The Ardent
Anti-Racism & Decolonization Review

FEATURES:
THE UN ROLE IN FIGHTING RACISM
LOCAL & GLOBAL ANTI-RACISM STRUGGLES
A 'CULTURE OF WHITENESS'
WOMEN OF COLOUR IN THE ACADEMY
ANTI-RACISM & INDIGENITY
RACE & TERROR

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The Ardent Review

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EDITORIAL
Racism and Motivated Ignorance

Malinda S. Smith

Today, most scholars in the social sciences accept the idea that race is socially constructed. This acceptance has taken particular iterations in how scholars think through race, such as the tendency to use scare quotes to signal its constructedness or not to use the concept at all, preferring instead to focus on the productive power of processes of racialization, without naming what these processes produce (i.e. a raced body). As Michael Banton (1998) notes, race is not an “objective, scientific and culture free designation of difference or appearance”. Rather, like all social constructs, it is simply a way of naming people and things, and of sorting them into particular groupings (Banton, 1997; 1998). This sorting can be based on a self-consciousness assessment of similarities to others, recognition of differences, or the imposition of otherness, often through racist processes. In this sense, then, categories such as “black”, “brown” and “white” or “people of colour” and “white people,” similar to gender and class, all are forms of social sorting. However, unlike gender and class, the social sciences often are uncomfortable with naming and accounting for race as a form of social sorting. As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) has argued, this social constructivism can be taken to some problematic extremes in order to evade the reification of race, sometimes avoiding and evading the concept altogether. For Bonilla-Silva, one implication is the peculiar phenomenon of “racism without racists” or “colourblind racism,” which masks the persistence of racist thinking, racism and racial inequality through abstract liberalism, cultural racism, and the normalization and minimization of racism and its impacts. Today’s racists engage in various semantic moves in order not to appear or sound racist. We all have been made complicit in, “I am not racist, but…” or “my best friend is brown” -- implying that what follows could not possibly be racist but typically it is.

The essays in this volume complicate our notions of race, racism and racialization, delving into how these play out in the academy, public sector, institutions of global governance, media representations, and everyday life. Rather than the dominant tendency to fixate on racialized minorities in order to figure out how to get along with “them” – the racial other – these essays also return the gaze by exploring whiteness. In this short introductory

essay, I want to place a spotlight on two challenges: first, the challenge of thinking through, talking about and theorizing race in an ostensible postracial moment; and, second, the challenge posed by “motivated ignorance” for confronting the stubborn persistence of the colour line, and particularly the tendency to think of black and brown people as raced but white people as deracinated or even colourless (Calhoun, 1989). In the spirit of critical race theories, I draw on incidences of everyday racism in the public and virtual spheres to think through the stories that they tell about why and how race matters, and about the ordinariness of race(ist) thinking and racial stereotypes, which permeate everyday life, including in the hallowed halls of the academy.

Individual racism may be easier to recognize and confront, than the more subtle and systemic forms of racism (Henry, Tator, Mattis and Rees, 1995). Individual racism often is evident in peculiar attitudes, beliefs and behaviours such as the discredited notions of the inferiority of racialized minorities and, correspondingly, the superiority of whites. It can be reflected in the racist jokes, gestures and attitudes of individuals in their relations with racial others. This individual racism is, however, also intimately connected with cultural racism which, in turn, is more intractable precisely because it can be embedded in long-held cultural values and practices that are normalized and part of our everyday way of thinking and acting. What I would like to do next, then, is to draw on everyday examples to see what kinds of tales they tell about racism in Canada.

Consider, for example, the “ghetto dude” story that arose in Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty’s office (Diebel, *Toronto Star*, 23 July 2007). Evon Reid, a Black University of Toronto political science student had written to Premier McGuinty’s staffer, Aileen Sui, enquiring about an advertised position. Sui, intending to forward the email to a co-worker wrote, “This is the ghetto dude that I spoke to before”. The email was, however, inadvertently sent back to Reid who blew the whistle. It led the Premier to call Reid to apologize for his staffer’s conduct. Sui, also a racialized minority, claimed the email and the language it deployed only circulated inside her “circle of friends”, implying there was no larger issue of institutional culture or systemic racism at stake. Yet, if her circle of friends tolerated and reproduced this racialized discourse to refer to prospective applicants for positions in the public service, it does suggest both a normalization and denial of eve-
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Everyday racism. It also illustrates cultural racism, and the ways in which this normalization can lead racialized minorities to internalize and reproduce racism (Rice, 1998; Pyke and Dang, 2003).

On a number of university campuses there have been troubling incidences that also raise questions about the need for a more systematic analysis of racism, and a more critical understanding of whiteness. These incidences raise serious questions about why more concern has not been evident at the level of university chairs, deans, presidents and provosts. In the Fall 2006, for example, students entering the University of Windsor’s Student Union-run Thirsty Scholar Pub were surprised to find a new dress code placed over the entrance to the pub. The dress code “banned exposed, long chains along with doo rags, bandanas, and ripped or baggy clothing” (Millar 2007). It also prevented students from wearing hats in an “unconventional” way, without naming whose convention was being inscribed as normative. According to the SU, the new policy was introduced for safety reasons, as drugs, alcohol and weapons could be hidden in baggy clothing and large jewellery could be wielded as a weapon. Other students saw the dress code as implicitly, if not explicitly racist and directed at the dress style – or cultural mores – of particular racialized minorities. At an open forum, attended by some 400 students, the dress code received heated discussion and, subsequently, was scrapped.

Students were critical of Windsor for being slow to act, and the University’s Human Rights Office for failing to respond by preventing the pub from implementing the discriminatory dress code. Under pressure from student groups the University decided to commission an independent investigation into the pub’s actions and, more broadly, racism and discrimination on campus.

The final report was released in April 2007 and it characterized the pub’s dress code as “racist” and in violation of Ontario’s human rights policy. The report makes a number of recommendation on how Windsor could improve its “culture of whiteness”, which extended beyond the specific incidence that led to the report (Millar 2007). In referencing the Ontario human rights policy it touched upon subtle and systemic racism, and the need for actions to combat actions that “may directly or indirectly, consciously or unwittingly, promote, sustain, or entrench” the unfair advantage of some people over others. The policy also notes that “Individuals may have prejudices relat-
ed to various racialized characteristics”, and these prejudices may include accent, as well as clothing and grooming (CBC News, 28 January 2005). Some students felt the report downplayed systemic racism and minimized experiences of racism by characterizing them as “perceived” rather than real. According to Andrew Langille, a law student that had supported the call for an independent investigation, the Windsor case needs to be thought of in the broader context of “a series of incidents from all over Ontario that have not been closely looked at” and which are “part of a bigger trend occurring at Ontario Universities” (Millar 2007).

This trend, however, is not confined to Ontario but reverberates on campuses across Canada. At St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick, for example, posters advertising a benefit by the Students Helping Others Understand Tolerance group were defiled with white supremacist comments (CBC News.ca, 3 October 2007). The posters depicted the image of an African refugee student from Sierra Leone and details of a benefit to help him bring his mother to Canada. The posters both on campus and in the downtown Fredericton were covered in white supremacist graffiti. Paul Cormier, vice-president of the Students Helping Others Understand Tolerance group suggested he felt ambivalence in how best to respond to such incidences. “Whenever one’s faced with this kind of ignorance, you can never decide whether to expose it or to just ignore it”, he said. However, the ambivalence also included not knowing what kind of message silence would send about the University, and the broader community’s views about racism and racial discrimination. A University spokesperson, Jeffrey Carleton, suggested the defaced posters were “certainly not indicative of the student body at St. Thomas University”, which prides itself “on our diversity and our commitment to promoting tolerance and maintaining a strong dedication to human rights” (CBC News, 3 October 2007). However, without knowing who defiled the posters there was no way of determining whether it was “one bad apple” as Carleton suggested, or whether it was reflective of unexamined racism on Canadian university campuses and within the broader community.

The above events illustrate the concept of motivated ignorance, as feminist philosopher Cheshire Calhoun (1989) terms it. “Unlike ordinary cases of individual wrongdoing”, Calhoun suggested, “oppressive wrongdoing often occurs at the level of social practice, where social acceptance of a practice
impedes the individual’s awareness” (1989, 389). Social scale matters because it complicates our ability to notice let alone think through how racism circulates and functions socially and, correspondingly, how to think through notions of individual and collective accountability. At the level of the social, “whole social groups [are placed] at risk” of discrimination and, thus, there is a much greater chance of social injustice such as racism precisely because of “its very normalcy”. Calhoun suggests “our moral and personal stake in intervening in the pattern is much higher” (Ibid.) precisely because knowledge suggests some kind of responsibility to speak out and to act. Conversely, there is a motivation not to notice, to deny, to discount and even to minimize experiences of racism and, thereby, to excuse oneself from moral and political responsibility. This motivated ignorance is self-interested insofar as it allows a person not only to be complicit in individual, cultural and institutional racism, but also to comfortably coexist with racism even among friends, family and in the broader society. In contrast, noticing is a first and necessary step for ending racism, including noticing one’s own racial discomfort with the other. Strategies to end racism thus require “seeing” the systemic as well as the social and interpersonal.

Feminists such as Marilyn Frye and Ruth Frankenberg, among others, have offered some useful insights into how we might think through the intersectionality of gender, sexuality and whiteness. They initially drew attention to the ways in which white feminists, in particular, were reluctant to grapple with the social, economic and political significance of “being white” and how this differently shaped “the matrix of options” for responsible action (Frye, 1983). In response to critiques by women of colour, white feminists began to think through their positionality in the matrix of social power, privilege, and exclusion and marginality in the 1980s and 1990s. In her essay, “What It Means to be White”, Frye noted, “many white feminists have to a fair extent responded to the demand; by which I mean, white feminists have to a fair extent chosen to hear what it was usually in their power not to hear. The hearing is, as anyone who has been on the scene knows, sometimes very defensive, sometimes dulled by fear, sometimes alarmingly partial or distorted”. Frye (1983) goes on to argue that social power and privileges were shaped by whiteness, and “it is an aspect of race privilege to have a choice – a choice between the options of hearing and not hearing”. Frye (1992: 152-3) also theorized what she called “whiteness” -- the ways in which whiteness functions as a type of character with “local perceptions and
conceptions” of the meanings of “being white”. Self-understandings of the whitely character included notions of fairness, honesty, ethical, benevolent and good-naturedness. Among whitely folk, Frye goes on to say, “nobody admits to being prejudiced” (154) or even to noticing race, let alone acting in a race-conscious manner.

Frankenberg’s work pushed the analysis of whiteness further, in ways that have illuminated both the social construction of whiteness, and the “social geography of racism” (Frankenberg 1993). How does race matter in the social formation of subjects and of social structures? Frankenberg offers a discursive repertoire for noticing, thinking through and theorizing several modalities of race and racism, particularly in relation to being white. These include the early understanding of race as a biological category, in which people of colour are constructed as biologically inferior; second, the rearticulation of race difference in social and cultural terms and a corresponding shift to the language of “ethnicity” or multiculturalism which, in turn, elides the persistence of race-thinking and racism; and, third, understandings of race and racism which are attentive to class and nation (see also Omi and Winant, 1983). Through in-depth interviews with white women, Frankenberg helped explain what it means and feels like to grow up white. Her work showed how colour-consciousness paradoxically pervades everyday life while, at the same time, white folks engaged in conscious and unconscious acts in order not to see race and, therefore, to claim race-neutrality and colourblindness. Yet, when the racial other was noticed it was done in specific ways which did imply a race or colour-consciousness. People might point to their tolerance and even appreciation of different types of dress, diet, dance and dialect associated with the racial other. More frequently, however, the racial other registered in white consciousness as the dangerous, pathological or undeserving other in contrast to the basic goodness inherent in inadequately explored notions of whiteness.

Other incidences in the public sphere, in public bureaucracies and university campuses reveal the continuation of older stereotypes and more virulent forms of racism. What persists between the new forms of colourblind racism and older more overt forms of racism is the idea of white innocence. Typically incidences that reflect older forms of racist thinking and actions produce a number of semantic strategies of denial or minimization. One common response is that such incidences are “just” jokes and all in good
fun and, correspondingly, that critics are humourless. Another common response is that such acts are isolated and representative of a few bad apples, rather than reflective of deeply embedded cultural and systemic forms of racism. Often motivated ignorance is coupled in a toxic mix of psychic violence and systemic exclusion.

In November 2007, the University of Toronto’s oldest student paper, The Varsity, ran an article, apparently meant as a joke, entitled, “The New Face of Charlie Brown”. It depicted a person in “blackface”, stylized with the features that have come to symbolize the genre and, particularly, Jim Crow stereotypical representations of Blacks during the height of US segregation. For many, this is precisely the racist history the image conjured up, as a joke (for/on whom?). When black student leaders met with The Varsity, they were stunned to learn that the paper’s editorial staff was aware of the racist history long associated with “blackface” imagery. The reproduction of the imagery in a joke issue of the newspaper was, for them, mere satire. This prompted Tianna Dowie-Chin to write a critical commentary on the “Troubling History of blackface”, cautioning critical thinkers about invoking racial stereotypes for a few laughs (The Varsity, 21 January 2008). As Dowie-Chin wrote, “Those who wrote the article may not have intended to offend black people. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and what they did demonstrates how disrespected blacks are in society…We’re tired of having our history demeaned, ghettoized, and ridiculed. It’s not funny and we’re not laughing”.

This was not the first reproduction of “blackface” imagery by Canadian students. A year earlier, at a Wilfrid Laurier University winter carnival, entitled “Nations of the World”, some white students ostensibly representing Jamaica, dressed up in blackface; they had blackened their faces with make-up and paraded with upside down Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets on their heads; others dressed in tie-die shirts, dreadlocked wigs and smoked faked ganja. These images subsequently were uploaded to YouTube, viewed by hundreds of people and generated wide-ranging commentaries (see YouTube, Racist Winter Carnival Blackface @ Wilfrid Laurier University, 6 February 2007). Both the Student Union and the University issued apologies and the students were ordered to take cultural sensitivity training.

More recently, on 26 January 2008, Martin Luther King Day, the office
door of the York University Black Students’ Alliance as well as the door of an adjacent bathroom, were vandalized with hate speech (see Kim, 2008). Someone had written, “niggers go back to Africa” on YUBSA’s door. The nearby washroom’s door was marred by the incitement of racist violence, “all niggers must die”. These racist incidences prompted the BSA’s president, Alicia Clarke to insist that, “There is no justification for racism and acts of hate” and, certainly, such incidences have no place, “in settings of higher learning, for education is the best solution to racial ignorance”. The BSA, she insisted, would “continue in our struggle against racism on and off campus, in solidarity with YUBSA in their fight against hate crimes and anti-Black sentiments”.

The York University students organized an antiracism rally, during which they deplored the acts of hatred. They also were critical of the fact that it took York University’s president Mamdouh Shoukri two days before he issued a statement, posted to the University’s web site. It characterized the racist graffiti as “deplorable and unacceptable”. The students at the rally showed critical awareness of racism, both in the academy and the wider community. Political science student, Besmira Alikaj, rejected efforts to minimize the incident. “We’ve heard enough ‘It’s just a bad apple’ argument”, Alikaj noted. “This institution has a lot of systemic problems that have to be overcome”. Gillary Massa, vice-president of equity with the York Federation of Students clarified that, “It’s not to say that York is a breeding ground for racists and homophobes and sexual predators”, rather, she said, “we’re a large campus – like a small city – so we need to be looking at this at an institutional level to prevent it from happening again” (quoted in Girard, 2008). As a consequence of a series of racist, sexist and homophobic incidences on campus, York’s president appointed an independent third party to audit safety and security on the campus and to develop specific strategies and programs to combat all forms of hatred and violence.

Again, racism was an issue faced by racialized minorities at Ryerson University. Early in March 2008, a Conservative Club member, Justin Morris, sent an email to the Student Union vice-president (education) Heather Kere with the subject heading, “KKK-White Power” (see, George-Cosh, 29 November 2006). There is also a growing number of Internet chat-groups in which white students expressed either ignorance or disdain for civil rights gains of people of colour. In fact, Ryerson students have started various groups on
the social networking website, Facebook. This includes the group, “Equal Rights for Whites”. It claims 143 members and its very existence is meant to suggest the achievement of rights is zero-sum, that is, if the rights of people of colour are recognized and respected, it only can be at the expense of white people. Another group, “I Am a White Minority at Ryerson”, touted some 206 members, and, as its name suggests, implies that there are “too many” people of colour at the University. Subsequently, the group was denounced by the Student Union’s Board of Directors. As well, Heather Kere, president of the United Black Students at Ryerson successfully proposed an emergency motion that called for the public condemnation of the group for promoting racial intolerance. Ryerson’s student union president Muhammad Ali Jabbar suggested the activities of the white students threatened to turn on its head the 50-years struggle for civil rights, and violated the University’s code of conduct that condemns bigotry and intolerance. Yet, when asked about the chat-groups and Internet-sites, Ryerson’s Provost Errol Aspevig said that, while the students were violating the university’s code of tolerance and equality, it was unclear whether the University had any authority over what individual students, rather than registered student groups, did on private online chat groups.

