content of the book. The book fundamentally focuses on the neocolonization and “new” occupation of Haiti and other oppressed nations. As the reader will notice, Haiti and, to certain extent, India are used as prime examples to illustrate how western neocolonial and neoliberal foreign policy has negatively impacted the school system and the economic and political systems of these countries.

Another reason that led me to revisit the book and include a new chapter is that a crucial political and historical event and a major natural disaster occurred in the United States and Haiti respectively since the book was first published in 2007. I strongly feel that these events should be included and analysed in the second edition, for they are connected to the content and focus of the book. The crucial historical and political event that occurred in the U.S. is that an African American, Barack Obama, was elected to the highest office in 2008. In the new chapter, I briefly analyse this important historical chapter in world history and provide a critique of Obama’s domestic and foreign policies. The natural disaster was the earthquake that occurred in Haiti in January 12th, 2010. This earthquake, which partly destroyed Haiti, has brought to the forefront many heated discussions about the United States, France’s, and Canada’s agenda to use this disaster as a political means to occupy Haiti with a disguised mask, opening its doors to major western corporations that serve their corporate interests. A critical political analysis of the earthquake is also included in the new chapter.

Although this book was already conceptualized for more than a decade, I embarked on the journey of writing it in 2004, a year after I started a doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. My plan was to finish writing at the end of summer 2005. However, the daily struggle of survival as a doctoral student, i.e., holding part time teaching and research assistant jobs at different institutions to support myself and family members, did not allow me to do so.

Three years before I started writing this book, three airplanes destroyed the World Trade Center in New York. Such tragic event cost thousands of innocent lives. In 2002, the Unites States (U.S.) attacked Afghanistan and overthrew the Talibans, who were accused of providing a safe heaven to Osama Bin laden. The following year, the U.S. and Great Britain and their allies invaded Iraq and overthrew Saddam Hussein under the pretext that Saddam had nuclear weapons and therefore was a danger to the western world. Since the U.S. invasion and occupation of these two countries, thousands of people, including children and elderly, have been killed.
In July 2006, Israel and Hezbollah, a military resistant Lebanese group but defined by both the U.S. and Israel as a terrorist group, were involved in a war that cost the life of thousands of innocent people in Lebanon and in Israel, particularly in Lebanon. Why am I referring to these world political events? This is to point out that this book was written during very crucial political moments, which greatly influenced my thought while I was in the midst of writing it.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book, like anything else in life that I have been able to accomplish, would not have been made possible without the love and support of my family, friends, colleagues, and mentorship of some professors. I would like to show my gratefulness to my wife, Romina Pacheco-Orelus, whose love and undying support have given the strength to finish the manuscript of this book despite lonely and difficult moments. I want to express my endless gratitude to the late Professor Joe Kincheloe and Professor Shirley Steinberg not only for their mentorship, genuine support, and intellectual inspiration, but also for the trust they invested in me by allowing me to publish my first book through their book series. Many thanks also go to the folks at Sense Publishers, Michel Lokhorst, Bernice Kelly, and Peter de Liefde, whose hard work made the materialization of the second edition of this book possible. I am innately grateful to Professor Noam Chomsky for giving me the opportunity to have a conversation with him about the effect of United States’ neo-liberal economic and political policies on impoverished countries like Haiti and others. I also want to thank Sonia Nieto and Pepi Leisyna for their mentorship and intellectual inspiration. I owe a deep debt to my undergraduate students at New Mexico State University for their honest and constructive feedback on the first edition of this book, which they used in one of my classes. Their feedback challenged me to revisit the book and make some minor changes, which I hope would make the second edition richer than the first one. My sincere gratitude also goes to Professors Herman Garcia and Marisol Ruiz for their suggestion and feedback on the new title of the second edition of this book and my graduate assistant, Rafael Espinoza, for helping with the index of the book. I am very grateful to my friends and former classmates Lumumba Shabaka, Estephen Noel, Gardy Guiteau, Margaret Boyko, Yasser Munif, Elsa Wiehe, Erold Bailey, Gloria Barragan, and Milton Joshua for their strong encouragement during the conceptualization of this book. I would like to express my sincere thankfulness to my high school mentor, Paul Ascencio, and history high school teacher, Jean Reynold Jean Pierre, whose early mentorship and inspiration helped me widen my knowledge and shaped my political and critical consciousness. I am also immeasurably appreciative to Frantz Fanon, Antenor Firmin, Jacques Roumain, Charlemagne Peralte, Jacques Stephen Alexis, Toussaint L’Ouverture, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Vandana Shiva, Maryse Conde, Amical Cabral, Paulo Freire, Walter Rodney, C.L.R. James, Edward Said, Antonio Gramsci, Malcolm X, Albert Memmi, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, Noam Chomsky, Sonia Nieto, Pepi Leystina, Chandra Mohanty, Andre Lord, bell hooks, Patrice Lumumba, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Thomas Sankara, Arundhati Roy, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Nelson Mandela, Howard Zinn, Michael Apple, Zeus Leonardo, Peter McLaren, Donaldo Macedo, Aime Cesaire, Amy Goodman, and Cornel West whose scholarly work, heroism, activism, and unshakable political and ideological stance against western empires have challenged me to critically reflect on, actively engage with and act on the world. Finally, but not least, I want to sincerely thank members of my family, namely my mother, Daya, and brother, Lyonel Orelus; his wife and two children, Carline Orelus, Jeffery and Jennifer Orelus, and my sister Freda Orelus for their love and endless support.
INTRODUCTION

Interrogating the Western World—Toward a Better Understanding of the Third World: A Historical Inventory

As the true radicals of postcolonial theory will tell you, we are hardly in a “postcolonial” moment. The official apparatus might have been removed, but the political, economic, and cultural links established by colonial domination still remain with some alterations.

Robin Kelly, In Aime Cesaire, Discourse on Colonialism.

Many of the post-colonial writers bear their past within them—as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a future, as urgently re-interpretable and re-deployable experiences in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the colonialis. And, for the first time, these writers can read the great colonials masterpieces that had not only misrepresented them, but had assumed their inability to read and respond directly to what had been written about them, just as European ethnography depended in very real measure upon the natives’ incapacity to intervene in scientific discourse about them. Let us try now to review the new situations more fully

Edward Said, Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World

INTRODUCTION

For many of us “postcolonial” subjects, colonization is not over. We continue to be surrounded by and subjected to colonial practices through many public and private institutions such as schools, churches, families, workplaces, and the mass media. Hence, synthesizing both what Robin Kelly and Edward Said mentioned above, I argue that colonization has merely taken a different ideological, economic, and political form as the history of the world has changed in the last fifty years or so. Even when some of us are now able to deconstruct lies embedded in colonial masterpieces about our identity, culture, and history, we still continue to face the challenge to fight for an accurate representation of ourselves through canonical texts. My contention is that the material disaster that came along with colonization is not as profound as the psychological scar it has caused “postcolonial” subjects. The legacy of western practices of colonization, i.e., forcible ownership of the colonized’s territorial space paired up with an ideological running machine put in place to control their mind, have been carried over in the neocolonial and neoliberal era, and it is pervasive. Further, the ongoing western politics of cultural and historical misrepresentation of “postcolonial” subjects might be subtle, but it continues to cause damages to our subjectivity and sense of self. As Dei (2006) observes:

Colonialism, read as imposition and domination, did not end with the return of political sovereignty to colonized peoples or nation states. Colonialism is
INTRODUCTION

not dead. Indeed, colonialism and re-colonizing projects today manifest themselves in variegated ways, e.g. the different ways knowledges get reproduced and receive validation within schools, the particular experiences of students that get counted as invalid and the identities that receive recognition and response from school authorities. (p. 2)

Thus, to counter the continuously ruinous effect of the legacy of colonialism, it is imperative that neocolonized and occupied people develop an anti-neocolonial discourse to critically interrogate and contextually situate historical and political events that have shaped their neocolonialized lived experience. Further, they ought to use such discourse to critically analyse and question the neocolonial social, cultural, educational, and political milieu that impacts them, rather than being passive spectators of this milieu.

The Occupier and the “new” Occupied, as a critical anti-colonial and anti occupation project, is situated at the crossroad of western neocolonial and neoliberal agenda to offer alternative ways of resisting such agenda. With this said, this book critically analyses the legacy of colonialism alongside the impact of western neocolonial and neoliberal policies on neocolonized and occupied countries. It maps the colonial encounter and its aftermath. It does so by shifting from a longstanding influential Eurocentric way of thinking and method of analysis to seek alternative analytical and ideological lenses in order to unveil and analyse the deep-seated educational, economic, political, and cultural wounds colonialism left as legacy.

Traditionally, studies on colonialism have focused on the dichotomy and asymmetrical power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. These studies have often looked at the colonized as a subordinate object and the colonizer as a dominant subject. However, for the last two decades or so, other studies, such as “postcolonial” studies, have gone beyond the binary opposing the colonizer to the colonized to suggest optional ways to explore cultural, political, historical, and economic effects that the legacy of colonialism has engendered. These studies have also examined the extent to which colonial and now “postcolonial” subjects have used their human agency to challenge and resist such legacy. “Postcolonial” theorist Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (1965), in his seminal work Decolonizing the Mind (1965), has looked at how colonialism has impacted the mind and identities of “postcolonial” subjects. Thiong’o has also demonstrated the important role of one’s agency plays in the struggle against colonialism and its aftermath.

