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George J. Sefa Dei · Shukri Hilowle
*Editors*

# Cartographies of Race and Social Difference

# Critical Studies of Education

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We live in an era where forms of education designed to win the consent of students, teachers, and the public to the inevitability of a neo-liberal, market-driven process of globalization are being developed around the world. In these hegemonic modes of pedagogy questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are simply not asked. Indeed, questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place—in schools, media, corporate think tanks, etc.—are not raised. When these concerns are connected with queries such as the following, we begin to move into a serious study of pedagogy: What knowledge is of the most worth? Whose knowledge should be taught? What role does power play in the educational process? How are new media re-shaping as well as perpetuating what happens in education? How is knowledge produced in a corporatized politics of knowledge? What socio-political role do schools play in the twenty-first century? What is an educated person? What is intelligence? How important are socio-cultural contextual factors in shaping what goes on in education? Can schools be more than a tool of the new American (and its Western allies') twenty-first century empire? How do we educate well-informed, creative teachers? What roles should schools play in a democratic society? What roles should media play in a democratic society? Is education in a democratic society different than in a totalitarian society? What is a democratic society? How is globalization affecting education? How does our view of mind shape the way we think of education? How does affect and emotion shape the educational process? What are the forces that shape educational purpose in different societies? These, of course, are just a few examples of the questions that need to be asked in relation to our exploration of educational purpose. This series of books can help establish a renewed interest in such questions and their centrality in the larger study of education and the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals.

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*We dedicate this book to all who are in the struggle for anti-colonial justice in the school system and for all those who are fighting to bring changes into the classroom and beyond.*

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In solidarity,
George J. Sefa Dei and Shukri Hilowle

# Introduction

There have been many books on race and so it is understandable to ask why another one? If the answer was so simple, we would have found a solution to the race problem that W. E. B. Du Bois (2003) aptly described as the problem of the twenty-first century. The race problem, unfortunately, seems to have no time restrictions or limits. It is as old as human history, and scholars, students and community workers are charged with the responsibility to continue to understand our societies and the changing meanings, significance and applications of race and difference through time. And, it is very opportune to speak of race now more so when we have US presidential leadership in the world that has used race as a punching bag to spill out alt-right conservatism, racial hatred and bigotry. But let us be under no illusion. The problem is global. It is not an American leadership problem. All over the world, the globalization of race and difference has meant that marginalized and minoritized groups have become likely scapegoats of everything wrong with the society. When voices of legitimate concerns are raised to draw attention to the dehumanization of lives and the sheer brutality of institutional force to dispense with bodies, we hear counter claims of individual responsibility, denial of White privilege and purposeful slogans of 'All Lives Matter' simply to counter legitimate calls 'Black Lives Matter'. Of course, all lives matter, and it is without saying. We must ask why segments of our community find it necessary to remind us that their lives matter. The disposability of Black and Indigenous bodies cannot be dismissed lightly as illegitimate concerns, especially, in a society with a track record of questioning African, Black and Indigenous humanity and making us degenerates.

What this book sets out to do is to follow the intellectual tradition in the search for answers and solutions to raise new and emerging questions from ongoing cartographies of race and difference. In an era of right-wing nationalist rhetoric, White fear and anger, Black and Indigenous, racialized peoples' pain, suffering and anger and the confluences of global racism, how do we begin to speak of race and difference to capture nuances and complexities of human social relations? How do we begin to understand the ways race complicates questions of Indigeneity to offer meanings for anti-racist and anticolonial practice? How do we understand the ongoing processes of empire-building informed by both the national imaginaries and the

conquest of ideas about citizenship, belonging and 'stranger in a homeland'? How is race and difference [re]framing cultures, identities, histories, social borders as well as the cartographies of space, community and nation? What role does the school system and education play in helping to [re]imagine new futurities? We believe these are some of the new questions to place on the table if a new book is to add to existing scholarship.

Colonialism is deeply implicated in constructions of Africa, Europe, Americas, Blackness, Whiteness and Nativism. Colonialism is implicated in the racialization of identities, whether as Black, White, Asian, Muslim, Indigenous, etc. The connection between race and biology and the discourses of biological determinism have long been discredited. We can only go far to concede that the naturalization of our categories has been debunked by science. So why is race still relevant to write about? Race continues to have significance. In fact, there are those who still cling on to their idea of the biological inferiority of Black and other racialized peoples. So in a sense, as a matter of fact, notwithstanding the scientific evidence, race and biology continue to be intertwined. Claiming race does not place human bodies/groups into a primordial fixture or context is intellectually sound, but politics is another matter. As editors of this collection, we insist that the 'diversity, complexity, richness, hybridity and contingencies' of our identities and social-cultural lives do not in fact really contradict a political claim of the urgency of race as political construct nor 'metaphysics of difference' (see Zeleza 2006; p. 15). We invest our communities with history, intellectual agency and resistant politics. The entire project of European colonialism, imperialism and empire-building has not stand outside of White racism. In order to excise ourselves from racist, colonial and imperial project, we must have frank conversations on race and social difference. Race has always been an unspoken element and impediment. It has been a conceptual lens to infantilize the racialized 'Other'. Through a silencing and negation of race, radical scholarship is easily nullified by both the dominant and racialized bodies who uncritically discredit race.

As noted already, racism continues to be enduring on global society. Continuing manifestations of systemic racism, including anti-different racisms, anti-Black racism, racial profiling, anti-Indigeneity and racism against Indigenous peoples and the current spikes in acts of Islamophobia, xenophobia, as well as individual and institutional violence against peoples of Islamic/Muslim faith and of Arab heritage all over the world, should give us pause of deep concern. We are not in a post-racial world, and nothing is further from the truth. It is as if there is new ammunition today to insist on race as consequential. There are no 'alternative facts' on this one! If anything at all, we are in a very intensified racial space where it means much more than ever before how we claim identities for politics. While it is true not everything is simply about race, surely we can subject much of our world today to critical race analysis. Everything has a lot to do with race and 'race speak'. So when we claim we do not see race, we do so to our peril. However, we can bring a critical race lens that highlights how race intersects with class, gender, sexuality, language and religion. It is one thing to speak of these intersections; and it is another to claim because race is scientifically meaningless that we must discard the term. Similarly, the power

of showing how race is demarcated by difference only strengthens the reality of race in contemporary society. We have not, cannot and must not move beyond race if all what this means is a ploy a denial of race.

'Moving beyond' race is to acknowledge its saliency and the intersections, and acting to address the historic and systemic injustices perpetuated along the trajectories of race. If race persists today, it is because we have not done much to address the problem of racism, and the term will continue to be relevant and significant precisely because of our social and political inaction. A mere rhetorical silence and silencing of race does not cut it for those who are continually at the receiving end of race and racism and oppression. In fact, everything that has been said so far equally applies to other sites of difference: gender, class, disability, sexuality, language, religion, etc. So we must ask why the discomfort and resistance to speaking race! It is easy and seductive when one is privileged by race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. to deny what this site of difference has actually done for us. After all, claiming that innocence and invisibility are old-fashioned god's tricks; in a society so much individualized that assumes we go as further as we can through hard work and individual merit, it is tough to acknowledge that something beyond self-efforts either holds us back or facilitates our social advancement. This is the conceit of Western liberalism which shows its contradictory face when it is pitted along the concept of globalization in scripting our lives.

Affirming the political and intellectual potency of race and its intersections with difference allows us to challenge the epistemic power of Whiteness, including its pre-eminence. It also allows us to call upon dominant bodies to acknowledge and interrogate their Euro-ancestry privilege. The dominant's discomfort with race can be an attempt to hide their power and privilege. This is, in fact, one more reason to remind us of the continuing significance of the race concept. We are also able to interrogate the colonialist, Eurocentric and White supremacist traditions of education. Is it impossible for us to distinguish between colonial education and Eurocentric education? No, these are powerfully tied, and in both cases, as the situation with conventional schooling and education, curriculum simply works to normalize White privilege. Very long ago, we were instructed on how the curriculum was an ideological text through which certain knowledge secured the power to dominate other ideas (see Apple 1993; Apple and Weiss 1983). The curriculum is about a way of ordering school as well as society. The curriculum transmits knowledge to maintain social order. While usually silent on power relations, the curriculum nonetheless transmits knowledge about social relations, and such relations shape everyday practices of schooling and society

The cartographies of race are equally about social relations except it helps us to ask questions about power and who, what, when and why knowledge about social groups constructed.

Situating race in the analysis is about power and helps us to understand the 'politics of knowledge'. This is indeed a time to write about race, a time when the sole global superpower is redefining its obligations to a world, when its leader is filled with ultra-right-wing racist ideology to pursue an isolationist agenda. President Trump is bent on building walls, putting executive orders in place to keep people out

of USA, a leader who quickly maligns his elected judges and take joy in deriding and castigating whole nations as prone to criminals ostensibly to appeal to and keep his core supporters happy. This is not nationalist populism. It is racist populism appealing to a White majority that put the President in power. We must call it for what it is. It is not anticolonial nationalism. It is to protect White privilege and supremacy in the world cloaked in national security rhetoric.

This book critically examines how race is constructed globally to intersect gender, class, sexuality, language ability and religion. The book answers some very important questions: how does anti-Black racism manifest itself within various contexts? Chapters in the book use the 'Black and White paradigm' as a lens for critical race analysis examining how, for example, the saliency of race and Blackness shape the 'post-colony', as well as the various 'post' colonial nations. The paradigm centres Whiteness as the lens of defining what is different. A closer proximity to Whiteness is rewarded, while the farther away to such Whiteness is punished (Dei 2017; Dei and Vasquez 2017; da Silva 2007; Smith 2010). The negative portrayal of difference is anchored in the sanctity of Whiteness. It is through such analysis that we can understand how historically colour has been a permanent marker of differentiation even though it has not been the only one.

This collection seeks to challenge the very notions of colonial differencing through a critical analysis of the transnational anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, anti-Indianness and anti-difference in general. Some key questions the book examines include how do colour-blind racist ideologies reinforce White hegemonic practices? How does anti-Blackness play a role in ethnic conflict globally particularly in post-colonial nations? It is through these conversations and dialogue in the classroom that the book was created, given the current political shift in American and the rise of anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, Islamophobia and xenophobia. The book critically examines White supremacy, racialization of gender, 'post-racial' false narratives and other contemporary issues surrounding race.

Dei (1966) discusses the saliency of race and how that is constantly denied or subsumed under other social divisions. While this book does not aim to undermine other barriers and social divisions including gender, sexuality, disability and other forms of marginalization, the goal is to use race as an entry point to examine the experience of Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples globally. The construction of race was centred on this belief that the Black body as a racialized Other was subhuman and biologically inferior to the White race. While this definition has been refuted, social dimensions of race continue to permeate society. The institutional barrier Black, Indigenous and racialized people face in education, and particularly in the judicial system, indicates that race is still a very important determinant of social positionality. So why has there been this denial to discuss race in society and even academia, where there has been this shift to subsume race under class and other social divisions. The book allows us to use race as an entry point to examine a wide range of issues including ethnic tensions in Afghanistan and anti-Black racism in South America, Japan and the Middle East.

Critical education must address racism alongside various other markers of difference. However, this can only be achieved when the saliency of race is acknowledged

and the experiences of racialized and Indigenous students are acknowledged. Contemporary race tensions stem from this need to deny racism in order to uphold and protect White hegemonic practices. In the Euro-Canadian/American context, we see how the national identity of Canada and the USA, for example, positions such nations as 'progressive' particularly in relation to America's continual oppression of Indigenous peoples and African Americans. This false narrative not only subsumes race and denies the ongoing anti-Blackness within many institutions. It also challenges any work that anti-racist groups do to improve the lives of all peoples. It is through the denial of racism that the continual oppression and marginalization of Black, Indigenous and other racialized peoples continue to operate.

The book makes the sociological connection between race and ethnicity. It is through a critical examination of the current political climate that we see how race continues to be a dominant social marker. Banton (1977) examines how classification continues to play role in society, while classification is being based on ethnicity. However, it is important to note that, as many scholars like bell hooks (1990) and Stuart Hall (1997), race is a signifier, and while ethnicity can be used to classify humans, race is a social construction that has material consequences for those who gain membership. Throughout human history, we have witnessed how the consolidation of Whiteness has occurred through the acceptance of Italians, Jewish, Irish and various other Eastern European nationalities into the broader category of the 'White'. Whiteness is just as much as a social construction as Blackness; the value and elevation of Whiteness was seen as desirable; hence, the acceptance of the White identity despite the cultural and linguistic difference amongst these various European ethnicities has reigned supreme.

It is important to ask who benefits from the denial of racism? Have we reached a post-racial destination, and can we move towards colour blindness. Contemporary discussions about race are centred on this idea of moving away from discussing race. However, statistics shows that Black, Indigenous and racialized students confront numerous schooling and educational challenges, racial profiling, police brutality and youth criminalization, disproportionate number of children in care and unemployment. We need academic discourses to support political action to disrupt the utopia view of society that has underserved marginalized populations

## Situating the Chapters

The chapters in this book critically examine the role of race and ethnicity and the experiences of racialized bodies within and outside of formal education. Each chapter examines the saliency and centrality of race and the role of race globally. The chapters also examine the role of White supremacy and the proximity of Whiteness through the connection of Euro centricity and the ways it is reinforced through education. Contributors have developed their chapters through critical investigations of race and difference and the dialogues on race and ethnicity and how the respective experiences and social locations shape race knowledge production. These chapters

examine how race plays a role in shaping current political climates. The rise of alt-right dogma and the continued oppression of Black and Indigenous bodies point out the need to address how White supremacy functions in society. The book takes up four interrelated themes in the cartographies of race and difference anchoring power, privilege and White supremacy. The focus on Whiteness is not to centre Whiteness in anti-racist practice but an open realization that race speaks to dominance and power, and in a White-dominated world, we must acknowledge this fact to develop anti-racist resistance.

In Part I, the focus on White Supremacy is placed in the historical and contemporaneous context of problematic discourse of 'post-racial' and the genesis of racial prejudice. Contributors in the section highlight some basic questions: how do we begin to conceptualize White supremacy in everyday action/practice? In contemporary society, how is White supremacist logics playing itself out? And how can be broach history to understand White supremacist though and racist action that is beyond simply a question of burning across? The chapters in this section offer useful pointers to help us address some of these questions. In the chapter 'The Trump Effect: Debunking the False Narrative of "Post-Racial" America', Shukri Hilowle examines both the history and contemporary discussions of racism in America and the historical roots of populism and the alternative right. It is noted that the rise of President Donald Trump was possible through his divisive anti-immigration, and Islamophobic campaign, which was supported by many Americans who found his platform appealing. Above all this chapter challenges the myth of the post-racial America, a false promise that was sold to Americans through the election of Barack Obama in 2008. This chapter centres a discussion of race and its role in contemporary American politics and the role of White supremacy. Elisha Lim's excellent rendition on Renounce or Perish examines the theological history of racial prejudice which is a much needed addition to this collection. In her work, Lim uses a critical race analysis to examine the theological history of racial prejudice dating back to the Middle Ages. Lim examines how religious discourse has been used throughout history to reinforce racial prejudice. This chapter explores the history of Eurocentric ideas and the role of religious discourse rationalization of racial discrimination through focusing on three key principles: moral binaries, human hierarchies and phobic segregation.

Part II situates White supremacy in global contexts drawing on the powerful 'Black-White paradigm'. The distinction of the 'Black-White' paradigm from a 'Black-White binary' informs a critical reading of how Whiteness and White supremacy emanate globally (see also Dei 2017). Contemporary framing of race, Whiteness and Blackness cannot dismiss the fact of a salience of skin colour as a powerful marker for social differentiation. A proximity to Whiteness and White identity is rewarded across different geographies and spaces (see also Silva 2007), while Blackness notwithstanding a positive affirmation of resistance and agency can simultaneously be read as deviant, criminal and transgressive. Clearly, to understand this feature of human society and to address racial tensions, we must use a discursive prism that shifts from binaries and dichotomous thinking to one of

connections and relations. And, yet no matter how hard we may try, Whiteness continues to be a yardstick for measuring anything else.

Globalization has come with an increased travelling of Whiteness to different geographies. The different geographies of Whiteness and Blackness have been consequential for our understanding of racism and oppression. The chapters in these sections are asking us to think through some deep question markers and delimits of Whiteness and White supremacy. Elisabeth Dennis' chapter 'Exploring the Model Minority: Deconstructing Whiteness Through the Asian Canadian Example' critically examines the 'model minority' status of Asian Canadians and the dominance of Eurocentric notions of race. This chapter examines the 'Black-White' paradigm that affords certain communities for their proximity to White privilege and Eurocentric supremacy. Dennis argues that Asian Canadians have been afforded privilege and upward mobility in a society that places their racial group as the model minority group. She further explores the implications of these ideas and how Asian Canadians are both constructed as examples but at the same time are excluded from mainstream White culture. Dennis main contention is that the construction of Asian Canadians as model citizens serves to further promote anti-Blackness and racist ideas surrounding upward mobility and the myth of meritocracy. It serves to blame certain communities for their failures instead of addressing systemic issues that have contributed to ongoing violence and racism in Canada.

The piece on Born to Work: An In-Depth Inquiry on the Commodification of Indian Labour and Current Discourses of Migrant Labour Under the Kafala System by Shirleen Datt explores forced labour and human trafficking rampant in the kafala system. The kafala system is used by several countries located in the Gulf including Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Using an anti-racist and anticolonial framework, Datt explores the historical roots of the saliency of brown skin and the colonial history of using brown bodies for labour. She draws parallels between the British's Indian indentureship system and the contemporary issues surrounding the kafala system. She draws the reader to critically examine the ongoing issue of human trafficking through an anti-racist approach; the saliency of the brown skin and the disproportionate rates of brown bodies used for labour in the Gulf reinforce the racialization of brown bodies. The discussion is significant in pointing to the mechanics of the global migrant economy and the role it plays in the demand for low-paid labour seen in countries in the Gulf. Claude Deschamps' essay on The Unbearable Lightness of Being Yellow: Whiteness and Its Legacy on Japan's Self-Image and Attitudes Toward the West gives a historical account of Japanese people's desire for Whiteness. He uses a personal recount of his time spend in Japan as a personal encounter with Japanese culture. Deschamps argues that the desire for Whiteness stems from the history of racialization of Japanese people during the Meiji Era (1865–1912). He argues that global racial hierarchy created by the West has contributed to this fascination for Whiteness. The historical construction of race has played a significant role in contemporary desires for proximity to Whiteness. Deschamps uses a decolonial theoretical framework to disrupt these notions the desire for Whiteness in Japanese culture.

In her chapter on Exporting Racism: Western Interventions and the Making of the Pashtun Cultural 'Others', Lailooma Wardak critically examines the history of ethnic tensions and conflict in Afghanistan through examining the history of colonial British rule and the long-lasting legacy of colonialism. Wardak argues that Western imperialism constructed Pashtuns as premodern and violent, and this is connected to contemporary discourses that continue to contribute to ethnic tensions in this region. The author notes that post-9/11 contemporary discourses contribute to the 'othering' of Pashtun identity. In examining the colonial history and racialized discourses, it is opined that that the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan stems from the colonial history and Western intervention and the exclusion and 'othering' of Pashtun peoples. In her chapter on Disempowered, Disenfranchised and Disengaged: Balochistan in Focus Name, Mashail Imran examines the colonial and colonized dynamic relationship between the Pakistani state and Balochistan. The region of Balochistan and its people have been politically and socially excluded; this divide and rule policy has been introduced and adopted during British colonization of this region. The overall exploitation and extraction of resources from this region have contributed to the overall 'underdevelopment' of this region. This chapter is helpful in tracing colonial legacies of oppression and how it is linked to the internalization of these systems of domination. Imran argues that the internalization of these colonial attitudes has contributed to the 'othering' of the Baloch people. The militarization of this region also stems from the need to securitize and employ dominant narratives that construct the peoples of this region as violent and 'radical' allowing for further exclusion and oppression. The anti-Baloch sentiment aided by mainstream media has contributed to the ideological differences in this region and has contributed to widespread violence and ethnically motivated killing of Baloch people. Using ideas from Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon, Imran argues that the depiction of the Baloch people as violent and radical ignores the social, political and ethnic marginalization and oppressions these people face in the region but instead follows colonial and dominant discourses of radicalization.

Part IV helps us to re-image race and to begin to subvert Eurocentric spaces and Whiteness as a system of dominance. We argue that in order to transform our present social conditions, we need new spaces. Such space must come with the re-imagining of race and a resistance to Eurocentric space. What are the possibilities of this happening? What will such re-imagining take? How do we begin to permanently dislodge Whiteness? What lessons of futurity can we draw upon? Andrea Vásquez Jiménez's chapter, The Term and Discourse of "Hispanic" Is Racist: Anti-Black and Anti-Indigenous Resistance in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, addresses how the discourse and term 'Hispanic', a term that is used by peoples of Latin America/Abya Yala, is rooted in anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blackness. Jiménez encourages the resistance of dominant hegemonic discourses that rooted in colonial histories and the erasure of these histories. The emergence of this movement to reject the term 'Hispanic' stems from Ontario provincial legislation of the 'Hispanic Heritage Month'. The author's paper recounts this process of resistance and the need to challenge Eurocentric narratives of peoples across Turtle Island. Through the support of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), community organizations and commu-

nity members, the focus of this work draws on a critical examination of the systemic transformation in school boards. It also raises critical questions regarding the tokenistic nature of Hxstory/Heritage 'months' and the ways we can transform and educate rather than reinforce colonial legacies.

In her essay on Racialization of Gender, Work and the Visible Minority Women at Workplace: With a Particular Focus on African Black Women in Canada, Thoko Ngwenya examines the history and ongoing racialization of migrant workers and immigrants and the ongoing discrimination and racialization of Black women in the workforce. Canada's long history of racialization of work includes the exclusion of Chinese men during the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway, along with marginalization and exploitation of migrant workers from former colonial countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Ngwenya examines the racism that Black women undergo in the workplace; through examining the workforce, this chapter critically examines the gendered, racialization and classism found in the workplace and problematizes the false notion of meritocracy in the workplace.

Marycarmen Lara-Villanueva's chapter 'Reflections on Race, Whiteness and Multiculturalism' extends the discussion by reflecting on the discourse of multiculturalism and how it erases discussions surrounding racial privilege. Lara-Villanueva argues that the school system benefits White students far more than other racialized groups; this chapter examines the ways White supremacy and hegemony operate in school system in a subtle way. Multiculturalism obscures and conceals this process. Through using a critical race theory lens, this chapter focuses on Whiteness in school system and the ways educators are implicated in this process. The resistance to the dialogue of race and saliency of race only further reinforces the domination of White supremacy in schools. Cultural deficit thinking also contributed to the expansion of this racialization of students of colour and further normalizes Whiteness. In the final essay of this collection, John Castillo's Re-imaging Africanized Bodies in Eurocentric Spaces uses an anti-racist approach to examine race as a social construct. The author examines the intersections of re-imagining Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces. Specifically, Castillo re-imagines the position of Africanized bodies through reconstructing the representations of Africanized bodies in popular media. He refers to this as the Image Matrix, and in doing this, the author considers his own dual African-Caribbean identity and the trauma of colonial project that subjugates and dehumanizes the Black body. Through colonization, the boundaries of 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' along with 'logical' and 'illogical' were maintained through Eurocentric spaces. By situating his own experiences as an educator in secondary education and his identity as a Black male in the discussion, Castillo not only challenges the reading of identity but also how resistance and politics are integral to claims of identity.

In conclusion, we reiterate that race is real. The concept and idea of race have been permanent features in our human psyche, social memory and consciousness. By extension, racism has been deeply ingrained in our thought processes and action practice through a particular sociohistorical conditioning that has led to the internalization of oppression as a functioning component of everyday existence. Racial [and racist] ideologies have directly shaped the construction of our social categories,

as well as the ways institutions function and perform to serve human and social capital needs. The cartographies of race and difference reveal significant historical, ideological, psychological and social contexts within which race is taken up. Similarly, there are structural, systemic dimensions of racism that are best understood in the context of the cartographies of race and difference. There are existing power structures in society through which race functions to maintain its full effects when systemically paired with difference. Through cartographies of race and difference, we are able to identify the complex institutionalized power structures and social forces within which White privilege and White power rest, serving to empower dominant groups while at the same time disempowering marginalized and subordinate groups. It is in such everyday acts of resistance and refusal that the racially oppressed can reclaim and insist on our social, intellectual and political agency and redeem our humanity.

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# Chapter 1
# The Trump Effect: Debunking the False Narrative of "Post-Racial" America

**Shukri Hilowle**

## 1.1 Introduction

The 2008 election of Barack Obama signified for many a cultural shift in America; for some his election marked a shift away from racial divisions toward unification and a "post-racial" society. President Obama's entire presidency was marked with racial tensions especially surrounding police brutality against Black men and the emergence of the Tea Party, along with resistance toward any policies he introduced. Fast-forward to 2016 and the election of Donald Trump, color blindness and the era of "post-racial" completely contradict the current political and social climate of America. The purpose of this essay is to explore how race plays a role in America and to challenge the idea of "color blindness" through examining the political and social climate of America.

As a Black Canadian woman, I have in many cases have witnessed color-blind attitudes about race. In my experiences, it was often privileged individuals who denied racism; when race is discussed, it is those who want to address racism that are accused of reinforcing racism. The notion of color blindness began in the civil rights era; Dr. Martin Luther King argued that a just society was one that did not use skin as a measure of character but the actions of such individual. He stated, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (King, 2). Dr. King gave this speech during the height of racial tensions during the civil rights movement in the 1960s. While this notion is very appealing especially for those marginalized for their skin, Dr. King did not once state that America has healed from the wounds of slavery and Jim Crow. The problem and dangers with the color-blind ideology is that it seeks to erase ongoing discrimination and violence against

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Black people. It seeks to stifle any discussions about racism despite race-based data, employment figures, racial profiling, and ongoing state-sanctioned violence against Black people, indicating that racism is still an issue in America. This paper argues that the idea of a "post-racial" America was reaffirmed by President Obama's election, but through examining media, social movements, and contemporary race relations, the idea of a post-racial society in America is a fallacy. Critical race theorists like bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins have discussed contemporary race relations in the United States; this paper will be using contemporary race theorists to analyze the current political climate in the United States since the election of Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential elections.

### *1.1.1 Race Relations in America*

Historically, race has always been a central issue in America, politically and socially; the civil rights era ushered in a key moment of progress for African Americans. The 1956 ruling of the *Brown vs Board of Education* was a monumental shift during Jim Crow Era American politics. The case was central in desegregating schools where the "separate but equal" doctrine allowed for the continual marginalization of Black students in schools. The historic ruling created change and disrupted the notion of "separate but equal" when data showed the effects segregated schooling had on Black students. Despite these advancements, scholars have noticed a similar re-segregation of schools comparable to the 1960s can continue into the current generation. This along with the notion of color blindness, contemporary race relations in America have moved from the recognition of racial discrimination toward subtler racism and the denial of racial discrimination. Some scholars have argued that a "new language of race" must be developed to address contemporary race issues (Ivery & Basset, 3). The immergences of class theory have also proved to be challenging for race theorists; the persistence that class was the central issue for Black Americans completely erases the Black struggle; class theory is now the dominant discourse for analysis on social inequality (Ivery & Basset, 3). This is a direct result of the hegemonic post-racial discourse that has rose to dominance after the civil rights era. Theorists like Kimberle Crenshaw, bell hooks, and various other Black scholars have discussed race alongside other social divisions. Crenshaw developed an intersectional framework to examine how race alongside class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of inequalities shape the lives of marginalized communities. The decision to move away from discussions about race allows for continual discrimination of Black people to continue under White supremacy. While other social divisions such as class, sexuality, and gender continue to affect marginalized communities, it is the concept of race that continues to play a substantial role in American society. Dialogue surrounding racial discrimination continues to be challenging, despite the fact that race continues to be the central most divisive issue in contemporary American politics. Public dialogues regarding racial discrimination and Black deaths at the hands of police, along with systematic barriers Black people

face, continue to be challenged despite overwhelming research. Economically, White family household incomes are 20 times more than Black Americans; structural racism particularly in the judicial system continues to impact Black American disproportionately more than White Americans. These are the new challenges Black theorists face when it comes to contemporary race relations in America.

In the past Black theorists had challenge Jim Crow laws that assured the "separate but equal" doctrine; in contemporary discussions about race, the number challenge is discussing race.

W.E.B Dubois book *The Souls of Black Folk* challenged the current problem with American social, economic, and political institutions and infrastructures. He stated, "the problem of the Twentieth Century (would be) the problem of the color line" (Catanese, 4). The current issue many Black scholars face today in the Academy is this push back against discussions about race. For Black feminists like bell hooks, using race as a stand point entry to discuss the plight of Black women has been central to her work. For many Black feminists, race does matter, and it is what differs the experiences of Black women from previous feminist movements that were exclusive toward women of color and was primarily focused on the experiences of White middle-class women. It is important to ask, does race matter too? Who was overwhelmingly affected by Jim Crow laws? It is always those who are not affected by race that argue that race is not an issue; for people of color, it is not a question that race not only matters but plays a role in our everyday interactions. Historically, Jim Crow laws were based on the idea that race was a biological determinate, and this had an impact on Black Americans and was the basis for the eugenics movement which sought to discriminate "inferior" groups including Black Americans and other marginalized groups. Since then scientific evidence shows a lack of difference between the races biologically, therefore concluding race as a social construct. Many theorists have discussed the saliency of skin color; George Dei argues:

> The hegemonic social evaluations of human differences, skin colour differences have historically been used to justify unequal human treatment. Therefore, as we call for an understanding of new and alternative meanings of race, we must be careful to deny the saliency of skin colour…. (Dei, 12)

While the understanding of race has changed since W.E.B Dubois work on race and the color problem, for many theorists today, the challenge is to continue to theorize about race and the meaning of race. Race continues to play a large role in politics and ever more in the American criminal justice system.

What are the differences between race and racism? While most theorists agree that race is a social construct, the everyday interactions and implications it has on Black people continue to operate under the system White supremacy. Racism on the other hand is a process that has developed historically through racial domination (genocides, slavery, colonialism, etc.). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues that this system has now become embedded within the fabric of societies (Bonilla, 1359). In order for a post-racial society to exist, racism along with the White-Black paradigm must be discontinued. Bonilla-Silva argues that new forms of racism are subtler and therefore harder to challenge and classifies color-blind racism as a new form of

racism (Bonilla, 1358). He states, "That is, that racism is above anything, about practices and behaviors that produce a *racial structure*—a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shapes the life chances of the various races" (Bonilla, 1360). The dominate group continues to prosper under this racial structure; meanwhile certain groups (subordinate groups) continue to be marginalized. This system is not fixed, and the categories do change over time:

> …Although the content of racial categories changes over time through manifold processes and struggles, race is not a secondary category of group association. The meaning of black and white, the "racial formation," changes within the larger racial structure." (Bonilla-Silva 1997, p. 472)

What continue to be real are the everyday consequences these meanings have on human beings along with the interaction (race relations) between certain groups. Social constructions of who is Black, White, and where other races fit within this paradigm do change; the social function of race plays a role in interracial relations, racial inequality, and the continual racial domination.

### *1.1.2 Contemporary Race: Black Lives Matter*

One of the greatest injustices in America currently is the mass incarceration of young Black men and the continual state-sanctioned violence carried out by the police. Carding, racial profiling, and murders continue to take place in an alarming rate, and disproportionately the hardest hit continues to be Black men. One social movement that has gained mass attention for addressing this issue continues to be the Black Lives Matter movement. This international movement centers race as an entry point to analyze this current problem; this movement has come to the forefront amidst the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and countless other Black men who have lost their lives to law enforcement officers. While the BLM movement gained attention for protesting for Black men who were targeted by police, their guiding principles focus on wide issues concerning Black people. This movement is focused on addressing anti-Blackness on a structural and institutional level. Carding and racial profiling is an institutional issue, and in a "post-racial" society, it begs to question the need for racial profiling, especially if we are striving for a color-blind society. Clearly, statistics shows that not only are the police not color-blind, but they target young Black men more so than any other group of men. BLM has been met with a lot of resistance particularly from the All Lives Matter movement. The ALM is a clear example of the application of color blindness and the desire to not discuss race. This movement also sheds light on continual racial tensions; the denial of race is strategic because it erases the history of racism and violence against Black people and the wounds of Jim Crow. What is also very sinister about this movement is that it continues to erase violence Black people face currently by denying any discussion of race. Alison Bailey argues that, "ignorance is often an active social production… From positions of dominance ignorance can take the form of those in the center

either refusing to allow those at the margins to know…" (Bailey, 80). The ALM also points to an issue of lack of empathy and this determination to maintain privilege. Disregarding the saliency of race allows for this type ideology to spread and for marginalization to continue under this movement. While the BLM and ALM movements point to a divide in America and social tensions, the 2016 Presidential elections contributed vastly to these already existing social and political tensions.

The murder of Michael Brown in 2014 sparked heated debate and protests throughout the nation, and the list of murdered men continued to grow; meanwhile, protesters were faced with repression. Some news coverage referred to the protests as "riots" and "unlawful," while others referred to the protests as "uprising" against racial discrimination and state-sanctioned violence.

Juliet Hooker states:

> …calls into question not only the integrity of U.S. democracy, but also the kinds of democratic obligations that can be fairly placed upon black citizens as a result. When other citizens and state institutions betray a pervasive lack of concern for black suffering calls into question not only the integrity of U.S. democracy, but also the kinds of democratic obligations that can be fairly placed upon black citizens as a result. When other citizens and state institutions betray a pervasive lack of concern for black suffering. (Hook, 449)

The BLM movement and protestors questioned the value of Black life and the unwillingness for the judicial system to properly charge police with the murders of countless of Black men. These racial tensions during President Obama's last few years as President indicated a crisis within America's democracy. The murders of Michael Brown and many other Black men show a flaw in America's democracy and also shed light into race relations. The mass carding and frisking of Black men disrupts the idea of color blindness, inclusiveness, and the overall American pride in diversity. It also disrupts the romantic ideas of the civil rights movement that ushered in the notion of progress in regard to race relations in America. For many including the ALM groups, race relations have significantly improved, and others have asserted that Martin Luther King Jr. would have not supported the BLM movement (Hook, 450). While some critics of the movement stemmed from the disdain they had for violent protests, some saw the protests and called for nonviolent responses to the murders. African Americans must always respond to terror with nonviolence; Hook states, "African Americans learned to meet racial terror with nonviolence in order to preserve their own lives within an arbitrary system in which responding in kind to any insult or harm could lead to sudden death" (Hook, 453). This puts a strain on the individuals to act nonviolent especially when faced with violence from the police.

Police presence in urban communities has always been a source of tension; many of the inner-city neighborhoods populated mostly by people of color have been shown to be targets of over-policing. The Black body often is marked as an assailant and is subjected to police harassment on a daily basis. Police practices have contributed to poor police and community relations. Research shows that violent and aggressive cops are more likely to be met with resistance; meanwhile the opposite holds true when police show restraint when approaching Black citizens; "males and minority citizens are *more* likely to show compliance" (Brunson & Miller, 613).

Black communities are subjected to more surveillance, verbal abuse, and overall disrespect by police; meanwhile, they experience slower response times and protection from police (Brunson & Miller, 614). The construction of the Black male body as a threat plays a substantial role in why they become targets of deadly force to begin with. In all the videos released of deadly shootings of Black men, the police interaction escalates quickly and violently, and this largely has to do with the suspicion police have of Black men. In some of these cases, following police instructions still resulted in death or injuries. Police are more likely to use deadly police force toward Black assailants than any other population of people. Studies have shown that 46.6% of Black people have been harassed, stopped, and questioned by police (Brunson & Miller, 616). Black people were five times more likely than any other group to report instances of harassment by police. In comparison only 24.8% of White youth have experienced police harassment or surveillance (Brunson & Miller, 616). Legal cynicism and negative attitudes toward police are also very prevalent in Black Americans than in White Americans.

There is a great discrepancy in the ways African perceive the legal system in relation to how White Americans view racial profiling. Middle- to upper-class African Americans also show negative attitudes toward police; age also plays a factor because juveniles show more unfavorable attitudes toward police. A report on police and community relations show, "minority youths consistently expressed more negative views of the police than did whites, and race/ethnicity was the strongest predictor of perceptions of police fairness and police discrimination" (Brunson & Miller, 617). Racial profiling victims have also been shown to have less favorable views of police (Brunson & Miller, 618). Consistently, race is the most important factor in the experiences of people with the police; disproportionately Black men showed to have the more resentment to police presence and harassment in their neighborhoods. One participant Darnell stated during a research study on the experiences of Black men with police, "police over there by me, they stop you just to mess with you for real. That's what they do. Sometimes they'll pull up and be like, 'get that damn crack out your mouth boy!' and keep going" (Brunson & Miller, 624). This is indicative of the ways certain citizens are over-policed and government, while other citizens are protected and given human rights. Many of the respondents in this study did not have prior criminal convictions but were still subjected to harassment by police. Some of them indicated that this was not unordinary occurrences but were frequently happening in their neighborhoods.

### *1.1.3 Whiteness: White Identity Politics*

Donald Trump's slogan "Make America Great Again" best represented the sentiment shared by many opponents to President Obama's policies and presidency; for many his elections signified a loss of power and privilege. When examining race, and how race plays a role in American society, we must begin by examining how the White identity has been formed and maintained. Cheryl Harris argues:

> Whiteness was premised on white supremacy rather than mere difference. 'White' was defined and constructed in ways that increased its value by reinforcing its exclusivity… The concept of whiteness was built on exclusion and racial subjection. (Harris, 98)

Whiteness is exclusive, and this is why it very valuable and desirable for many; the construction of race is neither static nor fixed but can very fluid. The definition of race, however, is never created by the marginalized but rather those who have power and privilege. Donald Trump's election was a clear example of a desire to return to the status quo and what is familiar: White hegemonic power. Donald Trump is a surrogate for many who needed representation; he symbolizes the American Dream. Sarah Lucia Hoagland argues that the error of Whiteness is its failure to be seen as interdependent on other groups. (Hoagland, 97). The value of Whiteness is dependent on the denigration of Blackness, without the process of dehumanization people of color. Whiteness cannot exist or have any value, thus the need for the continual protection of all the privilege of Whiteness in America. For a post-racial society to truly exist, this process of the White and Black paradigm must be erased. The Trump election indicated that for many, the White identity continues to play a role in politics. The polls show a large support for Trump by White voters; meanwhile 3% Black voters only voted for Trump; what was very alarming was the support of Trump from Hispanic voters despite his anti-Hispanic rhetoric (Kirk & Scott, 2). The results of this election indicate a growing concern and anxiety about America along with the fears of losing domination and power. The Trump slogan, "Make America Great Again," heightens this fear and allows voters a way out, a way to push back against societal change through the process of electing him as President. Trump in many ways symbolizes White identity politics or the Alt-Right movement, economic freedom, and conservatism (Fisher, 744).

The Trump election much like the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom to leave the United Nations signaled a shift in race relations and a counterreaction to the changing demographics in the United States and in Europe. While White Americans according the United States census continue to make up 77% of the population, millions of illegal immigrants along with a loss of economic growth in the working-class employment sectors, there have been existing tensions between working-class Whites and other marginalized groups (Kirk & Scott, 2). Trump's campaign was filled with racist and sexist rhetoric aimed at certain marginalized communities including Hispanics, Black Americans, and women. The largest support for his campaign stemmed from White males; similarly, anti-immigrant sentiment was the primary factor for the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom on June 2016. Once again, the overarching issue was primarily stemming from economic issues particularly from working-class British White citizens, but the racial element in this case also played a factor. The Obama election may have created a fear of loss of power and White hegemony, but for middle- and upper-class White Americans, there was no loss of economic growth and development. Racial consciousness of working-class Whites has been designed to place value on their White skin and position while ignoring their economic situation. Globalization and the shift to unskilled workers in the Global South have had a devastating impact on the working class. American

corporation's reliance on cheap migrant and immigrant labor has also had equal impact on the conditions of working-class communities in America. Racial consciousness allows for those within the same race to relate at a greater rate, and this plays a significant role in race relations; race consciousness is also a political identity that transformed how people react to certain policies and can predict voting turnout. The "Make America Great Again" slogan may have appealed to some working-class White Americans, but it completely alienated the Black vote.

Given the political and social climate of American since the Trump election, why do certain groups like the ALM movement continue to deny the saliency of skin color considering the power it has played during this election? Mills argues that this willful ignorance stems from the inability for Whites to relate to the problems that face Black Americans. The push back against BLM stems from the reluctance to admit that Black Americans suffer from police brutality at an alarming rate and higher than all other races in America; the BLM movement does not actively deny that others races are also victims of this ongoing problem. The ALM movement is just a small fraction of social movement aimed at denying racism and institutional racism; the Alternative Right group also known as Alt-Right has also emerged within the last few years as a major political and social movement in America. The Alt-Right differs from the ALM movement because it does not deny its roots with White nationalism and White supremacy, while the ALM continues to juxtapose itself against BLM, a group that continues to challenge White supremacy and institutional racism in America. The Alt-Right group is strongly against immigration, multiculturalism, and political correctness and supported the election of Trump, whom also denounces immigration and despises political correctness. Steven Bannon, a key member of the Alt-Right group, was a chief strategist to Trump during his election and will serve as the Senior Counselor to the President. They key focus of this group is to continue to promote anti-immigrant and anti-Black propaganda to fuel support from their supporters. Trump take-over of the Republican Party was effective because he gave supporters someone to blame and dislike John Kenneth White who argues corrupt politicians who allow illegal immigrants easy entry sign bad trade deals that undermine manufacturing jobs, refuse to stand up for America overseas, and allow "radical Muslim extremists" to run free in the Middle East and, eventually, find their way into the United States (White, 266).

Trump promised the working class to not only to "Make America Great Again" but to secure back employment to the working class. His racist rhetoric drew support from the working class; during his speeches, he made it clear that he was there for to serve the working class:

> I have visited the laid-off factory workers, and the communities crushed by our horrible and unfair trade deals. These are the forgotten men and women of our country, and they are forgotten, but they will not be forgotten long. These are people who work hard but no longer have a voice. I am your voice. (White, 267)

This excerpt is one of the many speeches he gave to supporters in working-class cities that have been in financial ruins since the 2008 recession. Trump's entire election campaign was filled with divisive propaganda that has proven to be very dangerous for Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other non-White citizens.

### *1.1.4 American Politics: Trump Effect*

Historically, populist political movement has always proved to be anti-immigrant and anti-Black; White argues, "Like the American dream itself, populism lives too deeply in the fears and expectations of American citizens to be trivialized or replaced" (White, 272). It was the Democratic Party in the 1830s that had a racist, populist platform that targeted White farmers in rural farms in America who were the hardest hit economically. Many of the working class were filled with racist attitudes toward Black Americans who they felt were the source of their own economic downturn; similarly, the anti-immigrant sentiments toward Hispanics, and Muslims, stem from similar conditions and fear about the economic conditions of the working class. The Trump movement and the anti-immigrant sentiments are another upsurge of a populist movement, and it has taken over the Republican party and gained Trump his election into the White House. The populist sentiments were tapped into by Trump despite resistance from previous Republican candidates like the 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Trump spoke for the working-class people and his choice of words appealed to many because he would critique the establishment: media, lobbyists, and congress. Trump has spoken against the establishment; in one of his speeches, he stated, "And even our lawyers and judges, the reflective 'wise men,' have been stepping all over the U.S. Constitution, the bulwark of our democracy. They have recklessly appointed themselves to be policy makers, because our actual elected officials are paralyzed by partisanship" (White, 275). Trump's appeal to the working class and his anti-immigrant rhetoric made him the ideal candidate following the Presidency of Obama.

Trump gained a lot of support due to his stance against Muslims and illegal immigrants; in polls it showed that 67 percent of Republicans supported his anti-Muslims policies for more securitization of American Muslims (Kirk & Scott, 2). In addition, 44 percent also favored Trump to deal with immigration policies (Kirk & Scott, 2). One of his highlights of his presidential promises was his desire to build a wall on the border of Mexico and America, and this was met with support from Republican voters because many of them believed immigrants were bad for the economy. Trump also asserted that Mexico would pay for the infrastructure of this wall; he also promised anti-fair trade agreements, which he asserted were the source of the economic downturn and loss of jobs for the working class.

