

REFRAMING ANTI-COLONIAL THEORY FOR THE DIASPORIC CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT In teaching and dialoguing with students and colleagues we have on a number of occasions had to grapple with questions such as: What is the ‘anti-colonial’? How is this different from a ‘post-colonial’ approach? And how are we to articulate an anti-colonial prism as a way of thinking and making sense of current colonial relations and procedures of colonization? These are tough questions complicated by the apparent mainstream privileging and intellectual affection for the “post-colonial” over “anti-colonial”. This paper is purposively written to provoke a debate as a contestation of ideas of the current ‘post’ context. We are calling for a nuanced reading of what constitutes an intellectual subversive politics in the ongoing project of decolonization for both colonized and dominant bodies. We ask our readers to consider the possibilities of a counter theoretical narrative or conception of the present in ways that make theoretical sense of the everyday world of the colonized, racialized, oppressed and the Indigene. We bring a politicized reading to the present as a moment of practice, to claim and reclaim our understandings of identity in the present with implications for how we theorise a Diasporic identity. We challenge the intellectual seduction to equally flatten notions of identity and relations as simply fluid, in flux or something to be complicated/contested. We believe there is something that must not be lost in reclaiming past powerful notions regarding particularly the marginalized understandings of their identities for the present. Thus we revive anti-colonial discourse, building on early anti-colonial thinking and practice. We are bringing a particular reading of the ‘colonial’ that is relevant to the present in which both nations, states and communities, as well as bodies and identities are engaged as still colonized and resisting the colonial encounter.

Introduction

In teaching and dialoguing with students and colleagues we have on a number of occasions had to grapple with questions such as: What is the ‘anti-colonial’? How is this different from a ‘post-colonial’

approach? And how are we to articulate an anti-colonial prism as a way of thinking and making sense of current colonial relations and procedures of colonization? These are tough questions complicated by the apparent mainstream privileging and intellectual affection for the “post-colonial” over “anti-colonial”. The ‘post’ conveniently implicates all, while the ‘anti’ identifies the ‘bad guy’ and carries with it a radical critique of the dominant, as the colonial oppressor whose antics and oppressive practices continue to script the lives of the subordinate and colonized even as we resist such dominance. Not many want to hear this raving of the anti-colonial. But the anti-colonial gives us a position that is implicating and revolutionary in its thinking. It also offers possibilities for colonized and marginalized subjects to design our own futures. Anti-colonial education allows us to dialogue with important questions of identity affirmation, yet at the same time bring to the discussion relevant issues specifically concerning the interconnections of power, difference, and resistance as augured in colonial geographies.

This paper is purposively written to provoke a debate as a contestation of ideas of the current ‘post’ context. Admittedly, in such undertaking we are likely to raise more issues that we can concretely address. But we see this is an important beginning. We are calling for a nuanced reading of what constitutes an intellectual subversive politics in the ongoing project of decolonization for both colonized and dominant bodies. In our view the Euro-modernist/Euro-colonial project of credentialism, legitimation and validation has problematically allowed many racialized, oppressed and Indigenous bodies in the academy to simply

negotiate for acceptance in white colonial spaces.

This is fundamentally flawed intellectually and, politically. Meanwhile [and not without noted resistance] the colonial space has been left intact to continue with its imperializing gaze, scripting and regularization of the “other”. What is needed is a particular set of interventions from multiple angles. We assist in this endeavour by complicating postcolonialism as a theoretical framework. But perhaps fundamentally, we argue for a re-conceptualization of the present moment as ‘anti-colonial’. We ask our readers to consider the possibilities of a counter theoretical narrative or conception of the present in ways that make theoretical sense of the everyday world of the colonized, racialized, oppressed and the Indigene. We bring a politicized reading to the present as a moment of practice, to claim and reclaim our understandings of identity in the present with implications for how we theorise a Diasporic identity. We challenge the intellectual seduction to equally flatten notions of identity and relations as simply fluid, in flux or something to be complicated/contested. We believe there is something that must not be lost in reclaiming past powerful notions regarding particularly the marginalized understandings of their identities for the present.

