Anti-Colonialism and Education

The Politics of Resistance
BOLD VISIONS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Volume 7

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Anti-Colonialism and Education
The Politics of Resistance

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To all those who have lost their lives to violence in our city – and to all those with the clarity to distinguish between injury and pathology. We hope these deaths will spur collective action to address the systemic neglect which plagues so many of our communities.
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FOREWORD

In Anti-Colonialism and Education: The Politics of Resistance, George J. Sefa Dei and Arlo Kempf have given us a stimulating intellectual account of the issues surrounding the active attempt for educational liberation. The authors who have contributed to the volume have been well chosen to present creative approaches to this abiding problem in most of the world.

As we engage the legacies of colonialism we are more certain today that the nonmaterial legacies are as important in our thinking as the material ones when we engage questions of resistance and recovery. The colonizer did not only seize land, but also minds. If colonialism’s influence had been merely the control of land that would have required only one form of resistance, but when information is also colonized, it is essential that the resistance must interrogate issues related to education, information and intellectual transformations.

Colonialism seeks to impose the will of one people on another and to use the resources of the imposed people for the benefit of the imposer. Nothing is sacred in such a system as it powers its way toward the extinction of the wills of the imposed upon with one objective in mind: the ultimate subjection of the will to resist. An effective system of colonialism reduces the imposed upon to a shell of a human who is incapable of thinking in a subjective way of his or her own interest. In every thing the person becomes like the imposer; thus in desires, wishes, visions, purposes, styles, structures, values, and especially the values of education, the person operates against his or her own interest. Colonialism does not engender creativity; it stifles it, suppresses it under the cloak of assistance when in fact it is creating conditions that make it impossible for humans to effectively resist. And yet there has always been resistance and there are new methods of resistance gaining ground each day.

The intricacies of engaging colonialism are as numerous as the ways colonialism has impacted upon the world. Indeed, the political-economic, social-behavioral, and cultural-aesthetic legacies of the colonizing process have left human beings with a variety of ways to confront the impact of those legacies. What we see in Anti-Colonialism and Education is a profound attempt to capture for the reader the possibilities inherent in educational transformation through the politics of resistance.

Professors Dei and Kempf have exercised a judicious imagination in selecting the authors for the chapters in this book. Each author is an expert in the area of the topic, skilled in presentation of the facts based upon current theories, and articulate in the expression of a need for educators to understand the pressures
both for and against colonialism. However, they all take the position that it is necessary to explore all formulations that might achieve a liberated sphere of education.

Since education normally follows the dominant political lines in a country where you have colonial political principles you will find colonial education. If you have the vestiges of past colonial practices, you will see those practices reflected in the educational system. I remember a colleague from Algeria saying to me that when the French ruled the country the students learned that their ancestors were the Gauls. When independence came to Algeria, he said, the people were taught that their ancestors were Arabs. The fact that this was only true for those individuals who had Arab origins, and thirty percent did not have such ancestry, was uninteresting to the political agenda. And so it has been in every nation where you have a political intention to mold a country on the basis of domination you will also have resistance. One seems to go with the other regardless to how long the process seems to take to commence.

This is not just an exciting work intellectually; it is a beautiful book edited with intelligence and executed with the kind of research and scholarship that will bring us back to its pages many times. Each author seems to feel the same desire to teach us to be truly human; that is enough for us to inaugurate our own anti-colonialism campaign in our schools and colleges. I shall gladly join the fray to make the world better.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book could not have been completed without the political interest and will of the many people who shared their knowledge in this joint undertaking. While the task of re-visioning schooling and education for the contemporary learner and teacher may be daunting at times, we believe strongly that it is by no means insurmountable. In fact, we have a wealth of knowledge with which to help transform education into a process and practice that serves the needs of the collective. We hope this book will contribute to the debate and discussion of how to address not only the imperialization of knowledge but also the various forms of intellectual colonization that mask themselves as everyday academic truth and valid knowledge.

George Dei would like to thank the students of his graduate level course, SES 3914S: “Anti-Colonial Thought and Pedagogical Challenges” in the fall of 2004 whose insights and discussions helped propel the vision for this collection. Arlo Kempf would like to thank Lola Douglas, Meghan Mckee and Randy Kempf for their support and loveliness. He would also like to thank George Dei and the contributors for their ideas and hard work over the duration of this project.

We both owe a great deal of intellectual depth to our colleagues, peers and friends who constantly challenge us to think more deeply and avoid academic closure. It is in the actions and resistance of the people that theory is born and takes life – to all who struggle against colonialism without the privilege of a pen in hand, we thank and salute you. Our academic objective for the book was also shaped by a desire to let our community politics inform intellectual pursuits at all times. We want to thank Geoff Rytell, who initially helped proofread sections of the book, as well as Cheryl Williams for her ongoing support.

Finally we say “thank you” to Joe Kinchelow, Shirley Steinberg and Peter de Liefde who made this book a reality.

George Dei
Arlo Kempf
INTRODUCTION:
MAPPING THE TERRAIN – TOWARDS A NEW POLITICS OF RESISTANCE

INTRODUCTION

I begin this chapter with a question germane as to why and how we articulate anti-colonial thought. Informed by Steven Biko’s (1978) earlier work, I ask: “Why is it necessary for us as colonized peoples to think and reflect collectively about a problem not of our creation i.e., the problem of colonialism?” This question is central since colonialism has not ended and we see around us today various examples of colonial and neo-colonial relations produced within our schools, colleges, universities, homes, families, workplaces and other institutional settings. It is often said that globalization is the new word for imperialism.

History and context are crucial for anti-colonial undertakings. Understanding our collective past is significant for pursuing political resistance. Haunani-Kay Trask (1991) writes about the importance of the past to Indigenous peoples as a way to challenge the dominant’s call to amputate the past and its histories. For the people of Hawaii, Trask notes that “we do not need, nor do we want [to be] liberated from our past because it is source of our understanding … [We] … stand firmly in the present, with [our] back to the future, and [our] eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas” (p. 164).

In order to understand the knowledge and resistance of the past as it relates to contemporary politics of resistance, one has to know and learn about this past. As noted elsewhere (Dei, 2000, p. 11), for colonized peoples decolonization involves a reclamation of the past, previously excluded in the history of the colonial and colonized nations. They must identify the colonial historical period from the perspectives of their places and their peoples. Knowledge of the past is also relevant in so far as we as people must use that knowledge “responsibly”.

But our situatedness as knowledge producers and how we perform “the gaze” on subjects, at times accord power and privilege to some bodies and not others. Therefore, an anti-colonial struggle must identify and define a political project and show its connections to the academic engagement. Franz Fanon and Karl Marx have both cautioned us that “what matters is not to know the world but to change it”. This assertion calls for a recognition of the multiple points/places of responsibility and accountability. For example, what does it mean to talk of accountability as far as identity and subjectivity, however complex? It may well mean taking the stance that in political work for change, certain issues are not negotiable. In other words, we need to see there are limits and possibilities of “negotiating” in anti-colonial struggles and politics. As Howard (2004) asks: How much can be

accomplished if we decide to “negotiate” around domination or oppression? Are we negotiating as part of a democratic exercise?

Rabaka (2003) has argued that “one of the most important tasks of a critical anti-colonial theory … is to capture and critique the continuities and discontinuities of the colonial and neocolonial in order to make sense of our currently … colonized life and … worlds” (p. 7). Therefore as we begin to flesh out anti-colonial theory and practice, it is fitting to ask some critical questions (see also Butler, 2002): Is there still a colonized South? What about a colonized North? Do we think of neo-colonialism/colonialism/post-colonialism as bridges, as new articulations, or as a continuation with no marked differentiation? What is “post” about/in the “post-colonial”? Is the theoretical distinction between neo-colonialism and colonialism spurious at best? What are the purposes and underlying intentions of making such distinctions? What are the convergences and the divergences in post-colonial and anti-colonial thoughts? Does “neo” in neo-colonial mean “new”, or “transformed”? What is neo-colonialism? What are its antecedents and its marked practices? What are the mechanisms and institutions that constitute neo-colonialism? Why do we speak of neo-colonialism and not anti-colonialism? Are the structures, practices and ideas which enable colonialism really that different from those of neo-colonialism? Are the differences between neo-colonialism and colonialism more than theoretical? Whose interests are advanced in speaking of neo-colonialism/post-colonialism? What are the [dis]junctures and [dis]continuities between colonialism and neo-colonialism? How do discursive forces and material aspects interact to further our understanding of colonial? How do we speak of power, coercion, subjectivity, agency and resistance in anti-colonial discursive practice? What are the relations between neo-colonialism and White supremacy? The book does not presume to offer full answers to all these questions. But it is hoped the discussions that follow offer some entry points into a new politics of engagement towards the formulation of a critical anti-colonial lens.

The power of the anti-colonial prism lies in its offering of new philosophical insights to challenge Eurocentric discourses, in order to pave the way for Southern/indigenous intellectual and political emancipation. In this discussion, anti-colonial is defined as an approach to theorizing colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics (see also Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001). Colonialism, read as imposition and domination, did not end with the return of political sovereignty to colonized peoples or nation states. Colonialism is not dead. Indeed, colonialism and re-colonizing projects today manifest themselves in variegated ways (e.g. the different ways knowledges get produced and receive validation within schools, the particular experiences of students that get counted as [in]valid and the identities that receive recognition and response from school authorities. The anti-colonial prism theorizes the nature and extent of social domination and particularly the multiple places that power, and the relations of power, work to establish dominant-subordinate connections. This prism also scrutinizes
and deconstructs dominant discourses and epistemologies, while raising questions of and about its own practice. It highlights and analyzes contexts, and explores alternatives to colonial relations.

Loomba (1998) sees colonialism as signifying “territorial ownership” of a place/space by an imperial power, while imperialism on the other hand is the governing ideology for such occupation. Anti-colonial thought works with these two themes/projects – colonialism and imperialism as never ending. The colonial in anti-colonial however, invokes much more. It refers to anything imposed and dominating rather than that which is simply foreign and alien. Colonialism reinforces exclusive notions of belonging, difference and superiority (Principe, 2004). It pursues a politics of domination which informs and constructs dominant images of both the colonizer and the colonized (Memmi, 1969). Colonialism is not simply complicit in how we come to know ourselves and its politics. It also establishes sustainable hierarchies and systems of power. Colonial images continually uphold the colonizers’ sense of reason, authority and control. It scripts and violates the colonized as the violent “other”, while, in contrast, the colonizer is pitted as an innocent, benevolent and [imperial] saviour (see also Principe, 2004). This historical relationship of the colonizer and colonized continues to inform contemporary subject identity formation and knowledge production. It shapes and informs identities by recreating colonial ideologies and mythologies (Tushiwai-Smith, 1999).

In theorizing the anti-colonial discursive framework, I would highlight some key salient points. All knowledge can be located in the particular social contexts from which it emerges. Such location shapes the ways of knowing and understanding the social and political relations at play in constructing social realities. The anti-colonial prism takes the position that all knowledges are socially situated and politically contested. The anti-colonial discourse is situated in colonial relations of power that are contested through resistant practices against domination and oppression. In working with resistant knowledges, the liberating influence of critical anti-colonial discourse becomes clear. The anti-colonial discourse works with the idea of the epistemological power of the colonized subjects. The colonial knowing is situated and informed within particular social contexts (see also Harding, 1996). Such “situated knowledges” (hooks, 1991; Collins, 1990) also point to the importance of subjectivity, positionality, location and history. In this regard, the anti-colonial referent is to the epistemologies about, and of, marginalized, colonized subjects.

Particular and different interests are served by knowledge systems, and the anti-colonial aim is to subvert dominant thinking that re-inscribes colonial and colonizing relations. The ability and strength of the anti-colonial prism to draw upon different discursive traditions to explain social and political phenomena is an important strength for multiple knowings. But anti-colonial thought, while borrowing from other theoretical frameworks, is not constrained by dominant epistemologies. It calls for a critical awareness of the social relations and power issues embedded in the ways of organizing the production, interrogation, validation and dissemination of knowledge in order to challenge social oppression and
consequently subvert domination. It also calls for acknowledging accountability and power. Since the burden of oppression is not shared equally among groups, and that even among the oppressed we are not all affected the same way (see also Larbalestier, 1990), we must all be able to address questions of accountability and responsibility of knowledge. It is within such a context that one must evaluate the politics of anti-colonial thought, in its call for a radical transformation of the analytical and conceptual frames of reference, used both in the academy and in mainstream public discourse so that the minoritized, subjugated voice, experience and history can be powerfully evoked, acknowledged and responded to. Unless we are able to articulate the grounds on which we share a dialogue and challenge the power relations of knowledge production, we will be shirking the responsibility of acting on our knowledge.

The academic project of anti-colonial thinking and practice is to challenge and resist Eurocentric theorizing of the colonial encounter. Such Eurocentric theorizing is best captured in representations of minoritized/colonized bodies and their knowledges, and through the power of colonial imageries. The anti-colonial critique also deals with interrogations of colonial representations and imaginaries examining processes and representations of legitimacy and degeneracy through the mutually constitutive relations of power. Colonialisms were/are practised differently; they differ in their representations and consequently have myriad influences, impacts and implications for different communities. Colonial practices can be refracted around race, gender, class, age, disability, culture and nation as sites of difference.

In many ways the “anti-colonial thought” is the emergence of a new political, cultural and intellectual movement reflecting the values and aspirations of colonized and resisting peoples/subjects. The Western academy cannot continue to deny the intellectual agency of colonized peoples. As resisting subjects, we will all have to confront and deal with the historic inferiorization of colonial subjects, and the devaluation of rich histories and cultures. What is required is critical educational praxis that is anchored in anti-colonial thought to challenge and subvert the “Western cultural and capital overkill”, and shed the insulting idea that others know and understand us [as colonized subjects] better than we understand ourselves (see also Prah, 1997, pp. 19–23). Colonized peoples require an anti-colonial prism that is useful in helping to disabuse our minds of the lies and falsehoods told about our peoples, our pasts and our histories (see also Rodney, 1982). We need to present anti-colonial discourse as a way to challenge Eurocentric culture as the tacit norm everyone references and on which so many of us cast our gaze (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1998, p. 11). This approach to anti-colonial discursive thought and practice is also informed by the academic and political project calling for knowledge that colonised groups can use to find authentic and viable solutions to our own problems.

In this struggle we can point to some positive developments. For example everywhere today, we (as colonized peoples) are reclaiming and reinvigorating our marginalised, and in some cases, lost voices and are speaking for ourselves. Within educational academies in North America and in the South, there
is an invisible but fierce struggle to negotiate power relations in the production, transmission and application of knowledge about the human condition of colonized subjects. In fact, some anti-colonial scholars and community workers are producing insightful readings on Southern peoples, interesting at a time when externally-concocted economic measures are reaping untold hardships on the poor and disadvantaged. There is also a reclamation of the cultural histories of Southern peoples, to learn from past indigenous solutions to basic human problems. It is no secret that the cultural resource base of Southern peoples has been the least analysed for its contributions to the development process. As noted elsewhere (Dei, 1994) the discourse within the South itself is changing. Some scholars have been pioneering new analytical systems based on indigenous concepts and their interrelationships. In producing new knowledges, we are drawing on the interfaces of society, culture and nature. There is also an emerging poignant critique of the over-emphasis on the cases of failure and disaster in the South, while the successes at local levels of rural communities are overlooked. The current discourse of “African Renaissance” (Mbeki, 1998) represents a rethinking of the way forward for African peoples. African Renaissance is a rebirth and a revival of African culture. It is a return to historical traditions and a new paradigm for the future which looks to the past to chart the future. The charting involves interrogating and scrutinising culture and cultural values, history and tradition for a change in attitudes, self-dependence and self-pride. Also here is a return to the African roots for self-definition; and taking African cultural perspectives seriously to explore new ways of doing things.

There is a call for a “New Humanism” inspiring Southern minds with a new faith and new hopes and helping to rediscover the potentials of colonized peoples. There is a consciousness emerging among Southern intellectuals, and working peoples, that emphasizes the role of ideas and social forces in development that is speaking [in the case of Africa] “... to the capacity of the continent to resuscitate itself from terminal collapse” (Ragwanja, 1997, p. 5; see also Kankwenda, 1994).

The anti-colonial challenges any form of economic, cultural, political and spiritual dominance. It is about identifying and countering all forms of colonial domination as manifested in everyday practice, including individual and collective social practices, as well as global interactions. An anti-colonial perspective is about developing an awareness/consciousness of the varied conditions under which domination and oppression operate. Such a perspective seeks to subvert the dominant relations of knowledge production that sustain hierarchies and systems of power. It challenges the colonizer’s sense of reason, authority and control. As noted elsewhere (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001), along with “casting our gaze on race and racialization, the anti-colonial approach encourages us to interrogate the interlocking systems of power and dominance, ... [in order to understand] ... how dominance is reproduced and maintained, and how the disempowered are subjugated and kept under constant control” (p. 317).