Trump's appeal also stems from his wealth; he symbolizes the American Dream and the lust for social mobility. Although Trump represents the top 1% with earning combined to over a billion, his speech along with his lack of political correctness allowed him to appeal to the poorest Americans in rural townships. Trump appeal also stems from his lack of experience in American politics; while for other candidates the more experience in politics helps your candidacy, Trump was able to gain support because of his critical views on politicians like Hilary Clinton. Trump has been regarded as a newcomer, one who has not been tainted by lobbyists or self-interest groups. The political structure has always been a source of suspicion by working-class Americans, and an example of this can be seen in the current gun

control debates and Obamacare. There has been a lingering fear of too much government intervention long before Trump announced his candidacy. The anti-government sentiment is very strong in the Republican Party, and many of the Republican candidates like Ben Carson along with Trump were newcomers to politics. While Trumps gained support, he was also met with a great deal of criticism particularly for his comments about African Americans, Hispanic, immigrants, and Muslims. The ideas that illegal aliens bring only crime to America along with his assentation that American Muslims are radical supports of terrorism, along with proposed decision to create a database to track Muslims, were being all met criticism. The Trump election sheds light on the divisive politics, and the support of Trump signals racial divide in America. The 2016 elections were one the most racially divisive elections, but it brought the discussion of race back into American Politics.

### *1.1.5 Anti-Political Correctness: The Alt-Right Movement*

The Trump elections also sparked debate surrounding race and political correctness; the Alt-Right movement was the key supporter of Trump's election. What is the Alt-Right movement, and what role had this movement have on the 2016 Presidential elections? The term Al-Right was first introduced by Richard Bertrand-Spencer in 2008; this movement key role was to center White nationalism and White ideals, along with the goal of persevering Western civilization (Heimbach 2016). Race realism is one of the key ideas of this far-right group; they also advocate for the return of biological race. This movement follows the neoconservative uprising in French politics, along with England's National Front, another far-right group that are also anti-immigration. Much of these far-right groups are exclusionary and vehemently against immigration; the supporters of these groups tend to think Western civilization is on the decline due to the changing demographics from newly arrived immigrants. Some of the proponents have also coined the term "white genocide" as a response to Syrian refugee settlement along with any resistance of White supremacy. Although this group is not monolithic, some key issues seem to be central in this movement including the preservation of Whiteness and the fear of the changing demographic of America and Europe. The National Policy column, an Alt-Right conservative think-tank, continues to spew propaganda surrounding this notion of white genocide; "immigration is a kind a proxy war—and maybe a last stand—for White Americans, who are undergoing a painful recognition that, unless dramatic action is taken, their grandchildren will live in a country that is alien and hostile" (Heimbach 2016). This movement is a direct response to immigration and the ongoing tensions surrounding race relations in America; this movement is vehemently against the BLM movement, and the disruption of White supremacy. It is not a coincident that this movement gained prominence during the Presidency of Obama. Some have argued that this movement and its support for Trump was a part of the larger "White lash" as a response to Obama's candidacy (Heimbach 2016). The Alt-Right disrupts the color-blind ideas of race and the imagined cohesiveness of America; it also shatters the idea of post-racial America.

Throughout his presidency, Obama faced adversity from Alt-Right groups and the Tea Party movement that posed a great deal of resistance to all the policies. The rise of the Tea Party was a direct reaction to the election of Obama; this populist movement was the first wave of anti-Obama rebellion and was the first populist movement from the right. The Tea Party pre-dates the Alt-Right group which gained more momentum within the last few years and its height during Trump's election race. The Tea Party has been labeled both populist and libertarian; their growing concerns over government intervention and spending along with their resistance to Obamacare were the key features of this right-wing conservative group. Many scholars have argued that race and loss of privilege seem to be the source of the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and the source for the uprising of both these far-right groups; the loss of White privilege and the concern over America's changing demographics seem to have signed White resistance in the far right. Most scholars agree that American politics have become more polarized since the 2008 election of President Obama. This polarization was for the most part by Republican strategists; the popular opinion that America was in crisis created a moral panic among working-class Americans. Some scholars have argued that there has been a crisis within the White identity, which has been a response, firstly, to the changing demographics in America, along with anti-racist policies aimed at creating equity and ending discrimination. What is interesting is the resistance to these policies stem from the fear of the implementation of anti-racism policies. For example, the BLM movement seeks to end police carding, profiling, and police continual murder of unarmed Black men. The ALM seeks to resist these changes by arguing that these barriers do not exist and are not systematic but isolated incidents. There has not been any loss of privilege; these groups seek to stop any changes from happening. This crisis stems from the absolute fear of the future of possibilities of American change; they are not a reaction to the contemporary conditions of marginalized groups. There have not been many changes under the Obama administration that have contributed to this type of reaction from the far right.

Some authors have argued that this reaction stems from the loss of privilege during the civil rights era and that many White Americans have resentment. The inauguration of President Obama further fueled this resentment toward the changing political and social structures in America. Therefore, it is not a reaction to supposed loss of privilege but the reclaiming of racial superiority;

Joel Olson argues:

> During slavery and segregation, white identity functioned as a form of racialized *standing* that granted all whites a superior social status to all those who were not white, particularly African Americans. The loss of individualized standing due to the victories of the civil rights movement, however, led to anger, anxiety, and resentment among many whites, and a desire to restore that standing. (Olson, 704)

The assertion that there has been an ongoing white genocide seems to illustrate this moral panic surrounding the loss of privilege. This panic also serves to mobilize White voters to support the Republican Party, and this tactic is very powerful gaining support from White voters against Black freedom movements. Public opinion has been reshaped by Black grassroots organizations like the BLM movement along

with various other movements that challenge white supremacy. White mobilization is a direct reaction to the demands of marginalized groups that demand changes to be made to end racial discrimination. Therefore, the BLM movement gave birth to the ALM movement, which was just a reactionary movement that did not pre-exist the BLM movement.

> The Alt-Right movement and Tea Party directly mobilized under the presidency of Obama, it was a direct reaction to the changes in American politics along with the mobilization of Middle America. What is particularly dangerous about these groups are the ways in which they operate to normalize Whiteness. While other social divisions are marked and marginalized, Whiteness creates a bubble wherein the White working class can gain esteem simple from being White. Olson argues, No matter how poor, mean, or ignorant one might have been, or whatever discriminations on the basis of gender, class, religion, or ethnicity one may have been subjected to, one could always derive social esteem (and often draw on public resources) by asserting, 'At least I'm not black'. (Olson, 708)

This is why the Alt-Right movements and various other populists' movement are particularly dangerous; they erase the social conditions of the working class while operating to serve the elite class. While White racial privilege still operates systematically, it no longer has the same experience during the post-civil right era. While this sentiment ever present, it took the right candidate to push and mobilize this resentment, and this provided the best opportunity for the Republican candidates. The Republican party was able to gain support from grassroots movements by "the development of a polarizing virtuous middle" (Olson, 710). The construction of "Middle America" under the threat from Black protesters along with the elite allowed for more support for the Republican party that promised to support middle-class values.

The 2016 elections showed the divisions among races and the ways in which racial consciousness dictates politics in America. The immergence of the BLM movement along with various other demands for the end of structural racism created a "White lash" which helped mobilize the middle-class along with working-class Americans. The politics and the election of Trump was a direct result of the populist movement in the Alt-Right and their predecessors the Tea Party. These reactionary movements were a direct result of the push to further end racial discrimination in the United States. The politics of Trump also show that race continues to be a factor within the very fabric of America's cultural, social, and political climate. Despite the false notion of a post-racial America, the immergence of the Alt-Right movement along with various other White nationalist movement indicates that there is still a great deal of resistance to maintain the already established White supremacist structural system in place in America. The judicial system along with law enforcement has gained a lot of push back from Black Americans; the ongoing violence of unarmed Black men at the hands of police has shed light into the current divide in America along racial lines. The statistics surrounding carding and civilian violence at the hands of cops indicate that there are differences between White Americans and Black Americans contrary to color-blind enthusiasts. While the election of President Obama was a turning point in American politics, the resistance to his presidency along with the support for Trump shows that America has yet to

achieve a post-racial society. President Obama's speech at a commencement echoed similar remarks about this false notion of post-racial America. He stated this in front of hundreds of graduates at Howard University a historically Black University, "Be confident in your blackness, there is no one way to be black ... There's no straight-jacket, there's no litmus test for authenticity." He also stated "my election did not create a post-racial society." While a post-racial society seems very appealing, especially to those most effected by racial discrimination, it is important to work toward ending White Supremacy in America.

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# Chapter 2
# Renounce or Perish

**Elisha Lim**

## 2.1 Introduction

Coming from a mixed raced Asian family of immigrants, I am moved by the critical race lens of museum scholars who have revealed reasons why contemporary art galleries often feel alienating to my family and I. Museum and contemporary art scholars and curators (Gagnon 2000; McMaster and Trafzer 2004; Fatona 2011; McMaster 2011; Walcott 2014) highlight institutional policies and systemic barriers that marginalize people of colour.[1] Their findings reveal a systemic bias against Black, Indigenous and artists of colour and a set of institutional strategies that have steadily undermined equitable racial representation in the arts[2].

[1] Writer Monica Kim–Gagnon documented the contestations of racialized artists and activists fighting exclusionary Canada Arts Council policies and cuts to provincial arts budgets; in 2004 curator Gerald McMaster fought critics of the National Museum of Indian Art who denied that Indigenous worldviews could constitute a legitimate exhibitionary principal; in 2011 curator and scholar Andrea Fatona's doctoral dissertation revealed that arts council policies prioritize a European sense of national identity. Black scholar Rinaldo Walcott adds to this philosophical discussion by considering the ontological impact of racially exclusionary practices in Canadian art institutions. Walcott describes a "culture of whiteness" and dismissal of Black Canadian life as a national State-building strategy.

In his keynote address entitled "Conditions Critical': Anti-Blackness, the Canadian Artworld and Future Collectivities."at the "The State of Blackness: From Production to Presentation" conference, Walcott exposed two layers of anti-Black forces: coalitions of racialized artists that do not ultimately support Black artists in the long-run, and Canadian cultural institutions that reject Black Canadian art history and lineage. Combined, Walcott argues, these forces have serious reverberations in undermining Black personhood and denying its place in the constitution of the Canadian state - and even humanity. (Walcott 2014)

[2] I follow Rinaldo Walcott's use of the "Euro-" prefix to distinguish between the European Western hemisphere and the Indigenous Western hemisphere.

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This paper argues that the under-representation of racialized artists in contemporary Canadian exhibits is also unconsciously bolstered by racial hierarchies that are based in Christian categories. I do not claim that art gallery staff consciously espouse Christian tenets; instead my goal is to scrutinize the deep roots of European Western logic, further back than colonialism or capitalism, to its basic valorizing schemas. These are Christian – a religion that European colonial agendas have appropriated since the eleventh century to justify expansion and profit. Even though Canada is a secular society, its colonial institutions are rooted in European Christian sensibilities of morality, sin and virtue (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, The History, Part 1 2015a, p. 24).

Christian doctrine demands that the faithful discern and enforce binaries of virtues and flaws. This includes people, races and works of art. This binary, and the paranoia and insecurity that it breeds, is reinforced sometimes out of profit or hate, but most often out of conformity or simple inertia. It is deployed as a teaching tool and storytelling framework in modern EuroWestern[2] political and cultural institutions, including galleries, and creates a host of side effects of which racial under-representation is just one, including a sense of visitor alienation and professional burnout amongst staff, particularly in major art institutions. I investigate this process and discuss the strategies of three curators who actively work to make space for racialized artists in their practices.

What has emerged from this research, and what I hope to offer curators and art historians, is the beginning of a conversation about how certain Christian modes of thought continue to be deployed by institutions and how they inform our roles as art professionals. The questions this chapter seeks to explore are the following. Does the gallery deal in residual Christian values? Is the under-representation of racialized artists a result of these values?

## 2.2 Christianity and White Supremacy

The writings of W.E.B. DuBois and Frantz Fanon form the bedrock of Black civil rights movements, and amongst many other issues, investigate the origins of white supremacy in Christianity. In DuBois' seminal 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, he focuses on the paradox of being both black and American when white Americans violently brutalize and segregate black communities. DuBois describes the simultaneous rejection and pressure to be a black Christian or a black American, coining the term "double consciousness", meaning the impossibility for black Christian Americans to feel unified within their identity (1903, p. 5). He writes about the impossibility for a black person to measure their Christian soul, because Christianity is the very measuring tape that makes blackness into "a problem". He asks, "why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house?" (1903, p. 5), and questions whether God Himself is anti-Black.

In his 1961 book *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon elaborates on the agony of anti-black religion. He begins the following passage in the voice of Christianity and,

like a ventriloquist, shames native populations for behaving like depraved parasites:

> The customs of the colonized, their traditions, their myths, especially their myths, are the very mark of indigence and innate depravity. This is why we should place DDT, which destroys parasites, carriers of disease, on the same level as Christianity, which roots out heresy, natural impulses and evil... I speak of the Christian religion, and no one need be astonished. The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen. (Fanon 2002, p. 7)

Through Christian eyes, native traditions and myths are the mark of evil. Colonial Christianity acts like DDT, a poisonous toxin bent on destroying Native life. Fanon makes an important observation about the contradictory behaviour of Christianity, although he does not probe further into its theological rationale.

During the settlement of Canada and colonial expansion, Christianity treated Indigenous Canadians with the same brutality. This is exposed in detail in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the research conducted by Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin in their 1990 book, *An Iron Hand Upon the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast*. Christian morality, sin and conversion imperatives played a central role in two draconian government acts that persecuted Indigenous communities.

The first was Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's enforcement of the Potlatch Law. In 1884 this clause was added to the Indian Act to ban Indigenous communities in the Pacific Northwest from practising potlatches – a central, communal ritual, a traditional form of economy, and a platform for cultural expression. This clause was explicitly added to appease Protestant and Catholic clerics, who labelled the tradition "depraved" and "savage". When these ministers were unable to stop the practice on their own, they demanded government support, and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald obliged. He quoted the Christian ministers, calling the Potlatches "unhealthy", inappropriate and "debauchery of the worst kind" (Cole and Chaikin 1990, p. 15). Although the clause first targeted West Coast communities, it eventually extended to Native communities across the country and was severely enforced by local bureaucrats known as "Indian agents", who would arrest, humiliate and prosecute anyone practising Indigenous rituals, resulting in the near eradication of many traditional practices (Cole and Chaikin 1990, p. 17). This cultural genocide was enforced on behalf of Christian morality, through practices of shaming and punishment – two Christian pedagogical methods that will be more explicit in the next example.

In the same decade as the potlatch ban, the government inaugurated the residential school system. Indigenous children were forced from their homes and sent to Christian schools where they were brutally disciplined and sometimes died in a process intended to break their connection to their traditions and assimilate them into Canadian values. These schools were generally run by one of two Catholic orders, Jesuit monks or Oblates of Mary Immaculate nuns, who labelled

Indigenous culture as sinful:

> In their missionary work, the Oblates made successful use of a teaching tool that came to be known as "Father Lacombe's Laddere". Based on earlier illustrated timelines that set out humanity's pathway to heaven, Lacombe's version was novel in that it included a separate pathway to hell. As a sign that their cultural and spiritual ways were sinful, most of the Aboriginal people in the illustration were travelling this road. (TRC, The History, Part 1 2015a, p. 91)

Once Indigenous traditions were established as sins, this justified violent corporal punishment. This violence operated in a feedback loop – condemning all human beings, Christians included, as sinful and deserving of punishment. In the "The History, Part 1", the TRC explains:

> The churches and religious orders that operated the schools had strong and interrelated conceptions of order, discipline, obedience, and sin. They believed that human beings were fallen, sinful creatures who had to earn salvation through mastery of their nature by obedience to God. The approach to discipline in schools was based in scripture: corporal punishment was a biblically authorized way of keeping order and of bringing children to the righteous path. (TRC, The History, Part 1 2015a, p. 649)

Because of a racist colonial agenda, Indigenous children were the most brutalized targets of a Christian worldview that humans are born flawed and must undergo a violent educational path to righteousness. Students were punished and demeaned for their language and cultural expression and exposed to documented physical and sexual abuse. As a result they associated their traditions with inferiority, pain and shame, a process that nearly destroyed these traditions (TRC, The History, Part 1 2015a, p. 7).

Christian missionaries were committed to damaging the psychology of the colonized in order to undermine their relationships to Native language, spirituality and cultural customs (TRC, What We Have Learned 2015b, p.19–20). This act of genocide also provided a secondary purpose, as a lesson to others. Residential schools teach current and aspiring Canadians about the nation's uncompromising monotheistic expectations of citizenship. I will argue that this coercive education also manifests in the gallery.

Church historians (Williams 1996; Friedman 2000) provide invaluable insight into the Church's ancient notions of race, although their medieval histories adopt an outdated modernist framework. Although their research reveals that racial categories are social constructs, they do not pursue the implications of these findings or investigate the genocidal fallout of these taxonomies. However this field is still a key link to understanding modern racism, as well as disablism and transphobia.[3]

Although the 1996 book *Deformed Discourse* focuses on the Christian conception of disability, medieval historian David Williams divulges that non-European races were categorized as disabilities. In 620 A.D. Spain, Isidore, the Archbishop of

[3] My curiosity about the Christian roots of racism was sparked by the book *Racism*, in which critical race historian Robert Miles attributes white supremacy to the Christian binaries of sin and virtue (Miles: 2003, 16), but also disablism and transphobia, a lesson that has profoundly expanded my sense of solidarity with these identities. This led me to three texts that do not cite Christianity, but clarify the connections between racism, transphobia and disablism: Alison Kafer's 2013 book *Feminist, Queer, Crip,* A.J. Withers' 2013 book *Disability Politics and Theory* and the 2015 Disability Justice Statement by author Patty Berne and the Sins Invalid collective.

Seville, created a taxonomy of nonhuman creatures to explain the existence of non-Christians in the world. The Bible teaches that Adam and Eve only produced one chosen race, and so Isidore created the "etymological encyclopaedia" to answer this problem with a list of 12 nonhuman categories. The last category was the "monstrous races", which were the product of Adam and Eve's evil son Cain and his sinful bestiary exploits. The first 11 were borrowed from pre-Christian Greco-Roman beliefs about imaginary races as well as attitudes towards disabled and intersex babies. Isidore labelled those, for example, as "atrophy", "excrescence" and "hermaphrodites" (Williams, p. 107). Isidore's list began the process by which the notion of the virtuous Christian became contingent on the notion of the sinful Other.

According to literary scholar and theological historian John Friedman, Isidore's list held such sway on the Christian imagination that even five centuries later, it was still the basis of medieval ecclesiastical university textbooks:

> On a commentary on the tenth-century Ecloga of Theodulus, a very popular school text in the Middle Ages, the innocuous word "Ethyopum" is interpreted allegorically: "Ethiopians, that is sinners. Indeed, sinners can rightly be compared to Ethiopians, who are black men presenting a terrifying appearance to those beholding them", Fulgentius of Ruspe spoke of baptizing an Ethiopian whom he saw as "one not yet whitened by the grace of Christ shining on him". And the theme appears in romances telling the story of the king of Tars, where a Saracen sultan marries a Christian princess who eventually converts him. Upon baptism he changes color from black to white. (Friedman 2000, p. 65)

Taken from Friedman's book, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, this passage describes the inherent sinful terror of the dark skin of Ethiopians and "Saracen" which referred to Arab people. Medieval Christians came to believe that dark skin meant a lack of grace and would turn white through Christian baptism. According to Friedman, the monstrous races also included dog-headed humans and headless men; and together all of these races were illustrated and codified in the medieval Psalter Map (appendix 1). This map assigns foreign populations, particularly those along the coast of Africa, to "monstrous zones" and eventually played a major ideological role in the later period of European expansion (Miles and Brown 2003, p. 16).

In the fourteen centuries since Isidore's time, the sinful, monstrous idea of the non-white races has been strategically, repeatedly exploited to justify political agendas and profit-driven enterprise. The Crusades may be the first large-scale deployment of Christian binaries of virtue and sin in order to wage war. In 1095 Pope Urban II declared that the foreign Muslim Turks were inherently monstrous in his speech in Claremont, France. He combined a fatal mix of xenophobia and salvation rhetoric so persuasively, that according to one legend, an independent band of warriors left for Jerusalem the next day on their own, ahead of the army. His speech was transcribed after the fact by four different clergymen and reassembled by medieval scholars:

> Let the holy sepulchre of the Lord our Saviour, which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the holy places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness. Oh, most valiant soldiers and descendants of invincible ancestors, be not degenerate, but recall the valor of your progenitors (Sweetenham 2006, p. 14).

Pope Urban's condemnation of the Turks is followed by a moralizing reminder to "be not degenerate". In other words, this speech is not only a war cry; it is also a form of ministry: discrimination was also one of the most urgent offices provided by the Catholic Church.

Writing about the hermeneutics of the modern self, post-structuralist theorist Michel Foucault explains that one of the two principle roles of Christian authority is to help the faithful discriminate – in order to renounce sin, temptation, the unclean and the corrupt, without and within. Quoting the teaching of the influential medieval theologian John Cassian, Foucault states:

> Thoughts are like grains, and consciousness is the mill store. It is our role as the miller to sort out amongst the grains those which are bad and those which can be admitted to the mill store to give the good flour and good bread of our salvation. Second....We must act like officers who divide soldiers into two files, the good and the bad. Third... We must verify the quality of the thought: This effigy of God, is it real? What is its degree of purity? Is it mixed with desire or concupiscence? (Foucault et al. 1988, p. 47)

Foucault explains that there is a "truth obligation" shared by all Christian denominations. In other words, Christianity demands that the faithful recognize and obey a "degree of purity" enforcing binary valorizing labels of virtue and sin onto all things and bodies. This binary, and the paranoia and insecurity that it breeds, has then been repeatedly reinforced in pedagogy and storytelling frameworks, within modern Euro-Western political and cultural institutions including art galleries.

## 2.3 Sin, Shame and Racial Hierarchies

Literary scholar Northrop Frye argues that the Bible's story arc is the most enduring template for modern Euro-Western storytelling (Frye and Lee 2006). It contains three standard parts: a fall from grace, a journey of contemplation and a happy reunion with all that was lost. This fall from grace is known as "sin". According to the 2005 New English Translation of the Bible, sin is an act that separates Christians from approval, acceptance and love. "But your sinful acts have alienated you from your God; your sins have caused him to reject you and not listen to your prayers" (Isaiah 59:2). In order to establish his argument, Frye breaks down the notion of Christian sin and contrasts it with Judaism (Frye and Lee 2006, p. 103). A Jewish person's sins are punished by a wrathful God, and so Jewish scholars debate the interpretation of holy laws. On the other hand, Christians must search their own conscience and agonize over their own failure to confess, renounce their transgressions or redeem themselves. For this reason, the New Testament designates the Self as the most important site for the struggle of our soul (Frye and Lee 2006, p. 103). As a principal protagonist of the Acts of the Apostles, St Paul determined and broadcast Christian doctrine, and in an instructive letter to the Romans, he most emphatically articulates the torturous notion of self-examination, "Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I

serve the law of sin" (Romans 7:18–7:23, New English Translation). According to Christian teachings the most fearful pernicious struggle is within; the law of sin manifests within my own flesh, my own body, in me. In other words, sin is a source of shame, and Christians are shamed by the knowledge that they must constantly overcome what they are. Frye explains that the U-shaped story – a fall into sin followed by a rise to salvation – is the most pervasive of Euro-Western narratives (Frye and Lee 2006, p.108).

What does it mean when racialized bodies are designated symbols of sin? According to St Paul's words, all of us contain original sin. In other words, while the monstrous races on the fringes of the Psalter Map are sinful, they are also reminders of inherent European sinfulness. When the Eclogus claims that "sinners can rightly be compared to Ethiopians" waiting to be whitened by the grace of Jesus, it implies that Ethiopians represent Europeans at their worst. In other words, "sin" and "virtue" are mutually constituent categories. Christian xenophobia is a didactic cautionary tale about every Christian's own shame.

Modern colonial capitalism preserves elements of Christian beliefs, like this sense of shame, because it is a useful manipulative tool. Other core Christian lessons about "loving thy neighbour" have not survived in commercial and political messages, but the notion of original sin is still a powerful tool for garnering power and profit. Feminist and critical race scholars reveal how consumer advertising and political campaigns thrive on insecurity and fear through sexist, ableist, racist messages (Beneke 1997; López 2015). These messages not only degrade the marginalized populations they target; they also provoke a general sense of insecurity by establishing uncompromising rules, parameters and cautionary tales to enforce the norm. Cultural institutions like art galleries reinforce this insecurity. When Rinaldo Walcott (2014) describes the marginalization of black artists in Canadian art galleries, he argues that it is a crisis for all human beings.

> because the structures are fundamentally launched against Black people, our forms of life, Black forms of life, continue to shape what it means to be human, in deeply profound ways. By this we mean that reckoning with the multiple violences of antiBlackness, Black peoples continually revise what being human means for all of us. (Walcott, keynote address 2014)

The disproportionate violence committed against black people increases the possibilities for violence against all.

Curators and museum scholars have demonstrated that artists of colour are underrepresented in art galleries due to Eurocentric Canadian nationalism which erases and devalues racialized cultural production. However, this erasure does not only devalue racialized cultural production. It is rooted in the philosophy of sin, or inherent flaw, which disproportionately attacks racialized populations, but devalues all cultural production generally. In the museum, residual Christian ontology establishes aesthetic norms through rules, cautionary tales and punishments for non-conformity. As I will argue based on the following museum texts and curator interviews, this creates a cycle of anxiety, insecurity and inertia that perpetuates inequality but also adversely affects all actors in the gallery through a coercive, dehumanizing worldview.

## 2.4 Christian Values and the Contemporary Museum

In 1995 Tony Bennett applied post-structural critical museology to a genealogy of museum display practices from an interdisciplinary background. In his article "The Exhibitionary Complex", he argues that the design of the world fairs taught values, behaviour and compliance to its nation's citizens through a "set of cultural technologies concerned to organize a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry" (1994, p. 4). The world fairs are the precursors to contemporary exhibitionary practices and Bennett's genealogy – detailing their taxonomy, spatial design and racial hierarchy – that provide valuable insights into underlying museum ideologies.

Bennett explains that Museums were founded to exert a new form of optically benign state power. During the rise of the modern European and American nation states in the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, governing bodies ceased to exercise violent control over populations, such as feudal practices of public torture or execution. Instead, modern governments demonstrated the kind of power that could extend life, through bureaucratic institutions like housing, public health care, education and other cultural institutions, a phenomenon that Foucault calls "biopower" (Foucault 2007, p. 16). Museums joined this project alongside other cultural institutions that, while appearing to be benevolent, in fact impart the strict expectations of the well-behaved citizen. As part of this process of the making of respectable citizens, art collections that had previously been private wunderkammers of the wealthy were opened up to the public and made into exhibits that magnified the command of the state by showcasing its colonial acquisitions. At the same time, the museum acquired a shrewd spatial design that exposed visitors to each other in an increasingly self-conscious way and reduced them to well-disciplined, orderly, obedient citizens (Bennett 1994, p. 7).

Presentation practices at world fairs also ranked people and objects. The 1889 Paris Exposition arranged Asian and African people in simulated "native" villages on a spectrum of human evolution from "barbaric to the nearly civilized" (p. 96). Although Bennett aligns these practices with the rise of new colonial disciplines such as archaeology, geology, biology and anthropology (p. 88), I argue that they descend from centuries of Christian belief.

Bennett describes how the 1901 Pan-American Exposition broadcast staunch Christian values through its handbook, including a Christian sermon called a "Short Sermon to Sightseers", which instructed visitors about how to behave (Bennett, p. 81). The Oxford History of Anglicanism cites London's 1851 "Great Exhibition" as proof of the glory of the Church of England:

> The frontispiece for the Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition displays a range of figures of all ages and many attributes… In the topmost corners of the image, an inscription reads "the Earth is the Lord's and all that therein is / The compass of the world and they that dwell therein". These provocative words from Psalm 24 are situated at the heart of the grand production of the Great Exhibition, consecrating it and declaring that everything within it and all who contribute to it are enmeshed in a Christian worldview sustained and supported by the British monarchy and the exhibition's commissioners. (Strong 2017, p. 407)

The Great Exhibition and "everything within it and all who contribute to it are enmeshed in a Christian worldview". Christianity was an epistemic locus of the Exhibition.

The 1893 Chicago World Fair was dedicated to Christian values. The Fair featured the first of many "Parliament of Religions", an institution that became a common feature of subsequent world's fairs. The Parliament of Religions was a showcase of diverse religious spokespersons gathered "to underline the central place of religion in the fair's agenda" (Joiner 2013, p. 76). However, although the spokespeople representing various religions included

Jainism, Theravada Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Japanese Pure Land, Hinduism, Islam, Baha'i, Spiritualism and Christian Science – the Parliament had one primary mandate – to "verify the supremacy of Christianity and demonstrate the superiority of Western culture" (Joiner 2013, p. 76). The Chicago World Fair was in fact intended to proselytize Christianity. In her book *Sin in the City: Chicago and Revivalism*, historian Thekla Joiner writes:

> Evangelicals saw the fair as a mini-missionary opportunity to convert international visitor and then return them to their home countries as emissaries of the Gospel. Their Gospel message, however, was equally and emphatically directed at the many "heathens" who resided in Chicago. The majority of the domestic heathens were men who, as in the 1880s, were perceived as threats to Chicago's moral and social order. (Joiner 2013, p. 83)

The insinuation that "heathens" posed "threats to Chicago's moral and social order" alludes to the Fair's white supremacist undertones. The Chicago World Fair hosted two conferences: the Social Purists, a movement to eradicate sex work, and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Both of these staunch Christian groups demanded that the Fair abide by Jim Crow laws and forbid the participation of African-Americans. Chicago civil rights activists Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells lobbied organizers until they grudgingly permitted one black speaker at Fair events (Joiner 2013, p. 74). Fannie Barrier Williams was chosen, a prominent local member of the Chicago Women's Club, and she courageously criticized the Social Purists, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Parliament of Religions, saying that white people "had no corner on morality, and to assume otherwise was to falsely construct a moral justification for racism" (Joiner 2013, p. 75). However, Williams was the only black participant allowed at the Fair, which highlights the theme of this paper: a central purpose of early exhibition practices was to model Christian ideology, and this religion was a vehicle for white supremacy.

Thus, because of the Christian overtones of the early Fairs, degrading ranking systems of racialized bodies were familiar to visitors. In fact, organizers struggled to differentiate themselves from carnival freak shows, which had dealt in the same degrading displays since the previous century. The nineteenth century was the heyday of the freak show – the most famous of which featured Saartje Baartman, a Khoikhoi captive from South Africa at London's Piccadilly Circus:

> Exhibitions of living foreign peoples were accessible and highly profitable forms of entertainment throughout the nineteenth century. Baartman's display was the first of the new century and the forerunner of numerous displays of foreign peoples including Sami ("Laplanders", 1822), South Americans (1822), Esquimaux (c. 1820s), Native Americans

> (1840s), San (“Bushmen”, 1847), “Aztecs” (1853), African “Earthmen” (1853), and Zulus (1853). (Qureshi, p. 238)

The freak shows echo Isidore’s list of disabled and foreign bodies. They may have inherited willing audiences from the previous century’s morality plays, which were popular forms of entertainment in which good Christians were tempted and taunted by dark, sinister characters who personified sin and vice (Bevington, p. 792).

Because Christians believed that foreign bodies were sinful, I disagree with Bennett’s supposition that Christian audiences felt flattered by captive Indigenous people at the world fairs. He writes that white citizens enjoyed a feeling of complicity in this show of dominance. This power thus subjugated by flattery, placing itself on the side of the people by affording them a place within its workings, a power which placed the people behind it, inveigled into complicity with it rather than cowed into submission before it. And this power marked out the distinction between the subjects and the objects of power not within the national body but, as organized by the many rhetorics of imperialism, between that body and other, “non-civilized” peoples upon whose bodies the effects of power were unleashed with as much force and theatricality as had been manifest on the scaffold. This was, in other words, a power which aimed at a rhetorical effect through its representation of otherness rather than at any disciplinary effects (Bennett, p. 4).

Bennett depicts visitors who felt “inveigled into complicity” with state power. However if Christian principles represented Otherness as depraved sinners, visitors would not feel flattered, but instead triggered into a prudish shame and repulsion – although it can be argued that this is just as effective a disciplinary tool as flattery. For example, upon seeing these “non-civilized” people at the World Columbian Exposition in 1901, the Reverend Beverley Eggleston left the tent in a rush. “The strange music of a foreign tambourine, and the hideous yelling (music, so-called) of non-American girls… to those possessing the sense of propriety, these bodily contortions were unrefined and even repulsive” (Eggleston 1901, p. 25–26). For Eggleston, foreign cultures were “repulsive” and reinforced his moralizing standards of local “American girls”.

Artist, critic and writer Brian O’Doherty contemplates the effects of the white cube. His 1976 book *Inside the White Cube* became a seminal text that challenged the role of the gallery, not simply as an art repository but a contested space that artists must navigate with savvy and caution. In the opening chapter “Notes on the Gallery Space”, O’Doherty offers an affective reading of the white cube space and records a sense of being an unwelcome intrusion. He attributes that feeling partly to a sense of Christian sanctity:

> The ideal gallery subtracts from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is “art”. The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself. This gives the space a presence possessed by other spaces where conventions are preserved through the repetition of a closed system of values. Some of the sanctity of the church, the formality of the courtroom, the mystique of the experimental laboratory joins with chic design to produce a unique chamber of esthetics. So powerful are the perceptual fields of force within this chamber that, once outside it, art can lapse into secular status. (O’Doherty 1976, p. 14)

This initial passage deploys some unexamined cultural interpretations – for example, which populations or bodies relate to "the sanctity of the church"? O'Doherty essentializes and homogenizes the reader and assumes that we share his normative cultural location as a white upper middle-class Catholic man in New York in the 1970s. However, his writing may reveal that the alienating experience of the white cube gallery affects visitors regardless of race, social location or privilege.

O'Doherty specifically articulates his sense of alienation in a passage which portrays the gallery as a site of personal anxiety – where "your own body" is made to feel like an "odd piece of furniture". He writes:

> Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial – the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics. Works of art are mounted, hung, scattered for study. Their ungrubby surfaces are untouched by time and its vicissitudes. Art exists in a kind of eternity of display, and though there is lots of "period" (late modern), there is no time. This eternity gives the gallery a limbolike status; one has to have died already to be there. Indeed the presence of that odd piece of furniture, your own body, seems superfluous, an intrusion, The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space occupying bodies are not – or are tolerated only as kinesthetic mannequins for further study. This Cartesian paradox is reinforced by one of the icons of our visual culture: the installation shot, *sans* figures. Here at last the spectator, oneself, is eliminated. You are there without being there – one of the major services provided for art by its old antagonist, photography. (O'Doherty 1976, p. 15)

Inside the white cube, one's body becomes a piece of furniture that is not just odd, but also implicitly grubby, in contrast to the art's "ungrubby" surfaces "untouched by time and its vicissitudes". The word "vicissitudes" is a graphic cue to mortality and our inevitable trajectory through Isidore's checklist from "excrescent" body parts to gradual "atrophy", a list that also inspired whiteness as a virtue and darkness as shame. The white cube preserves this story, surrounding the visitors, not even in the pink hue of European flesh, but an extreme white, "unshadowed, white, clean, artificial" making all bodies intolerable. O'Doherty recalls St Paul's anxiety of the flesh when he invokes the Cartesian ego, "while eyes and minds are welcome, space occupying bodies are not" (O'Doherty 1976, p. 15).

White cube galleries emerged at the same time as white cube churches during the German Liturgical Movement, which expressly rejected every mortal body, even God's. The rationale was that a white cube would remove the distracting drama of Christ's graphic bloodied body on the crucifix and replace it with the disembodied presence of God, represented by pure whiteness (Schloeder, p. 71). A key example is the Corpus Christi Church by architect Rudolf Schwarz (see Appendix 2). "In front of the altar were simple benches. Behind the altar was a great white void of a back wall, signifying the region of the invisible Father" (Schwarz 1958, p. 14).[4] This Church rejects even Christ's body, and so when O'Doherty states that "one has to have died already to be there", the Liturgical white cube tradition would deny even that. In other words, what O'Doherty describes as the gallery's "closed system of values" may be traceable to a tradition of rejecting all bodies, resulting in the extreme of the white cube.

[4] Other notable white cube church architects include Le Corbusier and Fritz Metzger.

Art historian Carol Duncan is widely cited in curatorial studies for her exposition of the museum's Christian rituals (2005). She points out that the gallery contains scripts and paths in the vein of Christian traditions. She writes:

> The museum's sequenced spaces and arrangements of objects, its lighting and architectural details provide both the stage set and the script… The situation resembles in some respects certain medieval cathedrals where pilgrims followed a structured narrative route through the interior, stopping at prescribed points for prayer or contemplation. (Duncan 2005, p. 12)

She goes on to caution that visitors who fail to recognize this structure will fail to enact the museum's ritual. The only visitors who succeed are those who are "perfectly predisposed socially, psychologically and culturally":

> The museum setting is not only itself a structure; it also constructs its *dramatis personae*. These are, ideally, individuals who are perfectly predisposed socially, psychologically, and culturally to enact the museum ritual. Of course, no real visitor ever perfectly corresponds to these ideas. In reality, people continually "misread" or scramble or resist the museum's cues to some extent; or they actively invent, consciously or unconsciously, their own programs according to all the historical and psychological accidents of who they are. (Duncan 2005, p. 13)

Duncan imputes gallery architecture with the power to provoke our insecurities – demanding a *dramatis personae*, or the ideal visitor, which is unobtainable. Some visitors will resist the museum's cues; some will scramble to read them, but all will feel a heightened self-awareness and some, failure. "The beneficial outcome that museum rituals are supposed to produce can sound very like claims made for traditional, religious rituals. According to their advocates, museum visitors come away with a sense of enlightenment, or a feeling of having been spiritually nourished or restored (2005, p. 13)". Duncan's appraisal of the gallery imbibes it with the biblical U-shaped narrative of imperfection, contemplation and hope for salvation.

Although Duncan's analysis aims to reveal the power structures of the gallery, she does not discuss power and race. In the introduction to her book, she writes:

> My book is, in the immediate sense, concerned not with the representations of foreign or non-western cultures, but with what art museums say to and about our own culture. Nevertheless, the two questions are ultimately not separate; western representations of western culture hold implications for the way non-western cultures are seen. (Duncan 2005, p. 4)

This statement makes three simultaneous erasures: of Indigenous "western" cultures; of the black, Indigenous and racialized populations that inextricably constitute western culture; and of non-white readers of the book. She confirms this erasure two pages later, "I look at some of the most prestigious spaces in my own – and what I assume will be my readers' – culture" (6). It may be due to this myopia that her analysis comes into conflict with sociologist Pierre

Bourdieu's 1960s seminal analysis of the museum:

> Without rejecting [Bourdieu's] valuable sociological insights, I treat museums... [as] content that is not always or not entirely subject to sociological or political description… It is, in my view, precisely the complexity of the art museum – its existence as a profoundly symbolic cultural object as well as a social, political and ideological instrument – that makes the notion of the museum as ritual so attractive. (Duncan 2005, p. 5)

This statement suggests a mutual exclusion between "symbolic cultural objects" and "a social, political and ideological instrument". It also undermines the power

differentials she sets out to examine. This lack of intersectional analysis, combined with O'Doherty's lack of structural critique, indicates the pace of museum studies that even in Duncan's 2005 book lags behind critical race theory, thus reinforcing the need for race analysis in art galleries. This is provided by the work of the Canadian curators and scholars discussed at the beginning of this literature review, which fleshes out, amongst other things, the connections that Duncan misses between ideologies, symbols and cultural objects. However, in some ways, both Duncan and O'Doherty's Eurocentric perspective helps reveal the impact of Christian affect on both white and non-white visitors to the gallery. I will now turn to Bourdieu's study, which makes some of the connections between museum cues and political ideologies that Duncan misses.

Duncan's *dramatis personae* borrows from Bourdieu's landmark 1960s study of museum visitors. His research asks the question: if museums offer enlightenment, nourishment and refined tastes, why do only a privileged few visit (Bourdieu et al. 1991, p. 120)? His study led to three conclusions. First, due to the class stratification of education, working-class communities may not aspire or feel entitled to approach the museum. Second, once inside the gallery, a visitor may not be, as Duncan states, "predisposed" to follow the gallery's cues, because without a privileged education those cues are illegible. Third, the privilege of museum literacy is ultimately converted into material assets. For example, societal recognition and perceived intellectual disposition, which are passed down through generations, seal privilege within the family. Bourdieu coins the term "cultural capital" to explain that museum literacy, and all privileged cultural literacy, is a form of power. Duncan disagrees with Bourdieu because she argues that the symbolic cultural aspect of the museum ritual is not necessarily political. This indicates how, 15 years after Bourdieu published his findings, writers may still deny the accountability of the art institution as an arbiter of power (Bourdieu et al. 1991, p. 148–152).

Bourdieu's research demonstrates that the space, architecture and aesthetic design that O'Doherty and Duncan observe is not just a foil for art and enlightenment; it is also a trial to test one's cultural "virtues". Visitors who are poor or marginalized do not have access to an elite education and so fail this test. Bourdieu opens his book, *The Love of Art*, by explaining cultural capital in explicitly Christian terms:

> The religion of art also has its fundamentalists and its modernists, yet these factions unite in raising the question of cultural salvation in the language of grace… The mystical representation of the aesthetic experience can lead some aristocratically to reserve this gift of artistic vision they call "the eye" for the selected few and can lead others to grant it liberally to the "poor in spirit"... It is as if those who speak of culture, for themselves and for others, in other words cultivated people, could not think of cultural salvation in terms other than of the logic of predestination, as if their virtues would be devalued if they had been acquired, and as if all their representation of culture was aimed at authorizing them to convince themselves that, in the words of one highly cultivated elderly person, "education is innate". (Bourdieu et al. 1991, p. 1–4)

Bourdieu conducted his research in the 1960s and published and presented his conclusions in several languages starting in the 1970s, yet decades later some art writers including O'Doherty and Duncan retain the "mystical representation of the

aesthetic experience". They do not acknowledge, as Bourdieu observes, the discriminatory process of the gallery, in which subjects are examined for "innate" cultivation, and only a "selected few" pass. His observation bears an echo of Fanon's description of Christianity: "[the Church] does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen" (Fanon 2007, p. 7). The mystical representation of the aesthetic experience in contemporary art upholds the same deterministic sense that some classes, races and abilities are inherently flawed.

All four authors provide ways that the museums manipulate the pedagogical tools that were first crafted by the Church. Bennett reviews the birth of the museum during the world fairs and documents the rise of its strict disciplinary technologies. Art historians Strong and Joiner couch the world fairs in Christian morality. O'Doherty describes the museum's sense of inhibition, Duncan acknowledges the museum's demanding cultural cues, and Bourdieu reveals its test of innate virtue and cultural salvation. All of these incorporate the anxiety of Christian ontology to produce an elite cultural product that alienates marginalized visitors but teaches firm rules to all visitors.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Following in the footsteps of Indigenous museum scholars and black critical race scholars, I have investigated racial inequity in the museum, not only as a matter of representation but as a philosophical, epistemic problem (Hill 2007; Igloliorte 2011; McMaster and Trafzer 2004). I consider white supremacy in the gallery as a Christian epistemological framework (Walcott 2014; Fanon 2008).

Medieval scholars document the rise of Christian racism based on virtuous insiders and inherently flawed outsiders (Friedman 2000; Williams 1996), and I argue that this echo is still audible in the overrepresentation of white artists in Toronto survey exhibits and the strict Eurocentric art canon taught in schools. Furthermore, although museum attendance is a voluntary form of entertainment, museums preserve a Christian practice of renunciation, discrimination and discipline, overt in nineteenth-century Christian sermons (Bennett 1994; Joiner 2013) and still ongoing through architectural cues and cultural literacy tests that foster self-surveillance or altogether discourage visitors who cannot afford an elite education (Bourdieu et al. 1991; Duncan 2005).

My personal contribution to this research is a close reading of Christian ontology, which reveals that there is no clean division between virtuous insiders and flawed outsiders. Combining St Paul (New English Bible 1972) and Foucault and Carrette (2013), I argue that the norm and the margins are mutually constitutive; the flaws in the Other mirror the flaws in the norm. Between the exacting test of museum cues (Duncan 2005; Bourdieu et al. 1991) and the fictional bar of "excellence" (Jacques interview 2017), the gallery mimics a white cube Church where even Jesus' body is not pure enough to hang (Schwarz 1995). My interviewees who work in major institutions attest to a work environment that breeds pain, burnout and anxiety, which especially affects marginalized staff, but also manifests in

conservative curating and inertia amongst all staff, and breeds inequitable racial representation, but also widespread insecurity.

