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Abstract

Departing from an appraisal of the topical relevance of what Canadian based geographer Derek Gregory has perceptively called 'the colonial present', this article presents a number of departures for an investigation of the ways in which the codes of a colonial conditions have infiltrated the metropolitan west (Gregory 2004). This article suggests a number of possible starting points for further discussion and focuses on an analysis of the long term process of transfer of colonial forms from colony to core and on an appraisal of migrations and their governance as one privileged site for the production and reproduction of coloniality.

Keywords

home, brought, metropolitan, space, colonialism, colonialization

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Colonialism Brought Home: On the Colonialization of the Metropolitan Space**Lorenzo Veracini**
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1. Departing from an appraisal of the topical relevance of what Canadian based geographer Derek Gregory has perceptively called 'the colonial present', this article presents a number of departures from an investigation of the ways in which the codes of a colonial conditions have infiltrated the metropolitan west (Gregory 2004). This article suggests a number of possible starting points for further discussion and focuses on an analysis of the long term process of transfer of colonial forms from colony to core and on an appraisal of migrations and their governance as one privileged site for the production and reproduction of coloniality.

A "Recolonial" World

2. Typically colonial resonances can be detected in the ways some leaders in the West are deploying rhetorics of "humanitarian intervention" and "inevitable necessity" while going to war in colonial theatres and for colonial purposes (see, for example, Ali 2003). In this context, many have especially noted a colonial frame of mind while observing the ways in which relationships between core and periphery and between Westerners and "Others" are now imagined and enforced (Khalidi 2004, Mann 2003). Colonialism and the return of "empire" are very much a current affair (Burbach and Tarbell, 2004).

3. Images of prisoner abuse in Iraq, for example, have produced a diversified debate on the significance of the acts they portray. *Guardian* journalist and commentator Gary Younge's remarks, however, are especially pertinent to a discussion dealing with the return of typically colonial forms:

Who they are ["white trash"—the servicemen and women who are depicted committing atrocities in the Abu Ghraib prison] is no defence for what they did. Indeed, who they are enabled what they did. It is one of the hallmarks of colonialism that the poorest, least powerful citizen of an occupying nation can wield enormous power in an occupied territory. A former chicken-plant worker like England [the most visible of these torturers—her image has been reproduced countless times] can humiliate virtually any Iraqi she wants precisely and only because she is American in Iraq. Once she returns to America she reverts to the bottom of the pile (Younge 2004).

4. Beside torture, the return of colonial understandings of social, personal, and geographical relations—Gregory's colonial 'imaginative geographies'—is also a current affair (Gregory 2004, 17-20; see also Said 1994, 282-386). At the same time, recent renditions of colonial enterprises have reevaluated the role of empire and emphasized its benign outlook (Ferguson 2003). These narratives have been well received: the return of empire has been accompanied by a return of imperial history.

5. And yet, one could argue that the new colonialist practice of the US and other administrations deploys a very old imaginary: while bombing campaigns over Iraq had already been tested during the 1920s, the occupation of Baghdad had already been present in the American imagination during the 1930s (Lindqvist 2001, Craige 1933). Guantanamo Bay is also and at the same time ultra modern and very old. The very existence of the military base in Cuban territory is one legacy of an uninterrupted colonialist tradition, and, besides technological transformation, the typology of detention currently operating there originates in specifically colonial contexts (Cuba and the Philippines during the Spanish American war and South Africa during the Boer war). Indeed, much of the imaginary and public discourse that is used to deal with the occupation of Iraq, with the successive attempts to establish a protectorate and more in general with the "global war on terror" was perhaps already existent. The George W. Bush administration may only have needed to repackage and mobilise an existing repertoire of attitudes, images and refrains: an old song with a new dress.

6. On the other hand, this perspective could also be reversed. Beside the "recolonial" attitude that is becoming apparent in recent geopolitical developments, we may be

witnessing the introduction of typically colonial features in the West proper (Balibar 2004b). The two processes go hand in hand, and, while some current events reinforce the traditional and colonial distinction between "metropole" and "colony", other trends contribute to blur such a distinction. During a phase that also witnessed a generalized process of decolonization—but more so in more recent years—the traditional line separating metropolitan and colonial spheres ceased to be supervised.

