
Ghosts in the Canadian Multicultural Machine

A Tale of the Absent Presence of Black People

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The author, who is an African-Canadian, was a beneficiary of the 1967 Immigration and Manpower Act. She embraced the Canadian Multicultural Policy and subsequent Multiculturalism Act and its programs as means to validate the identities and cultures of Black people. She tells a tale of her disillusionment and how multiculturalism has concealed the brutal histories of enslavement, colonization, and empire. She uses the metaphor of ghosts to describe her project of directed self-study to understand the subjugation of knowledge about the colonized other. She offers implications for educational institutions.

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We beseech thee . . . to preserve all that travel by land and water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children; and to shew thy pity upon all prisoners and captives.

—*The Litany*, Book of Common Prayer (1662)

This article is my personal retrospective on the ways in which the 1971 Canadian Multicultural Policy within a bilingual framework, and the subsequent 1988 Multiculturalism Act, have failed to name and address the embodied historical material inequalities and oppressions that the formerly enslaved African Others, arriving as immigrants to Canada since 1967, bring with them. I draw on my own experience as a 1969 immigrant to this country from Jamaica, a former British slave, sugar plantation society and

Author's Note: This article draws on the results of 10 years of self-study and travels to sites of memory, culminating in a doctoral dissertation titled *Bodies, Memories, and Empire: Real Life Stories About Growing Up in Jamaica 1943-1965*. Correspondence may be addressed to yvonne.brown@ubc.ca.

nation newly independent from Great Britain. When I arrived—unbeknownst to me—I still carried the label of British subject, which I discovered when I applied for Canadian citizenship 5 years later. Being a British subject meant that I did not have to take the citizenship classes or the citizenship oath; I simply had to present my documents to a lawyer who took care of the process, and I received my citizenship card and certificate in the mail. These personal introductions to Canada made me hopeful and optimistic about prospects for my children and myself. However, during my nearly 40 years as an educator who bought into the Multicultural Policy, I have lived many astonishing discoveries about the presence of living ghosts of peoples disposed of their territories, clans, families, and cultures and transformed into labor—slave labor, indentured labor, cheap wage labor—and about how they cast their shadows of European colonization, which the ideology and practices of culture could not, and still cannot, conceal. I regard myself as one of those ghosts made flesh as I lived and performed multiculturalism since its inception.

The body of this reflection will tell a story of how I embarked on personally directed study to inquire into my observation and experience of the negative treatment and portrayal of African/Black people in Canada and worldwide and to account for the erasure of Africa from the learned discourses in the institution of education, broadly defined.

The inception of the African and Caribbean presence in Canada was through the French and English slave trade in African captive bodies to the Americas and the Caribbean and the brutal transformation into slavery that reduced territorial identity to skin color, *Negro*, which means Black. Black was consistent with the color hierarchy set in place by Enlightenment scholars such as Hegel and Kant, among many others. Briefly, in this schema, those with white skin were placed at the top, with yellow and brown next, and black at the bottom, described as inferior to all. I am not sure where the so-called red man or noble savage fit, but they fared little better than the Negro, being enslaved before the Negroes were. The legal status of Black people as slaves was informally proscribed by the *Code Noir* in New France and by the Slave Code in the British territory. Prior to 1967, as a Black woman, the only way I could have come to Canada to work was as a domestic servant. This status was the social and psychological remnant of the slave trade in African bodies and the formation of the legal status as slaves and intellectual inferiors. The lawmakers of the French and English settler colonies in Canada had no intention of allowing immigrants who would eventually become full citizens of Canada to come from their enslaved or racialized labor force residing on their defunct plantations

or lumbering and mining operations from which Europeans extracted enormous wealth in Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia. It became the burden of immigrants from these places to assert their equality rights with the British and the French settlers/colonizers by becoming politically involved so as to write themselves into the national discourse on citizenship. A few examples will illustrate: the Japanese internment during World War II, the Canadian government's refusal to let the *Komagata Maru* land in Vancouver with its boatload of Sikh immigrants, and the Chinese Exclusion Act and Head Tax to deter Chinese immigration into Canada (see, especially, Thornhill, 2003, pp. 239-334). In immigration policies, Black people were deemed unsuitable, and every effort was made to keep them out of Canada.