The anti-colonial perspective is also deeply anchored in Indigenous ways of knowing and an understanding of the spiritual sense of self and the collective. This knowing situates the philosophy of holism as a key idiom of anti-colonial
practice. Evoked in this context, spirituality is an understanding of the personhood, a synergy of the body, mind, and soul and an accompanying awareness and respect for the wholeness of being, the interconnectedness of all things and a belief in a Greater Power that is beyond the capacities of the human senses to comprehend. Spirituality is the connection to all that exists. It comes from within the self, and from the world outside the self. By placing spiritual knowings in an anti-colonial discourse and practice, we affirm the symbolic, conscious and unconscious processes that inform our political work, to address domination and social oppression as they initially flow from the inner self/environment. In other words, the spiritual grounds the political. The anti-colonial knowledge that is brought to everyday politics is thus determined by our spiritual worldviews or cosmovision (see also Shahjahan, 2004; Wane, 2002; Zine, 2004).

THE POLITICAL AND ACADEMIC PROJECT

The importance of becoming politically engaged while at the same time remaining “scholarly” is itself an acknowledgement that our academic discourse must inform one’s political project and vice versa. As we pursue our intellectual and academic projects, perhaps it will best serve an anti-colonial cause if we deal more with the substantive issues at hand than with the “purity of [our] projects” (Bell, 1990, p. 164). This discussion of anti-colonial thought is informed by a political project to ensure that current educational practice provides a central focus to address colonial and re-colonial relations in the school system. I share a philosophy that a school system, and particularly the classroom, must provide the space for each learner to understand both her privileges and oppression, and to develop effective oppositional resistance to domination. In this context, I am aware that anti-colonial education continually meets with open resistance, such as the denial of difference that provides the context for power and domination in our society. For example, the all-too-frequent attempts to replace race with something else, even in the liberal discourse of pluralism, is a clear example. Within the academy (i.e., schools, colleges and universities) structural racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of oppression, revolve around ontological, epistemological and axiological foundations. For example, at the ontological level, our institutions are widely perceived as operating on the basis of fairness and as value free and objective. At the epistemic level, in order to know about objectivity and fairness, we are told continually to work with powerful notions of “merit” and “excellence”, and to utilise the prism of “thinking in hierarchies” rather than “thinking in circles”. As an important axiological foundation guiding moral conduct and ethics, there is an overriding belief in what can be called the “right” and the “wrong” things to do. Hence, treating everybody the same is believed to be the “right” thing to do. Similarly, we must all strive for universal social justice. The problem is that in such discourses about “right” and “wrong” there is a tendency to discount the qualitative value of justice. “Equal opportunity” and “colour blindness” are often heralded in ways that complicate
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racism by masking its real material and political effects, and consequences for certain groups in our society.

A great part of the problem confronting Euro-American/Canadian education is the incessant scripting of Western civilization, the fabrication of whiteness and the racial boundary policing that come with these practices. The dominance of Western civilization and the accompanying racial supremacy is anchored in a fabrication of whiteness. Historically, this fabrication required immense psychological, physical and intellectual energies to maintain the alleged purity of Europe and the West (e.g., one needs only to look at the attempts by so-called enlightened European scholars to deny Egyptian and Nubian influence on European history, and Western [Greek] civilization). Eurocentric knowledge masquerades as universal knowings. Today, this fabrication continues to exact a heavy material, physical, psychological and emotional toll on those segments of our communities racialized as different. Their bodies bear scars of intellectual combat.

THEORIZING POLITICS

Loomba (1998) long observed that European colonialism is both historically and geographically a complex rather than monolithic phenomenon. So the question is: How can we “be attentive to these nuances, and at the same time find shared attributes and features of power and resistance? Such a task requires an expanded vocabulary, and current debates on colonial discourse deal precisely with the nature of that expansion” (Loomba, 1998, p. 57). In many respects this is what the anti-colonial discourse is about. Elsewhere (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001), we have argued that anti-colonial thought is “epistemology of the colonised, anchored in the indigenous sense of collective and common colonial consciousness” (p. 300). Colonial education has been a powerful mechanism in colonising minds and cultural politics. Micro-physical power relations have worked effectively by re-ordering material space in exact dimensions and acquiring a continuous bodily hold upon subjects, thus making disciplined forms of education possible. The metaphysical power relations work by creating some semblance of order and structure as almost a non-material and non-consequential realm. Today, the colonial and re-colonial tools of subjugation extend beyond formal schooling to include the way in which imperial forces of global markets (through the over-glorification of market economy, modern communication methods and networks of information) are meeting the stated and unstated objectives and goals of formal education (see also Ahmad, 2004).

There are some key philosophical tenets of anti-colonial theory. Foremost is the concept of “colonial” as defined not simply as “foreign” or “alien” but more broadly as anything which is “imposed” and “dominating”. The subversion of colonial and colonizing relations lie at the heart of anti-colonial resistance. In order to uncover what such relations of the “colonizer and the colonized” imply, we must interrogate the connections between the “self” and the “other”. In arguing that the concept of “relations/relational” and “connectedness” are relevant
DEI

to anti-colonial theorizing, I am alluding to a discursive framework that situates the “self” as meaningful when tied to the other, as the individual connects to the group/community, and the inner to the outer. As many have noted there is an “other” within each self” (see Trinh Minh-ha, 2000). Anti-colonial thought works with difference and identity at the same time. An examination of difference implies seeing difference and sameness between self and other, the individual and the community, as well as also within the self. The self and group are important sites of the affirmation of identities. Within the identities of the colonized and the colonizer, there is a relation suggesting that the idea of identity cannot be dismissed. Individual and collective identities each constitute a critical core of who one is and who we are. Identity exists and is needed if we are to understand our essence as spiritual beings. But it is difference that separates one identity from the another at one level, while also ensuring the difference can co-exist with sameness. In other words, differences not only exist between entities but within subjectivities as well. As Trinh Minh-ha (2000) notes, while we argue for subjectivity we must simultaneously acknowledge the “inappropriate other within every ‘I’. Thus saying ‘I am like you’ to indicate sameness is at the same time a maintenance of one’s difference, as in saying ‘I am different’” (p. 1214). Difference must be seen as between the colonized and the colonizer as well as a relation between the two. This means a discussion of the subject as at once a colonizer and the colonized. The idea of a unitary self does not mean opposition between self/other, insider/outsider; subjectivity/objectivity or the colonizer/colonized.

Power is unequally distributed in every sphere of human social life. The greater the power inequality (whether racial or sexual, between classes or nations), the higher social power stands as an obstacle to peace and human liberation. Arguably the dominant/colonizer has power over the subordinated/colonized because of the differential positions inherited through history and social politics. The colonizer is inclined to perpetuate the cycle of abuse and coercion at the micro and macro levels in order to sustain the power base. In effect, dominating and oppressive relationships that emerge from structures of power and privilege are inherent and embedded in our contemporary everyday social relations (see also Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001). What is key to theorizing the connections between self/other/group/community and that of the colonized-colonizer relations is a critical perspective that interrogates the nature of asymmetrical power relations, as well as the rationality of the power of dominance in society. In the relations of the self/other, individual/community, inner/outer relations there is usually an enactment of power relations (see also Trinh Minh-ha, 2000, p. 1211).

In Foucaultian sense of micro-politics power is diffused, power is relational and circulates among groups (Foucault, 1980, 1989). At the macro level, there are differences in how power is accorded so as to render meaningful discussion of a/the colonizer and the colonized. It is the discretionary use of power that allows one group to posit boundaries around social positionalities and sites of difference. But as Shohat (1995) cautions us, the subordinate should also be able to strategically and politically evoke a collective sense of belonging in order not
to risk “sanctifying the fait accompli of colonial violence, or dismiss the idea of communal identities” (p. 177) (see also Spivak, 1988, 1990).

IMPLICATING RACE AND DIFFERENCE

Anti-colonial thought is about discoursing on difference, power, racial and social oppressions as well as the silences. As Larbalestier (1990) long ago pointed out “difference is both a conceptual, cultural and material problem. It is embedded in a politics of identity which are, in turn, embedded in relations of power” (p. 155).

The anti-colonial thought offers a political, cultural and ideological critique of colonial relations, as well as a political discourse of resistance grounded in a politics of identity. But one must exercise caution so that our anti-colonial disputations do not simply privilege race as a site of oppression or operate within a “racial cringe” (Bell, 1990, p. 158). In articulating the anti-colonial prism, I foreground the question of race and difference. The power of “race talk” resides in the making and experiencing of the “Other” and the creation of Othered subjects. Anti-colonial thinker Albert Memmi (1969) long ago informed us about the process of Othering, which is about the construction of imaginary differences as real. This was followed by assigning social values to these differences (e.g., one can be perceived as being lazy, inferior, unintelligent, uncivilized for being “different”). These differences then provided a justification for denying rewards and benefits, justifying the differential and unequal treatment of the “Other”/othered subjects. In the same vein the Martinique anti-colonial theorist, Aime Cesaire (1972) spoke of the equation of colonization with “thingification”. We see this when some racialized bodies (e.g., Blacks and Aboriginals) are objectified through the continual denial of their basic humanity. While not everyone is guilty of this, there is nonetheless constant blaming and pathologizing of racialized subjects for our perceived lack of certain basic qualities, for not understanding our own problems, for lacking the ability to think through our own solutions to problems and for neither fitting in nor are being capable of doing our jobs. If we are not lazy, then we are unintelligent. Education is racialized and we see this with the bodies that are disproportionately disengaged from the school system. We can also tell in terms of whose and what knowledge and experiences are validated and delegitimized. All these provide convenient grounds for failing to critically look at the ways in which systems marginalize and inferiorize groups and individuals. The propensity to blame the victim is unquestioned. We often fail to look at structures and how institutions function to create marginality for racialized subjects. Of course racialized bodies resist and challenge these perceptions, but this is beside the point. We must ask: resistance at what cost?

Today the concept of racialization is often referred to in discussing race and racism. Robert Miles (1989, 1993) and others refer to the process through which groups come to be designated as different, and on that basis are subjected to differential and unequal treatment (see also Li, 1990). Earlier references to “racialization” were to political economic processes that ensured a labour supply
for society and immigrant workers being racialized for work. We can speak of this in relation to ethnicity, language, economics, religion, culture and politics, etc. It is important to acknowledge that racialization entails the notion of biological determinism, that is to say, the concept that particular human traits are biologically determined and thus (these traits) are consistent both for individuals and for the group to which those individuals may belong. For example, the idea that the working class is dirty, lazy, violent, of inferior intelligence, has low moral standards, etc., has been based on biological determinism. These same discursive practices have fixed people of colour in exactly the same settled “natural” position.

The most important point here is that racialization is a historical construction, one that allows for white supremacist systems of power to suppress racial minority resistance. By way of understanding the “project of racialization” we look to those historical processes and trajectories that have allowed dominant groups to call upon culture, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, sexuality, and race (as skin colour) as a way of distinguishing groups for differential and unequal treatment. As a historical construct, the process of racialization allows for white supremacist systems of power to suppress racial minorities as unequal and different in order to justify their suppression and domination.

Closely aligned with the processes of racialization is the production of racialized subjects. As Lawson (2004) notes, we must take “racialized” as a verb, i.e., the act of doing something to the body based on its phenotypical features. In the broader sense, the making of racialized subjects points to the ways in which bodies are read or scripted according to skin colour and other phenotypical features as an epidemiologically correct casting. Black skin is associated with deviance, dishonesty; while brown is associated with terrorism, etc. the subject becomes racialized through such casting. In framing the issue as “racialization” the gaze is placed more appropriately on the one “racializing” the subject. In other words we uphold and counter the view that the person remains embodied, and therefore is not intrinsically “bad” because of her/his race. The process of racializing the subject is at fault and it is this process with which we must deal. So the process of racializing is external and strategic, and is not the responsibility of the person who is targeted. This distinction is crucial because of the tendency for some to argue that those who do anti-racist work by working with race actually create the problem. Anti-racist workers speak of race not to create racism but rather to shed light on it, and avoid its denial.

In looking at racialization processes and the making of racialized subjects, we see how these same biologically determined and thus racist ideas of behaviour, values, beliefs, cultural practices, etc., are grafted onto particular social relations and issues such as immigration, education, and crime in our communities. Dominant systems of racialized power construct ideas of criminality through particular bodies (see also Lawson, 2004)’s. We begin to see how crime and “gang violence” are viewed largely through (and in terms of) black and brown bodies and communities because it is they who have been invested with a biological propensity towards violence and crime. Discussions about terrorism and terrorists in public discourse is a case in point. We know particular bodies are now invested with
terrorism, they are viewed as a group to be possessed of certain biological traits that lead to the nurturing of suicide bombers, fanatical hatred of the West, sexist oppression, and so forth. Consequently, it can be argued that the whole process of racialization and the making of racialized subjects is indicative of larger cultural and social forces. People are not however, innately encoded with such negative images and messages. We need to ask, for example, why do Canadian families of diverse European heritage, largely consider themselves to be White? What does this practice tell us about race and racism in Canadian history and contemporary politics and culture? There is a currency (political, material/economic) to claiming whiteness.

There is a “two-sidedness” to any critical study of domination and oppression: the privileged and the subordinate position. Dismantling colonial relations and practices has as much to do with studying whiteness and oppression as the study of marginalized positions of resistance (see also Howard, 2004). It is important to acknowledge that colonized peoples and minoritized scholars have spearheaded the study of the colonial encounter and resistance which and that this is often unacknowledged. In many ways developing an anti-colonial prism is about having a critical gaze on the dominance of white supremacy. Given the possibility of the colonizer and colonized, particularly the colonizer, remaining oblivious to the sites of oppression/domination and (thereby showing limitations in knowledge and knowing) there is an “epistemic saliency” of the subordinate voice. The site from which we oppress is the site on which we least cast our gaze. It is significant in an anti-colonial practice to engage the question whether the dominant/colonizer should know and critique colonialism, imperialism and oppression without the input of those who have received, and continue to receive the brunt of the colonial encounter and its violence?

Anti-colonial thought is about a “decolonizing of the mind” working with resistant knowledge and claiming the power of local subjects’ intellectual agency. Resistance in this context is about fighting for survival and beyond. It is about resistance to domination of the past, contamination of the present and the stealing of a people’s future. The dominated/colonized subject survives despite attempts to deny her existence. Decolonization is also an interrogation of the age old dilemmas about authenticity, originality, indigeneity and autonomy of cultural, scientific, literary values and aesthetic creations. Western knowledges are deeply embedded in the indigenous historiographies of colonized peoples. While the Indigenous is located in the past it does not remain stuck in the there. The Indigenous precedes and survives colonial contact and its forces of domination.

Language is a powerful tool for decolonization. The power to name issues for what they are demonstrates an ability to use language as resistance, and to claim cultural and political capital that is necessary to challenge domination. The power of anti-colonial thinking lies in its ability to name the domination and imposition of colonial relations. Language can be used to challenge the negations, omissions and devaluations of a peoples’ social reality, experience and history. For example, David Theo Golberg (1990) in his seminal work “Racist Culture” makes the critical point that today race is irrelevant yet everything is about race.
This is a useful lesson for the pursuit of the anti-colonial politics of race. This is particularly poignant when Goldberg (1990) further asserts that “resistance must oppose the language of oppression, including the categories in terms of which the oppressor represents the forms in which resistance is expressed” (p. 314). The use of language in anti-colonial politics is important to the extent that discursive practices can mask the real material effects of power, privilege and oppression. It is crucial in anti-colonial politics to maintain an important distinction between individual white identity and whiteness as a system of domination and structure of privilege. White identity is an individual racial marker/signifier. Whiteness is a system of privilege and oppression. In other words, whiteness is about dominance. Whiteness is embedded in domination and systemic privilege. One can be marked for white privilege (as in a racial identity) and still take a stance opposed to white racism. As Howard (2004) also opines, these are not mutually exclusive positions.

WHEN “ANTI” REPLACES THE “POST”

To be precise, contemporary anti-colonial thought has roots in the decolonizing movements of colonial states that fought for independence from European countries at the end of the Second World War. The revolutionary ideas of Frantz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, Mao-Tse-Tung, Albert Memmi, Aime Cesaire, Kwame Nkrumah, and Che Guevara, to name a few, were instrumental in fomenting anti-colonial struggles. Most of these scholars were avowed nationalists who sought political liberation for all colonized peoples and communities using the power of knowledge (see Nkrumah, 1965). In particular, Franz Fanon’s (1967) and Mohandas Gandhi’s (1967) writings on the violence of colonialism and the necessity for open resistance, Albert Memmi’s (1969) discursive on the relations between the colonized and the colonizer helped instil in the minds of colonized peoples the importance of engaging in acts of resistance to resist the violence of colonialism. In later years, particularly in African contexts, other scholars including Aime Cesaire (1972), Leopald Senghor (1996) and Cabral (1970a, b) introduced questions of language, identity and national culture into anti-colonial debates for political and intellectual liberation.