7. Here is one possible key: a postcolonial condition is not or not only, as it is often implied, the attribution to the former colony of the specificities of a non-colonial situation (see, for example, Betts 1998). Rather, it must account for the importation of typically colonial tropes within the bounds of a metropolitan context as well. It is a process by which some of the codes of a colonial consciousness, and some of its practices, have filtered and are filtering through a border that has become porous. These codes have moved towards what understands itself as "core" (see Chakrabarty 2000). There is a need to investigate again the circumstances of a postcolonial condition and to appraise 'this precocious prefix' (Gregory 2004, 6).

"Civilising" Colonialisms

8. The emergence of colonial forms in metropolitan contexts is grounded in a long lasting tradition of exchange. Michael Foucault noted in one of his later works the 'boomerang effect' colonial models had

on the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions, and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization ... on itself (Focault 2003, 103).

9. On the other hand, Catherine Hall's *Civilizing Subjects* has used postcolonial and settler historical revisionism to re-examine evolving notions of English identity and to highlight how crucial a colonial dimension was to the shaping of "Englishness" (Hall 2002). As well, recent work by Paul Gilroy on what he calls a 'postcolonial melancholia' highlighted a widespread British reluctance to fully abandon colonially informed refrains and understandings in relation, for example, to race and postcolonial migrations:

[t]he residues of imperial and colonial culture live on wherever "race" is invoked. Locally, they promote a nostalgia and sanction a violence that ensure that Britain stays paralysed by the inability to really work through the loss of global prestige and the economic and political benefits that once attended it. [...] We might tentatively name this ugly formation postcolonial melancholia (Gilroy 2001, 162).

10. In France, Benjamin Stora has analysed the dynamics with which the colonialist memory of settler Algeria was displaced/replaced and rearticulated by anti-Arab political discourse (Stora 1999). The memory of a settler project and of a bitter war of decolonization lives on in the political practice of the right in France. In the Australian context, Ghassan Hage has highlighted a corresponding 'discourse of Anglo decline' and its role in shaping and remobilizing exclusive notions of 'whiteness' (Hage 1998, 20). The cultural legacy of the white Australia policy and of a settler colonial past lives on in exclusivist practices and the failures of Aboriginal reconciliation. Not only colonialism shaped metropolitan cores and other sub-colonialist dependencies, colonialism persists: its continuous memory and imagination is recurrently activated in the public sphere and mobilized in political discourse.

11. And yet, the discrimination separating colony and colonizing metropolises had been attentively and constantly reinforced throughout many passages of colonial history (see, for example, Fieldhouse 1966). In a classic colonial age, the juridical status of an individual or the acceptability of certain acts had crucially depended on the location of the individual and on whether these acts were committed within the borders of metropolitan Europe. The 1787 case of a fugitive slave who had reached Britain before being recaptured by his owner and was set free after a judge had failed to detect in England any law or custom which sanctioned the practice of slavery, epitomizes this difference (see Ferro 1997, 175, Davis 1975, 470-474). The remarkable coincidence between the long term legality of the Poor Law in all its versions (1601-1948) and the history of English colonialism could also be mentioned: the Poor Law was never, not even partially, exported outside the borders of the colonising metropole.

12. Introducing *Against Paranoid Nationalism* and following Robert Miles's work on racism, Hage noted the 'important historical shift that began in the late 18th century and continued throughout the 19th century: the increasing inclusion of nationally delineated peasants and lower classes into the circle of what each nation defined as its own version of civilized human society', and that 'this deracialisation and civilization of the interior went hand in hand with the intensification of the colonial racialisation of the exterior' (Hage 2003, 15, Miles 1993). Concluding his introduction, however, Hage observed that we 'seem to be reverting to the neo-feudal times analysed by Norbert Elias, where the boundaries of civilization, dignity and hope no longer coincide with the boundaries of the nation' (Hage 2003, 18).