Partially drawing on colonial and “postcolonial” theorists’ theoretical framework (Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1969; Thiong’o, 1965; Cabral, 1970; Said, 1978; Nkrumah, 1970; Young, 2001; and Bhabha, 1983, 1994), I critically look at the ongoing and wide-ranging effects of colonialism from multiple angles. I first demonstrate how educationally, culturally, politically, and economically the legacy of colonialism has impacted neocolonized and occupied people, particularly women living in Western countries. By Western countries, I mean countries in the Americas (except Canada and the United States), in Africa, in Asia, in the Caribbean, in Eastern Europe, and in the Middle East that have been economically and politically dominated and exploited and culturally influenced or, worse yet, alienated by
western imperial powers, such as the United States, Great Britain, and France. I go on to delineate how western neocolonial and neoliberal policies have engendered the displacement and migration of neocolonized subjects from their native lands to western lands. Specifically, I show the correlation between western neocolonial and neoliberal policies against neocolonized countries and the massive migration of neocolonized subjects to imperial lands, such as the United States, Spain, France, and Great Britain.

My central argument is that colonization and occupation are not only about the conquest of foreign lands. Equally catastrophic, they are about the ideological monitoring of the colonized’s and occupied’s mind, often maintained through western hegemonic texts and institutional apparatus such as schools and churches. Thus, throughout the book I demonstrate how, through schools, occupied and neocolonized people have been mis-educated to internalize and reproduce old western values, beliefs, and norms at the expense of their own.

To contextually locate the everlasting influence and negative effects of colonialism and occupation on neocolonized and occupied people, I use neocolonialism and occupation as two major themes throughout the book to analyse the unequal economic and political power dynamics between the West and the Rest. Here, the Rest is defined and referred to as colonized, neocolonized, invaded, and occupied countries, which one generally names as the “Third World.” With regard to the western neoliberal economic and political agenda, issues such as globalization and occupation are explored to analytically explicate western exploitations of neocolonized and occupied countries. Inhuman working conditions of Haitian and Indian farmers and factory workers are used as prime examples to demonstrate how this has been orchestrated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Bank (WB).

Using a personal narrative as a “postcolonial” subject, I offer an insider perspective of the political and economic devastations of Haiti caused by neoliberal economic and political policies of western imperial powers, including the United States, France, and Canada. I position myself as an insider to talk about the negative effects of western economic and political policies on Haiti, for too often many outsiders have claimed to understand the “other’s” struggles and experiences. I believe that the time now comes for the “subaltern” (Spivak, 1988) to firmly stand and speak in their authentic voice about their own lived experience. The invader, the occupier, in short the oppressor has throughout history spoken falsely on behalf of the subaltern. How could it have been otherwise? Has not that been the ever-present agenda of the oppressor?

As laid out below in the chapter outline, I address in this book issues related to western economic and political exploitations of formerly colonized countries such as Haiti and India. I am fully aware that my critical analysis of these issues might upset or anger privileged groups who want to maintain the status quo. If that is the case, I will certainly understand their anger or denial, for “truth” coming from the oppressed sometimes hurts the feelings of privileged groups and threatens their economic and political interests. However, I am hoping that they will be angry with themselves and, more importantly, attempt to find the source of their anger, which
might be grounded in and motivated by their economic greed and their social and political positions in an “uneven world” (Radhakrishnan, 2003). If this happens, I will be happy, for this might be a good sign of their awareness and consciousness of their racial, social class, and corporate privileges. If, after expressing their guilt for accumulating so much privilege at the expense of others, they are willing to take action against their own privilege for a fair and equitable world, I will be even happier. This is part of what I am hoping for in writing this book. This might sound like a utopia in a world where the powerful through exploitation and extreme greed are silently killing the powerless. By the powerful, I mean dominant groups of people in both the western and restern world that have exploited poor people in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and in some Eastern European countries.

As demonstrated throughout the book, the unequal power relations between the West and the Rest remain a human tragedy. However, this tragedy ironically has not been at the center of western world forums that have focused on “human issues.” Multiple summits organized by western imperialist powers to address these issues have simply been a deception to the poor living in restern countries. The more western powerful countries talk about poverty in restern countries, the more things stay the same. In my opinion, all these world summits organized by western empires to talk about the rampant poverty that has economically, politically, and socially destabilized restern countries have been thus far merely a confession of guilt without any concrete action that follows it. The goal of the West is and has always been to ensure that the West remains powerful and independent and the Rest stays powerless and dependent. The West does not seem to have any interest in joining the Rest at the economic and political rendezvous where the wealth of the world, which it has confiscated for centuries, should be equally distributed.

In Orientalism, the late Said (1978) unravels the unequal power relations between the West and the “other.” Said demonstrates how historically the western world has managed to maintain this uneven power relation by denigrating the “Orientals” through symbolic images that misrepresent them. The West has used these symbolic images, which portray the “Orientals” as simply exotic, passive, obedient and as savage creatures to politically and economically dominate the “other” world. Said puts it in these terms: “There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power” (p. 36). Although in his study Said focused primarily on the asymmetrical power dynamics between Occidentals and Orientals, his argument is quite relevant to many issues that I addressed in this book. These issues range from restern countries’ political and economic dominations by western neocolonial powers to cultural alienation and misrepresentation of neocolonized and occupied peoples.

As western imperial powers have shifted their economic and political policies from colonialism to neocolonialism, it is imperative that we, occupied and neocolo- nized people and their allies, stay ideologically and politically alert so we can unveil this gigantic shift and resist it. Resisting this shift will require us to seek a
new political and ideological terrain that enables us to understand what is happening both locally and globally, for the local informs the global and vice versa. Given that the local and the global are intertwined, one can no longer analyze what happens at a local level without linking it to what happens globally. Humanist and activist intellectuals, such as Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Edward Said, Arundhati Roy, Frantz Fanon, Jean Paul Sartre, Peter McLaren, and Antonio Gramsci, among others, have demonstrated through their work they understand the importance of such link. Establishing this link in their work has made it humanly stimulating and inspiring to many of us who have been standing firmly against western neocolonial and neoliberal policies.

As countries that were colonized and occupied have been experiencing a new form of colonization and occupation, neocolonized and occupied people, including the masses, those in the academia, and allies, have an obligation to stay politically engaged with the world and act upon it. By this, I mean they ought to take part in grassroots movement aiming to fight against the western neocolonial and neoliberal agenda intended to exploit and dehumanize farmers and factory workers, especially female factory workers, in the restern world. The struggle against the western neocolonial and neoliberal agenda is a human struggle that every concerned citizen should be engaged in. In other words, this is not a struggle that should only concern marginalized neocolonized and occupied peoples, such as poor farmers and factory workers in Haiti, India, and Afghanistan. Rather, it is a struggle that should concern us all.

Furthermore, to rigorously and effectively counter the western neocolonial and neoliberal agenda, more social political forums, like the ones that took place in Brazil in 2005, in Venezuela in 2006, in Kenya in 2007, and in Brazil again recently are necessary. At these forums, political space was created for the masses to actively be a part of the debate on issues such as globalization, unjust war, unjustified invasion and occupation of restern countries’ territories, and the objectification of human beings living there. The reason for the masses’ active participation in the debate revolved around these issues is that they are often the main victims of these corporate actions motivated by the political and economic greed of western imperial powers.

To de-imperialize the world, more social forums such as those mentioned above are needed. In addition, we need an anti-colonial framework to guide us in our communal movements to reclaim our stolen inalienable human rights. These rights were taken away from us since the colonizer invaded our space and built a colonial-based educational, political, and legal systems which, even decades after they were forced to “leave,” have continuously served their interests. Given this historical fact, the collective struggle to salvage our identities and humanity would require a historical consciousness. Such a consciousness combined with our cultural resources and spiritual strength would empower us to identify and act upon colonial legacies that continue to psychologically, economically, and politically impact us to this day.

It must be made clear that this book does not presume to hold solutions to all the problems that occupied and neocolonized people have been facing in this age of western neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Rather, it is written in the hope that it
INTRODUCTION

will be served as entry points into debates and dialogues aimed to confront and dismantle neoliberal and neocolonial practices that continue to sub-humanize both westerners and non-westerners. It is hoped, therefore, that the content of this book will be served as an ideological inspiration to those who have already engaged in these debates and dialogues, as well as to those who are about to engage in them.

What this book cannot offer, in terms of how to go about strategically to break into pieces the neocolonial and neoliberal machine, will be the gigantic task of future generations to take on. The reason is that the fight against the harmful effects of neocolonialism and occupation on oppressed people is a lifetime long struggle, however sad and depressing this might sound. Therefore, it will be dishonest and pretentious on my part as the author of this book to claim that its content is a panacea to countless problems that both westerners and non-westerners have been facing in this unjust world.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Using a personal narrative, I begin the first chapter, “Imagine the Life of the Neocolonized and “new” occupied in the Third World,” by providing a thorough analysis of how the legacy of colonialism continues to impact the culture, the educational, economic, and political systems of formerly colonized countries such as Haiti. I argue that in school most Haitian students are assimilated into the colonizer’s language, French, at the expense of their native tongue, Creole. Later in the chapter, I explore how the western economic and political policies toward Haiti have particularly impacted poor Haitian farmers. Like farmers in other restern countries, the majority of Haitian farmers are forced to abandon their farms where they used to grow crops to feed themselves and their families. I argue that these farmers have abandoned their farms because they have not been able to compete with western technological advances and the overwhelming importation of products from the West. I conclude the chapter by pointing out how, like most Third World countries, Haiti has been economically exploited and politically isolated by the West, particularly the U.S., France, and Canada.

