

Colonialism and Postcolonialism: A Colloquium

Conducted by Anne Wishart YOUNG

In recent times, there have been concerns with the whole global issue of colonialization and postcolonialisation. The terms in play are colonialism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism, hegemony, native rights, ethnic cleansing...

Few topics, not least in the light of the recent breakup of the Soviet Empire and Yugoslavia, or Mandela-led independence in South Africa, or relative democratization in South America, or the events in Rwanda and East Timor, have of late been more to the political forefront than colonialism as both an old legacy yet a new challenge. Already the old colonial paradigms of Europe - the British, Spanish, French, Portuguese or Dutch empires - have a look about them of long ago, a time past.

For today we hear talk of postcoloniality, multiculturalism, borderlessness, hybridity, subalternism, métissage, even of the Empire not only striking but writing back. Who runs this debate? What kinds of terminology best apply? Who, who not, is a postcolonial? Are those who think colonialism, in given cases, to have been no bad thing, simply nostalgia rightists? On the other side, what of those who speak of neoimperialism, a new colonial economic and cultural order, largely America - or at least western - centered? To mull over these and arising issues, I invited two respected academic friends to join me in a colloquium taped at the University of Tokyo. What follows is an edited transcription.

Professor William Gater is Canadian born and a Linguistics specialist who graduated from the University of Montreal. For the last 20 years, he has been teaching at the University of Tokyo, Komaba.

Professor A. Robert Lee is a Britisher who taught American studies and literature at the University of Kent at Canterbury, U.K., for over 25 years and is currently Professor at Nihon University, Tokyo. His publications include Designs of Blackness: Mappings in the Literature and Culture of Afro-America (1998), (with Gerald Vizenor) Postindian Conversations (1999), and edited essay collections like Other Britain, Other British: Contemporary Multicultural Fiction (1995) and The Beat Generation Writers (1996).

Concept Formation re: Colonialism

Anne Wishart Young: "Colonialism" as defined in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is 1: the quality or state of being a colonial or 2: something characteristic of a colony or 3 a: controlled by one power over a dependent area or people b: a policy advocating or based on such control. Its first year of usage interestingly enough was in 1853.

The critical characteristics of colonialism involve the following criteria as listed by the Washington educationalist, Eric Miller; The settlement of the new territory by a nation outside of its borders. The mass migration of settlers to this territory from that nation; The settlement remains under the rule of that nation. This settlement maintains cultural ties with that nation. The nation comes into contact

with another culture.

This description of the bare bones of colonialism in itself makes us focus on the responsibilities, parameters, obligations and clearly gives us a framework from where we can observe the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic problems that have evolved from any country 'making' another country its colony. Colonialism has had an enormous impact on our modern world and has been responsible for the mass movement of peoples whether by their own choice or by force throughout the centuries and the world, often directly effecting the rate of development of countries.

Robert Petersen sites in his paper, Colonialism in Greenland: An Inuit Perspective (Arctic Anthropology, Vol. 32, no.2 [1995]) two definitions of "colony". The first definition commonly held most likely by that of a colonial power is "a geographical area kept for political, strategical and economic advantages" (Klausner and Foulks 1982: 24). The second given by Sukarno of Indonesia, a colonized leader and a main figure in de-colonization this century is "a situation in which a people was governed by another people politically, economically, intellectually and physically". (Gould and Kolb 1964: "Colonialism").

Having presented you with two slightly different takes on what others believe the word "colony" to mean and a dry definition on "colonialism", my first question to open this colloquium is formed around these two pivotal concepts. As each individual forms their own internal and external attitudes and opinions based upon either firsthand experience or information garnered from others whether that be from parental or immediate accepted social norms, the cultural background, the media or the written word, What are your particular interests in colonialism? Why have you ever been intrigued or personally involved in the area of colonialism? Why does the word colonialism mean in particular to you?

Professor A. Robert Lee: It's inevitable if you are raised British, that you would think about coloniality, colonization, colonialism, the whole political family of that word. In the first place Britain of course did have colonies and it had an empire and it had a tradition of moving its soldiers, its preachers, its diplomats, and in the early days, its monarchs and their minions into other people's territory. Two views flow from that. Those who believed that they were bringing enlightenment, truth, beauty, civilization to the uncivilized, to the untruthful, to the unreligious, and to use the original Greek, the barbarians, the people who lived outside the imperium. That's one view.

The other view, which is the view I subscribe to, is that like all acts of power, it is a kind of extension of the collective ego. In the British case anglocentrism was taken to be God's language, a model for others.

Now you can use the vocabularies of both; enlightenment, a gift, a culture. Exploitation, repression, slavery, and the whole system by which one particular regime imposes its self on another people.