Thus we revive anti-colonial discourse, building on early anti-colonial thinking and practice. We note that anti-colonialism is not a discourse which belongs to the past. (Nations, regions and communities may no longer be colonized in the historical sense of the term). We are bringing a particular reading of the ‘colonial’ that is relevant to the present in which both nations,

states and communities, as well as bodies and identities are engaged as still colonized and resisting the colonial encounter. This to us is the 'anti-colonial' moment. The 'colonial' still exists and failing to include the anti-colonial in the current neo-colonial moment is very problematic and limiting to intellectual discursive practices that seek liberation and decolonization. But before proceeding further, we must also sound a caution. It is important to show intellectual depth and growth. We do not want to throw away postcolonialism in our insistence that we revisit anti-colonialism as a counter discourse. There has always a borrowing/fusion of ideas. While we question the hegemony and seduction of postcolonialism, we call for an expanded and critical reading of the 'post' and the 'colonial'. If the postcolonialism is to be an ally discourse there are obviously going to be intellectual tension to resolve.

Noticeably, in the much-popularized post-modern epoch, the post-colonial discursive has been centered within academic debates (Hall, 2005; Gilroy, 1993; Ahmad, 2008; Bhabha, 1994; Spivak, 1993; Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 2005). The quarrel itself concerns the nomenclature of the *post*. What is this *post* when the colonial has all but re-organized its permutations to adjust to the contemporary epoch? Themes such as multiculturalism, diversity, hybridity, ethnicity, difference, and heterogeneity have populated many discussions concerning the post-colonial. With emerging new identities being formed through globalization, trans-nationalism and Diasporization, the post-colonial discourse has given rise to different cartographies, and geographies in which the post-human articulates the newly found celebratory

configurations of the geo-self. Of concern is the issue of extricating new and different geographies of what it means to be human regarding colonially oppressed peoples. This is relevant given that the dominant transmission of what it means to be human remains well in place through the myriad tropes of power and privilege.

The historic specificities of colonization, is in of itself a place where knowledge dwells for colonially oppressed peoples. The challenge for the anti-colonial framework is with extricating these deeply embedded reservoirs of knowledge as embodied historically through a particular time and space by the colonial engendered body. In this discussion we posit an integrative anti-colonial discursive framework to help with rupturing the augured historic specific tropes of colonialism. This notion borrows from and revises both anti-colonial and anti-racist theories and practices.

Our hope is to advance some of the relatively recent ideas of anti-colonial theory contained in such pieces as wa Thiongo, 1993, 1986; Senghor, 2001; hooks, 1995,1992; Lorde, 1984; Smith, 1999; Dei, 2000; Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001, Davies, 2007; Dei and Kempf, 2006 and Kempf, 2009. This is not to presume the cited works are the sole sites for theorizing anti-colonial. We simply locate ourselves in this literature as where we are coming from and within the bodies of work that not only connects with new stances but also help us situate an advancement of anti-colonial scholarship. We advocate an integrative anti-colonial discursive framework that speaks to the different intersections of colonial oppression such as race, class, gender, sexuality, ableism, law and religion. We speak to the need for decolonization for all

bodies alike to move beyond the opening up of these new spaces, as circumscribed through celebratory discourses of identity and identification. We offer a countervailing discourse with the intent of speaking to particular experiences of oppression and resistance.

We also posit the anti-colonial discourse as a politics of action, as a way of knowing and understanding the lived experiences of the self through praxis, as a way of understanding the self beyond the governing ethic of Euro-modernity. We identify the anti-colonial discourse as an alternative body of knowledge, one imbued through local knowledges. We note the way in which the anti-colonial discourse coalesces through intersecting geographies of oppression. We work to de-tangle oppressive spaces as they appear through day-to-day social interactions by way of praxis as the governing ethic onto the said local body. We recognize the shift in colonial structures whereby the instruments of imposition have been reconfigured and present itself as the ethical and moral tenet within the everyday social environment. We situate the anti-colonial discourse as that which de-reifies colonial socio-cultural spaces as they come to reside within schooling and education and through the myriad hegemonic institutions of society. Our learning objective is with dialoguing through anti-colonial thinking so that different bodies can come to better understand the material forces as determined by certain socio-political and economic interests of the state. Of particular interest to the anti-colonial discourse are the different relationships of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism, the certain ways in which these historical determinants come to form limiting conditions on the self. That is, the self as

coming to articulate its humanism through the colonial logic of Euro-modernity.

Towards an anti-colonial discursive framework

To reiterate, we argue that while anti-colonialism may draw on postcolonial and neo-colonial writings and theoretical stances, these frameworks and approaches are by no means synonymous. Historically, colonialism has been about the material good, be it exploitation of the resources or the engagement of the body colonially endowed for plantation life. Colonialism has been about racist relationships with particular geographic bodies with the aim of material profit. The body read as raced, classed, sexualised and gendered is also central to the articulation of anti-colonial theory.

