CHAPTER 5

Educating for Critical Race and Anti-Colonial Intersections

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Introduction

As we write this chapter, we are over one year into the global coronavirus pandemic on Turtle Island, and likely longer than that in other parts of the world, and probably ours as well. All continents are now affected (CTV, Forani, 2020), over two million people have passed away, almost one hundred million confirmed cases (WHO, 2021), the world has seen many lockdowns, industry upheavals and crash after crash of the capitalistic, credit-based economies, the competition for vaccines, cures, and distribution politics. There is also a consuming debate, counter-visions, and ideas about policing and police reform, defunding and disbandment, renewed again in the aftermath of the police killings in the United States of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other countless other lives, needlessly cut short. In the wake of police incident-related deaths in Canada, including Chantal Moore in Edmunston, Ejaz Choudry in Peel Region, Eishia Hudson in Winnipeg, Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto (Cooke, 2020; Malone et al., 2020), similar conversations are also taking place here. In Toronto, police are finally

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working toward piloting a project to redirect mental health calls and wellness checks to non-police professionals for response in certain parts of the city (CBC, Toronto Pilot Project, 2021).

We take an anti-colonial approach toward understanding how the past colonialities around the globe, inform the present efforts to attain justice:

> Anti-racism work, now more than ever, requires an integrated, interdisciplinary, and intersectional understanding in order to recognize its global impact, scope, and implications. Anti-racism, thus, has emerged in today's context as a way to theorize, measure, understand, and counter the systemic physical, spiritual, communal, and emotional violences enacted by dominant cultures upon the Black, Indigenous, Racialized and other marginalized communities that they live among and beside. (Dei & Adhami, 2021a, p. 158)

What sometimes is lost—almost always lost except in the hearts and minds of those directly affected by the oppressions—is the historicity of these calls and debates globally, for decades, centuries, and likely millennia. Not only must we look back into both told and untold histories from around the world, it is even more important to implement a broadly informed multicentric approach (Dei, 2016), and we place the many centered views *alongside* one another (Adhami, 2015) in order to facilitate deeper knowing and better application of these learnings, if we want actual change in our communities and related frameworks, such as education, legal, and healthcare. The only way to displace hegemony is to include the rest of us and to remember—and address—the problems of the past so that we may actually progress.

We—as racialized participants in the academy—and indeed citizens in these socially and perpetually unjust globally intersectional societies are all too keenly aware of the erasure of our histories and the violences that we and those before us have stood up to, spoken out about, and fought against. We are aware of the progresses—changes big and small—that came about but were eroded before having a chance to turn the forever tide, by the cyclical processes inherent in supremacies that continually sustain themselves. Among the myriad of upheavals occurring around the world during this time, perhaps one very telling example of the pervasive endurance of coloniality and supremist ideology is the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill insurrection in the United States. While the systems of safety and security continuously and year over year kept a hyper vigilant attention on Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Asian, and other Racialized peoples and their supporters around the country, other extremists holding majority identities, in this case white and Christian, gained the freedom to flourish en masse and attack their own political infrastructure, while evading the same kinds of fear-inducing labels or responsive policing actions or lasting societal consequences. Such reality and practice are among the reasons we and others remain keenly aware that we must instigate more change as we continue to face and fight the injustices and work to recover the

histories, making every effort to ensure these new changes—layered over all those which have come before, last for all future generations.