After the SU passed the motion condemning the group, “I am a White Minority @ Ryerson”, its Facebook creator, Quinton Coish, then a fifth-year information technology management student voluntarily closed it. According to Coish, “I’ve received a lot of positive feedback from friends and members of my family. I’ve also received a number of negative feedback, but I’m not going to comment on what was said to me” (George-Cosh, 2006). Coish expressed surprised at the negative responses to the group and rejected claims that he was a racist. “Don’t pin me as a racist, as that’s what this group wasn’t intended to be from the beginning. It was meant to be a joke” (George-Cosh, 2006). Patrick Hunter, communications director at the Canadian Race Relations Foundation’s suggested the creation of the site, and the idea that it was a joke, both reflected ignorance of the experiences of racialized minorities and the continuing fact of unacknowledged white privilege in Canadian society. The impact of racism is painful for those who experience it and such pain and marginality are not the appropriate stuff of jokes, particularly by students in institutions of higher learning and presumably tomorrow’s leaders.
The group was subsequently revived as “I am a White Minority at a Toronto University”, and its membership has grown (Watt, 31 January 2007). Apparently the name change came after a meeting between Coish and the director of his ITM director James Norrie and the Dean Ken Jones. In an email Coish wrote to the group’s members, stating that, “The purpose of this meeting was to ‘gently persuade’ (by gently persuade I mean threaten me with lawsuits and disciplinary action) me to take down the group, or at minimum, disassociate Ryerson from the group (ie. Remove ‘Ryerson’ from the name).” The name change, however, has created tensions across Toronto’s universities as it implicates all of them in the Facebook group. Although the membership has grown, some students have joined it in order to protest the group’s existence.

It is within this ongoing climate of motivated ignorance that, *The Ardent* aims to be a space of engagement for insurgent public intellectuals to speak the truth to power by addressing the thorny issues of racism and decolonization in Canada and beyond. It is being launched at a time when individual, cultural and institutional racism remain pervasive aspects of our social and cultural geographies and, yet, too often are ignored as serious challenges to Canada’s self-conception as a welcoming an inclusive place. This Review also goes to print as Anti-Racist Canada reported the plans by the white supremacist group, the Aryan Guard, to hold a 21 March rally in downtown Calgary. In a shallow effort to mask its ideology of ignorance and hate, the Aryan Guard billed its march as one for “white pride”, although it does not claim its actions are about humour or ignorance. Similarly, the Anti-Racist Action-Toronto has reported the worrying presence of neo-nazi groups, as well as racist and anti-Semitic violence in Scarborough. Although relatively small, these white supremacist groups have emerged from the shadows to claim a growing presence in the public sphere, one that is inadequately critiqued in the dominant media and the academy.

I end the story on this note, having shifted from subtle to more overt forms of racism, and from the ostensible innocence of white students to the implicatedness of white supremacists in racism and in creating an exclusionary public sphere. By juxtaposing the two I hope to signal the disturbing social slippage between them, particularly in the social construction of whiteness. Racism inflicts psychic violence. It is socially corrosive. It shapes colour-coded privileges and disadvantages. The cases illustrated here demonstrate
an urgent need to address the continuity of older forms of racism and the emergence of newer forms. The essay explored the shift from colour-conscious to colourblind racism and the social construction of whiteness as deracinated or colour-neutral in contrast to people of colour who tend to be hyper-racialized. It highlights an urgent need to disturb social complacency, expose cultural blindspots, challenge motivated ignorance, and interrogate intellectual silences that enable the evasion of noticing, naming and combating racism and discrimination within contemporary Canada. The incidences examined all suggest that we can ill-afford not to notice racism, or to leave untroubled the paradox of motivated ignorance or motivated racism in the academy given its expressed commitment to the production and advancement of knowledge in the public interest.

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The United Nations Role in Fighting Racism and Racial Discrimination

Peter Jackson and Mathieu Faupin

From its inception in 1945, the United Nations has led an unrelenting fight against racism and racial discrimination. The framework for the Organization’s work in that area was the declaration in the preamble to its Charter on the question of human rights: “We the peoples of the United Nations determined … to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and … to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours”. Hardly had the ink dried on the Charter when the United Nations was called upon to live up to that declared intent by having to address the issue of racism, one of the first human rights questions to be dealt with by the world body.

A poster from the 1980s commemorating the Declaration. (UN Photo/Milton Grant)

On 22 June 1946, almost a year after the signing of the Charter and nine months after its coming into force, India drew the UN General Assembly’s attention to the treatment of the people of Indian origin in South Africa and requested that the subject be placed on the Assembly’s agenda of its first session. South Africa strongly objected to that request, asserting that under Article 2 of the UN Charter the matter was a purely domestic one, but the Assembly voted to retain the item.

On 7 December 1946, the debate on the Indian complaint began. In resolution 44 (I), its first on the subject, the Assembly affirmed that the treatment
of Indians in South Africa should be in conformity with the UN Charter. However, in 1947, it failed to adopt any resolution on the matter for lack of a two-thirds majority, forcing India in 1948 to again request that the matter be brought before the Assembly. From that time and for the next 43 years, until 23 June 1994 when the item was removed from its agenda, the Assembly considered the matter annually, expanding it on 17 October 1952 to the study of the whole question of apartheid in South Africa. In December 1948, it gave substance to the declaration on human rights in the preamble to the Charter by adopting the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, a clear statement of common standards of behaviour for the entire world, in which it recognized that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”. The Declaration, as well as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also adopted in December, opened the conscience of people worldwide to the need to work for the respect of those rights and freedoms. In March 1948, the UN Economic and Social Council had asked the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to collect and disseminate data concerning racial questions throughout the world and to prepare an educational campaign based on the information gathered.

Although the situation in South Africa was the catalyst for consideration of the issue of racism by the General Assembly and would dominate that debate for decades, it was not the only race-related issue to come before the world body. At its third session in 1948, the Soviet Union asked that the situation of the aboriginal populations, especially in the Americas, be studied within the general framework of the fight against racial discrimination and the protection of national minorities. In resolution 275 (III) of December 1948, the Assembly recommended that the situation of those populations and underdeveloped social groups of the States of the American continent be studied, at the request of the countries concerned.

In 1952, the Assembly widened consideration of the issue to include complaints by several Member States, organizations and individuals against racial discrimination in non-self-governing territories. Based on the annual reports of the UN Committee on Information, the Assembly also considered annually the question of racial discrimination in these territories. On 2 December 1950, under resolution 395 (V), it declared that “a policy of ‘racial segregation’ (apartheid) is necessarily based on doctrines of racial discrimi-
nation” and established a three-member United Nations Commission on the Racial Situation in the Union of South Africa. Meanwhile, dissatisfied by the pressure being brought to bear on it over its racial policies, South Africa withdrew in protest from membership in UNESCO, and from 27 November 1956 downgraded its representation at Assembly meetings. While the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was not binding on Member States, the Assembly, recognizing the necessity for firmer action, requested the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1780 (XVII) of 7 December 1962, to ask the Commission on Human Rights to prepare a draft declaration and a draft convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

The entire UN system continued to put pressure on South Africa. The Security Council, in its resolution 123 (1960) of 1 April, called upon the Government to abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination. It asked Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld to make arrangements for the country to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. The Secretary-General visited South Africa in January 1961. On 29 June 1962, the International Labour Organization voted in favour of a resolution calling for South Africa’s withdrawal from that Organization. In resolution 1761 (XII) of 1962, the Assembly requested Member States to take specific measures to bring about the abandonment of apartheid, including the breaking of diplomatic, trade and transport relations with South Africa. It also established the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa (later renamed the Special Committee against Apartheid). In 1968, the Assembly requested all States and organizations to “suspend cultural, educational, sporting and other exchanges with the racist regime and with organizations or institutions” in the country. In November 1971, in resolution 2775D (XXVI), it called for a boycott of sports teams selected in violation of the Olympic principle of non-discrimination. The Security Council, for its part, adopted resolutions 181 (1963) and 182 (1963) imposing a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa.
Action against racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, Nazism and racial intolerance continued to intensify. On 20 November 1963, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, by which it “solemnly affirmed the necessity of speedily eliminating racial discrimination throughout the world, in all forms and manifestations, and of securing understanding of and respect for the dignity of the human person”. On 21 December 1965, the Assembly unanimously adopted, under resolution 2106A (XX), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which described the nature of racial discrimination, set out ways States parties could eliminate it and established the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to oversee its implementation.

On 26 October 1966, by resolution 2142 (XXI), the Assembly proclaimed 21 March—the anniversary of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in South Africa—as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to be observed annually. On 11 December 1969, it designated 1971 as the
International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and the ten-year period 1973-1983 as the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and approved the Program of Action for the Decade. On 30 November 1973, the Assembly designated apartheid as a crime by adopting the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, which had been ratified or acceded to by 75 States or territories by December of that year.

However, the most controversial issue arising under the auspices of the Decade was the adoption on 10 November 1975 of resolution 3379 (XXX), which determined that “Zionism is a form of racial discrimination”. As a consequence of that action, several States withdrew their support for the activities to be undertaken in the context of the Decade, including financial support for the convening of a world conference. That action notwithstanding, the First World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was held in Geneva from 14 to 25 August 1978 and attended by 125 States and a number of international organizations and observers. The Conference adopted the Program of Action to further the objectives of the Decade. The Program was a further source of controversy as it contained a number of references unacceptable to many Member States and regional groupings, especially the provision condemning the “existing and increasing relations between the Zionist State of Israel and the racist regime of South Africa”. It also referred to the “expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland, the practice of racial discrimination against them and their right to self- determination”. There was also a growing connection between considering the question of racism and that of the self-determination of peoples. In Africa, in particular, these two issues were inseparable in relation not only to South Africa, but also to Namibia, Northern Rhodesia and other (Portuguese) territories.

Despite several concerted actions by UN bodies, the Special Committee on Apartheid reported in 1982 that 30 years after the General Assembly began consideration of the question of the race conflict in South Africa, the oppression had increased: more than 3 million blacks had been rooted out of their homes and 13 million arrested under the “pass laws”, which restricted movement outside reserved areas, and the Government had sought to deprive 7 million persons of citizenship through its policy of Bantustans, or homelands confining blacks to certain “independent areas”. Not only did
the Assembly declare 1982 the International Year of Mobilization for Sanctions against South Africa but, with the Security Council, also appealed for the clemency for the leaders of the African National Congress sentenced to death. On 10 December 1985, the Assembly adopted and opened for signature the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports.

In 1983, the United Nations held in New York from 21 to 25 March the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, to evaluate the work accomplished during the first Decade and chart new measures, where necessary. The Conference adopted a Declaration and Program of Action, which the Assembly approved in resolution 38/14, setting the stage for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (1983-1993). In addition, based on the work of the Commission on Human Rights, it considered and adopted a resolution on measures to be taken against Nazi fascist and neo-fascist activities, as well as all other forms of totalitarian ideologies and practices based on racial intolerance, hatred and terror.

However, in 1993, at the end of the Second Decade, many of the activities envisaged to implement the Program of Action were not accomplished because of a lack of financial resources. The Assembly, in adopting the Third Decade (1993–2003), noted that despite the efforts of the international community, the principal objectives of the first two Decades had not been attained and that millions of people continued to be victims of racism, racial discrimination and apartheid. The Program emphasized measures to be taken for the complete elimination of apartheid and support for the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. Notably absent from it were the issue of Zionism and reference to the Palestinian question, which had caused serious disagreements at the time of the adoption of the Second Decade. On 16 December 1991, in resolution 46/86, the Assembly voted to revoke the determination that Zionism was a form of racism and racial discrimination, as declared in 1975.

The vigorous and sustained efforts by the UN system and the international community bore fruit when in 1994 apartheid South Africa was transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial society, with the coming into force of the new interim constitution, which guaranteed universal adult suffrage to all South Africans. The country held its first democratic general elections.
in April, which were won by the African National Congress, whose leader, Nelson Mandela, became the first President of a new, non-racial South Africa. The question of the elimination of apartheid, which had been on the General Assembly’s agenda since 1946, was removed and the Special Committee against Apartheid dissolved. The Security Council removed the mandatory arms embargo and ended all measures it had imposed against South Africa. It also terminated the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Africa.

The end of apartheid in South Africa, however, was not the end of the consideration of racism by the United Nations. Through its Special Rapporteur, the world organization continued to examine contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and any form of discrimination against Blacks, Arabs and Muslims, xenophobia, Negrophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, as well as governmental measures to overcome them. From 31 August to 8 September 2001, the third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held in Durban, South Africa. The Durban Declaration and Program of Action committed States to combating those forms of racism and also acknowledged that slavery and the slave trade were a crime against humanity and contributed to racism. The Program was devoted to prevention, education and protection measures, including the establishment of a follow-up arrangement comprising a five-member panel of eminent independent experts to help implement the Declaration. In 2003, the Assembly closed the Third Decade and emphasized the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action as a solid foundation for a broad-based consensus for further action to eliminate racism.

Despite the advancements made, the issue of racial discrimination continues to be a major preoccupation of the United Nations, especially its human rights bodies, as it seeks new ways to reverse the trend towards intolerance and to fight racial hatred as they manifest themselves in new ways.

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Race and racism, as well as colour and national origin have been enduring aspects of state formation, and have permeated modern conceptions of citizenship and belonging. Historical memory is important for taking stock of the stubborn persistence of racism and racial discrimination, and how it saturates our social and intimate relationships, institutions, educational and employment opportunities and everyday life. It also is important for appreciating the role played by local and global anti-racism movements worldwide. This essay offers a schematic exploration of racism and racial discrimination, drawing on illustrative examples as a way to disrupt historical amnesia as well as to illustrate how and why anti-racism is an urgent contemporary political project, rather than an historical or theoretical one. March 21st 2008 marked the forty-second anniversary of the proclamation of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. In its 26 October 1966 Resolution 2142 (XXI), the United Nations General Assembly condemned racism, racial discrimination, segregation, apartheid, and practices of discrimination inherent in colonialism. In proclaiming the day, the UN called upon member states and the global community to each year to take stock of, and develop strategies to combat racism and other forms of racial discrimination.

March 21 is, thus, an important day for remembering and recommitting to the global anti-racism struggles and the role scholars and activists must play within civil society organizations, and through our national governments and institutions of global governance. Arguably, the role of national governments as well as the UN in the global anti-racism struggles always has been characterized by contradiction. On the one hand there has been global leadership, such as historic anti-racism Declarations and Conventions against genocide, racism and apartheid. At the same time, the organization was founded by colonial powers that were deeply implicated in the history of colonial rule and racial inequality.

When the original United Nations Declaration was signed on 1 June 1942,
the white-minority rule Union of South Africa was a founding member, but 49 of Africa’s 54 countries were not because they were still under British, French, Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule. Three years after this signing in San Francisco, the National Party in South Africa went on to institute apartheid – a policy of systematic racial “apartness” – and this racist regime lasted until 1994. The US also was an important founding member of the UN. Its own Declaration of Independence expressed a deep commitment to equality, but this coexisted with slavery and, subsequently, Jim Crow and “separate but equal”. In practice, “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal”, in practice meant white men only. Only over the past five decades of its 200-years history has the US, often reluctantly, expanded equality rights to people of colour and women. For decades the UN has been divided within itself, as it has coexisted and interacted with governments enforcing colonial rule and institutionalized racism.

Anticolonialism and Anti-racism
The global anti-racism struggle has been marked by contradictions, and by a sometimes profound gap between its principles and its practice, and the rhetoric of its leaders and the realities within national states. The UN was founded in this larger context of war and the Nazi genocide which killed 6 million Jews as well as some 5 million others, including racialized and religious minorities, gays and lesbians, persons with disabilities and others deemed inferior and expendable. It was a moment shaped by imperial and colonial rule across much of the global South, and by Indigenous inequality within white-settler societies such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand. It was a moment during which many of the world’s people of colour and Indigenous peoples lived under regimes marked by legally-sanctioned discrimination based on race, colour, creed, national origin, as well as sex, sexual orientation and disabilities.

A paradox of the moment is reflected in the fact that, on the one hand, colonial and white-settler societies signed both the 1945 United Nations Charter and, subsequently the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, on the other hand, the signatories had no intention of applying these “universal” rights to racialized minorities or Indigenous peoples. Article 1.3 of the Charter emphasized that the organized was founded with the aim of achieving international cooperation in solving global problems and “in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for
all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* espouses similar principles. Article 1 stated that, “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”; Article 2 states, “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. Yet, it was almost two decades before decolonization processes and anti-racism initiatives were systematically undertaken by Europe and within the white-settler societies.

**Global Struggles Against Racism and Colonialism**

The decade of the 1960s was marked by racism and racial discrimination from apartheid South Africa to differently segregated countries like the US and Canada. These conditions inspired historic anticolonial and anti-racism struggles worldwide. On 21 March 1960, police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire on a peaceful demonstration of primarily young students, killing 69 and injuring another 180, shocking the conscience of the world community. The demonstration was against the apartheid government’s Pass Law Act, which required Blacks over age-16 to carry a *dom pass* (roughly translated from Afrikaans as the “stupid pass”). The pass book, a kind of internal passport, was an early precursor to racialized identity cards. It aimed to regulate and restrict the movement of Blacks in areas officially designated as whites-only. The pass books were among the most despised symbols of the apartheid regime, requiring Blacks to be photographed and fingerprinted, and provide information on employment. The police, in turn, used this information to determine whether permission would be granted for Blacks to have mobility within designated whites-only spaces within South Africa. Since its introduction, Blacks peacefully organized to protest it. They faced the most brutal forms of police violence, ultimately culminating in the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March.