After independence, a new body of “anti-colonial” discourse emerged. This discourse appropriately labelled within the post-colonial discursive framework (see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1995; Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1990, 1995; Young, 1995; Leila Gandhi, 1998), undeniably illustrates powerful links to the ideas of earlier thinkers such as Fanon, Memmi and Cabral. Current anti-colonial theory reclaims ideas of early anti-colonial theorizing. Furthermore, today, the adoption of an anti-colonial discursive gaze, while borrowing from the postmodern view of colonialism as espoused in the works of Young (1995, 2001), Said (1978, 1993), Bhabha (1990), and Loomba (1998), represents an important intellectual contribution that departs significantly from post-colonial theory.

The ideas of post-colonial theorists largely focussed on the interconnections between imperial/colonial cultures and the colonized cultural practices and the
constructions of hybridity and alterity (see also Suleri, 1992; Shohat, 1992; Slemon, 1995; Bhabha, 1990; Spivak, 1988, 1990, 1999). The strength of post-colonial theory lies in pointing to the complexities and the disjunctures of the colonial experiences in the aftermath of the colonial encounter. In fact, Bhabha (1990) has shown that the colonial encounter and discourse cannot be assumed to be unified or unidirectional. Spivak (1988) also emphasizes the possibility of counter knowledges that emerge or are constructed from marginal spaces and the power of such voices for the pursuit of resistance.

As Shahjahan (2003) has also argued, postcolonial theorizing in a more general sense, demonstrates the shift of anti-colonial thought from the focus on agency and nationalist/liberatory practice towards a discursive analysis and approach that directs our attention to the intersection between “Western knowledge production and the ‘Other’ and Western colonial power” (p. 5). Today politics and economics cannot be separated from history and culture. In fact, Benita Parry (1995) and Ahmad (1995) have both criticized the discursive analysis of post-colonial theorists for their heavy reliance on textuality and idealism at the expense of deep historical enquiry and materialist interpretations. In offering a bridge between these stances, contemporary anti-colonial thought argues that colonial constructions affect knowledge production with profound material consequences.

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**ANTI-COLONIALISM AND POLITICAL ECONOMY**

In re-theorizing the “anti-colonial” through context-specific examples, grounded discussions of local struggles of resistance (and how these struggles connect the colonial encounter to the Indigenous experience) emerge. These discussions offer significant lessons for social change. At the global level, there is the on-going struggle for Indigenous peoples to retain their identities in the face of global sameness. Among Indigenous peoples in Canada, for example, there is a decolonizing project calling for abolishing existing relations with the Canadian government and forming new relations based on a “… recognition of the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples to follow their traditional ways of governance” (Sunseri, 2000, p. 146). Although there are questions about how such projects can be sustained and at what cost to Indigenous peoples, the anti-colonial prism maintains that Aboriginal peoples are bearing huge costs for their contemporary relations with the state to the extent that a way forward lies more in a sort of “delinking” (see Amin, 1976). This would mean engagement by local peoples on their own terms while controlling their economic, political, cultural and land rights for self determination.

Similarly, in the African context the political marginalization and resistance of indigenous cultures/groups such as the Ogoni struggle with the Shell Oil Company in the Niger Delta, is an example of how local peoples are re-asserting their rights in the face of overwhelming odds and a gluttonous corporate desire to design the futures of African peoples. Other examples include the Indigenous People of the Southern Mexican Highlands fighting neoliberalism, the Ogiek
of Kenya fighting for land rights, the Quechua community rebellions in Bolivia against international farming regulations, the Nisga’a people’s struggle for self-determination on Canada’s West Coast, the Palawa people and there fight for land rights in Tasmania and many others too numerous to name.

In these struggles “indigenization” is being redefined as the interplay of both “urban-African perspectives” and “traditional/indigenous/local perspectives”. Indigenization is not only about empowering local subjects to wrest control from external colonizers/globalizers. It is also about affirming the rights of a people to retain their “indigeneity” in the face of so-called modernity and modernization. The pitfalls of the modernist project demand a careful rethinking of political and social engagements with local subjects in resisting global/Western domination. Thus, the current anti-colonial struggle in Africa links the political call for “Africanization” with the re-culturation of African political, social, and economic institutions. More fundamentally, such anti-colonial struggles seek to connect the cultural “counter-hegemonic” activism (through, for example, the re-indigenization of African education) with the Gramscian counter-hegemonic politics aimed at proletarian control over the means of production and material politics as a necessary exercise in counter-hegemonic politics. There are important links between these struggles. There is the question of how the formal institutional spaces of African schools can be transformed into counter-hegemonic spaces. The limited transformational possibilities of such formal institutional spaces have been well noted by theories of social reproduction. The emphasis on the cultural/material of historical and current neo-colonial inequalities and schooling, points clearly to both the possibilities and challenges of social change. Any contemporary anti-colonial struggle in Africa must find ways to reconcile the primacy of “re-culturation” for social change through “re-Indigenization of African education” with the primary goal of regaining material control over political-economy to effect change. In South Africa, despite its emergence from apartheid in 1994, social development policies reflect the tenets of modernisation – a re-colonizing force for the second half of the twentieth century. The primacy of the market has, in the last ten years, had a particularly damaging effect on the country’s education policy in particular. As Weber (2002) notes, despite early gains for social justice under the ANC Government, the past decade has seen an overall shift to the right in social policy.

With regard to the unequal relations of power in the production of knowledge, and the role of culture in current struggles over political decolonization and rights of sovereignty, it is important to acknowledge that in the long run if nothing is done to change the political and economic structures of domination, these struggles will fail. Anti-colonial struggles cannot take place exclusively within cultural spheres of action. These struggles must actively engage domination and exploitation in the economic and political realms. As Tucker (1999) notes in another context, the “economic, political and cultural spheres are intimately intertwined. These different spheres do have a degree of autonomy from each other, and it is for this reason that change in the cultural sphere ... is central to and an important dimension of the change in the economic and political spheres” (p. 24).
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RE-READING INDIGENOUSNESS, LANGUAGE AND SUBJECTIVITY AS SITES OF LOCAL PEOPLE’S AGENCY AND RESISTANCE

Anti-colonial thought calls for agency and resistance. Within colonial relations there lie the individual and collective agency to resist subordination and domination. Agency emerges from the power of knowing and knowledge, and its this that gives meaning to social and political action. The resistance that is embedded in every power relation is possible through an affirmation of individual and collective subjectivities, and the knowledge that comes with understanding one’s social condition and context. Through the power and politics of resistance, the colonized are able to understand their social reality and work to change their condition.

As already noted, indigeneity and local indigenous knowledge, and specifically the relevance of the mind, soul and body interface in the construction of knowledge and pursuit of political practice and have been significant factors in anti-colonial theory today. Anti-colonialism calls for connecting discussions among the local, marginalised and the Indigenous experiences. The broad questions of [Indigenous] history and culture are fundamentally important in that anti-colonial discourses go back well beyond the experiences [conditions] faced by Southern intellectuals in the Western academy when resisting Eurocentric mimicking of intellectual procedures of the West. For example, we see this in the referent of the “post” and its dependence on Western philosophies, frames of reference, modes of thought; intellectuals seeking validation in Eurocentric standards, need to refer to works in West/Europe and America to validate and legitimise discourse. Local agency resides in how the anti-colonial project uncovers colonizing practices as deeply embedded in everyday relations, and how local/indigenous knowings become powerful sources of knowledge that allow for daily resistance and the pursuit of effective political practice to subvert all forms of dominance.

An anti-colonial framework must raise questions about the colonial encounter and its aftermath. Ahmad (2000) has asked us to think critically. We must take risks and be prepared to expose and challenge the hidden narratives which surround discourses of nation building and nationhood when difference is denied. Who is part of the nation? Who can claim citizenship? On what grounds do we make such claims? How are different subjects positioned? How does a certain language become dominant? The normative claims of shared identity inherent in discourse of nation building must be interrogated to unravel how certain hegemonic interests can be served when differences are erased in dominant talk. We must expose dominant practices that negate the power of spirituality and local indigenousness as the entry points for engaging in subjective resistance and agency.

On the question of language, Ngugi wa Thiong’o (1986) in his “Decolonizing the Mind” speaks strongly to the question of maintaining and developing proficiencies in African languages. As he puts it:

… the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural
bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples’ languages rather than their own. (1986, p. ii)

Language is very important not only in the process of identity formation, but also in processes of learning and for the psychological, spiritual, mental and cognitive development of the self. Language is also very central when it comes to notions of exclusion. Othering, stigmatization and the resistance politics that are called for when challenging such practices. Through language we can re-read voice and subjectivity and comprehend the intellectual agency of the colonized. An anti-colonial politics unravels the ways in which language operates to concretize racial and colonial exclusions, particularly in official discourses of and about the nation and citizenship that fail to critically engage questions of power, resources, equity and difference. Language is the substantive technology through which social exclusion is built around power and hegemony. It operates to silence and deny certain experiences, histories and identities.

Language is the unsaid discourse. In other words, language is not only what is overtly said but what is also left unsaid. Anti-colonial politics brings a complex reading to language both in terms of the “poetics of anti-colonialism” and the emphasis on the discourse subject agency and exclusion. Anti-colonialist practice challenges exclusions of Indigenous languages in most “post-colonial” contexts. For example, the way in which colonial languages, through globalism and transnational practices, as well as through linguistic racism, and the symbolic capital of language serve to discriminate and disadvantage the colonized.

Perhaps one of the important contributions of language to anti-colonial discourse is helping to articulate and critique the “post-colonial” overemphasis on the “subject”. We cannot underestimate the concrete and material problems of the everyday world or the tangible effects of broader macro-political forces. As Dirlik (1997, 2000) notes, there is a world outside of the subject. However, we must also agree that the subject and the material world cannot be separated. The real question, as Loomba (1999) asserts, concerns the manner in which structural material forces determine or script the subject’s agency and the subsequent impact on her or his ability to resist. Anti-colonial struggles see local subjects as makers of their own history. In other words, local subjects hold discursive power and their intellectual agency can be traced through history, not modernity. While the anti-colonial project notes that the subaltern can and do in fact speak, and have consequently become agents of their own history, it simultaneously recognizes that the limits of class, ethnicity, culture, gender and difference define how, when and why the subaltern speaks (see also Spivak, 1998; Shohat, 1995; Trinh Minh-ha, 2000; Prakash, 1992).
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How far can we celebrate our fragmented identities and what are the limits in terms of pursuing a broader political project? As many others have pointed out, at a time when marginalised peoples are finding a more powerful collective voice it is crucial that this project is not derailed by unnecessarily preoccupation with “split/fragmented subjectivity”. We must ask whether “this notion of decentred subject is the latest strategy of Western colonialism” (Loomba, 1999, p. 248)?

The idea for this book emerged from discussions in my graduate level course, SES3914S: “Anti-Colonial Thought and Pedagogical Challenges” in the fall of 2004. It was a very challenging course with class discussions informed by a desire to reclaim the power of oppositional discourse and theory for educational transformation. In fact, when Arlo Kempf and I decided to put this collection together, the feeling was that there was very little current theorizing on anti-colonial practices. We began working with some of the critical ideas held by class participants on anti-colonial thought and its pedagogical implications. In moving ahead on the project, we have extended the terrain of the discussion to include scholars working in this area whose ideas offer penetrating insights into anti-colonialism today. Our focus has been on the production of such knowledge and the implications of “science” and embodied knowing for rethinking educational theory and practice. Most of the papers deal with the body as an important site of knowledge, weaving through the complex terrain of education defined broadly as “coming to know and pursuing political practice for social transformation”. In this last section of this introductory chapter, I have provided a summary of each chapter, leaving it to the reader to connect important dots which make up this work. This may seem unnatural in an edited collection but the choice is strategic. When we edit rather than author books, the understanding is that others have something to say. Let us hear it.

In Chapter 1, “A Tool of Massive Erosion: Scientific Knowledge in the Neo-Colonial Enterprise”, Gina Thésée argues that science, namely physical science or natural science has been, and continues to be, a powerful instrument employed to control not only matter and energy, inert and living, but also people and nations. As a result, the world of science reproduces an uncontested power that leads to the transparent exclusion of diverse marginalized groups in terms of their perspectives, values, beliefs, identity and knowledge. The post-colonial period has continued the tradition of using science as a tool of disenfranchisement.

Chapter 2, “On Silence and Dominant Accountability: A Critical Anticolonial Investigation of the Antiracism Classroom”, by Philip S.S. Howard, uses the critical anti-colonial discursive framework to examine relationships and processes in the mixed race antiracism classroom. The meanings that are routinely, often unconsciously, created regarding the presence of certain bodies in the critical classroom, can work to alienate the racially oppressed and undermine the mounting of a sufficiently critical challenge to the racialized status quo. This chapter considers the ways in which racist/colonial dynamics might manifest in the mixed-race antiracism classroom, and posits approaches that might encourage more equitable relations.
Chapter 3, “Implicit Racism and the Brain: How Neurobiology Can Inform an Anti-Colonial, Anti-Racist Pedagogy”, by Serhat Unsal, argues that Racism exists in the institutional and cultural milieu established by the dominant historical social order which forms a wide and ever-present external field of socially mediated cultural memory. The human brain is a social organ that develops through experience, and certain aspects of social reality are reflected and gain expression there. This chapter presents the latest scientific data from neurobiological and neuropsychological studies linking racism and brain activity, highlighting two newly emerging bodies of research. It then links this research to the continuing legacies of colonial and racist violence on mental structures.

In Chapter 4, “Is Decolonization Possible?”, Njoki Nathani Wane investigates the role of spirituality within anti-colonial thought and practise, through the imagining of the pre-colonial, the colonial encounter, and the colonial eras; as well as through discussion of the impact of colonialism on colonized subjects. Her aim as a woman who grew up in rural Kenya is to examine her fragmented past and make sense of experiences, stories, proverbs, and idioms imparted to her by elders while growing up.

Chapter 5, “Spiritual Politics: Politicizing the Black Church Tradition in Anti-Colonial Praxis”, by Elaine A. Brown Spencer, argues the Black Church has an enduring historical and contemporary relevance in a pluralistic Afro-Christian religious culture. A paradox lies in its complicity in colonization while having also created religious forms of resistance to colonialism. The Black Church has helped Blacks sustain their sanity amidst colonial conditions by inculcating a philosophy of hope which has become fundamental to Black identity formation in anti-colonial struggles. Generally, the Black church has been an all-encompassing part of Black culture and identity; however, it remains vastly ignored, misunderstood, and even disdained.

Chapter 6, “Anti-Colonial Historiography: Interrogating Colonial Education”, by Arlo Kempf, argues there is strategic importance in the who, why, where and how of knowledge production and attempts to begin, inspire and facilitate an interrogation of dominant history. This chapter begins with an explication of the author’s theoretical framework for anti-colonial historiography. It goes on to provide an analytical case study of the history textbooks used in Ontario, Canada, from 1866 to the present. It closes with a case specific example of curricular synthesis, demonstrating one way in which dominant education can be subverted.

Chapter 7, “From Postcolonial to Anti-Colonial Politics: Difference, Knowledge and R. v. R.D.S.”, by Leila Angod, tells the story of a personal metamorphosis from a postcolonial framework to an anti-colonial one, and the growing pains that this process entailed. The convergences and divergences of the two theories are delineated by examining how each theory treats difference and knowledge. A postcolonial telling of the now famous R. v. R.D.S. is compared to an anti-colonial conception of the same case, in order to illustrate how each lens produces a different kind of knowledge.

Chapter 8, “The Power of Oral Tradition: Critically Resisting the Colonial Footprint”, by Maryam Nabavi, argues oral tradition has been used as both a
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mode of cultural survival and expression of resistance in anti-colonial movements. Global challenges in the modern era increasingly confront diverse ideologies and worldviews. A site of such struggle is the divide between the modern and Indigenous, where the ownership of knowledges are negated and possible room negotiation is denied. Drawing on the use of oral tradition in Indigenous cultures as it is used in reclaiming knowledge, cultural identity, spirituality and traditional practices, as denied during colonial intervention, this chapter explores how agency and critical consciousness subsequently ensue.