As anti-colonial scholars, we are also connected to and maintain relationships with our Indigenous heritages, in ways that are relational to lands, spirituality, and community, and we work to integrate these ways of knowing and the many teachings they offer to derive meaning and bring context to our work. We strive to consider beyond the contemporary identity tropes of skin color, ethnicity, national identity, and biological characteristics, which become contested and politicized through colonial displacements, to understand how mechanisms of power can be mobilized to embolden, neutralize, erase, or suppress. The evidence describing the impact of these kinds of colonial impacts on the subjects of its ruptures is long documented by many over decades and centuries. We have referenced only a handful of scholars from the past including Said (1979), Fanon (1961), Freire (1970), Smith (2012), and Césaire (1955), who are among many others who document and demonstrate how Euro-Western hegemonies have oppressed the non-European world. From an Anti-colonial perspective, perhaps one of the most profound implications is that even in cases where sovereignty and freedom are returned to peoples in principle, the menace of supremacist ideologies remains in place, such as in our education systems, for example, as to whose language we work in, and whose science and knowledges are considered valid. In society and everyday life, these ideologies become conveyed subtly in whose battle conquests and religions we center in our societies and observe as holidays, for example. Given the nature of coloniality's supremacist binary tendencies, these ideologies show up in how peoples in these societies—and their beliefs, customs, or traditions—become labeled as good or bad, right or wrong, civil or savage, terrorist or citizen—they show up in who is collectively vilified. It means these same people, by extension, will ignore how global industry exploits land, labor, and climate sovereignty of certain countries, with expansive, invasive projects that offer next-to-nothing wages, with almost complete disregard for local ecologies but then decry human rights abuses or climate pollution and change without any consideration of complicity. In the case of news and journalism, CBC Senior Reporter, Jody Porter (2022, pp. 8–9) describes the damaging impact of this disregard in the context of a growing industry of information dissemination, which values content, technologies, volume, and immediacies over knowledge, accuracy, and responsibility: "Old forms of accountability, of being responsible to one's community through reciprocal relations, are subverted in this dumping ground of data. In the news media's quest for clicks, favor falls on social media accounts with mass followings, so people who are popular on Twitter are coveted as news sources and interview subjects to drive more traffic to the news website. Former U.S. President Donald Trump is only the most extreme example of the damage this can do to public discourse where the person with the loudest voice is given a virtual blow horn." An anti-colonial lens allows us to also extend these analyses of power dynamics in systems predicated on colonial and imperialist

dispossession, to deeply understand and reflect on how these endemic values rage on in order to envision strategic educational transformation (Dei, 2006, 2021).

Between us, we locate ourselves as scholars and citizens, we ground in ancestries, experiences, and traditions from other continents, which converge and intersect with those that exist on the lands we presently inhabit. We pool our experiences as Elder, parent, community leader, pedagogue, as daughter, caregiver, journalist, scholar, and artist, as educators, change makers, activists, and of genders, locations, identities from our long journeyed paths. We work to subvert, change, reform, intervene in, and sometimes reinvent how knowledge, education, and information is collected, interpreted, disseminated, hidden, revealed, safe-kept, and used in the systemic continuance of power dynamics in society and institutions. To come from these places is to embody the spirit and the knowledge (Dei, 2013, p. 31), the research, and the history and to make that which we create, healing in essence. We share a clear vision for inclusive social, educational, and community well-being possibilities, that are multiply and simultaneously inter-enriching and brimming with intentions, options, and actions that that can be called upon and deployed for anti-colonial and antiracist emancipation.

While these pandemic times have proven extraordinary in many fathomable and unfathomable ways, we come to this work, also having witnessed many renewals and returns, and with intrinsic hope. Little Bear shares how worldviews shape understanding and engagement:

> In Aboriginal philosophy, existence consists of energy. All things are animate, imbued with spirit, and inconstant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance space is a more important referent than time…The idea of all things being in constant motion or flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world. (Little Bear, 2000, p. 1)

We see movements, projects, and programs that serve to uplift, empower, and propel Black and Indigenous peoples all around the world and provide opportunities, mentorships, and avenues that were previously oppressively denied. We have seen the election of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in the United States and their reversal of their predecessor's many problematic, supremacist-informed policies, including the Muslim immigration and travel ban. Some media and other outlets including CNN (Kaur, 2020), Science (Lecoq et al., 2020) reported that worldwide shutdowns since the declaration of a global pandemic had reduced the seismic impact of humans on the planet. Time Magazine (Wagner, 2020) and NBC (Chow, 2020), among others, also pointed to benefits for the climate resulting from a reduction in carbon emissions from restrictions to air, sea, and land travel, while other outlets such as The Guardian (Watts, 2020) point to the planet and nature reclaiming space and time for regeneration and animal population recoveries.

We know restoration is purposeful, at times difficult and unruly, and that healing takes great care and time, so we take inspiration from our peoples and our planet's natural rhythms to work toward empowerment, action, and lasting change. With this understanding, we start with the fundamental premise from Critical Race Theory that racism still exists in all its forms and continues to be endemic in our social systems, and we unpack the decolonial intersections from there.