In addition to the 1967 Immigration and Manpower legislation, a number of statutes have ignited fierce debates about historical exclusions and disenfranchisement and reparations: the 1982 Canadian Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Official Languages Policy, to name a few. The historical circumstances of how the land we now call Canada began with the forceful removal of the indigenous people from their land, their mass relegation to reserves, and their given legal status of non-persons and wards of the Crown all cast a long shadow on any righteous claims that the Canadian State tries to make to justify the Two Founding Nations claims (i.e., English and French). We, the colonized Others, are constantly reminded that the British and French colonizing projects established those nations as two imperial rivals who made compromises to accommodate each other by institutionalizing the Two Founding Nations doctrine. There was no question between them that the colonizing project was geared to settling Canada as "a White man's country," thus restricting immigration to White people from Western Europe, mainly from Great Britain and France.

A Tale of Ghosts

Without this prior knowledge of Canadian history, I embraced the Multicultural Policy as an inviting discourse offered by the Canadian State. What I have come to realize after some investigation is that the Two Founding Nations discourse is left intact as the dominant ideology of the nation while multiculturalism concealed the colonial and imperial legacies by constructing a cultural mosaic based on celebrations of superficial aspects of diverse cultures. Overshadowing the Two Founding Nations

discourses and projects, as well as the multicultural projects, were the legitimate demands of Aboriginal peoples for self-determination and self-government. This set of political activities more than any other, in my view, stood as living reminders of colonial experiences similar to those of Aboriginal peoples.

It was during the course of my reading and reflection that I discovered the racial, economic, and sexual collision of Africa, Europe, and the Americas. And this was what—incredibly—had made me! For I am one among millions of colored, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon children, the fruit of Black virgins, Ewe, Ashanti, Twi, Yoruba, Hausa, and Ibo, deflowered by White men. The deflorescence of which I speak was no ordinary sexual act of biological maturation. It was the deliberate racialized sexual assault whose purpose was domination and reproductive exploitation. Whites from Portugal, Holland, Spain, France, Denmark, and England ravished the African women even as they simultaneously plundered the African landscape for its gold, diamonds, iron, salt, gums, cloves, coffee, copper, leopard skins, rhinoceros horns, and, especially, its ivory—the white, and the black.

The harvesting of black ivory (Walvin, 2001) depopulated the continent, destroying clans, tribes, kingdoms, and nation-states. The rape of the healthiest and most beautiful women was relentless. It started at the point of capture and sale; it continued in the barracoons and spread along what became known as the Slave Coast of Africa and within the officers' quarters in the slave castles. We can imagine the sexual assaults, by White men and Black, within the confines of the slave ships that plied the triangular trade, especially along the Middle Passage and thereafter in the Great Houses of the plantations. Sexual assaults continued as an integral part of the violence, which controlled and enforced labor in the tobacco fields of Virginia and Kentucky; in the cane fields of Barbados, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Haiti; and in the rice fields of the Carolinas. White rape of Black took place over a period of more than 350 years. For 250 of those years it accompanied the legal trade in African bodies and then continued through a further century of legal African chattel slavery in what the Europeans conceived of as the New World.

I was born as a byproduct of those in the service of empire in the colony of Jamaica. I grew up hearing that Africa has no history; Africa has no culture; Black people were made to serve the White man. I still continue to hear derogatory assertions about Africa: Africa is the Dark Continent. Africa is the "basket case" of the world. Africa is the land of savages and backwardness. Africa has nothing to offer the world.

Let us compare the high social standing accorded to White students speaking with the accents of England, Australia, New Zealand, or the

United States, with the relatively low standing accorded to or adopted by Black and Brown students from the Caribbean, India, and Africa! Culturally, linguistically, and directly through the curricula of their schooling, people from these nations share a common colonial and British imperial heritage. But white is the color of the colonizer; black, brown, yellow, and red, the colors of the colonized. This is the embodiment of the status differential, which, even without further reinforcement, represents an unspoken rebuff, one that leads some students to resist and act out the rejection they feel, while others become alienated from the education system. Many leave school or universities altogether and thereby decrease their life chances.