As noted elsewhere (Dei, 2006) anti-colonial theory revolves around figures, such as Frantz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mao-Tse-Tung, Albert Memmi, Aime Cesaire, Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, Clara Fraser, Claudia Jones, Leopold Senghor, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Henry Sylvester-Williams, Stokely Carmichael, Amilcar Cabral, and W. E. B. Du Bois to name a few. The anti-colonial presence has been well historicized through these myriad bodies that have taken up the fight for the oppressed.

At this juncture we would put forward twelve (12) central principles of anti-colonial theory (see also Dei, 2010a; Dei and Asgharzadeh, 2001):

1. The anti-colonial framework is a theory about the

mechanics and operations of colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial projects on:

- processes of knowledge production, interrogation and validation
- the understanding of Indigenuity and local Indigenusness; and,
- the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics.

2. The anti-colonial theory works with the idea that all knowledge must purposively serve to challenge colonial imposition.

3. 'Colonial' is understood in the sense of not simply 'foreign or alien', but more profoundly as 'imposed and dominating'.

4. A rethinking of the notion of 'colonial' helps bring an expanded understanding to colonial relations and oppressions, moving and shifting the focus of knowledge on the variegated forms of territorial imperialism, or of state/cultural control of resource (including subjects) to other direct and indirect mechanisms and processes (e.g., technologies, education, knowledge and ideologies). The thinking is that colonialism as read as imposition and domination never ended with the return of political sovereignty to colonized peoples or nation states. Indeed today colonialism and re-colonizing projects manifest themselves in variegated ways (e.g., within different contexts (e.g., schools) as to the different ways

knowledges get produced and receive validation, and the particular experiences of students that get counted as [in]valid, and the identities that receive recognition and response from school authorities.

5. Anti-colonial framework theorizes the nature and extent of social domination, and particularly, the multiple places of power and how these relations of power work to establish dominant-subordinate connections. The idea of ‘coloniality of power’ (that is, an imperial power, as exercised, is beyond the power and agency of the subordinated; and extends beyond asymmetrical power relations).

6. Working with the anti-colonial framework means engaging such concepts as colonialism, oppression, colonial encounter, decolonization, power, agency and resistance, as well as claiming the authenticity of local voice and intellectual agency of peoples.

7. An integrated and intersectional analysis of colonialism, imperialism and decolonization offers a deeper understanding of anti-colonialism. In challenging all relations of domination it is understood that the procedures and mechanisms for the everyday operations of these relations may differ.

8. Anti-colonial theory also recognizes the central place of spirituality and the spiritual knowing – embodiment of knowledge.

9. The saliency of Indigeneity (as identity) and the Indigene (in terms of the authenticity of voice). That is, anti-colonial is an epistemology of the colonized,

anchored in the Indigenous sense of collective and common colonial consciousness. In other words, the anti-colonial framework is primarily an epistemology of the oppressed. It is a theory that emerges from the “ground-up” in terms of local peoples understanding their experiences in the context of colonialism, colonial and re-colonial relations and other associated oppressions.

10. As a theory, articulating the connections between colonialism, oppression, and change, anti-colonialism posits a ‘literacy of resistance’ to bring about social change (Kempf, 2010, p. 45).

11. There is a place for the dominant /colonizer /oppressor in the anti-colonial struggle. The dominant must be prepared to invoke and act on their complicities and responsibilities through a politics of accountability in order to bring about change. As Kempf (2010) writes “dominant bodies must work primarily against the oppression by which they are privileged and in which they thus participate” (p.46). The notion of “white/colonial privilege” is crucial to anti-colonialism because it provides us with an avenue for asking and insisting upon accountability and addressing responsibilities. For dominant bodies, working with the power of “colonial privilege” should be an important entry point to theorize anti-colonial politics.

12. It is also significant to bring a transhistorical analysis to the understanding of colonial privilege. The trans-historical analysis challenges and subverts the implication of the ‘post’ in post-colonialism (as an

aftermath) and asserts that the colonial encounter is transhistorical rather than historical, in that it persists across time in the colonizing of nations and peoples (see Kempf, 2010).

Anti-colonial education and the intersectionality of difference: The question of schooling in race, class, gender and sexual politics.

Engaging critical education through anti-colonial principles means speaking through difference and embodied knowledges. It means understanding the self through colonial subjectivities. It is about the colonized, oppressed, marginalized and Indigenous peoples dialoguing with local memories to come into critical consciousness through an understanding of the colonial experience by way of particular historic specificities. What worries us is the manner in which knowledge as articulated through contemporary schooling and education comes to be disseminated within conventional classroom spaces and presents itself as all inclusive, and encompassing of heterogeneity. We locate the conventional classroom as a disciplinary apparatus over counter and resistant ways of knowing (Foucault, 1995; 1980; Popkewtiz, 1997), alternative ways of knowing which historically have been immanent to the 'Othered' voice, and as being produced from the variable geographies of modernity. The limitation of the school curricula and the way in which schooling and education problematically speak to the experiences of different peoples are of the utmost concern to anti-colonial education. Indigenous, local cultural knowledges can help disrupt Eurocentric narratives embedded within

conventional spaces of learning.

