

The Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies (CIARS)
CALL FOR PAPERS

**DIALOGUING AND LIVING WELL TOGETHER:
DECOLONIZATION AND INSURGENT VOICES**

**11th Annual Decolonization Conference of the Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies
November 8-10, 2018
OISE, University of Toronto**

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies (CIARS)* in collaboration with Equity Studies, New College, University of Toronto issues a world-wide invitation to scholars, researchers, Elders, community leaders, artists, community activists, and educators to participate in a dialogue that critically explores how life in its multiple and interlinked biological, social, historical, cultural, and spiritual manifestations is conceptualized and experienced outside Western hegemonic epistemologies, the capitalist paradigm and the neoliberal notion of well-being. As a research Centre, CIARS brings together faculty, students and community organizations whose research interests and political commitments are in anti-racism and critical race studies. Our focus is anchored in the critical study of race as they relate to Indigeneity, decolonization, and education. CIARS' mandate, namely the fostering of interdisciplinary anti-racism studies in education, embraces a broad view of education. In CIARS' view, education can be understood as the processes that influence and contribute to how individuals and their communities come to know the world and act within it. CIARS' faculty and students are deeply committed to an integrative view: all systems of oppression are interlocked and a study of one such system, racism, necessarily entails a study of class exploitation, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, gender and colonial violence. The Centre is housed in Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto and is part of the Department of Social Justice Education (SJE).

II. CONFERENCE THEME

CIARS is pleased to announce that it is holding its X1 Decolonizing Conference for critical dialogues on the theme of **“Dialoguing and Living Well Together: Decolonization and Insurgent Voices”**. Using a Decolonizing perspective, the conference hopes to explore new meanings of “living well together” outside of White mythology (in Derrida’s terms) and the capitalist paradigm. We ask: how do we bring non-Western epistemologies to a terrain that has existed through a long-exercised White Mythology? What Indigenous experiences speak to the possibility of living well together in new futures? What additional dimensions of the

above can be gleaned from the constant mobility of bodies, identities, subjectivities and relations? Some local concepts steeped in “home grown cultural perspectives” (Yankah 2004, p. 25) are pioneered by Indigenous peoples to understand their communities and to explore ways groups can and do live well together. *Suma Qamaña* for Aymaras and *Sumak Kawsay* for Quechuas in the Andes, are equivalent concepts that summarize the idea that life is constantly being re-created in an act that involves all living beings. Turning to the African continent, Ubuntu is a traditional philosophy that also brings us to a different paradigm when thinking about life and living well. It is the reflection of an ontology that conceives of humanity as a large family, not an assembly of competing individuals. *Suahunu – The Trialectic Space* (Dei 2012) also explores the body, mind, soul, and spirit interface as a critical knowledge base and a ‘coming to know and act responsibility’ in a contested world. Within Turtle Island (North America), the Nuu-chah-nulth notion of *tsawalk* “one” (E. Richard Atleo, a.k.a. Umeek, 2004 & 2011) embodies the thoroughgoing ontological unity of all existence and the interdependence of human community and the individual. *Tawhid*, in the Islamic tradition represents the oneness of creation. These are just a few examples of the many ontologies and epistemologies that underpin traditional belief systems from around the world that conceive living relations outside Western epistemologies. These examples are Indigenous philosophies that can be interrogated to provide a formula for living well together.

These concepts all help challenge on-going colonization and re-organized colonial relations. It has been noted that colonialism is a sickening ‘civilization’ (Cesaire, 1972), a bloodthirsty ‘civilization’ (Bird, 2004) that measures its worth solely and problematically based on Europe’s global domination through underserving economic acquisitions using any means at its disposal. While the primary purpose of colonialism was imperial expansion and exploitation, Mignolo (2006) shows that such economic expansion was predicated on the secularization of a distorted ‘modern’ reality that foregrounded and presented European culture, religion, values, politics and knowledge systems as superior to all others and further masquerading as universal. It is well-documented that imperial expansion relied on the purposeful creation of hierarchies between cultural, political, ideological and social systems, acting upon human lives differently in particular geographies. Specifically, this hierarchy is upheld by what Quijano (2000) enthuses as a “colonial model of power” that interlocks a certain colonizing manifestation of human life, subjectivity and knowledge. Mazama (2003) further argues that, “colonization was not simply an enterprise of economic exploitation and political control, as it was commonly held, but also an on-going enterprise of conceptual distortion and invasion, leading to widespread confusion and ultimately, mental incarceration” (p.3) [see also Dei and Imoka, 2018].