At the global level, on the 14 December 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1514 (XV), the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples*. It stated, among other things, “that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith”. The *Dec-
local and global anti-racism struggles

Deemed foreign subjugation, domination and exploitation a denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms; that all peoples have the right to self-determination; and that arbitrary educational, social, economic or political pretexts should not be invoked to impede a people’s right to self-determination and independence.

In the intervening years the UN General Assembly proclaimed the November 1963 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; it characterized discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, and sex as affronts to human dignity, equality and fundamental freedoms. Article 2.2 is a clear rejection of states using their resources and institutions to enforce racism and racial discrimination: “No State shall encourage, advocate or lend its support, through police action or otherwise, to any discrimination based on race, colour or ethnic origin by any group, institution or individual”. It called for the elimination of racial discrimination, segregation and apartheid, for national measures, including in areas of teaching, education and information. Subsequently, the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination came into effect, and it was followed 8 years later with the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Fuelled by ever-growing anticolonial and civil rights movements, former colonial powers and white-settler societies slowly and reluctantly began to roll-back discriminatory laws, policies and conventions. In the US, the civil rights movement finally achieved the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Section 201 of the Act, reflects some of the language of the Declaration and the Convention: (a) All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin or sex”.

Despite the historic 1964 civil rights legislation, which followed the decade earlier Montgomery Bus Boycott led by Rosa Parks, and that inspired people like Martin Luther King, Jr., the US remained segregated. As well, the right of Blacks to vote was restricted at the local, national and federal levels. On 21 March 1965, King led 3,200 people on a civil rights march in the heart of segregated US, from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The Selma Montgomery March was actually a series of three marches, of which
only the final one was completed. The first march was halted by legal injunctions and police intimidation, precisely the repressive state techniques rejected in the Declaration Against Racial Discrimination. The second one on 7 March 1965 culminated in “Bloody Sunday”, when Governor George Wallace denounced the march as a threat to public safety, and deployed state troopers and sheriffs on horsebacks who attacked the 600 peaceful protestors with bull whips, billy clubs and tear gas. The third march did take place, and protestors – including the likes of Harry Belafonte, Sammy Davis, Jr., Nina Simone, Tony Bennett, and Peter, Paul and Mary – walked 5 days and 4 nights along US Route 80, through sometimes sweltering heat, wind and rain.

At the culmination of the long march for civil rights and liberties, King delivered another of his iconic speeches, “How Long, Not Long” (25 March 1965), before a crowd of some 25,000 people who had assembled beside the State Capitol Building. What King told the crowd then, remains true today, namely that, “The battle is in our hands. And we can answer with creative nonviolence the call to higher ground to which the new directions of our struggle summons us. The road ahead is not altogether a smooth one. There are no broad highways that lead us easily and inevitably to quick solutions. But we must keep going”. Within five months of this historic event, on 6 August, 1965, US President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Bill, to end arbitrary mechanisms that prevented Blacks from voting at the local, national and federal levels.

In apartheid South Africa, as in the US, civil rights demonstrators were intent on a non-violent struggle to end legally enforced segregation, and to advance civil rights and voting rights for Blacks. The hated Jim Crow (1876-1965) era of laws had much in common with legally-enforced “apartness” in South Africa (Hughes, 1967; Patler, 2004). The Jim Crow era was marked by the doctrine of “separate but equal”, which not only separated Americans racially but also disadvantaged Blacks and constituted a kind of “wages of whiteness”, as W.E.B. DuBois ([1935] 1992) first termed it. Segregation not only ensured unequal opportunities and outcomes for Blacks in the areas of political participation, education, employment, housing and overall life chances (also Roediger 1995), it also structurally advantaged whites and allowed them to enjoy the prosperity of America. As Ira Katznelson argues in When Affirmative Action Was White (2005), well into the twentieth-century,
US society was structured to ensure white racial privilege, that is, benefits or “wages” for being white and disadvantages or “costs” for being Black.

The legacies of Jim Crow, however, were not only legal, or even in terms of the social geography of racism (Frankenberg 1993). Perhaps life imitating art, the name Jim Crow laws derives from the 1828 “Jump Jim Crow” song and dance, and popular theatrical events in which Blacks were caricatured (Lhamon, 2003). These performances typically were by white comedians in “blackface”, and today inspires the work of much critical race theorizing and film-making (see, for example, film-maker Spike Lee’s 2000 film, *Bamboozled*). Strausbaugh argues that “blackface” was fundamentally about “displaying Blackness for the enjoyment and edification of white viewers” (2006: 35-6), many of whom lived in splendid isolation from fellow impoverished Blacks who cleaned their houses, took care of their children, farmed their crops and otherwise were second-class citizens.

**Local Anti-Slavery, Anticolonial and Anti-racism Struggles**

Arguably, much less is known about the history of slavery, colonialism, Aboriginal dispossession, or the anti-racism struggles across much of Canada.
(Smith, 2003), and space limits permits only a few illustrative examples. In the historical lexicon of the British Empire, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa were characterized as “white dominions”. Given that each of these states already were populated by Indigenous peoples, and immigrants from South and East Asia as elsewhere, white colonial-settlers from Europe were iterated into the identity of the Dominion as the defining character. This was also a act of symbolic violence and erasure, as it “white-washed” the fact of an already existing multinational and multi-racial character of Canada. Whether understood as white dominions or settler societies, the continuing hegemonic power of white settlers continues to raise thorny questions about how we should conceptualize such states in relation to the history of imperial and colonial rule. In what ways is colonialism in Canada similar to, or different from, say British colonialism in South Africa? Canada’s reserve system for Indigenous peoples has been compared to the bantustans (native reserves) created in a South Africa to keep blacks segregated from white colonial-settlers.

Various conceptual schemas, including “internal colonialism” have been used to explore the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the appropriation of their lands in white dominions. According to Abercrombie et al (2000), internal colonialism is a concept which signals that the source of power and domination are internal, rather than external as in what is called classic colonialism. The internal colony concept has come into disuse, in favour of “continuing colonialism”, signalling that the processes of decolonization are ongoing. What this conceptual debate highlights is the need to think through the historical conditions in which the colonizers returned to the “motherland”, as across much of Africa, and the contexts in which the colonists-settlers petitioned for, and received independence, displacing or permanently marginalizing the original populations. Arguably, this is the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, where the British and French settlers not only gained independence, but also proceeded to write the history of conquest in which they became the “two founding nations”. Another important challenge in settler societies like Canada is how to think through the relationship between dispossessed and dislocated Aboriginal peoples and the new racialized immigrants who may hail from ex-colonies in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues estimates there are some
370 million Indigenous peoples in over 70 countries worldwide. The struggle for Indigenous rights within the UN, like that with anti-racism, also has been marked by contradiction. On 13 September 2007, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a non-binding text which creates no new rights. Canada joined other white-settler societies both to object to vote against this historic recognition of Indigenous rights globally. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples maps into a comprehensive framework already recognized individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples, including their rights to culture, identity, and language, as well as education, employment, health, among other issues important to Indigenous peoples’ well being. Further, it emphasized the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue political, economic and social development that would fulfil their needs and aspirations as peoples. The Declaration calls for the prohibition of discrimination against Indigenous peoples, and calls upon signatory states to promote their effective participation in all matters that concern them, and to affirm their right to remain distinct.

The text of the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples was overwhelming approved by the majority of the UN, with 143 countries voting in favour, and 11 abstaining. Only four countries, all former white-dominions or settler-societies – Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States – voted against the Declaration. Canada’s position was represented by Ambassador John McNee who argued that the government had “significant concerns” about the language in the document. In particular, McNee claimed the negotiation process had not been sufficiently “open, inclusive or transparent”; that the Declaration’s provisions on lands, territories and resources were “overly broad, unclear and capable of a wide variety of interpretations”; and, that, provisions stipulating the need for states to obtain free, prior and informed consent before they act on matters affecting Indigenous peoples were unduly restrictive. Although the Declaration was 25-years in the making, and many of its provisions already had been adopted by the General Assembly since 1993, the new Conservative Government of Stephen Harper wanted to restart the negotiation process. At a press briefing, Les Malezer of the Permanent Forum said “it is an offence to all peoples of the world, a brutal reminder that discrimination against indigenous peoples is entrenched in modern geopolitics, and a cover-up of the extreme predicaments that demanded the gestation of an indigenous declaration 25 years ago and a re-
newed commitment every year since”. The Harper Government also suggested the Declaration might be incompatible with Canada’s Constitution. An Amnesty International access to information request showed, however, that the Government had lawyers in the Departments of Indian Affairs and Foreign Affairs review the draft Declaration and in a ministerial note they had recommended support for it (AI, 26 February 2008). As well, the three opposition parties all supported the Declaration. Thus it only can be assumed that it was opposed on other grounds. Louise Arbour, the Canadian who headed the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed “profound disappointment” at the government’s position.

The UN has declared that the transatlantic slave trade, slavery and apartheid are “crimes against humanity”. There now is an extensive body of literature on the role of states in the transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades, as well as the various iterations of the institution of slavery in the Caribbean, US and elsewhere. In Canada, by contrast, there has been a dearth of studies on slavery or how it factored into historical and contemporary social attitudes and relations and institutions. One useful exception is Afua Cooper’s *The Hanging of Angélique: Canada, Slavery and the Burning of Montreal* (2006), which documents the century-long history of chattel slavery in Canada through a compelling exploration of a Portuguese-born slave woman in Lower Canada, Marie-Joseph Angélique. She was accused of starting a fire, which spread across large swathes of Montréal, destroying some forty-six buildings, including the renowned hospital L’Hôtel Dieu. Angélique confessed to arson after she was subjected to *la question extraordinaire* – a brutal form of torture that shattered bones in her legs. She was convicted and condemned to death by hanging. Angélique is, perhaps, the most famous story although it is probably recorded in the annals of law as an ordinary case of arson. Both the French and British colonialists in Canada bought, sold, and owned both Aboriginal (“pani”) and African slaves.

Undoubtedly, the nature of slavery in Canada remains unknown to many students of Canadian history, politics and society. Yet, the first recorded slave in Canada was 1628, a young boy by the name of Olivier Le Jeune, who has been bought in Madagascar and moved to New France (today Quebec). Slaves were used as domestic as well as farm labour (Smith 2003; Cooper, 2006). The laws pertaining to the Canada clearly documented the existence of slavery in Canada, as with other colonies in the French and British
Empires. The 1763 *Treaty of Paris*, for example, stated that, “The Negroes and Panis of both sexes shall remain, in their quality of slaves, in the possession of the French and Canadians to whom they belong; they [colonists] shall be at liberty to keep their service in the colonies or sell them”. Some eleven years later, the Quebec Act also entrenched the colonists’ rights to buy and own slaves. And, after the American Revolution in 1783, British colonialists to Canada bought with them some 2,000 African slaves from the US. They settled in what is today Ontario, as well as Newfoundland, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island. In fact, in order to encourage more English-speaking settlers, the British *Imperial Act* of 1790 made special dispensation for slave-owners, including waiving import duties. According to the *Act*, “Negroes, household furniture, utensils of husbandry, or clothing” could be brought into Canada duty-free.

The abolition of slavery in Canada was a gradual process, beginning with the 1793 *Act Against Slavery* brought in by then Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe, which prevented the introduction of new slaves. The British Parliament abolished the slave trade in 1807, although the trafficking of humans continued under the Portuguese and Spanish flags. In 1823 the Anti-Slavery Society was founded, and over time its members were able to lobby against both the slave trade and institution of slavery. Slaves were owned in Canada until at least 1834, one year after the British Parliament’s *Slavery Abolition Act* called for the end of the institution throughout the British Empire. At Confederation, slavery had been abolished in Canada only 42 years. The legacies of slavery, such as racial segregation would linger in various ways well into the twenty-first century.

Although many know the name of famed civil rights activist Rosa Parks, fewer know the name of Viola Desmond, a Black Beautician from Halifax who challenged Canada’s segregation (Smith 1997). In 1947 Desmond refused to leave the main floor of the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia where she sat after the balcony designated for Blacks was filled. Desmond was expelled and although she challenged it all the way to the Supreme Court she lost the case. Not much is known about the history of the colour line and legally enforced segregation in Canadian educational institutions. Robin Winks (1969) has documented the history of racially segregated schools in Ontario and Nova Scotia. These schools similarly existed across the prairies, including Alberta and British Columbia, where numerous
efforts were made by white Canadians to segregate the Chinese, Japanese and South Asian children from schools attended by white children. It was not until “The Separate Schools Act” that references to separate schools for Blacks removed, and the last segregated school in Essex County, Ontario finally closed its doors in 1965. These efforts to desegregate Canada were made possible by anti-racism social movements and civil society organizations committed to social justice. In the mid-1950s, for example, the Black civil rights group, the National Unity Association, and the JewishLabourCommittee, among others, united to fight for desegregation of services in cities like Dresden and Chatham, Ontario. Eventually this led to the Fair Accommodation Practice Act of Ontario, which prohibited discrimination against Blacks and Jews in the delivery of services, and also the public display of signs that said “No Blacks Allowed” or “No Jews Allowed” (Smith 1997; Cannon, 1995).

Within Canada, the province of Saskatchewan was the first to pass civil rights legislation in 1947. The Canadian parliament passed a Bill of Rights in 1960; however it was only an ordinary statute that narrowly applied to the federal government. With the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms a more comprehensive civil rights legislation came into effect across Canada. The Charter held that all individuals are equal under the law and it enumerated a number of grounds for constitutional protections against discrimination – on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, and physical or mental disability. Paradoxically, the Charter failed to include sexual orientation as a protected ground. It subsequently was “read in” to Section 15 of the Charter after Delwin Vriend challenged the Alberta Human Rights Act, which failed to protect him from arbitrary discrimination in employment. Vriend was fired from King’s College in Edmonton simply because he was openly gay. In 1997 landmark decision the Supreme Court found that Alberta’s human rights act should include protection on the grounds of sexual orientation; Alberta has yet to revise the Act.

Combating Systemic Racism
Since the 1980s, the local struggles against racism and racial discrimination have included a focus on the thorny issue of systemic or institutional racism. Institutional racism refers to the systemic practices and experiences of racism within public institutions such as governmental bodies, universities and schools or corporations. It may include institutional policies, practices
as well as organizational culture and conventional biases and stereotypes that systematically functioned to exclude or inhibit the advancement of people of colour (e.g. Abella, 1984), or lead to a “poison work environment” that inhibits retention and promotion. Over two decades ago Justice Rosalie Abella defined systemic discrimination in her *Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment*, as well as proposed systemic remedies to tackle inequality. According to Justice Abella, systemic discrimination is constituted by,

... practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual’s or a group’s right to the opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics.... It is not a question of whether this discrimination is motivated by an intentional desire to obstruct someone’s potential, or whether it is the accidental by-product of innocently motivated practices or systems. If the barrier is affecting some groups in a disproportionately negative way, it is a signal that the practices that lead to this adverse impact may be discriminatory”.

Section 15, the equality clause of the *Charter* also expressly permits laws and programs with the explicit goal of “the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals” which, in turn, gave rise to frameworks such as the 1986 Federal Contractors Program for Employment Equity (FCP-EE). It was initiated by Cabinet decision and, subsequently, the 1995 *Employment Equity Act*, was extended to both the public and private sectors. The proactive purpose of the *Act* was at least two-fold, first, “to achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability”, and. second, “to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities by giving effect to the principle that *employment equity means more than treating persons in the same way but also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences*” (see Canada Public Service Agency, 2002, emphasis added).

Over 20 years after the Abella Report, a former Justice Department lawyer, a sitting senator and public service union executive testified before the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights that systemic racism remained a serious problem in Canada’s public service. In February 2008, Mark Per-
saud, a lawyer who left Justice Canada in 2003 testified that it was a “very poisonous, toxic department” in which to work. Part of the problem was the organizational culture, which was shaped by “overt racism and intimidation of employees” and where “there was no proper opportunities as visible minorities for us to be promoted equitably and fairly”. As a consequence minorities were underrepresented; those who were hired were difficult to retain (Don Butler, Ottawa Citizen, 6 February 2008). As well, Nova Scotia Senator Donald Oliver testified the problem was bigger than one department alone and that racism was among the major factors that prevented minorities from making advances in the public service. In his testimony Oliver, “For people who pretend that racism is not here and doesn’t exist, it’s ridiculous. It’s time we started to be realistic. Once we face that realism, may be then we can begin to solve the problem”.

The issue was not being tackled, in part, because of a kind of knowing denial or motivated ignorance (1989). What this also suggests is a wilful refusal to engage in critical reflection that would lead to a sense of responsibility. Calhoun suggests self-interest is at the heart of the refusal to embark upon a critical reflection for fear it might lead to something unpleasant, like recognition of the need for individual responsibility or institutional action. Public Service Alliance of Canada’s vice-president, Ed Cashman, suggested in his testimony that racism is “the elephant in the room”. Minorities, Cashman argued, applied for positions in the public service in disproportionate numbers but their continued under-representation suggests a systematic denial of access to a fair share of the jobs. Successive governments have showed little commitment to acknowledging the elephant in the room, let alone to engage in sustained actions to address the twin problem of systemic racism and motivated ignorance.