As both student and teacher, I have experienced and observed how destructive tensions arise when the hegemonic knowledge of the colonizer clashes with the repressed knowledge of the colonized, especially if the latter is articulated by those who, like myself, live among embodied memories of the slave trade and slavery. I have been especially struck by the ways in which knowledge about the colonized Other is subjugated or erased in academic disciplines. Curricular choices leave teachers ignorant of and unprepared to deal with traumatic stories of slavery, colonization, and political domination, whether historical or contemporary.

The omission and erasure of topics addressing the presence of Africa and Africans in Western historical study are particularly pervasive. It has become a fashionable pedagogical strategy for teachers and instructors to ask children and adult students of African descent to tell their own stories. But, of what use is it to racialize students to bring forward their stories and experiences when there is no epistemic base upon which to validate and honor them within a critical and ethical framework? Worse yet, what does it mean for racialized students to be perennial strangers in their classrooms, where they will learn next to nothing of their ancestral histories and heritage?

The received knowledge of the English civilizing mission served to displace any positive knowledge of our African past, our culture, or how we had come to be. Throughout my entire schooling, in Jamaica and British Columbia, I received no enlightenment about Africa or its peoples but learned only of the relationship of Jamaica as a colony of Great Britain and of our consciousness and civic duties as loyal British subjects. And yet, Africa was everywhere in and around me, in people and commodities that were made of Africans and by Africans. I can now count a few of the many unacknowledged ways in which Africa and Africans were present:

1. in the Milo, Ovaltine, and Fry's Cocoa beverages that we drank;
2. in the ivory handles of the knives and forks that the middle and upper class dined with;

3. in the ebony and ivory of the piano keys that played the melody and tunes of empire;
4. in the rubber of the Dunlop and Michelin tires that cushioned the wheels of bicycles and motor cars;
5. in the edible rubber of the Wrigley's Chewing Gum and the balloons that we children loved;
6. in the palm oil that greased the wheels of industry and was one of the main oil ingredients of Palmolive Soap;
7. in the coffee plants that originated in Ethiopia;
8. in the skills of Africans that supplied the muscle and sinews of industry.

I have noticed how Black bodies parade as still life in paintings, photographs, and books representing various poses of torture, forced labor, servitude, active rebellion, and quiet dignity. These are symbolic representations of a chilling lived reality of millions of African Black people. The brutalization of Black bodies in the New World is difficult to grasp. The litany of abuse is astonishing. The image of the slave catcher mounted on a horse, carrying a rifle, and followed by a bloodhound or a rottweiler sends shivers down my spine. The application of whips, manacles, and shackles; the lynching of Black men as sport, leaving "strange fruit" hanging on the trees: All have invoked an ancestral pain and left an indelible scar on my psyche. Everywhere I look, Black bodies stare at me in anguish. At the sight of their suffering and misery, my soul joins the silent requiem to those who perished in the Slave Trade, during plantation slavery, and to those who still perish today in the ghettos of Western cities, in the slums of the Caribbean islands, in the *favelas* of Brazil, and in the refugee camps on the Continent—the Motherland.

There can be no realization of the scale of the infliction of White pain on Black bodies without a sense of both the historical and contemporary displacement and dispossession of African bodies from their homelands in Africa, that great continent that is incontrovertibly acknowledged as the cradle of humankind.

