
Gender Based Violence - A Global Perspective

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Foreword by the Editors

This edited volume about the educational, social and political issues of the globalized world, is a collection of chapters by experienced academics from many different countries that are directly or indirectly entangled in the post-colonial social and economic milieu. The chapters come from Algeria, Ecuador, India, Italy, Netherlands, Nigeria, Poland, the UK and the USA. The book offers original ways of understating the social and educational contexts of globalized societies, through the critical lens of a post-colonial framing. In the title, the word ‘contexts’ refers to the inescapable social and educational environments that one is immersed in during their upbringing and throughout adult life. In some of the chapters we find discussions on the sociological aspects of the environment in which the education is constructed and delivered, in others we find the interconnectivity between the sociological aspects of life and the systems of education. The issues of social inclusion and exclusion are ever-present in each of the chapters and power relations are carefully examined, questioning the ideological and economic underpinning of education and the world’s social stratification. Due to the cross-continental nature of the book, the principle of world ‘*englishes*’ is willingly adopted, entrusting that the chapters will gain a global readership.

The editors endeavor to allow contributors free expression of their personal beliefs, to create openness and space for passionate and sometimes ‘non-standard’ approaches, in order to avoid the routine of false objectivity. This is coherent with the nature of this book, which aims to reach out for innovative ways of understanding and describing the socio- educational matrixes we all function in.

The book is divided thematically into four parts:

Part I – Violence and Psychological Manipulation

It starts with a chapter on globalization as a form of colonization, followed by trauma narratives from American schools, the creation of indigenous subjects through education in Ecuador and a recommendation against neoliberal policy in the Italian education system. This section ends with a thought-provoking theoretical piece on education in times of uncertainty and the uncertainty in education.

Part II – Social Aspects of Post-Colonial Gender Based Power Struggle

This part starts with a chapter on violence against women in India, followed by narratives of the third gender in Kolkata embedded in a post-colonial discourse. Calabar's lesbians' secret language at schools, completes the gender agenda in this section. The last two chapters in this part, dedicated to: paradoxes of childhood amongst the Ba'aka tribe in central Africa and to an empirical study of the Kashubian and German minority language rights in Poland, form an important contribution.

Part III – Critical Reflexion on Critical Thought – Thinking 'Out- Side the Box'

First there is a novel conceptualization of Janusz Korczak's pedagogy in a post-colonial context and this part goes on to an extensive review of colonial and post-colonial literature through the critical lens of a contemporary, Algerian scholar.

Part IV – Subliminal Struggle: Art, Architecture and Medicine

Contains a chapter about Neo-gothic architecture in Indonesia as a form of cultural oppression of the indigenous people by the Dutch settlers of faith, followed by the last chapter dedicated to India's alternative medicine, somewhat critical of the dominance of western medicine and western driven medical industry.

We trust that this volume will make an impact on expanding the boundaries of academic writing, to honour the diversity of the contributors and the multiplicity of their viewpoints, with an overarching motto to think outside of our own self-perpetuated socio-cultural casing, box or frame.

Editors

Tania Ghosh

Sribas Goswami

Preface

The greatest myth of our time is the notion that we inhabit a postcolonial world – that when the Global South revolted against the horrors inflicted upon them by the colonial powers and victoriously proclaimed their independence, the economic, social, and political assault on the so-called developing world and its peoples ceased. In fact, what is clearly laid out here, in this extraordinary volume that honors the magnificent diversity of thought and being, that is reflected in the non-Western world, is the multiple ways in which colonial relations have and continue to persist and to endanger the lives of indigenous peoples and people of color across the globe. The symbolic violence that this volume emphasizes has assaulted the ontological and epistemological richness of non-Western peoples for hundreds of years resulting in cultural and linguistic erasures and a reprehensible ‘spirit murder’. We must not forget, though, that this symbolic violence is fruit to the multiple genocides that took the lives of millions of people across the Global South in the indefensible quest to claim indigenous lands and its riches and to conquer and enslave its peoples all for the purpose of capital accumulation.

Decolonial theorists, including Enrique Dussel, Anibal Quijano, and Ramon Grosfoguel, have been instrumental to my understanding of the processes by which the West was able to become and remain the dominant force throughout the globe for so long. They trace historically the rise of Western knowledge as “truth” to the four major genocides of the 16th centuries forged “(1) against Muslims and Jews in the conquest of Al-Andalus in the name of ‘purity of blood’; (2) against indigenous peoples first in the Americas and then in Asia; (3) against African people with the captive trade and their enslavement in the Americas; (4) against women who practiced and transmitted Indo-European knowledge in Europe burned alive accused of witches” (Grosfoguel, 2013, p. 77). Decolonial scholars maintain that the *ego cogito* (I think therefore, I am) that characterized Descartes’ modernity replaced the dominant Christian perspective with a secular – but still God-like – perspective which established the superiority of mind over body and an objective and universal rationality to the White man (Mignolo, 2009). This *ego cogito* rose out of the conditions of possibility established by the *ego conquiro* (I conquer; therefore, I am) which was facilitated by the *ego-exterminus* (I exterminate you, therefore I am). Violence is, thus, foundational to the dominance of Western knowledge and organizational structures throughout the world and to the exclusion, dis- missal, and erasure of non-Western ways of knowing (Grosfoguel, 2013).

It is crucial that we recognize this atrocious past that may result in our demise as a species and in the ruins of the very Earth that gives us life. Surely, we can recognize that the Western, modern, and capitalist domination that has characterized our world for the last 500 years, has led us onto an apocalyptic path and that our salvation may lay at the wisdom and courage of the colonized ‘Other’ whose ways of knowing and being have been for too long silenced or relegated to “mystical, irrational, delusions.”

This collection of essays, both theoretical and empirical, point to the very real necessity to humbly ask non-Western peoples, to share their wisdom with the rest of the world and for the West to begin to recognize that it is high time we begin looking elsewhere for answers to our most pressing and persistent problems. Indeed, we have some examples to learn from, as indigenous groups are rising up to challenge the existing focus on capitalist development with its unending drive to economic growth that is depleting our natural resources, forging endless wars, and catastrophically creating a moral vacuum among our species. Numerous indigenous groups are introducing new ways of organizing their communities around more humanistic ideals – the interdependence of life forces, a reverence toward Mother Earth, and development for sustainability. One example is Buen Vivir, which now has gained some legitimacy through inclusion in the constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia. Buen Vivir is the Spanish concept used to convey Sumak Kawsay, a Quechua expression, translated to English as “the good life.” This is not the western notion of “the good life,” signaling affluence. Sumak Kawsay rejects development as continual growth, striving instead for equality, equilibrium of resources, and respect for nature and aims to structure life and the political and economic spheres through a participatory democracy. This approach rejects the superiorization of particular peoples or knowledge’s and instead seeks to recognize the subaltern, in particular the indigenous voices from which the concept stems, but also other traditionally marginalized voices of society, the mestizo population, and even the western canons (Fatheuer, 2011).

While the inclusion of this philosophy in the constitution has not resulted in its full implementation, particularly as these countries remain embroiled within a global capitalist structure, it does provide an example of the possibilities and in this way engages the hope and vision that we so desperately need to continue to do the work necessary to create a more humane world.

As a Marxist humanist, I believe fully that the evidence of violence – physical, economic, psychological and, of course, symbolic – that you will find in the following essays, are functions of a capitalist system that distorts our humanity and that a socialist alternative, rooted in Marxist humanist principles of equality, freedom, interdependence, and creative labor beyond necessity, will support the conditions from which our true humanity can develop.

Lilia D. Monzó
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