**Conclusion**

This essay has offered a schematic exploration of historical and contemporary struggles against racism, slavery, apartheid and colonialism. Drawing on examples from South Africa, the US and Canada, it has tried to complicate how we think about racism and racial discrimination, how it has manifested across time and space, and its enduring cultural and institutional legacies. It also links anti-racism and anticolonial struggles and some of the tensions and contradictions this relationship has created in social relations, within multiracial and multinational states, as well as within institu-
tions of global governance. The essay also draws attention to the challenge of historical amnesia, which can undermine our responsibility to notice, to name and to actively work toward eradicating racism and the social disadvantages that it underwrites for people of colour and Indigenous peoples in education, employment, accommodation and overall life chances. These challenges of the anti-racism movement continue. As King told the crowd in “How Long, Not Long”, “I want to say to the people of America and the nations of the world, that we are not about to turn around. We are on the move now…. and no wave of racism can stop us”. Anti-racism is “an idea whose time has come”.

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A ‘Culture of Whiteness’ (Is Change Possible?)

Sarita Srivastava

Many of us confront on a daily basis the decision about how, when and where to act in order to challenge racism. Whether within large institutions, community organizations or intimate relationships, the decision to act is always one with emotional, political and strategic consequences. For those of us who work within universities, the peculiar mix of conservative tradition, academic freedom, hierarchical organization and progressive politics provides a complex backdrop to anti-racist activism. Here I reflect briefly on my own experience at Queen’s University, and share my own ambivalence about anti-racist activism within the university.

Few phrases have prompted more controversial and ongoing debate at Queen’s University than the assertion in the recent Henry Report on Systemic Racism Against Faculty of Colour and Aboriginal Faculty at Queen’s University that there exists a “culture of whiteness”, a university culture in which values, everyday discourses, knowledge and institutional practices are shaped by white privilege. The Henry Report, (submitted in 2004 and released in 2006) suggests that “there are some strong indicators that a significant number of faculty of colour and Aboriginal faculty are concerned with the ways in which their presence and contributions are marginalized from the mainstream culture and structures of the University” (147). Surely these are not radical conclusions, particularly as the Henry Report is only the most recent of a series of initiatives aimed at equity issues at Queen’s. The 1991 report “Towards Diversity and Equity at Queen’s: A Strategy for Change”, was followed up by the 1992 “Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Race Relations and Curriculum in the Faculty of Arts and Science”. Both reports noted the under-representation of racialized persons at all levels at the university and called for increased communication, consultation, and the elimination of racism.

Yet after it was released in the spring of 2006, the Henry Report inspired a backlash that extended even to the Globe and Mail, where Margaret Wente’s column, in its now-familiar style, mockingly dismissed concerns about racism at Queen’s — after all, how could a university with a racially diverse student body and faculty be racist, she wrote. Within Queen’s, and within my own department, many of us also heard the dismissive claim that the
Henry Report was methodologically flawed. It was a key criticism, used to dismiss outright not only the conclusions of the Henry report, but also the initiatives that sprang from it.

Despite this backlash, there was clearly enough administrative lip-service to the Henry Report. Concerns about the publicity it garnered. The report’s release also inspired some hope that there may be opportunities for change or, at the very least, an increased awareness of the need for change. Yet overall, there has been disappointment at the limited change since the Henry Report was submitted in 2004. Most recently, a female faculty member was verbally and racially attacked and forced off the sidewalk by four male students while walking to class one afternoon last November. This incident, and the administrative and security response to it, highlighted for many of us the lack of administrative initiative on questions of equity.

Not that anti-racist efforts by students and faculty have been insignificant. One group in particular, QCRED, or Queen’s Coalition for Racial and Ethnic Diversity, has been a vibrant source of activism, primarily by students. More recently, the November assault on a faculty member inspired the formation of QCARF, or Queen’s Coalition of Anti-Racist Faculty. This was the first time that anti-racist faculty have had a communication and support network, a means for gathering, taking action and supporting each other. QCARF organized a phenomenally well-attended anti-racist rally as a direct response to the November assault. My own efforts over the last two years have been aimed at the need for curriculum development in the sociology department. A couple of years ago, a faculty member from another department asked me to supervise a reading course for one of her graduate students. She had done a review of graduate curriculum at Queen’s, and could not find a course that dealt with critical race theory. Against some resistance, I subsequently proposed and succeeded in starting a graduate course, Transnational Theories of Race, Gender and Sexuality, which I taught for the first time this fall. Facing considerable opposition, resistance and some overt hostility, I also succeeded in starting a departmental Equity Committee to review departmental practices and curriculum. While I have had two strong allies in my department, because of the difficulties of these struggles I began to feel that it might make more sense to focus on interdisciplinary efforts. Consequently, I am currently working on a proposal for a research centre focusing on critical race studies and transnationality.
At the moment, I sit on a committee that is overseeing an Employment Systems Review of Queen’s, a huge, comprehensive quantitative and qualitative review of equity practices. However, I also have a great deal of ambivalence towards these efforts. What is the potential for profound change if our work is limited by the administrative framework of the university? Why focus so much of our energies and efforts on reforming cumbersome and slow-moving institutions? Is profound change even possible within chilly environments, and with indifferent colleagues? How do we measure “success” — by the implementation of yet another policy? Often within institutions or organizations we are seduced into investing huge amounts of time in policy development or detailed reports, only to realize that there are insufficient resources and insufficient will to actually implement an equity policy or a report’s recommendations.

As an academic, I am supportive of the need for more detailed and thorough analysis of the nature of inequity. As an activist, I am simultaneously hopeful and pessimistic about what kinds of concrete, institutional changes, if any, this knowledge will be able to produce. My own research has challenged anti-racist workshops for the assumption that more and better knowledge will undo racist thinking and practices. Yet small discursive shifts can be significant and minor shifts in the people’s thinking can sometimes allow us to open up fissures in the way things have always been done, in the way we have always spoken about the way the world is. Is this enough to profoundly change inequitable relations of power and knowledge? Is this enough to keep us from losing heart? Often not. While I feel strongly that we should act where we are, work to change the places we inhabit, sometimes the struggle is so heart-breaking that all we can do is retreat, and move on. Perhaps the inaugural issue of this review will provide a way of linking these struggles in ways that give us strength — whether it is the strength to continue, or the strength to regroup.

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Women of colour educators in the academy: Pedagogical Tensions and Ruptures

Rozmin Jaffer

Many radical women of colour scholars draw upon conceptions of critical and feminist pedagogies. A taken for granted assumption of these pedagogies is that these emancipate the marginalized people of our society. There are, however, reasons for challenging this assumption of critical pedagogies. I would like to discuss the way in which critical pedagogies can become implicated in oppression.

Critical Pedagogies as Oppressive

Social theories often present themselves as “grand recites” or narratives. These theories “take on their own impetus so that one cannot see reality as ‘narrated’, but rather the way things are” or as facts (Spivak, 1990: 30). Grand narratives become “truth” that must be adhered to by all, rather than merely a narrative based on a social and historical context competing with many other narratives. The notion of “truth” misguides us down the slippery slope of setting standards that deem all other social narratives as “different and inferior”. A particular “truth” begins to take hold in society as a “Universal Truth”. Consequently, “truth” is not seen as a product of human societies but rather as something that exists independent of human societies. This is a modernist conception of “truth”, and many educational texts come from this understanding of knowledge (Acker, 1994).

Gayatri Spivak and other theorists problematize this notion of knowledge as the “universal truth” (Spivak, 1999). Critical pedagogies claim their aim is to “empower” individuals. The notion of critical pedagogues “empowering” another individual is itself a position of power (Lather 1991, Ellsworth, 1989). Hence we need to find ways to interrogate these so called “emancipatory” pedagogies. One such way is to contest the notion of “truth” as knowledge that is “objective” and/or “neutral” and, instead, to acknowledge that it is immersed in societal and historical contexts and self-interest (Gore, 1993). Another aspect of these grand theories that must be challenged is that the targets of change are not oppressive societal conditions that we inhabit, but rather individual “skills” and “abilities”. Hence, the focus on the indi-
individual deters from addressing structural conditions and the broader oppressive societal conditions. Postmodern theorists suggest there is a need for us to understand the way in which social and historical conditions not only effect but constitute people’s identities/subjectivities (Weedon, 1997). Consequently, rather than blaming individuals for their conditions, the oppressive nature of their social contexts needs to be understood (Ellsworth, 1997). Further, the ways in which society functions to maintain specific oppressive practices needs to be examined (Weedon, 1997). Postmodern theorizing gives us a way to understand how social conditions, including language, construct and constitute persons and societies. Moreover, relations of power are viewed as circulating in all human interactions, and power is understood as dispersed and relational rather than merely imposed from above.

In postmodern understandings, the classroom becomes a site of struggle for making social meaning (Ellsworth, 1997). The universalizing tendency of critical pedagogy and the “right” of the “libratory” teacher to know the “truth” about democratic practices can mask the play of privilege and oppression within any particular learning context. This, in turn, could work against any emancipatory tendencies. Spivak (1999) suggests that scrutinizing one’s own practice disrupts the “impulse to narrate” such that the narration is continuous and coherent, and further undermines our own fixities of “truth telling”. Notions of teacher, student, knowledge production and subjectivity are constantly undermined within pedagogical processes. Postmodern theorizing and practice cannot replace modernist thought and practice. Rather, postmodern theorizing can be deployed to interrogate and disrupt specific coherent and totalizing “grand” narratives of both modern and contemporary moments.

A postmodern reading interrogates the notion of the “libratory teaching” and re-visions the teacher as one who acknowledges her own oppressive relations in the classroom and works with the students to undermine and shift relations of power in ways that open up spaces for competing discourses to surface (Ellsworth, 1989). Recognizing and acknowledging the contradictions present in the classrooms, that arise from the multiple subjectivities within which we all live our lives, makes it possible to challenge and shift dominating relations of power and develop new knowledge and understandings.
The classroom is a site of complex interactions of power. These interactions are woven through often contradictory and competing representations of power around race, gender, class, able-bodiedness, sexual orientation and body size, and woven within individual’s conscious and unconscious motivations and behaviours. To work within these realities requires us to recognize and analyze power as multiple and shifting convergences in particular sites, rather than as fixed and immutable. Universalizing theories with respect to structures of power and oppression may not be enough to shed light on the complex relations of power that is present in the classroom. Ellsworth (1989) illustrates this complexity when she states that in her classroom “students of colour” did not have a unified understanding of racism or their role in effecting it. Rather, there were hierarchies within the “minority” group that often were not accounted for. In the spirit of better understanding pedagogy that moves away from universalizing theories, I would like to discuss Henry Giroux’s notion of “border pedagogy”, and the relevance of pedagogies that are “in-between” the conceptions of critical pedagogy and postmodernism.

**Border Pedagogies as “In-between” Pedagogies**

Giroux (1988) introduces the notion of “border pedagogies” and offers us a way of viewing critical pedagogy as “suspicious” of its own assumptions of power and knowledge. In short, the notion of border pedagogy acknowledges the shifting borders that both undermine and re-territorialize different configurations of power and knowledge. Border pedagogy takes into account postmodern understanding of various positions one can take whilst interpreting a text, for instance. Hence, instead of only one dominant interpretation, we now have a variety of interpretations/narratives from the margins of society. As students learn to interpret a text from a variety of subject positions they take on, and engage, multiple positions.

Roxanna Ng (1993) tells us that the she takes on various subject positions in an effort to relate to a feminist, anti-racist curriculum that is informed by her own understanding of postmodernism. For instance, as she identifies with “women of colour” she adopts an essentialist subject position and yet she undermines this identity as she suggests that educators reinforce racist practices when they name themselves “women of colour”. Within a classroom environment each subject position must be partially released to make room for another subject position, depending on the questions and remarks
from students (Wetherall, 1998). In this way, subject positions taken on by educators within pedagogy are vulnerable and partial.

A goal of the educator who practices border pedagogy is to keep things in process, to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures which continuously demystify the realities we create, and to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal. It is vital that educators understand the lack of innocence in any discourse by looking at the textual staging of knowledge. Deconstruction can provide a corrective moment, a safeguard against dogmatism, a continual displacement.

Border pedagogues must acknowledge the levels of knowing and doing upon which resistance can act. These deepen our understanding of the values invested in this epistemology and ways in which we, as educators, may act. It is essential to become aware of the ways in which “truth” is told, disrupted and displaced depending on the interests of subjects. How do educators take up, respond to and negotiate various “truths” circulating in the classroom? Lather (1991) rescues social action in the deconstruction of critical pedagogy. She states that the way to social action is in salvaging what she refers to as praxis: “For those committed to using the present to construct that which works against the relation of dominance, interventions in the arenas of research and pedagogy can illuminate the intersection of postmodernism and emancipatory project” (Lather, 11).

Conclusion
Ulmer (1988: 27) states that, “theoretical fictions organized into a pedagogy that would collapse the distinction separating teaching, research, and art might also have the power to guide transformation of the lived social world”. The juxtaposition of “theoretic fictions” and “praxis”, the central category of Marxist thought, signals ways in which cultural Marxism and postmodernism both “parallel and interrupt one another”. This gives us a way to speak of theoretic fictions organized into pedagogy which may lead to social change. It is also a way for women of colour educators to recover the ability to act within postmodernist discourse.

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Thinking Through Anti-Racism and Indigenity in Canada

Enakshi Dua

As we – anti-racist activists and people of colour – witness the daily struggles of First Nations people for recognition of treaties, control over indigenous lands, the right to education, health, housing and employment, and the struggle for sovereignty, the question that faces many of us is how we can support such activism. “People of colour”, those racialized as minorities, is a contested concept. While the term reinscribes racial and national categories that are socially constructed, limitations in linguistic resources often makes it is difficult to avoid using such categories for analytical purposes. Increasingly, over the past five years anti-racist activists have identified the struggles of First Nations people as an important site for anti-racist activism. Such activism is encouraging as for many decades anti-racist scholars and activists had often ignored First Nations struggles. Such activism is also crucial as without active engagement with the struggles of First Nations peoples the project of anti-racism remains an incomplete project (see Lawrence and Dua, 2005). I will argue in this article, however, that engaging with First Nations struggles is not a simple process, and requires further thinking through, critical dialogue and political action.

Particularly problematic is that most often our engagement with First Nations struggles is based on a politics of commonality – that as people who have been racialized as outsiders to the imaginary of the nation, as “minorities”, or as the “other”, people of colour share a common experience of racism with First Nations peoples. While such feeling of commonality can reflect a genuine commitment to address the ways in which First Nations people continue to be colonized, at the same time, such notions of solidarity can work to undermine indigenous struggles. First, such undifferentiated claims of solidarity erase the particular ways in which First Nations people face racism – through the processes of ongoing colonization (see Lawrence and Dua, 2005). Secondly, such claims of commonality erase the differences between how people of colour have been racialized and how First Nations peoples have been colonized. Third, understanding the historical and contemporary differences between the processes of racialization and the processes on colonization requires addressing the thorny issue of how people of colour have been positioned as settlers. Importantly, claims of
solidarity erase the ways in which people of color have been positioned as settlers with a “white” settler nationalist project. As a result, I would suggest that we need to carefully examine the way in which people of colour to identify, ally and take part in First Nations movements. I fear that by not doing so we reinforce the ongoing colonization.

Recognizing that people of colour also occupy the position of settlers within this geographic space that has come to be Canada can be unsettling for people of colour. How can people of colour be considered settlers in a nationalist project that has so profoundly been constructed through a politics of whiteness? Does the recognition that people of colour also embody the status of settlers, in turn, erase the way in which they have experienced such profound racism in Canada? Do people of colour not share the historical experiences of colonization – especially those groups that were enslaved? Indeed, the ways in which people of colour have historically and continue to experience racism is profound. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Black and Asian-Canadians were prohibited from migrating to Canada, denied citizenship, the ability to purchase property, to have access to publicly funded education. Their labour was super exploited to “build” railways, agriculture, fishing, forestry etc. People of colour continue to experience profound and debilitating racism including increased likelihood to experience poverty, discrimination in the labour force, lower wages, discrimination in health and education, and racial profiling. My point is not to diminish the profound significance of such racism. Rather it is to suggest that we need to build an anti-racist project that does not undermine First Nations struggles. Being true allies requires thinking through the way in which people of colour are positioned, and must be accountable, within a white settler nationalist project.

I would like to give three examples of the complicated ways in which people of colour occupy the liminal position of settlers within Canada. First, is through the way in which our lives take place on stolen land. As Bonita Lawrence has pointed out, decolonizing Canada begins by acknowledging “land theft and dispossession” (Lawrence, 2002). As an inhabitant of Canada, I live in and own land that has been appropriated from First Nations peoples through both exploitative treaties as well as non-treaty land. The schools that I attended, that my child attends, the community centers, hospitals, stores, beaches, vacation spots, roads, airports that I use are on
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a complex web of treaty and non-treaty land. Let’s take the example of the Greater Toronto Area, the space in which I reside. Currently, an Ontario native band has asked the federal government to compensate it for property that includes the City of Toronto. This land claim stretches back to 1787 when one of King George III’s representatives claimed to have signed a treaty at the Bay of Quinte with the Mississaugas. The British government claimed that the Mississauga’s surrendered all their land north of Lake Ontario. However, the deed remained unsigned, and was later revealed to be a blank deed to which were attached the totems of three of the Chiefs. In 1805, the land was re-surveyed and a new deed drawn up and the Crown again approached the Mississaugas nation. At this time, the king’s men offered 10 shillings – or 120 pennies – for roughly 100,000 hectares, property that currently covers all of Toronto and part of its suburbs.