13. While writing on postcolonialism, Stuart Hall summarized the colonial narrative as 'the

whole process of expansion, exploration, conquest, colonization and imperial hegemonisation which constituted the "outer face", the constitutive outside, of European and then Western Capitalist modernity after 1492' (Hall 1996, 249). This classic and long lasting distinction between an outer face and an inner face of the colonial condition has been progressively disarticulated.

14. Here are some indicators of this transfert and possible departures for an historical analysis of the reproduction of coloniality in metropolitan contexts: the passes, many of the methodologies of social control, the very idea of bombing civilians from above, the technologies of genocidal destruction have all been developed in a colonial context and were all eventually exhibited within the boundary of metropolitan Europe (see Lindqvist 1997, Lindqvist 2001, Traverso 2003, Naimark 2001, Conklin 1998). Already in 1955, Antillaise poet Aimé Césaire had especially insisted on the need to see fascism as a colonial form that had engulfed Europe at a time when the outward expansion of imperial colonialism had encountered its final limits.

What the very Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century cannot forgive Hitler for is not the crime in itself, the crime against humanity, not the humiliation of humanity itself, but the crime against the white man ... ; it is the crime of having applied to Europe the colonialist actions as were borne up till now by the Arabs, the Coolies of India and the negroes of Africa (Césaire 1950, quoted in Ferro 1997, x).

15. Moreover, recent research has also tried to recuperate/emphasize Hannah Arendt's intuition that there was a direct continuity between imperialism and fascism, that theories of race, racial and cultural superiority connected white/European settler colonies and the fascist ideologies of post-Great War Europe (Arendt 1951). Historian Jürgen Zimmerer has convincingly proposed an 'archaeology' of genocide that identifies colonial precedents as an essential prerequisite for successive practices (Zimmerer 2004). Dirk Moses has also proposed an analysis of settler colonialism that emphasizes its inherently genocidal structures (Moses 2004, 28-35).

16. But this movement of colonial forms from periphery to core does not involve only fascism or genocidal occurrences. As Sandro Mezzadra and Federico Rahola have noted, the movement with which typically colonial forms infiltrated *all* the European space included other aspects of the 'total war' that had applied for a long time to colonial subjects before flooding the European space (Mezzadra and Rahola 2003, 8). These included the already mentioned concentration camp, the machine gun (developed in time to participate in the final stages of the Indian wars in North America and then used against striking workers in the US); but also fingerprints, as Carlo Ginzburg had demonstrated, originally conceived in Bengal and eventually deployed within the metropolitan space with the strategic purpose of distinguishing between "laborious" and "dangerous" classes (Ginzburg 2002 [1986], 189-190). And it is not only about war: as demonstrated by Gauri Viswanathan in *The Masks of Conquest*, educational technologies associated with "English studies", originally developed for the Indian system of education as it was imposed by the British during the nineteenth century, were also later transferred and delivered to the metropolitan youth (Viswanathan 1989).

17. And then, in a more contemporary perspective, one should consider the relations of production represented by the new sweatshops and the new marginalisations. Finally, one should consider the people themselves, in a movement of displacement involving migrants and refugees and the creation of new diasporas (see Sayad, 1999). The very intimate relationship between colonialism and immigration is perhaps epitomised by recent discussions regarding the proposal to transform the former museum of African and Oceanic Art at the Porte Dorée (a building originally erected for the 1931 Colonial Exposition) in a new museum displaying the history and experience of immigration into France.