In Theory...Racializing Whiteness

> Indigenous research is just one aspect of a much broader, transformative project of Indigenous resistance (and decolonization) in all spheres of life. (Dei, 2013, p. 29)

It's a fundamental appreciation for the idea that in a democracy, majority rules, and in such a circumstance, injustice, and imbalance are inherent and intrinsic to any social system created within such structures, unless they heavily manage, monitor and remedy any systemic inequities that may impact that system's minoritized populations. After all, that is the responsibility of having any privilege, to ensure access and benefit to those who may not enjoy the same, the key element being the ability and willingness to share, a plausible, possible ideal. There is also an inherent danger in any democracy which is borne of organized circumstances of coloniality that its every system and institution will carry within it, the ideals and values of supremacy and visible and invisible systemic racism as the very goals of colonialism are to conquer, erase, conform, eradicate, assimilate and exploit for maximum capitalist benefit.

López (2003) outlines many systemic issues that undermine the success of racialized and minority students and educational leaders that emerge directly from the preexisting systemic impediments within founding democratic structures. López demonstrates how prevalent disenfranchising myths of participation, meritocracy, benefit, and equality are active within American structures of governance, conflict, power, and policy, and become replicated in systems and institutions of education, justice, medicine, and more. These myths also continuously feed the obstinate appetites of Eurocentric moncentricizations, totalitarianisms/quasi-totalitarianisms, while serving the exploitive savior ideologies of neoliberal globalization, monoculturalism, unimodal pedagogical hegemonies, and cognitive imperialism, as they work to silence our voices and erase any progress:

> Taken holistically, CRT posits that beliefs in neutrality, democracy, objectivity, and equality "are not just unattainable ideals, they are harmful fictions that obscure the normative supremacy of whiteness in American law and society" (Valdes et al., 2002, p. 3). Notwithstanding, White Americans continue to

> believe in these ideals, because a racial reality is, perhaps, too difficult to digest. (López, 2003, p. 85)

When racism operates in covert and overt ways, López (2003) asserts that whether through action or inaction, by presence or absence, it impacts and impedes the success, health, progress, and participation of any who are not defined as 'majority,' while furthermore solidifying impressions and perceptions of blame, failure, irresponsibility, or inabilities squarely onto the disenfranchised.

In the contemporary Western contexts, most present democracies are predicated on Eurocolonial and Christian values and norms. Consequentially As Ard and Knaus (2013, p. 22) also point out, whether in schools, universities, or in societies "[b]asing public policy upon research that relies and adheres to white norms and standards, limits decolonizing methodologies and ignores the large bodies of research that are devalued by traditional academic worldviews."

With such pressures and problems facing us simultaneously as scholars and citizens, decolonizing society and the academy and establishing other narratives, worldviews, and ways of knowing have been the ongoing work of countless activists, scholars, and resistors such as DuBois (1903), Fanon (1961), Friere (1970), Césaire (1955), Said (1979), and Smith (2012). A key element to any decolonizing and critical approach has been the project of speaking back to whiteness, such as in problematizing the neoliberal agendas and their commodifications of knowledge and the consequential resurgence of imperialist Islamophobia, for example, and the violence, and silencing spreading in the aftermath of the tragedies of 9/11, as seen in the works of scholars such as Razack (1998), Mohanty (2004) and Shiva (2004). Mohanty writes:

> [S]ome important sites for feminist, anti-imperialist critique and organising include scrutiny of the militarised US state and cross-border struggles, corporate globalisation, and the economics impacting power relations of gender and sexuality, the growth of a corporate/military nexus in the US academy, the contradictions of national security in the midst of the US Patriot Act, neoliberal agendas and complicit feminisms, US foreign policy, US domestic policy, and the imperial project, to name just the obvious. (2004, p. 71)

Reinstating the value of and restoring the mainstream acceptance of meaning to Indigenous ways of knowing and dismantling systems of supremacy has also been at the forefront of the work of such scholars as Cooper (2012), Coulthard (2010), hooks (1994), Mignolo (2007), and Maldonado-Torres, (2004). In one such intervention, Brayboy (2005, p. 430) extends the interruptions of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and Critical Race Theory to create Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) as a means to center the Indigenous experiences on lands now known as the United States:

> CRT was originally developed to address the Civil Rights issues of African American people. As such, it is oriented toward an articulation of race issues along a "black-white" binary (much the way Brown v. Board is), and, until recently, other ethnic/racial groups have not been included in the conversation. As a result, Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) have been developed to meet the specific needs of those populations. (2005, p. 429)

Brayboy's innovation provided specific tenets and "a new and more culturally nuanced way of examining the lives and experiences of tribal peoples since contact with Europeans over 500 years ago" (2005, p. 430), addressing important needs for inclusion of diverse perspectives and ways of knowing. These frameworks also consider White supremacy, imperialism, capitalist agendas, assimilation as key impositions on communities, and advocate for the restoration of traditional philosophies and beliefs where stories are seen as legitimate forms of theory and data, which can be mobilized for decolonizing.