The Mississaugas, who now live on a 2,400-hectare reserve west of Toronto, point out that the land was never properly surrendered. Bryan Laforme, chief of the New Credit First Nation, has asked the Canadian government to fulfill its legal responsibility by settling this land claim. Band councillor, Sandra Bonham has pointed out that such compensation would be used to improve life on the reserve, such as employment, education and housing. Notably this same situation is replayed all over Canada. Thus, as people of colour we need to address how our lives upon these lands are predicated on the processes of disruption, violence, and dispossession instigated by French and British colonists. For anti-racist activists this requires thinking through how people of colour are embedded in Canadian colonialism.

A second example of how people of colour are implicated as settlers involves thinking about the way in which citizenship rights are deployed. For people of colour who have citizenship, they have rights and privileges that have been denied to First Nations peoples collectively, and such rights have been deployed to deny First Nations rights to self government. Let me give an important example. In 1991, those with citizenship rights participated in constitutional reform referred as the Charlottetown Accord. The Accord, which was the result of ongoing talks around constitutional reform, especially as it relates to Quebec as a distinct society and to the self-government of First Nations peoples, was defeated in a national referendum in 1992. The Charlottetown Accord proposed constitutional changes that contained important features for First Nations peoples: recognition of First Nations
governments as a third order of government in Canada, a definition of self
government in relation to land, the environment, language, and culture, as well as representation in the Senate. Although the Accord was the result of years of negotiations between First Nations leaders and the Canadian government, the government had these changes ratified through a national referendum.

In essence, all Canadian citizens, including people of colour, were invited to decide on whether the Canadian government should honour its commitments to First Nations peoples. We do not know how or even whether, people of colour voted with respect to the Accord. that denied efforts on the part of First Nations peoples to fundamentally reshape Canada’s approach to decolonization. However, this illustrates the complexities for people of colour living in a settler society, and they ways in which they become implicated as citizens in the ongoing colonization of First Nations peoples. Those with citizenship rights in Canada were in a position to make decisions on First Nations sovereignty, which should have been made by First Nations peoples. Most importantly, antiracist groups failed to note this, and to offer a counter political strategy.

My last example of how people of colour are implicated in the ongoing colonization of First Nations people refer more to anti-racist activists and scholars. Through much struggle we have produced a body of knowledge that deconstructs the nation and challenges racism. However, a survey of much of this body of work illustrates that rarely do anti-racist scholars and activists include the ongoing colonization of First Nations people. And on the rare occasion where they do, such accounts fail to acknowledge the differences between the processes of racism and the project of ongoing colonization (see Lawrence and Dua, 2005). Let me take examples from my own writings. In 1999, I edited a collaborative book project, in which a number of anti-racist feminist scholars explored the intersections of ‘race’ and gender. At the time, I felt that we were doing a good task of centering First Nations issues. We began the anthology by examining the ways in which First Nations women had been historically racialized and gendered. There was another article that examined questions of First Nations self-government. In looking back I would suggest that we failed to make the ongoing colonization of First Nations people foundational to the text. We did not ask those who wrote on work, trade unions, immigration, citizenship, family etc, to
examine how these institutions/relationships were influenced by colonization. While more recently I have turned to cultural theory, critical race theory and post-colonial studies, my fear is that these approaches also fail to also fail to center the ongoing colonization of First Nations peoples As a result, these bodies of knowledge are framed in ways that contribute to the active colonization of First Nations peoples (for an elaboration of this argument see Lawrence and Dua, 2005).

Acknowledging these aspects does not mean that we need to erase our own histories and struggles with racism. Clearly our access to land, citizenship and knowledge production is precarious. Nor does it imply that Blacks, Chinese-Canadians, Japanese-Canadians, South Asians-Canadians, Muslim-Canadians etc are all settlers in the same way. Clearly for those racialized as “minorities” our relationship to land, property, consumption, space, citizenship and knowledge production in Canada is shaped by different histories of racism, class, gender, ability and sexual orientation. However, it does mean that we need to engage with anti-racism differently. We need to centre decolonization within anti-racism. The first step is to begin to unravel the way in which we are part of the process the ongoing project of colonization. This, in turn, requires that we engage with First Nations activism differently. This involves listening and learning from First Nations leaders. Only then can we become meaningful allies.

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**References**


Race and Terror in the Global Surveillance State

Makere Stewart-Harawira

The day of 16 October 2007 (15 October in New Zealand) is one that most Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders will not soon forget and most certainly not the people of the Tuhoe Maori Nation. On that morning the population awoke to the news that their small island country of green hills, high mountains, sparkling waters and supposedly harmonious racial relations had just been saved from unthinkable acts of terrorism.

Early on that morning, the population learned, paramilitary interventions in some 60 locations up and down the country had foiled an “IRA-style war plan” (Morse 2008), which allegedly included homicide attempts on key political figures in New Zealand and the United States, and the entire country from the clutches of terrorists. Thanks to the vigilant monitoring of New Zealand’s Security and Intelligence Service, we were informed, the plots of these dangerous persons had been uncovered, their training camps discovered and dismantled, and their key figures arrested – in some cases as the country watched courtesy of a television crew who, according to Television New Zealand “just happened to be passing by”.

In the quiet and peaceful valley of the Maori settlement of Ruatoki on the East Coast of the North Island, the only road in and out was blocked by police vehicles, adults were dragged from their cars and photographed, a bus carrying little children to their Maori language immersion preschool was boarded by armed and helmeted paramilitaries, an elderly woman was locked with her family in her garage for several hours while her home was raided, and the entire Maori community of Ruatoki was terrorized throughout the whole long day. In major cities, people were rousted from their beds and their early morning coffees. In a South Auckland Maori home all members of the Maori family, including the 12 year old granddaughter whom was asked by the police if she was a “terrorist”, were dragged into the streets to kneel for hours on the pavements with their hands behind their heads in front of the neighbours and forbidden to speak to or comfort their traumatized grandchildren who were present throughout the entire, unthinkable ordeal.

The country learned that the subversive training program of these alleged “terrorists” – one which we were assured included the use of Molotov cocktails and napalm bombs – was conducted in tin sheds in the remote, mountainous Uruwera region which is home to the Tuhoe people whose land was confiscated in 1866 and whom to this day have not ceded their sovereignty. The weapons of destruction that had been confiscated comprised machetes, rifles and other dangerous implements as are commonly used when pig-hunting or camping out in the bush. One commentator noted that these highly-publicized paramilitary interventions were timed for Monday by which time these dangerous terrorists had left their weekend camp and returned to their homes, a circumstance which enabled maximum disruption in multiple public locations as opposed to one remote tin hut.

The basis for the conduct of the arrests was a set of amendments to the 2002 Anti-Terrorism Act then under parliamentary debate. These amendments provided for imprisonment without bail and for the evidence to be kept “secret”. The 17 arrestees were imprisoned over night, brought before District Court Judges in four different cities the next day, and with one short-lived exception, returned to their cells for a further fourteen days. Although the “terrorism” charges were eventually dropped due to the Solicitor General’s finding that the legislation was too convoluted to be workable, other charges of which little has been said, remain.

Who were these highly-dangerous individuals? Of the 17 arrested on 15 October, 12 were Maori, many from the Tuhoe Nation. They were, variously, organic farmers, peace activists, indigenous snail rescuers, and Maori sovereignty activists and advocates. One was said to have connections to a Palestinian rights organization. What the 17 had in common was a firm belief in the inalienable right of Maori to self-determination. Valerie Morse, one of the non-Maori New Zealanders arrestees in this action, is explicit in her description and analysis of the events. Comparing the treatment of the Maori and non-Maori arrestees, she writes,

For the non-indigenous arrestees … the situation was starkly different. In my case, I was not even handcuffed as I was walked to the car. No white neighbourhoods were blockaded, nor were white bystanders stopped and photographed as they went about their daily business that cool Monday
morning in October. It was only Maori (Morse, 2008).

The role of the media was pivotal to the construction of Maori as agitators and potential terrorists. The country learned that 18 months of monitoring by the New Zealand Security and Intelligence Service enabled by surveillance and interception warrants obtained under the Terrorism Suppression Act [2002] had recorded remarks threatening the lives of senior members of the New Zealand and the United States governments. As “Operation Eight” (so named because of its 8 million dollar price tag) was played out, Maori were firmly positioned as culprits. The following days heard endless reiterations of terrorism amid a media frenzy of images replayed from bygone Tuhoe and other Maori protests. The country polarized. While thousands took to the street in support of Tuhoe outrage, far too many argued that where there’s smoke, there’s fire. It became evident that for large numbers of non-Maori New Zealanders, these events gave their embedded racism new legitimacy. Many seized the opportunity to reiterate strident calls for the removal of public policy affirming Maori rights and the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document signed in 1840 between some 500 Maori tribal leaders and the British Crown.

On the evening of the arrests, the much debated amendments to the anti-terrorism Act were passed into law without further protest. Two days later the government publicly announced that it had joined the United States Homeland Security database – and again, there was little protest. In the year leading up to the 2008 parliamentary elections in Aoteroa New Zealand, the “false flag” approach to the racialization of terror appears to have been highly effective.

The year 2008 has emerged as an epochal election year on both sides of the Pacific. In the tiny country of Aotearoa New Zealand, the huge gains in popularity by the New Zealand Maori Party, a political party comprised of both Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders formed subsequent to the government’s removal of Maori customary rights to the foreshore and seabed in 2004, are seen by many on both sides of the political spectrum as a major threat. The well-publicized positioning of Maori as a terrorist threat exploits to maximum effect the hidden and deeply embedded racism that exists in much of mainstream New Zealand. Tucked away in a far corner of the globe, it may be argued that the political impact on the rest of the
world is minimal. Yet as a member of the five–nation UKUSA intelligence network maintained since World War II (the other member states are the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia), Aotearoa, New Zealand is an important linkage in the global surveillance system (c.f. Stewart-Harawira, 2005). The politics of terror is a central plank in the assertion of a global monitoring and surveillance strategy, much of which is racially constructed.

During the 2008 United States presidential primaries, the right-wing attempts to position Democratic presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama as a “favourite of terrorists” by the false construction of links to the Muslim community is among the most blatant racialization of otherness. What can only be described as the normalizing of racist politics has become a major card in the jockeying of Republican and Democrat candidates alike as they seek to unseat the one presidential candidate who has consistently demonstrated dignity and integrity and who carries on his shoulders the hopes and dreams of so many who long for peace and justice. On one hand it could be argued that this insanity is yet another signifier, as if such were needed, of the mad desperation of the human ego’s greed for power, a greed that may yet push us to the brink of collective self-destruction. On the other hand, the weakness of apologies and denials by candidates is a clear signal of racism so deeply embedded in the psyche of white mainstream America that nothing less than a major psychological event will achieve meaningful change.

At the same time as the exercise of state-sponsored terror enlarges and normalizes the politics of racism and fear, it strengthens even more our refusal to be interpellated as its subjects. The launching of The Ardent on the Spring Equinox, when the sun shines equally on both sides of the equator, is a small but potent signifier of our collective commitment to its refusal and exposure. There will be a new day.

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Racism in Canada: The Evidence of Things Not Seen

Delia D. Douglas

At present we are witnessing the re-colonization of people, identities and places as “global economic and political processes have become more brutal, exacerbating economic, racial, and gender inequalities” (Mohanty, 2003 509). As a result, these shifts have created a new awareness and uneasiness regarding the meaning and significance of race; this has also led to challenges, changes and disagreements about citizenship and national identities. In what follows I suggest that we take more seriously and act with a renewed urgency regarding the enduring relevance and markers of racial and gender difference and strategies of gendered racialization because in its myriad forms, “racism enacts a violence which is psychological, physical and cultural” (Hall, 1996). I recognize the dynamic and complex nature of racism(s). As well, to say that all racism is gendered is an oversimplification; however, I am mindful of how racism intersects with other axes of power and difference such as sexualities and disabilities. Additionally while I focus on racism by the dominant it is important to note that we are all exposed to the “atmosphere”. Racial hierarchies exist and racisms exist both within and between members of diverse social groups.

We underestimate the connection between our embodied selves and the way in which our bodies are also “sensory and emotional entit[ies], encapsulating individual experiences and thoughts and desires” (Alexander and Knowles, 2005: 13). Thus I contend that the atmosphere of which we are a part, namely the physical environment in which we live, as well as the unconscious and the often-imperceptible elements of everyday life, should also be a part of our efforts to challenge inequality and injustice.

Where I live: Vancouver, British Columbia

As I struggle to find and write the words to speak about and to many different locations, I am reminded of the fact that all writing is circumscribed by the particularities of place and voice. I am a black female sociologist who was born in Britain, raised on the Prairies and educated in both Canada and the United States. I received my PhD 13 years ago but I have never worked full time in the academy; I labour on the margins, as contingent faculty and as an independent scholar, a cultural witness and reporter.

The Ardent Review (April 2008) 1, 41-44.
Homegrown: We’re not Racist, We’re Multicultural

The poignant title of Baldwin’s (1985) book, *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*, captures the essence of racism in Canada; that racism is not seen, or is more often denied, is due in large part to what we have come to take for granted, namely its very existence. The refusal to believe that there is a connection between violence and prejudice is one of the consequences of narratives of a nation that continue to erase our heritage of genocide of Aboriginal peoples, the internment of the Japanese, the indentured labour of the Chinese, racialized immigration policies such as the Continuous Journey legislation, and the enslavement of Blacks. Subsequent efforts to produce (and enforce) claims that we are a multicultural nation that comprises recent immigrants sustains an unmarked logic of domination that constitutes the context in which we organize our commonsense views of the world. That is, the reluctance to publicly name the practice of forced removal, exile, relocation and the conditions born of a history of complex movements that resulted in the creation of this white settler colony are integral to the construction of the racial character of the beliefs, choices and relationships that shapes our lived experiences as well as the atmosphere (i.e. of racial virtue) in which we currently live. Additionally, the institutionalization of multiculturalism has played a vital part in commonsense views of the nature of Canadian identity; it has contributed to a racial logic which has made it virtually impossible for many Canadians to recognize the existence of racism in Canada. Consequently de facto assertions of the multiracial (and to a lesser extent multiethnic) character of Canada enact particular forms of violence, as exemplified in assertions that ours is a tolerant society.

I have long been wary of the eagerness to invoke the term tolerance when talking of racial relations in Canada. Its recognition suggests that “we” represent a morally just society. Does that mean that we accept domination, or that we abhor it? (And, who is tolerating who here?) My father once said (under his breath) that tolerance is not acceptance of difference. And therein lies the rub. *We* may very well be a tolerant nation, but this is hardly an admirable quality in and of itself because it does not indicate an unconditional embrace of difference; rather it suggests disingenuousness on the part of the dominant.

What is also *not seen* is the fact that Whites and the culture of whiteness
have been central to the way Canadian national identity has been imagined and represented. White racial power is both constructed and communicated through the atmosphere, via the privileging of the white ethnicities of English and French, the organization of our institutions, and our social policies, and the unremitting assertion that race is only relevant to those who appear to be raced. On those rare occasions where racism is acknowledged, it is typically understood as hidden, understated (i.e., less harmful), or an aberration. We have embraced a very limited and limiting understanding of the nature and experience of racial oppression; as Canadians, we are virtually incapable of seeing that which stands before us.

Everyday Violence: It’s a Thin Line Between Tolerance and Hate

The following situations illuminate how racial matters are simultaneously rendered in/visible in British Columbia. Disappeared from the coverage of the “missing women” from Vancouver’s downtown east side is a discussion of the racial and class identities of these women, the majority of whom were Aboriginal, and the ways in which the intersection of race and class is inextricably linked to how they lived and died in the city. Likewise, we must ask why the 14 November 1997 brutal assault and drowning death of South Asian teenager Reena Virk, and the 17 November 2001 fatal beating in Stanley Park of Aaron Webster, a white gay male, are not considered hate crimes. In a similar manner, despite knowledge of his association with white racial supremacists, the police insist that Nathan Fry’s actions do not constitute a hate crime. Fry has been charged with five counts of first-degree murder and one charge of attempted murder in the 15 May 2006 arson deaths of Congolese refugees Adela Etibako, three of her children, and Ashley Singh, the South Asian girlfriend of the target and the sole survivor of the apartment fire, Bolingo Etibako. It is instructive that in each of these incidents, neither the mainstream media nor the courts have recognized these deadly forms of violence as acts of racial and gender hatred.