If there is a sense that the Europeans and North Americans have in the last two centuries refined the technologies of exploitation, the people of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Indian subcontinent hold centuries-long traditions. The Slave Trade of the Arabs first, and then of several Western European nations, scattered millions of Black bodies in Arabia, Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean. The European scramble for Africa and its colonization during the 19th century divided and displaced families, clans, and ethnic groups by creating imposed and artificial boundaries. Once in place, the imperial powers saw no contradiction in abandoning their received traditions of respect for life. Adam Hochschild (1998)

gives an account of how the Belgians wasted an estimated 10 million Congolese bodies in the cause of harvesting wild rubber, cultivating rubber plantations, building railways, and mining uranium. His narrative of how during this period Congolese hands were severed to prove the land had been cleared of its people is chilling. Hochschild exposes further atrocities of the French, Germans, and Portuguese in the Congo and the equatorial regions of Africa.

The ravages of man-made disasters, the famines, internecine wars, and political destabilization by former colonists and multinationals continue to waste Black bodies in place after place on the Continent—Zimbabwe, Sudan, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ivory Coast. During lengthy civil wars, violence and self-hate have been internalized, the corrupt divide-and-conquer legacy continued, and the wealth of the Continent misappropriated, so much so that great riches can be amassed amidst dire poverty.

Ryszard Kapuscinski (2001) shows how Cold War rivalries between the Soviet Bloc and the West were played out in strategic locations on the Continent and left behind graveyards of discarded military equipment and Black bodies. Further political destabilizations have occurred as a result of international predatory trade practices by Euro-American and Canadian multinationals such as Shell Oil, Dunlop, and Goodyear Rubber companies; De Beers Diamond; Cadbury's Chocolate Company; and Talisman Energy, to name only a few. Those unacquainted with these unhappy histories may be referred to some classic historical texts from Caribbean historians as a starting point: Eric Williams's (1944/1973) *Capitalism and Slavery* and Walter Rodney's (1982) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Structural poverty is endemic to Black people everywhere. Many Black people are ensnared in the cycles of lowest existences: They beg, squat on the outskirts of major cities, engage in criminal activity, and spend their lives wasted in prisons. Black people are among the highest percentage of the underclass in the streets of major cities anywhere in the West, and they labor as domestic servants on plantations on the continent of Africa and without. Black lives are seldom considered precious or innocent. The massacres of former Yugoslavia rightly called for immediate international intervention, and it was given; the massacres of Rwanda were merely deplored.

In my directed self-study, as I read, traveled, and observed, remembered scenes of brutalized Black bodies in Jamaica kept superimposing themselves upon my perceptions. So too was the imperial language of human degradation. I was compelled to deal with the haunting relatedness of these memories to the contemporary realities of Black people everywhere. In providing these modest

reminders, it is my hope to inspire further investigation into the use and abuse of Black bodies.

In time I came to see that the knowledge regimes of the British Empire under which I was schooled were as tenacious here in Canada as there in Jamaica. It amazes me still to recall how well equipped I was, educationally, to teach home economics and English as a young teacher in Canada. I was licensed to teach, based on my teacher education received in Jamaica. I had known the curricula before I arrived, since I had to pass external examinations in these subjects set by the University of Cambridge during my high school. My teachers' college curricula were based on those of the English Normal School. Those who are schooled in the imperial curricula extant in the former colonies, perhaps, have discerned the similarity of the curricula there and here.

Robin Blackburn (1997) shows the geographical reach and political economy of the slave trade, while Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1994) show the scope and legacy of European empires, the most outstanding of which was the British Empire, alongside the French.

While nations had previously often annexed adjacent territories, what was new in European colonialism was its planetary reach, its affiliation with global institutional power, and its imperative mode, its attempted submission of the world to a single "universal" regime of truth and power. Colonialism is ethnocentrism armed, institutionalized, and gone global. The colonial process had its origins in internal European expansions (the Crusades, England's move into Ireland, the Spanish *reconquista*), made a quantum leap with the "voyages of discovery" and the institution of New World slavery, and reached its apogee with turn-of-the century imperialism, when the proportion of the earth's surface controlled by European powers rose from 67% (in 1884) to 84% (in 1914), a situation that began to be reversed only with the disintegration of the European colonial empires after World War II. Some of the major corollaries of colonialism were the expropriation of territory on a massive scale; the destruction of indigenous peoples and cultures; the enslavement of Africans and Native Americans (and Native Canadians); the colonization of Africa and Asia; and racism not only within the colonized world but also within Europe itself (Brown, 2005, pp. 15-16).