As anti-colonial education continuously implicates historical and present knowledge production about difference, we can ask questions about identity, identifications and the politics of representation to present day issues about materiality, social justice and political action. One of the dominant critiques of anti-colonial theory is that early theorists were simply reductionist and particularly race essentialist in their analysis. Yet, the strength of the anti-colonial lies in its broad examination of systems of colonial oppressions structured along lines of difference: race, class, gender, sexuality, [dis]ability, language, etc. Admittedly, early and pioneering anti-colonial thinkers, Fanon, Memmi and Césaire all dwelt on the inescapability of race, arguing that race indistinguishably confers power, privilege as well as punishment simultaneously. Fanon later highlighted the saliency of class in his work (Fanon, 1963). Similarly, Aimé Césaire in his famous treatise 'A Discourse on Colonialism' brought to the fore the "colonial question" framed as significantly a race matter. But as has been pointed out (see Kempf, 2010; Dei and Simmons, 2010) the question of systemic accountability and the dominant's responsibility for removing colonial oppression is foregrounded. It is worth noting that Césaire would be among the first to theorize on the politics of intersectionality arguing that despite the intersections of race and class, racist colonialism trump simple class analyses. In effect, Césaire's anti-racism was deeply rooted in an anti-capitalist critique.

Furthermore, Albert Memmi's (1991) excellent work, 'The Colonizer and the Colonized' extended

Césaire's analysis focusing on the mutually constituting relationships between the "colonizer and the colonized". Memmi overarching learning objective was an investigation of the psychology and psychiatry of the colonizing mind and the implications for resistant politics for both the colonizer and colonized. He examined the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, pointing to the ambiguities and contradictions of any strict binaries or dualisms. He saw power relations as asymmetrical between the colonized and colonizer. This is an anti-colonial understanding of power. To him the colonizer is the racial dominant. Memmi posited the colonizer has two options for refusal. He either leaves or fights to change the system. For Memmi then, race is a weapon used to protect a larger social power – colonial power - largely made up of economic and material privilege and reinforced by racial oppression (Kempf, 2010). By focusing on the power, knowledge and agency of the oppressed on one hand and the challenges of accountability and responsibility on the part of the dominant bodies we come into a dialectic understanding of how change emerges (i.e., for the dominant to use their power and privilege in the service of social transformation in the contexts of the everyday resistance of the colonized).

Understanding the colonial as anything imposed and dominating, allows the anti-colonial discursive framework to engage the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, sexuality, linguistic, and religion-based oppressions through historical moments across time and space as sites of power and resistance. For a contemporary anti-colonial theory to offer a comprehensive account for the human

condition, it must speak to the intersections of the varied forms of social difference and colonizing relations. For example, gender is critical to anti-colonial analysis. The experiences of gendered colonial oppression are conflated and compounded with racial, class, sexual, ability, religious and linguistic oppressions. Notwithstanding the fact, that gender is a contested, fluid and paradoxical classification, it is a significant form of identity and a site of knowledge production. Intersectionality allows us to discuss the arrangement of the social, and the different configurations of identity by foregrounding particular identities. In other words, identity embodies intersectional sites as fragmented and whole at the same time. Yet, the anti-colonial in speaking to these intersecting nodal points of the human condition, as we read them, centers race and Indigeneity as the medium of inquiry. This is not to wittingly or unwittingly hierarchize oppression on the body, but it is to trace the historical constitutive conditions of the human as embedded in the material of race. In fact these same said intersecting sites of gender, class, sexuality, etc, which form the human condition comes to be organized and inscribed through race. Historically gender has been a site for political mobilization. The entanglements of gender and power offers an anti-colonial reading of gender through social relations of power and privilege that shapes, structures reality and practice and is informed by identity and experience. Similarly, sexuality and [dis]ability also are important sites and sources of difference. In colonizing discourses we come to see how bodies matter and body image and representation are key sites of anti-colonial struggles.

Colonial oppressions stemming from our 'cultural /sexual/ class/linguistic/ [dis] ability differences' are located within the power of 'common sense/hegemonic thinking' as ideological orthodoxies. There are gender/sexual differences around how colonialism and colonial relations are experienced. Sexual politics has been critical to decolonization and about understanding the ways the question of sexuality relate to the political project of decolonization. Today the violence of history continues to shape our fears and anxieties about sexuality (see Mercer, 1996; Wright, 2004; Brewer, 1993; Dei, 2010b).