Chapter two and three provide a brief theoretical review of colonialism, setting the tone to explore how the U.S. and France have executed their neocolonial agenda in neocolonized and “new” occupied countries like Haiti through the use of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. I argue that these imperialist countries, particularly the U.S., use these monstrous corporate organizations and corrupt leaders of neocolonized countries to strengthen and expand their economic and political projects. However, nationalist leaders, such as Patrice Lumumba and Thomas Sankara, who have opposed U.S. political and economic orders and policies, have been overthrown, put in jail, and/or simply killed. I situate my analysis of these huge corporations in the context of the U.S.’ overall neocolonial and neoliberal agenda aimed to divide and conquer. That is, a political and economic agenda intended to create a climate of political and economic terror in Third World countries so it can justify its invasion and occupation of these countries.
INTRODUCTION

In chapter three particularly, I do a critical analysis of President Barack Obama’s foreign policy demonstrating how his foreign policy is not so different from that of his predecessors. I argue that under his administration no fundamental change has taken place in the U.S. school system where social inequality and unequal distribution of resources are still rampant. In the same chapter, I draw on the earthquake that occurred in Haiti in January 12, 2010 to do a critical analysis of the socio-economic, political, and historical factors that have led the abject of poverty of Haiti to demonstrate how the U.S., France, and Canada have been trying to take advantage particularly of the earthquake that occurred in Haiti in January 12th, 2010 to open Haiti’s doors to western corporations at the expense of the poor Haitians.

Chapter four, “Noam Chomsky and Pierre Orelus: A Dialogue about the Impact of Colonialism and Imperialism on Third World Countries,” starts off with an in-depth analysis of the history of British colonialism in India. This chapter explores the negative effects of British colonial power on India. It goes on to establish the connection between western neocolonialism and corporate organizations, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, and how these organizations have impoverished countries such as India, Haiti, and Nicaragua, among others. Multiple political and economic aspects of United States’ and Great Britain’s globalization agenda are examined in the chapter. For example, the slaughtering of the Haitian pigs in the 80s by the U.S. government with the complicity of the Haitian government at the time is used as a case in point to illustrate how the U.S. economic globalization agenda operates in neocolonized and occupied lands.

Chapter five, “Education under Occupation,” maps western occupation of Third World countries and demonstrates how this occupation has tremendously impacted the school system of these countries. I begin this chapter by defining the term occupation and go on to provide a historical account of occupied lands by the U.S. and other countries such as Israel. I point out the socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental effects of western occupation on occupied people. Further, I examine the extent to which the learning of students living in occupied lands has been negatively impacted by western occupation of their lands. Drawing on my understanding of what a dialogical learning and teaching relationship between teachers and students should look like in a classroom setting, I go on to articulate what a progressive philosophy of education should entail. I then explore the complexity of the teaching task of progressive educators who have been teaching under occupation and the role that servant teachers of the occupying forces play in maintaining the status quo. I argue that while progressive educators help students develop political consciousness and critical thinking skills to challenge the status quo and effect social change, reactionary teachers mis-educate students by ideologically programming their mind to work for and serve the corporate interests of the occupying force and the dominant class living in occupied lands.

In chapter six, “De-westernize World History,” I interrogate the western hegemonic version of world history. Specifically, I analyze how the names of many heroic people from the Third World have been excluded from world history. I argue that this exclusion has resulted from the hegemonic version of world history permeated western school curriculum. Thus, I propose that the great contribution of
INTRODUCTION

non-western historical figures such as Toussaint L’Ouverture and Simon Bolivar, who also shaped world history, should be acknowledged and incorporated in western history textbooks. Finally, in the chapter I demonstrate how the dominant class has been trying to control the past by concealing historical facts from oppressed groups.

Chapter seven, “The Subaltern Language under Western Siege,” demonstrates how, through the history of colonialism, slavery, and western neoliberal and neocolonial educational policies, languages other than English, French, and Spanish (not from Spain) have been subjugated. It goes on to demonstrate how this linguistic assault against indigenous languages and dialects has been perpetuated in schools through the teaching practices of teachers who often teach with a neocolonized and neoliberal mind. This chapter makes an appeal to decolonize the school system and the mind of the school personnel who is often complicit with these neocolonial and neoliberal educational policies. I end this chapter by talking about the ideological component of language. Specifically, I show how language can be used, through texts, to misrepresent the “other” and also how it can be used as a tool of resistance to counter all forms of oppressions.

In chapter eight, “Intellectuals: The Redefinition of Their Roles in a Neocolonial and Post-enlightenment Era,” I analyze the ways in which intellectuals have impacted the world. I use as a building block the enlightenment movement to demonstrate how progressive ideas, such as justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, which Voltaire and David Hume fought for, have mainly served the interest of the dominant European and colonizing class. I argue that their revolutionary ideas did not serve the interest of the colonized Haitians and oppressed Indigenous people in South and Central America. After establishing the difference between conservative and borderless intellectuals I go further to suggest that restern intellectuals should play the role of cultural vanguard in the fight against the economic exploitation, the cultural invasion of their countries, and the servile assimilation of the youth into western imperial culture.

In chapter nine, “Third World Women under Western Gaze: A Critical Socio-historical Analysis of Their Struggles from the Colonial to the Neoliberal Era,” I contextualize and analyze factors (historical, socio-economic, cultural, and political) that have shaped the subjectivity, living and working conditions of women, particularly women in the Third World. I demonstrate how the legacy of slavery and colonialism combined with western neoliberal economic policy have impacted these women. I go on to provide an overview of major assumptions that have been made about these women. Specifically, I show how some western researchers have constructed Third World women’s multifaceted realities as though they were homogenous. I challenge and reject such a misrepresentation arguing that it fails to fully capture the multiplicity of Third World women’s lived experience. I conclude this chapter demonstrating how researchers’ political research agenda can influence the outcome of their research and lead to the misrepresentation of their informants.

In chapter ten, “Transnational migration to the West: What is at stake?” I explore the connection between the migration of many people to western lands such as the United States, France, and Great Britain and the political and economic aggressions
INTRODUCTION

of these imperial powers against their neocolonized and occupied countries. I go further to use my immigrant experience in the U.S. to explain how many people, who have been forced to leave their native countries, feel caught between the West and their native lands. I argue that they have experienced this feeling of being caught between these two worlds because of discrimination and socioeconomic exploitations they have experienced in the West and the nostalgia they have experienced leaving behind their beloved country of origin. I provide an analysis of various discriminations such as racism, linguicism, and xenophobia these transnational people have faced in the West because of their nationality, religion, race, ethnicity, and language. Finally, I draw a parallel between them and marginalized groups such as African Americans, Latino/as, Chicano/as, and Native Americans. Through this parallel, I demonstrate how the U.S. political system is set in a way that marginalizes and discriminates against people of color, particularly the poor ones.

In the last chapter, “The Rest Inside the West: Haiti vs. New Orleans during Katrina,” I begin with a comparison that a commentator made between New Orleans and Haiti after the Hurricane Katrina that destroyed New Orleans. Referring to New Orleans during Katrina, the American commentator said something along those lines: Is this the United States of America? These images remind me of Haiti. This is not acceptable. I challenge this comparison arguing that Katrina is a compelling evidence that the Third World exists within the western world. I unravel and analyze similar racial, socio-economic, and political factors that have impacted both people in New Orleans and people in Haiti. I argue that Katrina should serve as a reminder to both westerners and non-westerners the war of poverty that neocolonial and neoliberal western governments have been perpetrating against poor people should concern anyone who cares for humanity.
I wish to begin this chapter with a poem that I wrote about a year ago on the socio-economic and political plights of poor people living in the Third World. In this poem, which I entitled *IMAGINE a COUNTRY*, I raise issues that often do not get to be discussed in school and through the mass corporate media. In using this poem as a preamble to this chapter, I hope it will resonate to the reader who might have witnessed and/or experienced some of what is being described in it. For those who cannot see themselves through this poem because their life experience has been different, I hope its content will make them critically reflect on their unearned privileges. My contention is that through critical reflection people develop critical consciousness, which, in turn, might empower them to take action against inequalities of which many people, especially people in the Third World, have been a victim.

**IMAGINE A COUNTRY**

IMAGINE a country that has approximately 85% of its inhabitants who do not know how read and write; where having access to basic literacy skills is a luxury for millions of people; where the school system is still operating among the debris of colonialism.

IMAGINE a country devastated by poverty and divisions among politicians obsessed with power, wealth, and fame; where children and innocent people are killed on a daily basis; where the legal system is controlled by the powerful and functions mostly for them.

IMAGINE a country where the majority of its people have to struggle daily for a single meal, while a small privileged class is living a luxurious life; where thousand of children are homeless and dying of hunger, malnutrition, and pollution, while large amounts of money are spent to buy and/or make weapons to kill innocent people and maintain the status quo.

IMAGINE a country where millions of people do not have access to clean water; where children are dying of diarrhea and other curable diseases; where the majority of the people do not have access to health care; and the environment is constantly under attack.

IMAGINE a country where young women are the sexual objects of men, especially wealthy men; where young girls are sexually harassed, raped, and beaten by these men; where being a man is defined as having three or more women to treat as subalterns.
CHAPTER 1

IMAGINE a country where women are overworked and underpaid in factories producing brand clothes and shoes like NIKE for less than 50 cents per hour and can’t feed themselves and their families.