The Reproduction of Colonialities

18. The dialectics between colonisation, decolonization and population movements between former colonies and metropolitan centres—the "return" of European settlers in some cases and the migration to Europe of a large number of former colonial subjects—has been a long lasting feature of Europe's twentieth century (see Mezzadra 2001, which refers to the historical precedent represented by German policies regarding the naturalization of Polish agricultural workers in Prussia at the end of the nineteenth century. These measures—devised in order to guarantee access to cheap workers for German enterprises and to prevent the full integration of non-German residents—are surprisingly close to contemporary strategies for the organization/management of migratory flows to the European Union). And already in the early 1960s the French Situationists had talked about 'the colonization of everyday life', but these were considerations expressed in the midst of a rapid process of transformation and modernization associated with decolonization and loss of Empire (Ross 1996 6-10). However, recent instances of the movement of colonial forms towards the centre are in many ways qualitatively different and institute more explicit types of recognizably colonial relations.

19. The case of migrant women, and especially domestic workers and their often invisible

relationships with the more emancipated women who employ them may be another useful departing point for an analysis of the institutionalisation of a typically colonial dialectic inscribed well within the metropolitan cores. Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild's work on an intrinsically unequal relation in which a duty of care traditionally associated with womanhood is transferred to other women in order to liberate some from their obligations is not framed in a colonial terminology (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). Yet this type of relationship (which imposes on the migrant the burden of incapacity of exercising her prerogatives of a "caring" woman in her own right) should invite an investigation aware of its typically colonial entanglements. Of course, loss of capacity—in this case, loss of caring—is always compounded by the insecurity and transience of being a migrant.

20. Again, it is not only about migrant women, or just about caring. The intimate relationship between the vulnerable experiences of migrants in their working conditions, the more general process of erosion of workers' rights, and the evolution and institutionalization in a metropolitan context of fragmented forms of labor exploitation should also be appraised (for an analysis involving experiences of migrant workers in Italy, see Raimondi, and Ricciardi, 2004). And this typology does not involve only the West proper. When the government of the Philippines decided to withdraw its contingent of troops from its participation in the occupation of Iraq in July 2004, it was the fate of 1.5 millions Filipino domestic workers working in the Middle East (and their remittances) that they needed to protect. These workers represent the weakest link in a triangulation of quasi-colonial relations: they belong to a client state that could not reject US demands for military participation in Iraq and are at the same time personally dependant on their employers in an association that places them in a very vulnerable position. While their conditions could not be protected or even monitored and the Philippine administration was necessarily even painfully aware of this situation, it is unlikely that Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer could evaluate the subtlety of a very delicate pattern of unequal relationships before releasing careless remarks and initiating a diplomatic row (Collier 2004). Downer's disappointment was not really about the message that was given out by negotiating "terrorist" demands; rather, it was about the meaning that he felt should have been articulated in that situation and was not. He seemed to be expressing the need to restate that people construed as colonized are expendable. His attitude also shows how relatively easy it is to be gung-ho from the better end of a colonialy informed relationship of power.

21. These are examples; however, it is important to note that this constitutive passage ultimately upsets the fundamental liberal premise that all human beings are born equal (Bobbio 1990). The multiplication, stratification and ossification of legal statutes linked to the specific locale of someone's birth, a form that accompanies the movement of peoples across boundaries, marks indeed a momentous shift—possibly an essential passage in the process of establishing a new type of sovereign governance. Its novelty has been detected and emphasized for example by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in *Empire*, and following debates have concentrated on whether recent developments in international relations may or may not be framed within a classic analysis of imperialism (Hardt and Negri, 2000, Balakrishnan and Aronowitz, 2003, Hardt and Negri, 2004). However, concerned with the evolution of geopolitics, these discussions did not detect the intrinsically colonial character of a new regime.

22. The Australian Federal Government has in recent years consistently wrestled with the judiciary in order to test its prerogatives to punish the body and the psyche of "unlawful non-citizens" and their children. As well, recent legislative developments introduced by the Howard government envisage the possibility of indefinite detention without charge and powers to ban organisations without trial (see Hocking 2004). Suvendrini Perera has also highlighted the typically colonial switches surrounding the Tampa incident in an insightful article in which she linked the behavior of the Howard administration and Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (Perera 2002). In the meantime, Aboriginal peoples and communities also have to face the return of explicitly colonial forms: from unilateral and government determined dispossession and erasure of titles to land—a return of *terra nullius*—to the administrative discontinuation of elected bodies (Behrendt 2003, Reynolds 2003).