The cultural civilizing mission of the European empires, including the British, and the imperial knowledge regimes laid down over the past 500 years form the matrix of contemporary discourses on postcolonialism, neo-colonialism, antiracism, multiculturalism, and the globalization of labor and capital. And yet, how often still these discourses exclude the voices of

the colonized and further repress and subjugate certain histories that are foundational to the genesis and maintenance of these structures. In classrooms and in the workplaces of Jamaica and now Canada, I have often felt like a ghost made flesh, stalking the halls and classrooms of the academy to remind my classmates and peers about these repressed histories and their embodied presences. Like the African ancestral dead who has not been properly buried, my restless spirit roams the halls and classrooms searching for those bodies of knowledge that will speak Truth to me of Mother Africa and her motherless offspring scattered in the Atlantic Diaspora. My peers who have similar colonized origins and consciousness share my feelings. These repressions can burst forth from us—like precocious children at the dinner table who blurt out the family secrets in respectable company—causing embarrassment and subsequent punishment.

In my imagination, I often travel back in time to envisage the experience of the self-aware enslaved domestics in the Great Houses during slavery. While serving dinner to Massa and Missis, they could see and hear all the schemes pertaining to the expropriation of land, the exploitation of their own bodies and those of their kith and kin to be bodies of labor (Bakare-Yusuf, 1999) in the production of sugar, cotton, and tobacco. In the face of coercive power, they had to keep their silence or lose favor or their lives for acting on the knowledge to which they were privy. No doubt that their very sanity depended on dissembling their awareness. Theirs was knowledge of the contradictions, disruptions, ironies, suppressions, repressions, and paradoxes, which abounded, then as now. They knew their place and the expectations of them. They were simply the useful hands of the bodies of labor they had been made.

I find myself working within the knowledge regimes and institutional structures of the academy, listening to and observing proponents of the “new” globalization behave as though globalization had no antecedents. This represents a colossal forgetting of the historical antecedents. In the contemporary discourses on globalization, Africa is assigned an inferior status or else excluded entirely. And yet, African minerals and oil factor in the global economy, in both White and Black markets. Nothing has changed for Africa since the Scramble; Africa remains one giant colony of Europe, in spite of dubious claims to a “new world order.”

Some may consider these assessments partisan, self-serving, and unduly harsh. But let us consider: In 1969, I left the island of Jamaica for the then Dominion of Canada, where I have lived and taught for nearly 40 years, residing in the province of British Columbia. Before it became a province, British Columbia formed a keystone in the extraordinary reach of the British Empire. Its arms and flag still bear the device of the Sun in Glory,

for when British dominion was established on the west coast of the Americas, the empire girdled the globe. It was an empire on which the sun literally did not set. The British of the colonial era may have believed it was British decency and fair play that brought this about and that God was indeed an Englishman. At the Anglican church services that lasted through the long Sunday of an entire rotation of the earth, the lovely prose of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the King James Bible, must have laid to rest the troublesome misgivings and doubts of the dominant culture.

Yet the records—memory and history—show that the empire did not come into existence through the pious recitations of the Anglican liturgy. The reality was that the humane values expressed in the Prayer Book were not interpreted so as to diminish the power and extent of British expansionism, its determination to advance its interests and protect its trade through naval and military force, or its ruthless exploitation of all the resources at its command—material, territorial, and human.

I attribute the want of proper acknowledgment to a collective desire—conscious and unconscious—to conceal a very shameful and horrific past. To acknowledge the past would necessarily be to acknowledge the present, and the “developed” world is largely incapable of that. Even if we were to concede that the beginnings of the Slave Trade were acts of mischief by a few loutish 15th-century mariners, it turned into a 500-year nightmare for millions, enormous profits for a few, and a rise in commodities consumerism. Was it the love of sugar, coffee, tea, tobacco, and rum that allowed the Prayer Book Pious to keep their values tucked between the covers? The world has paid a price in addictions to these commodities. The exploitation of Central and South America has led to commodities trade that has wreaked even worse punishment. The folk in Jamaica would say this was divine retribution. Well and good, except that addiction is no respecter of persons or geographical borders.