To add a personal note, because I went into American Studies from that, it sharpened and defined my interest in the cultural pluralization of my own country - not just "The Empire Strikes Back" but something far more - the kind of change in the very grain of British life. The fact is that those people who are supposedly of Empire origin, or colonial origins, are British and are at the center of things and are not at the periphery at all. For someone who went into American Studies, it's pretty obvious that you have to have a discussion and analysis of whether or not you think the United States is the successor global power to the 19th century and imperium of the United Kingdom. But the United States is also a multifaceted mirror and while we can speak of the English language of necessity, we have to speak of the Spanish and all the other languages of the Americas.

There you have another empire, which interests me enormously for lots of reasons; I happen to have

a Spanish wife, I speak Spanish, I'm interested in Spain, and very interested in the Latino traditions of North America, all of those things. So why did the Spanish Empire collapse? Why did it begin? What did it produce? What is the difference between what is called 'encomienda', slavery and what was the Anglo American system of black slavery?

And what happens too, within the Americas to the gentrified Toryism, which led to much of Canada. Which on the one hand, it seems is the mirror of this 18th century sparatactical Toryism, the anti-Americanism been born at that point, while at the same time, it is in fact a deeply multi-cultural Canada, which has little to do with the memories of John Diefenbaker and the Federal laundering that went with it. And we can see that too in the other great white Commonwealth figure/country of Australia. Australia on one hand is all Sir Robert Menzies, or so we're told, and on the other hand, it is already reinventing itself as an Asian country in order that it should somehow engage in the Pacific Rim economy and talk about itself as multi-cultural.

So in a necessary way all of these things come together under the associated notions of coloniality, colonialism, colonization. That's roughly my own take on the matter.

Professor William Gater: Professor Lee and myself have similar origins we were both born as British subjects. When I was born, Canada was a part of the empire or the Commonwealth and at I would like to look at colonialism from just a different point of view.

It's interesting what you said, but as a phenomenon in history, if going back to Greece, from my point of view, in the eastern world there doesn't really seem to be a colonialism in the way we have in the West.

From the very beginning, thinking of Greece, Athens, for example, they had colonies. It was a kind of a transplanting of one culture into another place. The Modern English word colony of course is from Latin and meant to till or cultivate, colo, colere, colui, cultum - the past participle from which we get the word "culture". It originally had a very pleasant meaning to it and the idea was simply to transpose from one thing to another, so this idea of colonialism I think is particularly a western concept, but in the beginning at least, it was maybe meant in a very good sense.

Today the word has a very pejorative meaning and may be the reason for this is that we have to distinguish two types of colonialism. There is one, which brings your own culture to another usually uninhabited place. This can be put into question how uninhabited it was in the case of Australia for example and Canada, but if we think of the colonies of Greece, going to say Sicily for example, in a way they were duplicating a very great civilization from Greece and placing this in Sicily.

In many cases, European powers tried to do a similar thing for example, the English colonization of Canada. The first English colony was in Newfoundland. John Cabot discovered this island in 1497 and named it "Newe Founde Launde" hence its name. It was simply used as a trading station at first or a fishing station. The idea was to create a New England and France the same in Quebec, a Nouvelle France, and a Nueva Espania. The idea was basically to create almost what you would say, a mirror image, maybe a better image, but always a very positive idea from the original meaning of the word, to till or to cultivate. For many people this is a very positive idea.

Conversely, we see the negative side of colonialism where a European power takes over an already very well established and very high culturally formed civilization or culture, for example in the case of India or Spain, in South America in Cusco, and the destruction of the Mayan civilization. These were very high civilizations. To try to crush or to exterminate civilizations, this of course is a very negative idea of colonialism. And to me these represent the two types of colonialism.

Without being a tremendous advocate of colonialism because obviously it's a dead issue today and colonialism obviously has taken on a completely different connotation in the sense of not of countries, but of companies controlling large areas. So we could speak of American colonialism in South America where the fact is the government has absolutely nothing to do with it. This is a new dimension to the word colonialism and of course a rather negative one, but I think originally the idea of cultivating and bringing something new, a mirror image of one's own culture, this is a good idea. The other side is very negative when the intention is to destroy.

Colonial Insecurities and Identities? Fact, Fiction or Self-Deprecation?

AWY. In history, colonial powers have often been more interested in the colony acquisition race than with the rights of the natives. In the competition for economic gain and land, the need for cheap labor, the continuance of racial arrogance and intolerance, and the imposition of their preferred religion e.g. Christianity on native groups, the colonizers of North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and other lands created European white supremacy citadels. In the name of maintaining the quality of character of European models and standards of society "the colonial ethnic and racial minorities were reduced to second-class citizens"... "For colonial minorities, cultural alienation became not so much a norm as it did a method of survival" (Sanchez, Joseph. P. *Encounter*, Issue10, Fall 1992.)