The politics of the postcolonial: The question of identity and neo-colonial governance.

There can be no complete articulation of the colonial and anti-colonial without an engagement with the question of identity. In this discussion we take identity as more than bodies and how we come to name and know the self/personal and subject through our relations with others. We take identity as the making and engagement of subversive politics for social change, as theorizing through the sense of self, whether determined authentically via the self or as experienced as socially constructed and/or imposed [and read upon the body]. An important notation is the tension between authentic and socially constructed determinations of identity (e.g., experiences of the self versus generalizations based on group politics and identities). Identity influences our subjectivity and the politics of the subject (i.e., the positionality one assumes). Consequently, our subjective politics is enriched by the very lenses through which we know

and understand the world (i.e., values, experiences, opinions, morals).

Questions of identity, identification, coming to know the geo-self are central to the post-colonial discourse where noticeably the human condition becomes re-configured through the permutations of Euro-modernity, and the constellation of identities emerges through the unfreedoms of Euro-modernity. As the post-human articulates the self to meander through the contours of the globalized transnational illiberal humanism, identities then as positioned through difference of postcolonial come to experience their lived social environment in and through these given historical nomenclatures as they come to be colonially governed. We know identities are not evenly formed. Those identities emerging from anti-colonial struggles are interconnected, and they share histories of oppression and resistance alike. Immanent to this shared experience, (be it on the individual geo-self or the collective geography of the geo-subject), are tropes of liberation/emancipation, i.e., the search for the human within the self becomes a shared experience for colonially oppressed bodies. As we argue later, part and parcel of the post/anti-colonial tension is the contemporary question of nationalism and identity. The anti-colonial struggle congealed, formed cohesive relations in and through the quest for nationalism, that is, the right for local peoples to have the capacity to determine one's lived socio-economic reality on their terms.

It is without saying that the Diaspora is a contested space that emerged through the congeries of colonialism. Yet the Diaspora is more than a space and location. The Diaspora offers a way of pursuing

critical social thought and discursive politics to explain the colonial encounter and its concomitant displacement of bodies. While for some, Diaspora can be a place for claiming the individuality of the self, as well as history and culture, for many, the Diaspora is also a way of piecing fragmented selves, histories, struggles and resistances together. For this reason any effective articulation of anti-colonial theory must come to terms with how the Diasporian identity/ties and the relations to politics for social transformation converge. For example, for many African, Indigenous and colonized peoples the Diaspora is a space to claim and reclaim our collective identities as a necessary exercise in our own decolonization.

Our anti-colonial politics while shared and connected with other Aboriginal struggles for self determination and governance also requires a unique articulation of an Indigenous identity which is about a reclamation of self, history, culture and politics, as well as a recognition of how our bodies and bodies become complicit in the safeguarding of the colonial settler state. But we cannot be asked to take full responsibility and complicities for European colonization and occupation of stolen lands. This recognition is significant if divisive politics are not to derail the fight of all oppressed peoples against dominant European colonization. What critical anti-colonial education seeks to subvert foremost is the colonial dominant.

With the contemporary post-modern epoch of globalization, the anti-colonial cry for the sense of nationalism has withered through the ability of the individual to carve her/his future as trumpeted through the governance of neo-liberal humanitarian

democracy, heterogeneity and pluralism. Understanding the Diasporic-self through the postcolonial West speaks to questions of alienation, loss, belonging, home and nostalgia to name some. Yet within the constraints and regularities of the neo-colonial or of globalization, the globalized subject takes up the illiberal conditions of multiple subjectivities to will the self strategically to the utopia of modernity. The same time there is self-distancing from the Euro-enlightenment inferiorized 'other'. The neo-liberal self then through particular procedures and expressions comes to take up the capitalist contemporary as its ahistorical ontologised own (see Ahmad, 2008).