IMAGINE a country where the wealthy or those with some kind of economic capital treat domestic workers as modern house slaves; where politicians and so-called leaders arm teenage boys as death quads to murder their opponents so as to stay in power.

IMAGINE a country where human rights are a meaningless concept to those in power and those who are simply armed; where speaking out against torture and governmental corruption is taken as a threat and can cost one’s life.

IMAGINE a country from which you hold your most cherished memories; where your friends and family live, but which you hope to leave soon because of poverty, violence, and abuse of human rights.

IMAGINE a country where you are fearful and feeling unsafe because your political stance and ideology are seen as too subversive and where challenging the status quo equates to being a traitor, unpatriotic.

SITUATING MYSELF: A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF A POSTCOLONIAL SUBJECT

Like many people in the Third World, I do not have to imagine the sad and ugly scenes described throughout this poem. Growing up in the impoverished country in the western hemisphere, Haiti, I personally experienced and witnessed some of these scenes, which might be the reality of people living in other parts of the world. Given my social class background, I was not expected to go to and finish high school, let alone attend graduate school and become a university professor. Instead, like some of my neighbors, I was expected to follow my father’s footsteps to become a carpenter, or else a poor farmer who is forced to sell his labor to a “grandon” (Haitian people who own a lot of lands and have many other assets besides), get a wife and some mistresses, grow old, and die poor. Or alternatively I could have become a soldier like my father at one point wished for me, a tailor like some of my neighbors, a bus driver, or a seasonal worker who does manual jobs here and there for survival. Or, like thousands of young Haitians, I could have become a “tonton macout” (Duvalier’s private army) who tortured people who spoke against the Duvalier regime.

Out of the hundreds of people with whom I grew up, I was one of the few who made it through high school, to which millions of poor Haitians do not have access. In fact, in some rural areas, including the one where I spent part of my childhood, attending enough school to learn the basic reading and writing skills remains a dream for thousands of poor Haitian children. Some of these children had to work long hours on farms owned by power brokers who stole lands from the poor Haitian peasants who could not afford to send their children to the local school. Though I am the youngest in my family, I was the first child to graduate from high school and go to college. My older sisters were supposed to graduate high school before me but they did not make it beyond eighth grade. My father did not support the
Imagine the life of the Neocolonized

I imagine the life of my sisters’ education, fearing that they would get pregnant before graduating high school. In fact, my father was not alone in being reluctant to invest in his daughters’ education. Many fathers believe that girls should get some basic education and then stay home to help their mother clean, cook, and take care of their younger brothers and sisters. Although this might not reflect the reality of middle and upper middle class Caribbean women, it remains a fact that sexism affects most, if not all, women in the Caribbean.

When I graduated high school at the age of 22, it was a dream come true for my mother who sacrificed everything to support me throughout my high school years. I remember how proud she was to tell her friends, “My son just graduated from high school.” However, the idea of attending college was foreign to my mother who did not go beyond sixth grade. When I told her that I was applying for college, she replied: “I thought you were done with school, my son; when will you be done with school so that you can get a job to help me?” Though disappointed that I was not done yet with school, my mother continued to support me through college hoping that I would find a job after I graduate. Unfortunately, I never got a job like my mother had hoped until after I left Haiti.

My high school and college years within a school system that is still colonial-based were shadowed by political turmoil that paralyzed the whole country. However, until I became aware of the socio-economic and political challenges my native land was facing, I lived an innocent, naïve, and laissez-faire life style. I did not realize to what extent this country was devastated economically and politically by internal divisions that resulted from bloody fights among leaders in constant fight for power. Nor did I realize to what extent it was also economically and socially deteriorated by imperialist manipulations coming from western countries such as the United States and France.

The reason I lived this innocent and naïve life was that I did not have the political awareness and consciousness to question what I was taught to be natural and canonical truth. Until I started to question the [dis] order of things, I was regarded and treated as a good boy: obedient, smart, and polite. However, when I began asking pertinent or threatening questions about the Haitian school system that is colonial-based then, my high school teachers and some of my classmates labeled me as atheist, an angry, a rebel, and a confused boy. In school, my classmates and I were not expected to ask too many independent-minded questions that would oblige our teachers to tell us the truth, or challenge them to help us answer the following questions:

1. Why do students living in formerly colonized countries have to use textbooks and colonial masterpieces whose content is culturally and historically alienating to them?
2. Why is French the primary language of instruction in school but not Creole, our native language?
3. Why are professors who always speak French and English in class are considered “smart,” “sharp,” and “stylish,” whereas those who dare use Creole as the instructional language are considered less intelligent by students, colleagues, and even by the school principal?
4. Why do western imperialist powers always feel they have to intervene in times of “political crisis” in Third World countries and try to control the internal political affair of these countries?

5. Why are farmers discouraged to grow rice, corn, and beans because of an overflow of these products in their native land imported from the West?

Spending about three semesters in college in my native land did not enable me to develop a critical mind so I could answer the questions posed above. My colonial based schooling experience did not enable me either to understand the western cultural, political, and economic assaults against the restern world. I had to dig into the works of authors such as Frantz Fanon, Amical Cabral, and Albert Memmi to make sense of and critique what I was not allowed to know and question, that is, the imperialist interference of western countries in political affairs in Third World countries and the continued negative effects of colonialism on these countries.

Furthermore, my high school and college experiences in a colonial-based school system did not teach me that growing up in an uneducated and poor family should not dictate one’s destiny. Nor did these experiences teach me that being poor should not prevent one from questioning why Third World countries have been put in a political and economic situation where they always have to rely on the western world for foreign aid or, worse yet, borrow money from IMF and the WB with exorbitant rates. Nor did my high school diploma and my three semesters at the Haitian State University equip me with the necessary critical and political consciousness to understand why factory workers worked long hours making shirts, pants, jackets, shoes, baseball, and football equipment for corporate capitalist interests while they could not feed or clothe their children, let alone send them to school. Noam Chomsky (1999) through his scholarly work has unveiled the cruel working conditions of Haitian factory workers. Referring to the poor Haitians, Chomsky (1999) argues,

Foreign-owned assembly plants that employ workers (mostly women) at well below subsistence pay under horrendous working conditions benefit from cheap electricity, subsidized by the generous supervisor. But for the Haitian poor-the general population-there can be no subsidies for electricity, fuel, water, or food; these are prohibited by IMF rules on the principled grounds that they constitute ‘price control.’ (p. 34)

What Chomsky describes above reflects the sad reality of neighbors and relatives in the neighborhood where I grew up. I remember my neighbors and relatives having to work ten to twelve hours a day, and yet they frequently had to borrow money from other neighbors and family members to feed their children and pay their bills. Selling their labor force for hours in foreign-owned assembly plants did not enable them to improve their living conditions. On the contrary, these conditions had gotten worse from weeks to weeks until they were sent home after the closure of these assembly plants. Even though I was then a young boy, it was not too hard for me to make sense of their miserable conditions. Their tired and ill looking face combined with their sad stories about their job’s working conditions were the vivid testimony of their miserable lived experience.
Reflecting on the horrible working conditions of my neighbors and relatives, I now realize that taking action against social injustice and inequality that have taken place in the Third World requires first and foremost critical awareness and political consciousness but not necessarily a diploma obtained from colleges and universities that are still colonial-based. As a high school student, I abhorred school. However, I never questioned the high intrinsic value of education, which I do not believe is merely the product of a series of letters that one calls Ph.D. I believe that transformative education is to be found from one’s self-discovery.

THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES AT THE CROSSROAD OF WESTERN MODEL OF GLOBALIZATION: THE HAITI CASE

Living in a poor neocolonized country is a daily struggle for survival, especially for those who have been socially and economically marginalized by virtue of their social class and racial backgrounds. As a young boy, I witnessed and personally experienced the rampant poverty that my neighbors and friends endured as a result of the political instability and terrible economic situation in Haiti. For example, in the neighborhood where I was born and grew up, people have to walk miles to look for water, which is not often clean. Medical doctors and clinics are nowhere to be found in the area. In case of an emergency, ambulances are unavailable, so people literally have to rely on unreliable public transportation and sometimes donkeys to get to the hospital located miles away from their houses. Because of a lack of social and medical infrastructure available in their hometown, thousands of people have lost their lives when their lives could have easily been saved.

As for the farmers in my neighborhood, many have lost hope after waiting for months for the rainy season to come so that they can continue growing sweet potatoes, rice, bananas, sugar cane, and corn to feed their families. The advance of science has not worked for these farmers, who rely heavily on good rainy seasons to grow enough crops to survive. Faced with the threat of famine and hunger, many end up cutting down trees to make charcoal to sell to sustain themselves and their families financially. This desperate action taken by the farmers worsened their situation since there can be no rainy season without the protection of the environment.

When it rains, the farmers produce the agricultural products mentioned above in abundance, but the biggest problem they have faced is that they are unable to compete with the imported western products on the market that are a lot cheaper than those they spend months growing. For example, since the Haitian meat, rice, and coffee have been devaluing, the poor have no choice but to buy the much cheaper imported products from the U.S., France, and Canada. Consequently, poor Haitian farmers have found themselves increasingly financially bankrupt and unable to send their children to school, as their crops remain devalued on the market. Meanwhile, members of the wealthy class, which constitutes approximately 5% of the Haitian population, can easily afford to feed their children and send them to private schools. They are the ones who have been in favor of western form of globalization through which they have maximized their profits. They have maximized their profits by buying in great quantity and selling imported products from the West on
the Haitian Market. The poor Haitian farmers, on the other hand, do not have the economic capital to purchase these imported products that have been imposed on them to consume at the expense of the limited agricultural products some have managed to produce.