I have a very loaded and rhetorical question to pose to you William as we are both Canadian, you coming from Hamilton, Ontario and myself from Ottawa, how do you feel as a second-rate colonial? I raise this question from our long Canadian tradition of refusing to recognize indigenous Canadian talent until they have been acknowledged and acclaimed either in Great Britain or on the continent, and then upon return, reconsidered valued Canadians with valued contributions to impart to our insecure and identity flummoxed colonial culture. One of our great writers, Stephen Leacock (1869 - 1944) waxed quite satirically on this subject of "Mother England." in his eloquent I'll stay in Canada.

WG. I've never seen myself as a second-rate colonial.

AWY. Have you ever been treated as one?

WG. Never. Because first of all, it's a very broad usage of the word colonial when we're speaking of Canada. When I was born, of course Canada was a completely independent country and has been since 1931 with the statute of Westminster and we of course never used the word colony at that time to refer to Canada.

AWY. Not to ourselves?

WG. No, not to ourselves, but in fact we were within the Empire or the Commonwealth at the time when I was born in 1942. There were the Dominions of the Commonwealth or the Empire, and then there were colonies and this was simply a legal term. It meant places within the Empire where the final appeal was to Westminster. In the case of Canada it wasn't, so we were not a colony. These places were small places usually, of course, I'd exclude huge India.

AWY. When I was attending boarding school in England in 1967, the first year there was arduous. Not only was I a Canadian, a foreigner, a new girl in the Upper 5th form of an all girls private school, but even more surprising and a totally neoteric experience was that I was persistently called in a derogatory and denigrating manner "a colonial". Even recently on a trip to London a new acquaintance dubbed me as such again. And even with our famous Canadian dry sense of humor, there still existed a superior sting to the implied barbarous uncivilized second-classness of coming from the

colonies.

WG. Interesting that you should say this because my father who was in the British army, the Canadian Forces, went to London in World War I and even though he was a born Londoner, somebody pushed him. They saw "Canada" which was the only mark which they had to identify themselves as being from the Dominion, pushed him over and said "Stand up you colonial", but to me this is only humorous. I can't see that there's anything in that.

AWY. You mentioned that there were two aspects of colonialism, a negative aspect and a positive aspect. Robert, how do you view this concept?

ARL. Well, I don't except the alleged benefits of colonization. Colonization seems to be, like two forms of cancer. I'm sure there is cancer of the feet and cancer of the head, but colonialism seems to me the same disease.

WG. Even in the case of the Greeks?

ARL. I think the Greeks especially. Their culture was founded on slaves. On the one hand, you had the Socratic, the upper class Athenians and on the other, their whole economy, their whole social organization, their structure of power, their relationship with other people, rested utterly and paradigmatically on the slave culture.

WG. Every country did. It was nothing special.

ARL. Indeed it's not, so we shouldn't glorify it. If indeed Greek is the glory of Greece etc., we must see what selective version we're being offered, I think, equally in the cases of the so-called New World where colonialism was rampant. I'll deal with Africa in just a second. But, colonialism in the new world is not simply a matter of disinheritance any number of tribal peoples, because those tribal peoples did not simply offer finally Louis Riel in the history of Canada, and the history of métissage is one of the greatest stories of Canada. This is why I say Canada is slowly becoming Chinese, Japanese and Native and that the notion that the Anglophone tradition or the Francophone tradition are the only preeminent ones was indeed largely true in terms power, but in demographics that is radically changing. It is going to be a black, an Asian and other Canadians.

AWY. Where did I hear "It is a truism that if one's history is not respected, neither shall he or she be respected in society"...

ARL. Canada remains in one sense rather marginal to the colonial story. It's smallish population in terms of Americas. Its best shot will likely turn out to be its multiculturalism. Its danger is that of becoming a grievance culture-based on resentment of the US. There lies no small paradox. It's become rather an old record about hearing that in some ways. It's important to point out that the largest percentage illegal population in the United States is not Mexican, but white Canadian.

The thing I want to say about these two kinds. It's one thing to quote a lexical root of cultivation as we view obviously the origins of the word of colonization, but colonization was never there to cultivate anything other than a space in which to cultivate one's own power.

WG. A reflection.

ARL. No, because the cultures were already in place. In Native America, the calculation is that between the Bering Strait and Terra Del Fuego, at the time of the Columbia Land fall of 1492, there may have been as many as a hundred million people. And you can't have an empty land with a hundred million people. There is increasing evidence that it may have been larger than that.