Long gone is the cry for a historic specific collective sense by imperialized countries. Instead what we are experiencing is a particular constellation as imbued through the globalized, transnational Diaspora. Today these moments have been postcolonially re-shaped, democratized through expressions of cultural diversity, democratized through the capacity to identify differently. Diasporic bodies racing to be human come to be articulated through contemporaneous modalities of proteanism as exemplified through the conditions of *post-plantation*. This has resulted in a *post-ontologised* identity as historically configured through colonialism. While these moments may provide a sum temporary liberating ideal for individual bodies of the Diaspora, on a collective front the colonial/imperial conditions remain well in place for colonized geographies. The anti-colonial call to theorize Africa beyond its boundaries is no historic imaginary. Given the recent seismic activity in Haiti, which culminated into a series of benevolence from the united West, how might

we come to understand and discuss these necessary activities of the West given the governing imperial relationship with Haiti? Haiti is about having the capacity to self-determinate in the material sense. Haiti is about resistance to the colonial will, Haiti is about rebellion to colonizing forces and being made to remember what it means to resist the hegemony of the Euro-West. Haiti is about the anti-colonial call for debt and reparations.

James (1989; 1992) reminds us of the *Negritude* movement which emerged from Haiti through resistance. Negritude as a body of knowledge, as a politics of action, as praxis, as the ontological ethic immanent to enslaved peoples, which invariably worked to counter the dominant aesthetic tropes of Euro-modernity (see also Dei, 2011). If for the moment we are thinking through Haiti in order to understand, to articulate, to disentangle the tensions concerning the *post* and the anti-colonial, then we must consider James's approach of re-reading history in the context of a *dialectical historical materialism* (James, 1993). We must move beyond reading the materiality of the body through the moment of the present, and instead engage with a particular reading that includes the historical present. At the individual level, subjectivity is always already complex and intertwined through different experiential spaces of being, yet these spaces are well augured through bodies of histories. These spaces are well embedded through shared histories of oppression, through shared identities as governed through certain particularities, be it race/religion or shared experiential moments as they come to be foreground through the myriad intersections of class, gender, sexuality, and ableism.

With the anti-colonial we are not suggesting as an absolute, a return through time and space in order to locate, to embrace some pure, pristine origin. Nor that this return to historical origins, to the pre-colonial gives the panacea for the present day conundrum concerning, let us say citizenry, contestations about land claims, immigration concerns, or the Middle East dispute. Instead what the anti-colonial is suggesting is with coming to know and understand Haiti, we must dialogue with the past, we must engage with the historical determinants of the present, we must approach Haiti by tracing the historical material conditions concerning impoverishment as emerging through relationships anchored within the plantation enclaves of Euro-modernity.

Some key questions should be raised: For example, how do we come to make meaning differently of this classifying space of nationalism through the post or the anti-colonial? What are the ways in which nationalism reveals itself onto the contemporaneous Diasporic-self? How does this human condition of nationalism come to constitute the Diasporic-self? What are the theoretical underpinnings of nationalism? Is it that the governance of the post-modern as trumpeted through the postcolonial extricated all sense of home and belonging, in that, beyond citizenry as homogenously defined by nation-state, that one is limited to a particular geographic identification that distances the self from primordial readings of the body? In many ways the post-colonial has come to be populated and at the same time popularized through the theoretical framework of post-structuralism, temporally transforming the geo-subject to the globalized present, temporally relieving the

Diasporic-self from the historic fixity of colonial narratives.

Theory is however not absent of a body. Theory is not without a certain historical lineage, theory then is that much needed relationship between the *is* and the *ought*. If we are thinking about the Diasporic-self, in that, we are thinking about a particular geo-subject as located in the globalized West, what then are the moments of divergence and convergence if we were to discuss the lived experiences of the Diasporic-subject as located in the West and also as located within historically colonized geographies? At the same time we ought to be cognizant of our location and politics as been informed by the way we come to be historically positioned. How might we understand the Diasporic-self differently through a simultaneous reading of the post and anti-colonial?

The anti-colonial and Nationalist politics of decolonization

For many nationalism and nationalist politics have become problematic words worthy of intellectual ridicule. This is in part due to the erroneous conflation of nationalist projects that seek to reify essentialist identities and histories by excluding other bodies in the struggles for social justice and change. But we need to distinguish nationalist struggles informed by a desire to rid society from colonial oppression/oppression from those that seek to reinstate a different kind and level of dominance that exclude bodies. This is especially significant when constructions of Indigenous reclamation of identities are happening in the context of historical and contemporary legacies of White conquest, colonial

control, domination and occupation as challenges to the dominant socio-political discursive order.