Chapter 9, “Indigenous Knowledge in Jamaica: A Tool of Ideological Anti-Neo-Colonial Resistance”, by Mark V. Campbell, attempts to activate local indigenous Afro-Jamaican knowledge as a tool through which to tackle the neo-colonial hold of the Monroe Doctrine and dislodge the ideological supremacy of the United States in Jamaica. The author operates upon the premise that Afro-Jamaican indigenous knowledge(s) are essential “cognitive resources” in the anti-colonial struggle. The chapter utilizes an anti-colonial discursive framework as an approach that helps us theorize the re-/neo-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures of knowledge production.

Chapter 10, “Benevolent Dictators: Colonizing Encounters in Spaces of the South”, by Catherine Moffat, is a critical interrogation of the international development industry from within. It asks why is it that “international development” persists, even thrives, despite the failures of Northern-driven international? Once contemporary development practitioners realise that we are practising newer, more subtle and insidious forms of colonialism, we are necessarily led to the question, what might an anti-colonial “development” practice look like? The author brings a critical gaze to the international development enterprise (in both practise and theory), showing how it is rooted in racial domination and imperialism.

Chapter 11, “An Anti-Colonial Critique of Research Methodology”, by Jennifer Hales, critiques the author’s own research methodology from an anti-colonial standpoint, unearthing, revealing and challenging that which is often perceived or understood as neutral and/or objective. The chapter addresses issues of epistemological racism and white privilege, particularly with respect to white Northern/Western researchers conducting research in Southern contexts: can white, Euro-American researchers conduct research on or with people from other cultures?

In Chapter 12, “Remembering, Resisting: Casting an Anti-Colonial Gaze upon the Education of Diverse Students in Social Work Education”, Billie Allan reflects upon her own experiences as an Anishnaabe woman in social work education and applies the anti-colonial discursive framework to problematize the concept of diversity, and to reconceptualize the education of diverse students within the historical and contemporary context of colonization. The author examines the concept of diversity in social work education and its subsequent impact on diverse social work students.

Chapter 13, “Invisible Violence and Spiritual Injury within Post-Secondary Institutions: An Anti-Colonial Interrogation and Response”, by Marlene Ruck-Simmons, argues that colonialism as a materialized practice of hegemonic own-
ership, continues to violently affront identifiable bodies through the discourses of settlement and advancement. Within spaces of higher educational settings, these mythologies are replicated through epistemological, organizational and practice-based situatedness that invisibly perpetuate spiritual violence against those affirming otherted historicities, knowledges and lived positionalities. Offering her voice amidst the hush of post-colonialists, the author uses personal narratives and conversations with anti-colonialist literature, to expose the spiritual violence that is often brutally executed against minoritized bodies within post-secondary institutions.

In Chapter 14, “Engendering Indigenous Knowledge”, Lindsay Kerr examines the convergences and divergences between indigenous knowledges and feminism, and addresses the contested terrain within and between them, with particular reference to African writers. The purpose of engendering indigenous knowledge is to explicate women’s contribution to indigenous knowledge systems and to identify how women are differentially affected by colonialism and its aftermath; that is to make women visible in this field of knowledge.

In the Conclusion, “Looking Forward: Pedagogical Implications of Anti-Colonialism”, Arlo Kempf and I discuss the implications for learning and teaching raised by anti-colonial theory and practise. The broad pedagogical implications of this emerging theory are examined alongside the specific ideas raised by the chapters herein. Our long term goal is to help re-theorize anti-colonialism and to move it forward into the realm of current critical, pedagogical and political practice.

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GINA THÉSÉE

1. A TOOL OF MASSIVE EROSION: SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE IN THE NEO-COLONIAL ENTERPRISE

INTRODUCTION

The physical sciences have played a leadership role in the systematic establishment of European supremacy over nations which have been dominated through colonization for the past several centuries. The colonial enterprise and the natural sciences, mutually, have shaped and controlled the deployment of one another. Although new forms – more subtle, global and diffuse – of this dynamic have taken place, they cannot over-shadow the on-going oppression and exclusion of the same nations plagued by the neo-colonization enterprise. This is neither accidental, nor coincidental. While the old colonial power advanced unheeded, the neo-colonial power proceeds more cautiously, hidden under polymorphic masks. The most powerful of these masks frames an epistemological figure which implies knowledge. Today, education serves as the garden in which the seeds of the neo-colonial process are sowed in the minds of girls and boys, thereby assuring future Western domination and exclusion of marginalized nations.

Scientific knowledge is an epistemological tool, or weapon, used to develop, dominate, and shape minds. What has been the global impact of scientific knowledge on the different expressions of cultural knowledge? This chapter examines what I characterize as a massive erosion of cultural knowledges resulting from the quasi-military global effect of scientific knowledge. The metaphor of erosion symbolizes the neo-colonialism drama being played out to this day. The most important question is, is it possible to transform and reverse the impact of scientific knowledge into a framework that contributes to anti-colonial thought, and what are the suitable ways to develop a new politics of engagement and resistance toward scientific knowledge?

SCIENCE AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Western modern science reflects the empiricism formulated by Francis Bacon (1561–1626), as well as the positivism conceptualized by Auguste Comte (1798–1857), and the neo-positivism proposed by the School of Vienna early in the twentieth century. Each of these epistemological perspectives contributed to the building of science. Empiricism stressed the reality and foundation of the experimental process, which underpins the scaffolding of theoretical knowledge. With Comte, positivism placed facts at its centre, invalidating the quest for primary causal relations, final causes and significant meaning. Later, neo-positivism required that any assumption must ensue logically from facts.

THÉSÉE

The most important feature in science is seen to be the development of a scientific mind. According to Bachelard (1989, p. 17), the scientific mind can only emerge after the non-scientific mind is destroyed. This necessary conversion faces some important epistemological barriers, namely that the non-scientific mind must learn to reconcile the historic development of knowledge construction and the process of science learning. The author underscores that these epistemological barriers cause stagnation, regression, and inertia, which serve to diminish and contort the mind.

The scientific mind, or rational mind, acts essentially to put reality in order (to approach The Truth) by using the rational process, which is intended to be operational. The scientific mind avoids the study of any phenomenon which is not clearly formulated, questioned, problematized, operationalized and/or understandable. Strict steps governed by precise rules which guarantee the validity of the entire scientific process are, therefore, required. At the beginning is the conceptual construction of scientific facts. A scientific fact is not simply a piece of information; it has been constructed according to very strict requirements. For instance, to be considered legitimate as scientific facts, the various factors of a situation being studied must show that they are observable, regular, repeatable, measurable, predictable and controllable. To validate these characteristics, the scientific mind seeks only efficient operations suitable to the mathematical equations used in the effort to liberate mind from reality (Ullmo, 1969, p. 25).

This methodology-based epistemology leads, ultimately, to a reference knowledge, designated as Science, and characterized by the four fundamental, rigorous characteristics needed for any quest: objectivity, neutrality, verity and universality. Those science criteria are couched in the process of denial: denial of socio-construction of science for objectivity; denial of ideology and values for neutrality; denial of historical development of theories for verity; and denial of the other knowledges for universality. Hiding behind these four labels are, in a certain sense, four myths according to different theories which emerged during the later half of the twentieth century.

From the rationalist posture defended by Popper and Lakatos, to the anarchist posture of Feyrerabend, traversing the relativist posture adopted by Kuhn, science is presented in a broad spectrum of fundamental aims, basic principles and specific methodologies (Chalmers, 1987). Each of these visions presents a certain aspect of science constituted either as a systematized domain of knowledge, as a community of scientists maintaining and developing this domain, or as a socio-economic enterprise aiming to apply scientific knowledge, regardless of the impact or implications. The rationalist vision, which largely disseminated a cult of science, particularly in science education, presents science as something of value and cognitively superior because it is de-contextualized, neutral, asocial, a-historical and universal. The relativist vision emphasizes the social dimension of scientific activity. According to the anarchist vision, science is a dogma constructed carefully in the “developed world” during the last three centuries to displace and replace other dogma. Like a religion, science possesses its priests, authoritarian discourse, hermetic language, cult, communities, rules, and myths.
Religion, in this context, relates to the institutional, socio-economic, political and epistemological dimensions and, above all, the processes of exclusion and hegemony. Knowledge or faith? To learn or to believe? To be saved in this world with material life or to be saved in the other world with the eternal life? To go to school or to go to church? To seek knowledge or to seek God? The materialism of science took charge of the material life, and the idealism of religion took charge of the spiritual life, both being useful for the colonizer.

If knowledge is a systematized structure constituted of conceptual tools, consensual principles, codified rules, proven laws and theories, standardized discourse, and tested methodologies, then Western science is also knowledge since it has been systematized in the same manner. The knowledge provided by science can be extracted, as a fixed content, and employed in a mechanical, instrumental manner (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 2002). According to this western epistemology, only western science can claim to have valuable knowledge, owing to its on-going standardization, its proliferation of information-to-know, and its rigorous methodological concerns.

Indigenous epistemologies bring alternative perspectives to define knowledge. Indigenous epistemologies are concerned with the sociopolitical, economic and historical context through which knowledge is constructed, validated, theorized and applied (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, 2002). Knowledge, in this view, is anchored in a particular cultural group, and results from their ways of thinking, creating, behaving, formulating or communicating. It is a relation that involves people, not only experts, in a continuous process of re-creating, re-structuring, re-theorizing and expanding that knowledge.

Scientific knowledge, namely Western modern knowledge, relies heavily on the methodological dimension of inquiry. Durkheim, at the end of the nineteenth century, worked on some specificities for what became “social sciences”, and developed the basis for interpretative inquiry, hermeneutic in its basic principles, ethnographic in its approaches, and mostly qualitative in its methodological processes. Relying now on a specific set of scientific criteria (modified objectivity, internal validity and fidelity), disciplines such as sociology, psychology and, also, education, can claim to be scientific knowledge.

However, this development leads to numerous questions: What is the final purpose of the process? Who is it supposed to help, and how? Who identifies and defines the social problem? What do they think about the research process? What will be the impact on the participants and communities involved? Who writes the research, and who will take advantage of it? These questions are answered, ultimately, somehow accessorily, through what is called the ethical protocol. Ethical concerns are often later incorporated to improve the methodological process, but not at the beginning, to inform the research made by an ethical researcher. In this way, scientific knowledge is produced by methodologists seeking an interesting research subject rather than by agents of social transformation adopting appropriate methodologies.
Scientific arrogance is not only a result or side-effect of the ways that science has been used, but is also constitutive of the fundamental elements of its elaboration. Science has been developed to drive the European man to dominate nature. Many argue that the regrettable effects of science are due to its misuses by despotical politicians, cupid merchants or blinded corporations. Although this statement cannot be denied, it does not explain the whole picture of the hegemony of science for the last three centuries through the colonial and post-colonial enterprise. European sciences, embedded with technology and forming the techno-sciences, especially in light of their militaristic spin-offs, have been, and still are today, anchored into the colonial enterprise in multiple ways. Modern colonization has brought the South and European techno-sciences inextricable together. Science and technology form the core of success for European expansion and colonization around the globe (Osborn, 1999).

The exportation of techno-sciences from Europe started during the sixteenth century. Underpinning this expansion, Europe brought to the world its geography, its astronomy, its anthropology, its militaristic ambition, and its thirst to excavate natural resources abroad. The philosophy of Enlightenment allied to the idea of a universal humanity, provided a powerful justification for the broad diffusion of European cultural and scientific ideals. United militaristic and scientific forces ultimately became entwined in the European pursuit of imperialist goals, which swept through the developing world throughout the nineteenth century.

According to the anthropologist Arthur Bordier, the conceptualization of French colonial politics is based on the determinism of science (Osborn, 1999). Science offered a rational model for the development of a productive colonial system. The techno-sciences cannot be separated from the colonial system, where they created not only tools of exploration, penetration, domination and economic development, but also the scaffolding of militaristic and cultural superiority. They are an indispensable part of an intricate network of power which led to the domination of conquered nations, as well as the massive exploitation of these conquered lands. The introduction of science-based weapons and devices caused the defeat of indigenous elites and the traditional knowledge so cherished by indigenous peoples.

The railway, the postal service and the electric telegraph are seen as great motors of social progress in the colonial process. The colonial railway has been presented as the demarcation-line between pre-modernity and modernity, archaic and civilized worlds, and settled and nomadic peoples. However, since the eighteenth century, the Royal Academy of Sciences has been part of the machinery enlisted to support colonial efforts and interests (McLellan, 1999). Astronomy and cartography became united to furnish theoretical and practical knowledge relative to navigation, chronometry, meteorological observations, storm and eclipse predictions, longitudinal analyses, and the construction of ports for shipping. On a regular basis, the Academy organized and subsidized expeditions, as well as published the reports drafted by the explorers, adventurers and researchers who
participated in these expeditions. One of the formidable challenges for navigation was measuring longitude at sea, which was remedied by the Frenchman Ferdinand Berthoud, who constructed in 1760 a compass, an indispensable tool for navigators and a precursor to today’s precise chronometers.

One of the most important domains of interest in the French colonies was the study of botany and, more broadly, natural history, an ancestor of biology. In the seventeenth century, religious missionaries had been officially mandated to study Caribbean flora, and produced many encyclopedias outlining the knowledge they constructed/acquired. During the next century, many botanical gardens were created for practical reasons, a process which allowed medical and botanical domains to work together. The goal was to use the taxonomy developed in this area for the introduction of other plants, thereby promoting new economic interests for the colonies. For example, the coffee tree, the vanilla plant, the pepper plant, the clove tree, the cinnamon tree, the nutmeg tree, the mango tree, and the mangrove tree, and others, were transported from the Indian ocean to the Caribbean sea, and were highly coveted during the journey by enemy ships (McLellan, 1999). This represents the birth of the globalization of food production.

In the nineteenth century, science, namely biology and anthropology, was used to classify the different civilizations on a hierarchical scale. Racist judgments were no longer based on the creationist considerations of monogenesis or polygenesis (Petit-Jean, 1999). This racism has, since then, been supported by an authoritative discourse and an misguided interpretation of Darwin’s theory of evolution.

During this century, learned (scientific) societies (sociétés savantes in French) are increasingly involved in the control of the planet. According to Petit-Jean (1999), Europe controlled 35% of all lands in 1800, 67% in 1878, and 84% in 1914. Scientists became some of most important figures of the colonization-period, in addition to the military officer and the physician. Scientific arguments were constructed which supported the inequality of races, as well as legitimizing the legitimation of the domination of the supposedly inferior races (Coupin, 1905; Raichvarg, 1992). Biological theories, such as those pertaining to the anatomy of the brain, contributed to a great extent to the development of elaborate human scales. Scientific institutions, thus, played a key role by controlling networks of anatomists, naturalists, geologists, mineralogists, astronomers and physicians. Those multidisciplinary networks of scientists constitute an exclusive academy of letters in which news, instructions, plans, reports, publications and knowledge are shared to improve the logistics of the whole enterprise of colonization.

From 1800 on, science became involved, more directly, in militaristic expeditions, particularly in Egypt. Based on the first principle that colonization is the most effective way to explore and control territories, and on the second principle that science serves to emancipate “uncivilized” people from ignorance and absolutism, many scientific-militaristic projects were organized. While the militaristic branch assured the security of the project, and collected (or pilfered) precious arts and antiques of the dominated civilizations for European museums, the scientific
branch used science knowledge not only to support European concerns, but also to directly exploit the colonies. One major issue in this context was the acclimatization of plants, animals and humans. Scientific societies within the colonies started to organize large conferences to teach and explain to the explorers and military officers the resources discovered. Through these activities, scientific societies became the main educational network for the sciences. At a broader level, their publications contributed to the dissemination of science among the general public, thus influencing political debate.

SCIENCE IN THE NEO-COLONIAL ENTERPRISE

New but still powerful forms of colonization are playing out across the world since the vast movement toward independence in the 1960s was initiated. Science is now embedded in economic interests, thereby serving its inextinguishable appetite for more profits. Therefore, the unbalanced power relationship between Northern and Southern nations is reinforced through the militaristic, industrial, pharmaceutical and agro-cultural domains. Despite the fact that some countries in the South, like Brazil, Argentina, India and Indonesia, have recently become engaged in the scientific-techno-industrial revolution, these ex-colonized territories have generally accepted the scientific tradition as it was imposed from outside, and have generally lost the opportunity to develop their own indigenous traditions. As a result, there is a problem in that there is no relevance being attached to the research (Bouguerra, 1993).

Deployed in the South, science appears fully ambiguous and paradoxical. Most of the successful techno-sciences in the North have been used in the South against local peoples, and have reinforced the oppression they face. Science in the South has often constrained, threatened or imperiled peoples and nations. The same colonization process with new forms – more subtle, more insidious, and more powerful – takes place in the South. Taking into account the value of science and technology, several issues must be underlined: genetic pillage; the biotechnology threat; the South as the North’s guinea-pig; militaristic entomology; pharmaceutical colonialism; environmental destruction; and colonization of the mind.

