

THE ANATOMY OF COLONIZATION

HOW TO THINK ANTI-COLONIAL

COLONIAL THINKING

1

THE LIE OF THE LACK OF RESOURCES

Colonial thinking implies that colonized communities lack resources but it is the lack of resources that motivates small countries to colonize others. Gomes Eanes de Zurara, in 1453, dishonestly depicted all Africans as “savages” to justify the early stages of the Europeans slave trade.

2

FURTHER DIVIDING US

European colonial nations forged alliances with African kingdoms, providing weapons for their own colonial military expansions into neighboring nations, instrumentalizing regional divisions and fostering chaos that created more captives and war migrants vulnerable to being captured and sold.

The Arab slave trade, which focused less on economic production and more on the exploitation of African women had already made slavery widespread in Africa for 13 centuries and divided families and nations.

3

PORTRAYING US AS EVIL

Colonial thinking tends to project negative representations on victims of colonization and portray them as evil. For instance, the “Birth of a nation” made history by becoming the first film ever to be screened at the White House, and it depicted black people as unintelligent sexually aggressive and presented lynching as a positive thing. The 1915 film is credited for the revival of the KKK.

4

JUSTIFIED BY NATURAL ORDER

Colonial thinking tends to justify human exploitation by arguments of natural order, removing any moral responsibility from the act. For instance, the “curse of ham” is a lie pushed by Christian slave owners saying that Black people were cursed with slavery in the bible. The same lie had originally been used by the isrealites to justify the subjection of the canaanites, a semitic-speaking civilization not typically associated to Black people.

ANTI-COLONIAL THOUGHT

1

OUR PEOPLE ARE DEVALUED AND ROBBED

However, Africans have always had resources but were robbed and devalued. For instance, in 1324, Mansa Musa, King of Mali gave away so much gold on his way to the Mecca that the overall value of gold decreased in Egypt for the next 12 years. From West to East, South to North, Africa was full of “so-called” advanced civilizations full of natural resources.

2

RESISTING TO BEING DIVIDED

Anti-colonial thinkers refuse to be divided and conquered by focusing on uniting around common grounds and around the need to solve common social issues.

For instance, in the recent case of BIPOC people in Chicago complaining about migrants coming to their neighborhoods, anti-colonial thinkers would instead show solidarity to the migrants.

3

HAVING POSITIVE IDEAS OF OURSELVES

Anti-colonial thinking refuses to reduce our identity to the worst forms of behaviors in our communities. It recognizes the social conditioning of many of those who have been corrupted and drawn to engage in crime, become complicit in their communities destruction because of trauma, systemic corruption, lack of opportunities, or because of the insidious impact of stereotypes through the Pygmalion effect.

4

KNOWING THAT WE ARE POISONED AND HATED

Nothing is accidental in our social issues. In fact, we know that urban planning, toxic facilities, toxic products, lack of land, lack of healthy options for healthy lifestyles, generational health ghettos, hospitals and white standards all kill us. And they are all the results of human decisions, not fate.

REWARDING COLONIZED INDIVIDUALS WHO BETRAY THEIR COMMUNITIES

A typical colonial social conditioning is what we could call modern-day meritorious manumission. The Meritorious Manumission Act of 1710 was the legal act of freeing an enslaved African for “good deeds,” as defined by the national public policy, and could be granted to an enslaved African who saved the life of a white racist colonial by telling on slaves who were plotting a revolt.

This system of rewarding people who de-mobilize from their colonized community survives until this day through social-conditioning.

If you want to dig deeper in anti-colonial education, get more learning content at : <https://beinitiative.com/decolonialeducation/>

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HOW COLONIAL STRUCTURES WORK

COLONIAL THINKING

1

SERVITUDE: PERMITTED BEHAVIOUR

Colonial structures do not necessarily hate our people. But they tolerate us as long as we are not crossing the borders of permitted behaviour. So we are not allowed to speak up. That is servitude.

2

POWER: ONLY SOME PEOPLE CAN TELL THEM WHAT TO DO

In colonial structures, when leaders do not fit the typical ethnocultural or/and gender profile people tend to challenge their authority, and even feel frustrated for having to follow their lead.

3

THEY DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Divide and conquer has been a typical colonial process since the first days of colonization. In organizations, it leads us to put various groups in competition for limited resources or for our approval.

4

THEY RELY ON COLONIAL LOCAL LEADERSHIP

One of the foundational aspects of colonial structures is that they are able to indoctrinate members of the colonized community and elevate them as leaders to uphold the same colonial rule in their absence.

ANTI-COLONIAL THOUGHT

1

YES, WE CAN SPEAK UP!

Anti-colonial thinkers challenge things without being afraid to lose our ability to put food in our fridges and have a roof over our heads. For that reason, being an anti-colonial thinker is risky and we often get booted out of colonial structures for speaking up or not following the script.

2

EVERYONE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LEAD

In anti-colonial thinking, we do not disrespect the leadership of people from colonized communities. On the contrary, we seek it. Anti-colonial thinking is also less about hierarchies and more about decentralized decision-making and shared power.

3

WE USE RESOURCES TO UNITE

In Anti-colonial structures, we use our resources to unite groups beyond their differences instead of doing the contrary. We create bridges and we avoid fostering competition, especially between equity deserving communities.

4

WE ASPIRE TO DECOLONIAL LEADERSHIP

In anti-colonial structures, leaders from colonized communities do not treat employees as servants, we do not give more respect to the wealthiest than to the poor. We treat everyone with respect and we expect to receive great inputs and contributions from everyone.

MAKING SOCIAL AWARENESS RIDICULE

Last but not least, colonial structures tend to render ridicule the social awareness of the colonized people. In some cases, they even go as far as framing thought leaders from the colonized community as agitators or mentally sick people.

For instance, draptomania was a mental illness that was created in the 19th century to describe a slave who is obsessed with the idea of escaping slavery. This “othering” of anti-colonial leaders survives until this day in colonial structures. A modern day example is the recent co-opting of the term woke which originally meant social awareness and the recent demonization of critical race theory.

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