To acknowledge culpability in the historical and contemporary abuse of Africa and its peoples would force a revision of all righteous claims of the European civilizing mission, modernity, enlightenment, and White moral supremacy. Notions of aid and development would have to be reframed as acts of reparation and restitution for the plunder of gold, uranium, diamonds, cocoa, rubber, coffee, copper, and people. And so, the dark secrets of empire must be repressed and glossed over as culture.

When Africans and the New World are considered at all, the Slave Trade is usually eclipsed by the study of the overlapping 350 years of plantation slavery in Brazil, the United States of America, and the Caribbean. After reading about this aspect of my history, I believe the horror of it is too hard to look at, that most people would rather forget and suppress this event. For 350 years or more in some places in the New World, roughly 10 million

Africans were forced to labor for 16 generations to produce such crops as coffee, cotton, indigo, tobacco, and most of all, sugar, molasses, and rum. My African ancestors labored under the slave laws of the respective European empires and under the whips of their slave masters.

I was astonished to realize how the sugar lobby in the British Parliament determined my life, the life of Jamaicans, and the life of all in the British Empire where sugar was grown. The principal reason that the British established the crown colony—indeed the other West Indian Islands, the sugar islands—was for commodity production. Sidney Mintz's (1985) study of the history of sugar, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, charts its spread from the tables of the European aristocracies to the middle and working classes. Mintz shows how sugar changed the menus and cuisine of the various aristocracies so that they could indulge in the delights of sweetened coffee and tea with sugar cakes and cinnamon buns.

The part played by sugars in increasing the average total caloric intake make it likely that sugar both complemented the complex carbohydrates and partly supplemented them. The pastries, hasty puddings, jam-smearing breads, treacle puddings, biscuits, tarts, buns, and candy that turned up more and more in the English diet after 1750 and in a deluge after 1850, offered almost unlimited ways in which the sugars could be locked into complex carbohydrates in flour form. (p. 50)

Molasses, as a cheap by-product of sugar, was fed to the poor in England and the colonies so they could also invent coarser versions of culinary necessities to provide the energy to do back-breaking work for little or nothing. Crude molasses did more for the British Empire than feed the poor. It was the raw material for the distilleries founded in both New England and Old England to brew alcohol that their slavers traded to Africans in exchange for their fellow creatures. The British colonizers also used the same spirited beverage to intoxicate Native Americans to dispossess them of their land and leave a deadly addiction in their wake. In referring to the power exerted on the Crown and Parliament by planters, bankers, slavers, shippers, refiners, and grocers to support and favor the extension of the rights of the planters, the maintenance of slavery, and the availability of sugar and its by products (molasses and rum), Sidney Mintz (1985) writes,

It is to their efforts that England owed the institutionalization of a rum ration in the Navy (begun "unofficially") after the capture of Jamaica in 1655: half a pint per day from 1731 on. In the late eighteenth century it increased to a pint a day for adult sailors. . . . The official allocations of sugar and treacle to the poor-houses in the late eighteenth century were similar support measures. (p. 170)

Daniel Defoe, writing in 1713 about the slave trade, plantation slavery, and the mercantile triangular trade among Great Britain, Africa, the West Indies, and the Americas, summed up the tangled web of total exploitation of Africa and Black people as follows: “No African trade, no Negroes, no sugar, no sugar islands, no islands no continents, no continent no trade: that is to say farewell to your American trade, your West Indian trade” (as cited in Pagden, 2001).

The paradox is that the past is never past. It leaves its memorials as skeletons, traces, and ruins on the landscapes that compel the curious to ask questions and to seek answers. The past inscribes itself in the human body, the memory being the most obvious. Long after memory fades, genealogy and lineage—especially in a slave society such as Jamaica—ensures that we do not forget the event of chattel slavery and the illicit mixing of bloods. Historians and archaeologists re-create and reconstruct the big events such as the existence of the original peoples of the Americas and the Caribbean region. They chronicle the big stories of battles of conquest and trade by Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, and British.