AWY. One thing I must say here is, I do not believe that there was any continent or area of land on earth, that prior to colonization, were uninhabited. For example Newfoundland had a thriving

population of Beothuk, which were sublimated and now are considered extinct. Recalling our historical colonization or invasion of these lands, we also eradicated hundreds of thousands indigenous peoples by infecting them with alien diseases that they had no immunity to or prophylaxis for. In Australia we had not an empty country, we had the aborigines. In Canada, to this day we have problems stemming from the colonizing practices our Native peoples suffered and are still suffering from, while trying to regain and protect their lands, human rights, and retrieve and preserve their cultures.

ARL. Similarity when the British, the French, the Spanish, and the Portuguese landed in the Dark Continent, a preemptive vocabulary came into play. It's a vocabulary of barbarianism. It's a vocabulary of savagism. It's a vocabulary of the "heart of darkness". We are the harbingers of light. We bring civilization. We don't bring ruthless asset stripping of minerals. We do not nor bring ruthless means for human traffic and slavery, and slavery incidentally which is by no way over, I speak as a member of the antislavery society. There are over 2 million slaves in the world at the current moment.

The notion that somehow these grotesque concoctions that we've created whether it was in British Africa or Nigeria or whatever, or it was Angola, Mozambique, with the Portuguese or whether or even the French colonies. These are inventions and what we're still faced with and being charged with is how to live postcolonially and the postcolonial question being posed to us by some wonderful thinkers. We have to take on Frantz Fanon. We have to take on Aime Cesaire. We have the recent litan of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Paul Gilroy and others. These are the people who actually put things on the table for us to debate.

WG. But they are filled with contradictions themselves. For example, you mentioned both Fanon and Cesaire. Both of these people basically supported the French Republic and even though they were in the case of Cesaire, he was obviously a member of the Communist Party, but when the French came he always sided with France and at the time with Government Français or the French... I won't use the word "empire" because we've gone beyond that, the French Federation or something like that... so I think there's a load of contradictions when we speak of the so-called resistance people. In fact, what was the resistance? Fanon himself was European and was living among Africans, but when it came to Africans or Arabs having control, then of course he sided with France. Same thing was true of Aime Cesaire, when the crunch came with all of his friends in Moscow, he still sided with, obviously the very good side, with the government from Paris when you consider these very small countries.

AWY. Are you thinking that he's been co-opted?

WG. No again, I think it comes back to this idea of the original meaning of colony, of cultivating particularly in the case of Cesaire. He was a French man who happened to be black and was born in an overseas department, but he was a Frenchman.

Natives and Native Peoples; How is this defined?

WG. Professor Lee uses this word, "native" people. I would actually like to know the definition of this word. I would like to know, what are "native" people? It seems to imply to me that people should not leave their native land. Is that what you mean by that? Because for example, the native peoples of North America and South America obviously they are not from North America or from South America, but from Asia. This is without question.

ARL. Professor Gater is not right to think it's "without question".

WG. Or should people only stay in one place?

ARL. Let's answer your question. First of all the blinding obviousness that all Native people are derived from Asian stock has been challenged radically by any number of researchers. Have you ever thought about it the other way round that Asia might have been populated by native peoples?, as my great friend, Gerald Vizenor believes. The second thing is... Stay in one place. What is this one place? These overwhelmingly were migrant peoples, so the notion of "the one place" is, to put it kindly, a contradiction in terms. That they were migrant people is born out, if the Asian theory is correct, by the very fact of coming through the Bering Strait and down through the mountains. They were obviously migrant people, how could they be otherwise?

WG. They are not therefore native people.

ARL. They are native in the sense that they were there before any Europeans were there.

WG. Perhaps they still didn't come from there, but the point is what's a "native"? Is it just the people who happen to be born there? How does one classify people as "native"? What is a "native" Australian? What is a "native" Brit or Canadian?

AWY. The meaning of the word "native" to me accords with the term, aboriginal. In my Oxford dictionary, aboriginal is an adjective used "especially of people inhabiting a land from a very early period, especially before the arrival of colonists: aboriginal inhabitants, plants".

ARL. But we are quibbling. There are Natives, and there are Native people. We wouldn't use that word. That it gets conflated from time to time in the sense that you would have it conflated, namely by those of European stock, is simply a twist of usage. But we use the word a native Australian, a native New Zealander. One of the simple distinctions that's been drawn is that here are people who have been there immensely longer than any European.

WG. So really what you're talking about is in the question when you say native, you're talking about time, purely time.

ARL. Yes, well not purely, but I think time is of the absolute essence in this story. Our colonial ancestors for sure had no doubt in their minds as to who the native peoples were. That's why they called them Natives. They were in no semantic difficulty as to who exactly was native and who wasn't. They understood the word native in its more dire pejorative sense. These were the great unwashed, the great uncivilized, so that when for example, the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Spanish landed all indigenes were "Native".