## Appendix 1

**Psalter Map ca. 1260**

**Detail of monstrous races**

## Appendix 2

**Corpus Christi Church**
Rudolf Schwartz
Aachen, Germany
1928–1930

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# Chapter 3
# Exploring the Model Minority: Deconstructing Whiteness Through the Asian American Example

**Elisabeth Dennis**

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I use ideas from critical anti-racism theory and critical Whiteness studies to examine the racial positioning of Asian Americans. I begin by examining how historically, Whites constructed themselves as superior to other racial groups and how Whiteness currently functions as an unmarked norm. I use Asian Americans as an example of how compliance with Eurocentric standards of excellence functions to increase their status to a "model minority". Yet, the boundary policing of Whiteness prevents Asian Americans from reaping the privileges associated with Whiteness, as they are viewed as "perpetual foreigners". This speaks to the saliency of skin colour as a marker of difference, so despite assimilation and success, many groups will never be viewed as North American. I end with some implications of this racial positioning for Asian Americans, for other racial groups and for educational futurity.

## 3.2 Situating the Self

I am a Euro-Canadian heterosexual female and have spent my entire life in Canada. I, therefore, personally have not faced the struggles associated with immigration and have not been the victim of racism. My personal journey with the sociology of race and ethnicity has been with discovering my Whiteness and the associated White privilege. Growing up in Canada, I never had to have it explained to me that

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I was White and would never have to self-identify as anything but Canadian or with the ethnic groups my parents belong to.

I can identify with many experiences Maxwell (2004) describes in "Deconstructing Whiteness: Discovering the Water" in my own personal discovery of my Whiteness. Her example of the teacher's response of "color does not matter" when asking why her friend was a different colour than her resonates true with many of my teachers and family members. This colour-blind approach to race was reinforced to me through school and at home in that we were encouraged to see all students equally and not pay attention to skin colour. This approach allowed for the avoidance of talking about other people's races or experiences with racism. By failing to acknowledge the presence of racial heterogeneity, the knowledges and experiences of certain bodies are omitted, thus reinforcing the dominant White narrative.

However, unlike Maxwell's experience, I grew up in the multicultural city of Vancouver, British Columbia, and, from a young age, attended school with many negatively racialized people. In high school, I started studying in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and was one of a handful of White students amongst mainly East Asian and Iranian students. Because of this experience, I acknowledged myself as White, but did not yet recognize myself as being part of the dominant group or realize the privileges associated with Whiteness. I went to school in a privileged neighbourhood, and the negatively racialized students who I saw in the IB program were also "succeeding", which within this small population at that time, reaffirmed to me the existence of a colour-blind system.

It was reflecting on these years, and throughout my undergraduate degree in sociology, that I came to realize the privileges of Whiteness. It became clear that my identity or status as a Canadian was never questioned, while those of the negatively racialized members of my class were. Additionally, once going to university, I became aware of the immense privilege I had in being there but also how my Whiteness made that journey so much easier than many negatively racialized students. Through high school and university, I began to "discover the water" (Maxwell 2004) and see how much the system was built for students of European descent: from the subject matter taught, to the ways of testing, to getting the benefit of the doubt solely based on the colour of my skin.

Acknowledging this privilege was not necessarily easy, because it gave me great guilt and responsibility. I know many White bodies refuse to acknowledge this privilege because to do so is to forfeit all the colour-blind multicultural ideals that their success was solely the result of their own hard work. I am still on the journey of acknowledging this privilege because I do not know how to remove the privilege that has been gained from hundreds of years of oppressing. This journey started much too late for me, and my goal in studying a Master's in Social Justice Education is to ensure through education, more people acknowledge their White privilege and work to deconstruct the systems which continue to benefit it.

In self-situating, I work to ensure that my declaration is not "non-performative" as Ahmed argues most declarations of Whiteness are (Ahmed 2004). Positioning

myself as a White body is my first step in actively engaging in anti-racist work. By doing anti-racist work as a White female body, I do not wish to take up space or silence the authentic voices of those who have experienced racism and oppression. Instead, I aim to disrupt the invisibility of the White identity and deconstruct the forces which hold up and perpetuate White privilege. As Dei argues in his theorizing of critical anti-racism studies, “doing anti-racism work is about action and practice” (Dei 2013, p. 6). I therefore have the responsibility to take this theorizing on the deconstruction of Whiteness into my own sites and accompany it with actions to contribute to the disruption of Euronormativity.

## 3.3 Invisibility of Whiteness

Whiteness, for me, was an invisible racial category for much of my life. It was taken for granted that I am Canadian because of my Whiteness, as I function as part of the norm. As Keating (1995) argues, “Whiteness has functioned as a pseudo-universal category that hides its specific values, epistemology, and other attributes under the guise of a non-racialized, supposedly colorless ‘human nature’” (p. 904). In this way, Whiteness functions as the norm or yardstick that all others are compared against, while at the same time remaining unmarked. Because White bodies are viewed as the norm, they “do not have to see themselves as White but rather as without a race” (Maxwell 2004, p. 154). This is reflected by the fact that European-Americans are typically just referred to as Americans, whereas other ethnic groups are marked by hyphenated identities such as “African-American” or “Chinese-American”.

Whiteness, though, “is only invisible to those who inhabit it” (Ahmed 2004. par. 14). To non-White bodies, “the power of whiteness is maintained by being seen” (par. 14). The dominance of Whiteness in public spaces, movies and television, laws and education serves to reproduce the idea that this system is built mainly for White bodies and serves to exclude others from these spaces. For White bodies though, the dominance of Whiteness remains invisible as it is assumed to be the norm. This unmarked aspect of the White racial category allows dominant White bodies to remain ignorant to its authority and privilege and in turn, “secures its power by refusing to identify itself” (Keating 1995, p. 905).

In an attempt to disrupt this invisibility, critical Whiteness studies aim to cast Whiteness as a problem which needs to be investigated. As Roediger (2009) argues, its “most critical contribution lies in marking Whiteness as a particular identity—even peculiar—rather than as the presumed norm” (p. 607). It aims to examine the ways in which Whiteness operates to maintain its status as the unmarked norm, with the goal of disrupting this power. Critical Whiteness studies do not aim to recentralize or normalize Whiteness but instead focus on Whiteness in order to disrupt it. In doing so, it is therefore important to look at the historical construction of how Whiteness became the dominant unmarked identity.

## 3.4 Construction of Whiteness in Relation to the Other

As Dei (2001) argues, “we must unravel the discourses that lie behind the making and construction of difference” (p. 154). It is not the construction of difference itself that is the problem but the assigning of values which privilege certain bodies over others in relation to their difference. As Memmi (1968) argues, “the assigning of values is intended to prove two things: the inferiority of the victim and the superiority of the racist. Better still, it proves the one by the other: inferiority of the black race automatically means superiority of the white” (p. 188). The structure that places Whiteness at the top of the racial hierarchy was developed through the colonial mindset. White superiority was used as rationalization to counteract the discomfort surrounding the murder and destruction of other cultures and civilizations. European groups through colonization, therefore, attacked the psyche of other groups and their gods to paint them as inferior and deserving of colonization.

Whiteness became constructed as the norm of excellence and used as the standard to which the achievement of other minority groups was constructed. In early colonization, this view centred around the “view that Europeans were superior by virtue of their ‘civilisation’ and achievements (of which world travel and trade were but one sign)” (Miles and Brown 2003, p. 24). Through this, the African became defined as phenotypically and culturally different, which was used as evidence of their inferiority in relation to European “progress” (p. 30). This view has been perpetuated and sustained through personal and institutional racism.

Educational institutions in North America are Eurocentric and therefore prioritize European knowledges. In higher educational contexts, for example, the criteria for who gets hired as full faculty are based on Eurocentric ideas of success (how much is published, grants, etc.), and there is no reward for other kinds of excellence or knowledge (Dei 2016). Within high schools, standardized testing is often used as an “objective” criteria of merit, but it has been shown to be particularly inaccurate and unfair to racial and ethnic minorities (Baez 2006). In conversation with a teacher peer, she mentioned the experience of a student who had difficulty with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test because one assigned excerpt was about snowshoeing and therefore, it referenced specific cultural knowledges of which he had no experience. As a result, the test went beyond testing for literacy and became a test of one dominant cultural knowledge.

As Dei (2008) argues, “in schools and other social settings, White power and privilege masquerade as excellence” (p. 30). Through this process, what is defined as success and excellence within schools and society becomes linked to its proximity to Whiteness. For the purpose of this chapter, therefore, “success” will refer to this Eurocentric definition, as it is how success has been framed by the dominant group in the North American context.

## 3.5 Black-White Paradigm

Much of the previous research in the sociology of race and ethnicity has used the Black-White binary approach whereby Black and White are strict separate identities marked by their inherent differences to one another. As Dei (2013) argues, this binary has shaped "aesthetic, linguistic, and moral valuations and largely dictates power and privilege in North American society, including the primordial conflicts between light/darkness; good/bad; goodness/evil; pure/impure; clean/dirt dualisms" (p. 5). This binary view of race needs to be problematized to account for the complex processes which shape racial hierarchies.

The Black-White paradigm allows for this complexity by viewing the racial hierarchy through proximity to Whiteness and the traits of Whiteness. Whiteness, in North American society, has become the anchor or standard against which everything is measured or compared. As Abdulle (2017) argues, "all non-White races occupy the periphery in what can be described as outer rings that orbit the center—Whiteness. The most outer ring is occupied by the Black race. It is the Black race that anchors Whiteness" (p. 25). Therefore, within the paradigm, individuals and groups are positioned based on not only their proximity to Whiteness but also their distance from Blackness. This can be seen in the North American context with the privileging of lighter skin in terms of beauty, housing and income (Hunter 2007). Other negatively racialized groups move around on a "sliding scale" between Blackness and Whiteness, hoping to gain a position close to ideal Whiteness (Abdulle 2017, p. 25).

This paradigm can also help to understand how conformity to the White ideals of excellence and success can help groups ascend the racial hierarchy. Asian Americans, for example, through conforming to Eurocentric notions of success, are able to distance themselves from Blackness in the paradigm and move closer to the core of Whiteness. Individuals within negatively racialized groups can also take on traits of the oppressor to gain this proximity to Whiteness. As stated by Dei, "bodies matter but so does the politics. It is not just who we are but what we do" (Dei 2016). If negatively racialized bodies are using tropes of Whiteness to help reproduce the existing power relations, they become an imposter of Whiteness. The backdoor to Whiteness may therefore be open for some groups, and as Warren and Twine (1997) argue, "slipping through that opening is, then, a tactical matter for non-Blacks of conforming to White standards, of distancing themselves from Blackness" (p. 208). Through this paradigm, it is possible for other groups to move closer to Whiteness and in certain instances, allow groups to consolidate into Whiteness.

There are many historical examples which show how "racialization was economically and politically motivated" to continue the superiority of Whiteness (Keating 1995). As Webster showed, the "idea of a homogenous White race was adopted as a means of generating cohesion amongst explorers, migrants, and settlers

in eighteenth-century America. Its opposite was the Black race, whose nature was said to be radically different from that of the White race" (as cited in Keating 1995, p. 912).

Additionally, after World War II, there was a rise of powers in the Global South, and many countries began to fight for their independence. This led to the breakup of many of the existing powers in the Global North and the emergence of shifting power to the South. This depreciated power of White Europe caused a panic regarding the superiority of the region and of White groups (Dei 2016). This began the "race to consolidated Euro-Whiteness" whereby other ethnic groups previously not considered prototypical White were now included as a part of a newly created Whiteness (Dei 2016). As Abdulle theorized, though the ideal construct of racial Whiteness remains static at its core, different ethnicities can "occupy various places with the center-periphery as they intersect with time and space" (Abdulle 2017, p. 25). Post-World War II, groups that were previously considered "ethnic groups", such as many of the Celtic groups and Eastern Europeans, were now marked as White to maintain its strength and superiority.

Historically, some groups also strategically embraced the tropes of Whiteness to move favourably up in the racial hierarchy. In Canada, for example, French Canadians, who were previously viewed as backward and unruly "not quite white subjects", were able to leverage their increased socio-economic status to enter the White Canadian category (Scott 2016, p. 1290). Pierre Vallières, in his infamous book *Nègres blancs d'Amérique*, likens the struggles of Francophone Canadians to African-American experiences and "ironically summons White entitlement" by arguing that French Canadians should no longer be treated as non-White bodies due to their economic success (p. 1292). The above sentiment simultaneously appropriates the experiences of African-Americans and reinforces anti-Blackness to bring French Canadians in closer proximity to Whiteness.

During the same period in the United States, the Irish, who were viewed as non-white and discriminated against at the onset of European contact in the Americas, were also able to reposition themselves as White "by embracing and producing White supremacist images of Blacks and simultaneously conforming to White norms" (Warren and Twine 1997, p. 208). The examples of the consolidation of French Canadians and Irish into the White category show the fluidity of the positionality of Whiteness in relation to Blackness and how this works to maintain White supremacy.

Additionally, the Jewish and, more recently, Asian Americans have been referred to as "model minorities" for their ability to succeed within White standards of excellence. For the remainder of this chapter, I will use the example of Asian Americans to show how visible minority groups can take up tropes of Whiteness to ascend in the racial hierarchy and examine the barriers which prevent full ascension.

## 3.6 Model Minority

Asians in the United States and Canada are often referred to as a "model minority" (Wang 2008). The term was first used to describe Asian Americans during the civil rights era and was used to differentiate Asian Americans from other ethnic minority groups. They were viewed to be the "model" that other minorities should look to achieve and therefore, other minorities were negatively compared to them, especially in education (Wang 2008). The term ascribes Asian Americans to be intelligent, hardworking, achievement motivated, disciplined and having respect for authority and conformity (Wong et al. 1998). In particular, they are touted for their stellar test scores, above-average high school graduation rates and high acceptances into top colleges. By conforming to White standards of excellence in terms of mathematics and sciences, Asian Americans have been able to increase their proximity to Whiteness.

Bonilla-Silva (2004) argues that Asian Americans may be considered "honorary Whites" in his proposed tri-racial model. In this model, "Whites", consisting of new Whites, assimilated White Latinos and assimilated Native Americans, form the top tier of the hierarchy. The bottom tier is the "collective black", which consists of Blacks, dark-skinned Latinos, African immigrants, reservation-bound Native Americans and some low socio-economic Asian groups. The "honorary White" group sits in the middle and includes light-skinned Latinos, multiracials and high-succeeding Asian Americans (Japanese-, Korean-, Indian-, Chinese- and Filipino-Americans) (p. 653).

Within the Asian American category, one can see that those who, on some measure, conform to the Eurocentric notions of success are placed closer to Whiteness. The high-succeeding Asian Americans are included within this honorary White category, whereas Vietnamese Americans, Hmong Americans and Laotian Americans, groups with typically lower income and success rates, are classified as part of the collective Black. Distinctions are also made between native-born and foreign-born Asians as to where they fit in the model, as assimilated members of groups begin to distance themselves from members considered lower in the paradigm.

Many Asian Americans adopt and conform to the "model minority" view and the Eurocentric notions of success as they feel it will open more opportunities if they abide by it. Many Asians, for example, are "fleeing cities of immigration, disidentifying from new Asians, and invoking the image of the 'good immigrant'. In some communities, this has led to older, assimilated segments of a community to dissociate from recent migrants" (Saito 1998 in Bonilla-Silva 2004, p. 658). Bonilla-Silva argues that "honorary Whites may be classifying themselves as 'White' or believing they are better than the 'collective black' to move up in favour with the White group to receive more benefits" (p. 657). Due to the position of Whiteness as the norm, this mimicry of Whiteness and distancing from other minority groups can translate into material and social benefits for Asian Americans.

## 3.7 Policing of Whiteness

Despite the value placed on proximity to Whiteness, there exists a gatekeeping of ethnicity which maintains the exclusivity of the White category. With Asian Americans, they may ascend into the honorary White category but will never fully be viewed as White. As argued by Bablak et al. (2016), "the [model minority] stereotype is admired in Asian students, but also serves to exclude and dismiss them from the dominant White centre of peer culture" (p. 55). "Minority" is even included in the name of the stereotype to reinforce their position as outsiders; they are considered a "model" but only amongst minorities. Although they may have traits concurrent with White excellence and the "American dream", they are not granted full acceptance within the dominant North American identity (Bablak et al. 2016).

Concurrent with the "model minority" stereotype is the view of Asian Americans as "perpetual foreigners" who are permanent outsiders to the norms of North American culture and the dominant inner circle. As argued by Omi (2008), "this image is reflective of the process of racializing people in terms of their presumed affiliation with foreign places" (par. 7). This perpetual foreigner view is demonstrated in a survey by Kang (2001) which showed that 28% of Americans believed that Chinese Americans were more loyal to China than the United States. This foreignness is presumed by the question asked of many Asian Americans of "Where are you really from?". As Lee (2015) argues, "this seemingly innocent question reveals the assumption that Asianness and Americanness are mutually exclusive" (p. 5).

In one of my first-year university English classes, the professor asked us to introduce ourselves and tell the class where we were from. I introduced myself and said I was from Vancouver and did not receive any questioning of the validity of my answer. One of my close friends, a Chinese Canadian, also introduced himself as being from Vancouver. Despite being a fourth-generation Canadian and only ever having lived in Vancouver, our professor asked him where he was really from. It became clear that the professor was asking for his cultural background instead, which was not asked of any White students in the class. This carried implications that my friend could not really be from Vancouver if he is Chinese. This experience, and my conversation with him about it afterwards, made me realize how much my Whiteness gave me an assumed sense of belonging in Canada, because the country is constructed around Whiteness as the norm.

This example serves to demonstrate that the "perpetual foreigner" stereotype is not just applied to recent Asian immigrant groups but also to fourth-generation Asian immigrants who have gained a certain level of economic success in Canada. This stereotype, therefore, presents an ethnic absolutist view of the Asian category. The Asian group is perceived by the dominant as having a sameness of sentiment and a homogeneity in culture, opinion, beliefs and values. The actual heterogeneity of the Asian racial category, in terms of ethnicity, language, culture, generational status and success, is denied by both the model minority and perpetual foreigner stereotypes. In Bablak et al. (2016) study on high school experiences, Asian Canadian students "described moments of exclusion and Othering within their peer

culture, recognising that their 'Asian-ness' caused them to remain on the outside of the constituted White, Canadian inside" which meant they could "never be considered truly 'Canadian' even though they might have been born in Canada" (p. 65).

Historically in Canada, Asian Canadians, particularly Chinese Canadians, were constructed as an unassimilable Other and excluded from the Canadian national narrative. This construction is best demonstrated by the Canadian Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration in 1885, wherein the BC agent-general stated that "the Chinese character is of a fixed, persistent type, alien, beyond any control or chance of change, to everything that concerns Western civilization" (Anderson 1991, p. 45). This belief of difference leads to discriminatory policies such as the Chinese Head Tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act, both of which aimed to physically exclude Chinese citizens from entering and settling in Canada. Previous Chinese migrants, including those who had paid the Head Tax and those who fought for the Canadian forces in the Second World War, were not granted Canadian citizenship until 1947 (Cho 2004). Presently, Asian Canadians continue to be omitted from the homogenous North American identity that the dominant system is determined to preserve.

Asian Americans can therefore be examined using Simmel's analysis of "The Stranger". Simmel (1950) states that "in the case of the person who is a stranger to the country, the city, the race, etc...this non-common element is once more nothing individual, but merely the strangeness of origin, which is or could be common to many strangers" (p. 3). The stranger, therefore, will always be identified to where they are originally connected, regardless of the time they have spent in the land. Although they may find a place in the society, they will never be viewed as owners or truly belonging. He continues to say that "strangers are not really conceived as individuals, but as strangers of a particular type" (p. 3). This description is true of Asian Americans, as they are not viewed for their unique qualities but instead are homogeneously viewed as "perpetual foreigners" to North America.

Despite their citizenship, Asian Americans are always viewed as outsiders and will be perceived as connected to the land they originate from. This shows that despite the fluidity which allows them to move within closer proximity to Whiteness, there are strict boundaries preventing them from entering into Whiteness because of their perceived difference. There is a permanence to skin colour that has real consequences, which goes beyond the socially constructed nature of race within the Black-White paradigm. As Omi and Winant (1993) stress, it is necessary to "argue against the recent discovery of the illusory nature of race, against the supposed contemporary transcendence of race, against the widely reported death of the concept of race" (p. 52) because it serves to erase the consequences certain groups face as a result of their perceived race.

Within Bonilla-Silva's model, one can see that the hierarchy is based largely on skin colour. Included within the "Whites" are assimilated White Latinos and some multiracials, assumingly because due to their appearance, they can pass as White. Latinos are split between "honorary Whites" and the "collective Black" based on if they are light-skinned or dark-skinned, showing the effects of racism based on skin colour on this group. The Asian groups who are included in the "honorary White" category are able to transcend out of the "collective Black" category due to internal-

ization of tropes of Whiteness, yet are not able to transcend fully into the “White” category because of their skin colour.

People with White or light skin therefore have a pigmentary passport which allows them to be viewed as part of the “White” category within the hierarchy and thus legitimates their North American identity which is not afforded to all minority groups. As Johal argues, “as much as White folks across differences of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity or religion may be oppressed in relation to the dominant White middle class male subject—they hold a pigmentary passport of privilege that allows sanctity within the racial polity of Whiteness. This is a luxury people of colo(u)r across all our differences do not hold” (as cited in Dei 2001, p. 142). One can see therefore that despite the ability for Asian Americans to ascend into a “model” position amongst minorities through their mimicry of Whiteness, their skin colour and perceived cultural differences restrict their entrance into Whiteness absolutely.

## 3.8 Implications for Asian Americans

The construction of Asian Americans as a perpetual foreigner holds consequences for members of this racial group. The perpetual foreigner stereotype can lead to identity crises within members of these groups, because they are not viewed as belonging to their nation of origin but are also not fully accepted into their present community. This exclusion manifests itself in daily microaggressions which consistently remind Asian Canadians and Americans that they do not belong. *The New York Times* recently started a campaign with an open call for Asian Americans to share their microaggression experiences with the hashtag #thisis2016. The results were released in a video, which includes examples of Asian Americans being told their “English is surprisingly good” and one sergeant having his loyalty questioned and told to “go back to China” despite fighting for the US army (Woo and Al-Hlou 2016).

Huynh et al. (2011) found that students who perceive they do not belong due to this perpetual foreigner stereotype report greater tension between their ethnic and national identity, which often leads to difficulty forming a cohesive sense of self. The perpetual foreigner stereotype has also been shown to be associated with feelings of inferiority, discomfort and isolation from other peers (Sue et al. 2007).

The model minority stereotype has also been shown to have many negative implications for Asian Americans, including exclusion from workplaces (Lai 2013), health issues (Tendulkar et al. 2012) and overrepresentation in mental health settings (Lee et al. 2009). In school settings, this perceived positive stereotype can also have consequences, because certain assumptions are made about the performance of students. These assumptions can lead to pressure on students to live up to these standards of performance and can cause students to blame themselves when they are unable to succeed in school (Li 2005). Asian American students may also abandon their true aspirations and cultural practices in order to succeed within the Eurocentric education system.

Many members of this group aspire to increased racial positioning, but are unaware of the fact that by embracing the model minority stereotype and the European standards, they are accepting a type of "racist love" that leads to their own oppression and the oppression of other minority groups (Yu 2006, p. 329). As Bonilla-Silva (BonillaSilva 2004) argues, the honorary White "is the product of the socio-political needs of the Whites to maintain White supremacy given local and international changes" (p. 661), and their "standing and status will be dependent upon Whites' wishes and practices" (p. 662).

In order to reach their elevated position in the racial hierarchy, Asian Americans must conform to the Eurocentric standards of success and excellence. In doing so, they give up their Asian identity in exchange for proximity to Whiteness. In "Black Skin White Masks", Ex. Fanon (2008) argues that "the individual who climbs up in society--white and civilized--tends to reject his family--black and savage--on the plane of imagination" (p. 115). He demonstrates this through the example of a Black schoolboy who develops a "formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white" through his identification with the colonizer (p. 114). This demonstrates the great costs of mimicry and proximity to Whiteness, whereby authentic identities can be lost, and beliefs about value and excellence are shaped exclusively by Whiteness.

## 3.9 Use of Asian American Stereotypes to Uphold Whiteness

Thus, though the elevated position of Asian Americans shaped by Whiteness offers them some material benefits, there are negative consequences to these benefits. The true beneficiary of the construction of the "model minority" stereotype is the dominant White, as the stereotype serves to reproduce the hegemony of Whiteness. As Yu argues, "changing the narrative about one minority group serves a larger purpose to maintain the hierarchical race relations" (Yu 2006, p. 328). The "model minority" stereotype is used to reproduce the meritocratic ideal that hard work leads to success while minimizing the importance of institutional and historical barriers. As Wong et al. (1998) argue, "success of the minority is offered as proof that the American dream of equal opportunity is valid for those who conform and who are willing to work hard" (p. 100). It therefore naturalizes inequality in society and reproduces the idea that the success of White bodies is earned.

Through this process, Asians become triangulated between the dominant White and other minority groups and are used to legitimize the status quo. Kim (1999) theorizes that in relation to the dominant group, there exists a "civic ostracism", whereby the dominant group constructs Asian Americans as "immutably foreign and unassimilable with Whites on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to ostracize them from the body politic and civic membership" (p. 107). But in relation to other racialized group, there is a "relative valorization" whereby the dominant group valorizes Asian Americans relative to groups lower on the racial hierarchy "in order to dominate both groups, but especially the latter" (Kim 1999, p. 107). Whether

Asian Americans are constructed as "perpetually foreign" or as a "model minority" is contingent on who the object of comparison is and which narrative will serve the continuation of White hegemony.

## 3.10 Implications for Other Minority Groups

The construction of Asian Americans as a "model minority" when compared to other racialized groups serves specifically to delegitimise their claims. Historically, the "model minority" was created during the civil rights era to create an opposition to the claims of African-Americans. Asian Americans were used to "model" good citizenship and hard work to construct African-Americans as lazy and complaining (Kim 1999). It was also constructed to pit minority groups against one another to divert attention away from the disparities between these groups and the majority group, which continues at present. As Takaki (2001) argues, "our society needs an Asian-American 'model minority' in an era anxious about a growing Black underclass. Asian American 'success' has been used to explain the phenomenon of 'losing ground'" (p. 416). The "model minority" is presented in direct contrast to other minority groups and is used not only to reduce their claims but keep the dominance of Whites hidden by re-shifting the blame. These implications are beyond the scope of this chapter but have been explored by other scholars (see Chae 2008; Kim 1999; Yu 2006)

## 3.11 Implications for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Bonilla-Silva argues that the current racial stratification based on proximity to Whiteness will be more effective in maintaining the power of the White group because it effectively erases the visibility of the systemic barriers. This is what he calls "new racism", whereby the "maintenance of systemic White privilege is accomplished socially, economically, and politically through institutional, covert and apparently non-racial practices" (BonillaSilva 2004, p.654). Omi and Winant (1993) maintain that "it is now possible to perpetuate racial domination without making any explicit reference to race at all. Subtextual or 'coded' racial signifiers, or the mere denial of the continued significance of race, may suffice" (p. 7). This form of racism is not as visible so it becomes easier to deny the experiences of the oppressed.

In Canada, particularly in British Columbia where I am from, the conversation about race is more covertly discussed in terms of immigration, as only certain types of immigrants are viewed negatively. My mum is a first-generation immigrant from the United Kingdom (UK), but she has never been included in conversations about immigrants taking jobs. Throughout my childhood, my grandma (my mum's mother-in-law) would always complain about there being too many immigrants in Vancouver. Whenever my mum would remind her that she was an immigrant from the UK, my grandma would clarify she didn't mean "that sort of immigrant", clearly

defining immigrant in racial terms. The differing reactions my grandma had to my mum (a White immigrant) and other immigrants show how "immigrant" is actually code for a member of a negatively racialized group.

This is an example of the culturalization of race, where race becomes equated with specific cultural features. Over history, many types of logic have been used to try to "prove" the superiority of the White race and reaffirm its status as the norm. White supremacy has attempted to be shown in terms of civilization and then biology and, more recently, with regard to culture. White Anglo-Saxon culture is touted as the prototype of culture, with others being compared to their proximity to it. The elevated status of Asians as compared to Blacks is framed in cultural terms, whereby Asian success is attributed to their "Confucius culture" of hard work and ambition (Wang 2008). The existence and prevalence of cultural racism are not to deny or dismiss the continued existence of racism which occurs based on perceived biological differences between races, but instead to point to an additional form of racism.

## 3.12 Implications in Education

The implications of this culturalization of race in education are extremely important. The Eurocentric curriculum is still ever-present in the context of North American education, and the students who are best able to adapt to the Eurocentric system are rewarded with higher grades as well as higher educational attainment. Despite the prevalence of these Eurocentric values, the education system constructs itself as colour-blind in order to hide this. As Ghabrial (2012) argued, within the education system, "the language of 'achievement' and 'hard work' is routinely emptied of its race and gendered implications; success is a highly individuated event and it is necessarily 'race-' and 'gender-blind'" (p. 39).

Many take the success of Asian Americans as proof of these claims. For example, Lee's study of a high school in the United States found that White teachers and administrators used Asian American success as evidence of a colour-blind school system and argued that "if Asians [a racial minority] can succeed, then anyone can". This "rhetoric of colour blindness in schooling and education justifies the status quo of white privilege" (Dei 2013, p. 8) and therefore needs to be disrupted. Instead of viewing Asian American success as evidence of colour-blindness, this success needs to be examined critically using the Black-White paradigm.

## 3.13 New Directions for Research

The racial positioning of Asian North Americans in relation to White North Americans is an interesting case study to explore the Black-White paradigm and questions of border policing.

Future research should analyse how the racial triangulation of Asian Americans is changing with increased Chinese immigration to Canada (StatCan 2010). Especially in the higher education system, there has been an observed increase of Asian Canadians, which has resulted in articles such as Maclean's "Too Asian" (Findlay and Kohler 2010), which argued that universities are becoming more competitive and less social due to the increase of Asian enrolment. With this increased enrolment and competition, anxiety may be created within White populations about the threat to White hegemony. Ghabrial (2012) showed some evidence of this with many universities across Canada showing concern over the perceived enrolment drop of White classprivileged men and introducing programs to combat this. Further research can be done to discover if this increased competition will lead to increased border policing to this group to ensure there is no threat to White hegemony.

Another topic that warrants more attention not only in the Canadian context but globally is the role of tolerance and multiculturalism and how these help to perpetuate myths of meritocracy and colour-blind education. How does multiculturalism help to further the "new racism" that Bonilla-Silva is proposing? How can we disrupt these myths of multiculturalism that are so fundamental to Canadian identity and work to reveal the privileged position of Whiteness?

## 3.14 Conclusion

From the onset of European colonization, North American identity has been and is perceived to be predicated on Whiteness. School systems, societal norms, cultural practices, religion, ethics, morals and other fundamental aspects of the North American image exclusively reflect White European values, experiences and knowledges. Therefore, the more of these aspects a negatively racialized body is able to exhibit, the more access they have to White privilege. This is exemplified in the perceived success of Asian Americans. Their heightened position within North American society in relation to other negatively racialized bodies is predicated on their shared values and mimicry of Whiteness.

We need to criticize the idea that groups can only succeed if they mimic Whiteness. Instead of forcing students to conform in order to succeed in this existing system, we need to disrupt the Eurocentricity and allow for different definitions of success. In doing so, we must also "challenge the dominance of individualism, competitiveness, and the principle of meritocracy which have been the foundational canons of liberalism and humanism" (Dei 2013, p. 11). These ideas hold up White hegemony by privileging Eurocentric ways of knowing and help reproduce the existing social order.

Two of the primary things that need to change are the invisibility of White privilege and the fact that the education system is built for White students to succeed. Pedagogy is needed to discuss race and the effects of race in the classroom. As Dei (2013) argues, "the classroom of today cannot be a sanctuary free from discussions of race and social oppression" (p. 10). The historical effects of racism need to be

fully discussed, and White privilege needs to be made visible in order to subvert dominant narratives. The first step to dismantling White hegemony is to reveal the complexities of Whiteness. Remaining complacent supports the perpetuation of White supremacy by allowing the silencing and omission of all other voices, experiences and knowledges from the North American identity.

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# Chapter 4
# Born to Work: An In-Depth Inquiry on the Commodification of Indian Labour – A Historical Analysis of the Indian Indentureship and Current Discourses of Migrant Labour Under the Kafala System

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As a product of the Old Diaspora, my 'Indo'-Fijian identity is constructed through British colonialism and the enslavement of my ancestors through the Indian indentureship system. My ancestors were brought to Fiji Islands, a former British colony at the time, to work on the sugarcane plantations. I am a first-generation Canadian woman and the daughter of parents whom were also children of 'Indo'-Fijian sugarcane farmers, including my grandparents and those before them. Systems of bondage and indentureship are intertwined with my colonial identity of both 'Fijian' and 'Indo'. Although the Indian indentureship system was abolished in 1920, bondage labour and labour trafficking continue today under the new labour system, the *kafala* system.

In this essay, I look at narratives and claims of human trafficking and forced labour under the *kafala* migrant system, a migrant sponsorship system used by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries which includes the following: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (Renkiewicz 2016). I examine similarities between the British Indian indentureship system and *kafala* system, as both systems targeted and continue (*kafala* system) to target labourers of Indian descent and those from the Indian subcontinent (Storbeck 2011). After examining the historical ties of labour trafficking in India, I argue that the British enforcement of the indentureship system constructed and conceptualized brown bodies as mere labour commodities, contextually and specifically in systems where debt labour is apparent. Through this, I examine how the brown bodies have become commodified under systems of debt labour and how these narratives are reflected in the treatment of brown bodies in *kafala* system. Although the *kafala* labour system is historically rooted in numerous Arab cultures, I maintain that the

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system embodies colonial narratives similar to that under British indentureship system. Drawing my theoretical framework from anti-colonist and anti-racist theorist and scholars, I declare that the saliency of brown skin has been produced and intertwined with notions of bondage labour as a result of British colonialism and the enforcement of the Indian indentureship system, thus enabling brown bodies to be vulnerable and prone to labour trafficking.

My interest in this paper is to explore and uncover how brown bodies have become constructed and assigned to spaces of oppressive and laborious work. Specifically speaking, I wish to examine how brown bodies move through systems of bondage labour and subjected to spaces designed for degenerous work, which leads to their eventual deaths. By using academic Sherene Razack's framework, 'respectability' and 'degeneracy', I look at how the systems of bondage labour assign brown bodies to occupy spaces of oppressive work (Razack 2000). Furthermore, I will examine how the British imperial government manoeuvred indentureship as a tool not only to secure its white settler projects in its former colonies but construct horrific systems of bondage labour embodying severe racial divides. Moreover, I examine how the *kafala* system embodies and perpetrates these colonial narratives of racial divides through the treatment of migrants, who of course mostly bare the saliency of brown skin. Continuing, I examine India's historical ties to the British indentureship systems and its role in constructing brown bodies as a labour force surplus for GCC countries, a labour force who are ready to work in abhorrent working conditions until their deaths (Storbeck 2011). In the last half of this research paper, I examine Qatar's use of the *kafala* system and how neocolonial discourses have demanded of international labour migration with the emphasis of 'temporality' in migrant labour.

## 4.1 Labour Trafficking

Modern labour trafficking occurs usually in forms of bondage where one is linked through indebtedness to their employer (Bakirci 2009). Migrant labour is in high demand in GCC countries (Renkiewicz 2016). It is exceptionally demanded in Qatar, as the country prepares to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, one of the largest worldwide international football and sports events (Renkiewicz 2016). Under the guise of employment, domestic labour migrants enter GCC countries only through the *kafala* system (Renkiewicz 2016). The *kafala* system is essentially a sponsorship system which oversees and regulates the mass flow of migrant workers into GCC countries (Renkiewicz 2016). The system also subjects migrants to be legally bounded to their sponsor during their duration of employment in the host country (Renkiewicz 2016). Not only are migrants tied directly to their sponsor, the sponsor (usually the employer) assumes full economic and legal responsibility over of migrant (Renkiewicz 2016. Complete and utter control is given to employers over migrant workers under the *kafala* system. If a worker wishes to leave their employer or is reported missing, GCC governments will immediately cancel the migrant

worker's work visa and register them for deportation or dentation (Demetriou 2015). Moreover, the sponsor assumes full control over the migrant's eligibility to transfer to other employers and controls whether migrant(s) can obtain an exit visa to leave the country, even after they have completed their employment contract (Renkiewicz 2016). Although the *kafala system* varies amongst the GCC countries, common parallels of abuse and exploitation amongst migrant labourer populations are rampant and plague narratives of such a labour sponsorship system (Demetriou 2015).

Human trafficking and labour trafficking are a worldwide industry plaguing the global economy (Jureidini 2010). Migrant domestic workers are trafficked merely for labour exploitation; working conditions of their employment are often oppressive, abusive and exploitive (Jureidini 2010). However, oppressive and poor labour conditions do not constitute trafficking (Jureidini 2010). The intent to exploit migrants begins early, usually at labour recruitment firms in the migrant's home country and throughout the migrant's employers at their work cites (Jureidini 2010). Although it is quite apparent that trafficking occurs when a person is taken against their will and relocated for the purpose of exploitation (Jureidini 2010). Many would argue that GCC migrant workers have consented to their offshore employment and therefore understand and agree to the working and living conditions involved (Jureidini 2010). However, it is tremendously common for migrants not to be completely informed of their employment and living conditions or what their actual employment actually entails (Jureidini 2010). According to Ray Jureidini, author of *Trafficking and Contract Migrant Workers in the Middle East* states, 'issues of contest are irrelevant in cases of exploitation' [exploitation means exploitation] regardless if migrant workers consented to offshore employment (Jureidini 2010). Deception plays a key element in labour trafficking narratives, especially in the GCC countries where claims of labour trafficking are widespread and what seems universal (Jureidini 2010).

The Indian indentureship system and *kafala* system share numerous common similarities, as both systems targeted and seek labourers of Indian descent and those from the Indian subcontinent (Sturman 2014). Although the Indian indentureship was enforced by the British imperial government in 1833 and ended in 1920 (Sturman 2014), the demand for Indian labourers continues (Bakirci 2009). GCC countries have become increasingly dependent on the exportation of Indian migrant labour from India (Babar 2015). For example, Indians now represent the largest expatriate community in the GCC countries, similarly as to how Indians were one of the largest expatriated populations under British Indian indentureship system (Lal 1983). The saliency of brown skin and notions of degeneracy is tied to specific spaces in labour systems where oppressive and abuse working conditions are rampant (Razack 2000). It is deniable that Indian migrant labourers continued to be viewed as mere labour commodities, not only under the previous system of Indian indentureship, but continue to be viewed as underserving of personhood, dignity and human life under the exploitive *kafala* system (Razack 2000).

Those of Indian decedent have historical ties and complex histories with human labour trafficking (Storbeck 2011). An estimated 3.5 million Indians were transferred, kidnapped and removed from their ancestral lands to various parts of

the world through the British-enforced Indian indentureship system (Storbeck 2011). The Indian indentureship system was created to replace the former system of slavery after its emancipation in 1833 (Lal 1983). It is through the colonial history of indentureship and its implementation, Indians have been constructed to be viewed as subjects ready to have their labour power extracted and exploited (Lal 1983). Furthermore, British colonization and imperialism and the enforcement of the Indian indentureship system have constructed and conceptualized Indians as mere labour commodities, contextually and specifically in systems where debt labour is apparent (Voigt-Graf 2008). It is not to say that those who are of Indian descent in other labour systems are treated similarly to that of Indians under the *kafala* system but under specific conditions where bondage labour is apparent and exploitation is common. Therefore arguing, Indians have been historically and colonially constructed as the perfect candidate for labour exploitation. Indian migrants are viewed as mere labour commodities under labour systems where bondage and debt are involved.

## 4.2 Indian Indentureship System

As a result of British Colonialism, India has had complex histories with labour exporting and trafficking (Storbeck 2011). Indians, specifically, now make up the largest overseas community next to China, living in nearly 189 countries around the world with a population of over 25 million peoples (Storbeck 2011). The Old Diaspora emerged shortly after the emancipation of slavery in the British Empire in 1833 (Storbeck 2011). The Indian indentureship system was created to replace the previous system of slave labour; enforced by British government, the system was created to sustain its colonies and sugar plantations overseas (Storbeck 2011). The British created the Indian indentureship system specifically as a source of cheap labour after the emancipation of slavery (Storbeck 2011). Thus, sugar planters in the existing colonies were now provided with a new cheap labour force to replace the former labour force (previous slaves) (Struman 2014). When the Indian indentureship system was abolished after 80 years of operation, 3.5 million Indians had been removed from their ancestral lands and scattered as far as the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and Oceania (Sturman 2014).

Despite the transition of systems, working conditions under indentureship were reminisced to that under slavery (Sturman 2014). The Indian indentureship labour system was inherently exploitive and grounded in the same violences as that of slavery (Sturman 2014). Indian indentured labourers may have left India or the Indian subcontinent under agreed-upon contracts which included their length of stay, conditions of employment and an option to return once contracts were completed (Lal 1983). Indian indentured labourers were transported to numerous British colonies to work on its plantations in former colonies (Sturman 2014). Although the right of return was promised to Indian migrants by the British government, numerous migrants could not afford to pay for their ticket home or the increased interest

rates on existing debt barred any opportunity to return back to their ancestral lands (Voigt-Graf 2008). Nevertheless, the Indian indentureship system was exceedingly deceitful, as the system embodied various forms of debt bondage to ensure Indian Indenture labourers agency was minuscule, if not non-existent (Sturman 2014). The indentureship system trapped and displaced numerous Indian migrants in former British colonies during the indentureship period. After its emancipation, the global Indian diaspora emerged and the transnational identity of 'Indo' (Voigt-Graf 2008).

The British Indian indentureship system furthered racial segmentation of labour systems, specifically in labour system encompassing bondage (Sturman 2014). The indentureship system is an example of a racialized model of labour organization (Sturman 2014). Many scholars have argued that the indentureship system was a system between slavery and free labour (Sturman 2014). However, the indentureship system was rooted in master and servant relations and reminisced to the previous system of slavery (Sturman 2014). The indentureship system illustrated critical questions about the history of international labour regulation, as it addresses questions of what constitutes free labour bondage and is considered slave labour (Sturman 2014).

## 4.3 The *Kafala* System

The *kafala* system has increasingly come under fire, as reports of abuses and exploitations of migrants has increased. This labour system has been declared as forced labour, servitude and even slavery (Demetriou 2015). Migrant domestic workers under entering the *kafala* system experience exploitation prior to arriving to work in the GCC countries (Jureidini 2010). For example, migrants often seek offshore employment through recruitment agencies or labour brokers (Jureidini 2010). However, recruitment companies very seldom inform the migrant worker of the real circumstances and conditions they will face at their destination (Jureidini 2010). Author Jureidini states, 'migration and trafficking are interlinked, as traffickers exploit the processes by which individuals migrate', thus migrant workers are often deceived about the actual working and living conditions they will face in the host country (Jureidini 2010). Although proving deception is not easy, deception is integral to our understanding how migrants get trafficked into the GCC countries under the *kafala* system (Jureidini 2010).

The system itself is founded on the unequal distribution of power between foreign workers and employers; this dynamic permits abuses and the exploitation of migrant workers (Babar 2015). It is difficult to understand to what extent trafficking is occurring under the *kafala* system, as we are dealing with what Jureidini states, 'hidden populations' (Jureidini 2010). The experiences of migrants differ and are also gendered as well; women experiences differ than that of men (Demetriou 2015). Contrary to men, women are moving to the GCC countries to take up employment roles as domestic workers (Demetriou 2015). Women domestic workers are subjected to private family households; if violence occurs, the state is reluctant to intervene on pri-

vate property (Jureidini 2010). Whereas, men are often entering into GCC countries for employment in low-skilled or semiskilled sector, mostly in the field of construction (Demetriou 2015). It has been reported that domestic workers are often subjected to extensive long work hour days for minimal or zero pay, as they are expected to work in return for living in their employer's home (Demetriou 2015).

Daphne Demetriou, author of '*Tied Visas' and Inadequate Labour Protections: A formula for abuse and exploitation of migrant domestic workers in the United Kingdom*, states some of the common forms of abuse record in Gulf counties which include:

> nonpayment or underpayment of wages, confiscation of passports, inadequate living conditions, long working hours, agency fees and requirement violations, contract substitution and restriction or no freedom of movement, physical, sexual or emotional abuse. (Demetriou 2015)

Sponsored migrant workers who wish to leave the country may only do so by obtaining an exit visa prior to their departure (Babar 2015). Oftentimes this is an impossible and formidable task. Similar to Indian migrant experiences under the indentureship system, migrants under the *kafala* system have their agency entirely erased (Lal 1983). Migrants who have their passports confiscated are barred from leaving their employment and the country (Demetriou 2015). Stranded, isolated and desperate migrants are forced to endure and continue to work for their employers (Demetriou 2015). Confiscation of passports is a common practice and phenomenon under the *kafala* system (Storbeck 2011). For example, upon arrival migrant's passports are immediately confiscated by their employer (Storbeck 2011). Thus, migrants are not only unable to change their employers, but migrant worker's agency is completely erased during their employment (Storbeck 2011).