In contrast to these more gruesome manifestations of beliefs about the racial other, I want to offer examples which convey a different tone of racialized hostility. The first involves Laibar Singh, the Sikh man who suffered an aneurysm following his journey to attain refugee status. Singh’s efforts to challenge deportation orders have produced a vitriol expressed on blogs that is supported by an indifferent dominant media. My second example relates to the 27 November 2007 remarks about immigrants by Bruce Allen,
Douglas

a member of Vancouver’s Olympic Committee (VANOC). On CKNW, a local radio show, Allen told immigrants that if they do not like the “rules”, they should “shut up and fit in or leave the country. There’s the door. If you don’t like the rules, hit it. We don’t need you here. You have another place to go: It’s called home. See ya!” He also referred to the religious head coverings of Muslim women and Sikh men as “handkerchiefs”. Allen has refused to apologize and calls by civil society groups such as the Anniversary of Change and the Action Committee to Remove Bruce Allen, that asked for him to step down from VANOC go unheeded. All of these articulations of racism and anti-immigrant violence expose the atmosphere of our everyday lives as one that contradicts claims that Canada is a nation that lives comfortably with its racial difference.

Lessons (Not Yet) Learned
The legacies of imperial domination and colonialism continue to influence our understanding of difference, identity and belonging. The denial of Canada’s history of racial violence has contributed to the production of an atmosphere that serves both to silence current experiences of racial injustice as well as to trivialize the differential effects of racism on both the perpetrator and the survivor. In short, the symbols and structures of our everyday life reproduce an atmosphere and a sensibility which communicate hostility towards those perceived as the racial other and, by extension, functions to reproduce notions of the superiority of Whites and whiteness.

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Afrocentric Schools and the Politics of Invisibility
Debra Thompson and Jon Thompson

In a special meeting of the Toronto District School Board on the 29 January 2008, trustees voted by a narrow margin of 11-9 to establish Afrocentric education in Toronto. The three-year pilot program will be established in three existing schools beginning in September 2008, and aims to integrate “the histories, cultures, experiences and contributions of people of African descent and other racialized groups into the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and social environment of schools” (January 2008)

The 18 February 2008 edition of the Globe and Mail featured an editorial cartoon which exacerbated the already tense public debate on the subject. Under the caption, “Afrocentric Algebra”, a black teacher (or possibly a white teacher in Blackface, so exaggerated are his “Africanized” features) vacantly stares out from a chalkboard riddled with equations and asks, “S’up, Dog?” Responses to the cartoon ranged from vitriolic to supportive: while some readers hurried to launch online boycott petitions against the Globe, one reader ignored the obvious racial aspects of the illustration in order to correct the newspaper’s facetious equations.

Ironically, that day’s incarnation of the “Betty” comic strip, created by an Edmonton duo and published in the Globe only a few pages away from “Afrocentric Algebra”, escaped notice. In the comic, the character of Betty wonders aloud whether a recent trip to “Africa” (where specifically, who knows?) has changed her friend, who is shown in the last panel marching through a Canadian airport carrying a suitcase, hands-free, atop her head – perhaps the most shallow and stereotypical signifier of “Africanness” possible, other than skin colour and lips. The reaction to “Afrocentric Algebra” and relative stealth of “Betty” is demonstrative of Canadian thought vis-à-vis racism – it may be detected in broad strokes, but its subtleties largely escape us.

The “Afrocentricity” implied in Afrocentric education, as defined by Asanti (1991), is the study of phenomena grounded in the perspectives and epistemological constructs of people of African descent (Dei, 1996). Establish-
ing Afrocentric schools in Toronto may be a truly novel way to address the failures of the Canadian educational system to serve black students. Many parents, teachers and academics contend that the schools may be, as Professor George Dei of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) puts it, “the best possible path to educational and social success for our [read: black] students” (Dei, 2007). The schools may also represent a regression to the days of race-based educational segregation for black students, the legal provisions for which – yes, even in Canada – survived well into the 1960s (Winks 1997). Regardless of opinion, all conscientious persons with a stake in this debate are wrestling in the dark with the same problem: the politics of (in)visibility have ensured that frank and thorough discussions about race/ism have not taken place in this country to a degree from which useful public policy can be extracted.

We all know what it means to be visible and yet invisible. On one side of the coin, racialized populations are extraordinarily visible. The political and social differentiation of populations based on visible phenological and morphological characteristics is what once gave biological racialism its strength. Although race is no longer a biological truism, the visibility of race remains – even in the politically correct, kitten-hugging “visible minority” terminology of the Canadian government. On the other side, however, white supremacy has changed its strategies: the days of legalized racism are over. There is no castle to smash, no laws to fight against, no cry to rally around. Instead, we face an invisible system of power. As a system of power it is also a system of privilege, which means that we are unable to see it for what it is. As philosopher Charles Mills (1997: 76) writes, the fish can’t see the water – we can’t pinpoint the nature of the beast because we live within it – we eat, sleep, breathe, and exist in the confines of invisibility. This is the essential nature of the politics of (in)visibility – whereby those who are raced are clearly visible, yet invisible – and it is a political environment that has implicitly shaped the debate over the proposal to create Afrocentric schools in Toronto.

The main arguments for and against Afrocentric education are numerous and varied, and the battle lines are hardly uniform: individual African Canadians, their allies and their enemies are represented at every point along the for-and-against spectrum. The “con” side insists that the isolation caused by “Educational Apartheid” will harm isolated black students in the long-run,
While the “pro” contingent implicitly rests on the argument that black students are inherently disadvantaged in the mainstream educational system. While advocates of the plan have failed to address the many diversities encapsulated within the umbrella of “Black Canadian”, critics are quick to point out that a hegemonic white power structure cannot be resolved by black retreat. Even staunchly right-wing Tom Flanagan (2008), right-hand man of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has weighed in on the debate, bolstering the “pro” side with a piece defending free choice in the educational marketplace. (Countless Lefties, surprised that Flanagan would speak out for Afrocentrism, were spotted rushing out to add “flying pig damage” to their home insurance policies.) The diversity of opinions on this issue has no corresponding colour line. What is clear is the polarization of the issue at hand: the debate has been characterized in the media and general public as an epic battle between the rhetoric of “segregation” and appeals to Canadian multiculturalism on the one hand and blaming the nameless and faceless (but utterly racist) public education system on the other, creating a no-win situation in which advocates on either side believe in the legitimacy of no alternative other than their own.

As two escapees of Ontario’s public school system, it is hard to empathize with either side. The mythology of Canadian multiculturalism has never helped us a whole lot; between the two of us, we figure that we’ve attended at least seven “segregated” schools. And in suburban Ontario, these have always been the all-white-except-us variety. Conversely, guaranteeing that schools are a safe and inclusive space should be a priority that benefits all students, regardless of race. While such a space certainly was elusive in our “can I touch your hair?” days of public education, the very idea of Afrocentric schools implicitly gives the sense that we can’t create this space for black students in areas where white people live.

Beyond the rhetoric and the smokescreens, however, is an important and unasked question: does the solution address the problem? That is to say, if Afrocentric schools are the proposed solution, what exactly is the problem we’re trying to address? The spectre of racism in public education is omnipresent for those who feel its touch, but it is nonetheless experienced differently by each victim. Unequal power relations create and sustain incalculable opportunities for everyday racism to take place. Given the organic and mutable nature of the problem, it seems impossible that the single most
logical and immediate answer would be to create a separate, Afrocentric school. The cart seems to be firmly before the horse.

Aye, and this is the rub: the parameters of the problem have not been defined – and may not be definable – because they operate in the realm of the politics of (in)visibility. So, how can we proceed? If our metaphor is apt, then the only way to cease wrestling in the dark must be to flip on the light switch. We, as activists, must continue to work towards exposing the politics of (in)visibility rather than engaging in a rhetorical debate we cannot win while the multicultural cards are stacked against us. We, as academics, must provide the ammunition through which our activism can find its primary target. This includes the critical and continuing task of unmasking Canadian racism by providing evidence and empirical data on the interlocking nature of race, gender, and class – and consequently, the intersecting nature of white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism. If today we begin by acknowledging the invisible systems of power that make “race” matter, each tomorrow will bring us closer to real policy solutions that benefit all.

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Race-ing Alberta-ness

Gloria Filax

Festivals promoting cowboy culture abound in towns and communities across Alberta. The image of the cowboy is consumed through products and services like hair styling, car care, beef, blue jeans and other clothing, trucks, bars, bumper stickers, and beer. A standing exhibit at the world famous Glenbow Museum in Calgary celebrates what it regards as the important place of the cowboy in Alberta’s short history. As well, the Calgary Stampede is a world famous festival celebrating cowboy culture. In this short paper I explore how “the cowboy” has come to symbolize what is important about Alberta identity and how in doing so the cowboy mobilizes whiteness as the default identity position in representations of what count as true Albertans. What is at stake in the mobilization of the cowboy as representative of Alberta-ness is “who” and “what” counts as a true Albertan. The true Albertan, according to the popular narrative, is white and male.

According to a well-known story, cowboys are self-reliant and independent, ranging over wide-open spaces that represent an unfettered freedom not bound by fences or government. Cowboys are known for their “determined bachelorhood….the cowboy code of neighbourliness, loyalty, independence, and uncomplaining persistence … [although] now pickup trucks have replaced horses” (van Herk, 2001: 168-74). Cowboys are hard-workers. They are the quintessential red-neck, working under a strong Alberta sun that turns their white necks red.

When Alley Kat Brewery in Edmonton launched what turned out to be a joke beer called Redneck Beer, the then Alberta Report lauded the launch of a beer “targeted at westerners”, and at “Albertans proud to stick out their red necks” (Milke, 1997: 12). The label on Alley Kat’s Redneck beer features a cowboy, dressed in traditional denim shirt and a large western style cowboy hat. He sports a large handle-bar moustache. He is white, and, on Alberta Report’s reading of the Redneck cowboy, he is straight. When the Alberta Report’s editor, Paul Bunner, later discovered that Alley Kat Brewery had hosted a fundraiser for Gay Pride Week in Edmonton, his response was: “memo to real rednecks: choose your beverages carefully” (Bunner...
Much of the contemporary idealism associated with the cowboy has been achieved via exclusions, even while the cowboy has come to signal a homogenizing and dominant sense of Alberta-ness and even though the lore of the cowboy comes from a distant, romanticized past. Open range ranching ended in Canada in 1906 and by the beginning of this century 60 per cent of the cattle industry occurred in feedlots. Nevertheless, the romanticized cowboy is promoted as both paradigmatic of Albertans and as an actual Alberta figure. Reinforcing the notion that most ranching in Alberta takes place in the open range under the guidance of the cowboy, the Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) in their “If It Ain’t Alberta, It Ain’t Beef”, marketing campaign indicated that “the open landscapes and ranches show…the clean and healthy environment that the cattle are grown in” (Alberta Beef Producers).
When the Alberta Beef Producers re-launched the “If it ain’t Alberta, it ain’t Beef” campaign in 2001, it featured three women who “all people could relate to…a young mother, a mother and producer, and a grandmother”. In my reading of this image, the women in traditional male cowboy gear do little to disrupt the dominant story of free-ranging cowboys. Moreover, the white faces of these women, like the white faces of their male counterparts in the previous campaign, reinforce the notion that cowboys are white.

Excluding people from belonging is a fundamental way that various discriminatory practices occur. Exclusion from belonging, and its attendant effects, occurs through public policy, organization and politicization of public goods. It also happens through public cultural symbols that are used to represent a place or a people. Stories we tell ourselves about identities connected to citizenship or regional identity matter because they are linked to economic, social, and cultural benefits that the excluded cannot access. Belonging means that what one says and does matters, while not belonging has the effect of rendering one’s actions and words as less important.

We need more complicated stories about Alberta identity, a different and more diverse public culture with a range of symbols that announce the reality of a province populated by vastly different peoples with different histories and experiences. Appealing to a shared history or common past by mo-
bilizing a symbolic white cowboy who is to stand in for true Alberta-ness neither represents contemporary Alberta nor reflects the history of the region. Significantly, it erases the history of Aboriginal peoples and it ignores many immigrant communities, including farming communities of Black settlers, such as Amber Valley north of Edmonton.

Alley Kat’s Redneck beer undermines the stories we have of the straight redneck cowboy and creates other possibilities. The image of the cowboy on the Redneck Beer carton is decidedly campy, suggesting a gay male trope, made famous by the American group, The Village People, in their song, *YMCA*. We need still other stories to inform Alberta identities. This might be accomplished by resurrecting other stories from Alberta and regional history, recognizing and telling the stories of the diverse people who live in Alberta, and/or through parody of dominant stories about who is a true Albertan. To continue to rely on the cowboy, or any other white-racialized narrative to stand in for what counts as “properly” Albertan, is to promote an exclusionary – that is a racist sensibility – that produces insiders, those who feel a sense of community and belonging and outsiders, those who live in the province but find few cultural narratives that are inclusive of racial and other diversity.

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I borrow the notion of ‘race-ing’ from Toni Morrison’s *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power: Essays on Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and the Construction of Social Reality* (Pantheon, 1992) where ‘raceing’ is to question and problematize how ‘race’ is implicated in and produced by stories told about social reality.


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Privilege, Power, and Responsibility

Joyce Green

This effort to think through the relationship between privilege, power and responsibility originally began with a presentation I prepared for civil servants at the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission’s Annual Conference held in Regina, Saskatchewan on September 21, 2006. Saskatchewan legal aid lawyers are public servants who work under the auspices of the Commission, by providing legal representation to eligible persons (measured by a financial means test). Criminal law and family law are the two primary areas of practice by the Commission’s lawyers. The majority of the legal brain trust and of their support staff are white. A very large proportion of their clients are Aboriginal. Thus, my commentary was initially directed to a group of well-educated, well-paid and fairly privileged people who work in the justice industry. All were in the service the state, and their employment depended on their roles in enforcing legally recognized norms of behaviour via criminal law, and relational obligations via family law. However, the relationships I drew attention to in this commentary are not exclusive to legal service workers or even to civil servants. It is because of the relevance of these relationships to academia and other institutions – as well as to the individuals who make it possible for institutions to function – that I have expanded my discussion here, adapted for an academic, civil service as well as broader social justice audience.

Here, I make my comments to you in your capacity as citizens, who may also happen to work in the ivory tower, public service or in other similarly authoritative institutions of the dominant society – and as persons who have privilege and thus, power. I hope to convince you to think reflectively about how each of us constituted in relation to others. Then I shall invite you to commit yourselves to social and political transformation in the service of a justice far more capacious than that which legitimates your paycheques.

According to some, citizens, communities, democracy and justice are the raison d’être for the state, that is, for governments. While we can quibble about how complete an analysis that is (for example, it fails to account for corporate power) let’s take as a starting point that citizens, acting publicly in democratic and participatory processes, both direct government and hold

it accountable. Furthermore, citizens, gathered in social movements or just around kitchen tables, consider the project of justice all the time, and pressure government to respond to public policy problems. In so doing, citizens shape public discourse and norms, thus redefining our political cultures. Citizens have power; you all have the potential to change the world, or at least, a part of the world. On some accounts, you also have a responsibility to do so, and that responsibility begins with relationship, and with knowing about ourselves and others.

Many of you are carriers of privilege, much more so than most of the clients or students you serve or teach by virtue of the social cachet attached to your roles as respected professionals in the service of public purposes. But not all of you have the same degree of privilege. In a capitalist society, those with bigger paycheques enjoy more prestige, security, and power. In a society stratified by skin colour and disciplined by racism, those of you who enjoy white skin privilege have an additional card in your hands. In a society with a strong cultural current of male supremacy, men enjoy more power, autonomy, income and respect than do women. If you are publicly heterosexual, you will enjoy more respect and security than if you are an “out” gay or lesbian; and so on. Those who carry more markers of privilege have what one theorist called the “invisible knapsack” of privilege (Macintosh, 1988) that make their way through life much easier.

Yet, privilege and its results – the fact, for example, that most civil servants and academics are white, disproportionately women occupy the lowest paid positions and few Aboriginal or people of colour are hired – is generally noncontroversial. It is taken to be the result of both individual choice and the logic of meritocratic processes. I wish to challenge these assumptions, and to suggest that privilege plays an enormous yet invisible role in constructing what constitutes “success” generally and our success specifically and, similarly, in filtering out many others. In other words, it is my intention to make visible some taken-for-granted processes that do not get much attention. I do this because the consequences of these processes include institutionalized and culturally tolerated forms of injustice, and thus, they injure the social and political health of our society. Finally, I do this because you, with your privilege and your intelligence, also hold political agency – that is, you have the power to make changes individually and collectively in the service of social transformation.
My friend and colleague, the Métis scholar Emma LaRocque (2007), writes in her heartrending poem, *My home town northern Canada South Africa*, “How did they get so rich? How did we get so poor?” Thus posing the question, which becomes the challenge: so how did we get so rich?

LaRocque’s “we” is her family and her community – but also Aboriginal people in Canada. Her “they” is not only the shopkeepers and government bureaucrats in Lac la Biche, but all of us who benefit today from the historic and continuing processes of imperialism and colonialism. Those processes are encoded in Canada’s political economy. They are whitewashed and celebrated in its popular cultures. As a direct and intended consequence, some of “us” thrive, but Aboriginal nations are immiserated, and the majority of Aboriginal people suffer economic and social marginalization, along with the inter-generational social pathologies arising from colonial law and policy. LaRocque goes on:

*How did they get our blueberry meadows  
our spruce and willow groves  
our sun clean streams  
and blue sky lakes?  
How did they get  
their mansions on the lake  
their cobbled drives  
with marbled heads of lions on their iron gates?*

How did “we” get so rich? And the answers flow from history, from the state-enforced appropriation of Aboriginal lands and resources, through the subordination and oppression of Aboriginal peoples, to the contemporary amnesia about or rejection of history. The result is the policy equivalent of no-fault insurance for colonial society that implies there is no racism, no land theft, no oppression, and certainly no one now benefits from historic oppression. Thus, indigenous people are invited to forget the traumas our communities bear as a direct consequence of the same policies and practices that made some Canadians so rich.