23. Debates over the respective authority and jurisdiction of governments and courts, over the capacity of detaining and punishing migrants and/or suspected terrorists, also took place elsewhere. Yet few have noted that the multiplication of legal statuses applying to different territories subjected to the same power (i.e. Guantanamo Bay, where some actions would be permissible to some but not to others, as opposed to the US proper, where some entitlements should be accessible to all) is a typical feature of a colonial frame of administrative intervention. On the other side of the Atlantic, the establishment of a European system of race relations through the management/regulation of the position of migrants (both a national and a postnational process) has become one main element in the constitution of a Western European polity and administrative identity (Balibar 2003, Balibar, 2001, 77-83). Instances of this tendency can be noted: the selective yet temporary suspension of citizenship entitlements for citizens of the new members of the European Union seeking work outside their countries, and the display of an array of flexible responses regarding, for example, the status of the Turkish/occupied area of Cyprus after the failure of

the referendum over the unification of the island in early 2004.

24. Conservative academic Samuel Huntington's recent anxious book on the migration of Latinos to the US fits well in this frame. In *Who Are We*, Huntington argues that it is because of the potential coloniality that they bring with them, that migrants must be permanently barred from the normalization they aspire to (Huntington 2004). (Huntington, however, says one thing but recommends its opposite: it is exactly with the permanent discontinuation of the prospect of acquiring a number of citizenship entitlements that the colonialization process can be fully articulated and the "codes" of a colonial relation can be made permanent and institutionalized.)

25. Influential intellectuals have recently called in the European press for support of the prospect of an independent European foreign and defence policy as a counterpoint to American interventionism and for the urgent institution of a less barbaric and more "experienced" practice of dealing with former colonial territories/peoples/polities (Habermas and Derrida 2003). Further appeals have appeared in the Italian press as well and were promoted, among others, by Umberto Eco and Gianni Vattimo (Levy, Pensky and Torpey, 2004). It should be emphasized, however, that Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida's appeal was convincingly criticized by Iris Marion Young because it imagined Europe in strictly Eurocentric and ultimately colonialist terms (Young 2003). Indeed, the establishment of a higher and mostly unaccountable principle of 'foreign/domestic politics' (in the words of Habermas, 'Weltinnenpolitik') based on the self-fulfilling proposition that Europe possesses a robust history of liberal and democratic respect and tolerance is not only questionable, it risks reproducing some of the typical features of a colonial consciousness.

26. Despite this criticism, Habermas and Derrida's concern regarding some of the dynamics associated with the "war on terror" may highlight a nervousness linked with the manifestation of "recolonial" tendencies (Borradori 2003). Indeed, much of the discursive production associated with the emergence of the "war on terror" has also contributed to the stratification of legal statuses and to the re-emergence of a colonial dialectic on the international agenda. In this respect, prominent French intellectual Etienne Balibar has analyzed, for example, the ways in which the deployment of a permanent global war has placed a typically colonial dispute such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict at the very centre of global struggles over definitions and understandings of political legitimacy (Balibar 2004).

27. Many have anticipated that the parallel introduction of anti-immigration and anti-terrorist integrated information systems is likely to become yet another example of a technology developed to deal with a typically Orientalised "Other"—the "terrorist", the focus of a gaze obsessed with security, racial profiling, and alien infiltration—which is eventually brought within this side of the colonial equation, adding to the available technologies of social control (Paye 2005). As Gregory concluded in *The Colonial Present*, 'the permanent state of emergency institutionalized through [the] imaginative geographies of the alien "other" also reactivates the dispositions of a colonial imaginary. Its spacings are mirror images of the "wild zones" of the colonial imagination' (Gregory 2004, 260).