Through neocolonial discourses, there has been a shift in international labour migration with increased demand for 'temporary' labour migration (Rosewarne 2010). Globalization and its neocolonial narratives have created a labour system which emphasizes the temporality of labour forces and therefore has profound implications of the commodification of labour (Rosewarne 2010). Thus, migrants are not only unable to change their employers, but ones' agency is completely erased during the course of employment (Storbeck 2011). Migrants under the *kafala* system have zero employment rights, as employment rights do not apply to them due to the temporal nature of their contracts and non-citizenry status in GCC countries (Renkiewicz 2016). Through the current discourses of labour migration in the GCC countries, temporary migrant workers have become widespread according to Stuart Rosewarne, author of *Globalisation and the Commodification of Labour: Temporary Labour Migration*(Rosewarne 2010).

Due to Qatar's lucrative oil and gas industry, it has now become one of the most flourishing nations in the Middle East and amongst the GCC countries (Renkiewicz 2016). Qatar nationalists cannot sustain and provide the increased demands from the global market (Renkiewicz 2016). Therefore, Qatar's shortage of labour amongst the local population demands for the migration of labour to compensate for its

booming economy (Renkiewicz 2016). Qatar has now become an international hub and destination for most migration workers, especially those who are from India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh (Rosewarne 2010). Many of the migrants entering the *kafala* system are attempting to escape from poverty and violences experienced in their home countries (Rosewarne 2010). Little do these migrants know that these experiences of violences shall follow them and manifest in the *kafala* system. Specifically, migrants working in the field of domestic servitude are amongst the most vulnerable, as they are subjected to horrible and various types of abuses and exploitation (Renkiewicz 2016).

## 4.4 Born to Work

The *kafala* system has come under recent fire due to increased reports of migrant deaths, including claims of indentured servitude (Renkiewicz 2016). More specifically in Qatar, where the country prepares to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, reports of migrant deaths have increased substantively (Renkiewicz 2016). Labour migrants under the *kafala* system are predominantly of Indian descent or from the Indian subcontinent (Storbeck 2011). Although the *kafala* labour system has historically grounded and rooted in Arab cultures, it is part of ancient historical customs where tribe members would offer their homes to passing strangers (Renkiewicz 2016). Despite its original and historical traditions embodying hospitality, the *kafala* system no longer is a system which provides generosity and the promise of protection for passing migrant workers (Diop et al. 2016). The system now embodies parallel and hollowing conditions in which Indian indentured labourers suffered and endured under the British indentureship system.

Human trafficking continues to be a global phenomenon. Despite its inherit exploitive and contractual nature, the *kafala* system prevails in numerous GCC countries and heavily rely on imported labour (Renkiewicz 2016). In Qatar specifically, dependence on migrant labour is greater than all GCC countries (Diop et al. 2016). Majority of these workers are Indian (Storbeck 2011). Migrant labour now compromises nearly 94% of its estimated economically active population and approximately 99% of its estimated private sector workforce (Diop et al. 2016). Qatar's labour market is therefore heavily reliant on expatriate labour and depends on migrant workers to provide labour for even its public sectors as well (Berrebi et al. 2009).

Much like Indians under the indentureship system, labour migrants under the *kafala* system are subjected to spatial segregation from the local population (Diop et al. 2016). Indentured Indians were housed in barracks; these compounds were formerly used by former black slaves under the system of slavery (Pande 2010). The living conditions in these barracks were beyond horrifying and are parallel to the living conditions experienced by migrant workers under the *kafala* system (Diop et al. 2016). For example, migrant workers are placed into labour camps are completely barricaded from the rest of the local population (Diop et al. 2016). Oftentimes, migrants are subjected to stay in these compounds while they are not working;

migrant mobility is severely restricted (Diop et al. 2016). Through this segregation, migrations experience isolation and exclusion from the rest of society (Diop et al. 2016). During times where migrants are indeed interacting with the local population, they experience deep forms of discrimination and subjected to prejudicial treatment (Diop et al. 2016). In essence, migrants under the *kafala* system are treated no better than slaves, as their treatment is comparable to that of Indians under the indentureship system (Pande 2010).

The saliency of brown skin is intertwined with notions of low-skilled and bondage labour, as brown skin is linked to subjects of labour trafficking. According to author Claude Berrebi and co-authors, 'Indians constitute the largest expatriate group [in Qatar], followed by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis' (Berrebi et al. 2009). The saliency of brown skin becomes commodified and reproduced as subjects of labour, under specific systems of labour where debt and bondage are involved. According to anti-racist theorist and scholar Sherene Razack, certain bodies and subjects in specific spaces are seen as undeserving of full personhood (Razack 2000). Due to the colonial histories of Indian indentureship, narratives of disposability, commodification of brown bodies and systems of bonded labour will continuously run parallel to each other. Under such systems, brown bodies are denied full personhood and are automatically subjected to spaces where horrific and vile working conditions exist (Razack 2000). For example, Indian migrants are subjected to live in labour camps where conditions are considered so poor and migrants depend on charity for foods, clothes and, the most basic necessity of all, water (Storbeck 2011).

Colonial narratives have become entrenched and have seeped into the *kafala* system, as the system disproportionately targets those who are Indian or from the Indian subcontinent and bare the saliency of brown skin (Berrebi et al. 2009). Razack further explains, [journeys of transgressions are deeply historical ones] (Razack 2000). Although race is not fixed or bounded, we must acknowledge the contextual and colonial background of race specifically in systems of indenture and bondage labour (Dei 2017). Racial and colonial aspects of both the Indian indentureship and the *kafala* systems share a collective history of commodifying the brown body as a source of labour (Razack 2000). As brown bodies move through the GCC countries, more specifically, if my body were to move through GCC countries, these spaces have constructed to ensure my racial identity as a brown woman of colour will never be in question (Dei 2017). My identity is linked to degeneracy, low-skilled and bondage. Therefore, those of Indian descent and those whom obtain brown skin are viewed a source of labour. Brown skin is intertwined with notions of mere subjects who will inherently work in dreadful working and living conditions, as indentured Indian did so during the colonial period of indentureship (Sturman 2014).

Respectability and degeneracy are concepts fashioned by Razack, where subjects come to understand themselves through their spatial location (Razack 2000). To contextualize, the *kafala* system assigns certain bodies to certain spaces of degenerous work (Razack 2000). Through its exploitive nature as a bondage labour system, brown bodies are specifically assigned to occupy these spaces of oppressive work in GCC countries (Razack 2000). Thus migrants, who are often bare brown bodies, are

assigned to occupy spaces of degeneracy, and these spaces inevitably lead to their eventual death (Razack 2000). In Qatar specifically, there have been increased reports on migrant worker deaths (Renkiewicz 2016). In these spaces, migrant bodies are subjected to horrendous living working conditions, as many are expected to work 12- to 14-h work shifts (Renkiewicz 2016). Additionally, migrants are expected to work in temperatures up to 100 degrees; deaths by heat stroke and heart attack are all too common (Renkiewicz 2016). Working condition migrants are so poor that the International Trade Union Confederation stated them as parallel to that of slavery (Renkiewicz 2016). The most excruciating questions I would ask here is: How did certain bodies become constructed in ways to be assigned to spaces of oppressive and laborious work? How did the brown body, specifically, become constructed in ways that it is subjected into spaces designed for degenerous work?

Previously stated, the Indian indentureship system and the *kafala* system are reminisced to one another, as both systems embody an inherently exploitive nature to that of indentured servitude. Although the Indian indentureship system was enforced by British imperial government, the system was manoeuvred as a tool not only to secure white settler projects but construct horrific systems of labour embodying severe racial divides (Sturman 2014). In Albert Memmi's *The Colonized and the Colonized*, the author speaks of how slavery was never abolished [the system evolved into colonization] (Memmi 1957). After the emancipation of slavery and the enforcement of the Indian indentureship system, plantations were racially divided (Sturman 2014). For example, in some British colonies (Guyana and Trinidad), plantation fields were racially divided amongst Indian indentured labourers and blacks (Sturman 2014). Through colonial narratives, specific bodies have been reproduced to be viewed as mere labour commodities – the brown and black bodies. Contextually, I am examining the brown bodies' relationship in systems of bondage labour through colonial periods of Indian indentureship and the *kafala* system. Although the *kafala* system is historically embedded in numerous Arab cultures (Diop et al. 2016), the *kafala* system takes comparable positionality of labour systems that of colonization (Memmi 1957). Specifically examining Qatar's relationship with the *kafala* system, locals have taken the spatial positionality as the colonizer, and the migrant labour population (who are mostly Indian or migrants from the Indian subcontinent) has taken the spatial positionality of the colonized (Memmi 1957):

> The colonized... is asked only for his muscles; he is so poorly evaluated that three or four can be taken on for the price of one European.

The *kafala* system embodies these colonial narratives, as it views specific bodies as a source of labour. According to Albert Memmi, the colonized means little the colonizer, for the colonizer the colonized is nobody (Memmi 1957). For Qatar locals, labour migrants mean very little as they are denied not only their personhood through oppressive working conditions but subjected worked to death, literally.

In *Citizen's attitudes towards migrant workers in Qatar* finds, Qatari nationalists have mixed feelings about migrant workers, despite their enormous contribution to country's economy (Diop et al. 2016). Despite their critical importance, migrant work-

ers are viewed as threat to Qatari life, as majority feel as though they are under siege (Diop et al. 2016). Author Memmi explains colonialism is one variability of fascism (Memmi 1957). Memmi goes on to further explain that fascism is a regime of oppression which only benefits a view (Memmi 1957). Despite neocolonial paradigms, colonial fascism is not limited to white settler colonial nation states but can be embodied by other governments as well (Memmi 1957). We can see this in Qatar and GCC countries, as these countries has adopted colonial narratives of who gets to belong and who does not belong (Memmi 1957). For example, labour migrants are constructed as outsiders and never belonging in GCC counties (Diop et al. 2016). Qatar nationals do not see migrant workers are strengthening the culture or society, despite their critical importance in sustaining the country's economy (Diop et al. 2016).

India's historical ties to the British indentureship systems enabled GCC countries to view brown bodies as labour force surplus migrants who are ready to work in vile working conditions until their deaths (Storbeck 2011). Migrant bodies are subjected into specific spaces that have been racially produced (Goldberg 1993). David Theo Goldberg author of, *Racist Culture states*, categories of space are racially produced and ordered (Goldberg 1993). Meaning, racial categories are strategically spatialized into continental divides, national localities and geographical region (Goldberg 1993). Specific bodies belong to certain spaces and others into another. It is through this logic that racisms then become normalized even in its institutionalized forms through what Goldberg calls special configuration (Goldberg 1993). Indentured labour spaces encompassing oppressive conditions become normalized; it is seen as a logical implication of a racialized space made for migrant workers (Goldberg 1993). Bodies in these spaces and the violences experienced therefore become normalized and justified (Goldberg 1993). It is through the colonial legacy of indentureship that racial categories have been strategically spatialized and the *kafala* continues to perpetuate these violences and abuses amongst its migrant workers and therefore legitimizes constructions of racialized spaces (Goldberg 1993).

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# Chapter 5
# The Unbearable Lightness of Being Yellow: Whiteness and Its Legacy on Japan's Self-Image and Attitudes Toward the West

**Claude Deschamps**

## 5.1 Introduction

Although the Japanese generally view themselves as a racially and ethnically homogenous people and are undoubtedly proud of their history and culture, it is also plainly visible to anyone visiting Japan that the Japanese people have a fascination for white people. On billboards and in advertisements for cosmetic products and for English language schools, it is visually clear in the urban landscape that the Japanese have an adulation for whiteness. Why such accomplished people place so much emphasis on whiteness? What is it that stirs their fascination with Caucasians? Are the Japanese people victims of some sort of inferiority complex? If so, where could have this complex originated from?

In colonial settings such as Africa and the African diaspora in North America, it stands to reason that the colonized may aspire to whiteness or maximize their proximity to whiteness in order to lessen the oppression and stigma that often come from holding a position on the racial spectrum that is far from whiteness. This desire to be white is what Fanon (1952, p. 202) describes in the following:

The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man, there is but one destiny. And it is white. A long time ago, the black man acknowledged the undeniable superiority of the white man, and all his endeavors aim at achieving a white existence. The desire to approximate whiteness is also mentioned by Jensen (2011, p. 25). He states that in societies in which people believe there will be hierarchies, it appears to be in one's self-interest to accept the hierarchies and try to climb to, or stay in, the highest position possible. The potential rewards for this are access (or the promise of access) to wealth, greater social status, and an inflated sense of self-esteem.

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The benefits reaped from acting white are what Frantz Fanon (1952, p. 52) describes in the following: "The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle."

Japan, however, as I will argue below, has never been "colonized" in the true sense of the word. Certainly, the forcible opening of the country brought about by four heavily armed Americans named "black ships of evil" commanded by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry in 1853 to end Japan's nearly 250 years of self-imposed *sakoku* [1] (or closed country/isolation) had colonial overtones and fit the colonial agenda of Western nations at the time (Keith 2011); but since there was no establishment of an American colonial administration (as with the British in Africa or India) after the opening of Japanese ports to Western ships, we can consider the opening more as a trade opportunity for Westerners rather than a desire to subjugate the Japanese and turn them into colonial subjects (Zielenziger 2006). This explains why Japan was later able to unrestrainedly industrialize quickly and even surpass many Western nations in the process. Furthermore, the American occupation of the country (1945–1952) after Japan's defeat in World War II is nothing close to colonization. Japan kept its language and culture and again proceeded to become the second largest economy of the world in 1978.

How is it possible that such a powerful and independent country in Asia, with everything in its past and even present to be proud of, still courts whiteness? Is it possible that Japan's race from a feudal society to modernity was also a race to whiteness? This paper, rather than providing ready answers, is an exploration of these questions and what they mean to me as a Black person who spent 7 years of his life in Japan.

My interest in this topic goes back to my own genuine fascination with Japan, its people, its history, and its culture. As a child from Côte d'Ivoire, a Third World country and former colony still trying to break the grip of former colonial power France, a country whose promising nationalist and anticolonial leader was deposed by the French army and the UN in 2010 (Araoye 2012), my geography teachers always entreated us (students) to study Japan (and also South Korea) closely because our stagnant African countries have so much to learn from the economic trajectories of those countries. Since then, I had always looked up to Japan as a model of economic success, a paragon that developing African countries should emulate in order to gain economic independence and break the yoke of a nagging neocolonialism. There is no doubt in my mind: in terms of quality of life and the overall experience I had in that country, I hold Japan highest above all Western countries that I have ever lived in.

However, during my 7 years there, I witnessed a nation that I found somehow crippled by its obsession with whiteness. How can a nation that millions of people around the world admire for its 2000 years of recorded cultural history still bow before whites? Though Japan enjoys a relatively great economic success and a fine

[1] Japanese: 鎖国, literally "country in chains" or "locked out of country" was the foreign policy of Japan under which no foreigner or Japanese could enter or leave the country on penalty of death.

culture to showcase for, it appears that Japan is an Asian country that still abides by racial constructs devised outside its borders by Western powers.

This paper is a historiography of the Japanese people's fascination with whiteness. I conveniently borrowed the title from Czech Nobel laureate Milan Kundera's 1984 novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Kundera argues that lightness of life is unbearable because we want our lives to have weight and significance, because we want them to matter. The feeling of lightness in life can cause an existential dilemma whereby we desire things (such as whiteness – in this paper) in order to add weight to our otherwise insufficient and empty lives. Ultimately, we want our lives to mean something (to have weight) which means we want our lives to have meaning and significance. I argue that the Japanese desire whiteness to complement their yellowness because they think that being yellow is not enough in the world's racial hierarchy. Using a critical discourse analytic approach and a theoretical lens grounded in critical whiteness studies, this paper seeks to draw into the light Japan's efforts to emulate the West during the Meiji Restoration. These efforts to catch up with the West and Japan's desire to position itself as a leader in Asia, as I argue below, were all part of a performance and claim to whiteness. I will analyze how historical constructions of racial identity continue to inform actual lived relationships between people belonging to different geographical spaces. First, I will place our discussion of whiteness in its sociohistorical context of the nineteenth-century colonial and Western hegemony. Second, I will position myself in the discussion by showing how the Japanese fascination with whiteness (in this case *native-speakerism*)[2] in English language teaching affected me directly in my practice as a black-bodied high school English teacher with an accent in Nagasaki. It needs to be stated that the focus on Japan and my critique of the Japanese obsession with whiteness is not intended to be derogatory. I do not mean to disparage the Japanese as being dupes to global hegemonic whiteness, as these same attitudes are occurring in many other nonwhite countries in the world which have their own ways of appropriating and performing whiteness on their indigenous populations and/or immigrants. Rather, this discussion is meant to call into question a blind obsession with whiteness and lead us in ways that can disrupt or dismantle a hegemonic racial hierarchy based on whiteness, which still holds sway on even the most accomplished and developed countries like Japan. By so doing, I intend to raise questions as to how specific constructions of whiteness have the power to shape how we view ourselves and others and how we construct the institutions and discourses that shape our lives. Likewise, this analysis is not intended to paint a dismal and hopeless picture. In the end, I suggest that, as nonwhite nations rise to economic independence and prosperity, as China, for example, will someday take its place in world politics, they use these unique opportunities that are not available to countries populated by brown- or dark-skinned people to critically dismantle the ubiquity of whiteness that has subjugated the minds of so many and, in the process, offer a new world order not necessarily structured around race or whiteness.

[2] Coined by Holliday (2006), *native-speakerism* is a discrimination against non-native teachers of languages based on the belief that native speakers are the best language teachers.

## 5.2 Positionality

I went to Japan as a US citizen under the auspices of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, and I was assigned to a prefectural high school in Nagasaki from 2007 until the summer of 2012. The overall goal of this governmental program is to hire native speakers from affluent English-speaking countries such as the USA and Canada to help promote an international understanding among the Japanese and to assist local teachers with English education. Launched in 1987, the program had traditionally hired predominantly male Caucasians until recently (some 20 years later, when it started to diversify its pool of teachers both racially and in gender). I was such a diversity. But such diversity comes with its problems in a society that sees itself as homogenous and wishes to project that homogeneity onto others. It was not so much my skin color or my blackness that was problematic. Surely, I disrupted expectations among certain colleagues who expected a white person for the position. In fact, on a personal level, Japan is the country in which I felt the least racist microaggressions on my black body. This experience stands in contrast to dissimilar experiences by other Blacks in Japan. My racial guards were down, which added tremendous flavor to my stay in the country. It was rather my place of birth (Côte d'Ivoire) and my accent that worried some of the colleagues who had invested a lot of their efforts in the belief that the native speaker is the ideal language teacher. For some time, two of the English teachers flatly refused to engage in team teaching[3] classes with me because English is not the language that I first spoke on my mother's knees; therefore they did not consider me an authority on the language. Thanks to my other 5 colleagues and their understanding and awareness of *World Englishes*,[4] I kept a job for 5 years. This rather isolated experience or personal narrative could have easily remained on the margins of history were it not for a recent growing tide of criticism from critical applied linguists against the discriminatory practices of hiring only whites for English teaching positions in Japan. Such vehement denunciations of these discriminatory practices were taken from the publication of 18 critical essays compiled in *native-speakerism*, a collection published in 2013, and a book that helped me theorize my experience and connect it to larger discourses about race, ethnicity, and nationality.

"*Native-speakerism* is an established belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which springs the ideals both of the English language and of English Language Teaching (ELT) methodology" (Holliday 2006, p. 385). Japan has a long tradition of hiring only white native speakers for its English language needs. In fact, Honna and Takeshita (1998) argue that the Japanese have "anglophilic" tendencies in Japanese English language teaching. On websites and newspapers, it is quite normal to see advertisement such as this: *White male native*

[3] Team teaching is the usual way Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) on the JET program and Japanese Teachers of English (JTE) join efforts to deliver a lesson. Rarely do ALTs teach by themselves.

[4] *World Englishes* is a term for emerging localized or indigenized varieties of English, especially varieties that have developed in territories influenced by the United Kingdom or the USA.

*speaker needed for our English classes. Nationality: passport must be from the USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand only*. These advertisements have gone unquestioned for decades because the Japanese equate "foreigner" with "white native speaker of English." In simple terms, the Japanese believe in what Toh (2013) calls a "distorted formula" that translates into the following: *Foreign country = America = English = Whites*. This essentialist equation leaves out many Americans who are not whites nor native speakers of English or who speak more than one language at home. This is how I, a foreign-born American and non-native speaker of English, could not easily fit in this equation at my high school. Kubota (2002) has voiced some concern about how African-American English teachers have been asked to speak "standard English" by their Japanese colleagues, because their racial background places them out of bounds in the ELT business. Kubota and Fujimoto (2013) also report on Japanese-American English teachers (born and raised in the USA) experiencing differential treatment in salary in Japan because they were not foreigner enough for their jobs. They note that "the Japanese American English teachers' biological background stigmatizes them and diminishes the authority of their credentials as teachers and experts on matters of Western culture and language" (p. 200).

The equation gets even more convoluted if we take into consideration the case of children of non-English-speaking Caucasian families born and raised in Japan. They might as well be French, Italian, or Danish offspring and highly proficient in Japanese, and yet they will, as suggested by Toh (2013), "be absorbed, by dint of appearance, within a native speaker persona or stereotype" (p. 187).

An understanding of how the concept of race is embedded in the discourse surrounding the native speaker is called for if we want to move away from the current status quo in applied linguistics whereby non-native teachers of English have been relegated to an inferior status in English language teaching (Houghton and Rivers 2013). A succinct history of race and the English language in the context of Japan will reveal what lies beneath the surface in the promotion of native speakers of English.

## 5.3 Western Discourse on the Japanese Race

In many respects, the racial classification of the Japanese by Westerners in the past 500 years is a shining case in point of how the concept of race is a flimsy Western-born cultural construct and also an example of how race is a recent invention that emerged from the nineteenth century onward. Unexpectedly, the classification of the Japanese proved to be an onerous task (Knowner 2000), unlike the classification of Blacks in Africa or indigenous peoples in the USA, and there are inconsistencies or even conflicting accounts about how the West viewed the Japanese people. Charles Brace (cited in Knowner) notes: "It is difficult as yet to obtain trustworthy accounts of the races, in the various islands which make up this empire" (p. 117). Knowner remarks that the Western encounter with the Japanese was a "disturbing experience" for Westerners (p. 104) in the sense that Japanese seemed to defy the "unwritten

rule" of the colonial encounter. They were neither docile nor uncultured or barbarians, and often not at all inferior. This was a novel experience for Westerners, who at the pinnacle of their imperialist expansion viewed the world with enormous supremacy and paternalism. In earlier accounts of Western encounter with the Japanese such as the writings of Garcia de Escalante Alvarado in 1548, we find no interest in racial matters, as if the early explorers were oblivious to racial difference. This may be because racism was not born yet. Knowner argues that Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, having no clear technological advantage at the time over the Japanese, perceived very few differences between themselves and the local population. These visitors were rarely preoccupied with questions regarding the racial origin of the Japanese. Three centuries later, however, due to major sweeping changes in Europe, a discourse on the race of the Japanese began to emerge.

With the Enlightenment, the advent of scientism, and a racial worldview in Europe, Western scholars and observers began to pay growing attention to physical differences, and the Japanese began to appear different from the Europeans (Knowner 2000). Thus, Knowner points out that within a period of 300 years, the Japanese turned from spotless "whites" to quintessential "yellow." As a further matter, the rediscovery of Japan by Commodore Perry in 1853 provided a new opportunity for racialists who were eager to classify the Japanese. The easiest route they took to categorize the Japanese was to group them with their Chinese neighbors and other Asians on the continent in the general Mongoloid race (p. 113). "In crude racial terms," Knowner (2000) observes, "theorists made only a little distinction between the Chinese, Japanese, and other peoples of the region, and looked upon all of them as being much inferior and yet relatively closer (as compared to other races) to Caucasians" (p. 110). But, this proved to be an unpredictable task.

With the decline of China and its fall out of favor from Western circles, due to the discovery of a promising Japan, Westerners were very sympathetic toward the Japanese, and there was an ideological tendency among observers to racially distinguish the Japanese from the Chinese, the archetype of the Mongoloid race (Knowner 2000). In 1852, MacFarlane, for example (cited in Knowner), noted that "although strongly marked with the Mongol type, the Japanese bear a stronger resemblance to the European family, and their eyes are not so deeply sunk in their heads as those of the Chinese" (p. 114).

Some observers such as James Lawrence (cited in Knowner) went as far as placing the Chinese and the Negro in the same racial category, just so the Japanese can thus be elevated. "In stature," he wrote, "the Chinese are comparatively short, with thick bodies; complexions of a light-yellowish cast; features, closely resembling those of a negro" (p. 115). The Japanese were granted the status of "honorary white" by Westerners in order to separate them from their neighbors in Asia.

Western efforts to whiten the Japanese over their Chinese neighbors may have been a strategy to divide and conquer in the region, but they nonetheless maintain the Japanese below whites, but above Native Americans and Blacks in the Eurocentric classification of races (Knowner).

Positive representations of the Japanese culminated with the victory of Japan in the Sino-Japanese (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese Wars (1904–1905). But many

prominent Westerners such as German Kaiser William II and President McKinley viewed Japan as a threat to Western empire, and both leaders saw eye to eye and considered Japan as a catalyst of China's awakening, a direct threat to Western supremacy. McKinley became the promulgator of the "yellow peril" idea. Thus, former favorable accounts on the Japanese race had to be retired, and a new unsympathetic discourse emerged. Westerners placed the Japanese once again together with the Chinese and other Asians in the Mongoloid race, and as Knowner points out, "toward the end of the century, the color 'yellow' became almost synonymous with the Japanese" (p. 128). It is not certain whether it was this fall from grace – from "honorary whites" to quintessential "yellow" in less than half a century– that prompted the Japanese to be more aggressive in the region and reclaim "whiteness," but this was undoubtedly the beginning of an existential quest to lighten their yellowness.

## 5.4 The Quest for Whiteness

Much of this quest is based on Kawano (2010)'s account of how the Japanese were made inferior to Westerners and how they sought recognition from the West by learning western ways and their language to elevate themselves to the status of "civilized." Two treaties have played a significant role in keeping Japan from gaining economic and military power in the nineteenth century: the *Convention of Kanagawa* signed in 1854 and the *Treaty of Amity and Commerce* in 1858. Kawano suggests that these "unequal treaties nurtured a sense of inferiority in the Japanese, and as a form of resistance, they began to "improve their race" (p. 160)". According to Kawano, the goal of the Meiji leaders was, therefore, to develop in the Japanese people international norms "in the hope that they will be accepted as an equal member of the civilized international community" (p. 160). This explains why many Japanese were sent to Western nations (mainly the USA) to study their language and adopt their clothes and food and then returned to lead the Meiji restoration. Upon return to their homeland, "The newly-educated Japanese elites came to internalize inferiority by accepting the superiority of Western people" (p. 160). Universities that hired these elites became centers for the recruitment of new elites who would promote whiteness. The equation of English language teaching with the notion of whiteness surrounding the native speaker ideology in applied linguistics begins to emerge. Furthermore, aside from adopting Western ideologies, some intellectuals pushed for a "whiter body"; others advocated intermarriage with whites as a way to "strengthen the body" and "clean their bloodlines" (p. 161). For a more detailed history on the racialization of the Japanese people, read Knowner (2000) and Keith (2011). As can be seen from the above, the exploitation of whiteness in English language teaching practices is nothing new under the sun. The current practice of recruiting only native speakers (or Caucasians) as teachers of English is deeply rooted in historical discourses. The practice has a long history deeply anchored in the racialization of the Japanese people in relation to Westerners. Currently, the

*Eikaiwa*[5] (English conversation schools) industry is run by Japanese elites and business leaders who still bank on "whiteness" to attract their customers (Kubota 1998).

Another insightful way to look into the practice of hiring Caucasian native speakers of English is to view it from the theoretical lens of "leisure and consumption" proposed by Kubota (2011). She explains that "this perspective highlights the enjoyment of socializing with the teacher and the peers and forms of *akogare* [desire/longing] including romantic desire and the aspiration to be like other Japanese people with fluency in English" (p. 473). In this sense, English is learned not for pragmatic communicative purposes but mainly as a way to gain access to the circle of white teachers and those who use their language equally well. These *Eikaiwa* businesses attract their customers by exploiting images of good-looking white men to entice romantic desires in their female customers. Every major train station in Japan has an *Eikaiwa* school in its vicinity that exploits these representations to attract potential customers. According to Zielenziger (2006), the Japanese people spend about 20 billion dollars per year on English language study (p. 282). This is more than twice the amount that *Apple Inc.* made in the final quarter of 2012 when the company announced that it had made a net profit of 8.2 billion dollars by selling electronic products across the globe (Apple 2012). Kubota (2011) remarks that "if teachers are unattractive, students quit" (p. 484). In her qualitative study on students' desires (mostly female students), one of the school owners she interviewed confessed that for most of his female students, learning and/or making progress in the English language is not their main goal. He jokingly comments: "So I think this business is one third *mizushobai* [nighttime entertainment business] or a host club… Perhaps Japanese people have an inferiority complex or *akogare* (*desire*) for white people. I don't, though…" (p. 484). He also points out that the Japanese females at his school do not make any progress at all in their learning, to be honest, but they simply do not quit for that reason, because their main reason is to come and observe a foreigner. They come to experience something different from their everyday lives or to "consume the enjoyment of being included in the English-speaking world" (p. 484). One of the female participants in the study that Kubota (2011) interviewed went as far as to disclose that she wants to marry a white person because she wants to have a half-blood child. She further explains that half-blood children are "cute" and they will be bilinguals as they grow up. It appears the notion of a "whiter body" and "clean their bloodlines" mentioned above still hold sway on the Japanese psyche, as can be seen in the cosmetic boom of whitening products and in clothing advertising, which features predominantly white models. The fact that Japanese women go to great lengths to lighten their skin is now a widely recognizable social phenomenon. Ashikari (2005, p. 74) states: "Japanese women make enormous efforts to make their skin look lighter, staying in the shade when outside to avoid tanning, and using expensive face-whitening cosmetics." Although some scholars like Wagatsuma (1967) have argued that this desire for whiteness is rooted in Japan's own history of aesthetic values, rather than in westernized idea about race, the racial profiles of the people represented in the whitening cosmetics industry tell us other-

[5] An *Eikaiwa* is a private English conversation school.

wise. Many images of *haku-jin* (literally white people) are used in advertisements for whitening cosmetics as well as other makeup products. "Caucasian models appear to be a transparent symbol of 'world culture' and 'universal beauty' in the Japanese media" (Ashikari p. 82). Russel (1996) also concurs that "the Japanese self-emerges a white, near white, or aspiring to whiteness" (p. 12–13).

## 5.5 Discussion

Frantz Fanon considered the economic condition of the colonized as decisive factor in the desire on the part of the colonized to be white. He states: "It remains, nevertheless, evident that for us the true disalienation of the black man implies a brutal awareness of the social and economic realities. The inferiority complex can be ascribed to a double process: first, economic. Then, internalization of this inferiority" (Fanon 1952, p. xv). There may have been a desire among the Japanese of the Meiji era to aspire to whiteness since they lack the technological advantage of the West in the nineteenth century, as they were "so astonished, frightened, and ultimately impressed by the wondrous machines these uninvited gatecrashers brought to their shores, that the samurais were so beguiled that they were soon clambering on board for a spin" (Zielenziger 2006, p. 3). The Japanese decided never to experience this beguilement and sense of powerlessness again, so they rushed to modernize quickly, determined that the people would never be forced to prostrate themselves before Western invaders, and set out to guide the modernization of greater Asia (Zielenziger 2006). The rapid transformation of Japan from a feudal society to a modern nation-state has been hailed by many critics as a miracle, and as Zielenziger puts it, "In so many important respects, Japan seemed the ideal system for the industrial age" (p. 4). This ascension to the ranks of Western powers emboldened Japan to colonize and wage war in the region. The Allies' intervention in World War II brought an end to the expansion of Japan in the Pacific. After the horrors of the atomic bombings, Japan's economy and infrastructures were in a shambles, and this small country found itself starting up afresh. Yet, under the sheltering guardianship of the USA, which furnished military protection and opened its consumer markets to Japanese exports, the nation staged a remarkable recovery, and Japan entered the club of the wealthiest once again. Let us pause here briefly to examine this symbiotic relationship between the USA and Japan from a critical race perspective.

During the Meiji era, the USA and the colonial powers of Europe allowed Japan to appropriate technology and develop itself rapidly because of Western sympathetic accounts on the Japanese race, a generosity not displayed to Africans or any dark-skinned people around the world. After the World War II, the USA pumped large amounts of money into the Japanese economy to help the country recover. In my opinion, there is not a single country populated by Blacks or dark-skinned people in this world that has benefited from such a generous help, similar to how the USA assisted Europe through the *Marshall Plan*. Dei (1996) speaks of the "saliency of skin color" and how this plays out in unequal and differential treatment of peo-

ples. He states: “We must be careful not to deny the saliency of skin colour as this is still a factor in the social construct of race” (p. 53). We may ascribe the “Japanese miracle” to proclivity for hard, but we cannot ignore the fact that skin color played an important role in Japan’s awakening without being intellectually dishonest. The development of nations across the globe has been theorized as the exclusive domain of whiteness (Loftsdóttir 2009, p. 7). This means that development is in a sense racialized, seen as belonging to the domain of white European or American and by extension Asians of a much lighter complexion, but not in the realm of Africans. Nonetheless, just as skin color saved the Japanese from “barbarism” in the nineteenth century, we can also argue that it was skin color (yellowness) that justified the dropping of two atomic bombs on their nation. The same bombs could have been dropped on Fascist Germany or Italy. In the racial hierarchy of Western colonial thought, Europeans occupy the top echelon, a stage that no other race on this planet can reach. From the current geopolitical structure of the world, it seems that a race can bring itself up technologically (and economically) and even challenge the West, as the Japanese so brilliantly demonstrated, but it will be always reminded of its position in the predominant racial hierarchy upheld by Western colonial powers. “What emerges then,” as Fanon suggests, “is a need for combined action on the individual and the group. As a psychoanalyst, Fanon encouraged colonized people to no longer be tempted by ‘hallucinatory lactification’” (p. 80) but also to act along the lines of disrupting the social structures that support a desire for whiteness. “The black man should no longer be faced with the dilemma ‘whiten or perish,’ but must become aware of the possibility of existence,” he states (p. 80). Fanon warns us that if we have an inferiority complex, our psychic structure is in danger of disintegration, and steps have to be taken to protect ourselves and gradually liberate ourselves from this unconscious desire (p. 80). Fanon further explains that if we are overcome to such a degree by a desire to whiten ourselves, it’s because we live in a society that banks on this inferiority complex, in a society that “draws its strength by maintaining this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race over another; it is to the extent that society creates difficulties for him that he finds himself positioned in a neurotic situation” (p. 80). We need to interrogate the practices and representations that fuel the desire for whiteness.

## 5.6 Conclusion

What I have conveyed in this paper is through the eyes of a Black man and is influenced by my observations of the reactions of the Japanese to issues of race and whiteness in particular. It is based on my personal lived experience. Writing this paper was no easy task. As I approach the topic, I was forced to ask myself the following questions: “In the racial hierarchy of the world, who will take the writing and/or opinion of a Black person on the Japanese seriously?” “Am I in a position of authority to give my opinion on the Japanese behavior toward Whites?” “In the end,

is it any of my business?" I felt as if I was caught in a clash of the Titans where I was powerless to offer any advice, any help.

However, the moral obligation I felt for writing this paper sprung from my desire to improve the JET program, a well-intentioned program that provided my bread and butter for 5 years but which is still fraught with deficiencies (McConnell 2000). By offering my critique of the Japanese fascination with whiteness in English language teaching practices, and also in society at large, I intend to subvert unquestioned attitudes about whiteness. We can no longer afford a respite in the battle against whiteness, as its tentacles keep spreading to every corner of the globe, even into territories where it should not have taken hold in the first place. Since whiteness has found a way to morph into new shapes in Asia, we have to emphatically and relentlessly challenge, interrogate, and rupture its hold on the world. Countries populated by nonwhite peoples should give whiteness no haven to incubate. There is no place for whiteness to take root in Japan. If the Japanese knew of the *Takao Ozawa v. United States* case, for instance, they would come to realize that for a long time, the USA denied citizenship to Japanese nationals on the grounds that they were not whites (Lopez 1995). The following organizations were erected to counter and contain the "yellow peril": the *Asiatic Exclusion League*, the *Anti-Jap Laundry League*, the *Japanese Exclusion League of California*, and the Japanese-American Internments during World War II in Western USA. All these movements were discriminatory measures aimed at preventing Japanese nationals from becoming full citizens of the USA because of the color of their skin. The desire for whiteness among Japanese may abate if critical citizens of Japan educate their people about the aforementioned movements.

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# Chapter 6
# Exporting Racism: Imperial Interventions and the *Occupation* with Pashtun Culture

**Lailooma Mayar Wardak**

## 6.1 Introduction

In the wake of September 11, 2001, western powers rushed to "rescue" the Afghan people from the tyranny of the fundamentalist Taliban. Since then, "rescuing" has been the official policy line by which western, particularly American, invasion of Afghanistan is legitimated. Interest in this topic fuelled curiosity about Afghanistan which led to increasing discussions in support of, or in opposition to, western interventions, Muslim women, Islam and terrorism, etc. However, missing from these arguments is a thorough interrogation of race and ethnicity and its relevance to discourses about Afghanistan.

In this paper, I draw on anticolonial and anti-racist frameworks and argue that western discourse about Afghan, in general, and the Pashtun peoples, in particular, is guided by racist ideologies rooted in colonial legacies to control the Orient. I suggest that western interventions act as conduits for exporting knowledge to Afghanistan, imparted by racist ideologies, which manifest in the routine experiences of Pashtun peoples. The arguments presented in this paper draw heavily on Said's *Orientalism* and Omi and Winant's (2014) "racial formation theory" to shed light on processes and conditions by which Orientalist discourses intersect with constructions of Pashtun peoples as the racialized 'Others'. I contend that constructions of Pashtun identity are predicated on a relation of power, tied to deeper historical moments, rooted in earlier colonial encounters of British India with the Pashtun people. This essay challenges commonly held notions that ethnic tensions in Afghanistan are a consequence of organic historical processes; rather, I show that

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the imperial gaze and newer forms of racisms intervene, collude and collapse to reproduce discourses of a particularly orientalized Pashtun ethnic identity.

Said (1978) reminds us that Orientalism is not "*essentially* an idea, or a creation" (p. 5); rather, the discursive construction of the East is based upon a "relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (p. 5). Orientalism calls attention to the "strength of oriental discourse" as "a system of knowledge about the Orient", "a created body of theory and practice" (Said, p. 6) which fixed the image of an inferior East in western consciousness. Oriental discourse is powerful because of its close ties to state institutions and civil society. Because of Orientalism's close affiliation with civil society (schools, institutions, media), Orientalist knowledge multiplied and spread into the general culture. In doing so, Orientalism normalized, in public consciousness, the image of a superior West in relation to an inferior East.

The arguments presented in this paper draw on an anti-racist framework to ground the lived realities of Pashtun peoples in the contexts of broader historically situated racial projects. I stress that race thinking, "a way of making up people" (Douglas, as cited in Omi and Winant 2014, p. 233), is central to the construction and positioning of the category of Pashtun difference. An anti-racist framing allows conceiving of Pashtun "Othering" as a process sustained by power structures that evoke cultural difference to justify exclusion, dehumanization and violent occupation. Here, we use racial formation as a historical process of "making up people" in both "social structure and cultural representation" (Omi and Winant 2014, p. 236) which, in the case of Afghanistan, race thinking assumes local articulations in a way which frames Pashtun identity as the backwards, premodern and inherently violent Other.

I draw on my experiences as a Pashtun having spent my adolescent years in Kabul and then in Pakistan Pashtun territory. Over the years, I found myself confronted with microaggressions and verbal onslaughts, from friends and peers, about my Pashtun*ness*. In reaction, I would either argue against or smile in agreement to the propositions of Pashtun representations—I had internalized racism. Similar conversations made their way into casual conversations and, more often than not, when challenged would be dismissed as simple light-hearted "jokes".

However, emboldened by the American invasion of Afghanistan, discourses espousing Pashtun exclusion were openly embraced. Why would this be? Over the years as I looked back, I came to a realization that these were not isolated events; rather, in my entire adolescent life, I had encountered a steady stream of name-calling relating to my Pashtun identity. The "jokes" were in reality expressions of deeper fears tied to ideas of national belonging and claims to contested histories. The anxieties I speak about had a consistency to them, the Pashtun ethnic identity. At times articulated as Pashtun the Taliban and on occasion as Pashtun the backwards, the illiterate, the stupid, etc., the name-calling varied depending on the national and often broader geopolitical agendas of the time. The constant was always Pashtu/Pashtun[1]—Pashtunness had become the punching bag of historic

[1] The language of the Pashtun peoples is Pashtu/Pashto/Pakhto. Pashtunistan refers to the historical territories of Pashtun peoples. Pashtunwali is the "way of life" code. [11] Where I use Taliban, I refer

anxieties. In these moments, discussions were in reality articulating deeper historical anxieties that have been lurking around the region's social and political scenes for over a century, the problem of Pashtun ethnicity.

In this paper, I demonstrate that colonial discourses and existing imperial agendas are interconnected hegemonic projects which have produced, and often re-enforced, a salience to the Pashtun ethnic identity—one which is not inconsequential to the existing "ethnic" tensions in Afghanistan. Culture talk related to Pashtun difference had been a point of contention; however, in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Taliban, western discourse of "freedom" re-enforced a strikingly violent image of a Pashtun culture that had pervaded western consciousness in the colonial encounter, decades earlier. During this time as foreign occupiers rushed to "conquer freedom" and "save" Afghanistan, the colonial gaze, once again, fixated upon people once described by the celebrated British Statesman and Noble Prize winner, Winston Churchill (2009), "a race intensely passionate and fanatical" (ch.3) and "savages" with an "aboriginal propensity to kill" and their religion, Islam, which "stimulates a wild and merciless fanaticism" (ch.1).

With memories of Taliban[2] rule and brutality still raw in Afghan memory, foreign powers saw an opportunity to reinscribe on the imaginations, of westerners and Afghans alike, an even more violent portrayal of the familiar colonial imageries of Pashtun people. Think tanks, academics, media and *expert*s, backed by ascending career prospects, accompanied ideological and material forces of empire to write, speak and act on the "…lifestyle and beliefs of the colonized" (Fanon, p. 8) Pashtun peoples in ways which reproduce western hegemonic power. Fanon (1963) unapologetically reminds us that "It is the colonist who *fabricates* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject" (p. 2). By remaking the "Other", the West remakes, reasserts and re-establishes European dominance of values, culture and traditions.

Not dissimilar to the colonizer of the past, the occupier of the present also speaks in cultural terms, yet this time a layer of Taliban premodernity is added to representations of Pashtun identity. In his article titled "Understanding Taliban Through the Prism of Pashtunwali Code", Zahid (2013), an *expert* in anti-terrorism studies, concludes that the West's "lack of understanding the code—Pashtunwali—is the primary reason for the Taliban "rigidity" for peace. By locating the problem of the Taliban in Pashtunwali, Zahid (2013) reproduces the same colonial ideas which a century ago Churchill (2009) ascribed to Pashtun culture:

> Their system of ethics, which regards treachery and violence as virtues rather than vices, has produced a code of honour [Pashtunwali]so strange and inconsistent, that it is incomprehensible to the logical mind. (Churchill 2009, Ch.1)

Similarly, the title of his book, *Churchill's First War: Young Winston and the Fight Against the Taliban*, Coughlin (2013), another expert with close ties to CIA

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to the political organisation and not to the literal interpretation of Talib which means student or talib-ul-ilm which means "student of knowledge".

[2] Farhan Zahid is listed under "experts" with the Washington Institute and connected to think tanks "specializing" in terrorism. See http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/farhan-zahid retrieved March 20, 2017.

and MI6 (Suskind 2008 p. 374), reveals the nonsensical logic by which the book's content is informed. Coughlin (2013) substitutes the Pashtun tribes resisting British colonialism in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century with Taliban group of a century later to imply a deeper history of Taliban and, in doing so, strips away the politics behind the groups' emergence. Coughlin (2013) while glorifying the brutal colonization of Pashtun lands, yet, fails to mention that the political "Taliban" emerged 31 years after Churchill's death and almost a century after the battle of Malakand, where Churchill first encountered the Pashtuns. Indeed, Winston Churchill never encountered the Taliban because the group was non-existent then; it emerged as recent as 1994.