Neo-Colonialism through Genetic Pillage

Genetic pillage concerns the inestimable richness of the biodiversity of the South. This apparently unlimited source of seeds constitutes a laboratory which multinationals from the North can freely and endlessly exploit and transform. They then sell genetic material at high costs to the same countries in the South. As the genetic uniformity of the monocultures in the North increases their vulnerability, fresh genes have to be brought into the cycle, over and over, negatively affecting biodiversity in the South. The economic return for those multinationals is calculated in the billions of dollars of profit every year. Importantly, they entrench their intellectual property “rights” for the genetically improved material with patents
and licenses. Selling improved seeds back to the South leads to the dislocation of some of the local varieties, thus impacting on the local population. This effect is called genetic erosion.

*Neo-Colonialism via Biotechnological Threat*

After atomic energy and telecommunications, biotechnology is presented as the third major revolution in the contemporary history of humanity. However, unlike an atomic explosion which can be seen and heard, the liberation of micro-organisms is invisible and inaudible; and, significantly, the living material reproduces itself. This invisibility and reproducibility constitutes the threat of an unimaginable ecological holocaust. Jacques Testart (1997) is correct to question the forces supporting technology, which are mainly economic in orientation, and which are focused on increasing profits at the expense of the dominated.

*Neo-Colonialism: The South as the North’s Guinea-Pig*

Is it possible for a country to undertake experiments in a foreign country which are forbidden or impossible for it to do within its own territory, especially when opposed by many of its own citizens? Despite the Helsinki Convention relative to experiments on human beings, peoples of the South have always been subjected to chemical experiments controlled by, and from, the North. Classic examples of this can be found in Puerto-Rico, Haiti, Mexico, Chile, Columbia and Thailand (Bouguerra, 1993).

*Neo-Colonialism through Militaristic Scientific Research*

In the goal, supposedly, of understanding how the mechanisms of infectious tropical diseases can affect troops, the militaristic domain pursues scientific research on toxins and parasites. The 1972 Convention on Biological Weapons made their utilization illegal but it did not forbid their production for dissuasive goals. The problem now is that the production-process rate has been considerably simplified and accelerated by genetic engineering.

*Neo-Colonialism through the Pharmaceutical Industry*

Without underestimating the complicit cooperation of various governments, one could consider the movement of some drugs toward the South as a wave of toxic waste. In response to this observation, a representative of the Swiss company Hoffman Laroche in Africa commented: “*The pharmaceuticals companies do not exist for the human good; they exist to make profits. If, by chance, they contribute to the well-being of sick people, it is a bonus which they will use for advertising capital and public relations*” (translated from French quotation by Bouguerra, 1993). Other questionable practices have been mentioned and criticized by countries in the South, notably Columbia: over-invoicing, improper fiscal shelters, false financial losses, unfair competition, and false advertising. Taking into account the African climate, some families of drugs are particularly in demand by
these populations, including antibiotics, anti-diarrheics, anti-paludism, vaccinations and anabolic steroids, the latter to stimulate appetite and decrease fatigue. Despite a weak economic situation, countries in Africa, with their particular public health situations, represent a tremendous market for pharmaceutical firms. If one adds lax regulations and controls, especially concerning insulin and anti-paludism, the pharmaceutical industry has a green light to do whatever serves its immediate interests.

Neo-Colonialism through Environmental Destruction

Very few people dare to deny the green-house effect and other environmental impairments, such as the ozone layer, smog, acid rain, water contamination from metal ions, erosion, and their inevitable consequences on climate change, water, agriculture, and health. Who are victims of these effects, and who is responsible? Environmental destruction is difficult to predict, evaluate, and link to specific causes, especially for countries in the South. In Haiti, the onslaught of Hurricane Jane in 2004 devastated the area around the city of Gonaives, but compounding the damage was the almost complete lack of foliage due to trees being cut down for fuel, without consideration for replenishment of the forest. The American multinationals responsible for the exploitation of bauxite, and for re-arranging geographic patterns to accommodate their commercial routes are also responsible. Does humanitarian aid for natural disasters come as an after-thought, or is there preventative planning to protect people, as is the case in the North?

Neo-Colonialism through Enslavement of the Mind

Science often neglects concerns abut meaning, and focuses on the technocratic sphere of material and methodological concerns. Not only does it avoid meaning as a scientific purpose but it invalidates the quest for meaning as unworthy of an intelligent (scientific) mind. One has choices: submit oneself to the laws of the scientific mind, escape completely into an isolated sphere, or work at odds against perceived logic and the intelligent way. Whatever the choice, through science, the mind is colonized, enclosed in the scientific frame. Science is more efficient than even physical violence in perpetuating domination over peoples and nations. As Nandy (1998) has put it, this psychological effect of colonization makes one become the intimate enemy to oneself. The colonized mind seems to secrete epistemological anti-bodies that fight against its own cultural traits, and then destroys them. The most important step ensuring the success of the colonial enterprise is to work on the mind (Nandy, 1998; Shiva, 1998).

SCIENCE AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Western science and technology find their full deployment in industrialization, starting in the nineteenth century. Science, technology and industrialization mesh together into a triad concerning the conceptualization of laws and theories underpinning the conception of mechanical and electronic devices, as well as the
massive production and diffusion of these devices. The industrial domain does not limit itself uniquely to the application of technological protocols. It also supports a set of political, economic, social and organizational components. For instance, today’s prevailing organizational structure is based generally on the nineteenth century industrial model (schedule of work, compartmentalization of tasks, and division of knowledge). Despite many conflicts and crises, the long and tight incubation of science with technology and industrialization, within the context of European traditional cultures, led to what can be qualified as a new European culture. With an economic impetus, the capitalist model assured complete hegemony. The logic of this new culture lies in the principle of expansion: knowledge, territories, material resources, human resources, production methods, openings markets, and above all, profits. Not only has the content of cultures been modified, but cultures have also been shattered to their deepest foundations.

Colonization, through the model of Western science, led to a vast invalidation of diverse indigenous knowledges. After religious subjugation and military deployment by the West, Western knowledge production and application was a second phase, more subtle and sophisticated, used to maintain the system of domination. Arguments used to frame the campaign worked at several levels, including philosophical, epistemological, methodological, and cognitive. These were necessary in order to legitimate and justify the political and socioeconomic domination over peoples and nations in the name of colonization. Western culture gained power and identity by creating knowledge about the nations Europeans had colonized. As no production of knowledge can ever ignore or disclaim its author’s involvement, it is clear that knowledge produced by Europeans about subordinated people is shaped within the configurations of power and domination between the former and the latter (Said, 1979).

As stated above, philosophical denial of the existence of indigenous knowledge has taken place. For example, after erasing the existence of African philosophy, which, according to Hegel, was the unique prerogative of Ancient Greeks, Hegel presents Africa as a different geographical space but without time, a-historical, surviving anachronistically, outside of the history of the world (Willinsky, 1998). Where there is no time and history, there is no memory; there is a vacuum, a tabula rasa where a new corpus of knowledge about the other can take place. As a consequence, a tremendous body of geologists, naturalists, astronomers, ethnographers, philosophers, historians, geographers, painters and writers started the encyclopedic work of producing a coherent imperial knowledge. An example of the metaphor of erasing knowledge comes in the form of the movie character of the invincible white man Tarzan, who faces nature in the African jungle and triumphs.

The epistemological posture which facilitated material progress in the West has gained its superior status in developing countries by suppressing the traditional epistemology of the indigenous cultures. Western knowledge, based on the scientific model, became the standard knowledge, and its process was considered the standard way for achieving knowledge. In this way, the neo-colonial enterprise created a state of mind that was nurtured and maintained by indigenous people.
themselves over other indigenous people (Nandy, 1998). The superiority of western knowledge has been internalized, both by the colonizer and the colonized. Indigenous knowledge, on the contrary, has been classified as a folklore of rituals, beliefs or myths, which, according to Western epistemology, is a non-knowledge.

Indigenous people have been judged as incapable of knowing. Not only have they not created their own knowledge, but they cannot successfully master and construct for themselves Western knowledge. The invalidation of indigenous knowledge goes deeper by relying on genetic theory. The sadly unforgettable Bell curve (Herrnstein and Murray, 1994), after the resurrection of the highly discredited pseudo-science of eugenics, reminds us that more than a century and half ago the Darwinian theory of evolution led to a strong link between intelligence and race, and that in the racialized world inferiority just happens to be associated with being poor and black (Dei, 1996). The conceptual mixture of intelligence, race, knowledge, cognitive ability and social consequences served up by Herrnstein and Murray has been denounced by many scholars (Berger, 1994; Dorfman, 1995). Some have nuanced their assumptions without questioning their motives. Owing to the pervasive effects of social-Darwinism on psychological researchers and the use of intellectual quotient (IQ) tests by the school psychologists, the question remains whether or not the Black-White IQ gap is based on genetics or social context.

Starting in the 1960s, the absolute glorification of Western knowledge achieved a climax in the international arena (Aillot, 1999). During this period, scientists in the South started to pay attention to popular practices. A solid corpus of indigenous knowledge has been constructed, including a deep understanding of natural phenomena, and a logic well adapted to the specific local context. Essential differences between scientific knowledge and cultural knowledge emerge, including at the level of principles and values: in other words, the vision of what is rational, what is better, what is desirable, and what is not the same.

Indigenous knowledge is significant because it is contextual, vocational and solution-oriented. It demonstrates the ability to: (a) bring solutions to problems identified by the people who face them; (b) take into account the environmental specificities and the socio-economical context; (c) produce an understanding of contemporary challenges; and (d) limit, as much as possible, predictable negative side-effects (Aillot, 1999). Even if this definition is close to that of sustainable development, it does not necessarily pursue the same goals. The aim of sustainable development is to continue to exploit nature in a quantitative way by trying to minimize as much as possible the inevitable side-effects. The challenge is to re-value indigenous knowledges without avoiding the duty to enlighten, describe, analyze, synthesize and generalize, according to the requisite patterns of transmission and diffusion. This duty does not exempt indigenous knowledges from being critical, or from being critiqued.

The contact between the science-technology-industrialization triad and vernacular cultures, whatever the domain, often takes place in forced asymmetric interactions. The immediate effects are abrasive, and enduring, provoking a process of leaching of cultures, including deforestation, uprooting, disastrous
water run-off, and prolonged periods of dryness. In the long term, the essential
elements, such as the nutritive soil and the humus of the cultures, have been
flushed out. This is the framework of erosion. In neo-colonized countries, the
primary culture is still organized to fall in line with the powerful colonial values,
needs, interests, representations and behaviors. Language, religion, education,
production, consumption, life style, and aesthetics are all involved. The serious
tensions introduced in these societies through the imposition of colonial culture
have generally shattered the vernacular cultures; in particular, those societies have
suffered through deportation, slavery, colonization and anti-Black racism. Special
consideration, therefore, must be exercised in understanding and contextualiz-
ing presenting realities. For these populations, cultural erosion also means the
removal of identity.

Conquered, and then disintegrated in the colonial empire, indigenous cultures
have suffered from the ideological discourses, all of them legitimating the su-
periority of Western colonial culture. The religious discourse invalidated the gods,
and enslaved the soul. The aesthetic discourse invalidated the phenotypes, and
enslaved the body. The social discourse invalidated the rituals, and enslaved the
behavior. The educational discourse invalidated indigenous knowledges, and en-
slaved the mind. Then came the meta-discourse, the scientific discourse, which
furnishes all of them with the epistemological tools to rationalize their discourse.

The ethical domain presents itself when the scientific discourse affects the
cultural sensibility. Ethics plays a major role in the value system of a culture;
it offers norms and criteria for action, models of behaviour, and principles for
motivation. However, despite the fact that science generates some of the most con-
troversial issues for societies, ethical concerns are generally rejected by scientists.
The requirement for an ethic in science and by scientists is paradoxical: scientists
are asked to think about the ethical problems they stir up when their pragmatic
logic (defined by usefulness, immediateness and profits) does not acknowledge
the pertinence of the ethical questioning.

IMPACT OF CULTURAL EROSION IN SCIENCE EDUCATION

Willinsky (1998) postulates that the educational project of neocolonialism in
Western countries is only beginning, and, that given its enormity, it seems to
be able to live on, as an unconscious aspect of education. It may take many
generations to appreciate the depth of a body of knowledge transported through
five centuries, characterized by information-gathering, studying, classifying and
ordering the world within an imperial context. As imperialist Occidental soci-
eties are being shaped increasingly by science and technology, science education
represents an important domain for all stakeholders: decision-makers, employers,
researchers, teachers, parents, and especially the students themselves.

The elitist nature of scientific training has always placed emphasis on the
specialized theoretical content of disciplined programs, rather than the learning
process or the social construction of scientific knowledge. Later, the desire to
assure a basic scientific education for all led to altered program content, and a greater priority was placed on the cognitive process involved in science learning. Emerging from constructivism and socio-constructivism psychological trends, science teaching was born with an increasing preoccupation on understanding how students construct their scientific knowledge, and which conditions can best improve science learning (Giordan and de Vecchi, 1987; Robardet and Guillot, 1997). The aim of science education, during the ten to twelve years of elementary and secondary schooling, therefore, is designed to shape the scientific mind in every student, no matter what their deep cultural concerns might be.

The exact reproduction of world dynamics comprised by the North-Colonizer and South-Colonized dynamic takes place, at the school level, between respective groups of students. At school, the North-South cleavage is expressed in terms of the underachievement in science. At the higher levels, the cleavage is expressed in the under-representation (exclusion) of some groups of students in science. In the United States, where most of the research has been conducted on this issue, excluded groups are composed largely of African Americans, First Nations and Latin Americans (Catsambis, 1995; Muller et al., 2001; Murry and Mosidi, 1993; Oakes, 1990; Solorzano, 1995).

In the popular imagery, black students are associated with interest and success in sports, music and dance, but not with science. They themselves indicate that science is something for white people (These, 2003). Some research reveals, on the contrary, that they have high-level aspirations to pursue their studies in science, but very few of them follow through. Although constituting 15% of the population, African Americans represent only 2% of graduate students in science and engineering (Oakes, 1990). Despite the significant increase in the representation of women in science (another group traditionally excluded from science) in the last decade, there is no such improvement for the African American community. In general, early in school life, they manifest severe underachievement in mathematics and science, and comparative data show that they achieve lower levels than European and Asian-American students of the same socio-economic status (Hill and Pettus, 1990; Muller et al., 2001). Interestingly, the ones who succeed and pursue their studies in science at the doctoral level come primarily from the Traditionally Black Institutions (TBI), which offer undergraduate degrees to black students only (Solorzano, 1995).

In Montreal, where the Haitian community totals roughly 150,000 (Torczyner and Springer, 2001), the situation is not very different. The academic route of Haitian youth is also considered fragile. In elementary schools, they are over-represented in special classes that constitute a dead-end for advanced studies, especially in science and mathematics. In Junior high school, they show weak achievement, notably in the same area. In the latter stages of high school, they are relatively absent from advanced courses in physics and chemistry, which are gateway courses for college-level programs in science-related fields. Whatever their relation to science and mathematics might be, the result is streaming or filtering of lively, capable minds into areas the effect of which will be felt throughout their lives at social, economic, and professional levels, via the academic segregation
that takes place in adolescence. At college level, the underachievement in mathematics and science continues. Among those who are admitted to university level science programs, few of them pursue their studies beyond the undergraduate level (Thésée, 2003).

Given the cultural, and mainly phenotypic, heterogeneity of schools in occidental cities, great attention is paid to the educational process within intercultural contexts. At the beginning, the colonial attitude aimed to keep colonized people away from the general education stream, arguing that it was not applicable for them: the half-civilized (Gustave Lebon, 1889, quoted by Gadjigo, 1990, p. 12). Then, the assimilationist attitude aimed to eradicate in children behaviours representative of the vernacular cultures, judged unacceptable by the colonial culture, in order to engage them in the civilized Western culture through the education process. Additionally, although it relies on different ideological foundations, there is Cartesian rationalism, which shapes a Man, postulating that education must go forward, without any consideration for contingent factors such as cultural belonging (Camilleri, 1985). That infers taking into account the cultural dimension in education, and focusing on the normative European worldview. Acculturation is one of the concepts elaborated to analyze the situation of a dominated cultural group evolving under the influence of a dominant cultural group (Segall et al., 1999).