Displacing/Replacing Colonialisms

28. The Europe of Schengen (that is, the European Union as characterized by the establishment of a common border regime) establishes—with the help of the displacement of border control technologies to 'safe third countries'—'flows of expulsion' that upset the traditional distinction between "inside" and "outside" ('safe third countries' are states where asylum seekers and migrants could have applied for protection on their journey to reach the European Union and where these peoples can be deported to by migration officials unwilling to allow their permanence in the European Union) (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2003). Comparable rearticulations of sovereignty in relation to migration policy can also be detected in Australia and in the US. The Australian Border Protection Act of 2001 excised Christmas Island and Ashmore Reef from Australia's migratory zone (this situation may yet be introduced in other areas of Australia's sovereign territory) and established detention centres in Nauru and New Guinea (the "Pacific Solution"). In the US, a controversial practice of "voluntary" repatriation of illegal Mexican migrants is also being experimented with the collaboration of Mexican authorities (Kraul 2004). These policies are sometimes expressed in humanitarian terms, yet, as the transportation by plane of illegal migrants to Arizona shows, by ensuring their repatriation deep into Mexican territory, they establish a crucial and unprecedented distinction between the traditional border line separating the US and Mexico and a different/displaced typology of border articulation located somewhere within another sovereign state.

29. These policies are sometimes expressed in humanitarian terms, yet, by ensuring the deportation of illegal migrants, they establish a crucial and unprecedented distinction between traditional borderlines and a different/displaced typology of border articulation located somewhere within another sovereign state. And it is not only about the willingness of deporting illegal migrants; it is also about the capacity of transferring the technologies of border control and the sovereign entitlements that they signify. It should be emphasized how these developments export/import colonially informed relationships of power and their

surveillance. Gregory has perceptively concluded that 'the extension of global order (as an asymmetric system of power, knowledge, and geography) was made dramatically coincident with a projection of the colonial past into what seems [...] a profoundly colonial present' (Gregory 2004, 28).

30. It is a paradoxical circumstance: while measures aimed at the control of migration flows are inevitably framed in the language of national sovereignty, they ultimately establish a system of flexible degrees of border integration—a colonial system of regional integration. In the end, while these developments introduce within the metropolitan context and at its borderlands the multiplication of administrative regimes which is one essential prerequisite for a colonial condition, the principle according to which all residents of the same area irrespective of religion and nationality must come under the same law—one of the bases of "European" law as opposed to "colonial" law—has slowly but surely disappeared. Rather than seeing the abandonment of a colonial framework of social intervention, this process is reproducing and hardening some of its constitutive elements.

31. We live beside individuals and communities that are allowed to reside in the West but will never access some of the entitlements traditionally associated with whiteness/citizenship. In this context, the traditional avenues for their social integration—for their normalization—have been progressively extinguished. There is now a growing literature dealing with processes of civic stratification in relation to the control of migrants and dealing with the 'denizen', a category originally developed by Tomas Hammar (Morris 2000, 2001; Hammar 1990). On the other hand, while the colonial dimension of these processes is not often mentioned or investigated, colonialisms and multiculturalisms have been meaningfully related to each other in the work, for example, of Sneja Gunew (Gunew 2003).

32. Is it possible to relate Giorgio Agamben's influential notion of *Homo Sacer*, a person devoid of citizenship or political rights and reduced to the state of naked life (Agamben 1995, see also Perera 2002b), to the colonized; is it possible to apply to these dynamics the categories of colonial analysis? Quite remarkably, the fact that peoples are made to carry with them their colonial statuses across borders without ever losing them is by now lived as normal (albeit some do express concerns regarding the inhumanity with which migrants are treated).

33. When "frontiers" (however reconstructed) and their surveillance become crucial aspects of a constituent passage, diasporas—their composition, their sensibilities, their strategies, their politics, their histories—also become a strategic site for contestation (Sayad 1999, Papastergiadis 2000, Mezzadra 2004). There is now a quite developed literature on these themes: on frontiers, their recomposition, on racial discourse, on migrations, their borderlands and their politics. However, there is also perhaps a need to conceptualise the relationships between migrations and coloniality in a context in which, paradoxically, parallel to the heralded Westernisation of the world, we may also be witness to the ongoing colonialization of its colonialist cores.

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