Furthermore, in the 1980s the Haitian farmers experienced a drastic economic crisis when, following the pressure from western countries such as the United States, thousands of Haitian pigs were slaughtered under the pretext that these pigs were contaminated. The hegemonic truth behind this sordid action was that the United States needed an empty and available market to sell its own pigs, which the farmers could barely care for. Unlike the Haitian indigenous pigs that could eat anything and did not require any special food regimen to grow and be healthy, the imported pigs required special treatment and food. These pigs therefore became an economic burden to the poor Haitian farmers who had no choice but to pay for the special food regimen that these pigs required. The money that they spent on this special food regimen could have been used to feed their children who were starving.

In the countryside of Haiti, breeding indigenous pigs was the only source of revenue for the farmers who were deprived of social services such as Medicaid and Medicare that are available, for example, in the United States. Breeding pigs constituted a form of financial banking centered on bartering. That is, when the Haitians farmers needed money to purchase food, clothes, medication, and pay for their children’s school tuition, they sold their grown pigs. It was not difficult to sell these pigs on the market because buyers were eager to buy animals they could easily take care of. However, selling the imported pigs was a challenge for the Haitian farmers because consumers were extremely reluctant to buy these high-maintenance pigs.

Decimation of the indigenous pigs is not the only economic blow or disaster that has affected the Haitian farmers. The indigenous roosters, hens, cows, and turkeys that they own and depend on for survival have been under attack as a result of western globalization. Selling the imported products on the Haitian market in great quantity has been the norm; no restriction from the Haitian government is imposed on the invasion of foreign meat. To put it simply, the imported roosters, hens, chickens, and turkeys from foreign countries such as the United States dominate every corner of the Haitian economy and market as part of their hegemonic ethos of globalization. Needless to say, the Haitian farmers cannot compete with the flow of these imported meats, and their social and economic situations have been worsened as a result.

This kind of hegemonic interference has affected not only Haiti’s economy but also its culture. For example, wearing authentic Haitian clothes is one of the components of the Haitian culture. My parents have always worn handmade clothes, and when I was a teenager, they always took me and my siblings to a Haitian tailor to have our clothes made for either school uniforms or other purposes. Making and wearing authentic Haitian clothes was very popular among the people, especially among members of the middle and working class. There were many tailors throughout my neighborhood, and they took pride in their work, which they depended on to feed their family and send their children to school. Haitian farmers
were their most reliable and frequent consumers. Making and wearing authentic Haitian clothes has greatly contributed to a sense of unity and community among the Haitians. As a result of their constant transaction and interaction, Haitian farmers and tailors developed a sound rapport with each other in the community. Although there was a lot of competition among the Haitian tailors to make the best possible authentic Haitian clothes, this did not prevent them from being bound by the sense of community created by their shared craft.

Practically all of this is destroyed as the Haitian market has been bombarded by second or third hand clothes coming from neocolonizing countries such as the United States and France. Like the Haitian farmers, the Haitian tailors have not been able to compete with this new imperialist cultural invasion. As a result, many involuntarily retired from the profession that had previously enabled them to feed themselves and their children for decades. Unemployed, they had no alternative but to migrate to Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, in search of jobs that were already scarce. From this group of tailors and farmers forced to leave the countryside, many became unemployed and have been living in shacks. Others might be among those manipulated and paid by politicians hungry and thirsty for power to commit unspeakable crimes and acts of violence.

The flood of used clothes from foreign countries has not only increased the level of poverty among the Haitians, but it has also created competition and division among them. For example, those who wear and take pride in wearing the imported used clothes tend to believe that these clothes are superior to the authentic Haitian clothes. In fact, they tend to look down on the very small group of Haitians who, despite the influx of foreign cloth, continue to wear the Haitian made clothes. Haitian teenagers are the most common consumers of these second hand foreign clothes. For example, some of my high school classmates never hesitated to say that the authentic Haitian clothes are old-fashioned while bragging proudly about the used brand name clothes, such as Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, and Polo attire, they were wearing.

On a recent trip to Haiti, I witnessed that it is not only second-hand clothes and imported food that dominated the Haitian market, but virtually everything one can conceive of: (1) used cars that are not allowed to be driven in the U.S. for legal and environmental reasons; (2) over the counter medications, and (3) expired canned food. Friends and family members shared with me anecdotes about people who died as result of consuming and using products that were contaminated and expired. These are human tragedies that are not reported by the media owned by corporate capitalists. Western imperialist countries, which are responsible for the human misery of the Haitian people, have remained largely silent, and obviously have no interest in forestalling their criminal actions. What these imperialist countries are concerned about is to find cheap and convenient markets to unload and sell products that should have been disposed of.

The resources of a country include not only its people but also its environment. Therefore, destroying the environment of any country leads to the destruction of the country’s very structure and infrastructure so vital to the people who reside there. One of the major problems that Third World countries have been grappling
with is the attack by internal and external forces on their natural habitat leveled. As previously mentioned, poor Haitian peasants, forced by poverty and unaware of the importance of protecting the environment, have been cutting down trees to produce the charcoal they need to survive. Because of a lack of proper irrigation and the destruction of trees in the mountainous areas, some cities in Haiti have been devastated each time the country experienced natural disasters such as hurricanes and major floods. A prime contemporary example was the flood in both 2004 and 2008 that destroyed plants, houses, and caused thousand of deaths in Haiti. However, the most drastic effects on the environment in Haiti was the toxic waste that the government of the United States dumped several years ago in Gonaïves. If the whole continent of Africa, South and Central America, and Asia have been used by western researchers and scientists to conduct their research and scientific experiments, Haiti has become, thanks to its convenient location, the dumpster into which the U.S. empire disposes of its toxic products and garbage.

HAITI UNDER THE EYES OF THE WEST

Haiti has been inscribed in the world historical archive as the first black nation that vigorously fought for and gained its independence in 1804, thereafter galvanizing the whole western hemisphere and helping other countries such as Venezuela to gain their independence. Since its independence, Haiti has been harshly punished, used, and exploited by the West. First, it was severely punished by the West for being the first black nation that dared to commit the “sin” of killing its White French colonizers to gain its independence. Such action threatened powerful western countries that were determined to prevent radical grassroots movement from developing in the whole western hemisphere and elsewhere in the world. Second, as J. Michael Dash (1988) clearly explained in his book, *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination*, Haiti has been paying a price for the significance of its past, and it is a price motivated by racism and the economic and political control held over the world by western imperial powers. And third, since its independence in 1804, Haiti has been under siege by the United States, which occupied it for 19 years, from 1915 to 1934; controlled its political apparatus and exploited its resources; and formed and left behind an army that has destabilized Haiti for almost a century. As Dash (1988) points out, “Almost from the moment Haiti gained its independence as a Black republic in 1803 Americans tended to imagine it as a void into which they could pour their own ideas” (p. 22). Dash goes on to add “The United States occupied the Island in 1915 and set in place a native tyranny that exacerbated an already desperate state of affairs” (Dash cited by Said, 1993, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 289). However, as Said put it, “when in 1991 and 1992 thousands of Haitian refugees tried to gain entry into Florida, most were forcibly returned” (p. 25).

Like many countries in Africa, Haiti does not seem to be a country to which the West pays close attention, precisely because (1) the majority of people living in it are poor and black and (2) there are no “communist or terrorist movements” taking place there. The only time the West pays attention to the political situation of Haiti
is when there is a grassroots movement that threatens western imperialist interest, like the one led by Jean Bertrand Aristide in late 1980s and early 1990s. This has been the policy of the West towards Haiti for decades. Nothing has changed substantially in Haiti since its independence; almost everything remains the same, though with different political and economic masks.

Although Haiti is still used for geopolitical and economic reasons, it is no longer the convenient and beautiful tropical island it used to be. Nor is it the neocolonial island where white American and European tourists used to go for vacation and expected the local people to treat them as their modern white masters by preparing and serving them fine Haitian dishes, entertaining them with Haitian traditional music and dance. Nor is it the neocolonial island where so-called white European and American Christian missionaries loved to go to and expect to be treated as kings or queens by the local people who they taught Christian dogmas. To be precise, while sexually taking advantage of young Haitian girls and adults, these white missionaries-who I would call neocolonizers and occupiers-were preaching them the western model of the Gospel, which has been used as an ideological tool to westernize and oppress people living in the western world.

As a young boy not yet able to understand the privilege of whiteness, I assumed, like every innocent Haitian child, that the people in my neighborhood were simply being hospitable to those white missionaries. What I failed to understand was that there was more to it than hospitality. The young adult Haitian males, who had some schooling, spent days practicing a song written in the neocolonizers language, English, as a way to welcome them in my native land. Within this same old church building, there was a kindergarten school where I received my first formal education. The Haitian female farmers, on the other hand, missed days of work to prepare the finest Haitian food in order to impress the white Christian European/American missionary men, who raped their teenage daughters, nieces, and other young girls in the neighborhood. The sad reality was that some Haitian parents knew that their teenage daughters were sexually molested by the white Christians, but did not take any action to stop this criminal act. On the contrary, as I later discovered, many of these parents wished that their daughters got pregnant by the white men who, so they hoped, would “whiten” children in the family. Moreover, it was not a secret to the public that the same white Christian missionary men forced many young Haitian girls to abort their children while they continued to have sexual relations with them. Ironically, they were still getting the same respect that they got when they first invaded our neighborhood.