However, the domain of intercultural education has neglected the central point that people from neo-colonized countries have been subjected to centuries of systematic racism in the extremely unequal colonizer-colonized relationship. The fact of anti-black racism illustrates this dilemma (Dei et al., 2004). In education, there has been a parallel pathologization of vernacular cultures that manifested in the following expressions: “intercultural problem”, “cultural deficiency”, “cultural handicap” and “cultural inadequacy”. The significance of this terminology is not innocent, and the repercussions are far-reaching, as evidenced by teachers and those in authority who view the “other” as somehow deficient and inferior.

CONCLUSION: A FOUR-TREND RESISTANCE MODEL TO COLONIAL THOUGHT

The main contribution of this chapter toward the development of a critical anti-colonial thought framework lies in the socio-epistemological work proposed herein. It brings science, and scientific knowledge together as targets to be carefully scrutinized when addressing concerns of pervasive colonial mechanisms, effects and impacts on indigenous cultures. The metaphor of erosion offers a conceptual framework for the description, analysis and understanding of these impacts.

If it were only a question of interest, taste or preference, the issue of scientific knowledge would be of paramount importance. The reality that science is a critical pre-requisite in education, especially in order to enter and advance at the post-secondary level, makes it a necessary domain of concentration. Being excluded from this field of knowledge early on leads to a life of exclusion for many students.
from the mainstream of studies, employment and life opportunities. The embedding of technology into science teaching, coupled with the technocratic paradigm which guides education, highlights the urgent need for a critical approach, one less contaminated by the methodological perspective of the ongoing positivist paradigm. Additionally, the need for an anti-racist science teaching becomes more salient (Gill and Levidow, 1987).

The resistance against the long-term and systemic colonial enterprise is undoubtedly complex and uncomfortable. In this process, there is no safe place to stand. Every intervention, no matter how it is expressed in attitudes, words or actions, is a controversial political stand against an institution, taken implicitly and/or explicitly. Certainly, many trends must be developed in parallel: the political, the legal, and the social. Scholars can assist in the struggle against neo-colonialism and the resulting new figures of racism, through intellectual strategies. They are involved in the work of questioning the knowledge which sustains domination and exclusion. To engage in anti-colonial thought is to engage in knowledge production, interrogation and the use and the relationship of social power (Dei, 1996). For example, Dei (1996) and Dei et al.’s (2004) work in anti-racism education, as well as Shiva (1998) in feminist knowledge; Said (1979) and Thaman (2003) exemplify the increasing attention paid to indigenous knowledge by minority scholars.

Critical theory proposes an approach to social realities with the aim of encouraging liberation from diverse types of alienation and emancipation of peoples and groups. This requires stimulating critical reflection about discourses and social practices, and also shedding light on contradictions, paradoxes and power relations involved in the hidden structure that sustains domination and inequities (Sauve, 1997). As a fundamental value, critical theory is based on the development of critical consciousness and empowerment within one’s social context. The key considerations for the scientific researcher are, therefore, to: (1) scrutinize social realities in order to expose and flesh out the imbalanced power dynamics; (2) denounce systematic references to instrumental rationality relying on pervasive positivistic perceptions of science; (3) question expressions of liberal humanism, which can anesthetize minds; and (4) revalorize subjective and affective realities in order to facilitate people re-appropriating their voices and their knowledge. Our purpose is to engage in anti-colonial thought through what can be called a critical socio-epistemology, which leads to analysis of the social realities we are concerned with: the neo-colonial dynamics that invalidate cultural knowledges and dominate peoples and minds through the pervasive mechanisms of a positivist science.

The following model presents a set of four strategies: Refuse, Re-question, Re-define and Re-affirm.

Refuse: Globally, this strategy is used to address the different discourses which are infused into the mind continuously in everyday life. These discourses present strong symbolic, implicit and explicit content. The symbolic content includes images, styles, attitudes or relations which fill the ordinary social environment with, for example, media and artistic productions. The implicit content includes
entities such as representations, beliefs, stereotypes, and all statements taken for granted without having been questioned. That is the case, for example, when knowledge is represented as being exclusive to European White males (Shiva, 1998). The explicit content includes the rules, laws, methodologies, data, and analysis constructed upon a rational perspective supposedly acknowledged and accepted by all. This includes natural science and other knowledge claiming to be scientific representation of a kind of authoritarian discourse which muts other types of knowledge. The efficiency of the discourses is centered on their ability to impregnate the mind without shattering it, so the more subtle and insidious they are the deeper the impact. Given its transmission-function, the school is the main site of propagation for these discourses. In that sense, the feminist perspective of science teaching as activism would be a place where equity meets with an inclusive science concerned with global environmentalism (Tripp and Muzzin, forthcoming).

Re-questioning: This strategy relates to new forms of questions to address issues of scientific knowledge. Re-questioning is similar to a de-construction; the de-construction of the technocratic world, which asks mostly “how much?”; seeking the measurable goals in various situations. Placing emphasis on “What for?” addresses concerns about finalities and meanings. The goals pursued by scientific knowledge activities often affect deep values about life and living. For example, to re-introduce the finalities questions, in science education, is one way to transform it in a more socially appropriate way, which makes people feel more involved in what they learn. In this case, in accord with Sauve (1997), re-questioning even the aims of education must be a point on the resistance agenda. Transforming the questioning makes the educational researcher become, first, a social-transformation agent seeking appropriate methodologies, rather than a methodologist seeking a social research subject, as can be seen in the university formation in research that emphasizes the methodological dimension (Smith, 1999). Emphasis on “What is suitable?” establishes a real and equitable priority list, which is not based on luxury needs and inherent profits, but based instead on the problems faced by people and nations. Re-questioning the “How?”, therefore, shatters the certainty and rigidity of methodologies by daring to structure procedures differently.

Redefine: The responsibility to redefine or to re-write knowledge is crucial. There must be a re-definition of knowledge in all its dimensions, that which is social in nature: formal traits, aesthetics, choices, ethical values, and collective rituals. The formal traits of knowledge include concepts, basic principles, rules, laws and theories which have been formalized through periods of inter-subjectivity and broad consensus. Redefining aesthetics supposes a change of perspective which allows for the appropriation of an analysis toward oneself by oneself, rather than to see oneself through another’s eyes. Redefining ethics is necessary in order to re-shape values by also taking into account ancestral mores which are usually depreciated by progress-oriented scientific knowledge. Another dimension of re-defining knowledge relates to the inquiry into meaning discussed above. If the quest for meaning is, at least partially, answered by religion, which etymologically
aims to join people (from the Latin *religare*), then collective rituals must also be re-defined. As scientific knowledge, religion has to be critically questioned and re-defined in order to uproot the pervasive colonial representations and the continuous alienation of the mind which results from those representations.

*Reaffirm*: To reaffirm the self is necessary in order to deviate from the pervasive Eurocentric view of others that one is inferior (Wane, 2002). Going further in the resistance process is supposed to affirm the collective self supported by all actors at all levels (societal, community, family and individuals of all ages).

New strategies of self-affirmation must be considered, including those in the realm of pedagogy. Solar (1998) proposes an emancipatory pedagogy, which claims to rupture four characteristics inherent in the process of domination: (1) silence; (2) omission; (3) passivity; and (4) disenfranchisement. She proposes to replace them by inserting transformative actions, such as: (1) giving voice to the word; (2) working on memory; (3) participating actively; and (4) feeling the empowerment.

Considering the intricate working of colonial phenomena and the broad spectrum of damage inflicted, one can state that the diverse problems we face today are not escapable. Whether or not they are acknowledged as such, the ongoing problems faced by colonized peoples and nations constitute the syndrome of a post-traumatic effect (Dei et al., 2004). As Dei et al. (2004) have postulated, if complete healing is not possible in the near future, as our identities are situated in the scarred experience of post-colonialism and racism, what hope can accompany our reflections and interventions? The acknowledgement of a post-traumatic effect for survivors of wars has introduced, in psychology, the concept of resilience, which is imported from metal physics field. It is linked to resistance and flexibility. In psychology, resilience designates the capacity for a person to recover well, without serious after-effects, after experiencing trauma. The most important factor associated with the resilience of the persons in post-traumatic syndrome, as well as in school, is the positive support offered by a nurturing social environment which can buffer the trauma (Cyruhnik, 1999; O’Connor, 2002). Despite the impregnation of colonization through scientific knowledge, and despite the erosion of vernacular cultures (re)generated by people and nations, the hope for a meaningful resistance and resiliency is situated within the framework of understanding, meaning and empowering, which can be only achieved within a strong and supportive communitarian-based experience, and a strong racial socialization and identity.

**REFERENCES**


PHILIP S.S. HOWARD

2. ON SILENCE AND DOMINANT ACCOUNTABILITY:  
A CRITICAL ANTICOLONIAL INVESTIGATION  
OF THE ANTI RacISM CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine the pedagogical and knowledge-producing processes that occur in the mixed-race antiracism classroom. My site of interest, here, is not simply the classroom that attempts to be racially equitable, but instead, one that takes up antiracism as its primary object of inquiry, thereby intending to challenge racism, and one in which the participants are differently privileged with respect to dominant societal racialization practices. In particular, I seek to examine the way in which whiteness is, or else fails to be, interrogated and challenged both outside of and within the classroom through this site. I raise questions about the extent to which students privileged through race do, or else do not, engage with their personal implications and responsibility in the hierarchical racial reality in which they/we live, and about what this (lack of) engagement looks like when conceptualized within an anticolonial discursive framework. Consequently, I discuss the ways in which whiteness is often further entrenched even in the site of the mixed-race antiracism classroom, and suggest ways that this site can be restructured based on critical anticolonial knowledges.

There has been much written around the notion of whiteness and its relationship(s) to antiracist/critical pedagogy. Some writings concern themselves generally with what the writers understand as the possibilities and limitations among various methods of engaging and confronting whiteness (e.g., Ellsworth, 1997; McLaren, 1998). Others look particularly at the theoretical grounding of the pedagogies used in critical classrooms (e.g., Ellsworth, 1992; Ringrose, 2002). Still others are specifically concerned with seeking out appropriate pedagogies for instructing White students about whiteness in an effort to head off white guilt and/or reactionary retreats to the most bigoted expressions of whiteness (e.g. Giroux, 1997a, 1997b; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2000; McLaren, 2000; Rodriguez, 1998, 2000). These writings generally hinge on arguments around the essentialism involved with the notion of White racial solidarity and/or monolithic conceptions of whiteness, and are occupied with whether certain antiracist approaches and methods reify the whiteness construct that they seek to challenge. However, many of these writings (with some notable exceptions such as Roman, 1997) in their attempt to challenge essentialist notions, are not balanced with an adequate analysis of white privilege. As I shall discuss, a major theoretical flaw in a majority of these writings and the pedagogies they advance is a confusion of

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the concepts whiteness and White identity/ies – concepts that, here and elsewhere (Howard, 2004) I argue are distinct, though overlapping.

None of these writings adequately address the issues that concern me here, particularly since they are written with the agency of the White body as their primary concern. What I am concerned with are the colonial relations and dynamics that are potentially reproduced in these classrooms, thus impinging upon the Non-white body. I argue that the pedagogical methods suggested in some of these articles entrench whiteness by claiming to challenge it, but leaving the issues of the accountability and responsibility of the White body in White supremacist society insufficiently addressed. In trying to create a comfortable identity space for either the White body in multicultural society and/or the White antiracist body in antiracist circles, these writings are one-sided and fail to mount an adequate challenge to whiteness – that is, the system of white dominance, privilege and supremacy. I argue that underlying these shortcomings is the ineptness of postmodern and/or postcolonial theoretical stances for adequately analyzing privilege, and for articulating the agency of the Non-white body.

In this chapter, then, I use a critical anticolonial discursive framework to re-examine the site of the mixed-race antiracism classroom. While there is much overlap between postcolonial theory and the anticolonial framework as it is advanced in this volume, there are several critical disjunctures between them; and these are principal features that I build into this critique.

HOW I COME TO THIS CRITIQUE

I am a teacher in Canada who has worked in various secondary and elementary schools in Quebec and Ontario – specifically in Montreal and in the Greater Toronto Area. In these settings, there are no education professionals – teachers, administrators, support workers, etc. – who would openly claim to be racist. Indeed, I have found the opposite – that is, that most education professionals would claim to stand firmly for matters of racial and cultural equity. However, despite my years of experience, I am continually taken aback by the sometimes subtle, often blatant, but very routine manner in which many of these same individuals, in their thinking, behaviour, practice(s) and policies, habitually enact whiteness – that is, they behave in ways that marginalize and discriminate against their Non-white students and colleagues and entrench the racist status quo. Of course, much of this contradiction is made possible by the unspoken “taboos” (Schofield, 1989; see also Kailin, 1999; Lipman, 1997) around explicitly mentioning race, working in tandem with the unrestrained practice of invoking race through the “coded language of racism” (Kailin, 1999; see also Dei, 1996, 1999; McIntyre, 1997; Lipman, 1997). These strategies cloak expressions of racism with a veneer of liberal acceptability. However, I found it perplexing that, apparently, these educators – most of them identifying as White,² and some of whom had taken “diversity”, “multiculturalism” or antiracism courses in their teacher training – could not or would not see what appeared to me to be the stark contradictions between their
words and the consequences of their actions. What caused this blindness or wilful ignorance – this “dysconsciousness” (King, 1991)? What exactly in the identity formation of racially dominant subjects enabled this phenomenon?

This ongoing experience has, in large part, fuelled my involvement in community initiatives that support students of colour, as well as my interest in formally studying racism and racialization processes. I came to the academy seeking a space where the everyday Canadian realities of racialization and racism, white dominance and White supremacy could be named openly, understood, and challenged in the midst of the Euro-American context that handles these issues with silence and denial. Data gathered during my Master’s research strongly suggested that those White teachers whose actions seemed to contradict their claims to racial egalitarianism were also those who acknowledged the existence of white racism, while distancing themselves from it (Howard, 2002, p. 51). White racism, for them, was always perpetrated by someone else, somewhere else, or at some other time. Thus, it seemed clear to me that a large part of challenging white racism would entail exposing everyday enactments of whiteness, coming to understand the formation of racially dominant subjectivity, and laying bare the implication of the White body in White supremacy at both the macro and micro levels.

It was with much consternation, then, that in a number of instances within the critical academy, I found classes and forums with an express antiracist raison d’être that, in their pedagogical approaches, failed to challenge this denial and distancing. Unlike in the school system, I found that there was critical talk about whiteness; however, very much like in the school system, I found individuals structurally positioned as White speaking about whiteness as something happening in a nebulous “out there”. They seemed to make no connections to themselves and to draw no implications about how they might construct oppositional White identities. Further, little, if anything, in the way these spaces were structured or in their guidelines for engagement challenged this phenomenon. This is in marked contrast to the important, but often hyper-critical demand upon minoritized bodies in the academy to justify their resistance discourses and examine the implications of their/our locations.

In this chapter, therefore, I wish to take another look at what some scholars have disparagingly referred to as the “confessional approach” (see e.g. Bonnett, 2000a, p. 142; Bonnett, 2000b, p. 128; Ringrose, 2002, p. 310) to antiracism pedagogy. Contrary to these scholars’ assessments, I argue that this approach may be the only way to combat the colonial relations of racial dominance that can easily be reinscribed even within the very classrooms and people that claim to oppose them. This method moves in the direction of promoting in these contexts some form of reciprocity in knowledge-producing endeavours, which have usually unilaterally taken away from those positioned as racially subordinate (see Bannerji, 1991; also, hooks, 1992).
DISCURSIVE FRAMEWORK

In this section, I map out the aspects of an anticolonial discursive framework with which I will be working in this paper. In particular, I consider Albert Memmi’s formulation of “the colonizer who refuses” (1969), alongside some recent work that fleshes out the anticolonial discursive framework (Dei, this volume; Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001) and Dirlik’s (1997) critique of postcolonial theory.

Anticolonial discourse takes issue, quite pointedly, with the manner in which postcolonial theory tames the political bite of resistance discourses. Its attempt to grasp the complexity of subject positions in a vaguely defined “postcolonial” era seems to occur at the expense of the ability to articulate an unambiguous political rejection of colonial power relations. Further, the overemphasis on the discursive belies the urgency of the tragic material effects lived by the oppressed. Indeed, the “aura” (Dirlik, 1997) created by postcolonial discourse makes such definitive terms as “oppression”, “oppressor”, “discrimination”, “resistance”, “struggle”, seem passé. It is no wonder, then, that anticolonial scholars have pointed out postcolonial discourse’s domesticating effect upon the resistance discourses of the colonized (Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 307), and even its attractiveness to dominant intellectuals in “settler colonies” (Dirlik, 1997, p. 64).

While anticolonial discourse has long recognized the complexity of identities, it contests what would seem to be the attendant political paralysis and the inability of postcolonial discourse to name, track, isolate, and resist ongoing colonial relations. As such, for theoretical grounding it looks to the prematurely forsaken writings from an era when the tyranny of colonial systems and the urgent need to overthrow them were well understood. Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1969) is one such work.