WG. No, they simply knew them as natives, those, who were born there, that's all.

ARL. So it didn't mean all the racist litan—"kafirs", "niggers", "wogs", etc?

WG. I think your equivocating now. The fact is that the word native simply means born in a place. You see I object to it being used, let's say for example, to qualify only one group of the Canadian population.

AWY. Which?

WG. If you work referring to the Indians of North America by native or the Inuit, I object to the use of native to apply to these people only. I think anyone born in Canada is a native Canadian and the same to Britain, Australia, or the Americas.

AWY. Going back to our earlier discussion, wasn't Britain a colony?

ARL. Parts of Britain were colonized. The notion that it was a Roman colonization was in fact not so. But it tended, in the Roman case, to be a temporary seizure of land.

AWY. It was a very long 'temporary' seizure wasn't it?

WG. We have to remember, Britain was called a provincia. It was a province to the Roman Empire. The idea of colonization certainly was not considered a temporary one. The idea of building streets, Watling Street, Bath, all of these places, meant it was to be there forever. My personal opinion, the idea of bringing a civilized nation which you considered good, your own, as the Roman civilizations to the whole world. To cultivate them too and including them as well, I must point this out, in the case of the Roman citizen, everyone was included. Anyone who wanted to become Roman, followed the ways of Rome, was accepted.

Metaphor or Dogma?

AWY. While preparing for this colloquium, I kept stumbling over these two expressions, mother country and fatherland. The use of the term "mother country" dates back to 1587 and the first part of its definition reads as such; the country from which the people of the colony or former colony derive their origin. It seems to me in reflection, that these two terms might portray a very condescending and controlling sentimentality and the history of colonization is providing more and more evidence that such paternal/maternal benevolence did not and still does not exist. Perhaps you would be prepared to comment on the use of these. Secondly, I'd like you to comment on, why some colonies refer to their home countries as a fatherland or mother country.

WG. Of these two, obviously this idea is an anthropomorphic metaphor for the family. It doesn't particularly matter.

AWY. Why?

WG. You see if you look at Europe, maybe this is a cultural thing. If you look at Britain, we speak of the motherland. In the case of Germany and the Netherlands, it is the fatherland and so by the way are later 19th century versions e.g. Latvia is tēvizems "fatherland", obviously copying the German form. I don't think that there's anything particularly significant in this though.

AWY. Let's just simply say a father and mother represent the parents in the family. Colonization is a form of binding whether it's a positive or a negative bind. Would you say that these terms were appropriate?

WG. Let's just look at this for example, the patria, in the case of Latin and in the case of France la patrie, the country of the father, as apposed to Britain which is the mother land. Given the colonial histories of both countries I don't particularly see that there's any big difference in the two. I think it simply a metaphor. It's to say, look we are the parents, we're parents, and in a very good sense, we are going to cultivate.

AWY. You are children.

WG. We are going to give you culture, our children. Moreover, in fact in many cases when this was highly developed as it was in the case of France, with the Constitution of the Fourth Republic in 1946. I think this was a very important thing in the development of colonialism. It was France particularly the first country that got rid of this whole idea of the mother and fatherland and everybody is going to be part of the Republic and everybody is going to be a partner. In other words, there's absolutely no difference at all if you live in Martinique or Guadeloupe. You are going to be French; you're just like everybody else.

In this way, what you have is something the Americans later copied with their statehood idea. In

addition, no one ever refers of course, I've never heard of Hawaii being referred to as a colony, but it is certainly a colony in every sense that it was taken by force. It was an independent country, but in this case, it's not to be called a colony, they call it a state. This idea I think, if I'm not mistaken came from France. The idea that a country doesn't have to be limited to one continent, it can be universal. I think France was the first country basically to abolish this idea of the colony and of the mother and fatherland.

AWY. I have to pass this over to Robert now. Are children, dependents ever allowed to grow up, meaning colonies?

ARL. Let me go back to this language of mother country and fatherland. I really don't buy into any of this.

WG. It's a metaphor.

ARL. These are totally specious mock family terms and are as loaded as, say, Uncle Tom and Aunt Dinah in US slave culture. These are false "families" and they are self-persuading and self-subsidizing. The motherland of the Great Britain was not a motherland to, in a word we haven't used yet and it's time we did, those of a different "race". This is a completely specious form of family. It's a kind of self-appointed parentage based on the notion that we were genuinely there to help the children of Africa, the children of India. The Spanish gave another term in the recent weather phenomena of "El Niño". The matter continues in such notions as 'Les Enfants du Paradis' - Natives as children.