The question of nationalism is omnipresent through the colonial project as being determined through a series of Euro-constraints (e.g. Middle East debate and recent conflicts concerning Libya and Egypt). Nationalism as interpreted through resistance, as of having the right to self-determine one's humanism, historically and strategically has been taken up in a totalizing way as a means of liberation, as an emancipatory tool for colonized peoples. Nationalism was the alternative humanism to the state of enslavement, an alternative humanism to plantocracy life. National consciousness was engendered and became part and parcel of the decolonizing movement. National consciousness was in a sense a necessary relationship to counter the governing colonial tropes that circumscribed what it means to be human (Fanon, 1963). Yet nationalism as been positioned and interpreted as homogenous and as totalizing to a particular geographic-body, as being absolute, complete, singular and closed to a certain domain, has come to be located as the supposed delimiting mantra of the anti-colonial. The theoretical option posited is the post-colonial, which offers a multitude of possibilities of experiencing what it means to be human. The anti-colonial movement of nationalism have been trumpeted through certain epistemologies, in particular Marxism, in which questions concerning the material conditions on the body were engaged, phenomenology, in which the lived experience was challenged and importantly through Negritude, whereby resistance and decolonization were practiced. But the culture of decolonization has yet to

permeate some geographies that have been historically determined through colonization.

In tracing the theoretical trajectory of decolonization, we can point though to spaces where the central organizing principle speaks towards the claim to Euro-modernity. While in the globalized West, in particular in academe, decolonization as materialized through the post or the anti-colonial, have shifted from let us say, Marxism, to the entrenched post-structuralism, the colonial revealing itself through the normate of mass media cultural technologies. In the name of progress and ability, to participate in these moments is to come to be registered as civil, or the rise to modernity, or sometimes even as decolonization. But we cannot discount these moments, these moments form the human. These moments also form the edict for present day bodies.

The question is: How does one come to experience decolonization given the contemporary entanglement of the globalized Diaspora? What is the moment of recognizing the colonial, the post-colonial, the anti-colonial or that which is decolonized? By no means are these moments singular events. We come to know these spaces through some absolute way of knowing as governed through a particular history or a particular experience. We know today the lived experience is not readily compartmentalized, or neatly boxed, in that, the anti-colonial does not dismiss the post-colonial de-centred subject, to do so would negate the human experience in the name of high theory. In fact, these de-centering moments come to form constitutive variants for the anti-colonial discursive. With the different transmissions of the Diaspora and

the immanent transhistoricism that come to form identity, the daily communicative exchanges of the geo-subject as shaped through the configurations of Euro-modernity, all point to the complexities and complications of identity formation through histories of violence. We call then for an anti-colonial reading, which embraces the present through the embodiment of the historically determined.

There have been different conceptions of anti-colonial theorizing. Some approaches have traditionally focused on the Indigenous struggles for independence against European colonization of their territories. Other perspectives have tended to conflate the processes of neo-colonialism and post-colonialism. For example, how might an anti-colonial lens help us understand the colonial as it resides within the coterminous ethnic geography of the dominant group? How do we make sense of the dominant group in which Anglo-saxonism has come to be exempt from this ethnic construct and thus the racialized minoritized as a collective becomes ethnicised?

A critical transhistorical approach allows us to work with the discursive knowledge of re-colonial relations, that is, colonialism and colonial relations as unending and hence a need to problematize the periodization of colonial histories. The colonial presence is all but a sum unitary experience. As the post-colonial/anti-colonial debate locates itself within the tensions of advanced/late capitalism (Ahmad, 2008; James, 2005), transnational subjectivities (Appadurai, 1996) and imperialized geographies, the urge to extricate nuanced meanings of particular bodies as interpreted through difference is ever prevalent. Yet meaning derived through these

experiential bodies is always already laden with politics, in that experience is not to say neutral or objective. To embody a particular transhistorical identity is to claim a certain history as embedded through imperialized geographies. The call for an anti-colonial reading is about understanding experience through contested sites of knowing and unknowing. It is about a theory that cogently speaks to the imperial present *from, with through* and *against* the colonial past. It is a theory that dialectically centres the subject by way of the historic present.

Historically, colonial geographies have been encapsulated through the immutable racialized experience of plantocracy, enslavement, racism, culture, and different narratives of nationalism. To speak about the social as residing within these spaces, was always about absencing the presence of resistance. It was always about absencing the call for a return to historical origins to extricate cultural ways of pre-colonial life. Colonial geographies have been saturated through narratives with the interest of legitimizing the civilizing project of Euro-modernity. The postcolonial/anticolonial debate reminds us that the human experience as imbued through the conditions of enslavement materializes in many ways other than a sum, unifying, absolute determinant, that the post and the anti converge around sites of heterogeneity, pluralism, difference. With coming to understand the theoretical difference concerning the post and the anti, we are asking: To what extent then, do the moments of divergence emerge through a particular reading of the historical origin of colonized peoples? How do we come to know, understand and theorize beyond the geographical boundaries, the

ontological primacy of particular historical bodies within the Diasporic present?