Coughlin (2013) not unlike Zahid (2013) draws the fault line with Pashtun culture and dovetails all Pashtun peoples into the category of Taliban. Coughlin (2013) goes even further and charges that "Afghanistan's Pashtun tribesmen" of the late nineteenth century are "the Forebears of the Taliban". Reinventing histories and relabeling lived realities are the colonizers' way of masking imperial violence. Just as General Roberts' army supposedly "saved" (Coughlin 2016, p. 45) Qandahar in 1880, so too are American troops "freeing" Qandahar today. Blending, blurring and muddling language is necessary to secure occupation; for entanglement of language obscures the racist ideologies upon which the occupier secures hegemonic domination.

Racism and occupation go hand in hand. Racism has been tested and retested an effective tool of imperial expansion in the United States, Africa, Australia, the Middle East and all "Other" countries in between. The colonizer/occupier is neither ignorant nor innocent in his logics; the oppressor is experienced in violent takeovers and knows that racist ideologies enable and sustain occupation. But justifying brutality requires the dehumanization of the "Other", and thus, it is here that the occupiers' knowledge experts ascend into relevance. The imperial expert's role is to manage colonial narratives by centering the occupier's racist ideology in scientific rationality. By centering racism into a Euclidean notion, "Things which equal the same thing also equal one another", the imperial expert succeeds in formulating Pashtun and fanaticism as equal to one another. Removing imperial politics from the equation, the imperialist assuredly says, that because Pashtuns are Taliban and Taliban are fanatical, then it must stand true that Pashtuns equal fanatical. The *experts* are simply bolts and parts of an imperial machinations bent on subjugating non-white Easterners. By occupying meaning the colonial *expert* manages occupation.

Zahid (2013)[3] *the expert*, Coughlin (2013, 2016)[4] the *journalist* and Churchill the Statesman/war correspondent are connected in their pursuit of applying a

[3] Farhan Zahid is connected to influential think tanks "specializing" in terrorism. See, The Jamestown Foundation, Global Research and Analysis. Farhan Zahid. Retrieved from https://jamestown.org/analyst/farhan-zahid/, The Mackenzie Institute. Farhan Zahid. Retrieved from http://mackenzieinstitute.com/author/farhan-zahid/ The Washington Institute, Farhan Zahid. Retrieved from https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/farhan-zahid.

[4] Con Coughlin is the defence editor and chief foreign affairs columnist at The Telegraph. He is cited as a world renowned expert on the Middle East and terrorism by Harper Collins Publishers, Macmillan Publishers, RCW Literary Agency and VoxEurop. See, Harper Collins Publishers. Con

civilizational analysis to Pashtun people's resistance to western aggression. Said (1985) reminds us that "Since it seems…patently impossible to dismiss the truth of Orientalism's political origin and its continuing political actuality, we are obliged on intellectual as well as political grounds to investigate the resistance to the politics of Orientalism, a resistance that is richly symptomatic of precisely what is denied" (p. 91).

In so far as Said (1985) is concerned relations of domination and subjugation also give birth to sites of resistance. What I mean by this is that domination is not an all-encompassing event; subjugation and oppression give rise to political awakening emerging out of sites from which collective resistance is launched. Although imperial discourse of "occupation" may seek to impose a particularly orientalized identity, Pashtun peoples have not been the passive recipients of such impositions; they are resisting foreign oppression in the cultural spheres of art, music, poetry and story-telling and as well actively on the ground. This subject is too important to be glanced over and requires an elaborate and independent examination of its own which is beyond the scope of this paper. In particular, since the material consequences and lived experiences of subjugation (e.g., displacement, poverty, marginalization, innocent deaths, etc.) are, too often, masked by the language and discourse of the occupier. For the purpose of this paper, suffice to say that resistance is at the centre of the colonial/occupier encounter with Pashtun peoples. Knowing this requires of us to call occupation for what it is—an imperial project of racial oppression and resistance—a want of freedom, No, a *demand* to free *their* lands from foreign aggression.

This essay is not interested in developing a study of the Taliban/Pashtun dichotomy; rather, it is concerned with the way knowledge about the Pashtun peoples, and by extension Pashtun identity, emerges through a prism of Taliban/premodernity analysis. The knowledge produced by the occupier "experts" is not confined to western policy and academic circles. The knowledge I refer to is also not inconsequential in its material effects; it is a racialized knowledge that "has become an effective tool for determining the distribution of rewards, penalties and punishments" (Dei 1996, p. 41). Race knowledge extends in reach and scope, travelling beyond the heavily fortified foreign military bases of Qandahar and Bagram and penetrates all spheres of social and political life, extending beyond Afghanistan's boundaries.

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Coughlin: Ecco, harpercollins ebooks author. Retrieved from https://www.harpercollins.com/cr-100522/con-coughlin Macmillan Publishers. Con Coughlin. Retrieved from http://us.macmillan.com/author/concoughlin/ Rogers, Coleridge, and White Literary Agency. Con Coughlin. Retrieved from http://www.rcwlitagency.com/authors/coughlin-con/ VoxEurop. Con Coughlin. Retrieved from http://www.voxeurop.eu/en/content/author/113771-con-coughlin.

## 6.2 Who Are Pashtuns?[5]

Various theories have been proposed about the origins of the Pashtun peoples; however for thousands of years, they have lived on indigenous Pashtun territories between the Hindu Kush in north-eastern Afghanistan and the northern stretch of the Indus River in present day Pakistan[6]. Bound by a common heritage and the Pashtu language, Pashtuns, historically referred to as Afghans, are distinguished by their traditional code of living called Pashtunwali ("the way of the Pashtun"), an unwritten code of social values, norms and behaviours including speaking Pashtu, having and doing *Nang* (loosely translated as, principled, to live with honour), *Milmastya* (generosity), *Ghairat* (courage), Zhjaba (keeping true to one's word), Ezaat (respect), Singeeni (modesty) and... etc.—a socially understood way of life—coded into the very notion of being a *true* Pashtun. To be a Pashtun, one must *do Pashtu* "…and 'doing' Pashtu in this sense means living by an exacting code" (Barth 1969/1998, p. 119), which includes speaking the Pashtu language; Pashtuns live and are united by Pashtunwali[7]. Steul observes, "It [Pashtunwali] is thus a means of ethnic identification and differentiation in relations to other ethnic groups" and "[it] can be seen above all as the values forced on the individual if he is to be a respected member of society and to enjoy its acceptance" (cited in Grima 1992, p. 3). In other words, one cannot claim Pashtun*ness* without Pashtunwali; Pashtunwali, including the Pashtu language, is the marker of a Pashtun ethnic identity. In essence, without doing Pashtu a member who merely speaks Pashtu is caste out of Pashtunness.

The Pashtuns traditionally consider themselves independent of a structured external authority (i.e. the state), therefore, imposed leadership is understood as subjugation by an illegitimate authority. Pashtun peoples independence and social structures were violently eroded with the onset of colonial Britian's expansionist desires resulting in the annexation of large swaths of traditional lands late in the nineteenth century. The brutal occupation of Pashtun heartland and subsequent separation of lands from traditional territories dealt a heavy and lasting blow deep into the collective Pashtun body. The geographical boundary between Afghanistan and present-day Pakistan continues to be disputed territory[15]. In this paper, wherever I use the term Pashtuns/Pashtun peoples, I am referring to Pashtun tribes and peoples, as one people, of one land on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan boundary.

It is agreed that the Pashtun people numerically make up the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan; and the numeric majority thesis has been invoked, for decades, to

[5] Depending on the dialect spoken, Pashtun/Pakhtun/Pathan is used. Pathan is commonly used in colonial texts and also by people in India who claim descent from Afghanistan.

[6] For colonial texts specific to the origins of Pashtuns, see Caroe, O. (1958). *The Pathans, 550 B.C.–A.D. 1957*. London: Macmillan.

[7] For more about Pashtun social organization, see Barth, F. (1969). *Political leadership among swat Pathans* (No. 19). London: Athlone Press. [15] See Pakistan Military Trying to Force Kabul to Accept Durand Line: Karzai TOLOnews: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T97nlqH4HA retrieved December 7, 2016.

claim Pashtun dominance. However,[8] Hanifi (2016) offers a compelling evaluation of the Pashtun domination myth and asks us to critically engage narratives of Pashtun dominance in Afghanistan's political structures[9]. For the purpose of this paper, I argue that the Pashtun numerical majority constitute the sociocultural minority and that the Pashtun who *does* Pashtunwali is produced as the racialized subject owing to foreign and in particular western imperial interventions.

## 6.3 Pashtun as the Cultural "Other" *Kabul, Afghanistan:*

Sixth grade—2 weeks earlier, my family had moved to Kabul,[10] and my father had taken employment a, with the Ministry of Public Works. I had transferred to a new school located in an upper middle class neighbourhood of Kabul. To my detriment, unlike everyone else in Kabul, I lacked proficiency in Dari/Farsi, the language of bureaucratic state institutions, the lingua franca of urbanite Kabul, although I shared Pashtu, my mother tongue, with 42–50% of Afghanistan's population.

Biology class—I had found a permanent place in my new class, sitting next to Brishna, my newly made friend whom I later realized to be my lifeline for surviving school that year; Brishna, like myself, was a Pashtun. She was kind, and feeling affinity as a Pashtun would help me with memorizing daily lessons in Pashtu, whenever we had a chance (during recess, between classes, on our way home, etc.). One day, in the second week of school, Malem Sahib Nasreen Jan (Jan is appended at the end of the name for honour and a sign of respect), our biology teacher, entered the classroom and as usual wielded a whipping stick to let us know the consequences of poor behaviour. With her usual authoritative manner, pointing at me she called out, "You! Stand up and share the day's lesson with the rest of the class". As I slowly made my way to the front of the classroom, Brishna rushed to my rescue to let Malem Sahib (teacher) know that I had memorized only sections, for the reason that I did not have proficiency in Dari/Farsi; I was/am a Pashtun. After a momentary stare, from head to toe, my teacher instructs me to share with the rest of my classmates what I had learned. And there it was; in that brief gaze—in that momentary stare—our teacher managed to signal the reading of my entire being; I was, effectively, put on display for all to read. I continued, "...Gul nastaran safid hast, Gul nastaran do hujrawi hast…". Cutting me short, Malem Sahib sarcastically retorts

[8] Pashtuns make up ~42–52% of the Afghanistan's population. Statistical data of ethnicity is a historically contentious issue in Afghanistan, and its examination, though important, however, is beyond the scope of this paper. However, by all accounts it is agreed that the Pashtun people make up the largest ethnic group, and for the purpose of this paper, we only take this to account when examining the role of exported racial projects in fueling or rationalizing ethnic tensions.

[9] The interrogation of Pashtun domination thesis, indeed, deserves a critical inquiry; however, this line of questioning is beyond the scope of this paper.

[10] My father was an educated middle-class diplomat stationed in Washington, USA. From the age of 3, I was raised in the USA. I did not have any contact with Dari/Farsi and for this reason did not have any recollection of Farsi/Dari. My parents spoke Pashtu at home.

"Passrafta[11], Pashtu ra yad dari…Sahi Farsi yaad begir"—(*Backwards, you know Pashtu learn Farsi correctly*).

It was in this context that I experienced my first encounter (many others were to follow) with the anxieties and discomfort arising from Pashtun ethnic encounters in the urban Farsi-speaking centre of Kabul. The fact of Pashtu constituted sufficient information for a reading of my whole being; one word "Passrafta" summarized an entire interpretation of my identity, my social location, my history, my abilities and my worth. In that brief moment, my teacher's gaze was loaded with various readings of my identity. I was assigned with meanings about my past and present which have been in circulation for decades and, more importantly, foreign ideas exported by western powers. My teacher was articulating locally assumed beliefs about an entire group of people, indigenous to the land, with knowledge that was constructed by a deep history of colonial aggression. In efforts to make non(sense) of the world around her, my teacher, in her remarks "Passrafta", was in reality reproducing meanings of centuries-old category of the cultural Other; she was articulating what she thought *I ought to be*.

Wildman and David (1995) informs us that our thought processes are structured in ways in which we use categories to understand the world around us. Wildman and David (1995) says, "…categories contain the image, like an entrance to a tunnel with different arrows, of subcategories" (p. 886), and it is through categories, often socially constructed, that we come to narrow down on meanings. We are not suggesting here that categories themselves are problematic; categories are neutral groupings. The issue is problematic when categories are fixated with meanings founded upon negative valuations which in turn produce stereotypes. The danger is that stereotypes act as stable images about groups of people and the negative valuations associated with that representation are stripped of the politics of their formation, de-historicized and uncritically perceived as natural to *thei*r genetic makeup, culture or religion.

Representations, however, are not organic formations; rather, representative categories are socially constructed and products of centuries-old processes that articulate systems of power and privilege. It, therefore, matters to know which group demarcates categories, what their class position is and ultimately whose voice is manifested in making of representations. To ignore "the voice" of the maker would be to deny the processes that legitimate notions of inclusion and exclusion. Negative representations of the 'Other' serve to sustain unequal systems of power without having to answer to questions of inequality and oppression. Dei (2016) says, "The bidding of representation for those who are oppressed is disentangling—for the dominant it's about appropriation" (personal communication, November 8, 2016).

Representation is powerful, precisely, because valuations associated with particular groups of people are enacted in daily practices and often appear in mundane activities and in everyday places such as in schools, workplaces, shopping malls,

[11] Passrafta in Farsi/Dari literally means "backwards". However, in daily usage it connotes stupidity, rural and premodern.

etc. Practiced daily, negative valuations about the Other (i.e. in the case of the Pashtun—backwards, premodern and violent) produces a normalization effect that stabilizes given meanings into the Gramscian conception of "common sense", the notion that, over time, hegemonic knowledge is normalized into a taken-for-granted form which requires neither explanation nor justification—in other words when knowledge about the 'Other' is fixed and the associated negative meaning is made normal. Power which oppresses draws authority from the circulation and normalization of negative representations of the 'Other'.

Winant (2000) reminds us "that at the level of experience, of everyday life, race is a relatively impermeable part of our identities" (p. 183). The cumulative effects of "racial formations" do manifest in consistent racial practices with real-life consequences to groups who are its objects. And groups on the receiving end of racial projects know all too well that "Once such [racial] notions enter the popular domain and hence discourse and ideology, then they are, to all intents and purposes 'reality'…" (Young 2000, p. 270).

The constructed "nature" of Pashtu is not disconnected from the logics of race thinking of European colonists. For example, the colonial New York Evangelist (1879) describing Pasthuns reported that the Afghans[12] "a race of men…who, being Moslems are inflamed with the fiercest fanaticism" (p. 4) or General Stewart, a senior officer of British India's army, racist description stating "They are a vile race, and we shall never make anything of them. The more I see of them, the more hateful does their character appear" (cited in Coughlin 2013, p. 48). Pashtun descriptions, similar to the text above, are a common feature in colonial literature[13] about British India's exploits in Pashtun lands.

Colonial texts, however, also reveal the link between race and Europe's deeper anxiety about the possibility of failing the Great Game. As colonial India's consistent attempts at managing populations and controlling Pashtun territories met with failure, the colonizers decisively and swiftly assigned negative valuations to people whose "name was still one of terror" (Low 1881, p. 162). In the anxiety of what Rudyard Kipling called the Great Game,[22] "the Great Game that never ceases day and night" (cited in Singer 1980), the colonizers were confronted by a population whom they saw as "a people filled with martial pride, and with the dormant fanaticism of those who were the most orthodox of Musselmans" (Low 1881, p. 166). Confronted with *unmanageable* non-European populations, the colonizers sought newer approaches for the material exploitation and domination of non-European people.

Moss informs us that race thinking is not Europe's ideology of "...scattered moments of madness, but as an integral part of the European experience" (cited in Biddiss 1979a, p. 508) and constituted the new approach by which colonizers ratio-

[12] In colonial texts Afghan, Afghaun, Pathan and Pashtu/Pusthun are interchangeably used to refer to ethnic Pashtuns and not, necessarily to the current political identity "Afghan".

[13] See Kaye, J. W. (1874). *History of the war in Afghanistan*. London: W.H. Allen & Co. [22] See Roberts, P. E. (1916). The First Afghan War. Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough (pp. 310-324) *India*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

nalized domination. Racial categorization of European colonialism began to operate "as a form of pseudo-religion" (Moss cited in Biddiss 1979a, p. 510), which imparted new ways of understanding the Other. The fact of Pashtu as the ethnic Other became deeply entangled with the colonial logics of race. Benjamin Disraeli, twice the Prime Minister of Britain, would declare in 1849, "Race implies difference, difference implies superiority, and superiority leads to dominance" (quoted in Biddiss 1979b, p. 16). Race was constituent of colonial exploitations and empire's tool for managing, evaluating and assigning human worth so that Europe could and would institute structures of exclusion and inclusion to establish domination.

Miles and Brown (2003) shows that representation of the Other is associated with a deep human history and "…evaluations about the Other have been generated and reproduced" as a fact of human encounters for thousands of years "…in order to explain the appearance and behaviour of those with whom contact has been established and in order to formulate a strategy for interaction and reaction" (p. 10), and this has been the case for most of human interaction through human migration, exploration, trade, etc. In the case of the Pashtuns, we observe non-European explorers and scholars such as the Moroccan Ibn et al. (1929) writes about his encounters with the Pashtun tribes of Afghans in a manner which is descriptive of landscapes, locations and people; in a sense, he has attempted to understand—no, *to know*—the people whom they encountered. Ibn et al. (1929) says, "We travelled on to Kabul, formerly a vast town, the site of which is now occupied by a village inhabited by a tribe of Persian called Afghans. They hold mountains and defiles and possess considerable strength, and are mostly highwaymen. Their principle mountain is called Kuh Sulayman" (p. 180). Notice that the descriptions presented by Ibn Battuta are not race-based nor are they intended to establish relations of power and privilege. Rather, Ib et al. (1929) aims at describing a peoples by understanding their relationship to their landscape. Drawing on the proposition put forth by Miles and Brown (2003) then, basic representations can operate simply as tools for human interaction, neither static nor fixed, rather a mechanism by which to understand the Other and each other and "to formulate a strategy for interaction and reaction" (p. 19), and this appears to be exemplified in non-European texts of travellers who encountered people different than themselves.

What I suggest here is that colonial representations of the 'Other' diverged from the human intention of knowing and set the foundation for a de-humanization of non-Europeans. The negative valuations of difference, cultivated, nurtured and instituted by colonialism, were the seedlings from which all of, west vs. Other, relations of power sprouted. With European colonialism the "interpretation of difference" (Dei, personal communication, October 18, 2016) shifted in that *the function* of representation served to propel unequal relations of power. Rather than functioning as mechanism by which "to formulate a strategy for interaction and reaction", colonial representations of difference assumed new forms, in the service of colonial expansionist activities. Colonial representations, coloured with negative valuations of racial, somatic and cultural characteristics of the Other, emerged as significant criterion for designing constructions of East and West, "geographically, morally and culturally" (Said 1978, p. 31). The colonial binary of East-West continues to oper-

ate, till the present, along a superior-inferior, civilized savage and modern-traditional dichotomy. Representations served colonialism as a tool by which to oppress and dominate. Said (1978) clarifies that "Orientalism" demonstrates that colonial representation of the Other "was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West—'Us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'Them')" (p. 43). Thus, we stress that colonial representations of an Orient, morally and culturally inferior, continue to guide Europe's thoughts, actions and policies in the region.

British India's early confrontations with the Pashtun tribes of Afghans were not different from Europe's expansionist activities in other parts of the globe. However, a seemingly distinct feature of colonial representation of the Pashtun is related to, the dialectic of Pashtun tribes' position in countering domination vis-a-vis Britian's plausibility of domination. Lindholm (1980) says that "…the image of the Pathan (Pashtun) varied according to the vacillations of colonial policy" (p. 357) suggesting an evolving Pashtun ethnic imagery interconnected with British determinations to rule the Afghan tribes, by one form or another. For instance, during colonial Britian's expansionist forward policy, Elphinstone (1842) opines that the Afghan tribes' social games are "childish, and can scarcely be reconciled with their long beards and grave behaviour….a strange game for grown-up men" (p. 312). Elphinstone's (1842) text, although condescending and derogratory, yet, is insignificant compared to colonial texts orginating decades later in the late the nineteenth century. Colonial literature reveal varying readings of Pashtun peoples, evolving from childlike, to independent and fierce warrior, to savage barbarians. Depending on Britain's position vis-à-vis the colonized tribes', colonial portrayal of the Pashtun ethnic, is constructed as either the noble savage or fierce warrior. Elphinstone's text corresponds to a time when Britian sought to secure *friendly* relations with Kabul. Only a few decades later with increased British aggression violent portrayals of Pashtuns progressively multiplied.

By this, I do not purport that changes to Pashtun interpretations be understood in terms of colonial innocence. Europe had no desire to rethink her logics of race or make an authentic attempt at understanding the Other. To the contrary, race thinking was and continues to be central to European expansionist activities. In the aftermath of the second Anglo-Afghan war, the New York Evangelist reports,"...unjust as the act may have been in its origin, English arms should establish the reigns of English law, and the Christian religion take the place of Moslem fanaticism" ("The Afghan War", 1879). In British circles, varying and often contradictory representations of Pashtun peoples emerged as rationalization of colonial policies and, yet, in one form or another savage portrayals continued to be employed to justify domination. Lindholm (1980), drawing on the texts of the colonial administrator Rudyard Kipling, writes:

> In the interminable skirmishes and ambushes of this drawn-out border war, a new image of the Pathan [Pashtun] was formed. No longer a child, the Pathan [Pashtun] was drawn instead as a bloodthirsty and fanatical savage. But alongside this characterization there was also a certain respect for the fighting qualities of the tribesmen. *By admiring the Pathan*

> *warrior, the British soldier was able to rationalize his own inability to win a decisive victory* (my emphasis, p. 354).

We observe in the above quote that the childlike description lends to the long-held paternalist views about the Other directly associated with European logics of imperial conquests (Van den Berghe 1985). Not able to abandon the master position view of self, the colonizer's valuation of the Pashtuns would evolve from childlike to a more romanticized, warrior-type version. In both situations, the colonizer was preoccupied with a sense of master-slave relation. Informed by logics of race thinking, a superior-inferior rationalization was necessary to justify the colonizer's position in relation to the colonized. Similarly, valuations assigned to Pashtun ethnics were historically situated, and the associated representations, subject to the power positions of tribes vis-à-vis foreign/western plausibility of domination.

I now turn to explain how we might understand the social location of the ethnic Pashtuns in Afghanistan today. First, let me clarify that the Pashtun question, in large part generated by anxieties that accompanied the colonist's experience, continues to be a problematic for western powers concerned with territorial and political control in the region. Now as then, the Pashtun peoples and their territories are, predominantly, at the receiving end of imperial violence. What I suggest, here, is that present-day western preoccupations with the Pashtun ethnics are not disconnected from colonial ways of thinking race; the ongoing discourse about the Pashtun ethnic is a colonial legacy "transferred wholesale into US intelligence agencies, foreign policy-making networks, and military institutions" (Hanifi 2016, p. 386). Race operated in the service of the master colonizers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and continues to function in empire's service—race continues to function as a tool which facilitates and rationalizes imperial projects of domination.

But how might we comprehend the Pashtun ethnic problem in consideration of the "terror" question which is, ostensibly, guiding western policies in the region? I suggest that, in the context of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the two very different issues, in reality, are submerged into a single notion and articulated predominantly as the fanatical-Pashtun problem, consistently expressed by neo-oriental discourses as one and the same – the problem of "terror". What I mean by this is that political expediency requires that historic anxieties about the Pashtun subject be explained away as a problem of terror. In post 9/11 invasion of Afghanistan, the US MoD budget skyrocketed; millions of dollars were allocated towards the US military and "development" projects in Afghanistan; strategic programs for "winning the hearts and minds", active military operations and newly developed counterinsurgency (COIN) programs[14], such as the Human Terrain System,[15] all, specifically target Pashtun peoples territories. Reports and advisories offered by influential American

[14] For more on COIN, see CDR Larry LeGree, US Navy, "Thoughts on the Battle for the Minds: IO and COIN in the Pashtun Belt," Military

Review, September– October 2010, pp. 21–32 http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20101031_art006.pdf.

[15] For the article on the "Human Terrain System" project, see http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/06/29/the-rise-and-fall-of-the-human-terrain-system/ retrieved December 11, 2016.

think tanks, such as RAND,[16] make clear that Pashtuns are specifically "target audiences" (Munoz 2012) of counterinsurgency operations or antiterror western military interventions including political propagandas and PsyOp activities.

Race has been a core feature of western formulations of the East but vocabularies employed to rationalize imperial interventions disguise the west's race-thinking motivations. For instance, unless it is made clear that the objective of western interventions is Pashtun ethnics, how can "target audiences" (Munoz 2012) be read as racist? So when the "War on Terror" makes claims to *freeing* Afghanistan by targeting specific ethnic groups, it matters to call it for what it is—a racialized imperial project sustained by "culture talk". Abu Lughod (2013) cautions that:

> Just as we need to be suspicious when neat cultural icons are plastered over messier historical and political narratives, so we need to be wary when Lord Cromer in British ruled Egypt…and First Lady Laura Bush, all with military troops behind them, claim to be saving or liberating Muslim women (p. 34).

Fanon (1963) teaches us that "…the final aim of colonization was to convince the indigenous population [that] it would *save* them from darkness" (my emphasis, p. 149). Here, Fanon is referring to discourses of imperial domination that transcend occupying the material and physical and having as their objective the aim of penetrating at the level of the consciousness; In other words, occupying the 'hearts and minds' of the colonized. The imperialist is persistent in his pursuit; he doesn't give up and invokes their barbaric culture, to continuesly remind the colonized their inferior status. The colonizer is secure, beyond any doubt, of his conviction in his superiority, his authority and in his belief as the saviour. Fanon (1963) comprehends the colonizers way of thinking and says, "[T]he result was to hammer into the heads of the indigenous population that if the colonist were to leave they would regress into barbarism, degradation, and bestiality" (p. 149).

Fanon (1963) speaks intensely about the oppresser's formulations, his schemes of domination, but how far removed are contemporary western objectives from that of colonialism, if at all? In the aftermath of 9/11, Bush in addressing the Joing Session of Congress proclaimed, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (eMediaMillWorks, 2001). We are wary of this type of speech, and this stems from two areas of concern. First, culture talk, especially summoned at the highest levels of the power echelon, sets the conditions for the legitimation of ideological workings of race. Such "discussions and explications about "culture," "nation", and "heritage" can, and do, become new tropes for producing racialized doctrines and reproducing overtly racist discourses" (Dei 1996, p. 47). In doing so, President Bush's "Us"—the West—becomes the standard by which to measure non-western people, and the smallest digression from the standard becomes suspect. Under these conditions meanings of West and East become more pronounced, and eastern categories normally considered "traditional" come to signify "backwardness", "religious-premodern", "Pashtu-tribal/anti-western" and the combination, "deadly terrorist". In the context

[16] See www.rand.org.

of explaining Afghanistan, rather than East vs. West, a constructed dichotomy of "Good Muslim, bad Muslim" (Mamdani 2004) or "good Afghan, bad Afghan", emerges. The "bad Muslim" image of the Pashtun "warrior" takes on new significance; the image of the Pashtun is reinterpreted as a violent religious fanatic who imposes *their barbaric style* of Islam on the rest of society and enslaves women.

Second, Bush's choice of words obscures the racial connotations of his rhetoric and, in doing so, eliminates any possibility for a critical interrogation of race. Under the right conditions (i.e. War on Terror), "critical terms of articulation [of race] are dimmed, deleted, distorted, and redirected [and] the conditions one referenced by "racism" have not disappeared but have assumed new form and taken on new significance in novel social conditions" (Goldberg 2008, p. 1714). These conditions are what Goldberg (2008) calls "racisms without racism". Goldberg's (2008) concept of "racisms without racism" is useful in order to make sense of processes that export racisms while at the same time concealing any and all references to race. As we observe from the Pashtun experience, western constructions of cultural "Others" have taken on new, obscured and distorted forms, yet, for groups who shoulder the burden the material and physical consequences remain intact.

Exporting racism is not accidental; rather for centuries western powers have invested in organized efforts into the tactic of perfecting to "hammer into the heads of [I]ndigenous populations" (Fanon) racist ideas. This is all too familiar for the Pashtun peoples of Afghanistan who bear the brunt of calculated efforts to support and fund media groups, development projects, educational institutions, political think tanks and other cultural institutions only to promote and legitimate western interventionist discourses. The cumulative effects of exported racialized projects increas ethnic tensions as different ethnic groups are pitted against one another. Calienda (2011) demonstrates that persistent reinforcement of racist ideas about the Tutsis through radio and TV, ultimately, set the context for the Rwandan genocide (p. 79). In the case of Afghanistan, messages propagated by neo-oriental rhetoric make clear which groups are "western preferred" and which are "western non-preferred". In its very peculiar way, race in Afghanistan is employed as a social currency by which western-preferred groups receive access to material resources, benefits and prestige. Under these conditions, the Pashtun ethnic emerging as the non-preferred group is in the arduous position, defined by the West as the "bad Muslim" and interpreted by the urban centre as the radical traditionalist.

## 6.4 Conclusion

We conclude that ethnic tensions in Afghanistan are not disconnected from the socio-political conditions created by western interventions and the broader "War on Terror". What appears as an organic formation of an ethnic conflict, in reality, is neither natural nor ethnic/civil in character. For one, western powers preoccupied with domination, necessarily, require the inculcation of proper conditions to propagate imperial agendas. In Afghanistan, a "divide and rule" policy, pitting the

preferred group against the non-preferred group, is at the centre of a foreign occupation which has persistently insisted on racializing indigenous Pashtun peoples into the cultural Others. The conditions we speak of facilitate and sustain hegemonic power in ways by which the Pashtuns remain at the receiving end of violence, perpetual marginalization, ongoing domination and significantly cultural and political subjugation.

This is not to deny the brutal actualities of war that have been enacted upon Afghanistan as a whole nor do I mean to diminish the pain inflicted on all peoples of the region, in particular in Afghanistan. Rather, violence and injury must be understood and acknowledged as a calamitous reality of Afghanistan society and, war, a painful truth embodied in the experiences of *all Afghans*. However, I claim that western imperial agendas operate in ways in which violence is disproportionately visited upon the Pashtun peoples collective—bodies culture and lands. This is not an issue of contemporary making, but Pashtun identity has been a thorny issue for western powers seeking control in the region since the first colonialist encounters. I assert that western discourses of war pathologize Pashtun identity in order to rationalize and justify imperial domination.

I conclude that the Pashtun peoples, as a distinct ethnic identity upheld by Pashtunwali, is riddled with a cultural saliency which at the international level guides western interventionist policies and at the level of the nation is marked for exclusion from the national ethos of modernity. This is made possible by conditions imparted by racialized logics, yet, by projects in which race is "dimmed, deleted, distorted" (Goldberg 2008), therefore diminishing any possibility for a critical interrogation of race. At this critical moment, we must be ready and adamant to reimagine a socially just Afghanistan, and this we can do by interrogating the broader sociological consequences of race thinking. The sociology of race and ethnicity can help us unmask imperial projects predicated on "divide and rule", operating to the detriment of stability in the region. We must begin a process of decolonization and decolonization demands of us to liberate Afghan lands, state institutions, schools and culture of occupation's discourses.

The crisis of ethnic tensions in Afghanistan is a crisis of western regimes persistently seeking to control eastern Others; the conundrum we find ourselves in is deeply entrenched in colonial histories of occupation which continue to be fuelled by racialized discourses exported by imperial powers. The result is the establishment of racialized national projects of inclusion and exclusion and the fuelling of ethnic tensions in the region. The crisis in Afghanistan is a crisis of (in)justice; it is the interplay of a racialized "War on Terror" and a peoples demand for a just humanity.

I recognize that the ideas presented in this paper may cause discomfort for many Afghans including the Pashtun peoples. In particular, when I claim that the Pashtun numerical majority is incorrectly interpreted and commonly mistaken for Pashtun dominance. I realize that my argument, "Pashtun ethnic as the cultural Other", disrupts popular beliefs about Afghanistan's story as a nation state and this is, indeed, difficult to accept. However, we must understand that the lived realties of Pashtun bodies tell us a story of imperial violence, of colonial oppression, of forceful separa-

tion and systematic cultural erosion. If we are to interrupt processes that give life to oppression then, we must raise important questions, albiet very difficult ones, about the origins, the processes and the voices in those stories, – we must challenge oppressive power. Pashtun dominance myth has been central to Afghanistan's national story, but the hard truth is that this single story contradicts the harsh realities of Pashtun peoples on the ground, for whom violence and dehumanization are an everyday reality.

The consequences of Europe's race thinking, whether it be in western discourse or in Afghanistan's national ethos, have situated the Pashtun identity as the problematic Other. I propose an interrogation of our common sense(s), and I contend that we must seek to understand the Pashtun peoples in the context of *their* reality. And while this may be alarming to many, the disintegration of Pashtun ethnic identity is a matter of urgent inquiry. If identity and ethnicity "…are places [that] the colonizers did their dirty job" (Dei, personal communication, Oct. 11, 2016), then we must start with reassessing the Pashtun peoples lived realities and challenge commonly held beliefs about Afghanistan's colonial past and present, in general, and Pashtun identity in particular. I further suggest that we take the opportunity to interrogate the Pashtun collective body, ask questions about the relation of western policies to Pashtunwali and query the historical processes which set the contexts for Pashtun marginalization.

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# Chapter 7
# Disempowered, Disenfranchised and Disengaged: Balochistan in Focus Name

**Mashail Imran**

**Central Question** How has the Pakistani state (primarily the army and government with Punjabi elites as the dominant in both) behaved as a colonizer towards the Baloch ethnic population? 'Violence itself defies easy categorization. It can be everything and nothing, legitimate or illegitimate; visible or invisible; necessary or useless; senseless or gratuitous or utterly rational and strategic' (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004, p. 3). This quote, in essence, depicts my comprehension of violence. It is not possible to restrict the term to a single definition as the implication of violence for those who perpetuate it is different from those upon whom it is inflicted (Dei 2016a). Holding on to this interpretation of violence, I will begin by asserting that the Pakistani state's violence towards the land and people of Balochistan is 'calculated'. It is strategic in terms of the control it gives to the state in manipulating the vast natural resources and economic potential of the land to satisfy the ruling elite.

Moreover, the fine line between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' use of force was erased decades ago to preserve the dominance of the ruling elite as well as ensure the political and social exclusion of the local people. Subsequently, the protests and uprisings which emerged in response to the state's oppression were only curbed through the use of greater force. In the eyes of the state, the context of peaceful protests and militant uprising was seen as being similar in nature, so it responded uniformly to both. So my question is – should this violence be seen as 'necessary' because rebel uprisings could have destabilized the country, 'senseless' because the state should have dealt with peaceful protestors in a different manner or 'gratuitous' for the rest of the nation as they were saved from a possible political overhaul stemming from Balochistan? This question has become a guiding tool for me as I lay out the analytical framework to dissect human marginalization and land degradation in Balochistan.

In my paper, I will be focusing on the intersectionality of class and ethnicity to discuss perpetual violence and discrimination faced by the Baloch ethnic group in Pakistan, at the hands of the Pakistani state. By the Pakistani state, I refer to the

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government, bureaucracy and military – the three organs which have been dominated by the Punjabi elites since the country's inception since 1947. Through an anticolonial discursive framework, I aim to discuss how the state is acting as a colonizer towards the Baloch population and how, even, decades after decolonization, the Pakistani government is enacting the colonial mindset to displace, incapacitate and oppress the Baloch population.

Before I delve into my analysis, I would like to express my thoughts on the land and people of Balochistan. While growing up in a presumably privileged part of the country, history and geography textbooks taught me about the magnificence of the province. They taught me how it was the most mineralized and resourceful region of the country, yet the least developed, how it had a rich culture and heritage, yet I knew no one at school with roots in the province. However, what I also learnt from those around me was that the region was governed by tribal laws and that its people were backward. As a young student, I did not question the content of the textbooks and only studied what I was taught and 'supposed' to study. My first main interaction with a Baloch student, named Amjad, occurred at the age of 19, at a debates competition. I was hesitant in interacting as my first impression of him stemmed from my already ingrained perception of the Baloch being backward. Moreover, my perception that I was superior to him in terms of education and class, coupled with my implicit-bias towards him, prevented me from making conversation with him, for which I am ashamed to this day. However, it was kind of Amjad to approach me, and while we started off with small talk, I soon realized that he was a very well-informed individual. When we began to discuss the inequity in Balochistan, I was completely thrown off guard when he respectfully called me out on my privileged position as a Punjabi. I think his words led to my coming out of my bubble and recognizing the harsh realities that govern the lives of so many in that region. I am grateful to Amjad for reminding me of my privileged position and how my Punjabi ethnicity, in a way, contributes to my complicity in sustaining a long time process of systemic discrimination against ethnic groups, most notably the Baloch.

With the passage of time, however, I have had a chance to extensively examine literature on Balochistan and am thankful to the people who have contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the Baloch crisis. I am also indebted to my Professors at the Social Justice Education Department at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), who have helped hone my critical thinking skills and have allowed me to rework and rethink about the concepts of class, privilege, oppression and ethnicity. Through my evolutionary experience, I sincerely hope that I am able to do justice to this topic.

Firstly, it is important to understand that Pakistan is a country which consists of one race. The differences there exist in terms of ethnicity, religion, caste and class (Majid 2013). Colonization of the subcontinent by the British resulted in the classification and division of groups through the divide and rule policy which gave the British a free hand to rule their colonized population by marking differences amongst them.[1] After gaining independence from the British in 1947, the subconti-

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[1] Marx, *The Future Results of British Rule in India*.

nent was partitioned, and Pakistan came into being. The same classification of groups continued, after partition, through classification of ethnicities via creation of four different provinces, each being home to a certain ethnic group. This classification was a strong divisive factor and led to the emergence of Punjabis, from the province of Punjab as the dominant ethnic group. Here, I would like to distinguish the Punjabi elites from the overall Punjabi ethnic group. The Punjabi elites refer to industrialists, technocrats, bureaucrats and military commanders who have dominated mainstream politics for over several decades. I categorize them because they have oppressed members of their own ethnicity as well, especially in Southern Punjab (Majid 2013). By situating the discursive relations of ethnicity framework within this context, I will be substituting the term 'race relations' with 'interethnic relations' and will be contextualizing the political implications of 'whiteness' with the political implications of the dominance of Punjabi elites, in order to examine the roots of interethnic conflict within one race (Dei, lecture 2016e).

From the study of critical pedagogy, it can be asserted that the construction of ethnic identity is done through historical, cultural and political factors. Moreover, the existence of a discursive framework reminds us that conversation around ethnicity requires a focus on understanding geography through a spatial lens. Geography allows us to focus on individuals and their experiences. Since an individual's affiliation with their ethnicity and experience signifies difference from another group, this difference becomes a strong marker of identification. This identification becomes visible through in- and out-group member interactions which perpetuate 'dichotomies of inclusion and exclusion'(Dei, lecture 2016b).

Contextualizing this framework allows us to place the Pakistani state at the helm of adopting policies of 'exclusion' towards the Baloch (out-group) and harbouring an attitude of 'inclusion' towards the Punjab elites (in-group). This brings into focus power relations between the two which are governed by relations of domination and subjugation (Dei, lecture 2016a).[2]

The enactment of this colonial mindset stems from a violent history of British colonization, and as Fanon quite rightly said, the colonial settlers wrecked the 'mind' and 'soul' of the locals (Dei, lecture 2016a).[3] The patriarchal and hierarchical distribution of power in Pakistan is a gift of the colonial legacy. The state apparatus – primarily the government and military is dominated by representatives from Punjab. Since a long time, they have upheld the belief that they are superior to other ethnic groups. This stems from the logic of superiority which the British enacted over their subjects during the colonial era (Dei 2016b). It reminds me of a personal encounter I once had with a Punjabi army general at a dinner. When the conversation turned to politics and everyone started discussing a terrorist attack in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, he started glorifying the army's presence in the region and declared how they have managed to maintain security and captured rebels and militants over the course of so many years. His tone reflected a sense of entitlement, and he took great pride in emphasizing that the Pakistan army had curbed intereth-

[2] Dei, lec, Sep 20.

[3] *Ibid*.

nic tensions in the region. After listening to him for some time, I questioned him about the mass disappearances and killing of Baloch leaders by the army to which his response was that the previous President, General Pervez Musharraf who was also a military dictator, was responsible for the killings. After sidelining my question regarding the disappearances, he again presented the army as the saviour of the region and successfully lauded the troops for suppressing separatist movements and ethnonationalist uprisings. The projection of a saviour image – a typical trait of the colonial dominant – is reinforced through the activities of the army in the region (Dei 2016b).[4] This image is flaunted across the country to delude the masses of the atrocities being committed there. Moreover, as a faction of the dominant, the army is able to ensure that the voice of the marginalized is cloaked neatly under the garb of the urgency to foster security and protection (Akhter 2015).[5] What was intriguing about the general's discourse was the way in which he deflected the blame of Baloch leadership killings onto the previous military general, as opposed to defending him, although both collectively represent the army as a unitary entity. What does this attitude of distancing tell us about collective responsibility? The lack of it and no form of acknowledgement, in his case, are equivalent to adding another complex layer to an already shrouded problem of marginality. This mindset of not taking collective responsibility, conveniently putting the onus on another entity and placing oneself outside the space of oppression makes dialogue around ethnic disenfranchisement practically impossible (Dei 2016d).[6] I was quite perplexed with his narrative, and the more I probed him, the more frustrated I became. Eventually, I had to stop arguing with him after receiving stern glances by grown-ups around me which was a signal for me to quiet down and behave like a proper, good girl.

The aforementioned narrative makes me question the logic of oppression and how it functions within this construct. The concept of internalized oppression ties back to the workings of the colonial history, so it can be argued that the Pakistan army and government have internalized oppression in the way they treat the Baloch (Dei 2016d).[7] The narrative of the dominant which it uses to justify and oppress the colonized also works in reverse. This is understood in terms of how the oppressed imbue internalized oppression to carry out marginalization within their own community, e.g. killing of ethnonationalists by Baloch rebel fighters (Majid 2013).[8] I am also reminded of George Dei's reference about how places which speak to the identity and belonging of the oppressed are probed by the colonizer. Since Balochistan is a site of identity and belonging, the colonial dominant exploits the identity of the nation by reifying them for profit while simultaneously erasing their voice for any political claims (Udayakumar 2011).[9] Yet, it is important to bear in mind that the

[4] Dei, lec, Oct 3.

[5] Akhter, *Infrastructures of Colonialism and Resistance*.

[6] Dei, lec, Oct 20.

[7] Dei, lec, Oct 20.

[8] Gulshan, p. 52.

[9] Udaykumar, p. 89.

struggle for resistance and transformation emerges from these sites and spaces (Dei 2016c).[10]

Foucault's theory of the modernist state fits well within the structure of the Pakistani state where the term radicalization quite aptly describes how the state functions. As a radicalized body, the state puts itself in charge of creating mass inequity (Akhter 2015).What is interesting to note about Foucault's theory is that he does not use the word radicalization in a context it is normally used in. Before reading his theory, the meaning of radicalization in my mind had something to do with the term radicals which normally refers to a group of rebels and extremists working against the state. However, after reading him, the reality of how a state radicalizes to create difference between certain bodies immediately reminded me of the treatment of the Pakistani state towards the Baloch.

Apart from provincial cultural differences which are found around the world, the government and army take it upon themselves to create and pronounce ideological differences between the Baloch and other ethnic groups. This leaves them in a spotlight that not only tarnishes their image but also makes them appear as instigators. This thus produces an anti-Baloch sentiment which is projected across the country through mainstream Pakistani media. The media, too unfortunately, sides with the story of the dominant, and when the dominant version of the story is broadcasted on television and printed in newspaper over and over again, it leaves no room for even passive empathy for the displaced, disposed and dispossessed Baloch population.[11] In this way, the modernist state project sustains, and the colonial dominant thrives.