The unwritten stories that only elders tell draw on their individual and collective memories, of the minutiae of their lives and struggles and of the effects of big events on their lives. When the elders die, they take their archival memories with them, and we are left to imagine and reconstruct the stories they told us and to fill in the gaps from the symbolic archives and the landscape. In so doing, we add our own understanding of their lives and how they intertwine with ours. We inherit our social blueprint of trauma, accommodation, and resistance. The past lives in the present and plays tricks with our collective unconscious.

There are uncounted numbers of ghostly stories that the colonized Others bring with them to Canada. Some no doubt are hopeful, and many more doubtless bitter and tragic. They present themselves as embodied memories suppressed in classrooms. The voices that struggle to be spoken and heard are on a continuum from mute, to stammers, to whispers, to shouts. They mumble and rumble throughout the edifices of Western civilization. Voices are rising in brilliant polemics, scholarly writing, songs, dramas, poetry to join the choruses of the ancestors.

Prospects for Education Practice

The moral tone of all institutions, particularly social and educational, is determined by the quality of knowledge and information that circulates in texts, images, talk, attitudes, and ideologies about the world and our place

in it. Indeed, the quality of knowledge that is the substance of educational, curricular, and social policies determines the institutions' ability to evaluate their moral and ethical positions with regard to justice and equality. Their very definition of social justice, I argue, is grounded in the legacy of social and racialized inequalities of empire. The answer to addressing social and racialized inequalities in the curriculum and educational policies in educational institutions is not a benign celebratory multiculturalism, which emphasizes our false sociohistorical similarities grounded in imperial cultural and linguistic assimilation, but a critical multiculturalism that begins by studying and examining the legacy of trauma, accommodation, and resistance of the embodied subjects who inhabit the contemporary multicultural classrooms and workplaces.

Colonized subjects of former European empires inhabit educational spaces in which the knowledge regimes that inform their learning, research, and teaching were never designed to give them right of place within these social institutions. The colonizers' history and imperial social practices demonstrate to them that they are bodies out of place. Meanwhile, they simultaneously observe the embodied legacy of unquestioned gestures of right of place and expressions of entitlements that the heirs of the colonizers bring to these institutions. Against this revelation there is a silent counterdiscourse that frequently happens simultaneously in classrooms, whereby colonized Others, just by checking their bodily reactions to being in these spaces, can detect the lies in the partial truths that are imparted and the unfair practices that are institutionalized to undermine their existence and to mock their ambitions.

From the official knowledge regimes, the colonized Others learn their inferior worth within the symbolic order. Many of them come to these classrooms with embodied knowledge of imperial oppression in their countries of origin and find within the Western archives official records of deliberate appropriation of their lands, destruction of their cultures, and attempted genocide of their people. They live out the tensions and confusions of their double consciousness. In order to cope with their lot, they mask their feelings and dissemble their gestures so that their minds can be suitably colonized, knowing that the best that they can become are mimics in a system that rejects mimic men and women. In spite of the contradictions and tensions, they sincerely hope that their life chances will be enhanced.

The questions I pose to educators espousing multicultural perspectives are, What sorts of knowledge and ethical preparation do teachers need in order to receive the stories of the colonized and enslaved others and begin to make sense of them? At a concrete and commonsense level, what do educators need to be able to hear, feel, see, do, and think in order to help the

colonized Others understand who they are and how they came to be? Are there places for emotional expression and moments of healing for descendants of a wretched colonialism, in their pedagogy? Can stories of trauma, accommodation, and resistance be the stuff of multicultural classrooms? In multicultural classrooms, I want teachers to think about what might be at stake when they ask children to write or tell their life histories. I want teachers to think about what knowledge they repress and why. For example, why do teachers ask me if they should be teaching about slavery? I hope that teachers may go out of their way to read and take seriously the scholarship and cultural productions that are being produced by colonized Others who have migrated to Canada since 1967.

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