The Difference Indigeneities Make

> Decolonization and [I]*ndigenizing* my life includes learning and practising my culture; learning my language; speaking my language; fighting ethnocentrism in education, research and writing; battling institutional racism; and the list goes on. Decolonization and [I]ndigenizing is about both knowing and having a critical consciousness about our cultural history. (Absolon, 2011, p. 19)

As we work to decolonize our practices, we work to bring together multiple ways of knowing, centered and as equals, as an active disruption and displacement of hegemony. Little Bear (2000) talks about the importance of relational worldviews, where knowledge is shared as knowledge, and exists in community, with everyone understanding their world and experiences from their own unique location, which is valid, vital, and knowingly contributing to the whole.

> Singularity manifests itself in the thinking processes of Western Europeans in concepts such as one true god, one true answer, and one right way. This singularity results in a social structure consisting of specialists. Everyone in the society has to be some kind of specialist, whether it be doctor, lawyer, plumber, or mechanic. Specializations are ranked in terms of prestige. This, in turn, results in a social class structure. Some professions are higher up the ladder, and some are lower down it. In science, singularity manifests itself in terms of an expensive search for the ultimate truth, the ultimate particle out of which all matter is made. And so it goes. (Little Bear, 2000, p. 5)

On the journey of un/re/discovering, Adhami (2015) describes how these themes of love, universality, and relationality as also present in South Asian traditions and Sufi worldviews, also consider, render, and/or view many

western, linear paradigms as seemingly incomplete for their neglect of these ways of understanding (inter) connections (Adhami, 2015). As Porter (2022, p. 3) warns, "Any public undertaking that leaves out Indigenous perspectives is destined to lead us to the same harmful place." Adhami's description of these dismissals of traditional knowledges highlights the particular impact of such impositions especially when occurring in smaller minoritized communities, where relationality and solidarity are often—and collectively—mobilized, for example, to counter the displacement and absence of culturally relevant and appropriate scholarly articles, community supports, languages, and histories vis-à-vis the contexts of global coloniality. Dei describes the need for the creation of such 'epistemic communities' as:

> "[A] place for researchers and learners to openly utilize the body, mind, spirit and soul interface in critical dialogues about understanding their communities. It is also a space that nurtures conversations that acknowledges the importance and implications of working with a knowledge base about the society, culture, and nature nexus." (Dei, 2013, p. 32)

Critical reflection tells us that notions of singularity and absoluteness from which distorted notions of objectivity emerge, then insist upon the validity of one worldview and consequently only contribute to notions and practices of supremacy, exemplified within the academy and within other institutions. In these environments, as we know from the past, everything and anything can be weaponized in order to serve the intentions of single or multiple supremacies, even in so-called democracies. Laws can be created to demonize, silence, and assimilate the so-called different, moral panics can be created to get the masses on side, and as (Dei & Adhami, 2021 in press a) wish to note and emphasize, *anything and everything can be weaponized*. Indigenous teachings often center coexistence and peace and other ways to navigate difference and conflict. If we take past racialization in the academy to mean the objectification of non-European, and non-white worldviews, then perhaps now is the time to take back that concept and racialize the academy by repopulating it with knowledge and wisdoms from every part of the world, from all knowledge systems and traditions. Doing that will bring some much needed vibrancy and energy into the institutions and breathe some life into these static spaces known for reference, expertise and teaching. Many have already in the past, and are presently contributing to this process, and we will need to keep up this work until we have displaced the many hegemonies and supremacies, without falling into the polarities that global colonialities posit. Coexistence must prevail.

There is an ever-growing number of intercontextual and interdisciplinary decolonial strategies and actions that are now well documented (Dei, 2017; Smith, 2012) to employ in the academy, and at the same time, these strategies must also be of use and effective in dismantling colonialism in communities and societies. These represent actions of mentorship, of empowerment, of equalizing, and of peace. We take up our positions in the academy, from

our given locations and identities, and have previously named key elements of practice that are essential to our stance and how we navigate the present circumstances (Dei & Adhami, 2021b, p. 18 in press b). We share these strategies in solidarity with colleagues and community members who also, especially, address the importance of collective action. What we invite for consideration is: What are the implications for schooling and education, in teaching such things as decolonization, anti-colonialism, and combatting anti-Blackness, when and if steps like the ones we—and others before and alongside us—have suggested become common practice?