I would like to elaborate on the notion of disposability of Baloch bodies. A surface-level understanding places the concept of disposability on the margins of social, economic and political disenfranchisement (Udayakumar 2011).[12] It is hard to take on a literal interpretation of disposability. Quite unfortunately, this concept, in its literal sense, is applicable in the case of the Baloch community. The state's 'coercive attitude towards the oppressed nation' has quite literally translated into mass disappearances and killings of the ethnic group. For over several years, young Baloch activists, students, teachers, women and doctors have been picked up and thrown into torture cells, created by the army. Majority of the disappeared individuals do not return home, and their dead bodies are found years later in unidentified places and graves.[13] Those who manage to come out of these cells alive bear signs of severe trauma and psychological abuse. In 2014, it was estimated that the number of missing persons is more than 21,000. The figures release after a 6-month interval each year, and the count rate is only increasing. In addition, inadequate media coverage and lack of concern by the judiciary and human rights organizations are only adding to the plight of the Baloch people.[14]

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[10] Dei, lec, Oct 11.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Udaykumar, p. 86.

[13] Tanqeed, *The Last Conversation.*

[14] *Ibid*.

However, within a nation that has been constantly victimized, we find survivors, very few in number they are, but they exist, nonetheless, and are striving to address the plight of their community. Amongst the survivors are Mama Qadeer and Farzana Majeed, two inspiring individuals who I was fortunate enough to meet. I met them at a discussion panel titled *Unsilencing Balochistan* hosted by a human rights activist, Sabeen Mahmud, in April, 2015. The stories of Mama Qadeer and Farzana speak of unbearable pain and suffering, but what is truly remarkable about them is their fearlessness and endurance. Mama Qadeer, a political activist, was compelled to create the organization, *Voice of Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP*), after his son, a youth activist, disappeared in 2009. His son's dead body resurfaced in 2011. After his son's demise, he decided to become a voice for all the aggrieved families who were tirelessly waiting for their beloved ones to return home.[15] Farzana, a young activist herself, joined VBMP after her brother was picked up by security forces in 2009 and to this day is still missing. At the discussion forum, both activists highlighted their mental and physical struggle in advocating justice for their nation. They openly vilified the army and government for wreaking havoc in Balochistan by creating this state of 'accepted normalcy' where healthy human bodies disappeared and scarred corpses reappeared on a regular basis.[16] Both Qadeer and Farzana along with their entire organization have been condemned by security agencies and have been called 'traitors' by the state. However, despite constant threats and backlash, their effort to strive for justice has not thwarted, and in an attempt to vocalize their demands to the central Pakistani leadership, they embarked on a cross country long march in 2013. Their misery and grief were exacerbated when they were shunned by central Sindh and Punjab. Their only allies were fellow marginalized communities located in rural Sindh and interior Punjab.[17]

While referring to the concepts of transformation and resistance mentioned earlier, it can be asserted that the Baloch sense of identity and belonging to which Qadeer and Farzana clung on to dearly was brutally distorted by the colonizer. Their resilience allowed them to embark on a journey of resistance and transformation from their site of oppression. Here, I am also compelled to draw a connection with Georg Simmel's piece, titled *The Stranger.* While the title may sound simple, it alludes to a deeply moving narrative which goes beyond a surface-level exploration of physical and psychological facets of estrangement (Simmel 1950).[18] Mama Qadeer and Farzana are both strangers on their own land. The sense of estrangement which they feel, despite being citizens of Pakistan, is of a kind I will never feel or understand completely because the reality is, I do not reside in their space of oppression. I am a distant onlooker who is speaking from a position of comfort and privilege. I know I will always be seen as someone coming from a space where I can talk about their issues and challenges without bearing the wrath of the dominant because

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Tanqeed, *The Last Conversation.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Simmel, *The Stranger.*

I belong to the Punjabi ethnicity, at the end of the day. Therefore, I am not a stranger but am rather implicated in a process which is creating and sustaining 'the dichotomization of inclusiveness and exclusiveness'(Dei 2016b).[19] This is a powerful tool of identification as it identifies spaces which create the stranger as well as the relationship of proximity with the dominant. In Mama Qadeer's case, this proximity is reflected through his relationship with the dominant which in plain language could be understood through these words, 'the dominant cannot be estranged because they come to possess' (Simmel 1950).[20]

Questions of dominance, estrangement and possession were the highlight of the discussion which were given a more lucid shape through the stories of Mama Qadeer and Farzana Baloch. I will now move on to the story of the organizer Sabeen Mahmud whose existence was an inspiration for many – a true visionary and an advocate of emancipatory pedagogy; I hope to follow her example one day.

Sabeen' story is about courage, boldness and fierce resistance to the status quo. It was her resistance which led her to host a discussion on Balochistan despite receiving several life threats by state agencies to steer clear from this topic. It was an honour for me to have met her personally because none of the audience members, including myself were aware of mass disappearances until that day.

Sabeen was a forerunner in the setting up of a safe, anticolonial space which sought to hold a much needed dialogue. Tragically, Sabeen's transformative story ended much too soon as her life was brutally shortened by an attack on her, which took place on the same day she hosted the discussion forum (Ali 2015).[21]

Sabeen's death leaves me with anger and frustration, more than grief. She was a resilient woman who did not let her gendered position be weighed down by the clutches of a patriarchal society. In a society where the patriarchal order confines the voice of the woman to certain spaces, she was able to advocate for another marginalized group. Her relentless focus on the politics of marginality opened up platforms which centred around dialogue and language. She facilitated the use of active dialogue in spaces of privilege and emphasized the importance of navigating through language in order to deconstruct ingrained perceptions regarding Balochistan.

The use of language and how we construe it formulate our perception of 'spatial- or place-based relations' which are 'key to understanding development and underdevelopment' (Akhter 2015).[22] Majeed Akhter gives an accurate analysis of the state of Balochistan by describing how language needs to be framed in a way that does not conveniently categorize one part of the country as 'backward' and the other part as 'advanced'. In order to deconstruct the discourse on language, it is important to first dissect the language of labelling and then understand why this labelling still persists. The 'language of place' also needs to be comprehended in terms of 'how regions are locked in relations of dependence – or even domination' (Akhter 2015).[23]

[19] Dei, lec, Oct 3.

[20] Simmel, *The Stranger*.

[21] Ali, *Dawn News.*

[22] Akhter, *Infrastructures of Colonialism and Resistance.*

[23] *Ibid.*

Therefore, once the relationship of Balochistan with Punjab is understood in these terms, it becomes easier to understand the roots of underdevelopment in the region. The analytical framework of development places underdevelopment in Balochistan at the behest of development in Punjab. Those who dare to challenge this uneven development and social exclusion, such as Sabeen, Mama Qadeer and Farzana, are violently suppressed.[24] A notable development project which has received a strong reaction from within Balochistan and quite rightly so is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project aims at developing infrastructure within the region, but there are certain questions which come to my mind (Akhter 2015).[25] The Pakistani state also carried out infrastructure activities in the region but that only resulted in pillaging and exploitation. What kind of infrastructure are the Chinese going to build? Will the Baloch witness another colonial power imposition on their land along with the state's involvement? Or will China be a substitute colonial power in the region?

An analysis of CPEC can be well-understood through the discourse of Frantz Fanon who provides the necessary analytical tools to examine the project's implications for Balochistan. First, Balochistan is placed within a 'colonizer' construct to address its 'colonized relationship' with Pakistan. Fanon claims that the 'social social-scientific and political categories – like modernity and development simply do not work when trying to understand the actions of colonized people in colonized spaces'.[26] This is translated through the reaction of the Baloch (the colonized) to Punjab's (the colonizer) attempts at developing and modernizing their colonized space through imposition of technology. This reaction is manifested in the form of violent rejection to the technological infrastructures which are imposed under the guise of modernity. Such a reaction is valid because it is very difficult for the Baloch to view technological advancement as being separate from the 'culture and agenda of the colonizer.[27] Therefore, a resistance against CPEC or against construction of dams should not be equated to rejection against modernization but should rather be understood as a rejection against the colonizer's 'version' of modernization.[28] It is very difficult for the Baloch to embrace the colonizer's version of modernity' as accepting it would mean acquiescing to the notion of subordination which would only strengthen and consolidate further as a result. Hence, the question that needs to be asked is not why do the Baloch reject development efforts by the colonizer but rather why does the Pakistani state continue to pillage, profit and "act as a colonizing power within its own borders?" (Akhter 2015).[29]

The answer to this question could be structured along the vision of introducing an emancipatory nationalist project which is based on solidarity and aims at giving power to the local people. The basis of such a project would not be maintenance of

[24] Akhter, *Infrastructures of Colonialism and Resistance.*

[25] *Ibid*.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] *Ibid*.

[29] *Ibid*.

coercion and self-serving goals but rather a broad consideration and implementation of policies which reflect the interests of marginalized groups, foremost. Unfortunately, the culmination of such a vision seems to be a far-fetched reality as the central leadership, in the wake of an increasing domestic security crisis, is cloaking its manipulation and exploitation, to steer attention away from the region.[30]

Furthermore, it's time that we become more specific in the way we ask questions. Instead of saying 'Pakistan first', a way of showing solidarity is saying 'Balochistan first'. The reconstruction of language is needed to foster a policy shift which questions the role of current infrastructural investment in the province.[31] Be it CPEC or any other development project that is undertaken, it needs to ensure that economic benefits of the project are directed at the local population. An emancipatory project would also deal with local power structures in a way that would allow a 'redistribution of status, wealth and power within Baloch society'. [32]

However, as the ongoing security crisis is an epidemic affecting the entire country including Punjab, the model of integrationist nationalism could emerge in the form of solidarity being extended from spaces such as Karachi and Punjab which are occupied by the colonizer towards spaces like Balochistan which are occupied by the colonized. This national solidarity was displayed when Sabeen Mahmud created an anticolonial space when she hosted the discussion forum on Balochistan but was considered a threat by the colonial elite despite the 'marginal political position she occupied' (Akhter 2015).[33]

The politics of marginality and resistance remind me of George Dei's words, 'We need education of a certain kind to navigate through and change mindsets'.[34] In this context, education of a certain kind is needed in Pakistan – education that interrupts and allows students of privilege to question their sense of entitlement.[35] However, critical pedagogy and dialogue is what Sabeen started outside classroom settings. She created a space to reflect on our own set assumptions and beliefs, but how was that translated? She lost her life as a result. So where does this place all those who are trying to find answers to questions the majority fears to ask? Where does this place me? As someone who took inspiration from her and I am sure there are many more out there who did the same, I am left in this utter state of confusion and fear. I want to be part of the space which she created to initiate dialogue, but the pedagogy of fear is what guides my action. Should I give in to this fear which guides my thought process and leave aside the critical pedagogy which is the need of the hour and needs to be undertaken? I am left with all sorts of questions and at times, feel utterly hopeless in terms of achieving something substantial. I want to constantly challenge my intellect and influence those around me to do the same. However, I want to be realistic at the same time and have realized that it is very difficult to

[30] *Ibid*.

[31] *Ibid*.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] Dei, lec, Oct 3.

[35] *Ibid*.

change someone's mindset, let alone challenge it. Speaking from personal experience, I once spoke to a close family member regarding the crisis in Balochistan, and his stance was pro-army and he was against the antinationalist movements which are going around there. His perception regarding the issue is reflective of how the majority of the elderly population views Balochistan. It made me self-reflect my own views, and I concluded that it takes effort and conscious thinking to step outside our comfort zones and be open to embracing counterviews and opinions. Not everyone, including myself, is comfortable doing that.

However, change has been observed especially post Sabeen's death – a change which is headed in the right direction. This change reflects a change in mindset where young university students have begun to critically question and analyse the Baloch crisis. Universities are becoming spaces that encourage discussion on social and political issues which are in need of dire attention. The first step is dialogue, and it is uplifting to see that dialogue has initiated. However, Pakistan needs to go a long way, and the journey to transformation and change is one that requires a restructuring of structural and systemic power structures.

In retrospect, one can elucidate the crux of the issue through Marlon Simmons and George Dei's words which essentially sum up the process of change and how it needs to be facilitated at an individual level and state level, 'By focusing on the power, knowledge and agency of the oppressed on one hand and the challenges of accountability and responsibility on the part of the dominant bodies, we come into a dialectic understanding of how change emerges (i.e., for the dominant to use their power and privilege in the service of social transformation in the contexts of the everyday resistance of the colonized). Understanding the colonial mindset as anything imposed and dominating, allows the anti-colonial discursive framework to engage the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, sexuality, linguistic, and religion-based oppressions through historical moments across time and space as sites of power and resistance'.[36]

Before moving towards solutions with regard to discrimination against the Baloch at the hands of the Pakistani colonizer, let us briefly summarize the focal aspects of our discussion. Over the last half a century, the Punjabi-dominated political and military elites have oppressed the Baloch, withholding political and social rights from the populace. The state has ruthlessly exploited the vast resources of the land to the benefit of the Punjabi elite. In terms of race and ethnicity, the Baloch language has been ignored, while the national language of Pakistan has been foisted upon the people without consideration. Ethnicity has also been brought into play, with the Baloch being portrayed as an uneducated and primitive people ruled largely by tribal lords. The political and economic exclusion of the Baloch, to the benefit of the Punjabi elite, has ensured a growing gap between the two ethnic groups.

Integrated into a state-sponsored programme, these policies have effectively discredited and isolated the Baloch point of view in the eyes of both the Punjabi establishment and the Punjabi masses. This discrimination is a reminiscent of the colonial mindset of the British Raj, which ruled via a 'divide and conquer' strategy. The

[36] Simmons and Dei, p. 79.

Pakistani state, a successor state of the Raj, continues on the same policy line. Its multi-faceted approach towards the marginalization of the Baloch people is augmented by its use of force and civil rights violations in the province. Voices against this oppression include individual activists as well as various organizations. Unfortunately, their outreach and influence are limited, as they face the might of the Punjabi-dominated politicomilitary class.

Based on Marlon Simmons and George Dei's earlier phrase, we establish the two aspects essential for change: the need to develop accountability for the policymakers as well as empowering the Baloch through knowledge of the land, people and the situational dynamics. While the above discussion highlights the role of the Punjabi military government nexus in suppressing and subjugating the Baloch, ways must be actively sought to counter this exploitation so as to effect a change in the colonial mindset of the Pakistani regime and people.

Foremost, voices of rationality within the military and the government are increasingly holding their institutions accountable for the happenings in Balochistan. A more pragmatic and persuasive approach is being brought to the fore to rectify the decades long injustices inflicted upon the land and its people. Through the proliferating activities of NGOs, young activists and organizations, the country's institutions are being scrutinized and subjected to ever greater levels of accountability. Having already considered the possible negative consequences stemming from CPEC, we must analyse the project from the perspective of ameliorating the conditions of the Baloch. CPEC has brought Balochistan in the limelight and heightened pressure on policymakers to abandon their colonial mindset and revamp their strategy with regard to the province. The Punjabi military, political class and bureaucracy are already realizing the need for peace and development in Balochistan, which is the only long-term solution to meeting their own objectives with regard to CPEC as well as economic development in the region to benefit themselves. These ideas, representing the contrasting side of our discussion, provide multiple ways forward towards eliminating the colonized and colonizer relationship between the Baloch and the rest of the country as well as further integrating the province into the Pakistani state.

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# Chapter 8
# Dismantling the White Supremacist Term and Discourse of "Hispanic"

**Andrea Vásquez Jiménez**

## 8.1 Introduction

The term and discourse of "hispanic" continue to be commonly used and imposed on all peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora worldwide. To be quite blunt, its underpinnings are exclusionary, Eurocentric, white supremacist and racist—particularly anti-Black, and anti-Indigenous, as well as anti-gender-non-binary. These anchors of "Hispanic" are often not recognized, ignored and, at times, blatantly denied. I look to the politics of language, particularly the politics of naming to engage the poetics of the term "Hispanic" as more than just language. The imposed naming of "Hispanic" on our peoples is part of a colonial project, a project by which the colonizer in this context, Spain, have spread ideas, ideologies and actions with language as its cornerstone of colonization (Allen 2016). Understanding this, it is vital to recognize connections to the materialization of language, such as the dehumanization of nondominant bodies.

In acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of language and particularly in this context of the term and discourse of "Hispanic", I am situating my piece simultaneously within the intersecting global diasporic and local context. The situating of this in various sites is necessary precisely because "Hispanic" is exercised in numerous locations, spaces and times. Ultimately, in all those multiple and intersecting sites, the (re)perpetuation and complicitness of white supremacist structure are enabled by invoking "Hispanic" noncritically.

The choice of neutrality of not going against "Hispanic" is indeed political. We cannot and must not be neutral; we must take a stance against "Hispanic" and what

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it represents! Since we are all educators in different spaces, capacities and forms, this must be taken up as an opportunity to engage and position ourselves against the imposed Eurocentric naming of "Hispanic" and as an extension of all other Eurocentric, racist terms, discourses and language. Noting that many of us have come to a state in our journeys where we continuously and consciously work to divest from the multiple and varied forms of whiteness, including opposing "Hispanic", this shows indeed how we all have agency, and responsibility, in which we must be held accountable to (un)learn and relearn how our usage of language, terms and discourses (dis)empowers white supremacist structures. Individually and collectively we must not only consciously disrupt Eurocentric terms and language, such as "Hispanic", that (re)perpetuate the centring of whiteness and white supremacy but as well work to disrupt those structures that have created such a language in the first place. Therefore, in taking apart and unveiling the term and discourse of "Hispanic" as white supremacist, the intentional use of critical anti-racist and anti-colonial discursive practice within this piece is used as a tool to make public, share knowledge and commit people and institutions to oppose the systemic usage of "Hispanic". In writing and highlighting this matter, this piece also manifests into ammo and an armour of resistance that can be utilized by those of us who already oppose it and that are continuously questioned of the legitimacy of our positioning against "Hispanic".

Being aware of having a limited space to dismantle "Hispanic", I choose race as central, as foundational and as focus to do so. With that stated I make the choice to not provide any justification for its usage or take up room defining *race*. I move unapologetically forward with this approach since racism is the problem and not the definition of race (Dei 1995). Therefore, through a race-centric analysis, I will be dismantling the term and discourse of "Hispanic" demonstrating its Eurocentricity and particularly racist nature such as anti-Black and anti-Indigenous. While I do this, I do not deny that other social differences do not matter, and I do not deny that such a term and discourse of "Hispanic" impact us in other ways depending on our gender as will be referenced in this piece as "Hispanic" being anti-gender-non-binary, but also keeping in mind the effects of "Hispanic" are also dependent on our sexual orientation, sexuality, spirituality, class, differently abled bodies, etc., where these additional intersectionalities alongside with race and skin colour as a marker need to be further dismantled and fleshed out. Focusing on race, I move forward with an integrative anti-racist lens—this lens is used as a way to read the world, and there is an understanding that "race becomes a point of entry through which the varied forms of social oppression can and must be understood" (Dei 1995, p. 16). Ultimately, my approach as previously stated does not refuse the importance of intersectionalities alongside with race, including skin colour and other forms of difference; instead it is a space where race is centred and not pushed away (Dei 1995). Maintaining a space where race permeates throughout writing is vital, because the act and ability to name race is a part of the politics of naming as a form of resistance, since race tends to usually be erased of its importance and validity. Race, as well in the context of doing critical anti-racist work, is also just as much about highlighting whiteness to take it down from a position of domination by decentring white

supremacy (Dei 2013). Acknowledging that race also includes whiteness is crucial so that Europe, and more specific in this context Spain, is not normalized as raceless and recognizes that these are at the core of Eurocentric and racist language such as "Hispanic". In choosing to (re)engage, (re)think and (re)affirm how white supremacist the term and discourse of "Hispanic" really is, we must recognize that depending on the body and how it is read, there are disproportionate material advantages and/or consequences that such language including "Hispanic" causes. In recognizing this, there are hopes to propel further social transformative action in opposition to "Hispanic". Likewise, my undivided stance against "Hispanic" in writing is my proclamation on paper voicing *NO to* "*Hispanic*" *and white supremacy!*

While reading through, keep in mind the following: the act and ability to name are indeed an act of power, and since there is power in naming, we must question who tends to have that power in naming us, and for what purpose? How is it that whiteness and exclusion have been (re)inscribed through the naming of "Hispanic"? How is the naming and language we use either become complicit in enabling material consequences or in resistance to them? With language informing and perpetuating white supremacist structures, how can we use language and action to dismantle and subvert those same structures that work to dominate us? In what ways can we use language in (re)naming, (re)defining, (re)articulating, (re)assigning and (re) applying signification to language and terms such as "Hispanic" as sites to reclaim, resist and contest imposed naming and white supremacy?

Therefore, in my piece of, and as resistance by, engaging the politics of naming to dismantle the term and discourse of "Hispanic" as Eurocentric and racist, I unpack its nature by dividing up my writing into eight sections: I start off with Sect. 8.2 titled *Locating Myself: What Brings Me Here?* I utilize this section to situate both my positionality, as well as my story of lived experiences to contextualize what brought me to purposefully write in opposition to the term and discourse of "Hispanic". After, in Sect. 8.3 titled *Unapologetic Use of Terminology and Writing Approach*, I go through particularly important terms and their positioning with aesthetics as to how I will be purposefully employing them throughout this piece as power situated in the context of resistance. Moving to Sect. 8.4, *Theoretical Frameworks and Situating the Politics of Naming*, I unpack how my purposeful choices of utilizing critical anti-racist and anticolonial theory intrinsically work together and inform the dismantlement of "Hispanic". In Sect. 8.5 titled *Power of Language and Discourse*, I speak to what is the importance of dismantling a term and discourse such as "Hispanic", by looking at the implications and consequences that language, discourse and knowledge manifest. Swiftly moving into Sect. 8.6 titled *Grounding the Term* "*Hispanic*", I provide a foundational understanding which situates the term "Hispanic" as connected solely to Spain, the Spanish language and colonization. Building off the previous sections, in Sect. 8.7, *the Singular Eurocentric Discourse of* "*Hispanic*" shows the multiple ways that "Hispanic" is Eurocentric; this is done by way of unpacking a petition that I had written in 2015 opposing the naming of "Hispanic". Moving over to the next piece titled *Resistance in Language and Naming It as It Is*, as a form of direct resistance, I use this space to make the connections of language, discourse and ideology in order to name

"Hispanic" for what it truly is white supremacist. Lastly, looking at Sect. 8.9 titled *Responsibility to (Re)Activate Possibilities and New Futures*, I look at how each of us individually and collectively (re)activate ourselves and each other by the act of knowledge transfer and critical knowledge exchanges on "Hispanic" to engage, reimagine and activate new futurities of our own.

## 8.2 Locating Myself: What Brings Me Here?

In order to understand what brings me—and brought me—positioning myself in my writing through my reality, experiences and story is a crucial way to make sense of why I write, about what I do write about and how I write about it. I feel that it is important to situate myself but as well situate the specific event that ultimately led me to my decision to resist "Hispanic" not only in "community" spaces but take it up in larger public spaces—including writing strategically and purposefully.

As for myself, I am an Afro-Latina born to Colombian parents in what is dominantly known today as Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Among other intersectionalities of my identity, I also recognize my privileges as a light skin, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender woman, with access to academic space. In recognizing my privilege to be in academia, and this precise opportunity to be published, my responsibility not only as a community member but as well as a community activist as co-chair of the Latinx,[1] Afro-Latin-America,[2] Abya Yala Education Network—LAEN (formerly known as the Latin American Education Network), I look to be what embodies a scholar warrior, "A warrior fights, contests, resists, and subverts. A warrior sacrifices the self for a larger cause. [They are] an academic 'rebel' who takes intellectual and political stances informed by the needs, concerns, goals, and aspirations of their communities" (Dei 2014, p. 175). Therefore, as much as I know that there will be backlash for writing this piece, primarily by those who (sub)consciously have investments into the whiteness of "Hispanic", they are of no concern to me. What brings me here is a labour of love bringing to the forefront the exclusionary and racist issues of "Hispanic" that at the local level has been in multiple instances shut down and ignored by people who deem themselves as a part of our "community". As such, my unapologetic political stance against white supremacy by dismantling the white supremacist poetics of "Hispanic" is informed by a necessity and wants of our community.

What has assisted in bringing me here was having gone through a process of my own healing of internalized issues of racism and self-hate. This process was jumpstarted in a collective community setting and led to my own individual journey of

[1] The term Latinx moves beyond the gender binary of Latin@, Latina and/or the masculine centric term Latino. The "x" makes it inclusive to gender non-conforming and gender-fluid peoples (Scharron-Del Rio and Aja 2015).

[2] The term Afro-Latin-America centres Black-African presence and identities in Latin-America and its diaspora (Benson 2016).

self-love by consciously (un)learning and relearning. I was privileged enough to reflect on my earlier self and own experiences that unveiled relational interactions and systemic issues that impacted and informed my own decision-making at that time to negate and erase my own Blackness by investing into whiteness. Reclaiming, reaffirming and centring my Blackness and African diasporic identity brought me to a state of mind that no one can ever impose Eurocentric standards on me, my community or anyone else for that matter.

Moving through this paper, and reflecting back on my decision to continuously and actively resist against the term and discourse of "Hispanic", it was immediately when I, at that time, as a member of the Latin American Education Network (now known as the Latinx, Afro-Latin-America, Abya Yala Education Network) had attended a "Hispanic" Canadian Heritage Council (HCHC) meeting in August of 2015. The location of the meeting was at the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples (CSSP), whose executive director when I attended was also the president of HCHC. Entering this space for the first time, my sole purpose there was to advise them of the major concerns regarding "Hispanic Heritage Month" and push for a name change that is more reflective of our peoples, not exclusionary or whitewashing. It must be said that at this time, it was publicly known via a link of City of Toronto documentation that multiple members that made up the bulk of HCHC membership at that time provided support letters strategically as individual community organizations in support of October to be recognized as "Hispanic" Heritage Month at the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario level, and pushing for it federal-wide (City of Toronto 2014), without any prior community consultations and/or outreach.

In this space, I had brought up multiple concerns regarding "Hispanic Heritage Month", such as it being exclusively Eurocentric, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-gender-non-binary. Among the concerns provided, I advised them of a necessary name change, so that it can be inclusive of our people's social differences and not be Eurocentric. Throughout my speaking almost instantaneously, I was interrupted by many of those present at the table with racist, sexist, homophobic, gender binarism and ageist remarks. I already had realized that it was an unsafe, unwelcoming and hostile space. There were various violent statements made by HCHC members including their advisors. I clearly remark when I shared my own personal experiences as an Afro-Latina and an African descendant, and a person in that group yelled, "Go to Spain you will find your roots there!" and immediately after stated, "You can forget the other part you're not really the other one". There was a stark delegitimization, marginalization and erasure of not only my remarks but as an extension my communities concerns. A realization of this was through the (re)echoing of HCHC stating that the naming of "Hispanic Heritage Month" had already been decided and that it will remain as "Hispanic" regardless of other opinions. There were attempts at truth-claiming, utilizing fear tactics, stating that it cannot be changed since legislatively it was already recognized at the City of Toronto, and Province of Ontario level (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2015), and claiming that at the federal level, it can *never* be changed since it was already being looked at the Senate as Bill-S228 (Parliament of Canada 2015).

Although this is definitely not an exhaustive list of what was stated or the interactions in that room, what was just as concerning was the silence and complacency of that space and those people present. In many instances there was either silence, a minimizing or rationalization of the impact of the violent statements said in that room. I was internally angry and enraged knowing that they were attempting to continuously push forward a singular whitewashed image of our peoples and how much danger their anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, anti-gender-non-binary sentiments, actions and space actually violently impact our community in multiple ways. This supposedly “inclusive and welcoming” space where those present have previously and continuously self-identified themselves as “community leaders” in political, educational and funding spaces for the community in Toronto; they actually are complicit in extremely violent, unsafe practices and spaces in/for our community and delegitimize our embodied ways of knowing multiple knowledges, experiences and voices.

With the above having been experienced, I am only one example of who this has happened to, and one is more than unacceptable. There is a legacy of these violent acts that continue to this date. There are many stories not only within this specific space but others as well. Therefore, it was precisely this violent act that had enraged me to the point in making that decision to actively resist and dismantle the term and discourse of “Hispanic” so that others if unaware can also understand its white supremacist ways and utilize transformative knowledge as a way to (re)activate others to oppose “Hispanic” and its white supremacist system in language and in action. Therefore, both what brings me here and has brought me here, make me intentionally use any spaces of privilege and power that I have to give back to our communities. For instance, by way of getting this piece published it is another form of resistance in and of itself and can be used by us against those who delegitimize our voices, identities and experiences.

## 8.3 Unapologetic Use of Terminology and Writing Approach

In my chosen approach of using language, and naming to both reclaim and resist, I have chosen to use the entirety of my writing as a space for such. Therefore, in this section below, I will be situating various terms that I employ throughout this piece and as well situate how I intentionally resist white supremacy by the way I use text visually.

One of the crucial terms that I purposefully use throughout my piece of resistance is Latin-America, with the hyphen. I use the hyphen within Latin-America to infuse the primary meaning of the term to its geographical region (Milian 2013). Expanding on this, I purposefully place the hyphen between both the terms, to simultaneously not only refer to the Land but also as a way to decentre the Eurocentric stand-alone imposed terms of Latin (and) America, as an act of reclamation. Therefore, utilizing the hyphen has provided me a way to empower the language that I have used previously and continue to use as sites of resistance in

opposition to Eurocentric imposed language. This precisely functions to subvert white supremacist structure because it differentiates itself from the European colonial source imposed name and title of Latin (and) America on the region (Mignolo 2005). Here we can see the power of resistance and reclaiming through the act of rewriting terms, turning titles that were placed to dominate us and utilizing language to decentre the white-European-dominant's use and imposition of naming.

In continuing to use language and naming as resistance, I also choose to use the term Abya Yala. It is one of the multiple Indigenous terms that is used to reference a geographical region and Land prior to colonization and pre-"Hispanic" era. Abya Yala refers to what we dominantly know today as the Americas and is a Kuna (Panama) word meaning "[L]and in its full maturity" (Del Valle Escalante 2014, p. 115). The importance of using Abya Yala, a Kiche Maya scholar states, is that "... renaming the continent would be the first step toward epistemic decolonization…" (Del Valle Escalante 2014, p. 115). Just as important, the term Abya Yala is noted by Kichwa scholar Muyolema (2001), as a recovery of language, and the recovery of naming *Abya Yala* is twofold; it is a recovery of political enunciation and positioning (Muyolema 2001). Aymara leader, Takir Mamani, suggested a universal usage of Abya Yala, by its Indigenous peoples in order to "give authority and recognition to the Indigenous cosmovisions" (Arias et al. 2012, p. 10, my translation), recognizing that "Calling with a foreign name our cities, villages and continents is equivalent to subjecting our identity to the will of our invaders and their heirs" (Arias et al. 2012, p. 10, my translation); as a result Abya Yala since the 1980s has been utilized by various countries' Indigenous organizations (Muyolema 2001). With the said information, the contextualization of the usage of Abya Yala in this piece is used to reference the decolonial name of Latin-America, since Abya Yala is "…a universal concept for Indigenous Peoples of Latin[-]America and stands for unity and belonging" (What is Abya Yala Fund? 1997), and as a direct and constant critique of Eurocentric naming such as "Hispanic".

With this stated, the reason why I strategically place Abya Yala beside Latin-America is because, predominantly at this time, most people will recognize what we know today as Latin-America, whereas many people are unaware of the term Abya Yala, due to the colonization of language within our Eurocentric systems. Therefore, I hope this to be a continuum of moments to (un)learn, relearn and raise awareness, so that through reading the visual representation of both terms beside each other can activate (sub)consciously those correlations, and associations of the names, in hopes that it can further open up dialogue regarding Abya Yala and its peoples ongoing resistance. With this stated, although there is no definitive and/or perfect term that encompasses our communities, for the purpose of this piece as resistance, I have been utilizing and will be employing the pan-ethnic term: *peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora*. This term that I have developed with all its terms purposes as outlined previously, I have shared, and used previously and currently within my community work and daily life, where it will also be used here when speaking of our multiple communities and is in respect and recognition of our numerous identities and social differences that make up our peoples, including all the diasporas.

Within politics of naming, there also is a politics of capitalization. Which terms get written with an initial capital letter? And which do not? There has been a normalization as to which terms are deemed (in)significant enough to capitalize or not. Politics of capitalization is also a site of domination and can be taken up as a form to resist. Continuing with language and writing as forms of resistance and reclamation, I intentionally have decided which words I will capitalize and which ones I will not when lower case letters ensue. As such, I am unapologetic in my own choosing not to capitalize anything that involves words such as white and whiteness, in short any eurocentric language including "hispanic". By that same token, I will always capitalize words such as Black, Blackness, African, Africanness, Indigenous and Indigeneity. I do this to enact my agency and power to subvert white supremacist modes of valuing and thinking through my ability to change the aesthetics and visual representation of words. This is also resistance through language and naming, since in most spaces that involve writing, the opposite is usually practiced and seen, capitalizing of Euro-white-centric language, and not the capitalization of words that centre terms such as Black, Africa and Indigenous. It has been to the point that these practices are overlooked, not recognized or questioned, precisely because it has become the norm. Keep in mind that an extension to those terms that are deemed significant, or insignificant enough to capitalize or not, there are people who when read embody those terms which due to white supremacy are placed at that same value, with the materiality of rewards and/or consequences dependent on which terms of significance they embody.

Lastly, to using terms, aesthetics and visual representation of words on text as resistance, I also, as many people already do, use quotation marks to indicate my critical stance. I clarify that I am not using the quotation marks around "Hispanic" in a way that denies the materialized impact and consequences that terms and discourses, in essence language, create and impact lived experiences. Instead, I use it as a way of signifying my opposition to the naming and language of "Hispanic", its materiality and its white supremacist structure that it is embedded in and a part of.

## 8.4 Theoretical Frameworks and Situating the Politics of Naming

In situating my opposition to "Hispanic" and myself in this paper, as a guidance to which lens and theoretical frameworks will purposefully anchor my work, this piece is first and foremost written as one of the ways that I am responding to the urgent call, "…to offer counterhegemonic readings which work to disrupt the production and dissemination of colonial knowledge…" (Dei 2013, p. 3). Hence, I work to disrupt the normalization of the colonial term "Hispanic" and its singular Eurocentric discourse which is currently used, not only at the local level but globally. In speaking to its global impact, it is situated in the reality of the legacies of colonization, primarily the coloniality of power, which is a social racial hierarchy that classifies

people by race (Quijano 2007) which by another name is a racist white supremacist system, also noted as a colonial legacy.

Therefore, recognizing that white supremacy is global because of colonization, I intentionally use critical anti-racist theory (CART) and anticolonial theory to inform my dismantling of "Hispanic". Principles of CART that are foundational throughout my paper is the centralization of race and its saliency; historical unpacking; recognition of material advantages and disadvantages; collective struggles, resistance and resilience; and transformation as the end goal (Dei 2013). A second theoretical framework that is interwoven in my piece of resistance against "Hispanic" is an anticolonial framework which is very much intrinsic to anti-racist work and vice versa. As such, I will be "engaging such concepts as colonialism, oppression, colonial encounter, decolonization, power, agency and resistance, as well as claiming the authenticity of local voice…" (Simmons and Dei 2012, p. 75). I will be contextualizing "Hispanic" as part of colonization and how colonialism has informed linguistic and naming practices to uplift the white supremacist structure that "Hispanic" entails.

In situating the politics of naming, I have chosen these frameworks because precisely within them, there *is* power in naming. For instance, CART "is the discursive practice of liberation, naming racism and white supremacy for what they are: oppressions" (Dei 2013, p. 6). Hence, in order to decentre and dislodge whiteness, one of the ways that this is being done is by naming "Hispanic" for what it is, white supremacist and oppressive. As well, by naming domination and imposition, anticolonial thinking *is* exercised as power by its ability of naming (Dei 2006a, b, c). Therefore, in working towards liberation, I utilize these discursive practices precisely to name domination, white supremacy, racism, colonialism and its legacy through the naming of "Hispanic". This act of naming and calling out is essential in our resistance and decentring of whiteness, and in demonstrating how the term and discourse of "Hispanic" in and of itself is not only oppressive, but that those who impose and utilize it systematically are participants in reproducing oppression and maintain the status-quo. Hence, what exactly is contained within the politics of naming? What politics of power, politics of resistance and politics of language are in the politics of naming, calling whiteness out and (re)naming? Who tends to have this power, when the act and ability of (re)naming are indeed an act of power? Why is it that the dominant are heavily invested in certain names for naming? What material advantages are they receiving from their investment? How does it (re)perpetuate a racist hierarchy? For instance, in which ways does the dominant naming of "Hispanic" (re)inscribe white supremacist eurocentric classification and dynamics?

With this stated, there is a reaffirmation that we can also resist dominant naming by exercising our agency, own individual and collective power to resist by negating imposed language, precisely by naming it, calling it out and even (re)naming ourselves differently. When we resist dominant naming, what are those material effects that we take away from the dominant, in which they are so heavily invested in? How is it by highlighting racist terms, language, naming and its discourses do we have the capability to use language to (re)name, (re)define, (re)articulate, (re)apply and

(re)assign signification to language and terms such as “Hispanic” as sites to reclaim, resist and contest imposed naming and white supremacy and, by the act of that, have the capability to change the relevance of how such language is used?

## 8.5 Power of Language and Discourse

A lot of people that I have already heard from ask, why are you so focused on the term “Hispanic” if it is only a word? And state that there are more important things to move on to. Except, what people may not have realized is the extent of power that lies in language; for instance, language produces knowledge through discourse which is “...is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about— i.e. a way of representing— a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed” (Hall 2006, p. 165). Hence, language, words and discourses have to do everything with the politics of naming and power.

We must look to dismantle racist words such as “Hispanic” precisely because of the power of language even if people deem it as yet another social category that is socially constructed by way of discourse; however, this does not take away from the realities that are caused by such social constructions (Dei 2006a, b, c). In fact, the power of “Hispanic” instils parameters, and this enables what or who can or cannot be spoken about even if we do not consciously see those parameters. Therefore, the power of language, individual terms and discourses such as “Hispanic” is immensely powerful and political in the way that they have the ability to include, exclude, uphold, oppress, subvert and/or maintain the status quo. For instance, “Hispanic” as you will notice in the coming pages has a particular discourse that is constructed and (re)perpetuates a white supremacist racial hierarchy, by marginalizing, excluding and erasing African, Indigenous and gender-non-binary identities inherently making it racist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-gender-non-binary. Therefore, since language and discourse have power to normalize knowledge, in this instance, the oppressive ways of “Hispanic” as a tool by the dominant many times go unrecognized. Also since language is not only a tool of domination but can be used as a form of resistance (Dei 2006a, b, c), we must use language to arm ourselves within the politics of naming and subvert the dominant’s oppressive tactics.

In resisting language, we resist the ideology of it, and our minds decolonize as we work to unpack language; once again language is a tool to decolonize and oppose the dominant (Allen 2016). Hence, to challenge a Eurocentric discourse such as “Hispanic” is to decentre whiteness. This is precisely why the term and discourse of “Hispanic” must be dismantled. In acknowledging the various politics that there is in language and naming, I have intentionally chosen to name “Hispanic” as Eurocentric and racist, as a site of resistance by using language, to name the issue behind *the name* (Dei 2006a, b, c). This form of resistance through the language that I use is then a way to disrupt, contest and subvert the naturalization of “Hispanic”

and cause further conversation that puts into question and in opposition to the noncritical and normalized usage of "Hispanic" without the realization of its consequences due to the power of language and naming in the first place.

## 8.6 Grounding the Term "Hispanic"

Being aware of the power of language and discourse and what that power entails, it is now important that we have a brief but necessary grounding of the term "Hispanic". It is vital that there is a common understanding of the foundation of the term, since this is at the core of dismantling the racist and exclusive singular Eurocentric ways of "Hispanic".

As such, in looking at a definitive consensus surrounding the term "Hispanic", it is understood that "Hispanic" is "derived from the [l]atin word for [s]pain, [h]ispania and means [s]panish…" (Yankauer 1987, p. 15). With the above stated, we can already see the direct correlation of "Hispanic" to its location in Europe, more so specifically its connection to Spain, which is one of the multiple colonizing countries of Latin-America/Abya Yala. Here, we also see the linkages of "Hispanic" to language, particularly the Spanish language. Also, as it refers to language, it simultaneously refers to identity, since those from Spain are Spaniards and are Spanish. Peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora are not Spanish, and this colonized tongue of the language Spanish is not the only language spoken in such a vast geographical region and within its diaspora. What must never be belittled or erased is that those links of language and the connection to Spanish identity that some people feel by identifying as such and/or naming "Hispanic" is historically through and because of colonization. This continued heavily colonized notion of the term is perfectly described by "Hispanic" being the new people resulting from the colonization of Latin America, in 1492 (Gracia 1999). Keeping this in mind, we can quickly draw connections to the birth of the term "Hispanic" to colonization, since its focus is on what "the people became" as a result of it. Hence, the whitewashed term of "Hispanic" came directly and is situated within colonization. Essentially, in other words that are much more direct is that the term "Hispanic" means as of Spain and/or Spanish-speaking peoples; and it is a term where colonization and colonial legacies are its foundation.

In case, anyone at this time doubts the direct connections of the term "Hispanic" to being Eurocentric, and essentially white supremacist, maybe what changes your mind is that there are actually Spaniards that go against the term and discourse of "Hispanic", precisely because of what it means and represents. For instance, in October 2016, the city of Badalona, the Spanish city in Spain, cancelled "Hispanic(ness) Day", which when translated from the English colonial language to its Spanish counterpart is also known as "Día de la hispanidad". It was cancelled stating that the "public holiday commemorating the day [c]hristopher [c]olumbus first set foot in the Americas, 'glorifies the genocide' associated with [s]panish occupation of the continent" (Samuels 2016). Hence, people in Spain are opposing

a national holiday which is in the name of "Hispanic(ness)" precisely because that term equates with colonization: genocide and occupation. These tactics of colonization are ongoing remnants of the colonial legacy, which is also instilled in the term "Hispanic". But let's just say, even if people of Spain were not opposing it, it does not make it anymore right, and this should really not be what sways someone's decision on the term. If at this point, it was what swayed your opinion, or if you are still looking to rationalize and not oppose it, please take a few minutes to reflect back as to why? Why did you have to read this to change your mind? Or if this has not been able to change your mind, step back and reflect why is it that you are invested in believing that "Hispanic" is still salvageable? How is it that you are invested in the whiteness of "Hispanic" and what is in it for you? What material rewards have you received from this? Are you one of the culprits to shut down people, when there have been attempts at opposing and denouncing "Hispanic"?

## 8.7 The Singular Eurocentric Discourse of "Hispanic"

Since there is now an overarching understanding of what the term "Hispanic" inherently means, this makes it that much easier to dismantle the discourse of "Hispanic" as Eurocentric, white supremacist, racist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-gender-non-binary. Therefore, I will be using as the jump-off the most direct grounding of "Hispanic" that was presented and was noted verbatim in the previous section, which is that the term "Hispanic" means as of Spain and/or Spanish-speaking peoples; and it is a term where colonization and colonial legacies are its foundation.

Prior to moving forward, I would like to make a few things clear, such as Spain is a country in Europe and that the language of Spanish was forced upon by Spain onto various regions of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its peoples through colonization. With that stated, peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora are not Spanish, and the colonized tongue of the language Spanish is not the only language spoken in such a vast geographical region or within its diaspora. Then, what must never be belittled or erased is that those links of language and the connection to Spanish identity that some people may feel by identifying as and/or naming themselves "Hispanic" is historically through and because of colonization. As such, "Hispanic" is blatantly Eurocentric, and we must come to terms that its underpinnings and the reality of consequences that it manifests are inherently because it is Eurocentric, white supremacist, racist and particularly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous, as well as anti-gender-non-binary. Hence, we have to continuously question the role of "Hispanic" within the politics of naming and language. What is it that "Hispanic" manifests? How does the ideology of white supremacy of "Hispanic" maintain the status quo? What are the real-life consequences and implications that it reproduces and maintains?

At this point, I bring it back to my personal story in my choosing to write about this. As a reminder, what had initially sparked my need and desire to ensure

"Hispanic" is dismantled at a larger capacity was due to the hostile meeting as previously mentioned, with the organizational group HCHC. Those "community" members present looked to erase anything that was not Eurocentric and denied my own African roots as an Afro-Latina as well as the plurality of identities and intersectionalities within our own peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora. It was out of rage, love for self and my community, that in desperation I wanted to at least attempt in making a swift transformative change to halt legislation in what we know today as Parliament of Canada; this I felt was imperative so that the whitewashed, white supremacist and Eurocentric narrative of "Hispanic Heritage Month" would not be legislatively legitimized at a national level and be overturned in those multiple sites where it is currently "celebrated". I then decided to do something and do anything, to assist the dismantling of "Hispanic".