As the title of this seminal work would suggest, Albert Memmi undertakes defining and describing the categories “colonizer” and “colonized”. He further subdivides each category speaking of “the colonizer who refuses” (1969, pp. 19–44) and “the colonizer who accepts” (1969, pp. 45–76); as well as the “two answers of the colonized” (1969, pp. 119–141).

Memmi argues at length (1969, pp. 10–16) that though Europeans in the colonies might vary with respect to their ethnicities and class positions, and though some may be exploited by the ruling classes, they are still invested in the colonial system and “given equal material circumstances, economic class or capabilities, he[sic] always receives preferred treatment” (1969, p. 12) with respect to the colonized. Memmi also rejects the common sense comparisons that are often made between the less privileged colonizer and the colonized individual who may be affluent – that is, the colonized individual who experiences some class privilege within the colonial system (1969, p. 9). He states that the colonizer “knows … that the most favored colonized will never be anything but colonized people … that certain rights will forever be refused them [within the colonial system], and that certain advantages are reserved strictly for him [sic]” (1969, p. 9).
Memmi is also clear that within the colony there can be no simply “colonial” individual – or, in other words, that the “European living in a colony but having no privileges . . . does not exist” (1969, p. 10). He explains that such an individual is privileged by the colonial system regardless of her/his personal disposition and feelings about that system (see 1969, pp. 17–18). The European in the colony is therefore always a colonizer, whether or not s/he agrees with the colonial system, thereby becoming a “colonialist” (1969, p. 45). Memmi writes:

... colonization does not depend upon one or a few generous or clear-thinking individuals. Colonial relations do not stem from individual good will or actions; they exist before his [sic] arrival or his [sic] birth, and whether he [sic] accepts or rejects them matters little. It is they, on the contrary which, like any institution, determine a priori his [sic] place and that of the colonized, and in the final analysis, their true relationship. (1969, pp. 38–39)

Finally, Memmi points out that the privilege of the colonizer is always at the expense of the colonized (1969, pp. 8–9), putting to rest the notion of merit where there are relations of domination. He is worth quoting further here:

He [sic] finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized man [sic]. If his [sic] living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he [sic] can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he [sic] can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him [sic] and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he [sic] breathes, the more the colonized are choked. (1969, p. 8)

In a time when postcolonial discourses seem preoccupied with notions of “hybridity” and the “third space” and while discourses of dominance are invested in maintaining privilege while claiming innocence, what is worth reclaiming and reasserting in Memmi’s dated analysis is:

(a) The clarity with which he is able to speak of colonizer and colonized. In spite of what critics of such older writings may claim, Memmi skillfully nuances his definitions recognizing the existence of multiple locations along the spectra of both privilege and politics within each category. However, by keeping the notion of privilege foremost in his analysis, Memmi has no qualms about distinguishing between these two categories and drawing boundaries around them.

(b) The importance of the critical gaze upon dominance from the perspective of the dominated subject. This is not to be understood as the fetishization of dominance, but as an expression of the next critical insight, namely . . .

(c) The two-sidedness of the colonial situation – that is that the experience of the colonized and the experience of the colonizer with respect to privilege are the juxtaposed surfaces of the same wrinkled fabric. The valleys in the one side of the cloth are the mountain peaks on the other.
(d) The way in which Memmi undermines dominant claims to innocence made through flawed comparisons between colonizer and colonized and the unwillingness to acknowledge the unequal distribution of privilege and consequences in the colonial system.

In our contemporary global context, such analytical clarity is refreshing. While in the present historical juncture, border crossings, the notion of the colony within the metropole, the colonizer within the colonized, and other dislocations are significant matters giving rise to complexities in spatial reasoning, the logic behind the distribution of privilege has remained alarmingly stable. Memmi’s analysis helps to redress the political paralysis induced by the poststructural/postcolonial premature outright rejection of categories in an apparent unwillingness to analyse the historical distribution of systemic privilege. While strict binaries are not tenable, this matter cannot be allowed to forestall political correctives while social disparities are still so glaringly apparent. As Dei and Asgharzadeh so poignantly assert, the power of a social theory exists in its ability to offer a social corrective (2001, p. 298). Political paralysis only results in the maintenance of the status quo.

APPLYING ANTICOLONIAL THOUGHT

Once one recognizes and is willing to point out the enduring colonial dynamics in our neo-colonial or global colonial (but hardly postcolonial) times, the appropriateness of applying anticolonial thought in this historical juncture becomes clear. Dei (this volume) posits that the notion of the colonial “refers to anything imposed and dominating rather than that which is simply foreign and alien”. As such, anticolonial thought becomes useful for articulating resistance against any site of domination. However, the anticolonial discursive framework seems particularly useful for reframing what I have called the apparent posttrace discourse in true antiracist terms. Nowhere is the “unilateral fragmentation around difference” (Chisti, 1999) and the postmodern race to implicate multiple subjects in colonizing projects more apparent than in contemporary discourses around race and racism.

The debate about racial categories and boundaries and their overlap with other axes of oppression, while important in challenging the biologism of historical and commonsense understandings of race, has often been misused, resulting, in some cases, in questioning the existence of racism, and certainly in many cases, in rendering white privilege invisible. Anticolonialism understands the socially constructed nature of racial (and indeed, all other social) categories, the messiness and futility involved with determining precise racial boundaries, and that racial identities are not monolithic. However, it rejects the accusations of “essentialism” and “vulgar multiculturalism” (e.g. Newitz and Wray, 1997a, p. 5) that are commonly levelled at the use of these labels to track and resist social privilege and punishments. When one appreciates the political immobility that such accusations cause, one is led to ask questions about the true motives of such arguments. To
Illustrate, when one looks at the appalling realities of anti-Black racial profiling by criminal justice, employment and educational systems here in Canada – the statistically demonstrated existence of the driving while Black charge (e.g. Rankin et al., 2002); that the employment rates for Black university graduates equals that of White grade ten dropouts (e.g. Solyom, 2001); that Black students are pushed out of schools in disproportionate numbers (see Dei et al., 1997) – what, indeed, is the purpose of trying to micro-analyse who/what is Black and/or who/what is White when this is so clear with respect to the distribution of privilege and punishment at the systemic level?

Of likewise questionable motive are the current discussions around the tenuousness of white racial privilege which foreground the “particularity of experience” and the “simultaneity of oppressions”. Of the one type are arguments that White identity/ies is/are too diverse and fragmented for one to be able to assume that all Whites have white racial privilege (e.g. Chambers, 1997; Newitz and Wray, 1997a, 1997b) – arguments that are often flawed because they primarily consider relationships among those identified as White (e.g. Chambers, 1997, p. 191). Of the other type are arguments that whiteness “does not only impinge on matters of race” but “cuts across social axes” (Rodriguez, 1998, p. 38; see also p. 47). In the case of this second type of arguments, though it is important to recognize the interlocking nature of the several axes of social domination, why and to what end does the term whiteness become the catchall term for any kind of social dominance? If we were to stretch this argument to its limits, then in order to truly have white privilege, one must not only be identified as White, but must also be male, bourgeois, Anglo-European, heterosexual and non-disabled.

The two types of arguments I have discussed above can make it very difficult for almost any person located as White to recognize and become accountable for her/his implication in whiteness. If one finds oneself unable to claim that one’s whiteness has been compromised by one’s gender, sexuality, non-Anglo-European ethnicity and so on, one can often attempt to claim working-class origins, which for most individuals is only a few generations removed. Indeed, the White Trash project (see, e.g., Hartigan, 1997, 2003; Newitz and Wray, 1997a, 1997b), with which I have taken issue at length elsewhere (see Howard, 2004), seems to be largely occupied with contesting the notion that poor Whites have any racial privilege at all. I agree wholeheartedly with Scheurich that “claims that white racism is interrupted and complexed by sexism, classism, heterosexism, while true to a certain extent, [. . .] are dangerous if we use this ‘complexing’ to dilute or undermine the pervasiveness of white racism” (2002, pp. 8–9). We must be able to “think through ‘Whiteness’ and its complexities without avoiding or evading racial injustice and deep systemic inequities” (Dei, 2000, p. 29).

Finally, I assert that the White antiracist worker, despite her/his political opposition to whiteness, is still privileged by that whiteness. It is here that we must insist on the difference, for analytical purposes, between White identity and whiteness (see Howard, 2004; Moon 1999; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2000). A number of the “complexity of whiteness” arguments attempt to create a space for the White person to be or to become opposed to whiteness (see Giroux, 1997a, 1997b;
Newitz and Wray, 1997a, p. 5) and thus seek ways to “rearticulate” (Giroux, 1997a) whiteness as other than dominant. However, this is a dangerous argument in that it suggests that living out an oppositional White identity and possessing white privilege are mutually exclusive positions. It becomes yet another way for the White body to be ignorant of or deny its implication in the whiteness that privileges it in spite of its political convictions. I argue that the White identity that one chooses to live out does not negate one’s implication in the system of whiteness that confers privilege. Further, I contend that it is this understanding that creates the space for the formation of a true antiracist White identity that can engage whiteness in its complex and contradictory meanings. This identity works to undermine whiteness while yet being accountable for its implication in privilege.

These insights, then, which stem from a critical anticolonial stance, are those that I will bring to bear upon the classroom dynamics in the mixed-race classroom. However, first I discuss some of the ways in which White subjects distance themselves from whiteness in the academy.

**DEFERRING RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH ACADEMIC RATIONALITY**

I have discussed the ways in which whiteness is deferred through the invocation of complexed identities. This section will deal with how this deferral is accomplished in the academy in particular.

In the first place, the academy functions as a space for the creation, acquisition, assertion and reassertion of whiteness and the simultaneous rejection of Non-whiteness. The strategies that enable this are numerous. Among these are the liberal notions of “merit” and “excellence” involved with determining who gets into and belongs in the academy and why, and who then becomes successful by academic standards. These concepts are mobilized in such a manner as to deny the embedded racism that structures academic selection, standardization and gate-keeping processes (Dei, 1999, p. 18). Also, there are the knowledge validation processes that determine which knowledges are worthy of academic attention and disciplinary status and which are rejected for being “interested” and “partisan”. Further, the Eurocentric knowledge that characterizes dominant academic discourses is presented as objective and universal, obscuring its own interestedness (Asante, 1991; Dei, 1994), while discussions of Euro-American societies, their histories and their politics, are sanitized – stripped of the racism that defines them, and shot through, instead, with a politics of denial, erasure and forgetting (Dei, 1999, p. 18; Dirlik, 1997, p. 64). Finally, scholars have observed the “civilizational racism” (Schurich, and Young, 1997) in academic epistemologies caused by the inherent racism in received academic understandings of such terms as “respectability”, “reason”, and “rationality” (see Goldberg, 1993; Dei, 1999, p. 21; Razack, 1998). In this section, I trace some of these strategies as discussed by Schick (2002) in order to draw attention to academic distancing, not only from the alleged messiness and degeneracy of Non-whiteness, but from any implication in white racism.
As I have discussed above, Schick also addresses the way in which White university students construct the space of the university as an ideological space of whiteness “characterized by abstraction, objectivity, and rationality; quite unlike ‘out there’, where others belong and which [they] describe as political, embodied, and not necessarily rational” (2002, p. 101). Out there in the street are found “such irrationalities as ‘culture and gender’ [while] in the pure white space of the university, these issues can be discussed as intellectual topics” (2002, pp. 111–112).

However, I further wish to draw attention to a point that Schick hints at, but unfortunately does not fully develop. Schick shares an excerpt from a student participant’s interview where he tells of seeing “somebody scrawling some racial or gender slur on the [washroom] wall” (2002, p. 116). Schick’s ensuing discussion centres around the fact that the participant sees this individual as belonging “out there” and, thus, by his presence in the university, is seen as invading the university. However, the point that Schick just misses developing is that the participant has distanced himself from other (racist and sexist) Whites, despite the fact that this “invader” is, presumably, a White man, and also presumably a student who does indeed “belong” in the space of the university. Thus, outside the university walls one finds not only those who are racialized and gendered (as though we all weren’t), but also those Whites who perpetrate racism and sexism. The space of the university, as well as those within it, is/are thus neatly absolved of any implication in white and/or male dominance. I will return to this point in the next section.

GRAPPLING WITH THE COLONIAL IN THE ANTIRACISM CLASSROOM

Having discussed how distancing might occur in general in the academy, I now narrow my focus to deal with this phenomenon within critical academic spaces that might not only claim academic rationality, but also nominally exist to challenge social dominance and inequity. Specifically, how might this dynamic play out even in the antiracism classroom?

While there is an important discussion that is had around resistance by racially dominant subjects who refuse to recognize social (and particularly, racial) privilege at all, or who are required or pressured by their programs to take multicultural or antiracism courses (see e.g. Ng, 1993; Pope and Joseph, 1997; Schick, 2002), in the interest of brevity, I will limit my discussion to those who willingly enter these critical spaces, and who are willing to recognize the existence of racial privilege on the macro level. Racially privileged students in these circumstances, in contrast to those unwilling to acknowledge structural social inequity, tend to be silent in the classroom or otherwise resist implicating themselves in the web of relationships of a system of domination that privileges them. This silence of those who have antiracist sentiments, or their tendency to maintain discursive distance between themselves and whiteness is problematic. I posit several possible reasons for this silence here:
(a) **The failure to recognize racial privilege.**

The student may simply not recognize her/his own racial privilege. As I have already suggested, this is entirely possible because of the proliferation of discourses and arguments that resist the recognition of racial privilege. Most common are those that revolve around the notion of the complexity of identities. Namely, the intersection of gender, sexuality and/or ability marginality is understood to erase the dominance of whiteness. Also of significant influence here are those arguments that purport to resist essentialism but fail to recognize and acknowledge the crude constructions of race that still determine white privilege. Individuals over-influenced by this argument underestimate the role the body plays in locating them socially. They argue that their bodies are inconsequential, privileging the notion of the “rhetorical body of whiteness” (Warren, 2003, p. 19) over more embodied understandings. Here Memmi’s claim that it is impossible to have a colonizer without privilege (1969, p. 10) is useful. From a critical anticolonial perspective, which foregrounds the notion of privilege, it is impossible for the White body in white supremacist Euro-American society to be devoid of privilege. It is clearly unrealistic and unacceptable to claim that the white body is inconsequential within racist society. Such a stance makes white privilege (more) invisible to those who have it. Antiracism/anticolonial classrooms must create the space and the imperative for the racially privileged to recognize the ways in which they are dominant even as they address any ways in which they are simultaneously made marginal (see Dei, this volume; Fellows and Razack, 1998).

(b) **The fear of becoming vulnerable.**

Ellsworth suggests that students in general assess the risks involved in self-disclosure, and that “students occupying socially constructed positions of privilege [may not] risk being known by students occupying socially constructed positions of subordination” (1992, p. 105). Such a stance is analogous to that of Memmi’s “colonizer who refuses” (1969, pp. 19–44). Memmi discusses the contradictions between the colonizer’s position of privilege and her/his contradictory and wavering commitment to opposing the colonial situation, and predicts that this results in the silence or withdrawal of the colonizer who refuses (1969, p. 43). The White body in antiracist circles has to navigate similar contradictions. S/he must consider what it means to have racial privilege while opposing it, and what the full success of the antiracist project might mean for life as s/he knows it and/or her/his relationship with the racially oppressed. Who will s/he be, and will s/he be rejected because her/his structural positioning is taken by the racially oppressed to be more salient than her/his individual political disposition? It would appear that Memmi’s prediction holds true, and that the uneasiness caused by such questions results in the kinds of silences in the classroom that Ellsworth discusses. While the reasons for this discomfort are clear, the silence is inexcusable, and suggests the political ineffectiveness with which
Memmi charges the colonizer who refuses (1969, p. 42). It is impossible to do true antiracist work without a willingness to take the very real risks that are implied. As Dei (2005) has asserted, the important question is not “Who can do antiracist work?”, but rather, “Who is willing to assume the risks?”. Further, little is accomplished by this silence of the dominant. The racially oppressed are no less aware of the socially bestowed privilege of the racially dominant simply because they have chosen not to articulate their relationship to it. Indeed, the message more likely to be received in such instances of dominant silence is one of insincerity and lack of commitment to changing the racist status quo.

(c) The “Inoculation” effect (Rains, 1998, p. 78)
Here, I do not intend to imply that Whites are maliciously trying to use this space to create themselves an alibi that excuses them from resisting white supremacy (though this does, no doubt, sometimes occur). Rather, I am suggesting that its presence in the antiracism classroom and/or other sources of affinity with Non-whiteness (through romantic or family relationships, for example) may cause the White body to understand her/himself (or think others understand her/him) as being devoid of implication in whiteness. S/he need now only focus outward on “other Whites out there” who have not yet come on side. It is worth taking considerable space here to unsettle this notion.