In terms of housing, there was no castle or mansion built for them in this impoverished neighborhood. However, the place where they stayed had what they wanted: respect, young girls, sexual gratifications, fine Haitian food and music. The life style of these American neocolonizers, in my opinion, was no different from that of the French colonizers in Algeria, Congo, and Tunisia; the Portuguese colonizers in Cape Verde and Mozambique; the British colonizers in Jamaica, Kenya, and Nigeria and the Spaniards in South and Central America and Mexico during colonization.

They seized our indigenous women from us and enjoyed the finest food that we did not have access to in our own land. In a word, they monopolized everything in
the name of the Gospel and their whiteness and, before departing the country, they left us with a bible, written of course by their white ancestors and whose content could not help us liberate ourselves from mental slavery, neocolonial exploitation, and exploitative conditions. Instead, with this white bible the American “missionaries,” neocolonizers, and occupiers simply taught us to pray, pray, pray, forgive, forgive, forgive, love, love, love our enemies, but nothing about standing up to fight for our inalienable rights and change our poor social and economic conditions. They taught us to keep hoping for a better life in heaven, while on earth we were starving, oppressed, exploited, and discriminated against. Having witnessed and experienced the hypocrisy of and lies told by these neocolonizers and occupiers, I quickly realized that this “white bible” would not do us any good. It simply taught us to be submissive and accept our horrendous socio-economic situations caused by the economic greed of western neocolonial powers and the dominant class in Haiti. To simply put it, we were duped and lied to by the white American neocolonizers and occupiers who were preaching us a Gospel of submissiveness, of false hope, and of blind resignation while their country has been exploiting the human and natural resources of our country.
CHAPTER 2

THE OCCUPIER AND THE “NEW” OCCUPIED

As I shall be using the term, “imperialism” means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; “colonialism,” which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.

Edward E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*

Drawing on Haiti’s historical trajectory involving its political isolation and economic exploitation by western powers such as the United States and France and the political debate stemming from the recent earthquake that partly destroyed it, this chapter examines the argument that has been made about the neo-colonization and re-occupation of this island. In 1965, Albert Memmi wrote *The Colonizer and The Colonized*. In this book Memmi analyzes the unequal power relations between the colonized Africans and European Colonizers. Specifically, Memmi analyzes the inhuman condition of the colonized caused by the exploitative practices of European colonizers. During the period Memmi wrote this breakthrough book, many African countries such as Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritius, Botswana, Comoros, Seychelles, Lesotho, and Djibouti were still under the colonial domination of imperialist powers like Great Britain, France and Portugal. The rest of African colonized countries had just become independent. The liberation of Africa from its European oppressors signified a new era of hope for colonized Africans who were subjugated to colonial rules for centuries. Although internal conflicts resulting from the colonial legacy have ravaged independent African nations and caused the death of millions of innocent people, officially these nations were “free” of colonial dictates and domination. After colonized African countries gained their independence, one may have thought or hoped that the colonial era would be over and that a significant shift in the unequal colonial power relations between western countries and non-western countries would take place. However, as it has become evident years later, these formerly colonized and occupied countries have been experiencing a renewed form of colonization and occupation disguised with a different mask (Nkrumah, 1970; Thiong’o, 1986; Orelus, 2010; Young, 2001). Haiti, a former French colony, is not exempt from this new form of colonization and occupation (Farmer, 2003; Chomsky, 2002; Goodman, Chomsky, Farmer, Aristide, and Aristide 2004; Orelus, 2010).

Like many formerly colonized countries mentioned above, it has been argued that Haiti has been experiencing a new form of colonization and occupation by western imperial powers such as the United States and France (Farmer, 2003; Goodman et al. 2004). In *Getting Haiti Right This Time*, Goodman et al., contend that this form of occupation is orchestrated through U.S. neo-liberal economic and foreign
policies with the complicity of corrupt Haitian leaders and some segments of the Haitian elite. For example, corrupt Haitian governments such as the Duvalier opened Haiti’s doors to western corporations for cheap labor; so did the former Haitian general Henri Namphy and former presidents Prosper Avril and Boniface Alexandre.

It is worth pointing out that Haiti is not the only formerly colonized country that has been victimized by the politics of neo-colonization and occupation of western imperialist countries. The U.S. and Great Britain have neocolonized and occupied other “Third World” countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan through their neo-liberal economic and political policies and their imperial armed forces. The poor and the struggling middle class, including students, living in these neocolonized and “new” occupied countries have suffered the negative effects of neoliberal economic and political policies of these western imperialist powers. These imperialist countries have occupied and neo-colonized “these darker nations” (Prashad, 2007) under the pretext that they want to help them to be stable, prosperous, and democratically run.

However, with the recent U.S. election that led to the presidency of Barack Obama, many people have had high hope that president Obama, whose father was from Kenya, a formerly colonized african country, would have a different foreign policy toward impoverished nations. Nonetheless, this has not yet happened. As I argued elsewhere, Obama’s presidency is unquestionably a shift in the U.S. political paradigm, for white males have dominated this country’s political system for centuries (Orelus, 2009). However, since Obama came to power, there has not been a significant change in U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis countries that have been labeled as “Third World” countries; nor has it been a radical change in the U.S. educational system where social inequality continues to be rampant and where many public schools in places like New Orleans and Chicago have been replaced by charter schools (Giroux, 2008). Obama’s change and hope campaign slogan has yet to become a reality. Under his command, the U.S. continues with its imperialist and neo-liberal policy abroad. Iraq and Afghanistan are still occupied by U.S. imperial armed forces, and innocent civilians, including students, continue to lose their lives. It seems to me that only the skin color of U.S. presidents has changed since the presidential election in 2008. However, the color of ideology of these presidents remains the same. In other words, Obama may be defined as black but his ideology appears to be as white as his white conservative male predecessors.

Furthermore, Obama’s discourse toward oppressed nations is not so different from his predecessors. Like the presidents who preceded him, Obama has used an imperial discourse when referring to currently invaded and occupied countries, where nationalist militants and/or leaders have been resisting U.S. invasion and occupation of their lands. Like former presidents Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, George Bush senior and junior, and Bill Clinton, Obama has portrayed himself and acted as a warrior president. He authorized this year a deployment of 21,000 soldiers to be sent to Afghanistan to protect U.S. interests under the pretext of fighting against terrorists. Like U.S. and British soldiers who have already been in Afghanistan for about a decade, these newly deployed soldiers would mostly likely
end up killing innocent civilians and many of them would run the risk of losing their lives. Though there might be terrorists there loyal to Osama Ben Laden, I argue that, like other oppressed people, what Afghans really need is food, shelter, employment, health care, and access to quality education but not bombs and occupation of their land by foreign armed forces.

Finally, Obama’s political speeches and actions about occupied Palestine are not so different from former U.S. presidents. Like them, he has not taken a strong stance against Israel’s occupation of Palestine. In short, the U.S. imperialist agenda of occupying and colonizing other nations including Haiti has continued under Obama’s administration.

It is worth pointing out that the historical and political context of Haiti is different from that of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. However, I argue that occupied and neo-colonized nations share many things in common such as constant terror and murder and exploitation of the resources of the colonized/occupied by the occupying and colonizing power. Similar to Iraq and Afghanistan, Haiti has been under domination and occupation of U.S. neo-liberal economic and foreign policies, partly implemented through the manipulation of corrupt leaders and the complicity of United Nations. As I stated elsewhere,

The example of Haiti is unique in that it has been occupied by the soldiers of the United Nations (UN) under the imperialist commend of the United States, France, and Canada since the Haitian president Jean Bertrand Aristide was forced to leave power in 2004. The UN soldiers were sent to Haiti to supposedly restore order and peace there. However, from what I learned from some Haitians residing in Haiti, these soldiers have been living a privileged lifestyle similar to that of the former French colonizing soldiers and special envoys. Furthermore, according to these informants, the presence and action of the UN soldiers created a lot of terror and tension in many parts of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti (Orelsus as cited in Malott & Bradley, 2010, p. 35).

In the sections that follow, I briefly revisit Haiti’s historical past analyzing the challenges that came along with the Haitian revolution and its aftermath.

**HAITI’S PAST REVISITED: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

Even though Haiti is the first black republic that fought for and earned its independence from the French colonizers in 1804, it has remained unknown to many people in the world. The Haitian revolution is rarely mentioned in western world history textbook. To paraphrase Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), Haiti’s glorious historical past has been silenced. Trouillot writes,

The silencing of the Haitian Revolution is only a chapter within a narrative of global domination. It is part of the history of the West and it is likely to persist, even in attenuated form, as long as the history of the West is not retold in ways that bring forward the perspective of the world. Unfortunately, we are not even close to such fundamental rewriting of world history, in spite of a few spectacular achievements. (p. 107)
Since Haiti became independent, western countries such as France and the United States have isolated it diplomatically while at the same time economically exploiting it. In fact, when the slaves sought support from the U.S. government to fight against the French colonizers, the U.S. government turned them down. This government feared that the Haitian revolution would inspire and incite oppressed blacks who were still enslaved in the U.S. and other disfranchised groups to revolt against their oppressors and set themselves free. When Haiti became independent in 1804, the U.S. did not recognize it until 1862. As the highly respected American journalist Bill Moyers (2010) put it,

In 1804, the slaves rebelled and after savage fighting defeated three foreign armies to win their independence. They looked to America for support, but America’s slave-holding states feared a slave revolt of their own, and America’s slave-holding president, Thomas Jefferson, the author of our Declaration of Independence, refused to recognize the new government. (p. 1)

Unlike other nations such as the United States, Latin American countries, and African countries that fought for and gained their independence from their colonizers and occupiers, Haiti was the only country that had to pay its former oppressor, the French colonizers, a sum of 90 million gold francs for its freedom. Starting to pay this huge sum of money in 1825, Haiti did not finish paying it until 1947. In all fairness, Haiti should have been the one demanding economic reparation from France, which exploited its human and material resources. Instead, the French government at the time arrogantly demanded that Haiti paid for its independence. Naomi Klein (2010), the world acclaimed journalist, states, “When Haitians won their independence from France in 1804, they would have had every right to claim reparations from the powers that had profited from three centuries of stolen labor. France, however, was convinced that it was Haitians who had stolen the property of slave owners by refusing to work for free” (p. 1).