The issue as to whether colonies or ex colonies "outgrow" the parent, is really another form of specious argument. The reason it's specious is not because they have to outgrow their parents, but that they have to return to self-parenting. That is markedly true in the case, say, of the Philippines - America's only "formal" colony. They took over Hawaii from the British and French and the Sandwich Islands and whole range of things; it's a complicated history. It had a great deal to do with the nature of what America was going to pick up in the way of so called Commonwealth countries. It includes Puerto Rico. It includes Cuba. It includes the Spanish-American War of 1898.

All I want to say about this is that we must be very careful always of these preemptive vocabularies. These vocabularies are always from the force majeure. They're not ever from the other side and when you hear the other counter vocabularies, all of this mothering and fathering goes out the window. I think one of the dangers is internal colonization by the language. Because the very language of coloniality is somehow known as if it were some transcendental, objective, vocabulary. I reject that totally.

AWY. That's why I brought it in, as while reading extensively through quantities of colonial material, I kept coming upon heavily couched vocabularies and seriously wondered if those colonized really felt such affection towards those who were subjugating them. Mother Country? Fatherland?

WG. I agree with Professor Lee, that this is totally outdated and not used any longer, but you can imagine the initial stages when they were creating this myth.

Patriotism, The Patronizing, and Power

AWY. Patriotism and the patronizing aspect. Is it really relevant now?

ARL. I think this is complicated. Colonialization tends to be seen only through the record of elites - the elites who did the colonizing. But the other part of it, and which includes a lot of my family, is the lower order, working class soldiery etc. Get them in the army if they were male, send them out and

let them beat up natives.

This gave an efficacy, which was to be replicated in your own country of Canada. The early recruitment into the early Royal Mounted Police was always from the lower ranks and the reason was because they had no power anywhere else. Of course the officer class wasn't. They were the Anglo Canadians of old, but the bottom ranks, were out of the lower class. So "class" and "race" seem to me the "twin stars" if you like of colonialism. And all that bromide, all that cover-up language, mother country, fatherland, and patronage should be just seen for what it is, an obscene rhetoric of laundering, laundering naked power.

AWY. Aha! You've brought up a word I was hoping would be emphasized here. The major fulcrum in history, past, present, and future has and will always lie in the hands of the strongest. Power to Foucault equated the metaphor, the vocabulary of the asylum and described the way the modern state incarcerates us and inflicts surveillance and control over us. He believed it could be applied to society as a whole and represented the ways in which power can replicate itself. This in conjunction with Fanon's work gives us one of the fundamental bases from which to study and approach postcolonialism. Do you see areas where this might not generally apply? Is there another aspect to Robert's earlier points?

WG. Well, inversely, what would you do with the issue today? There are some countries, and I think it's a problem with numbers, there are places that really can not be self-standing states in the world. They're very small islands.

ARL. Like Britain, France and Puerto Rico?

AWY. And I think Ireland is doing very well also, but I believe this kind of argument would be less ominous if it was only conceived by colonial civil servants who were members of the colonial power. By the colonized people themselves adopting such ideas, it would then justify the colonizers beliefs in the colonization itself and also to its presence. "it would create a people who had lost belief in their capacity. It would create a people who were thankful to be colonized". (Petersen, R. 1992) How can we address these phenomena?

ARL. I think there is an answer to that too. Julius Nyerere, who is one of my personal heroes, a great African socialist, who was among the first to use and to explain "neocolonial" and "neocolonialism" is as much of the business of asset stripping.

The fact that these countries can't stand on their own economic feet doesn't exempt dictatorship in Nigeria, brute regimes in the Congo, rabid military groups in what was Burma and so on. Nobody is excusing any of these. But the notion that they are somehow feeble entities unable after some kind of almost generic incapacity for self-governance, is ridiculous. The idea should surely be how did the asset stripping, how did the powerlessness, come about. Or what is neocolonialism?

AWY. Veni, vidi, vici. Colonizers came, they saw, and conquered and when for example the American British colony decided to have self-rule, it was the economic loss that forced Great Britain to look elsewhere for recompense. As John Freeth, the English Poet wrote in the New London Magazine in 1786,

The loss of America what can we pay?
New colonies seek for at Botany Bay.

With regards to the musings of some that some races were and are incapable of self-rule, I'd like to refer to Robert Petersen in his paper Colonialism as Seen from a Former Colonized Area when he

speaks of the end of colonial administration in Greenland and that the worried colonial civil service reasonably enough, expressed their beliefs that everything would collapse.

“Such fears may also have served to justify the continued presence of a privileged elite. This justification contained some ideas of altruism; but on the other hand, it would only be reasonable to persist in “helping” people if they were not capable of helping themselves to a sufficient degree. The idea of people who could not help themselves thus did not necessarily reflect reality, but to smooth over the colonizers consciences”.