This anything resulted in me starting a petition opposing *"hispanic Heritage Month"* (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). Therefore, through engaging and unpacking this particular petition that I wrote in 2015 and which was supported by hundreds of community members, I demonstrate the singular Eurocentricness and exclusionary ways that are embedded within the discourse of "Hispanic". Primarily my focus will be the following highlighted points to show that "Hispanic" causes and/or maintains erasure of African and Indigenous identities, imposition of Eurocentric gender binary identities, erasure of multiple-lived histories and of ongoing resistances and resilience and invisibilization of languages. Using this framework from the petition, I am going to flesh out those points from when I had initially written the petition in opposition to "Hispanic".

Bluntly stated, "Hispanic" erases our Blackness, Africanness and Indigeneity by centring whiteness. How so? Well as seen in the previous section when we were grounding the term "Hispanic", in one of its most simplistic form, it means "as of Spain"; therefore it is actually then solely inclusive to people's connection to Europe, Europeanness, white, whiteness and essentially Euro-whiteness. As a result, since the discourse of "Hispanic" includes solely identities that are Eurocentric, it then is exclusionary to anything that is not of a Eurocentric identity (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). Namely, "Hispanic" particularly excludes identities and intersectionalities including but not limited to Black/African and Indigenous identities of our peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora. In this context, any and all other non-Eurocentric identities and, as an extension our humanity, multiple voices, lived experiences, histories knowledges and spiritualities are not valued, are made invalid, are delegitimized and are deemed non-existent.

Which other identities and peoples are erased? What else has the Eurocentric discourse of "Hispanic" erased? In regard to the notion of singular Eurocentricness, by no means is it solely confined to race. Instead, "Hispanic" also exercises blatantly its Eurocentric exclusionary practices when translated to Spanish since it "... invalidates those people in our community who are gender non-conforming due to the [s]panish language focused term [being] gendered in binary forms" (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). How you ask? Well, for instance, the mere fact that "[s]panish is a gendered language, with nouns ending in an 'a' generally regarded as feminine and those ending in an 'o' considered masculine" (Reichard 2017, p. 1), and since

"Hispanic" is a word that refers to people, thus when translated to the Spanish language in its Eurocentric way, it is either "Hispana" or "Hispano"; it then works in a way that excludes all peoples whose gender identity "fall outside the woman-man binary—those identifying as agender (without a gender), nonbinary (beyond the traditional binary), or gender-fluid (fluctuating genders), among a spectrum of other identities" (Reichard 2017). Therefore, the singular Eurocentric discourse of "Hispanic" is gendered, and this is seen through its imposed Eurocentric binary forms of gender.

When our identities and peoples are erased, what else is marked non-existent by "Hispanic"? If our identities are erased, what happens to our histories? Once again, whose history is being told? Which parts of history are erased and for which purpose? As such, in the continuation of unveiling further the discourse of "Hispanic", our peoples and by extension our own and collective set of lived experiences and multiple histories that we are connected to are erased. The multiple histories which are denied are those that do not make up the singular Eurocentric palatable commodified notion of history. The discourse of "Hispanic" is subsumed by a Eurocentric narrative that in turn whitewashes the other existing multiple histories. The discourse entails a presumption that there is only one history, heritage and way of being that has ever existed. Additionally, "Hispanic" discourses and narratives create the illusion that there was no existence of peoples on the geographical region of Latin-America/Abya Yala until "they arrived". As such, this presumed singular history through the discourse of "Hispanic" seeks to erase the history of colonization, rapes, killings and the enslavement of African and Indigenous peoples by white European-Spanish colonizers by its technique of romanticization and erasure of naming it (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). Inevitably with this stated, by reinforcing a singular Eurocentric narrative, it erases the multiple histories pre-colonization, the act of colonization itself and its colonial legacies to date. Whose interest is it that "Hispanic" works in a way to erase colonization? What is at stake? Why does "Hispanic", whiteness and white supremacy want to erase the reality that there was never a discovery of that Land and in reality that Indigenous peoples were always there prior to their "discovery" and that even prior to colonization peoples of Africa were on what we call today the Americas as well? (Sertima 1976/2003). Why does a white supremacist structure hide the greatness of our peoples? What do they win, when we do not recognize our greatness? Why do they not want us to know our people's own and collective resilience and resistance?

In connecting past multiple histories to the present day of creating histories and new futures, these singular Eurocentric narratives and discourses of "Hispanic" erases particularly but not limited to the intersectionalities of how Indigenous peoples, and African descendants, have not only in the past exercised resistance against colonization in multiple ways, but it also erases the present-day social movements and ongoing resistances (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). By purposefully erasing the entirety and multitude of ways that peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora exercise and have exercised our own agency and how we collectively mobilize to decentre whiteness, we have to remember, in this instance, that by the erasure of these, there is an attempt to derail our own power. It is in their interest for

us not to recognize our resilience, our resistance and our power; if so, they will no longer have us under their domination of ourselves investing into whiteness.

For the purpose of dismantling further the singular Eurocentric discourse and narrative of "Hispanic", and fleshing it out further, another way to see its Eurocentricity is seen by whose language is solely represented. The Eurocentricness of "Hispanic" is consumed and dominated by language since it essentially means "Spanish-speaking peoples"; it creates the existence of a sole language: the Spanish language (Vásquez Jiménez 2015). Therefore, only the Spanish language is the only language to be validated. It simultaneously invalidates all other languages including African and Indigenous language which not only were historically spoken but to this day are spoken as well by peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora (Scharron-Del Rio and Aja 2015). It is because "…linguistic racism must be understood as a form of marginalization and even 'genocide,' or cultural erasure of the Other…" (Dei 2006a, b, c, p. 19) that it reminds us that "Hispanic" continues to work in ways to oppress and erase anything that is not Eurocentric.

These discourses of "Hispanic" are truly insidious because of the way it normalizes a singular Eurocentricness, by constantly and continuously erasing a multitude of identities, histories, resistances and languages that make up the many peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora. Therefore, in reaffirming and opposing the naming of "Hispanic" that is Eurocentric and white supremacist, it is now clear when looking at the discourse and narrative of "Hispanic" that many of us can already answer the questions of exactly whose and which identities are erased by "Hispanic"? Whose histories and resistances are deemed non-existent by "Hispanic"? Whose languages and cultures are invalidated by "Hispanic"? If the discourse of "Hispanic" is able to erase these and many times go unnoticed, what else does it erase, and how does it (re)centre whiteness? These erasures of such intersectionalities are blatant acts that are anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-gender-non-binary and must be called out. Back to my story of the HCHC, erasing those identities by being invested (sub)consciously in the white supremacist ideology of "Hispanic" is only one story; these acts of erasure and centring solely of a singular Eurocentric identity, history and language through the discourse of "Hispanic" still happen to this date through different spaces, times and ways. In my critical discursive practice as resistance against the singular Eurocentricness of "Hispanic" that seek to confine our peoples into boxes, I speak out with a (re)affirmation echoed by love, which tends to more than often be forgotten, that among many other intersectionalities that make up our unique identity is that our peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora can be and are of any race! Of any skin colour! Of any hair texture! Of any gender! Of any sexual orientation! Of any religion! Of any spirituality! Of any class! Precisely because we are made up of intersectionalities, and we are not one identity, "we cannot impose a singular identity term for a whole community" (Vásquez Jiménez 2015).

## 8.8 Resistance in Language and Naming It as It Is

The discourse of "Hispanic" has become pervasive and is (sub)consciously in individual and collective everyday mindsets, language, actions, academic literature as well as local Toronto organizational levels which include but are not limited to the HCHC ([h]ispanic Canadian Heritage Council 2014), at local school board levels where it continues to be "celebrated" (Toronto Catholic District School Board 2016), likewise at the municipal and provincial level such as the City of Toronto (City of Toronto 2014) and Province of Ontario (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2015). In reality, "Hispanic" is systemic and global wide, just as its foundation of Eurocentric and white supremacy is. This pervasiveness, however, in most instances is not detected as language that reinforces the ideology of white supremacy. As a result in going back to the poetics of "Hispanic" and considering the ways, "…language is used and how, especially in that usage, race and racisms are expressed in everyday practice" (Dei 2006a, b, c, p. 18), how is the ideology of "Hispanic" expressed in everyday practice? It is essential that we make the connections from language that is used to those ideologies embedded within the language and ultimately to the materialized consequences on the lives of people that are a result of discourses and language used. As such, it is important to question in which ways do the usage, language and discourse of "Hispanic" become prevalent to concretize consequences on precisely those bodies that it particularly erases Black/African, Indigenous and gender-non-binary peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora? In which ways do these material consequences show up? And in which ways are we complicit?

In drawing the connections, if what a white supremacist racial hierarchy is precisely what is (re)perpetuated and maintained by the discourse of "Hispanic", racial hierarchy in which those at the bottom consist of Black, African and Indigenous peoples, meanwhile Europeans and whiteness are at the top of the hierarchy (Telles 2014). Then how so is "Hispanic" not equated and disregarded as white supremacist? How is it that the term and discourse of "Hispanic" is still deemed as suitable in many spaces, when the term and discourse of such language have been called out already as Eurocentric, racist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-non-binary? Why is "Hispanic" still a plausible option? Why is it still actively being used, reinstated and disguised as an inclusive term? Why is "Hispanic" rationalized and justified as solely within the realm of an identity debate issue that "will just never be resolved" and that we must move onto "important" things? Why is language and naming usually denied its correlation to material effects? Who are those that benefit from investing into "Hispanic", and which material rewards are at stake if they were to even acknowledge and recognize how "Hispanic" is exclusionary, Eurocentric, white supremacist and racist?

Therefore, in connecting the politics of naming to my deliberate process of highlighting the exclusionary Eurocentric, white supremacist, racist, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous foundations of the term and discourse of "Hispanic", I exercise my own agency, power and politics to (re)name, (re)define, (re)articulate, (re)apply and (re)assign the signification of "Hispanic". By naming and calling out what

"Hispanic" truly is when it is imposed on peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora, by this act alone, there is an impact on the relevance of how this language is used and for which ways. There is no neutrality to the term and discourse of "Hispanic", and in reality there has never been a neutral foundation; instead it always has been a linguistic, text, ideological and materialized form of the colonial dominant to further dominate as an extension of its other "…antics and oppressive practices [that] continue to script the lives of the subordinate and colonized…" (Simmons and Dei 2012, p. 67). Hence, in resisting and unveiling the insidiousness of "Hispanic"—the act of changing the signification of language subverts whiteness and white supremacy by denormalizing it. The capability to resist, subvert and contest dominant Eurocentric discourses, when emphasizing, "…on 'centralization' of language in the everyday can only help strengthen critical anti-racist discourse and practice" (Dei 2006a, b, c, p. 19). Therefore, using language to (re)name, (re)define, (re)articulate, (re)apply and (re)assign signification of terms and discourses when used in this matter as a critical anti-racist and anticolonial practice is power itself that we can exercise and practice in our daily lives, since these are sites of resistance against language that is used to dominate, inferiorize and erase (Dei 2006a, b, c).

## 8.9 Responsibility to (Re)activate Possibilities and New Futures

In addressing the poetics of the term "Hispanic" as more than language, let us question now: What is our individual and collective responsibility, to ourselves and each other? How are we, and can we be agents of change within ourselves while simultaneously (re)activating change in others? How can an activation of change lead to (un)imagined new futures? How is the transfer and exchange of knowledges that are counter-hegemonic with others an activation of new possibilities? How can interpersonal relationships by sharing knowledge activate systemic change? What are the educational opportunities that we can take up by sharing this knowledge? What are those educational opportunities that we miss, if we do not share or engage with this knowledge? How can using "Hispanic" demonstrate that no terms are neutral?

Therefore by "Hispanic" being named, and you having read this, you now have the responsibility to make a choice, if you have not already, and be accountable in that decision, knowing what you now know. Are you willing to take a stance against "Hispanic" and what it represents? If so, our responsibility entails that we oppose, resist and name in any spaces what "Hispanic" truly is—exclusionary, white supremacist, Eurocentric, racist, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous and anti-gender-non-binary. Individually, by naming "Hispanic" either vocally, in anti-racist and anticolonial discursive practices or in any way that we are capable to, we become change-makers. In essence we activate possibilities for how others viewed the term and discourse of "Hispanic" and its ideological foundation. It does not necessarily mean that everyone is ready or rather willing to divest from whiteness; however, by us exercising power in naming, we are able to raise possibilities of a greater

communal critical consciousness and give rise to new imaginings for our community. It is in those sharing of spaces and knowledge where those new imaginings and ideas that envelop possibilities, leading to new futures. As such, we must not underestimate our agency to make a difference while being along in our journey to assist others in their journey of (un)learning and relearning as well. It is our power in choosing to destabilize what has become so normalized, and in destabilizing, we can ignite and (re)activate others to action.

Social justice is a way of being and must never be confined to certain spaces as such; the dismantling of systemic issues cannot be separated from the self or from interpersonal relationships. Our resistances are also just as much a collective community effort as it is individually; this is seen by the ways in our everyday lives we counter anti-Black, anti-Blackness, anti-Indigenous, anti-Indigeneity, anti-gender-non-binary, etc. In the act of countering, we are also participating towards and igniting new futures although unimagined in certain instances, we know what we do not want and oppose it. We (co)create transformative spaces, shifts, new imaginings and futurities by countering these, and although resistance, subversion and contestation of white supremacy including the discourse of "Hispanic" are not new, it is still very much necessary. With this stated, just as important it is to (re)activate people in dismantling "Hispanic", it is just as important and necessary to activate beyond deconstruction and also construct through the creation of possibilities and reimagined futures for our community. With this said, let us continue to oppose "Hispanic", dismantling its white supremacist ideology, and meanwhile always (co)create new imaginings and futures for our *peoples of Latin-America/Abya Yala and its diaspora.*

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# Chapter 9
# Racialization of Gender, Work, and the Visible Minority Women at Workplace: With a Particular Focus on African Black Women in Canada

**Thoko Ngwenya**

## 9.1 Introduction

Black history produces, reproduces, and perpetuates stereotypical characterizations of Black people as invisible, dependent, and unskilled. Embedded in the historically hegemonic ideologies are perceptions that historically portray Black people as cheap and an expendable labor force that perpetuates oppressive stereotypes. It further fosters internalized racism, which can be destructive and is an external form of racial oppression. For example, racialized bodies are stereotyped based on sidelining Black workers as unskilled and unintelligent and are assumed to be creating "problems of their own" if they complain. Black people are also stereotyped as lazy, incompetent, aggressive, and criminals. Visible minority women in Canada and in particular African Black women have been subjected to a variety of discriminatory practices at workplace due to institutionalized racism and racialization. Although Canada considers itself as a multicultured society, and is a proponent of diversity and inclusiveness at work and school, I believe, through my own personal observations, research, and experience at workplace, their form of diversity and inclusiveness lean more toward sexuality. If one is queer, that is, lesbian, gay, or transgendered and White, there are higher chances for that individual to succeed and be elevated at workplace than being a Black woman.

Elabor-Idemudia (1999) in her article "Racialization of Gender in the Social Construction of Immigrant Women in Canada" argues that "for Black women, their experiences have been socially and institutionally structured in ways that are different from those who are not Black and female", further suggesting that "as a group, African/Black women tend to experience their social world differently than do men and other, non-black women" (pp. 38). This narrative fosters internalized and institutionalized

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racism which is destructive, for both men and women at work, as it affects their confidence and self-esteem. It also creates racial binaries and diminishes the contributory values of visible minority men and women at work or school. Being seen or deemed as less intelligent and unskilled perpetuates stereotypes, based on sidelining migrant workers as unskilled and unintelligent. The meanings ascribed to race and identity have increasingly become linked through a racialization process where collective identities are constructed in fragmented and complex ways.

The Canadian racialization of migrant workers dates back to the 1800s, where Canada exploited migrant Chinese men to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. Man (2007) in her article "Racialization of Gender, Work and Transnational Migration" gives a narrative of Chinese migrant workers in Canada and highlights how migrant workers in Canada are gendered, classed, and racialized. She argues that the demand for cheap labor to fulfill the country's expansion project was initiated in the 1800s, and Canada used migrant labor from China to build the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Racialization of labor is linked to forms of free and unfree labor. Omi and Winant (1993) define racialization as the process by which racial attributes and meanings are projected onto previously nonracial situations. Thus, racialization is multifaceted and can affect different racial groups in varying ways, depending on a group's status position. This paper explores how immigrant workers, who are documented residents and legal to work in Canada, Permanent Residence and even Canadian citizens, have been marginalized through institutionalized racism and racialization at workplace. Using the epistemic saliency of the oppressed voice as a theoretical framework and the colonialism/decolonialism theory, I will focus on also on the race and racism theory. These theories will help unpack the narrative on how the visible/invisible notion of dominance constructs the notions of power to address the theoretical framework. Furthermore, I will explore how the narratives of racialization of gender, work, and transnational migration have impacted immigrant Black women to access senior-level jobs in their professions. To help guide my discussion, I will attempt to address these questions: (1) How the concept of race is used as a basis for differentiation and social marginalization of groups in Canadian immigration practice; (2) how racialization has been used to construct meanings that maintain the social and economic dominance of particular groups within society; and (3) how gender is racialized in the social construction of immigrant women.

Racialized labor systems are gendered, creating a complex intersection of race-class-gender division among workers. Women face a gendered division of labor, but women of color especially face the worst of conditions. For example, the garment workers in Bangladesh, the Mexican maquiladoras, and the Filipino domestic caregivers in Canada all face low pay and poor working conditions, while racialized men are impacted by exploitation of labor because they are seen as "fit" for manual labor. For example, the migrant farmworkers in Ontario, who work in poor working conditions and low pay as farm workers, and the Tamil workers in Sri Lanka who work in farms to export produce to Canada are racialized. Race and racism are the systemic and structural processes through which certain populations are marginalized, excluded, and disadvantaged, further providing a platform of how institutionally supported systemization becomes part of inherent exclusion of the marginalized

and citizenry. Hence the Canadian policy makers, for example, introduced the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) in 1966 to offset acute labor shortage in the agricultural industry. Initially contracting Jamaicans, the program was extended in 1974 with Mexicans to work in Canadian fields, packaging plants and greenhouses throughout the year.

## 9.2 Race and Racialization of Work

The concept of race is rooted in the history of colonialist and imperialist systems and dates back centuries. Throughout history, people recognized race and racial differences, but what has changed over time is the interpretation of race. Dei (1996) in his article "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Race" defines race as a "socially constructed category which lacks any sounds scientific validity"; however, he adds that "yet race continues to gain in social currency because of its utility in distributing unequal power, privilege and social prestige" (pp. 2). Meanwhile, Omi and Winant (1993) in their article "Theoretical Concept of Race" posit that "our society is so thoroughly racialized that to be without racial identity is to be in danger of having no identity," further suggesting that "to be raceless is akin to being genderless" (pp. 5). The majority of visible minority bodies in Canada are subjected to racism and racialization in schools and at workplace.

Although Canada has a program that invites professionally trained migrant workers to be part of its workforce, the system does not acknowledge them as professionals once they are in the country. In as much as Canada has a point system that was developed to invite professionally trained workers to Canada to bridge the gap of the labor market, it still does not treat those professionally trained individuals with equality and equitable access to job market compared to their "White Canadian trained" counterparts. Nangwaya (2012) in his article "Historical and Current Labour Market Experience of Racialized Immigrants in Canada" points out that "the Federal government developed a points systems that assigned a numerical value to prospective immigrants based on their education, training occupational skills and prospect for immediate employment in Canada, one that was not based on the race criteria of prior legislation" (pp. 308). One wonders then what and when did this policy change that racializes the internationally professionally trained or Canadian trained immigrant workers and their credentials. Nangwaya further highlights that "the 2006 census in Canada revealed that 19.8% of the national population were foreign born and that Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto remain the magnet metropolitan areas for the majority of immigrants" (pp. 308). This census report reflects results of 10 years ago, I believe these numbers have significantly increased now, and if these statistics do not reflect reality of migrant workers and immigrants in Canada, then I do not know what will.

What is even problematic and disturbing is the pathologization and stigmatization of Black migrant workers in Canada. Additionally, the inaccessible inequalities and inequities for the immigrants and migrant workers create an environment for

them that disempower them and have no voice to challenge their status quo. Calliste (1994) in her article "Race, Gender and Canadian Immigration Policy" suggests that "Blacks were stigmatized as mentally, morally, physically, and socially inferior and a potential social problem in Canada. It was feared that any influx of Black immigrants would cause economic and race-relations problems similar to those experienced in the United States. Immigration officials thus sought to avoid the problem by restricting the entry of black settlers" (pp. 132). Thus, this negative approach further justified the restriction of migrant workers to enter the labor market in Canada, and even if they do, they are pigeon holed and tokenized in their roles with reduced access to elevate them to much senior roles. Although Canada has had and still has labor shortages, hence the point system to invite immigrants, they do not have better chances of professional jobs except for precarious work, which no "non-White" Canadian is willing to do. It is evident that racialized immigrant and nonimmigrant racialized workers in Canada have long been discriminated against in the labor market. Nangwaya argues that "the challenges confronting racialized immigrants in accessing employment opportunities that match their educational attainment are informed by the racialization of their labour," further suggesting that "in order to deal with the inequalities in the labour market for racialized immigrants, the solutions ought to address the systemic barriers." (pp. 301). These systemic barriers are structural and are rooted in the systemic roots of racism, sexism, and capitalism.

Compared to their counterparts who emigrated from Europe or the United States of America, for example, African, Latin American, and Asian immigrants are faced with systemic and structural racism and racialization. Nangwaya posits that the "Canadian labour market is not the most hospitable and friendly to racialized immigrants who are seeking to access higher rungs on the job classifications system or looking for primary labour market jobs" (pp. 303). Therefore, this is testament to the fact that Black people and other immigrants of color, once in Canada, face systemic and institutional discrimination and barriers, either through nonrecognition of their foreign qualification and experience or racial and ethnic prejudice (through stereotypical portrayal and representation). For example, those with university degrees had greater difficulties finding suitable employment than similarly qualified immigrants from European countries. This is because credentialization is a huge challenge used by the government policy systems that does not acknowledge internationally trained professionals even though they can confirm credibility of those credentials directly with the migrant worker's "home" university or college.

## 9.3 Gender, Race, and Class

Historically, studies have shown that Canada has racialized migrant workers and immigrants according to their gender, race, and class. Similarities can be seen between the Black workers who migrated from the Caribbean in the 1900s and earlier and the Chinese workers from China in the 1800s; again not much difference is

experienced today where Canada claims to be a multicultured country. Calliste (1994) in her article gives us a historical account of the Caribbean workers who migrated to Canada in the 1900s. She suggests that "Canada's immigration policy regarding Caribbean Blacks between 1900 and 1932 was structured by a dialectic of economic, political, and ideological relations; employers' demand for cheap labour to do unskilled and domestic work was set in tension with the state's desire to exclude Blacks as permanent settlers" (pp. 132), further suggesting that "Caribbean Blacks provided a reserve army of labour; they were employed in a split labour market where they were paid less than White workers for doing the same work" (pp. 132). Similar practices are done to this day. Therefore, the labor market into which migrant workers are inserted in Canada is highly racialized and gendered. The ideological processes of constructing race and gender within Canada are most evident in the types of work that differentiated groups of migrant workers do in Canada. Elabor-Idemudia (1999) highlights how "racially-constructed gender ideologies and images often portray Black women as 'naturally' suited for jobs in the lowest stratum of a labour market segmented along gender lines. As such, most Black immigrant women are employed in labour intensive, low-wage sectors utilized as a reserve labour force, subject to intense exploitation, and often denied the most basic labour rights" (pp. 39). Thus, gender is racialized in the social construction of immigrant women. This speaks to how racialization is used as a practice in which certain groups and jobs are gendered, raced, and classed, depending on who is in that role. Furthermore, this narrative addresses the notions of how hegemonic power and dominance play out between and among different races.

Racism navigates public and private spaces and is used in the articulation of gender discrimination that depicts Black women in derogatory ways. The continual perpetuation of the sexual division of labor within the market economy still exists within a racist division of labor which disproportionately locates Black women within racial and gender divides. Gender places most women within the sexual divides of the gender division of labor role-labor force dichotomy, and race further discriminates and racializes Black women even to much lower rungs of the labor market. Therefore this reinforces the narrative of precarious workers for racialized groups. As Teelucksingh and Galabuzi (2007) in their article "Working Precariously" highlights:

> Race acquires a social significance attached to certain biological features which become the basis for categorizing distinct groups of people. Then the social process of racialization imbues these categories with value, leading to socio-economic practices that reflect and reinforce those values. It is these practices that are responsible for the differential treatment that privileges some and oppresses other members of society. (pp. 203)

This speaks to how the Canadian labor market has differential outcomes along racial and gender lines.

Although my narrative addresses the racism and racialization of African Black women in Canada, the systemic racism and racialization of migrant workers for both men and women have not changed since the 1880s' experience of the Chinese men who built the Canadian Pacific Railway. The majority of migrant workers from the former colonial countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, just to mention a few,

have been and continue to be racialized by the Canadian labor market. The Canadian system has not changed from the approaches of the 1880s; the only difference is that immigrants no longer pay head tax and some can qualify to be citizens. But that does not mean that you have the equal access to the labor market as the dominant White race. Go (2012) in her article "A Race-Based Analysis of Canada's Immigration Policy" gives us the historical racialization encounter faced by the Chinese men in the 1880s and suggests that "the Chinese immigrants who came to Canada to build the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) also found themselves victimized by this country's racist immigrant law, further suggesting that "as soon as the CPR was completed in 1885, the government of Canada imposed a head tax of $50 to discourage Chinese immigrants from coming in" (pp. 14). The federal government had passed the *Chinese Immigration Act* in 1885 that imposed the head tax. Nangwaya highlights the historical narrative of this head tax and suggests that "the estimated of $21 million dollars that was collected from the head tax was used to give land grants to Europeans immigrants" (pp. 11). As earlier mentioned, the Canadian system creates the insider/outsider binary of who belongs and who does not. Europeans were also immigrants but were given privilege status over Chinese or Africans because of their race and assumed class that was privileged over non-White.

Furthermore, Man (2007) outlines the history of the migrant workers in Canada and suggests that since "1987, Canada has had about 18.4% foreign born Canadian" (pp. 235). What is disturbing for me is that, as Nangwaya articulates, this "measure was undertaken to restrict Chinese workers' entry into Canada and to satisfy the racist outcry against Chinese Canadians in British Columbia" (pp. 11). Race and racism are the systemic and structural processes through which certain populations are marginalized, excluded, and disadvantaged. This further provides a platform of how institutionally supported systemization becomes part of an inherent exclusion of the marginalized and citizenry.

Racialized labor systems are gendered, creating a complex intersection of race-class-gender division among workers. Women face a gendered division of labor, but women of color especially face the worst of conditions. For example, the garment workers in Bangladesh; the Mexican maquiladoras, who are in low-paid work and worst working conditions produce clothing for the Canadian markets; and the domestic caregivers from the Philippines who work in Canadian homes all face low pay and poor working conditions.

## 9.4 Transnational Migrant Work/Global Labor

Sharma (2000) in her article, "Race, Class, Gender and the Making of Difference," posits that "migrant workers are expressly recruited to serve the Canadian labour market, but permanent resident and citizenship status is formally denied," further suggesting that "they comprise a significant part of Canadian society but are simultaneously constructed as being outside of that society" (pp. 8). This notion speaks to how the Canadian system creates the barriers of insider/outsider binary and

addresses the question of citizenship: who belongs and who does not and who qualifies for being a Canadian citizen and who does not. Even if one becomes a Canadian citizen, and you are a visible minority, the dominant race always wants to know "where you really from." Elabor-Idemudia (1999) suggests that "the salient use of these ideological constructs as parameters for determining their suitability for life in Canada is particularly challenging for African immigrant women" (pp. 39).

Bonacich et al. (2008) in their article, "The Racialization of Global Labor," argue that global capitalism has created and maintained racial hierarchies of labor, and the authors further suggest that "racialized labor forces encounter many of the same enduring oppressions that colonialism imported" (pp. 351). Therefore, despite the end of colonialism, the countries in the West continue to exploit the countries in the East, through the imperialist, capitalist, and globalization initiatives. Man (2007) suggests that ''globalization and the effects of restructuring, privatization, and deregulation have aggravated labor market conditions" (pp. 244), resulting in the polarizing effect of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. In the early 1980s, neoliberal policies were introduced, resulting in the privatization, restructuring, and deregulations of the labor market and the advent on globalization. This phenomenon aggravated the labor markets through further marginalizing the migrant workers, not only in Canada but across the world. As Calliste suggests that "while the Canadian state regarded immigration as a way of resolving labour shortages and a source of future permanent citizens, its definition of suitable permanent citizens was structured by race, class, and gender. *Section 38 of the 1910 Immigration Act* empowered the governor-in-council to prohibit entry of immigrants belonging to "any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada, or of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character" (pp. 132).

Although Canada is a country of immigrants, the state policies and practices continue to perpetuate racialization of migrant workers and immigrants, through the accreditation system. Canadian employers require Canadian experience from new immigrant workers, disregarding the credentials and experience that migrant workers bring to Canada. Thus, the Canadian workplace landscape perpetuates the exploitation and oppression of the marginalized and racialized bodies. This speaks to my personal experience; as a Black African Canadian woman myself, who relocated to Canada several years ago, I have been questioned of my credentials and experience from my home country. To this day, regardless of my credentials, from my home country and additional credentials from a Canadian university, I still am not "good enough" for jobs that elevate me to senior-level roles compared to my counterparts, who are younger and White, with no equivalent skills and experience like mine, who find themselves elevated in their roles year after year. Clearly, the Canadian labor market qualification is race and sexuality, not skills and experience. The Canadian institutions continue to perpetuate the narrative of "social exclusion to oppression" (Gorman, 2012:123); hence, that systemically excludes and oppresses the socially marginalized, regardless of their education, knowledge, and experience, they are subjected to forms of systemic segregation and discrimination. Therefore, unless institutions value different kinds of experience, it means that migrant workers and immigrants will be socially, economically, and politically excluded.

## 9.5 Implication of Work

Given the above historical narrative of how racism and racialization of migrant and immigrant Black women and the visible minority at work or school in Canada have progressed or not so much, I believe that Canadian policy makers have a lot of work to do to change this narrative. I am not in education or educator, but I would like to believe that change has to start at a young age to be practically effective at workplace. Institutions like the Toronto District School Board, colleges, and universities, for example, should be able to include race and racism courses in their curricula and how this affects children of color and visible minorities in school. School boards and school curricula can start by removing special education program, for example, that discriminate children of color from taking academic courses, because that alone decreases their chances to proceed to university education. Furthermore, labor organizations and unions should also educate and sensitize leaders in authority at workplace through workplace learning on the impact of racism and racialization and its impacts to the workers. These steps should not only be on paper, but should be implemented to effect change. Therefore, this may assist workplaces to be truly diverse and inclusive and remove barriers of discrimination and racialization. I know this will or may take year to address, but a journey of a thousand miles begins with a first step. Institutions that continue to perpetuate institutionalized racism and racialization should be punishable by law, for example, that way, more realistic change can be possible.

## 9.6 Conclusion

The narratives of racism and racialization of Black women in Canada are not uniquely different from what history has shown us. Historically, Canada has racialized migrant workers from former colonial countries like Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The racism and racialization of workers continue to be perpetuated to this day as Canada uses the migrant workers and immigrants as cheap and expendable labor. Black women in particular have experienced low-level-paying jobs; they are seen or deemed as less intelligent and unskilled and continue to face the perpetuation of stereotypes, based on sidelining them as not good enough.

Credentialization and lack of Canadian experience have also been used by Canadian systemic racialization as a tool to further marginalize migrant workers and immigrants and deny them of access, equality and equitable jobs. Rather, Canadian labor markets pigeon holes and tokenizes migrant workers and immigrants, and they become nothing but numbers for their diversity and inclusiveness policy that fulfills the quotas of Black women or men and satisfies their stratification agendas.

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# Chapter 10
# Talking to the Wall: Whiteness and White Resistance in the Classroom

**Marycarmen Lara-Villanueva**

*I believe in revolution*
*because everywhere the crosses are burning.*
*sharp-shooting goose-steppers round every corner,*
*there are snipers in the schools…*
*(I know you don't believe this.*
*You think this is nothing*
*but faddish exaggeration. But they*
*are not shooting at you.)*

*I am marked by the color of my skin.*
*The bullets are discreet and designed to kill slowly.*
*They are aiming at my children.*
*They are facts.*
*Let me show you my wounds: my stumbling mind, my*
*'excuse me' tongue, and this*
*nagging preoccupation.*
*with the feeling of not being good enough* (Lorna De Cervantes)

I am the mother of a young Latinx Muslim boy with multiple exceptionalities. At age 4 he was already an avid reader, and by age 5 he knew the entire periodic table and could explain kinetic energy to an adult, articulating precisely the difference between exoplanets and dwarf planets. In the classroom, his peers have consistently alienated him because of his "ethnic differences." Yet he is a happy child who strives to maintain and nourish his friendships even with those who remind him he does not belong. He is a brilliant 7-year-old, yet most his teachers fixate on his inability to work independently, write neatly, and follow instructions. One teacher said she has seen "a lot of kids like him." Not one teacher has ever mentioned his giftedness. My attempts to address his special needs have only been met with skepticism and reluctance. Dei (2014a, b) reminds us that the school system either does something *for* you or does something *to* you (p. 240). I have seen my son struggle to be seen, acknowledged, and valued. He is too young to grasp the significance of the acts of

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resistance that often allow him to claim a space in the room. I celebrate these acts and continue to nourish them, for they give me hope that I have some control over his fate in the school system and to pursue change. I refuse to let the school do something *to* him; instead, I want to believe that one day the school will be a space where all knowledges can coexist.

In this article, I reflect on the ways race continues to be a highly contentious issue in school settings, despite blatant acts of racism that constantly manifest in Canadian classrooms. Mohanty (1990) explains that classrooms should be understood as political and cultural sites, as power hierarchies are often reproduced in Eurocentric educational institutions. I discuss how whiteness is constructed in the classroom and the role that white educators, and particularly female teachers, play in policing its boundaries. Lastly, I examine how multicultural narratives operate in the school system to mask white hegemony. I employ a critical race theory framework in my reflections, drawing from my personal experiences as a queer Latinx immigrant, and recent racist incidents perpetuated against children of color in Ontario. My intention is to contribute to the existing conversation about the unspeakability of race in the Euro-Canadian/American school system and the complicity of white educators in the perpetuation of racism in schools. I wish to imagine the possibility of a classroom where nonwhite children are no longer victims, but benefactors of an equitable system.

## 10.1 My Positionality

I came to Canada from Mexico to study as an international student at the University of Calgary in 2003. I felt the years spent on campus as isolating and with little personal, spiritual, or even professional reward. My inability to make white friends secluded me, and I felt unsafe most of the time. The majority of my professors were white males. I never engaged in class discussions, even when I felt my contribution was valuable, because I thought it was not worth the risk. I was troubled by the idea of being taught classes such as Anthropology of Gender or the Anthropology of Latin America by white male professors. I suspected it was problematic, but did not have the language to articulate my concerns. I experienced internalized oppression because of my isolation and lack of representation. I self-doubted while reading, writing, and learning; as a woman of color in academia, I felt oppressed and unseen by the rhetoric of white dominant ideology and Western scholarship. Today I know this rhetoric is imbued with ideologies of racism. This is the rhetoric that wants to "hush our voices and [prevent] us from articulating our victimization" (Anzaldúa 1987, xxiiii). My experience as an undergraduate student was dreadful, and I promised myself I would never set foot in academia again.

Two years after graduation, and exhausted from feeling invisible and in the margins, I decided to move to Toronto. I had just given birth to my son and felt it was time to acknowledge that social and cultural alienation were fragmenting my iden-

tity. In an impulse of self-preservation, I convinced my partner to sell everything we had, quit our jobs, and move to Toronto. The so-called multicultural paradise promised a diverse landscape where we could raise our multiracial baby; the city also offered an opportunity to find community and heal. I felt empowered by our agency and choice in transforming our experience as an act of active resistance. I will not be a passive witness to my son's constant invalidation, bullying, and tokenization in the classroom. I decided to give academia a second chance so I could become a better advocate for him.

## 10.2 My Theoretical Framework

I am influenced by the work of Gloria Anzaldúa, particularly her stance on theory and academia and the pervasive ways in which these spaces have been heavily restricted for communities of color. For Anzaldúa (1987), "If we have been gagged and disempowered by theories, we can also be loosened and empowered by theories" (p. xxvi). What happens when we, the objects, become the subjects? Anzaldua invites women of color to look through the master's gaze and use *his* methodology—the "master's tools"—to dismantle Western hegemony. Likewise, Yosso (2005) argues:

> [I]f some knowledges have been used to silence, marginalize and render People of Colour invisible, then 'Outsider knowledges (Collins 1986), mestizo knowledges (Anzaldúa 1987), and transgressive knowledges (Hooks 1994) can value the presence and voices of People of Colour, and can re-envision the margins as places empowered by transformative resistance. (p. 70)

My framework in this essay is critical race theory, as it foregrounds race and challenges claims of objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity, "asserting that these claims camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups" (Yosso 2005, p.73). Using the principles of interest convergence, the myth of color blindness, and experiential knowledge, I problematize white supremacy in the educational system. Through counter-stories, critical race theory works by amplifying the experiential knowledges of racialized communities (Delgado and Stefanic 2001). Counter-storytelling entails "telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told," that is, disenfranchised communities, people of color, Black, and Indigenous peoples (Solorzano and Yosso 2002, p. 26). Using personal examples, this article will explore how the white imagination responds to realities of race and racism in the classroom, demonstrating that race and racism are institutionalized and upheld by white educators. Dei (2014a, b) argues that race and racism are "a major responsibility for the contemporary educator and learner" (p. 239); thus, I focus on the centrality and saliency of race and how this determines children's and educators' social location.

## 10.3 The Unspeakability of Race

Although it is important to analyze race across historical time, for the purposes of this article, I intend to focus on the concrete effects of race, as a socially constructed category with no scientific validity (Omi and Winant 1993; Miles and Torres 1999; Lopez 1998; Dei 1996a, b). W.E.B. Du Bois stated that slavery, colonialism, segregation, privilege, and exploitation not only perpetuate racial hierarchy but also create the "worlds of race" themselves (as cited in Olso 2005, p. 119). Race is not just a sociocultural construct, but one that has "sinister causes and consequences" (Lipsitz as cited in McLaren and Torres, 1999). Despite its lack of scientific validity, the salience of this social construct developed over half a millennium of enforcement as a tenet of social organization (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 5); race "continues to gain social currency because of its utility in distributing unequal power, privilege, and social prestige" (Dei 1996a, b, p. 2). Racism, as the undisputable consequence of race, is deeply engrained in our society. Racism makes race real; as educators and community workers, we ought to identify the salience of race and recognize its effects even while facing resistance. We ought to treat both concepts as tangible, living, and operative aspects of our society (Dei 2014a, b, p. 240). Racialization defines children's experiences in school, and we must be cognizant of these processes if we wish to engage in antiracist discussions and pedagogy. This realization is more evident for parents of color than it is for white educators and for white parents; we need to articulate ways to problematize their institutionally embodied inaction, denial, and passivity.

Race, as a fundamental principle of social organization (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 3), dictates our social location, possibilities, and limitations. Yet the relevance of race continues to be contended in education conversations, making its consequences undistinguishable and debatable. This reluctance to engage the issue of race may be the result of an "uncritical acceptance of the status quo" and a feeling of guilt vis-à-vis racism and discrimination (Egbo 2011, p. 26) on the part of white educators and those in positions of power in our educational institutions. It is not surprising that for parents and guardians attempting to engage educators in conversations about race in the classroom can be an exhausting ordeal. As a mother of color struggling to navigate the school system, my efforts to engage in racial conversations have been infertile most of the time. Nonetheless, these discussions have allowed me to reflect on the unwillingness to acknowledge race as real and the need to center race and racism in discussions even when that makes educators uncomfortable.

Not giving race the discursive space it warrants allows educators to deny the possession of white privilege. On the other hand, educators who acknowledge race as real have taken their first step toward both a critique and transformation of the racist practices that operate in the school system. Heywood (2016, class discussion), in response to a student's resistance to the term "white supremacy," highlights the importance of having the courage to "name" the oppression if we hope to dismantle it. Similarly, Dei (2014a, b) argues that the denial of white dominance distorts reality and does not allow us to work together to find solutions (p. 15). The last time I

discussed the importance of the problem of representation with my son's teacher, she claimed to "completely understand" and equated my problem to her struggle in finding French-language books for her son: "Most children's books in French, have animal characters; I know what you mean, it is a struggle!" In other occurrences my attempts to bring race into the conversation are met with significant resistance; cheerful faces slowly morph into discontent as I utter the words "white" or "racism." It seems the same policy makers, administrators, and educators who embrace diversity and "multiculturalism" resist acknowledging the presence of white supremacy in the school system (Deckers 2014, p. 62). I argue that to uproot Western hegemony in the school curriculum and the dominance of whiteness in the classroom, race, racism, and white supremacy must be identified, confronted, and destabilized with collective rage.

In the fall of 2016, seven families filed a joint human rights complaint against the York Region District School Board for racial and religious discrimination faced by their children while they were at school. The complaint cites the case of a Markham principal who was found to have posted Islamophobic comments on Facebook. The director of education for the York Region school board, J. Philip Parappally, claimed that "[w]e all share a goal to create learning environments that are safe and welcoming for all students and staff. As one of the most diverse and highest performing jurisdictions in the province, our achievement comes in concert with equity and well-being" (Javed 2016). J. Philip Parappally's statement is a clear reminder that diversity and multicultural frameworks—and those who align with them—do little to challenge the status quo or resist structures of power and domination.

Less than a couple of months earlier, the mother of a 16-year-old boy who was banned from attending any school in the Durham region had also filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights tribunal alleging racial discrimination. Even though the problem of racism in the Durham District School board had been discussed in the past, the school board refuses to compile race-based statistics, arguing that "there is no scientific data to support the claims that black children are being expelled and suspended at higher rates and being punished more severely than white students" (Haines 2016). Effectively, there is no data to support these claims, because the school board refuses to collect data that may support allegations of racism and discrimination in the disciplinary records of students.

In another instance, Mississauga police used handcuffs to restrain a Black 6-year-old girl following an incident at her school. A Peel Police spokesperson said they were called by the elementary school's administration, because the child was acting violently, by kicking, punching, biting, and spitting (Hudes 2017). These incidents illustrate that the lives of racialized students are threatened by the racist attitudes of educators, denial of administrators, and excessive violence with which children are disciplined. School administrators have consistently failed to place the saliency of race at the forefront by attempting to divert the conversation. As Dei (2014a, b) contends, the unspeakability of race shows its significance (p. 239).

Recent statistics employ veiled language to address the experiences of racialized students in the school system. Although data can help us establish the nature and context of a problem, as in the case of the Durham District School board, studies

often focus on language, country of origin, length of time in Canada, or citizenship status as it relates to student disengagement (p. 14). Evidently, there is significant resistance to speak about race and its implications in educational outcomes for racialized groups of students; this resistance is pervasive in the language employed by schoolteachers, administrators, and policy makers alike. Research conducted by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) on dropping out shows that Portuguese-, Spanish-, and Somali-speaking students leave school at the highest rates: 38%, 37.5%, and 35.1%, respectively. By region of birth, English-speaking Caribbean and Central/South American and Mexican students leave school at the highest rates, 38% and 37%, respectively. Combined with earlier statistics, these numbers are indicative not only of issues of language and place of origin but point toward a hostile learning environment for racialized students. Educators, policy makers, and administrators have attempted to disappear race either by denying that race matters or by using code words and phrases such as “newcomer children” or “cultural differences” (Schick and St. Denis 2005, p. 366).

Undoubtedly, the school system is structured to disproportionately benefit white children over any other cultural group; white children gain from the normalization of white supremacy, while the same practice disenfranchises Black, Indigenous, and children of color. White children learn to claim truth as their private domain, while nonwhite children learn to hide their culture because white hegemony teaches them they do not hold “truths” but “perspectives” (Howard 2006, p. 54). Research suggests that nonwhite parents talk about racial identity much more frequently with their kids than white parents do (Vittrup 2010). In the exercise of their privilege, white parents enjoy the luxury of not having to teach their children to identify and stand up to racist bullying, to protect themselves from police, or simply to be proud of who they are, no matter how much they learn otherwise. Ignorance and lack of engagement are luxuries not available to members of racialized communities (Howard 2006 p. 61); for us engaging in conversations about race is no longer an option. We must protect our children by telling truths and explaining injustices; we must guide and help them heal from the insidious effects of racism and teach them to fight for justice.