In short, since its independence in 1804, Haiti has been used, abused, isolated, and exploited by western imperialist powers like the United States, France, and recently by Canada, as well as by internal corrupt Haitian leaders and some Haitians from the upper class.


After almost two hundred years of isolation and exploitation, Haiti has ironically become internationally known especially after to the earthquake that partly destroyed it. This earthquake has caught the attention of many about Haiti’s long state of misery and poverty. During this tragedy, many people, including hosts and commentators in the U.S. mainstream media, kept referring to the abject poverty of Haiti. However, they failed to critically analyze why Haiti is so poor, except the host of the alternative TV station Democracy Now!, Amy Goodman, who invited scholars to discuss underlying historical, political, and socio-economic factors that have led to Haiti’s poverty. Instead, conservative commentators and columnists like David Brooks and right wing Americans such as Rev. Pat Robertson have blamed
Haiti for its disastrous socio-economic and political problems. For example, in commenting about the earthquake that partly destroyed the country, Rev. Pat Robertson (2010) stated,

Something happened a long time ago in Haiti and people may not want to talk about it. They were under the heel of the French. You know, Napoleon the Third and whatever. And they got together and swore a pact to the Devil. They said, “We will serve you if you get us free with the French.” True story. And so the Devil said, “Okay, it’s a deal.”

Similarly, David Brooks (2010), an Op-Ed columnist of New York Times, argued,

Haiti, like most of the world’s poorest nations, suffers from a complex web of progress-resistant cultural influences. There is the influence of the voodoo religion, which spreads the message that life is capricious and planning futile. There are high levels of social mistrust. Responsibility is often not internalized. Child-rearing practices often involve neglect in the early years and harsh retribution when kids hit 9 or 10. (p. 2)

Furthermore, while attempting to analyze why Haiti is so poor, Mr. Brooks inaccurately and unfairly compared Haiti’s colonial history to that of other Caribbean countries like Barbados and the Dominican Republic. He argued that like Haiti these two countries have experienced dictatorship and colonialism, yet they have been doing well economically and Haiti has not. Countering both Mr. Brooks’ and Robertson’s inaccurate analysis of Haiti’s socio-economic, historical, and political realities, I contend that Haiti has been so poor because of the neo-liberal policy of the United States, France, and Canada that has destabilized it economically and politically for centuries. Moreover, I argue that Haiti’s state of poverty should be situated in its historical and political context; Haiti should not be unthoughtfully, superficially, and arbitrarily compared to other nations that have not experienced what Haiti has been going through since its independence in 1804.

As noted earlier, before the United States imposed its neo-economic liberal policy on Haiti with the complicity of corrupt Haitian presidents, the Haitian farmers were able to grow crops and sustain themselves and family. They did not have to buy imported products like rice, beans, banana, and sugar from the United States because they were able to grow these products in their farms. Nor did they have to move to Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and overcrowd it in the hope of finding employment at U.S. owned factories implanted there.

The implantation of these factories has led many farmers to move to Port-au-Prince. As a former resident of Haiti, I knew many farmers who stayed in Port-au-Prince after these factories were closed. Determined to continue to survive in that city, many built shacks there and in surrounding cities causing many infrastructure problems. The Haitian governments did not oversee and regulate the construction of overcrowded and poorly built huts, which have posed a treat to the safety of many poor Haitians. This safety problem caught the attention of many observers, especially during the earthquake. Relief workers, both national and international, were not able to help and save Haitians who were trapped under collapsing shacks
and apartment buildings because of the infrastructure problem that the country has long faced, particularly in major cities like Port-au-Prince and surrounding cities such as Cite Soleil.

Because of the infrastructure problems and lack of resources, many Haitians lost their lives during the earthquake while these lives could have been saved. According to a report released by the Haitian Government, between 217,000 and 230,000 people had been identified as dead, an estimated 300,000 injured, and an estimated 1,000,000 homeless. Many of my relatives and friends, who experienced this tragedy and witnessed the struggle of many Haitians who were trying to save the life of other Haitians, stated that those who were quickly rescued from collapsing buildings, hotels, and houses were mostly foreigners, including Americans and UN employees and soldiers. Many Haitians had to use their bare hands and feet to save other Haitians who were trapped under the debris of houses and apartment buildings. The majority of poor Haitians who were trapped in these collapsing shacks, houses, and apartment buildings did not receive proper assistance from international rescue workers on time. Consequently, they lost their lives.

Many who “survived” the earthquake died of hunger days and/or weeks later because they did not receive aid on time. Meanwhile, the propaganda to restore the image of the United States government that, for example, neglected the poor, the disabled, and the elderly during Katrina was widely spread through the U.S. mainstream media like CNN, Folks News, NBC, and ABC. The United Stated has been portrayed as Haiti’s solely savior while hundreds of poor Haitians have been homeless and dying of hunger. The Haitian major airport, Toussaint L’ouverture Airport, has been controlled and occupied by the United Stated soldiers and personnel as if this airport belongs to the United States. American and the UN soldiers have also occupied other parts of the country, including the destroyed presidential palace. As Williams Engdhal (2010) put it,

Now, in the wake of the devastating earthquake of January 12, the United States military has taken control of Haiti’s four airports and presently has some 20,000 troops in the country. Journalists and international aid organizations have accused the US military of being more concerned with imposing military control, which it prefers to call security, than with bringing urgently needed water, food and medicine from the airport sites to the population. (p. 6)

Before the earthquake, Haiti had already been controlled and “diplomatically” occupied by UN armed forces. Initially, these soldiers were sent to supposedly restore peace and order in Haiti after the former Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was ousted for a second time in 2004. Since Aristide’s departure, these soldiers have been occupying the country and terrorizing the poorest of the poor Haitians.

To substantiate what I am arguing about these soldiers, I want to narrate what I recently observed and witnessed in this island. The following narrative is drawn upon my own observation and personal experience as a former resident in the island and the testimony of those who have witnessed and directly experienced mistreatment from these soldiers. It not based on findings of any empirical research.
In a recent trip to Haiti before the earthquake took place there, I witnessed UN soldiers treating poor Haitians as non-wanted citizens in their own land. For example, the poor Haitians were prohibited from having access to certain beaches that used to be public beaches. However, UN soldiers were enjoying these tropical beaches with fine Haitian women, who behave as these soldiers’ sexual objects. While poor working Haitians were complaining about a lack of reliable public transportation, the UN soldiers were circulating in expensive trucks (Orelus as cited in Malott & Bradley, 2010, p. 31).

Moreover, friends and family members shared with me that these soldiers, mostly males, were eating at the most fancy restaurants owned by the Haitian bourgeois. To confirm this, I decided to have dinner at a few of these restaurants. I purposely interacted with many of them to investigate who they were, as they did not look like the ordinary poor Haitians. While eating at these fancy restaurants, I quickly discovered that the customers were mostly UN soldiers from Brazil, Nepal, Guatemala, and El Salvador, and privileged Haitians who refused to speak Creole with me, but instead insisted on speaking French. Ironically, the UN soldiers were neither French nor Americans but soldiers from these countries mentioned above. It seems to me that these UN soldiers are replanting the seeds of colonization in Haiti under the name of an organization that was created to re-establish and maintain peace and order in countries destroyed by internal conflict and war (Orelus as cited in Malott & Bradley, 2010, p. 32).

The presence and deliberate actions of both UN and U.S. soldiers in Haiti are a good indicator that a new form of occupation is taking place in this island. This form of occupation might be difficult for some to understand. However, it is obvious to Haitians, especially those who know the history of French colonization and US occupation of Haiti. This form of “new” occupation, as many Haitians with whom I interacted put it, is taking place in the name of “peace” and “democracy.” While it is widely believed that the UN soldiers were sent to this island to protect innocent people from being killed, many people in many communities, particularly in the poor ones, shared with me that these soldiers were killing innocent people whom they suspected were causing terror. In fact, in the words of many of poor people who shared with me their testimony, the mere presence of the UN soldiers caused them more terror and fear than the “violent Haitians” whom these soldiers were chasing and killing like animals in their own land (Orelus as cited in Malott & Bradley, 2010, p. 30).