WG. I agree with you, but this was really at different issue. It's the development of colonialism. Today we still do have examples of the old style of colonialism. I think it's a matter of defining exactly what it is. For example, think of colonial states, and they could be called colonial states, the French Republic, the United States for example, both of these are colonial powers. Wouldn't you agree?

ARL. No, I wouldn't.

WG. So how do explain states, which are thousands of miles away from the metropolis, and where taken by force in several cases, why are they not colonies? Simply because they call them “states”?

ARL. No. It's infinitely more than a question of nomenclature. It's a matter of historic evolution. For example, if you have a superpower, which runs an economic order, then neocolonialism exists. America actually, oddly has been remarkably free of colonial holdings with the obvious been notable exception of the Philippines. It hasn't actually had...

WG. Alaska and Puerto Rico

ARL. The Virgin Islands, Guam, and so forth... None of those adds fuel to your argument. They simply are places that have discrete histories and each one needs to be considered. Moreover, they were not colonized, there are other ways in which those powers have evolved. For example, Hawaii which you always invoke as a colony was never a colony. There were four warring factions in Hawaii that in some, invited the Americans in, opposed it, some wanted to go back to self-governance.

WG. British rule.

ARL. May be. But historically, the story is no one story. We know that the Royal family of Hawaii was a very complicated player in this whole story. In the question of Puerto Rico, which is different again, you cannot turn away from the 1898 Spanish-American war. It was a kind of a left over from the Spanish regime and there has been an ongoing debate about independence. A good half of the Puerto Ricans wanted the Americans to run their lives. Now that is a long way from simply saying, colonization.

WG. But how many were against it?

ARL. We do know that there were two groups. There still are two groups and very recently last year in fact, there was a referendum in Puerto Rico with just over 50 percent saying they wanted to continue what is called Commonwealth status with America. It's a long way from talking about that, from the British in India, from the French in Algeria, etc.

WG. But what you have today seems to me, are leftovers.

Neocolonialism; Money Makes the World Go Round

AWY. We do have something very interesting here. Covert colonialism? Palestine, Mexico, Panama... Long distance colonial systems? Alternatively, should we just call it neocolonialism? Here's what Kwame Nkrumah wrote in *The Ghanaian Statesman* about it under the title Neo-Colonialism: The

Stage of Imperialism, 1966; and I quote;

“The essence of neocolonialism is that the State, which is subject to it, is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed to from outside... Neo colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress”. What is neocolonialism to you?

WG. To me neocolonialism is right across the board. It's never called by its real name, and in fact, it hasn't been since last year when Britain handed back, to China its last colony, Hong Kong, well almost its last colony. Nevertheless, it was actually called a Crown colony, right. In the case of France, coming back to their many possessions around the world, of course they don't call them colonies, but Overseas Departments. I'm just trying to say that this is a phenomenon, which still exists in the world.

ARL. Neocolonialism originally was an economic term. Obviously the one country that we haven't so far mentioned which has long been a colonial power, but is now faced with a kind of ruined colonialism, is Russia. The Soviet Empire has floundered both on economic grounds and by its refusal to let go Islamic territories. Smaller nationalities now arise - Chechnya, Armenia etc. The break-up of Yugoslavia. The story is one of what has been called “glocalization” - the global and the local.

WG. Most of these countries are in fact independent states. However, again I think the problem is these few leftovers within Russia. You spoke of Chechnya; it would be one of these colonies. I would call it a colony, but there are very few. They're very few of them in Russia now. My question is, as I want to know something about this... Places like Bermuda, can they ever be anything but British? Can Guadeloupe be anything but French? Can Aruba be anything but Dutch? Because these are far too small to really be independent states and they already have an infrastructure very much connected with their, mother country or fatherland, and with the metropolis from the main country where ever it happens to be. In the case of Hawaii, we have the same thing. It is not connected with the American mainland and it's called a state.

ARL. It's not. It's called a state. It is a state.

AWY. So basically we're looking at de-colonization, but without economic independence.

ARL. Well that is the hundred thousand-dollar question now. Can any state be economically independent after colonization? The answer is, if historically they themselves have been colonized previously, the odds are stacked against them.

AWY. I read an article from The Independent newspaper by Kathy Marks. She wrote about the peoples of Diego Garcia, one of the Chagos islands, who were moved nearly 50 years ago by the British government 1,200 miles away from their island to make way for an American military base. Until recently little was known about this chapter in Britain's colonial history. In 1965 when Cold War paranoia was at its height and Britain was divesting itself of the last remains of its empire, Mauritius was persuaded to hand over the Chagos islands in exchange for their independence. In 1966 Parliament signed a treaty leasing the islands to the United States. Next the Pentagon made it clear that it did not want the “population problem”, not even on the outlying islands, the nearest of which was a 127 miles from Diego Garcia.