## 10.4 The Construction Whiteness

I am interested in exploring the making of white subjects in the school system. Reflecting on the processes that take place in the classroom, I draw from my experiences as an immigrant mother of a racialized child attending a public school in the Toronto District School Board. Whiteness takes different forms in the imaginary of racialized communities. White identity is a racial fabrication, and white subjects are highly implicated in preserving the racially constructed status quo (Lopez 1998, p. 193). I argue that white women educators are most complicit in policing the boundaries of whiteness in the classroom, as they do little to problematize its unjust effects and continue to rely on color-blindness discourses that promote liberal

multiculturalism as a solution. The making of white subjects in the school system presents a microcosm of the ways in which whiteness is centered and placed at the top of our Canadian racial hierarchy.

I was born and raised in Mexico City. My first encounter with a white subject was while on a family trip to San Antonio, Texas, when I was 7 years old. I had seen white people on TV, mostly on American movies, but never in the flesh. I remember being in an elevator on the way to our hotel room. A white couple entered, and my dad pulled me toward the wall of the elevator to make more room for them, even though there was enough room for another family or two. My parents always ensured that we did not occupy much space, especially in spaces shared with white subjects. The message was unspoken, but clear: Do not make too much sound, do not talk too much, do not take up too much space, do not trouble white people, and do not be yourself in front of white people. I learned these rules early on. I have observed other parents of color passing on a similar admiration for white bodies to their children, by acting to diminish their children's presence in spaces shared by white bodies.

My father admired the white people he did business with: "These people are talented at everything they do"—he often said. I grew up believing white people were good at mostly everything they did: *they* made movies we grew up watching, *they* dominated sports, *they* made the music my father played and loved, and *they* were beautiful—to my then 7-year-old colonized aesthetics. When my parents took me to Sea World in San Antonio, I remember admiring white girls my age, as they walked in their swimming suits. My body was brown and thick; my hair was long and frizzy. I knew that—unlike me—the girls by the swimming pool looked like my dolls at home, and they reminded me of the girls in the movies we watched. Inadvertently, during that trip I was learning to fear, respect, and admire white subjects. This is how whiteness was constructed in my context. Euro-whiteness was an aspiration, something seductive that I fantasized with, but an archetype that made growing up painful. Whiteness was a destination, both a place of arrival and a mirage.

Theorizing the social construction of whiteness is essential in our efforts to deconstructing it. However, revising its historical fabrication entails an extensive literature review that is beyond the scope of this article. The intellectual justification of racial stratification was (and is) used to justify the process of colonization and Eurocentrism. Social Darwinism explained how the theory of survival of the fittest applied in the context of social groups, as "different races adapted socially through the process of competitive survival." The perceived failure of some "races" was utilized to justify their inhumane treatment (Dei 1996a, b, p. 61). "White" as the victorious racial category was proclaimed powerful, dominant, and desirable. Whiteness needs to be understood as the historically specific convergence of economic, geopolitical, and ethnocultural processes: a sociohistorical form of consciousness given birth at "the nexus of colonial rule, capitalism and the emergent relationship between dominant and subordinate groups" (McLaren and Torres 1999, p. 56). Racial and socioeconomic disparities were structurally designed through colonial rule, and this process of colonization has had devastating effects to Indigenous, Black, and other nonwhite peoples throughout the past 500 years.

In the 1960s, Fanon asserted that whiteness had become a symbol of purity, justice, truth, and virginity. Historically, Euro-whiteness was made seductive as it gave access to power and resources; the relationship between the white Europeans and those who were subverted continues to be one of colonial domination (Quijano 2007), as European colonialists constructed institutions, such as schools, with the purpose of perpetuating and preserving their positions of power. While direct and explicit colonial rule may have disappeared, colonialism persists today in its many disguises as cultural, economic, political, and knowledge-based oppression. Despite the evident processes through which whiteness is institutionalized, universalized, and structured to benefit white supremacy, the perniciousness of whiteness relies on its ability to be invisible.

White as a social category continues to go unmarked and thought of as synonymous with humanness, enabling whites to proclaim universality (Anzaldúa 1987; Ferguson 1990; Hytten and Atkins 2001). Unlike nonwhites, who are portrayed within paradigms of homogeneity, whites are perceived as individual "historical agents whose differences are unclassifiable among themselves" (Hytten and Atkins 2001, p. 58). To "race" white people is to destabilize their claim to speak for humanity (Hawley 2005, p. 54) but also to make their differences imperceptible as in the homogeneity that characterizes other racialized communities. The need for white people to locate themselves within the structures that have historically privileged them is resonant now more than ever. Yet, bringing whiteness to the table in institutional settings, such as the school, continues to be met with resistance, leaving people of color powerless in conversations where oppressions cannot be named.

In the classroom, colonial relationships and dynamics can be reproduced, whereby white teachers (perhaps unknowingly) uphold power configurations of white supremacy at the expense of marginalized students. In the Euro-Canadian/American educational system, white educators are implicated in the lack of critical attention to white supremacy and white racism, despite the growing number of studies that have identified a need for progressive changes in teacher education programs (Sleeter 2017; Matias et al. 2014; Egbo 2011; Allen and Rosatto 2009; Solomon et al. 2005). A study by Solomon et al. (2005), which investigated teacher candidates' perceptions of whiteness and white privilege in Canadian society, found a tendency toward the denial of such privileges. Teacher candidates were asked to respond to Peggy McIntosh's (1990) *White Privilege* piece. Some of the white study participants responded:

> McIntosh's tone is castrating, counter-productive and intrinsically feeble-minded in character with its ethos of negative energy. Why should whites (and males) forever be made to feel guilty by would-be do-gooders like McIntosh.

> Whites may well be over-privileged in some settings, but the author fails to point out any negative aspects of being white. To highlight some negative aspects, minorities have affirmative action for attaining certain jobs, and can use discrimination as an advantage against whites.

> This article is one-sided with the emphasis pointing to minorities being oppressed. How can she [McIntosh] say there is 'white privilege' if when I applied to become a teacher, there

> was a clearly stated option for anyone of a minority to state that? (Solomon et al. 2005, p. 158)

Allen and Rosatto (2009) discuss how white educators' investment in specific, concrete, and privileged identities, such as whiteness, remains unchallenged even when exposed to critical pedagogy literature (p. 8), such as the examples above. According to Dei (1996a, b), "a critical anti-racism educational strategy questions the centrality and normativity of Whiteness, and the fact that 'White' is a key concept that leads to the constructions of non-whites as the *other*" (p. 65).

One privilege of whiteness, according to Schick and St. Denis (2005), is to pass invisibly as the norm, which depends on the marginalized identities against which the norm can be compared (p. 299). Fine (1997) asserts that whiteness is produced in a symbiotic relationship with other colors, where:

> …whiteness grows as a seemingly "natural" proxy for quality, merit and advantage, "color" disintegrates to embody deficit or "lack"…"[W]hiteness" and "color are therefore not merely created in parallel, but are fundamentally relational and need to be studied as a system. (as cited in Schick and St. Denis 2005, p. 300)

In practice, this system of privilege starts at birth, and it is pervasive as soon as children enter the school system. Schools, like other Eurocentric institutions, have a history of "othering" racialized bodies; whites are socialized to conceptualize their world in ways that favor their positions within it (Solomon et al. 2005; McLaren and Torres 1999). Yet we know white men and women do not fare equally within the system of white supremacy.

Njami and Srikanth (2002), argue that historically, white women have used the domestic space and their power within it not to subvert but to preserve the status quo and to further racism (p. 16). While parents of color engage in racial conversation with young kids in preparation for membership in racialized and marginalized groups, white parents have the luxury of not having to think about race, and their children will also privilege from the comfort in knowing they are the norm. White children see themselves represented in books and stories; they learn their names are pronounceable, and their traditions are reflected in the school calendar. White children enjoy their lunch with confidence—knowing that Mohammed and Francisco will never make fun of their macaroni and cheese or Wonderbread sandwich. Unlike us, whiteness in the lunchroom is odorless and invisible. As parents and educators, we ought to confront the resilience of racism, the delegitimization of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1997) of students of color, and the ways in which white teachers are implicated in rewarding some capital over other.

Schools normalize white dominance through traditional pedagogy, the devaluation and "othering" of nonwhite cultures, curriculum, liberal multiculturalism, and racist administration. If racism is the symptom, the performance of whiteness that upholds white supremacy is the disease, and to cure it we must thoroughly understand the disease itself (Matias and Mackey 2016, p. 35). How can we begin to unpack the meanings of whiteness while the word itself pervades the limits of the politically correct? How can we put on the table issues of white supremacy and

engage white teachers in the conversation, without being confronted with their naïveté and lack of awareness? In Yamato's (1987) words:

> With the best of intentions, the best of educations, and the greatest generosity of heart, whites, operating on the misinformation fed to them from day one, will behave in ways that are racist, will perpetuate racism by being 'nice' the way we're taught to be out there: marginalization and contemporary cultures nice. You can just 'nice' somebody to dead with naïveté and lack of awareness of privilege. Then there's guilt and the desire to end racism and how the two get all tangled up to the point that people morbidly fascinated with their guilt are immobilized. (p. 21)

We know that individual intentions are not enough, and change must happen at an institutional level.

## 10.5 The White Woman Educator

> As the often-silent benefactors of both white supremacy and the legal protections that were made possible by civil rights movements led by people of colour, white women in particular have a moral and ethical responsibility to place the abolition of white supremacy at the forefront of their personal agendas
> –Dreama Moon

White women teachers comprise a significant majority of the public school teaching force in Canada and the United States (Ryan et al. 2009; Goldring et al. 2013). A study on the racial diversity of the teacher population in Canada found that the proportion of the general population of color is much greater than the proportion of racialized elementary and secondary educators and educational counselors (Ryan et al. 2009). My contention is that white teachers, in particular white women teachers, are complicit in the maintenance of white hegemony in the classroom, and they work actively to police the boundaries of whiteness.

The winter of 2016, I had a discussion with my son's teacher, after my son had complained that his white peers had mocked him after learning that he speaks Spanish. The teacher responded by stating "that's just boys trying to be silly," erasing the racist content of the bullying, and justifying their white supremacy in training. When I spoke about an incident I had witnessed while volunteering in a school trip, where a white boy had asked a nonwhite first-grader boy "how do you say your name in English?," the teacher, a white French Canadian woman, came to the children's defense by arguing that "even she had been asked similar questions." Njami and Srikanth (2002) suggest that white women occupy an in-between status as both marginalized and racially privileged in countries in which the residual effects of colonialism still operate (p. 14). Theoretically, this should equip this group with the resources and sensibilities to work with children who belong to communities that have been historically marginalized. However, as the cases above illustrate, and my personal stories interacting with white women teachers confirm, they are not only unable to locate axes of power and complicity with racism but also unwilling to

inquire into the forces that benefit them and white children in school power structures.

It has been acknowledged that by displacing attention from race to gender, white women have relinquished their moral responsibility in the fight against racism (see Njami and Srikanth 2002; Sleeter 2017; Fellows and Razack 1998). Fellows and Razack (1998) describe "race to innocence" as the process initiated by competing marginalities whereby white women, challenged about their domination, respond by calling attention to their own subordination (p. 339). Lugones' (1990) allusion to white women's source of incompetence in their understanding of racism and ethnocentrism, which she coins "infantilization of judgement," is described as a "dulling in the ability to read critically and with maturity of judgement, situations in which race is salient":

> White women turn into children avoiding all commitment except against racism in the abstract, paralyzed as responsible beings, afraid of hostility and hostile in their fear, wedded to their ignorance and arrogant in their guilty purity of heart. (p. 53)

White women teachers may use their own place on the margin to evade an examination of their complicity in the fabrication of white hegemony in the classroom, for instance, by using personal stories of overcoming sexism as a form of subordination and exemplifying the "hard work pays off" discourse. Mawhimey (1998) refers to storytelling or personal testimony as a move toward innocence which functions to normalize and recirculate white power and privilege. Despite their laudable intentions, white women teachers continue to do little to problematize the unjust systems of domination that affect children of color, and by exercising white hegemonic power, they deny and silence the "experiential realities of bodies of color" (Dei et al. 2004, p. 8).

## 10.6 Multiculturalism to Mask a Problem

Multiculturalism was brought under federal law in Canada in 1988, with the intention to preserve the cultural freedom of all individuals and to provide recognition to the cultural contributions of diverse ethnic groups to Canadian society (Moodley 1999, 148). However, the act has been criticized as an attempt to redefine and legislate race relations, in the name of protecting cultural diversity. Multiculturalism as a discourse was created by white legislators with political projects, as in the case of Pierre Trudeau's liberal agenda in the 1970s, which was meant to cope with the residual hostility of the Euro-Canadian population toward immigrants (p. 148). The celebration of "cultural difference" and the raceless nation narrative implicated in the Multicultural Act of 1988 has repercussions for the reproduction of racial privilege. Although Canadian multiculturalism has undergone several changes in the past decades, it has done little to revoke existing power arrangements. I argue that is not meant to subvert the current power dynamic.

In North American educational settings, although well intentioned, multicultural programs do little to generate social change; as whiteness continues to be an invisible yet universal norm, white domination becomes implicit in multicultural discourses. Multiculturalism as a discourse that celebrates diversity and mutual tolerance is patronizing at best, yet the tolerant majority “wallows in a self-congratulatory confirmation of its open-mindless” (Moodley 1999, p. 149). Multicultural education may not be as effective as antiracist education in specifically disrupting the privilege and currency of whiteness. As educators and academics, we ought to reflect on the difference between multicultural education and antiracist education; we must be vigilant of the ways in which multicultural narratives are used to mask racist practices and policies that directly affect racialized children. Multicultural education is not meant to disrupt white privilege, as the saliency of race and presence of racism are virtually ignored.

In multicultural education, different multicultural activities and celebrations are consistently implemented throughout the school year. Through celebration and song, and with no need to mention racial differences, these practices make their way into acceptable curricular practice (Schick and St. Denis 2005, p. 206). Yet dismantling oppression requires disrupting knowledge, not simply adding more knowledge (Kumashiro 2001, p. 34). The cause of racism is not the lack of awareness about other cultures, but the supremacy of a group over the rest. Individuals do not discriminate against others because they are different, rather it is the act of discrimination that creates hierarchical categories and then naturalizes these differences (p. 55). Evidently some educators falsely believe that by “adding on” differences in their lesson plans, the problem is solved and inclusivity achieved.

The problematic focus on difference that some multicultural discourses carry fails to change that which is non-different, or the norm (Kumashiro 2001, p. 6). For instance, educators may acknowledge celebrations such as Eid or Diwali during the school year, yet fail to dismantle the supremacy of the Christian calendar and the subtle imposition of Christmas celebrations on Muslim and Hindu children. Many white educators are quick to celebrate attempts to embrace diversity in their lessons, without an honest examination of power and privilege, and the way in which they are themselves implicated in such imbalances. While teaching about the othering of marginalized groups, they ought to carry their analysis onto the present and examine how some groups are favored, normalized, and privileged and how this process is legitimized and maintained by social structures (Kumashiro 2000 p. 36) and institutions alike, including the school system.

Questions of power and the construction of difference play an important role in the official and hidden curriculums alike (Dei 1996a, b, p. 117). Inclusivity means “ensuring representation and pedagogies that respond to the social construction of difference in the school system” (p. 176), yet many educators would support inclusion only when diverse ways of knowing are taught as subordinate and inferior to the superior ways of knowing, those sustained by the imperialist white supremacist patriarchy (Hooks 2003, p. 47). Bell’s 1980 assertion that in most institutional contexts, white people will support racial justice only when they understand and see that there is something in it for them rings true today. In the classroom, the process

of knowledge hierarchy and power construction often goes unnoticed, especially as most white teachers are uncritical about common multicultural practices. While the inclusion of certain racialized voices is a step forward, we should be cautious of falling into delusional equity. If we continue to deny the saliency of race in the school system, with its tangible and detrimental consequences for racialized children, and if we reinforce the construction and perpetuation of power hierarchies through multicultural practices, moving toward equity will continue to be an unattainable dream.

A while ago, in my son's predominantly white school, his class read a book about a family fleeing their war-torn country. The family were refugees, which was not directly disclosed in the story, and the main characters were two boys named Marwan and Tarek, which are both Muslim names. At home, my son expressed empathy: "It's terrible what happens to the Syrian refugees." He also had unresolved questions: "Why are Syrians being bombed? Why is there a war? And why are people not doing anything?" In the class app, his teacher posted a photo of the children retelling the story through tableau and commented on how powerful the story was and the discussion that followed. The teacher said that "the students also shared connections of how they and their families have helped people in need and all of the children spoke about wanting to care for others through their words and actions." White parents were quick to celebrate the lesson: "Thank you for fostering this conversation in the classroom," a parent commented.

Although well intentioned, this activity is an example of an Orientalist approach to the Middle East, and an exercise of "othering" where children are given the opportunity to learn to emulate colonial relationships, while creating a static and stereotypical view of Middle Eastern communities. Racialized assumptions of communities of color reproduce educational inequities and reinforce deficit approaches to schooling. A sociological-cultural framework creates and justifies deficit thinking by using pseudoscientific standardized tests to build stereotypical views of racialized students (Portelli and Sharma 2014, p. 256) and create distorted notions of communities of color. As a result, educators try to fulfill students' deficiencies with forms of cultural knowledge deemed valuable (Yosso 2005, p. 75).

The luxury of ignorance has given white people the power and privilege to write their history and reinforce their limited versions of truth; thus, white ignorance and selective forgetting have been institutionalized in the name of education (Howard 2006, p. 63). Dei examines the value of multicentric knowledge and the need to create a space for other centers of knowledge. I believe educators when they claim their goal is for all students to feel included and welcomed in the schools. But what do educators really mean when they make such claims? How can we make sure the jargon of inclusivity and multicultural discourses remains relevant? For as long as they continue to universalize the experiences of the European subject, "multiculturalism" remains a strategy to mask white supremacy and uncomfortable racist practices. If we fail to provide a more critical look at liberal multiculturalism, struggles between power evasion and race cognizance will continue to be fought on its terrain (Frankenberg 1993). Furthermore, if we fail to reclaim other ways of knowledge and engage in multicentric ways of knowing and affirming racialized students'

myriad identities, histories, and social contexts of learning, our efforts to create inclusive classrooms will continue to be futile and counterproductive.

## 10.7 Concluding Thoughts

In this article, I have reflected on the unspeakability of race, especially in educational spaces and despite the racist practices that are prevalent in schools. I briefly explored how "whiteness" is fabricated and perpetuated by white teachers in schools, while attempting to identify the unique ways in which women teachers are implicated. Lastly, I discussed the ways in which multiculturalism is used to mask white hegemony and the constant "othering" of racialized students. Schools are institutions where proximity to whiteness is rewarded, and I am hopeful that this understanding will help us trouble race and work together to dismantle the systems that continue to oppress our children.

Discussions about race and whiteness with educators will continue to be met with defiance and skepticism. The classroom as a political space gives me hope for change; classrooms have the potential to be sites for antiracist interventions and social transformation. I am eager to continue learning about this possibility.

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# Chapter 11
# Reimaging Africanized Bodies in Eurocentric Spaces

**John P. Castillo**

## 11.1 Introduction

The catalyst for my discussion generates from spontaneous conversations I have daily with grade nine African-Caribbean students vocalizing their lived experiences in the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, the relationship between my students and I was characterized with educational rhetoric, formality, and rigidity in delivering curriculum expectations, outcomes, and objectives outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education's curriculum document. Unbeknownst to me, my preoccupation in curriculum content only distances me from my students by attenuating their blackness and their experiences as racialized bodies. Firstly, by blackness I am referring to the heterogeneous representations of dark-skinned descendants of a nation of people appraised and commodified as slaves for inhumane transportation to the Americas and throughout the Caribbean originating from the Slave Coast of West Africa. My blackness defines my race demarcated by Eurocentric ideologists setting a standard of ideal perfection introduced in the mid- to late eighteenth century by German anthropologist Immanuel Kant. As the "originator of the first theory of race," Kant propagated the concept that "color is the most constant character of the human varieties"; subsequently the permanence and preeminence of skin color indicated that "race is an ex-speciation which cannot return to the original stem… race once formed resist further remodeling. Race cannot be undone by further differences in climate. It is permanent" (Bernasconi 2009, p. 92). Kant's seminal work on the permanency of race became a marker by which "…whites considered themselves clearly superior to everyone else" and "the blackness of Africans was not only a subject of theoretical speculation, it became the characteristic around which all the prejudices against Africans were gathered" (Bernasconi 2009, p. 92).

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In addition, the formation and sustainability of race has become a "fundamental organized principle of contemporary social life…race can be defined as a concept which signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (so- called phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always necessarily a social and historical process" (Winant 2000, p. 172).

Because "the scientific concept of race underwent many changes after Kant introduced it…we are unable to do away with the notion of race" (Bernasconi 2009, p. 92). The entrenched effects of Kantian rhetoric of race as a permanent marker by which human bodies of African ancestry are imagined and believed to be inferior to dominant European bodies are echoed in Desmond Cole's 2015 article "The Skin I'm In: I've been interrogated by police more than 50 times—all because I'm black" featured in *Toronto Life* magazine when he writes, "…too many black men are 'known' through a foggy lens of suspicion we've done nothing to earn. After years of being stopped by police, I've started to internalize their scrutiny. I've doubted myself, wondered if I've actually done something to provoke them. Once you're accused enough times, you begin to assume your own guilt, to stand in for your oppressor. It's exhausting to have to justify your freedoms in a supposedly free society" (Cole 2015, April 21). Secondly, by racialized bodies, I am citing lingering colonial rhetoric dominating Western thought and imagination subsequent to centuries of systematic and indiscriminate cultural violence on the body, mind, soul, and spirit of individuals characterized as subordinate to the dominant Eurocentric narrative. For Winant, "the idea of race began to take shape with the rise of a world political economy. The onset of global economic integration, the dawn of seaborne empire, the conquest of the Americas, and the rise of the Atlantic slave trade were all key elements in the genealogy of race. The concept emerged over time as a kind of world-historical bricolage…racial categorization of human beings was a European invention" (Winant 2000, p. 172).

Furthermore, Walton and Caliendo would argue that the aftermath is a racial discourse where "…race has been used to create a dividing line between those who were white and those who were non-white and to determine who would and would not have political rights (and, by extension, political power). In addition, cultural traditions created and adhered to by dominant European bodies are the 'norm,' while those from non-white races are the less significant 'other.' In the end, race (and, by extension, racism) has been constructed as a great divider and the avenue by which people of certain groups have come to be framed as inferior to whites" (Walton and Caliendo 2011, p. 3). My third consideration of Africanized ancestry looks at the possibilities of students reconstructing their African identity from fragmented pieces of colonial dominance and disturbance. By Africanize, I am referring to the Eurocentric gaze toward the African subject as irrational and uncivilized needing salvation from their uncharacterized humanity. Subsequently, blackness, racialized, and Africanized proposition intersectionalities wherein "the concept of race has come to embody a series of assumptions that subconsciously affect our

thoughts and behaviours and which have been incorporated into our social and political institutions" (Walton and Caliendo 2011, p. 4).

Returning to the classroom, subsequent to my first few days in the classroom, and coming to the realization, impact, and affect of my position as a racialized body, what began as formal interactions with my students soon evolved into a transformative decolonization space generating conversations to examine the significance and relationship of theirs and my blackness. I vividly remember one particular conversation with a black male student three weeks into the first semester after establishing trust, respect, and a rapport with my students. As the conversation progressed, my student's understanding of his Africanized body came to the forefront as "Sir… when I go to class, I know I am black." My student's poignant comment echoes Cole when he states, "Everywhere I went I should be prepared to prove I wasn't a criminal" (Cole 2015). It is plausible to ascertain that my student identified himself through a criminalized Eurocentric gaze informing him of his position in the classroom.

Subsequent to analyzing my student's comment, I vividly recall his ambivalence to disclose details of the violence inflicted on his body, mind, soul, and spirit by the bias of a sacred "gate keeper" of colonial education seeking to confirm their beliefs that "…native peoples were less than fully human, or at least inferior humans to Europeans, then the extermination of those people and the expropriation of their land could be presented as the inevitable triumph of a superior group and, therefore, morally justified" (Caliendo and McIlwain 2011, p. 24). By disregarding past narratives, minimizing the significance of his African ancestry without considering the impact of starting with a racialized conclusion and developing evidence within a Eurocentric gaze lends credence to el-Khoury when she writes, "The 'panoptic power' or panoptic form of power is based on constant surveillance and done with the intention to ensure compliance and make possible the control of blacks by placing them on a timetable, documentation, regulating their acts, submitting them to hierarchical observation, a normalizing judgment, and examination" (el-Khoury 2012, p. 86). Furthermore, the mental assault on my student's understanding of the immutability of his blackness by perpetuating an inherent vice (not a virtue) bequeathed to the student because of his African ancestry engenders "the danger of a single story" asserted by novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie when she affirms:

> …that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but also to make it the definitive story of that person. Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity. (Adichie 2009)

My initial reaction and response were to approach this assault on my student's understanding of his blackness by defaulting to my professional obligation and consider maintaining an inclusive space of neutrality, professionalism, and objectivity as an educator. However, I resolve to listen to the despair in my student's voice coming to the realization of his Africanized body, his blackness, and being Africanized through a Eurocentric gaze. For my student, the construction of blackness within the European imagination situates him within a static *Matrix* fixed with representations of deviant images perpetuated by a self-concept and understanding of biased opinions reaffirmed by the gross misuse of power and privilege of the dominant to not only maintain dominance but also remind students of their irrational and unintelligible position in Eurocentric spaces. According to Conroy (2013), "In schools, common-sense knowledge about race has immense influence over teachers' perceptions of the character and abilities of racialized students. In particular, perceptions of Black male students have resulted in the disproportionate use of exclusionary schooling practices against Black male students, which in turn serves to limit their life chances" (Conroy in Dei and Lordan 2013, p. 169). After considering the violence inflicted on my student, his bleak outlook toward the future, and his skepticism to hope, I resolved to consider reimaging Africanized bodies (including myself) in Eurocentric spaces. I turn now to examining the *Image Matrix* with particular attention to archetypes, stereotypes, and typology. Throughout this discourse, I will consider how images are constructed, deconstructed, formed, and reconstructed externally on Africanized bodies and internally in the psyche of the African subject's imagination.

## 11.2 The *Image Matrix*

From this perspective, the link between Eurocentric spaces and Africanized bodies can be explored further within the framework of an *Image Matrix*. Fundamentally, an *Image* is the physical representation of a mental picture constructed by decoding stimuli proceeding from the senses, more specifically the eye gate. My reference to *Matrix* asserts the position from which a concept perceived, received, and believed transforms itself into tangible representations of preconceived ideologies. For Hall these representations are "the 'system' by which all sorts of objects, people, and events are correlated with a set of concepts or mental representations which we carry around in our heads. Without them, we could not interpret the world meaningfully at all. In the first place, then, meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thoughts which can stand for or 'represent' the world, enabling us to refer to things both inside and outside our heads " (Hall 1997, p. 17). The juxtaposing of my blackness and Africanized experience and that of my students situates me simultaneously within convergent and divergent boundaries in the classroom subsequently generating cognitive dissonance in my student's understanding of theirs and my blackness. According to Leon Festinger's *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (1957), he argued, "…humans prefer cognition to be unopposed or

consonant, and struggle with those that are opposed or dissonant." For some of my students, my blackness provides currency to identify similarities in our shared experiences as Africanized bodies in navigating the complex landscape of secondary education. Comparatively, my blackness also presents conflicting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in other students; their understanding and my representation of blackness produce emotions of anger, anxiety, confusion, doubt, frustration, surprise, and wonder. Although students can identify my African ancestry by the rich caramel brown tone of my skin, their dissonance verbally manifests itself as, "Sir why are you always so polite" and "Sir…why is your voice like that, you're a man of color." Without hesitation, my students position themselves to offer a conjectural appraisal and demarcation of my blackness by entering through an auditory gate.

An analysis and consideration of possible antecedents of my students' critique and discrimination toward my voice propositions me to examine the comments directed at my deportment in communication and sophistication in my vocal timbre. Subsequently, it behooves me to consider how students imagine my blackness as it relates to the sound and intonation of my voice. Is my blackness synonymous with aggression when communicating? Is it characterized by intimidation to subvert forms of oppression? Did I travel beyond significant Africanized and Eurocentric markers, boundaries, or invisible barriers established in the imagination of my students? In addition, how my blackness is constructed and understood within my students' frame of reference, had I become "The Stranger" as Simmel argued, "The stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational, or general human, nature. He is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people" (Simmel 1950, p. 2).

Although my students and I share a common African ancestry, is my compassionate demeanor a phenomenon within what I describe as the *Image Matrix*? Comprehensively, the *Image Matrix* proceeds from an intangible framework pieced together with images of fragmented histories, the complex present, and an indeterminate future. These mental images, ideas, and representations generate pervasive concepts of blackness, visual perceptions amalgamated from unexplained phenomenon and mental representations of something previously perceived. Although immaterial, within the *Image Matrix*, there are congruent and incongruent ideas that construct and inform the attitudes and beliefs of individuals through thought, experience, and the senses, more particularly the eye gate; for it is through the eye gate, the color of my skin comes to the foreground of the image palate in the mind. The architecture of images perceived through the eye gate solicits voluntary and involuntary responses from a dominant Eurocentric gaze within the imagination to form mental images of my blackness and that of my students. Fanon acknowledged these fragmented images when he writes, "I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects…Now the fragments have been put together again by another self" (Fanon 1967, p. 109). Subsequently, the lenses through which my students envision themselves play a

pivotal role in establishing and reaffirming the position of their blackness as well as the process and possibilities of reimaging their Africanized bodies.

In continuing my discussion, the *Image Matrix* espouses a conceptualization to seek confirmation of widely held racial beliefs while disregarding the relevance of engineering alternatives to preconceived mental images. For Dei:

> …it has become an effective tool for determining the distribution of rewards, penalties and punishments. The concept has been used to 'divide and rule' peoples, a practice that is itself assisted by the human desire and craze to categorize and classify individuals and social groups. Together with other aspects and dimensions of our individual and collective identities, race continually implicates how we, as humans, come to know, see, understand and interpret ourselves and our world. Consequently, race matters in human lives and social interactions. The brutal facts of economic history and the harsh realities of contemporary society clearly demonstrate there is, and has always been, an ideological meaning to race. (Dei 1996, p. 60)

The *Matrix* represents a fixed topography circumscribing ideological constructs; in the *Image Matrix,* a predisposition to garner evidence that demands a verdict is fundamental to disseminating what Banton refers to as "propositions of racial typologies." Before examining typology within the *Image Matrix*, it is beneficial to consider two interconnecting antecedents*,* archetypes and stereotypes. Briefly, an archetype represents a standard (whiteness) or rather a measuring stick by which all else (blackness) receives value and validation. For Dei:

> There is both visibility and invisibility of Whiteness and Blackness, and these are read differently. For example, Whites deny their visibility because it is seen by them as 'normal,' 'neutral' and 'objective.' Whiteness as an identity becomes the standard bearer.
>
> But this invisibility is visible to those oppressed on the basis of the assumed superiority and privilege of Whiteness. In contrast, there is a hyper-visibility of African/Black peoples that is not accorded to any other community of color. For Black and African peoples the application of color has meant profound costs and consequences, while for Whites it has denoted privilege. (Dei and Lordan 2013, p. 5)

In addition, there was a definitive color symbolism within Greco-Roman culture by which whiteness is positively evaluated and blackness negatively evaluated.

With the advent and persistence of colonialism, it is plausible to substantiate colonialism as an illegitimate legacy bequeathed on indigenous bodies wherein the permanence of their physical features (more specifically their skin color) becomes a marker categorizing indigenous bodies as "other," barbaric, irrational, unintelligible, and disconnected from the innocence, intelligence, perfection, purity, and rationality of whiteness. My reference to whiteness generates from the colonial metanarrative informing social constructs that "…native peoples were less than fully human, or at least inferior humans to Europeans, then the extermination of those people and the expropriation of their land could be presented as the inevitable triumph of a superior group and, therefore, morally justified" (Caliendo and McIlwain 2011, p. 24). In maintaining societal constructs that demarcate indigenous bodies (more specifically black bodies), the criminalization agendas augments "a white supremacist society" wherein "white people will have advantages that are

not a product of any individual effort or ability but are built into the structure of society" (Caliendo and McIlwain 2011, p. 26). In retrospect, blackness is intrinsically link to deviant behavior requiring policing and rehabilitation to maintain hegemony within Eurocentric spaces.

Historically, the evidence presented to a Eurocentric audience was derived from presuppositions during European expansion to colonize, subjugate, and dominate African peoples. Miles argues that, "The barbarian as other was seen to lack the capacities of intelligible speech and reason, capacities that were considered to be the quintessence of Greco- Roman culture, even though they were recognized as human beings" (Miles 2006, p. 20). The Africanized evidence perceived through the Eurocentric lens brings about a racialized verdict wherein Africanized bodies require a Eurocentric space as a point of reference to eradicate their blackness ironically diminishing their crimes against the greater humanity. In hindsight, Omi and Winant preface Fields when she states, "Nothing handed down from the past could keep race alive if we did not constantly reinvent and re-ritualize it to fit our own terrain. If race live today, it can do so only because we continue to create and re-create it in social life, continue to verify it, and thus continue to need a social vocabulary that will allow us to make sense, not of what our ancestors did then, but of what we choose to do now" (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 5). The dissolution of defining humanness and humanity from a single archetypal paradigm (Eurocentrism) not only negates indigenous histories, knowledge(s), and narratives but also further propagates a racialized agenda to demarcate human difference as a blemish on the canvas of human history. By perpetuating these imposed differences and negating to advocate for the articulation of these differences void of hierarchal arranging, skin color biases consequently engender hegemonic discourses reinforcing blackness as being akin to inferiority, deficiency in intellectual ability, and lack of socioeconomic accomplishment.

I shift my discussion to examining the interrelationships of stereotypes with the *Image Matrix* and the significance to reimaging Africanized bodies. In defining stereotypes, it is necessary to consider the implications of possessing a standardized mental picture held in a commonplace and space by members of a group as it relates to Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces. A closer examination of these groups lends credence to an "us" versus "them" paradigm wherein the dominant groups objective is to subvert the subordinate group in attempts to substantiate overt racial prejudice attitudes and dogma. In his "Social Darwinism" discourse, Banton (1997) states, "There is in the world a hierarchy of races…those nations which eat more, claim more, and get higher wages, will direct and rule others, and the lower work of the world will tend in the long-run to be done by the lower breeds of men. This much we of the ruling color will no doubt accept as obvious" (Banton 1997, p. 96). In critiquing the historical implications of stereotyping and the connections to the brutality and violence inflicted on the body, the residual mental anguish that plagues the psyche of black people, the brokenness of the human spirit, ruptured histories disconnecting one generation from another, fabricated knowledge, and the dehumanization of people with African ancestry, there is no doubt that the unfair belief that all people within a particular group sharing distinct characteristics are fundamentally flawed is punished with the same racial judgment and

fixed idea perpetuating political and sociological oppression on racialized bodies and more specifically Africanized bodies. Dei advances an antiracism framework by exclaiming:

> Colonization was not just about the colonizer/oppressor stealing colonized and Indigenous peoples' lands and material resources. It was about colonization of minds and the intellect. By not educating critically about race and privilege we accentuate the problem of certain bodies developing a false sense of superiority or inferiority, perpetuating the colonization of minds. It is for this reason that for both the oppressed and dominant, our strategies of decolonization have to incorporate a form of critical anti- colonial and anti- racist education. (Dei 2013, p. 10)

Turning now to investigating blackness as a typology in the *Image Matrix,* I will outline a few key points of entry. Firstly, a typological discourse on blackness looks closely at the intersectionalities within education more specifically teaching, learning, and schooling and the practice of putting students into groups according to how they are similar and how they are Africanized. A closer analysis considers the black and white binary, racial classification and categorization, the process of "othering," dominant and subordinate groups, and maintaining a benchmark of humanness as a point of reference that serves as a standard by which "others" are measured or judged. My reference to education as it relates to learning provides a platform to comment on structures within secondary education designed to support students that are "at risk." The reference to "at-risk" students is common vernacular utilized in education to describe students with academic and socioeconomic deficiencies positioning them on the periphery. Subsequent to their positioning, a pseudo-remedy to the typology corrals students into a holding pattern in Eurocentric spaces; students in these spaces interpret their blackness as a disadvantage to achieving academic success within the typology perpetuated by Eurocentric ideologies of blackness. Secondly, students "at risk" are described as disproportionate in possessing adequate social intelligence to contribute to larger social groups within Eurocentric spaces. As Conroy asserts:

> For Black male students, teacher perceptions of their character and abilities, which are influenced by historically racist constructions of Black masculinity, play a much larger and crucial role by serving as justification for racist, exclusionary practices. Black male students frequently recount experiences of mistreatment and a sense of having been misunderstood and misread by teachers and school administration during their elementary and high school years…teacher did not believe they were intelligent, and that they were perceived as being intimidating or scary because they are black males. (Conroy in Dei and Lordan 2013, p. 170)

Thirdly, students faced with disparity in their socioeconomic status are candidates suitable for social equity and restoration. The fourth in the typology of blackness in education is hypothesizing that "at-risk" students live in an antagonizing family dynamic characterized by single or absentee parents, subsequently having an adverse effect on their academic performance in the classroom.

The principal objective of the term "at risk" marginalizes students within quadratic typologies for what Dei (1996) describes as, "…the creation of a hierarchy of groups, and for establishing criteria by which to include and exclude groups of people in the process of allocating resources and services." In concluding the *Image*

*Matrix* discourse, I reflect on the significance of the limitless possibilities in constructing images and the power of the imagination to amalgamate emotions that inform experiences and thoughts. These images provide a frame of convergent and divergent boundaries that engender ideologies predicated on archetypes and stereotypes. Additionally, I concede to consider the intersectionalities of Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces and the reimaging paradigm. In examining the reimaging paradigm, it is important to understand according to Dei "…the origins of the race concept can appropriately be tied to Western European philosophical and belief systems and, particularly, to the colonial and imperial expansion activities in the seventeenth century…Race at that time, was a powerful and useful concept for sorting out the human variations observed by Europeans explorers, conquerors and colonizers" (Dei 1996, p. 60). In reimaging, it is notable to consider an indeterminate amount of possibilities of deliberate action to form a new concept of Africanized bodies; in addition, resistance from the dominant is always inevitable because of the threat of abdicating power and privilege. For Omni and Winant, "our society is so thoroughly racialized that to be without racial identity is to be in danger of having no identity. To be raceless is akin to being genderless" (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 5). Reimaging in within the framework of education is creating spaces for students to consider the implications of their Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces and the possibility of eradicating the phenomena of internalizing racial ideologies left by the long-term effects of the European expansion project to colonize racialized bodies for capital gain.

## 11.3 Africanized Bodies in Eurocentric Spaces

Given the premise of this discussion is grounded in antiracist theory and race continues to define the landscape of human activity, it is essential to outline who constructs, maintains, and occupies Eurocentric spaces and how Africanized bodies are read in these spaces. There is no reason to doubt that racial ideologies predicated on European conquest and expansion play a pivotal role in constructing Eurocentric spaces. In these spaces protecting entitlement, privilege, power, and prestige are at the forefront; sharing the position of power with subordinate members of society is an act of treason against the state. These spaces are constructed and maintained by white dominance; consequently, whiteness becomes a valued currency. Jensen asserts this when he writes

> in a white-supremacist society, white people will have advantages that are not a product of any individual effort or ability but are built into the structure of society. We call this white privilege. To claim that white people have privilege is simply to acknowledge that, all other social factors being equal, non-white people face a range of hostile behaviours—from racist violence to being taken seriously at a business meeting, from discrimination in hiring to subtle exclusion in social settings. While all people, including whites, experience unpleasant interaction with others, white people do not carry the burden of negative racial stereotypes into those interactions. That advantage is what we call white privilege (Jensen in Caliendo and McIlwain 2011, p. 26).

Imposing Africanized bodies in these spaces requires establishing the roles of servant and the served. Africanized bodies are welcomed in Eurocentric spaces for the sole purpose to reaffirm the power and privilege of non-racialized bodies consequently affirming intolerence. For Miles his understanding of intolerence in reference to Cox (1970:393) is, "...an unwillingness on the part of a dominant group to tolerate the beliefs or practices of a subordinate group because it considers these beliefs and practicesto be either inimical to group solidarity or a threat to the continuity of the status quo" (Miles 1980, p. 172). An analysis offered here is specific to an understanding of what Dei describes as "white anxiety," the fear and anxiety of losing power and privilege over racialized bodies. Additional considerations focus on the Africanized subject performing whiteness as the antithesis to their blackness in a Eurocentric space. Albeit that skin color is a permanent marker (Dei 2016), a counter-discourse of defining blackness is an undertaking having a ripple effect of global proportions.

## 11.4 Recommendations

The intention of my discussion is to work with ideas and theories to inform my thinking about reimaging Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces. Throughout my discussion, my expatiation of the *Image Matrix* as a paradigm supports my understanding to the significance of archetypes and stereotypes as they relate to typology. The intention of my discussion is to indicate the potential contribution of my position in the classroom and the interconnectedness of my African ancestry and that of my students and their implications in reimaging our bodies in Eurocentric spaces. In addition, my daily interactions with adolescent African-Caribbean males position me to acknowledge disconnect, disengagement, displacement, and distance of students in the classroom. By (dis)connect I mean the severing of connection(s) between past narratives woven into their African-Caribbean ancestry in conjunction with social pressures subsequently causing withdrawal from these past narratives and retreat into their private world of unanswered questions. In reference to (dis) engage, I am describing a release or detachment from the present. Concerning (dis) placement, I am considering a transitional action or rather a negotiating and repositioning effort within shifting contemporary narratives. In addition, I speak of distance as defining the space(s) between fragmented histories, a complex present, and an indeterminate future.

In retrospect, my observation positions me on the peripheral—subsequently; this phenomenon has catalyzed my interest in African-Caribbean diaspora and bring to mind James Baldwin when he states, "The paradox–and a fearful paradox it is– is that the American Negro can have no future anywhere, on any continent, as long as he is unwilling to accept his past. To accept one's past–one's history– is not the same thing as drowning in it; it is learning how to use it. An invented past can never be used; it cracks and crumbles under the pressures of life like clay in a season of drought. How can the American Negro's past be used? The unprecedented price demanded–and at this embattled hour of the world's history–is the transcen-

dence of the realities of color, of nations, and of alters" (Baldwin 1963). For Omi and Winant in looking ahead "…it may be possible to glimpse yet another view of race, in which the concept operates neither as a signifier of comprehensive identity, nor a fundamental difference, both of which are patently absurd, but rather as a marker of the infinity of variations we humans hold as a common heritage and a hope for the future" (Omi and Winant 1993, p. 9). In light of this, I am cognizant that returning to pre-racial society would be asking a butterfly to return to its former caterpillar state.

However, arduous the future may seem, I propose generating learning environments wherein "our sole hope of salvation lies in our being able to lose our race identity in the commingled blood of the nation; and that any other course would merely increase the friction of races which we call race prejudice, and against which we have so long and earnestly fought" (DuBois 1897, p 108).

## 11.5 Additional Considerations

The process of image construction in the human imagination is a marvel of creativity, ingenuity, and spontaneity; each image recreates an experience associated with a specific memory subsequently generating emotional responses having a direct correlation on the body. In considering my African-Caribbean heritage, I reflect on the role of colonialism in shaping African thought, the identity of peoples in the Caribbean, and the representation of interconnecting narratives of culture, ethnicity, language, and race. In addition, a common misconception regarding African-Caribbean people is that of a homogenous cultural identity throughout the chain of islands situated in the Caribbean Sea and the Americas. Stuart Hall bring to light that the African-Caribbean migrant's dilemma is reconciling the reality that "everybody there comes from somewhere else, and it is not clear what has drawn them to it. That is to say, their true cultures, the places they really come from, the traditions that really formed them, are from somewhere else. The Caribbean is the first, the original and the purest diaspora. What is more, not therefore just a diaspora and living in a place where the centre is always somewhere else, but we break with those originating cultural sources as passed through the traumas of violent rupture" (Hall 1995, p. 6).

In understanding African-Caribbean identity, it is fundamental to establish the ongoing journey through postcolonial knowledge and memory. The common reality of reimaging Africanized bodies generates multiple representations of meandering historical narratives; these narratives produce a series of converging and diverging tensions in considering how we are perceived and represented in Eurocentric spaces. I want to suggest an ontological inquiry and collaborative dialogue within contemporary education and schooling, teaching, and learning. I trust that my discussion offered insight on the interconnectedness between reimaging Africanized bodies in Eurocentric spaces.

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