We must also speak about the theoretical location of the post and the anti, to disentangle the nuanced ways in which these theoretical frameworks come to be discursively positioned within the Diasporic West, to understand how these said theoretical positions come to be co-opted. Imperialized geographies that boast the post and the anti have been reconfigured through the material conditions of capitalist modernity. For some imperialized geographies, the experiences of racism come to be spoken about as being void of colonial specificities, as being ahistorical.

The anti-colonial critique of the Euro-modernist project of credentialism and legitimation

Dialectically we ought to think of the anti-colonial in relation to Euro-modernity, and the post-colonial as contextualized through time and space of the globalized Diaspora (Senghor, 2001). It is important to understand how the discourse of race and by extension racism comes to be discussed within these theoretical spaces of the post and the anti-colonial. How are central questions concerning identity, race, the self, citizenry, nationalism, racism, multiculturalism, become positioned and discussed by particular scholars as these bodies are organized through the regulatory space of academe? What are the ways in which academic privilege come to be accorded through a post-colonial framework, while at the same time theoretical distancing the knowledge production from the anti-colonial discourse? We know

discourses are neither, apolitical, ahistorical, neutral or innocent.

We are also mindful of the embodied politics immanent to post-colonial theories. Is it that the post-colonial as embodied through as (Fanon, 1967) notes, the *historical racial schema*, locates itself in the West, in the heart of Euro-modernity, which brings to the surface the experiences of the racialized body, simultaneously carving new geographies for the said body. In that, central to postcolonial thinking is the extrication of identity as embedded within the imperializing script of colonialism, that central to the postcolonial is extricating the humanism of racialized peoples. We also need to be cognizant of the conditions of possibilities and limitations with the said “post”, in that, the postcolonial interpret difference as experienced within continental geographies with historical trajectories of colonialism.

How do contemporary readings of the Diaspora as the subject of the scholar come to be located within the Euro-West? What we are attempting to amplify are the different discursive methods, the different discursive locations for the post and the anti-colonial and how they come to constitute a different reading of the colonial experience grounded in different geographies as temporally constituted and validated. The post colonial has given us a way to understand, to interpret the location, the experience of bodies, which in particular have historical trajectories to certain geographies of colonization. North, South geographies articulate the post differently, and in fact within some Southern geographies, the politics of the post or the anti-colonial is absent, instead there exist the materiality of a particular post-independence as

installed through the attendant discourse of capitalist liberation and emancipation for all.

We also posit that for some Southern geographies the anti-colonial is all but forgotten. Debates about racism concern the experience of the present as disjointed from histories of colonization. The concern is more about the material conditions of the present and the urgent need for technological advancement, which presents itself as the innocent, totalizing fixed measure of progress. If the anti-colonial discourse emerged through resistance struggles for national emancipation, we might ask then what is the contemporary experience of liberation as residing within the governing epoch of postindependence? Some might ask: Liberation from what? Emancipation from what? With the legality of disenfranchisement being disavowed in colonial South-Africa, and with the African subject, the same said subject designated for plantation humanism climbing to the utopian of modernity in the form of the newly found presidential subject, the cry then from mass media discourse is that of the *postracial*, that we have moved beyond race, racism, the colonial and the imperial. Notably here is the haste to disavow race/racism with the invested interest of the imperial West.

Today we are propelled to think about how we come to make sense of this thing call liberation through the unfreedoms of modernity. How do we make sense of the colonial when imperial America comes to be governed in and through the ontologised materiality of plantation humanism, that of the black subject? As we come to make sense of the colonial, as we dialogue through different interpretive locations, (post or the anti-colonial), these discursive terrains

diverge and converge from each other, as the human experience reveals itself through the contingencies of the transhistorical and the ontological primacy of the geo-subject.

Conclusion

To conclude we reiterate that to take up the post or the anti-colonial is a political act. The anti-colonial is both an intellectual and political project for all voices are subjected to multiple interpretations keeping in mind the politics of the anti-colonial which accords ontological primacy to the local body. We enthuse that the anti-colonial is augured through histories of colonial oppression, that the anti-colonial is about engaging the contemporary through a certain memory of colonial violence. It is about the continued struggle to resist the neo-colonial governing procedures that reside within the everyday lived experience. The anti-colonial concerns a particular self-reflexive relationship with the past, it calls for the present to dialogue with the past, that the present cannot be interpreted ahistorically through the present.

Acknowledgments

We want to thank the anonymous reviewers of the journal for their helpful insights that have informed the final paper. Marlon Simmons in particular, extends heartfelt thanks to George Dei for the invitation to co-author this important paper.

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