Over the next seven years, Britain systematically emptied the archipelago of every one of its 2000 residents. The Ilois themselves were never consulted and were shipped off to Mauritius and to the Seychelles in overcrowded vessels and abandoned at the quayside. In the 1965 November telegram sent

from the Foreign Office to the British mission at the United Nations, it was suggested that "we think it would be best to avoid all references to 'permanent inhabitants' " to get around the problem that the Ilois had been there for many generations and been born there and thus actually illegally removed from their lands or as stated in the newspaper "a mass kidnapping of its own citizens". Is this the trading off of useful colonial holdings, the treatment the colonized deserve, the development of one countries wishes at the devastation of another cultures rights, or the enforcement of poverty and hence of dependency? Is there truly any hope for a colonized country such as this, to regain its economic independence?

ARL. There is only in the sense that because of history, there has always been, not always, but certainly has been this century, and a vast amount of British money has been put into it for so-called development. We speak of "development". Various issues arise. Do you or don't you "forgive" debts? What does the ex-colonized "owe" its former colonizer given, say, 200 years of mining or logging or even slavery? How does a newborn "state" get rid of the vicious circle of loans, debts, client governments etc?

AWY. Another question comes from that, even if a country has the means to pay the debt, there is no guarantee that it won't be re-colonized or neocolonized by yet another country/conglomerate that has attained it through such means as the ones I mentioned before re Diego Garcia.

There has been a more complex study of social structure to analyze popular culture by theorists, such as Stuart Hall and an important question asked is; who has power over whom? Hegemony is difficult to define, but is the term now used for, "a ruling class's or alliances, domination of subordinate classes and groups through the elaboration and penetration of ideology, ideas and assumptions, into their common sense and every day practice...

"It is the systematic, but not necessarily or even usually deliberate, engineering of mass consent to the established order. No hard and fast line can be drawn between the mechanisms of hegemony and the mechanisms of coercion In any given society, hegemony and coercion are interwoven" See Todd Gitlin, The Whole World is Watching, 253.

Where does hegemony come into this?

ARL. It comes right at the center of it.

AWY. How does it apply now, let us say, to Bermuda?

ARL. Well very simply. Bermuda is symptomatic of a world in which, for example, the language politics of English dominate. If the Internet is going to be all in English, although someone recently tried to do a Spanish and Portuguese Internet, these other world languages, if the world trading centers were always trained and to do that training in English, if most of the Industrial Technology is going to have, even say from Japan, it's going to be English. In one sense, the hegemony is both cultural, political and it's economic. The trouble basically is that we have in fact North/South instability in the great languages used.

But the hegemony lies with those who have the power to direct the international economy. The matter has passed from "nations" to other kinds of conglomerates - the 'global' investors etc. We'd never heard of the phrase "hedge funds" until quite recently. Money flows and rules. Maybe the future is with people like George Soros.

Reconsiderations

It is often omitted that colonial power itself created economic and social problems. By its harmful rejecting of anything other than its own values, knowledge, religion, and organizational system, the colonized area effected dissolution of their own original indigenous norms. These colonial attitudes might not have been all incorrect, but their impact on the social, economic, and intellectual systems not the least the religious, were introduced as if they were universal values.

For those living in present-day colonialism or neocolonialism, there are very few gratifying or helpful answers. Groups about the world are trying desperately to save the few from the few. Globally the treatment of abuse is being exposed by those who know firsthand the sublimation or eradication of their rights and the pilfering of their country's resources for negligible amounts of recognition or reimbursement. The large conglomerates - the neocolonizers do not seem to care about the peoples or the environment, nor do they seem to care about the future either... Money and power now.

Analysis and taking heed from the lessons learned or not learned by the past mistakes made in the name of colonization, history demands an awakening from the sometimes politically safe distance adopted by many, when they believe there's little hope that much can be changed.

Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa. Dante Alighieri wrote this thought provoking line in *Divina Commedia*, 'Inferno' canto 3, 1.51 "Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass on". However one cannot just sit back, when so clearly it is unacceptable that even in this present-day and age, peoples and countries rich in culture and lands face the destruction of both, due to wealthy outsiders economic greed. There is much more that we should expect from the powers that be on this topic of colonialism and postcolonialism, powers that do not want to recognize their present-day usage of peoples and lands, and also the much avoidance of direct dialogue from those who should countenance their part in its continuance and a more honest and perfectly frank acceptance of responsibilities world wide.

I asked my two respected academic friends, Dr. William Gater and Dr. Robert A. Lee to join me with their thoughts and concerns. I gratefully thank them for the generous giving of their time, invaluable intellectual input and unwavering personal and professional support. Without their cooperation, this paper would never have come to fruition. It has been an honor to work with them.

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