In adopting a critical and decolonial approach to knowledge and resistance, we focus on those subordinated bodies and regimes of knowledge that have often been consigned to the margins of academic discussions and in the so-called “deeply intellectual” conversations that saturate the elite halls of the Western academy. Conference papers are expected to help

resurrect these ‘Otherized knowledges’ by pointing to how they can be deployed to offer counter visions of our world. Through the integration of a decolonial lens to knowledge and resistance, we also question and critique what is often presented as “valid” and “legitimate” knowledge and the ways such knowledges ought to be produced, interrogated and disseminated both internally and externally. Questions as to who and what is discounted, how, why and when are major points for investigations. Raising such questions illuminates the complicity and the marginalization of certain voices, experiences and knowledges, particularly in academia. Within the learning space there is always a colonial presence. This presence is marked by power and privilege as accorded on particular bodies and experiences. The discursive politics of decoloniality therefore requires an understanding that colonialism did not end with the formal departure of the colonizer from the Lands of the colonized (de Santos, Quijano, Gregory). Anything to the contrary is intellectual and political dishonesty. Colonialism still manifests itself both with the presence and absence of the colonized. Despite the removal of colonial flags in some instances, there remains the colonizer who continually works with the tropes and ideas of Western modernity, liberalism and human material progress. As well, there remains a coloniality of power that simultaneously operates while masking and marking itself in the on-going search for ‘excellence’, ‘merit’, ‘standards’ and ‘scholarly knowledge’ on specific bodies and within particular geographies. These specificities of knowledge underpin different bodies and geographies herald a curious intersections and dynamic of power and knowledge along the lines of race, gender, class, sexuality, and [dis]ability.

As critical and subversive scholars, we have to ‘write back’ to the imperial narrative. If we do not respond, we risk emboldening false narratives that only serve to re-write histories, erase historically sidelined voices and experiences and thus reaffirm racist colonial logics of knowledge. Yet, in ‘writing back’, we stand accused of always reacting to the dominant narrative. However, there is a place and time to re-infuse consciousness into the polity about the ongoing colonial project and the unfinished and urgent business of bringing about justice and decolonization (see Dei 2017; Dei and Imoka 2018). It is in this spirit of resistance that our Conference is born. As Grosfoguel (2007) reminds us, “one of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of the ‘postcolonial’ world” (p. 219). Unfortunately, in the so-called ‘post-colonial’ world, we continue to feel the grip of colonialism and see clearly what colonization has done, and continues to do, more harm than good. Colonialism has been unending and our decolonial and anti-colonial resistances must be likewise!

III. CONFERENCE SUB-THEMES

- Traditional Indigenous knowledge systems for Living Well
- Biodiversity and the Capitalization of Nature

- Water, Life and Communities
- The Anthropocene and the Racialization of Resources
- Migration, Exploitation and Resistance
- White Mythology and other Epistemologies
- Sustainable Economies, Food Sovereignty and Living Well
- Black and Indigenous Futurisms
- Race, Education and the Academy
- Counter-Visions of Education
- Indigenous Resurgences and New Possibilities
- Race and Gender Violence
- Race, Culture and New Media
- Race, Policing and the Justice System
- Blackness and Anti-Blackness
- Whiteness and White Supremacy
- Anti-Racist Feminisms
- Race, Queer, and Disability
- Reframing Intersectionalities
- “Mixed” Race Identities
- Race, Immigration and Resettlement
- The Nation State, Citizenship and International Development
- Language, Race, and Education
- Spiritualities and Land
- Pedagogies and Land
- Environmental Coloniality
- Race, Environment and Health
- Interculturalism and Decoloniality
- Anti-Muslim Racism
- Imperialism, Militarism, and Islamophobia

IV. CONFERENCE SUBMISSIONS CATEGORIES

CIARS welcomes a wide range of submission categories:

- Individual papers
- Individual posters
- Group poster sessions
- Group panel sessions
- Workshops (aimed at enhancing Graduate Student learning)
- Arts-based Installations and New Media (Poetry, Songs, Dance, Audial-based media such as podcasts, Visual-based media such as Film, and other New Media)

**You may submit proposals to more than one category **

V. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals should clearly connect to the conference theme and contribute to the advancement of Indigenous and decolonial studies, anti-colonial thought and practice, critical race and anti-racism theory, practice, methodology, and/or community organizing. Please see format, word limit, and deadline below:

Format

Your abstract should adhere to the following guidelines:

- ✓ 5 Key Words
- ✓ Research question
- ✓ Aims and Objectives
- ✓ Methodology/Theoretical Framework (such as method of data collection, modes of inquiry, conceptual framework)
- ✓ Results/conclusion (even if they are preliminary at the time of submission)

Word Limit

Individual Papers: 250 words

Group Panels: 500 words

Other Work/Contributions: 250 words

Bio: 50 words

Submission Deadline

The submissions portal opens on January 30, 2018. The deadline for submissions is May 30, 2018.

Accepted proposals will be contacted by July 30, 2018. Details of the submission process can be found at the websites listed below:

www.decolonizingconference.com

www.oise.utoronto.ca/ciars/

We look forward to an intellectually stimulating and spiritually rejuvenating learning experience for all!

In solidarity,

The XI Decolonizing Conference Organizers

CIARS

CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE ANTI-RACISM STUDIES

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