

# The Ongoing GRIP of Colonialism in our Language & Knowledge...



"There is so much continuity that we CANNOT disentangle the ideas held today from the ideas from the past. It is important to consider the real-world effects and consequences of these past ideas."

(Kim Tallbear, 2013)

## Assessing Terminology

- **Ethnicity**: Relates to **social** and **cultural norms**, symbols, and cultural differences. Not always distinguishable from the idea of 'race' & used as its 'politically correct' **code word**.
- **Racism**: Ideological **element of signification** to select and to **legitimize the selection** of a particular **population** whose labour-power will be **exploited** to benefit the system of rule.
- **Discourse**: A body of speech/writing as a **particular way of representation**. Not a closed system with **consequences** for its use & to those who are subject to it.
- **Discursive Formation**: Several statements working together.
- **Discursive Practice**: The **practice of producing meaning**. All practices have discursive practices!

The origins of ethnicity are inseparable from racism!

**Colonialism**: Referred to as the **outposts** that **facilitated** Imperialism (e.g., *forts and ports*).  
**Imperialism**: The chronology of 'discovery', 'conquest', **exploitation**, and **appropriation** tied to **interconnected layers** of imperialism.

Colonialism and imperialism are INTERCONNECTED!

**Decolonization**: Centring **Indigenous concerns and world views**, a process that engages with imperialism and colonization at multiple levels (i.e., *underlying assumptions, understandings, past & present*) so that these **problems are NOT reproduced** in our future **writings and understandings**.

 **LAND BACK** Movement (4rsyouth.ca)

(Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Miles, 1994; & Hall, 2018)

## Discourse of the West & "the Rest"

Discourse was how the West **behaved towards** the rest and established itself **against the other** as a **regime of knowledge**.

Europe formed **language** and **discourses** to represent the difference between itself and the others during the **encounter** with other cultures.

These discourse are still **ongoing as conceptual categories**.

Indigenous histories, cultures and languages were **interrupted** and radically **silenced, misinterpreted, and reformulated** by European imperialism.

Attempts at **Reconciliation** are reframed colonial project of indigenous disappearance...

Reconciliation on the state's terms requires indigenous leaders to **recognize assumed crown sovereignty!**

Recognition in **strategic domestication** leaves the foundations of colonial relationships **undisturbed**.

### The Doctrine of Discovery

The court's refusal to challenge the racist **origins** of "Canada" assumed sovereign authority over Indigenous peoples and their territories  
e.g., *Delgamu'uk decision*

Colonial powers will **recognize collective rights and identities** as long as this **recognition does not question** the legal, political, economic, frameworks of the **colonial relationship** itself.

(Coulthard, 2014; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; & Hall, 2018)



## Racial World System

**'Race' = system of rule from ABOVE**



Institutionalized forgetting of the **origin and meaning** of 'race' has **disguised** the violence/coercion of its **origin** and purpose.  
The **history is all around** us but **nothing** around us helps understand/remember this history.

**Antiracism = from BELOW**



Racism as a **force** to be **opposed and resisted**.

## Genealogy of DNA as a Concept...

- Produced through **reinvention** of 'gene talk', concepts of **blood** and **inheritance**.
- The way in which DNA **reflect power** as an object **identity** and **knowledge**.

## Real World Power Imbalance



- Some people's ideas are **made to matter more** than others.



< 98% of DNA is  
non-coding

## What is "DNA"?

- All humans **share the same DNA structure** and basically the same genome.
- Most markers of ancestry & close biological relationships **don't actually code** for anything.
- Patterns of genetic variations are NOT visually observable and do not correlate with phenotypical variation (skin, hair or bones).
- We **differ individually at certain places from person to person**.



## How Science is Complicit...



- Knowledge producing cultures/practices **shaped earlier research**.
- Continues to influence the way in which science is done today!
- Bodies, body parts, and fluids were **used to constitute knowledge** of human **biological and cultural history**.
- Scientific language has changed over and over... YET **continue to use categories of the past** to identify people!
  - "Native American, European, Asian, and African"
- The population specific markers studied actually **mirror** the cultural, racial, ethnic, national, and tribal **understandings** of the **people who study them NOT those they mean to identify**.

(Tallbear, 2013)

## Fighting Back...

- We should study and teach things that **nourish capacities to dream of a future**.
- 'Race' is **more invisible than ever**, but race identity shape life chances.
- Acknowledge that **exclusionary politics all rely on racism**.
- Social collectivity require explanation, NOT be assumed as natural and universal.
- **Investigate** the construction and reproduction of the idea of race.
- 'Race' needs to be **represented as a social process** and explained, **NOT a social fact to explain other facts**
- **Struggle against imperialism** cannot only happen at the textual level... **lived experiences** should be taken into account on how imperialism can be understood:
  - **Reclaiming history** is essential to decolonization
  - Creating a **post-liberation national culture**
  - **Critiquing Western history** and the way it has been written/constructed **hand-in-hand** with colonialism and imperialism
- Viewing **DNA as a matter of social/political relationships** ... **NOT about the body** and CANNOT be defined by the body.



(Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Miles, 1994; Tallbear, 2013; & Winant, 2015)

## Books that Interrupt Colonialism...

- ***From a Native Daughter*** by Haunani Kay Trask
- ***Mohawk Interruptions*** by Audra Simpson
- ***Orientalism*** by Edward Said
- ***Native American DNA*** by Kim Tallbear
- ***This Bridge Called my Back*** by Cherrie Moraga
- ***Warrior Life*** by Pam Palmer
- ***Red Earth White Lies*** by Vine Deloria, Jr.



Let's interrupt the Eurocentric UNIFORMITY in our  
bookshelves and libraries!

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