In the first place, we insist on the simultaneous restoration of Black, Indigenous, and Racialized voices to conditions of authenticity and primacy, rather than of marginality. This would be transformation whereby scholars and leaders can participate with agency and free of pressure, of performativity, or to maintain a status quo. If we taught about the inherent relationalities of Blackness, Indigeneity, Asian-ness, and other identities as principle elements of our science education, and then incorporate teaching about the impacts and intersections of land dispossessions, labor exploitations, and slaveries on a global landscape, how far might that kind of restorative strategy of voice go toward, for example, reasserting broad, diverse and real notions of Black humanhood and dismantling systemic practices of anti-Black racism and anti-Blackness? What if the global knowledges we learn about span thousands of years, rather than hundreds of years, and were explained by the peoples of the lands rather than those who arrived to exploit them? It is a strategy designed to interrupt—by diverting discourse to be contained within an antiracist framework—any habits that preserve the ongoing narrative, such as those that may erase the connections between settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, and therefore any responsibility to correct that atrocity, by divesting coloniality of its obligations and responsibilities for reparations and amends.

Secondly, as part of this leadership practice, we reiterate our insistence on the multicentric restoration of spirituality and relationality to our institutions, at the very least to the same degree of commonality as any of those of the dominant (Absolon, 2011; Adhami, 2015; Little Bear, 2000). Our spiritualities and Indigenous ways of knowing are imperative and unalienable from our voices and actions. Incorporating our worldviews means doing and seeing things differently, as activating worldviews that center relationality and respect with all sentient and non-sentient beings means that the very essence of the scientific approach will differ greatly. That is, interpreting connection, causation, and consequence are not read the same way they may be in a paradigm that centers dominion, disconnection, observation, and control. That will include spiritual awareness and traditional understandings as nourishment and praxis, all at once. We are talking here about a return to incorporating traditional pedagogies and methodologies such as having Elders in schools, bringing primacy to oral knowledge and traditions on par with written text, while incorporating the multiplatform and multi-context learning that is now taking place, in a very virtual pandemic learning world. In education, like in

many other aspects of life, the pandemic has brought us back to many of the basics, creating many instances of isolation, causing introspection while also creating broader opportunities for connecting and understanding connections, especially through the use of multiple kinds of knowledge platforms and technologies.

Thirdly, we continue to engage in and support ongoing efforts to bring back our histories in ways that mitigate further injuries of disconnection and erasure. What if we were to unravel the narratives of colonial conquest and European wars to reframe our teaching practices and focus on multiple contexts of historical and political consciousness and resistance. There are many of these stories across the world, politicized by contexts and constructs of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, alliances, in African contexts, on Indigenous lands, affecting people in countries now called Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, North-something, and South-something else. This way of approaching education enables a deepening of the discourse that connects Black liberation, Indigenous restoration struggles, and Pakistani/Indian independence, for example, as decolonizing struggles for sovereignty. To restore other versions of relationality. To displace myths of the singularity and single dimensionality imposed upon any one community. An important aspect of this is also to disengage from western frames and lenses, and increase the number of 'trauma-free' representations of peoples and communities (Blake, 2021) as another means to undo the damage caused from the prevalence of distorted colonial narratives and gazes.

Fourth, we look at institutional practicalities, and encourage and advocate for the creation of groups and communities, where working together to accomplish the greater purposes mentioned above. This means working with local communities and the Black, Indigenous, and Racialized educators within our institutions to understand their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and psychological needs. It requires that we develop strategies for mentorship and support mechanisms to address and overcome barriers. It means that we encourage sustainable practices and success by providing strategies for Black, Indigenous, and Racialized recruitment, retention and promotion, and leadership coaching and training. It requires that we examine and review educational, classroom teaching, and curriculum practices, of workplace equity and implementation strategies on an ongoing basis, to ensure the checks and balances are current and relevant, and state clear goals and outcomes that are accomplishable. These shall also address recourse and accountability at all levels of institutional leadership, and make sure that these measures are backed with financial commitment and support. While this is taking place in our institutions at various levels, and again our pandemic has extended many previously insular communities through global connectivity, we are advocating for a collective paradigm shift in overarching social structures that ensures such strategies and remedies are institutionalized *and* maintained *and* monitored regularly so that they do not fall the way of the tokenized short term programs of the past. We need to commit to this as a global society.