First, there is the notion of the ambivalence of the colonial will. Lott (1993) argues persuasively, through his treatment of blackface minstrelsy, that even the clearest manifestations of racism can be shot through with notions of desire and ambivalence on the part of the racist and/or the racially dominant toward the racially subordinated (e.g., pp. 18, 52–53). Likewise, Huhsdorf (2001) argues convincingly that Robert Flaherty’s “documentary” work with the Inuit, work that he might benevolently have conceived of as preserving a dying culture, served largely to portray the Inuit as inherently inferior by locating them statically in anachronistic time and forecasting the disappearance of “the” Inuit culture, while obscuring the colonial relations between the “West” and the Arctic that were responsible for making such a discourse possible. As such, Huhsdorf concludes that “the ‘documentary’ value of Flaherty’s work does not lie in its accuracy in portraying Eskimo [sic] culture. Rather the contradictions in the film reveal … the need of modern colonial culture at once to claim its innocence and to enact its dominance” (2001, pp. 115–116).

In discussing relations of alleged benevolence and the attraction of those positioned as racially dominant to those positioned as racially subordinate, I wish to also draw attention to hooks’s observation that “[d]ifference can seduce precisely because the mainstream imposition of sameness is a provocation that terrorizes” (1992, pp. 22–23). Clearly, any notion of (racial) difference or Otherness as the “spice [or] seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream culture” (hooks, 1992, p. 21) is a notion that re-
asserts the normalcy and centrality of the (racially) dominant as the standard against which all Others are measured. A clear conclusion to be drawn from these arguments, then, is that the racially dominant’s attraction to the Other and/or to antiracism where s/he is able to rub shoulders with the Other cannot always simplistically be assumed to be all positive and/or devoid of racism.

The second reason that the White antiracist should proceed with caution is the observation that pejorative racial meanings are embedded in European/Euro-North American knowledge systems. Toni Morrison, in *Playing in the Dark*, concerns herself with exposing “the pervasive use of black images and people in expressive prose [and] the shorthand, the taken-for-granted assumptions that lie in their usage” (1992, p. x); the way that “black people are reduced to ‘a personal metaphor’” (hooks, 1992, p. 39). Morrison declares that:

Neither blackness nor “people of colour” stimulates in me notions of excessive, limitless love, anarchy, or routine dread. I cannot rely on these metaphorical shortcuts because *I am a black writer* struggling with and through a language that can powerfully evoke and enforce hidden signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and dismissive “othering” of people and language which are by no means marginal or already completely known and knowable in my work. My vulnerability would lie in romanticizing blackness rather than demonizing it; villifying [sic] whiteness rather than reifying it. The kind of work I have always wanted to do requires me to learn how to maneuver ways to free up the language from its sometimes sinister, frequently lazy, almost always predictable employment of racially informed and determined chains. (1992, pp. x–xi; emphasis added)

Clearly, Morrison is not only testifying to the existence of these embedded racial meanings and to the commonsense way in which they are employed, but she is also linking the methodological risk of lapsing into their usage to (un)racialized social dominance. Along with the numerous examples that Morrison employs in her analysis, Espinet and Razack add Miller’s “The Crucible” which, through the character Tituba, “evokes an entire constellation of [racialized] values which serve the plot effortlessly, itself illuminating the degree to which this negative other constitutes the assumptions of everyday knowledge” (1995, p. 3). Thus, the embeddedness of white supremacist assumptions in Euro-American culture makes the reinscription of racism, even in critical spaces, extremely likely – particularly where one is not aware of one’s vulnerability to doing so. Dominant discourses that normalize racist inequity and that cover their tracks by insisting upon the innocence of whiteness make it that much more crucial that the White body that is privileged by these notions grapple seriously with its implication in whiteness rather than imagining that the effects of their social positioning are so quickly and easily surmounted.
Thirdly, we must consider the work of ostensibly “aware” White scholars whose project or intent was/is either specifically to challenge racism and/or to be respectful of the racially minoritized. DuCille (1994) speaks of an incident in which White scholar Jane Gallop anticipates the presence of Black scholar Deborah McDowell at one of her talks and wishes to impress and honour her. However, duCille notes that “Gallop seemed to expect approval without having to do the thing most likely to win it [that is, in her talk,] include McDowell and other black women scholars in the category of feminist theorists” (1994, pp. 608–609). Further, duCille notes that through Gallop’s narration of this incident, she “actually demean[s] [McDowell] . . . cast[ing] her (and . . . ‘the black feminist critic’) somewhere between monster and mammy” (1994, p. 609). In another example, Zine Magubane discusses the way that Sander Gilman’s frequently referenced article, Black Bodies, White Bodies, while skillfully drawing attention to a racial shorthand in late nineteenth century art (somewhat analogous to that spoken of by Morrison in literature) fails to historicize, and thus essentializes, notions of Blackness and “racial and sexual alterity” (2001, p. 818).

These arguments should serve to make the case that the racially dominant in the antiracist classroom cannot be assumed to be devoid of racism; neither can it be assumed that her/his motives are above reproach. I suggest, then, that an open engagement with the implications of the social positioning arising from one’s body is an indispensable part of the antiracist work of those positioned as racially dominant.

(d) The inability to speak as victim.

This is the situation in which some students do not speak because they do not feel that their social positioning gives them sufficient access to discourses of marginality (see Ringrose, 2002, p. 301). This amounts to a problematic association of the right to contribute to an antiracist discussion with having a non-dominant identity. This position fails to see the two-sidedness of racism (Memmi, 1969; Fanon, 1967; Morrison, 1992), and, therefore, the importance that the offensiveness of racism be spoken not only by the racially oppressed, but also by the racially dominant (Dei, 2000, p. 35).

(e) The desire to avoid monopolizing the discursive space.

Finally, some racially privileged students recognize that white dominance has often manifested itself through its will to define and speak for – to seize voice while silencing other voices. Students who claim this as their reason for silence wish to avoid continuing this trend and/or avoid being mistaken for doing so. This is, possibly, the most reasonable excuse for silence or failing to be openly accountable for one’s racial privilege. However, these sensitive and insightful students must understand that the resolution of this dilemma is less an issue of whether they speak than of how they speak. As I shall discuss below, their silence will usually prove to be the greater error.
As I have suggested earlier in this paper, much of the scholarship that examines whiteness and how it might be confronted in/through the classroom is underwritten by an implicit concern with the agency of the White body. Consequently, the perceived problems are those that limit the agency of the White body, and the proposed solutions are those that extend it. More specifically, main features of these writings express concerns that applying the label “White” or foregrounding the domination of whiteness might induce white guilt and/or white defensiveness, and/or provoke white bigotry or complacency, and/or hinder the formation of a guilt-free antiracist White identity (see e.g. Ellsworth, 1992; Giroux, 1997a, 1997b; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2000; Ringrose, 2002). The solutions suggested, which are offered under the banner of a misappropriated anti-essentialism, exacerbate the problem with which I am concerned here – namely, the creation of the space for racially dominant individuals to overlook their personal implications in the system of whiteness, and the reinscription of a colonial dynamic.

An entirely different set of questions and solutions than those in the aforementioned articles might arise if the agency of the racially oppressed subject is centred while maintaining an anticolonial gaze on dominance. Specifically, I ask here: What are the risks and consequences for the racially oppressed body of sanitized, impersonal, arm’s-length discussions of whiteness? What violence to the Non-white body is implied where whiteness is discussed and dissected, but yet would afterwards seem to have action-oriented implications for no one in the room? How might these phenomena be resisted? In this vein, I make two observations.

First, many writers have attested to the fact that for the victim of racism to be able to speak of the often hidden racist dynamic in society and her/his experience of it in an atmosphere that acknowledges and affirms the reality of such experiences is a necessary survival tactic — a means of maintaining sanity in a society that routinely ignores, denies, and renames racism (see Christian, 1987; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tate, 1994). While the racially oppressed are well served, and best served, by the stories that we share among ourselves, I suggest here that because of the two-sidedness of racism, there is a further dimension that is significant. Antiracist ends can also be served by stories from the dominant that likewise trump the prevailing denial of racism. The voicing of stories that expose one’s implication in racism, and how one has been privileged by it, are stories that serve to rupture the socio-pathology that allows racial injustice and racial privilege to appear normal. What is certain is that if much of the violence of contemporary whiteness lies in its silence, forgetting, denial, and claims to innocence, then detached treatises on whiteness with no grounding in the personal serve only to exacerbate that racist violence.

Second, it is important to remember what the work of such scholars as Morrison (1992), and Nestel (1995, 2002) makes clear — that is, that so often racially dominant subjects produce knowledge, construct identities, and garner credentials on the backs of the racial Other. Thus, however reasonable the motives for silence or detached conversations about race might seem to the racially dom-
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inan, if their personally grounded contribution to the discourse in the antiracism classroom does not occur, the likely result is a slide into a knowledge-producing dynamic that is inherently colonial while racially subjugated bodies continue to speak in an effort to rupture silences that uphold the status quo. “The other [becomes] a spectacle for audiences who themselves remain unseen and unscrutinized” (Huhnsdorf, 2001, p. 115). The knowledge produced in the classroom, then, largely benefits Whites at the expense, and by the expending, of Non-whites – an academic form of “eating the Other” (hooks, 1992, p. 21).

Non-White educators have agonized about this dynamic for some time (e.g. hooks, 1990, pp. 54–55; Bannerji, 1991). Bannerji, protests “I am offering up piece by piece my experience, body, intellect, so others can learn” (1991, p. 6). One might respond to her, “Then why not just stop?” Yet, she cannot be silent (Bannerji, 1991, p. 7). The political and moral commitment to doing one’s part to move an antiracist project forward dictates that one cannot allow oneself to be silent and allow whiteness to remain unnamed and unchallenged. To suggest silence to the racially dominated subject in these circumstances is to suggest they accept the racist status quo and support detached, impersonal, “objective” discussions of racism. As scholars concerned with the agency of the Black (or Non-white) subject have made clear, objectivity is the subjectivity of Eurocentric discourse (see, e.g., Asante, 1999, p. 5). This may explain the discomfort some have with the personally grounded vocality of the racially oppressed. It is a powerful tool of resistance (see Dei, 2000, p. 37). Thus, the means of avoiding the colonial dynamic in the antiracism classroom cannot be through promoting aloofness, but rather through promoting reciprocity.

TOWARD SOLUTIONS

In order, then, to maximize the classroom’s antiracist potential and interrupt the playing out of a colonial dynamic, I suggest that those positioned as White break the silence and begin to speak about their locations and their implications in dominance where they find themselves in antiracist settings. However, it should be clear here that I am not inviting the dominant and dominating voice of an unapologetic whiteness, again, to deny and justify racism and defend white privilege. Nor am I inviting the ostensibly antiracist White body to sympathize or even empathize with the racially dominated, attempting to get into our shoes and speak for us, or else dominating antiracist discourse by setting its parameters and competing for the right to speak, to name, to define, to construct knowledge in its own image. Yet I do call for the voice of the racially privileged body that realizes that, at least with respect to racism, it cannot, and should not, speak primarily as victim but, rather, is willing to face its implication in whiteness and racism, thereby offering up its own experience and attempts to rupture whiteness for contemplation. The willingness to voice one’s implication in whiteness establishes the only ground upon which Whites can learn antiracism and do honest antiracist work, and this ground must continually be re-established in a racist
society that continually contradicts and seeks to erase it in order to re-establish white dominance and “innocence”. Schurich (2002) asserts:

That we as whites are at our core white racists no matter how hard we work against racism must be accepted, said, repeated. We must always carry and speak this explicitly in our understanding, in our publications, in our actions. (Schurich, 2002, p. 8, emphasis added)

Strangely, the implications of such a stance for pedagogy in the antiracism classroom are often ignored and certainly not insisted upon – possibly, may I suggest, because it runs up against the liberal construction of “freedom”. Not that I expect or advise that anyone interrogate or bully anyone else into speaking, or that anyone deliberately shame her/himself. But I do insist that pedagogical activities, classroom discourse, and evaluation ought to eschew “rational academic distance” and continually and explicitly encourage that each person openly consider how s/he is implicated in and related to racism as a prerequisite for such a classroom to be classified as an antiracism classroom.

Thus, I am arguing for the much maligned “confessional approach”, (Bonnett, 2000a, p. 142; Bonnett, 2000b, p. 128; Ringrose, 2002, p. 310), so named by its detractors because of their disdain for it. And if this refers to the self-absolving (and deliberately self-innoculating) opening ritual of simply naming oneself as racially dominant without grappling with the implications, I too am opposed (hooks, 1990, p. 54). However, I do promote a space for the type of “confession” that means admitting one’s connection to what has gone wrong. And guilt, which others seem to want to be careful not to inculcate (Giroux, 1997, pp. 313–314), may be a necessary part of this process if guilt means cultivating a sense of responsibility and accountability for a-critically accepting and enacting an ideology that accepts white-skin privilege as normal while claiming democratic and egalitarian ideals.

An anticolonial pedagogy for the mixed-race classroom, then, might ask that all students articulate their understandings of their personal relationship(s) to whiteness – how they have been either privileged or punished, or both, by racism and racialization, and in relation to whom. They might consider the relative intensities of racisms for differently racialized bodies. After establishing ground rules for respectful engagement that will avoid inflicting further racist insult and violence, an anticolonial pedagogy might ask all students to recall and re-analyse situations in which they failed to challenge and were complicit in whiteness. Further, the racially dominant might consider ways in which they may knowingly have allowed themselves to garner white-skin privilege through silence, while Non-white bodies might consider how they may have enacted whiteness toward other bodies of Colour. An anticolonial pedagogy would surely require all students to devise ways in which they might take up and live out antiracist identities, and to submit their musings for contemplation by, and comment from, those who are differently located. Much about combating racism for the White body will mean the need to understand whiteness, its privilege, and the process
of constructing an oppositional White identity. Toward this end, hooks (1990) asserts:

only a persistent, rigorous, and informed critique of whiteness could really determine what forces of denial, fear, and competition are responsible for creating fundamental gaps between professed political commitment to eradicating racism and the participation in the construction of a discourse on race that perpetuates racial domination. (1990, p. 54)

A classroom dynamic where dominant accountability is fostered changes the potentially colonial dynamic of the mixed-race antiracism classroom and moves toward a more reciprocal and, therefore, equitable experience. While the racially oppressed, in sharing their experiences, benefit by establishing the reality and validity of their experiences while offering their experiences toward an understanding of racism from their perspective(s), the racially dominant, reciprocally, in articulating their accountability and sharing their own experiences of grappling with whiteness, establish an authentic entry-point into a true antiracist stance while offering their experiences for an understanding of struggling against whiteness from their perspective(s).

Thus, through an anticolonial shifting of the focus from the agency and interests of the White body to a concern with the agency and interests of the Non-white body, and through an understanding of the two-sidedness of racism, I have argued that detached rational discussions of an unembodied whiteness cannot serve antiracist ends. I contend that because of the face of whiteness in critical academia, which creates so many possibilities for the individual positioned as White to find an “out” (Scheurich, 2002, p. 8), the White student in the antiracism classroom must openly grapple with her/his own implication in whiteness and the issues involved with the development, possibilities, and tenuousness of her/his own oppositional White identity. Consequently, I have argued for the undermining of whiteness in the antiracism classroom through an anticolonial pedagogy which would include personally grounded dominance-challenging contributions from those located at different points on Memmi’s map of the terrain of colonization (1969, p. 8). As Dei insists, “the classroom must provide the space for each learner to understand both her privileges and oppression, and to develop effective oppositional resistance to domination” (this volume).

NOTES

1 Again, an exception here is Kincheloe and Steinberg (2000), which hints at the difference between these concepts. Unfortunately, this article subsequently slips into an anti-essentialism discussion that, like many similar articles, works to evade the materiality and embodiedness of white privilege.

2 While it is important to consider the role of the racially oppressed subject who has internalized the oppressive ideologies and therefore enacts whiteness, (and there is much scholarship to this effect) this paper turns the gaze upon the racially dominant. As the anticolonial discursive framework I use in this paper will make clear, while these differently located subjects may both enact whiteness, they differ significantly in that the racially dominant subject suffers few of the consequences for her/his actions in comparison to the racially oppressed subject.
3 The insightful analysis of the relationship between colonizer and colonized is marred by the fact that Memmi clearly had only men in mind, and in some instances blatantly objectified women. While this is inexcusable, and is an erasure about which Memmi has since expressed remorse, and while it calls for a gender analysis of Memmi’s work in general, the particular concepts that I discuss here hold true across gender lines.

REFERENCES