Our political culture sanitizes all this, particularly through the media so we can think of ourselves as good people, as a great country, unstained by his-
tory, oppression, and privilege. So that we can be blind to the racism that Aboriginal people cannot ignore.

Racism exists not just in offensive personal acts – which most would condemn. It exists in the culture of communities, in the assumptions we hold about our origins and our values, in our ignorance of privilege and of history. It is enacted through structures and processes like justice systems, education, universities, and sports clubs. And, while racism is most violently experienced by Aboriginal people, it also maims the humanity and civility of those who perpetuate it, and deny and ignore it. If you want to think of this instrumentally, racism injures the capacity of the body politic, and of the university, to work collaboratively toward common visions: it impairs social and economic cohesion and dynamism, and it cannot accommodate critiques that deny its foundational myths of goodness, universality, inclusion, merit, and so on; it produces resistance to forms of knowledge other than those sanctioned by the foundational thinkers of the dominant order. In other words, the social salvation and intellectual potential of all of us is bound up in confronting and eliminating racism from Canada’s social fabric.

Citizenship is a role that we seldom think about, except at election time, and when we pay our taxes. But citizenship is perhaps one of our most important responsibilities. Originally, citizenship was a minimal set of three obligations: citizens were to vote for representatives, obey government and pay taxes, and serve in combat if required to do so. In this formulation, it seems that individual citizens hold a simple relationship with their government. However, citizenship is taken to be a much more capacious set of obligations and rights now. It includes both responsibilities such as the minimums I have just mentioned, and rights.

The political theory of liberalism focuses on individuals as citizens. Contrast this with political theories, and the political traditions of most Aboriginal peoples, which focus on individuals in relationship within and among communities. The primary objective is right relationship: individuals divorced from right relationship are unhealthy, unhappy, and at risk. Moreover, relationship is a process requiring continual attention and nourishment. Thus, the model of political process via right relationship is a valuable contribution from Aboriginal philosophies.
And citizenship too implicitly invokes relationship. Citizenship is meaningless apart from the context of society. Societies organize themselves through processes we know as politics and administer politics through instruments like political parties, constitutions, and bureaucracies such as legal aid commissions. Beyond these “large-P” political activities, there are other relationships that citizens participate in: social movements such as the environmental movement, or the women’s movement; interest groups such as unions and child care lobbies; and spontaneous public actions such as protests over the goods and services tax (GST), the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and so on.

Relationships are what make human lives meaningful. The quality of our relationships, both private and social or political, is a primary determinant of our individual health. The quality of those relationships among large numbers of citizens is a predictor of a stable, healthy society and hence, of a healthy body politic.

Yet even this more capacious construction invokes a simplistic understanding of citizenship, for it implies that we are all constructed as citizens in the same way, and thus, experience citizenship similarly. Finally, it assumes that we citizens hold the same relationship to the state and to each other.

Only people who are in most ways part of the “mainstream”, the status quo, the dominant population, are able to so comfortably share these assumptions about the noncontroversial nature of society and the state. My aim here is to foreground not difference, but privilege: and to do this, I invite you to understand hierarchies of social, economic and political power, and your personal location in relation to that power. Canada exists because of appropriation of Aboriginal territory and resources. The colonial, then settler state, has enforced its authority with oppressive policies, legitimated by racist ideology. This, too, shapes our political cultures, at least as significantly as more comfortable myths about hockey, pioneers, co-operatives, and tolerance.

Canada’s social viability requires a healthy political culture. Racism renders our political culture toxic. Our failure to attend to politically and socially significant differences between citizens leads to bad relationships, and thus,
undermines our social and political stability. Our ignorance of this – especially the motivated ignorance of privileged elites – guarantees that those of us with power will continue to reproduce the status quo and, correspondingly, will fail to imagine policy alternatives and practices that might transform serious, structural problems like racism.

Emma LaRocque also asks: how did we get so poor?

*How did my Nokom lose her grandchildren ...*
*How did my uncles Alex and Ezear die?*
*Singing sad songs on the railroad tracks ...*
*My Nokom and her daughters*
*Singing sad songs on the railroad tracks?*

Social institutions such as universities, political parties, police academies, and courts reflect and enforce certain forms of privilege, and specific relations of dominance and subordination. All of us participate in these relationships, and those of us who benefit from them tend to be especially blind to them. There are social and political consequences of racist, sexist, and other exclusionary hierarchies in Canada, yet these kinds of problems are generally attributed to all kinds of secondary causes. They are blamed on the victims. They are blamed on individual “choices”, though few of us choose the conditions in which we make our choices.

The challenge, then, lies in how those of us with privilege come to terms with its implications, and take up our responsibilities as privileged citizens and public intellectuals to construct a more equitable, just, and meritocratic society and more honest and equitable relationships. Like the realtors say, location matters: we need to understand our measures of privilege and power. Then, citizenship, including citizenship in the academy, requires something of us. And this is the most important role for citizens – to engage in the perpetual process of right relationship manifest by personal action and by collective will, in our social and political contexts.

All my relations

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References


Harvesting Social Justice and Human Rights in Rocky Terrain

Darren E. Lund

We hear a great deal about how far we’ve come in promoting diversity and challenging racism and other oppression in Canada, particularly from well-intentioned liberal-minded folks who see some positive strides in the past decades. However, almost every day I’m reminded of how much work there remains to do in this country, and particularly in Alberta, to challenge racism and other forms of oppression. I am honoured to be invited to contribute a piece to this important new forum, but I’m also feeling a bit overwhelmed by the task. I remember being at an event where June Callwood was introducing me and remarked, “Alberta, now there’s some rocky terrain for human rights work!” I had to agree, as I’ve researched the climate of hatred and intolerance that has been an undercurrent in this province; back in the 1930s the Ku Klux Klan had tremendous popularity here (Baergen, 2000; Lund, 2006). Of course, most of us also ignore the fact that we’re a colonized nation, and that we are all living on treaty land negotiated away from First Nations people.

Obliviousness to Oppression and Privilege

Like the fish who never thinks about the water in which it is swimming, most Albertans move through their lives oblivious to the hierarchies of power unearned status around them, and are rarely encouraged to speak out or take action against inequities. Most of us haven’t been encouraged to look at what John Willinsky (1998) has called the “monstrous lessons” of our past, the racist official government policies, the discriminatory institutions and program that are set up to benefit the dominant group, and all of the invisible privileges that make up our contemporary society. We have certainly never been taught to look critically at our own racialized identities as white people in a country that sees whiteness as the unspoken norm; my recent co-edited book invited a number of leading scholars and activists to delve into this issue with respect to the implications for education (Carr & Lund, 2007).

There is some irony in the path my life has taken in this field, as I am counting myself among these clueless people; I was born and grew up in Calgary...
quite unaware of issues surrounding racism, oppression and human rights. My otherwise loving parents had taught me some fairly powerful lessons about difference, but many of these weren’t the kind I’m trying to teach my own children. As a long-time police officer, my father holds a number of stereotypes about particular marginalized groups. I know I always felt rewarded for telling jokes that I now understand to be racist, sexist and homophobic. My lessons in accepting difference and working for social change were only to come well into my adult years.

**Encouraging Youth Activism**

When I became a high school teacher in Red Deer in the mid-1980s, I was inspired by a group of students whom most educators considered to be “under-achieving” and “non-academic” but who actually decided to form an anti-racist group in one of my English classes in my first year of teaching. The program really took off, and we suddenly found ourselves in the national media spotlight. You can read more about the *Students and Teachers Opposing Prejudice* (STOP) group in other sources (Lund, 1998), but it is safe to say that it was successful on a number of measures and managed to survive as a voluntary activist club in the school for 20 school years! We did everything from multicultural dinners, to charity fundraisers, to political lobbying, to protests, to holocaust awareness events, to all-ages concerts, to forming Alberta’s first-ever Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) program (Lund, 2007). Yes, that was in Red Deer. I’d encourage you to find out more about how you can help make the schools in your community safer and respectful places for all students, and a good place to start is the *Alberta Teachers’ Association* (ATA, 2008). They have some very progressive policies and resources for students and teachers.

I have learned a great deal about working with young people over these past two decades, and the main lesson is that they are *not* the leaders of tomorrow. In fact, they’re actually already the leaders of *today*. Not constrained by cynicism or a long list of reasons their anti-oppression efforts may likely fail, youth activists typically just want to “go for it”. When given a vehicle for their social justice concerns, and respectful engagement from their adult allies, they can be highly skilled and enthusiastic at taking action against oppression and discrimination in meaningful and effective ways. When they are encouraged to take ownership and agency within cooperative projects, students certainly don’t feel bound by the same constraints as their adult
activist counterparts.

**Education and Research for Social Justice**

I now spend my teaching time within a faculty of education where I am encouraged to foster a greater awareness of a range of diversity issues among my adult students who are taking a two-year after-degree program to become teachers. The work is highly rewarding, but full of tensions and apprehension for a number of good reasons. Most people who want to be teachers did really well and don’t see schools as sites for progressive social change; they are predominantly white and working- or middle-class, and are often unaware of the critical and political dimensions of their chosen careers, and the field of public education more broadly. However, the work here is exciting, and I am inspired by the quality of the people choosing this field, and their willingness to begin to ask the difficult questions around identity, inclusion, difference and privilege as they become teachers in schools that have very different demographics than the ones I attended a few decades ago.

I am also privileged to be in the position to advance the field in other ways as a scholar/activist in this area. I’ve been invited to volunteer with a number of community boards and agencies that are full of committed people from a variety of sectors. In addition, my academic research into teacher education, student activism and educating for social justice has been richly rewarding, and regularly takes me into schools across Canada and beyond. My goal is to study first-hand how we can best address these issues in ways that make a permanent impact. My graduate students and I always try to ensure that the relationship with our research participants is both respectful and reciprocal. In this way, we get to interview and observe the greatest students and teachers, and work collaboratively in activist projects that allow us to encourage their work while contributing to the field of study.

**Risks in Standing up for Rights**

Educators and other community workers who tackle human rights and equity issues in their daily practice also need to be aware of the significant risks of their work. I spend most of my work encouraging people to get involved in the struggle for equity, as the alternatives — paralyzing apathy or oppressive practices — really aren’t viable options. However, I also know that there are always risks in standing up for basic human rights and dignity in a pluralistic democracy. My own work has brought me so much personal
growth and professional rewards, but I have also encountered a great deal of resistance along the journey. The first month that STOP was formed, for example, I had a conversation with a prominent member of my school district’s administration, who said that if my anti-racism efforts “blew up in my face”, he officially “knew nothing about it”.

That same month, I received a personal letter from convicted hate-promoter Terry Long, Canadian leader of the Aryan Nations, on his Aryan Nations letterhead. A few years later I got a threatening letter from disgraced Alberta teacher and convicted hate-monger, James Keegstra, who warned me that if I didn’t turn from my “evil Talmudic puppet-masters” I would face the “thousand deaths of a coward”. Little did I realize that these would pale in comparison to the hate mail and phone calls I would receive some years later when I spoke out for the fair treatment of gay and lesbian students in Red Deer. We had been running our GSA group for two years when a hateful letter to the editor, written by a Red Deer pastor and youth worker, appeared in the Red Deer Advocate newspaper in June of 2002. The pastor specifically targeted gay kids and their supporters, declaring them guilty of putting the safety of children at risk, and erroneously linking them to pedophilia and disease.

The reverend went after the educators and other pastors who would dare support these vulnerable young people, calling them “just as immoral as the pedophiles, drug dealers and pimps that plague our communities”. “War has been declared”, he warned. “Where homosexuality flourishes, all manner of wickedness abounds”. Perhaps most chillingly, he called for readers to “take whatever steps are necessary to reverse the wickedness”. A Red Deer teenager was gay-bashed, less than two weeks after the letter was published. His young assailant called him a “faggot” as his cheekbone was shattered. When a local reporter asked the 17-year-old victim for a comment, he replied that he didn’t “feel safe” after reading the letter the reverend wrote (Zielinsky, 2002). He was right; he wasn’t safe at all.

I filed a human rights complaint against the reverend with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and waited more than five years for a hearing. At one point the commission dismissed my complaint, so I appealed and was allowed to “take carriage” and conduct my own investigation and legal work. During the Panel Hearing last July, a courageous office manager from
the reverend’s youth centre testified under oath that the reverend not only knew the youth who committed the Red Deer gay-bashing, but later actually condoned the violence.

There were consequences for this action; in the fall of 2002 I was sued by the reverend, who sought $400,000 in a frivolous defamation lawsuit that was later dropped, but only after I had amassed over $30,000 in legal expenses. Many generous rights supporters ensured I was not left on the hook for the entire cost. However, I still routinely receive hate mail, telephone calls and e-mails – usually calling me an evil sodomite – and people have contacted my Dean and the university President asking for job action against me for promoting equality. My wife and teenage kids regularly discover offensive material about me on the Internet. Last fall I received a written death threat that the Calgary Police had to investigate.

I am pleased to report that my complaint was upheld in a ruling last November, now posted on the Internet (AHRC, 2007), in which the letter was deemed to have been likely to promote hatred. Despite what the media critics have been saying in the past few months, this case wasn’t about eroding freedoms of expression or religion. It was actually about matters of life and death, social justice and the kind of society we choose to create. It was about safeguarding the personal safety of our young people, and the ruling emphasizes the urgent need for well-supported human rights commissions.

Balancing human rights with freedoms, and struggling for social justice have always been complex pursuits. The fact that the terrain is rocky in this province does not mean we should abandon our important work in sowing the seeds of justice. I am convinced we all need to take strong stands against hatred and oppression, both in our personal and public lives. Sometimes this requires educational efforts, sometimes activism and protest, sometimes lobbying, and other times it requires the help of government agencies. I encourage each of you to continue your activism and education toward social justice, and sincerely wish you all the best for a plenteous harvest.

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References
Toward ‘A Racism-Free Edmonton’ Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination

Sushila Samy


Although it is the ultimate responsibility of other orders of government to enact and enforce laws governing human rights and citizenship in Canada, it is recognized that the integration of people of diverse cultures, religions and ancestral roots happen primarily at the municipal level. There are specific actions municipalities can take to ensure positive integration and to help prevent and respond effectively to acts of racism and discrimination. In light of this, the City of Edmonton signed the “Declaration to join the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities against racism and discrimination”. Edmonton was one of eight municipalities to sign the Declaration. To date, 23 municipalities across Canada have signed the Declaration, six from across Alberta.

At the provincial level, Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission funded the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) to create a toolkit to assist municipalities interested in developing an action plan to deal with racism and discrimination. The Hon. Denis Ducharme, then Minister of Alberta Community Development, wrote to mayors in Alberta encouraging their municipalities to join the Coalition. Minister Ducharme together with Charlach MacKintosh, Chief Commissioner of Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission have encouraged membership in the Coalition. By signing the Declaration, the City has committed to:

- Developing and implementing an Action Plan
- The coalition commitments and Action Plan to inform the City’s vision,
Collaborating with the community to take action
• Working with other municipalities in addressing racism

After the signing of the Declaration, the Edmonton Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD) committee (now called the Racism Free Edmonton Committee) was formed as an Administrative Committee. Sixteen organizations in Edmonton are represented on the Committee and include representatives from the University, colleges, school boards, law enforcement, non-governmental agencies, Canada Immigration Commission, Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission, and departments of the City of Edmonton.

Since its formalization, the Racism Free Edmonton Committee has been meeting monthly as a whole, and in various sub-committees, to develop a process for action. The Committee has developed its Terms of Reference and has sent seven representatives to the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies in Los Angeles to participate in important anti-racism and discrimination workshops, which will inform the process to move forward.

At its February 20, 2008 meeting, the Committee decided that it needed to hold a series of forums in Edmonton to identify experiences of racism and discrimination in the community, as well as to generate sustainable solutions to the complex challenges facing our rapidly growing City. The outputs from these forums will assist in developing an Action Plan for the City in partnership with its various stakeholders.

The goal of creating a “Racism Free Edmonton” is possible with the shared commitment of the community, businesses, educational institutions, law enforcement and all levels of governments. Individuals and organizations need to get involved in making our City a role model of respect and inclusiveness.

*Sushila Samy is the Project Coordinator for the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination, City of Edmonton. Email at Sushila. Samy@edmonton.ca.*
Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations (NAARR)

Charlene Hay

The Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations (NAARR) is a non-profit, charitable organization with over 150 individuals and organizations as members. In our effort to eliminate racial discrimination, we encourage children, youth, and adults to respect people of all colours, races, and creeds. NAARR works by conducting research, providing education, and working toward systemic change.

Our organization began as an ad-hoc committee, in 1993, with the sole purpose of organizing the annual March 21 Campaign (International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination). Since 1998, NAARR has facilitated various projects and has been functioning all year. Staffing has increased from one coordinator in 1998 to our current component of 5 full time and 1 part time staff. The number of individual and organizational members has grown from 30 to 150 and we have developed a very large community network. We are working directly with 10 government funders and have developed relationships with many others. Partnerships are central to every project we work on – some examples are Edmonton Public and Edmonton Catholic Schools, a number of individual schools in Edmonton, all Edmonton Immigrant Serving Agencies, several Aboriginal organizations, Expecting Respect peer education program, Kids in the Hall, and Edmonton Young Offender Centre. We have also built the capacity to carefully plan projects with clearly outlined outcomes and indicators to measure success.