HAITI’S WESTERN “SAVIORS” IN TIME OF CRISIS: A PARADOX

Surprisingly, the American president, Barack Obama, chose two former American presidents, Bill Clinton and Georges W. Bush, to coordinate and facilitate the relief recue effort aimed to “save” Haiti. Prior to the earthquake, Bill Clinton was already chosen by the United Nations as a special envoy to Haiti. Such choice reminds me of the colonial period where the French colonial government sent especial envoys to Santo Domingo to defend its interests there. The appointment of former president Clinton as a special envoy to Haiti westerners should be questionable for two major reasons.
First, it has been reported that Haiti has a huge oil reserve comparable to that of Venezuela, if not bigger. It has also been reported that this impoverished country has other natural resources such as iridium, a precious, rare, and extremely expensive silver-white metallic element that has been used in military industry. Besides South Africa, Haiti is the second known country to possess this metal. In an online article in 2004, a Haitian writer, Georges Michel, stated:

It has been no secret that deep in the earthy bowels of the two states that share the island of Haiti and the surrounding waters that there are significant, still untapped deposits of oil. One does not know why they are still untapped. Since the early twentieth century, the physical and political map of the island of Haiti, erected in 1908 by Messrs. Alexander Poujol and Henry Thomasset, reported a major oil reservoir in Haiti near the source of the Rio Todo El Mondo, Tributary Right Artibonite River, better known today as the River Thomonde. (p. 3)

Therefore, it is not surprising that the United States, France, and Canada have shown great interest in Haiti. These countries have tried to keep Haiti under their control for centuries. After the earthquake, they have shown even greater interest in this country and a firmer determination to take control over it, preventing other governments countries such as the Venezuelan government from intervening to help Haitians in dire need. Moreover, because of their vested interest in Haiti, these imperialist countries orchestrated two major coups against the democratically elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who they felt would prevent them from geopolitically and economically controlling the island. As Engdhal stated,

The remarkable geography of Haiti and Cuba and the discovery of world-class oil reserves in the waters off Cuba lend credence to anecdotal accounts of major oil discoveries in several parts of Haitian territory. It also could explain why two Bush Presidents and now special UN Haiti Envoy Bill Clinton have made Haiti such a priority. As well, it could explain why Washington and its NGOs moved so quickly to remove-- twice-- the democratically elected President Aristide, whose economic program for Haiti included, among other items, proposals for developing Haitian natural resources for the benefit of the Haitian people. (p. 4)

The second reason why Bill Clinton and his former predecessor Georges W. Bush should not be trusted is that these two former presidents have destroyed Haiti with their neo-liberal economic policy. For example, Clinton helped the former ousted Haitian president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, return to power in 1994 provided that Aristide would implement his neo-liberal economic policy in Haiti. This neo-liberal economic policy entails opening Haiti’s door to corporations like Walt Disney to exploit poor Haitians in assembly factories. As Moyers (2010) puts it:

Every president from Ronald Reagan forward has embraced the corporate search for cheap labor. That has meant rewards for Haiti’s upper class while ordinary people were pushed further and further into squalor. Haitian contractors producing Mickey Mouse and Pocahontas pajamas for American companies under license with the Walt Disney Company paid their sweat shop workers
as little as one dollar a day, while women sewing dresses for K-Mart earned eleven cents an hour. A report by the National Labor Committee found Haitian women who had worked 50 days straight, up to 70 hours a week, without a day off. (p. 2)

Apparently, former president Jean Bertrand Aristide did not follow Clinton’s neo-liberal economic order as agreed upon. Instead, he continued to show firm opposition to U.S. unfair foreign policy toward Haiti. Consequently, Aristide was once more overthrown in 2004, a coup orchestrated by former president Georges W. Bush government with the complicity of some corrupt Haitian soldiers and members of the Haitian upper class. Before Aristide was ousted, Georges W. Bush blocked all foreign aid to Haiti, exacerbating the poor socio-economic conditions of Haitians (Goodman et al., 2004).

It is disheartened that Barack Obama chose these two neo-liberal American presidents to help “save” Haiti. I ask: (1) When was the last time did these two men show compassion for Haiti? (2) Where was Clinton when poor Haitians, fleeing oppression in Haiti, attempted to enter the United States in 1991 but were forcibly returned to Haiti? (3) Why didn’t Clinton help them stay in the U.S. like he allowed the Cuban refugees to do so? (4) When was the last time did both former presidents Bill Clinton and Georges W. Bush care for Haitians and other poor blacks? (5) Where was president Clinton when millions of Ugandans were murdered in 1994 during the genocide? (6) Why did not he intervene to save the life of many of them? (7) Likewise, why did not Georges W. Bush intervene on time to save the lives of many poor blacks when hurricane Katrina destroyed New Orleans? (8) Is these two presidents’ “compassion” for poor Haitians an act of white man redemption? (9) Or is it merely a political move to repair their legacy as warrior presidents while at the same time making sure that the U.S. interests are protected in this island, which they have impoverished with their foreign policy when they were in office? It seems to me president Barack Obama, consciously or not, gave these presidents, especially Georges W. Bush, a chance to save face. As the entire world knows, Georges Bush’s decision to invade Iraq and Afghanistan has destabilized these two countries and caused the death of million of innocent people and soldiers, including American soldiers.

DÉJÀ VU: SAME IMPERIALIST TACTIC AND AGENDA

A similar political façade took place when the Tsunami hit Indonesia. Former presidents Bill Clinton and Georges Bush senior were chosen by George W. Bush junior as special envoys to Indonesia to save Indonesian people. How ironic was such a decision? Historically, the United States government is well known for supporting oppressive governments in Indonesia that defended U.S. interests. For instance, the Nixon government has bombarded this country while in power under the pretext the U.S. was fighting against communists (Chomsky and Herman, 1979). The hidden agenda behind the U.S. terrorist actions was to destabilize the country so the U.S government could put in power the Indonesian dictator Suharto, who served U.S. corporate interests for more than a decade (Chomsky and Herman, 1979).
CHAPTER 2

Former Presidents Georges Bush junior and senior orchestrated a similar plot in Haiti. They overthrew the democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and helped put in power puppet provisional prime ministers like Marc Bazin and presidents like Boniface Alexandre who posed no threat to U.S. interests.

As demonstrated above, Haiti may not be officially colonized and occupied but, in my view, it has been experiencing a new form of colonization and occupation through western neo-liberal economic and foreign policies. However, despite this renewed form of occupation Haiti is currently under, many people, including Americans from the U.S. with whom I have interacted, hope that something positive would emerge from the earthquake, that is, western powers would help Haiti stand on its feet. This sense of optimism may have resulted from a forum about Haiti that took place in Canada approximately two weeks after the earthquake occurred in the island. At this forum, the Canadian government announced that it has a ten-year plan to rebuild Haiti. Similarly, the French president, Nicolas Sarkouzi, while visiting Haiti on February 17th 2010, stated that he had a rebuilding plan for Haiti and hoped that the Haitian government would agree with it. I ask, however, at what cost? Further, what is the political agenda behind this plan? Would this be an act of real compassion and genuine desire from the international community to help another nation stand on its own feet and become financially independent and prosperous? Or would it be a strategic political of western empires like the U.S., France, and Canada to move to widely open Haiti’s doors to western factories like garment type factories where many poor Haitians have been exploited? Klein (2010) intelligently captures this eminent danger when she states,

This history needs to be confronted now, because it threatens to repeat itself. Haiti’s creditors are already using the desperate need for earthquake aid to push for a fivefold increase in garment-sector production, some of the most exploitative jobs in the country. Haitians have no status in these talks, because they are regarded as passive recipients of aid, not full and dignified participants in a process of redress and restitution. (p. 1)

In short, is the agenda behind this reconstruction plan is to occupy Haiti again? It is hoped that during the reconstruction project Haitians will be among contractors hired to rebuild Haiti. It is also hoped that Haiti will not have to borrow money from Canada, the United States, and France with an exorbitant interest rate to rebuild itself. These countries owe Haiti a lot for having exploited it for centuries. As Klein (2010) goes on to state, “A reckoning with the debts the world owes to Haiti would radically change this poisonous dynamic. This is where the real road to repair begins: by recognizing the right of Haitians to reparations” (p. 1).

In ending this chapter, I want to argue that any reconstruction project aimed to rebuild Haiti should first and foremost involve transforming the Haitian school system that is still colonial-based. The major historical and school buildings may have destroyed during the earthquake. However, in my view, the colonial mentality that has long inhabited these buildings has not disappeared. In other words, the colonial mentality would persist in many Haitians’ minds and souls regardless of the fact these school and historical buildings are collapsed. These minds and souls
need to be decolonized (Thiong’o, 1965) if Haiti is to transcend the negative effect of the French colonial legacy and become the independent, autonomous, and prosperous Haiti that many genuinely concerned and caring Haitians have long wished it to be. After two hundred years of independence, Haiti unfortunately continues to emulate the French educational system. French, the language of the colonizer, is still valued over the Haitian Creole, the maternal language of all Haitians except those from the upper class who grow up speaking French as their first language.

Haitian students whose mind is still colonized tend to value more the French language than the Haitian creole. They also tend to show more appreciation for French literature and history than for Haitian literature and history. Until a fundamental change occurs in the Haitian educational system, including a profound transformation of the colonial mentality of many Haitian students, Haiti would continue to be a neo-colonized nation. Likewise, until Haitian leaders with human and political dignity join their brilliant minds and souls together to discuss and attempt to solve the pressing socio-economic and political problems that Haiti has faced, it would continue to be a nation that depends on its former colonizers and occupiers to solve its internal problems. A nation can’t stand on its feet and shape its destiny when its people are still trapped in a colonial mentality.