From our perspective here, we suggest an approach that embodies and:

> …speaks to relationality, interconnectionality and the collaborative approach of multicentric knowledge synthesis that we see in our own and so many world wisdom traditions. We need to be able to exist in academic communities that enable us to *be who we are*, rich with mentors, colleagues and leaders who sustain and foster our healthy engagement and participation in the academy, who reward, privilege and recognize our ways of knowing, learning and teaching, as equal and appropriate, as embodied and entire. (Dei & Adhami, 2021, pp. 21–22, in press b)

We must continue to expand our understandings of how resistance is practiced in all its forms, redefining what is considered 'normal' and challenging objectification of our ways and our bodies in the academy in ways that also serve broader communities (Adhami, 2015; Dei, 2013; Little Bear, 2000). We must empower, uplift, and embolden one another, and resist the colonial temptations to reduce, repress, and overtake one another, simply because coloniality defines success, privilege, reward, and access through tropes of supremacy. Coexistence is possible and valid in its own right, and we must lead with courage, hope, and heart to model it and make it so, for this is an important part of advocacy and an important precursor to all our actions, especially if that means abandoning participation in the politics of a space, and excusing ourselves from becoming our own oppressors.

Defining this kind of location and stance is by no means exhaustive or absolute, rather it is evolving and alive, a living practice. We consider any progress that comes as only one dimension of our society. Such dimension could still be incomplete and susceptible to erosion, especially if its impact and ability to reach, take root, and flourish in entirety are hindered. As has become a common catchphrase during these pandemic times, we are, after all, in this together.

Conclusion

Even with all we know and have learned in the past, we witness the futility and damage from history repeating itself. As in the case of the United States, even with all the checks and balances, the progress spurred by the Civil Rights and equity movements and discourse of mutual respect and coexistence was clawed back in the post-9/11 era, replaced by revitalized demonizing, and an ever-increasing hypervigilant surveillance of Black, Indigenous, Brown, and othered peoples. While that phase directly targeted Muslim and brown bodies, it redeployed the old tried and tested colonial tropes of suspicion and derision enabled by fear, used globally toward Black, Indigenous, and Racialized peoples. In the current climate it continues to feed the rise in populist notions of supremacy as well as propoganda-based fears that have been at the root of American and Eurocolonial injustices for many centuries. And while the fear,

surveillance, extreme security measures, and precautions were again meted out on these populations, it was in fact a collection of far right, entitled, white supremacist ideologies that dared attempt to dismantle one of the most visible, self-affirming western democracies of our time, nearly upending it, one January afternoon. Even democracy, after all, is just *that* fragile. As López (2003), among others, points out, this western democracy was questionable at its very inception, in terms of its ability to create fair and equitable societies and communities. So the need for real and lasting change is dire, if we are ever to dream of leaving something for our future generations.

Our critical, anti-colonial insistence calls for:

> [T]he subversion of the university/academic space, to uncover the potentialities of being for educational and social transformation. This could require changes in leadership as well as structure, for example, so that the immovable right and space is established – beyond token gestures, and once and for all – for us to *be* as diverse and authentic as who we are. (Dei & Adhami, 2021b, p. 6)

This is an ongoing effort, which calls for the opening up of space, practice, and engagement in ways that are restoratively informed by Indigenous knowledges, cultural practices, and ancestral traditions, so as to create learning spaces infused with ways that engage and uplift participants in a spirit of betterment, evolution, growth, and learning, as our practices of knowledge building, sharing, and keeping have traditionally intended, meant to be devoid of hierarchical preference.

As such, in our work we have long advocated for knowledge practices to encompass and embody international/global citizenship, by reimagining pedagogy and literacy studies, unpacking media and information studies, and broadening and reconnecting perspectives on science, mathematics, history, social justice, and other streams of knowledge in ways that are inclusive of gender/feminist studies and Southern/Indigenous epistemologies. In doing so, we resist the label of critical, as a further marginalization and imposition of structural hierarchy and a colonial binary. We simply add our voices to those among many, as existent on par, not necessarily defined as being in opposition to.

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questionable rhetoric of all forms of hate including anti-Blackness, anti-Muslim sentiments, anti-Semitism, and anti-Asian sentiments, to name a few. What remains clear and undeniable are the systemic paradigms, the very values and cultural norms, that entrench injustice in our every institution while purporting to uphold what constitutes civility and fair and decent treatment for all. We stand in solidarity with our friends, colleagues, and partners on the path, of all families and communities, at a time when we are facing a global recurrence of derision, hate, and colonial violence.

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