In the early years of NAARR, we received funding from Canadian Heritage (federal) and Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship & Multiculturalism Education Fund only. Our funding base is now diverse and includes many funders: 3 federal departments, 5 provincial, 2 municipal, and 6 other funding organizations. In addition to these, we have contracts for professional development with one school district and several schools and we hold a casino approximately once every 2 years. We have met with a number of other funders that are possibilities for the future: 3 federal and 1 municipal. This process of exploring for new possibilities of funding will continue.

During the first five years of full-time operations, NAARR conducted three

community consultations and one large research project. *Youth Against Racism, Multiculturalism in the City of Champions, and Backlash to 9-11* each assembled series of focus groups to ask of the Edmonton community to describe how racism was manifest in their lives and to help develop solutions. There were clear needs indicated in this research: changes to education curriculum and professional development for teachers, as well as hiring practices for schools; hiring practices and ways of working together in the workplace; bias in media feeds racial stereotypes and racism in society; and training for employees in the public sector. We then conducted a major research project on racial *Equity in Edmonton Schools*, again using focus groups and this time including surveys of students. Our coordinator is an African man, an experienced teacher, and has nearly completed his PhD in Drama Education for social justice.

Our work following this has been with youth, within the formal education system, and now with professional development. We have a youth program that has run since 2004, training young leaders to be knowledgeable in anti-racism and then to educate other youth using dramatic, interactive methods. As of this moment, they have presented workshops to 10,000 youth.

After the *Equity in Edmonton Schools* research, we worked formally with three Edmonton school districts to create action plans to work toward change. We continue to work with two districts – both are working on policy change and professional development of teachers. The process of working to systemic change was hugely challenging and complex. It was funded by project funding that has been completed. There are still so many things to work on with the districts and now that we have developed key relationships with leaders in these districts, we need to be able to continue this work.

We have a project that is offering excellent quality professional development to teachers on *Culturally Responsive and Anti-Racist* teaching and learning. The project coordinator is an experienced teacher and has nearly completed a PhD in Education where she focused on this area. She has excellent knowledge and facilitation skills. Her work incorporates needs assessment and follow-up sessions that tailor workshops to specific situations and increase effectiveness. After one year of development of the project, she is now receiving many requests from schools for professional development. She has expanded her work to the social service and corporate sectors. This
Hay

has been very successful and is just starting to pay for itself.

We have begun working with Edmonton Public schools and Aboriginal students and families to assist them in developing excellent communication with each other. The coordinator is an Aboriginal social worker with a great deal of personal and professional experience to bring to this work.

*Charlene Hay is the Executive Director of NAARR.*
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A Review of Recent Canadian Critical Race Scholarship
Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez

Wendy Chan and Kiram Mirchandani, *Criminalizing Race, Criminalizing Poverty: Welfare Fraud Enforcement in Canada* (Fernwood Publishing, 2008). The authors argue that a war against the poor is currently in progress. People of colour are, often, the target of government’s attempts at shrinking welfare state. Racial stereotypes and difference are usually used to construct people of colour as potential “abusers” of the system, to criminalize and penalize poverty through surveillance and control of welfare state recipients. *The Poetics of Anti-Racism* (Zed Books, 2007) edited by Nuzhat Amin and George J. Sefa Dei deals with language and racism. It focuses on the centrality of language and how race and racism are expressed in the everyday life. In dialogue with educators, scholars of language and sociology, this anthology argues how anti-racists could use language-based discrimination in their struggles for equity in Canada.

Through a critical anti-racist lens, MacDonald E. Ighodaro in *Living the Experience: Migration, Exclusion and Anti-Racist Practice* (Zed Books, 2007) dissects issues facing refugees, immigrants, and other racialized minorities, both in Canada and globally. The book is a critical look at the inherent racism in Canada’s immigration and refugee policies and also at the socio-racial constructions widely used in Canada to exclude, contain, and repatriate refugees, particularly those coming from Africa. In *The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21 Century Britain* (Pluto Press, 2007), Arun Kundnani shows how, exacerbated by the attacks of 9/11, government policies and press campaigns are destroying multiculturalism in Great Britain and, instead, producing a new form of institutionalized racism, which erodes human rights and criminalizes difference, particularly that of Muslims and asylum-seekers. Finally, in *Dancing on Live Embers* (Between the Lines, 2006), Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas offers a hands-on book for racial justice activists seeking to create more equitable workplaces. Drawing on different stories and case studies, the book explores how racism, privilege and whiteness operate in the organizational life. Away from multiculturalism and celebratory diversity, the book challenges existing racism and inequi-

ties of power and the uneven progress made by some of the most committed anti-racist organizations.

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‘Homey Racism’: A Review of Nandita Sharma’s Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of ‘Migrant Workers’ in Canada

Janine Brodie

In Home Economics: Nationalism and the Making of ‘Migrant Workers’ in Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), Nandita Sharma tells two stories about the production and reproduction of white hegemony in contemporary Canada. The first story draws on parliamentary debates, policy documents and immigration data to recount the conception, conditions and consequences of the 1973 Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP). The NIEAP provides foreign migrant workers with temporary employment authorization to engage in what Sharma terms as “unfree labour” in Canada and is part of a growing regime of border controls and state practices, which constitute a two-tier legal system, one that “regulates national subjects and another that regulates foreign objects. However, as Sharma persuasively argues, the NIEAP and associated state discourses underwrite white hegemony, legitimate the subordination of migrant workers and promote the idea that migrant workers, overwhelming non-whites from the global South, are lucky to work legally in Canada. They are “wanted as unwanted” workers.

Home Economics also challenges familiar nationalist discourses that represent Canada as a tolerant, multicultural, and caring society, revealing, instead, the often-times racial and racist underpinnings of the Canadian state and various formulations of Canadian identity. This second story is multifaceted and ambitious but current debates about the limits of multiculturalism, reasonable accommodation, and barriers to integration underscore that critical scholarly engagement with race is both necessary and long overdue.
Considering the troubling ways in which these issues are now framed in public opinion and rehearsed in such public forums as Quebec’s Bouchard-Taylor commission, readers will find Sharma’s development of the idea of “homey racism” particularly insightful. Sharma outlines the ways in which the idea of home has been linked to family, ethnicity, community and national boundaries in modernist discourses and how this fusion of identities and spaces naturalizes and legitimizes the differential treatment of people living in the same spaces. This narrative allows us (particularly, white nationalists in the Canadian case) to imagine that we have the exclusive right to our “homeland”, and that “we do not have to share our space with anyone else unless they are the same”. While homey racism once took the form of overtly racist immigration policies, Sharma argues that contemporary forms of racism are more subtle, focusing on cultural difference and the problem of integrating those who are deemed different, “un-integratable”, and a threat to our national way of life.

One could take issue with *Home Economics* for, among other things, sometimes slipping into overly broad generalizations, deploying an insufficiently nuanced or historicized discussion of white nationalism, or choosing to rely on first generation globalization research, which incorrectly juxtaposed the national and the global as antagonistic political spaces. These critiques, however, would not diminish the many strengths of this innovative and revealing book. It definitely will be on my Canadian graduate core course reading list next year.

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A Survey of New Books on Race, Racialization and Anti-Racism
Compiled by Malinda S. Smith


The Ardent Review (April 2008) 1, 76-78.
**Western Law and Politics** (University of Toronto Press), 240 pages, ISBN: 10: 08020947X.


Malinda S. Smith is an associate professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta. Email: Malinda.smith@ualberta.ca
Upcoming Conferences & Symposiums
Compiled by Malinda S. Smith

Congress 2008
Thinking Beyond Borders: Global Ideas-Global Values
31 May – 8 June, 2008, Vancouver, B.C.
Federation’s Equity Issues Portfolio

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 12:15 TO 13:20 - BUCH A204
Falguni A. Sheth
A philosopher and political theorist at Hampshire College, Amherst, Falguni A. Sheth writes and teaches in the areas of continental and political philosophy, philosophy of race, and legal and feminist theory. She is co-editor of Race, Liberalism, and Economics (U of Michigan Press 2004), and, under a Woodrow Wilson Career Enhancement Junior Faculty Fellowship, is completing a book manuscript provisionally entitled The Political Theory of Race: Technologies and Logics of Exclusion (SUNY), which draws upon such examples as the caste system, the practice of veiling, and the framework of liberalism, to illustrate how racial divisions are a fundamental feature of sovereign-subject relations in a polity.

Panel Discussions:

SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 10:30 TO 12:00 – BUCH A204
De/Colonizing Anti/Racism in the Academy

MONDAY, JUNE 2, 10:30 TO 12:00 – BUCH A204
The Audit Academy: Measuring (in) the Profession

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 10:30 TO 12:00 – BUCH A204
Intersectionalities in Theory and Practice

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 10:30 TO 12:00 – BUCH A204
Affirmative Action and Equity in the Academic Workplace

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 15:00 TO 17:00 – BUCH A204
Equity Leadership from the Top

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4, 17:00 TO 18:00 – BUCH FOYER
Reception

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 10:30 TO 12:00 – BUCH A204
Action and Traction: Equity “How To” from the Field

Confirmed panelists for the daily events include: Enakshi Dua, Bonita Lawrence, Roxana Ng, Sunera Thobani, Joy Mighty, Lawrence Berg, Audrey Kobayashi, Carol Schick, Handel Kashope Wright, Malinda S. Smith, Maria Wallis, Stephen Petrina, Sarita Srivastava, Yasmin Jiwani, Pat Rogers, Claudia Emes, Mahejabeen Ebrahim, Janice Drakich and Christian Leuprecht.

Organized by:
Donna Pennee, University of Guelph (dpennee@uoguelph.ca),
Malinda S. Smith, University of Alberta (Malinda.smith@ualberta.ca)
Maria Wallis, Independent Scholar (wallismariarose@hotmail.com).

Interdisciplinary Conference on Race Future of an Illusion,
Future of the Past
Call For Papers deadline April 15, 2008.
The conference will take place 13-15 November 2008 at Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey: <http://www.monmouth.edu/>

Call for papers, panels, and workshops on race in contemporary society and history from multiple disciplinary perspectives on the following topics:
Race: History of an Idea; Race and Slavery in the Atlantic World; Race & Nation; Race, Ethnicity, Space, and Place in History; Race and African Americans; Race and the Asian American Experience; Race in Latin America; Race, Ethnicity, and the Problem of Language; Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Contemporary African Society Race, Gender, Class; The Multiracial Movement in America; Multiracial Identity in Global Perspective; Teaching of Race and Ethnic Studies in the Academy; Genetic Ancestry Tracing; Racial Genetics and the Commercialization of Race; Representations of Race in Communication Media; Psychology of Racial Oppression; Future of Race; Whiteness and White Privilege; Race and Medical Dispari-
ties; Race and Sports; Race and the Military in U.S. society. Keynote speakers will include Dr. Alan Goodman-President, American Anthropological Association (2005-2007), and Associate Director of the New York African Burial Ground Project.

Please forward the following: a 250 word (1 page) abstract to futureofrace@gmail.com along with a brief CV. Hettie V. Williams, Lecturer-African American History, Monmouth University; email: futureofrace@gmail.com. Additional details online at: <http://FutureofRace.googlepages.com/home>.

Rethinking Race in the Americas: Anthropology, Politics and Policy
Sponsor: Department of Anthropology, Indiana University

This symposium presents eight internationally renowned anthropologists who will speak on the concept of race, its relation to anthropology, and its relevance to the politics of the present across the Americas.

Deconstructing Islamophobia: Immigration, Globalization and Constructing the Other
University of California-Berkeley, California, 25-26 April 2008
The conference seeks to provide an open scholarly exchange, exploring new approaches to the study of the current period, and de-constructing the organizing process that gave birth to Islamophobia as well as it interconnectedness to existing and historical otherness in the area of race, gender and “post-colonial” studies.
Email: Contact: HatemB@berkeley.edu /Web site: <http://crg.berkeley.edu/index.html>
tinct Manifestation of Racism and How to Tackle It
Coast Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre, Calgary, Alberta, 30 April-2 May 2008
The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) invites Canadians to the 2008 Award of Excellence symposium. This is the fifth presentation of this important event to recognize achievement and Best Practice in equity and anti-racism in Canada. The 2008 symposium takes in consideration Canada’s leadership in the field of anti-racism in Canada. It is an opportunity to lead public policy, profile research and share exemplary models of anti-racism practice. The symposium will address current issues in relation to equity and racism through policy, research, education and training forums. There will be a specific emphasis in these topic areas: Racial Profiling • Race Based Statistics • The Integration of Race and Anti-Racism in Education & Training • National Anti-Racism Policy • Reasonable (religious) Accommodation • Racism as a Determinant of Health
Email: Erin Dowe at info@crrf-fcrr.ca / Web site: <www.crrf-fcrr.ca>

Fifth Annual California Roundtable on Philosophy and Race
University of California-Berkeley, California, 3-4 October 2008
Submission Deadline is April 30, 2008
Web site: <http://www.californiaroundtablephilosophyrace.org/>

Registration is free but please register by email by April 30, 2008. Papers should be no more than 30 minutes in length. Please submit full paper or detailed abstract (2-3 pages), as MS word .doc or .pdf document to Falguni Sheth: fsheht@berkeley.edu.

International Conference on the Representation of Islam and Muslims in the Media 2008,
The negative image of Islam and Muslims is becoming ever more pervasive around the world. It is hoped that this International Conference will succeed in examining the problematics of the noted communication scenario and open up new pathways to solution.
Email: icorm08@iiu.edu.my
8th Annual Critical Race Conference Announcement
Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, 2nd week of November 2008
The 8th Annual Critical Race Conference will be held at Ryerson University this year during the second week of November. A Call for Papers will be distributed through various listserves including the RACE listserve accessible to all RACE members. For information, please contact Prof. Sedef Arat-Koc: Email: saratkoc@politics.ryerson.ca

Facing Race Conference 2008
Location: TBA, 13-15 November, 2008
Sponsored by the Applied Research Centre, CUNY
Web site: <http://www.mediaactioncenter.org/?q=node/1196> / Email: arcny@arc.org

The Facing Race conference will bring together people concerned about race including activists, organizers, journalists, artists, scholars, key policy advocates and researchers interested in exploring innovative strategies and successful models for changing public policy.
Submissions are Invited!
Submissions are invited for the next two issues of, *The Ardent Anti-Racism and Decolonization Review*, which aims to provide a space for contributors to critically analyze issues, ideas, concepts, theories, practices, initiatives and innovative strategies related to race, racialization, antiracism and decolonization. It will provide a scholarly platform for high quality dialogue and debate on these and the broader struggles for social justice.

About The Ardent
The name reflects the passionate commitment to racialized minorities and Indigenous peoples, to building anti-racism, decolonization and social justice alliances. The etymology of the English word “ardent” is the Latin word, *ardens* and the French word, *ardant*. Its meanings include intensity, resoluteness, and steadfastness, determined, hopeful and passionate. It signifies commitment, a “burning passion”, “ardent revolutionaries”, and a “fervent desire for change”.

The Ardent, Volume 1, Issue 2:
In addition to issues of racism, racialization and antiracism, this issue will focus on the following themes: colonialism(s), anti-colonialism(s) and decolonization. The issue will commemorate 21 June, National Aboriginal Day in Canada and the 9 August, the UN-designated International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. Due date: 20 June 2008.

Essay submissions may explore, among other topics, theories, concepts and practices related to colonialism, coloniality, internal colonialism, neo-colonialism, and post-colonialism; historical and contemporary anti-colonial and decolonization struggles; decolonizing the mind, knowledges, ways of knowing and being; decoloniality and Indigenous struggles. Submissions that take an intersectional analysis, and which explore racialization, antiracism and decolonization are especially welcomed.

The Ardent, Volume 1, Issue 3:
In addition to issues of racism, racialization and antiracism, this issue will focus on the following themes: neo-orientalism, antiracism and ‘11 September 2001’, racial profiling, Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo Bay, reasonable accommodation, and related debates. Submissions that take an intersectional analysis are especially welcomed. Due date: 10 November 2008.
Guidelines for Submission
Contributions will be selected for their relevance, originality, clarity, and educational and literary merit. All submissions must be written in clear, user-friendly language for a general, not necessarily academic, audience. Jargon should be kept to a minimum and all concepts should be clearly and succinctly explained.

All submissions must be between 1,000-2,500 words, an original work, solely written by the author or co-authors.

Submissions should be written and explained in your own words. However, where references are used, they should be included in full at the end of your submissions.

Contributions should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margin, and follow a standard APA format. See APA-style.org: <http://apastyle.apa.org/previoustips.html>.

Contributors may submit works electronically. The preferred formats are Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format (RTF).
Please include your name, institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and e-mail address in the upper right hand corner of the first page. The Editor reserves the right to reject any Submission, which does not comport with The Ardent’s vision.

Submissions should be sent to:
Dr. Malinda Smith, Editor, The Ardent, c/o Department of Political Science, 10-16 H.M. Tory Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2H4 Canada; Email: Malinda.smith@ualberta.ca