TINK TINKER, MIGUEL DE LA TORRE, EDWARD ANTONIO, WARD CHURCHILL, NATSU TAYLOR SAITO, AND ROGER GREEN

Decoloniality And Disintegration Of Western Cognitive Empire – Rethinking Sovereignty And Territoriality In The 21st Century

THE COLONIAL COMPROMISE: A PANEL DISCUSSION

Tink Tinker: I need to say, first off, how appreciative I am to Professor Miguel De La Torre for bringing this book together and editing it. We've been colleagues for a good long time, very close colleagues at Iliff School of Theology. When I first came up with the title, and Miguel asked me to title the volume, I chose *The Colonial Compromise: The Threat of the Gospel to the Indigenous Worldview* (2020), as maybe a useful way of getting at how Christianity and its missionaries, forcing, coercing, converting American Indians to different denominations, was so much a part of colonialism. I was known at Iliff for saying Christianity is colonialism, colonialism is Christianity, referring to European colonialism, since 1492. The net result has been that huge numbers of American Indians on turtle island have indeed joined Christian churches, different denominations Catholic, Protestant and have made Christianity their own, without sorting through what sort of compromises we had to make in order to join churches. We had to give up the foundation of our collateral egalitarian worldview in order to buy into this hierarchical UP-DOWN image schema that comes with eurochristians and their invasion of turtle island. But that for starters. There are huge cultural worldview compromises that Indian people have been forced to make—not just Indian people but indigenous people all over the globe that that was my interest in providing this title and inviting these authors, these colleagues and friends to write chapters for the book.

My own piece, which I wrote at the very end, after seeing what my other colleagues had written, was probably the most personal and biographically reflective piece that I've ever written, in the half dozen books, nearly 100 journal articles that I've published and chapters in books. I went back and thought through my life and how my thinking had changed, how I had changed, as I went through a serious process of decolonizing the self and participating communally in the urban Indian community of decolonizing ourselves as Indian people. And again, I thank my Miguel for bringing this book together, because it really did, in a sense, force me to do that kind of thinking and to do that kind of writing and I was really happy with the essay. When I'd finished it, I thought I had done something that really did put a capstone on my career, and haven't stopped writing

since then, and I'm still learning. So, I maybe I need to rewrite that essay in about 10 years. But, but for now, it captures where I am in my own growth and thinking. I'll stop there, I want to hear from a from Miguel and the others, *Kakunah*!

Miguel De La Torre: Thank you, Dr. Tinker. First of all, though the book is a tribute to Dr Tinker, I'm the one that was totally honored to be the editor of the book and putting it together. And I say this because, all too often, anybody whom has ever edited book knows that you usually have a hard time putting that together, because of the contributors. But in this case, all the contributors have really rose above and went beyond the call of duty, and they worked so well with me and it was really a pleasure of bringing the book together.

The chapter that I wrote is called "I'm an Indian too?", and what I was trying to do in this chapter is several things. First of all, obviously I'm not indigenous, therefor, in all honestly, there's nothing I can say with any integrity about what it means to be indigenous in this world. The only thing I could say with integrity is how I am privileged by not being indigenous, how I am complicit the structures of oppression. So, the chapter began to try to deal with my own complicity. And I dealt with it, by looking at one of my intellectual mentors and that's José Martí, and anyone who knows anything about me knows that José Martí really shaped a lot of my thinking. He's someone that so important to me that I'm in the process of writing three volumes each about 300 pages each on his work and his thinking. So, even though I truly, truly admire the man, I began to be concerned with how he understood the indigenous community. He was a Cuban, late 1800s, but lived in Guatemala and México. And one of the things that Martí does … and just to like take a step back, Martí is celebrated throughout the Americas as being one of the first to say that the Indigenous community must be part of any future of the Americas during a time when that was not common. And while it seems like this is something to be celebrated when you dig deeper, it is highly problematic because he attempts to eliminate the Indian so that he, too, can become Indian.

He writes a famous phrase, "*más que blanco, más que negro, más que mulato*" (more than white, more than black, more than biracial). And what he says is that to be Cuban we're not black, we're not white, we're not mulatto, we're all just Cubans. Therefore, as a white cube I'm also black and black humans also white, we don't have races. It's probably one of the first times that this is color blindness instituted socially.

So, I looked at some of his writings concerning the indigenous people he does the same thing there, in where he literally takes the place of Indians, because if all Cubans are also

Indian then no Cuban is responsible for the genocide of Indians or the Taíno people, and the Taíno, people are also now responsible for their own genocides, because they are also Cuban. He goes so far in a doodle in one of his writings of literally putting his head on top of the body of an Indian. So, this is an appropriation saying that he too is an Indian so this way all Cubans are no longer responsible for the genocide of Indians.

I found that argument very interesting because I argue that it continues today when you have people, like even Fidel Castro, in certain instances, referring to himself as "we Indians," first went ahead and fought against the colonizers when he was talking about the U.S. as the new colonizers. Che Guevara it was portrayed as the new Hatuey, one of the first indigenous people to fight the Spanish *conquistadores*. So, the chapter really began to deal with someone who I've always admired but began to show how his understanding of the indigenous people only reinforces this colonization of Cuban minds, even while he is still being celebrated for being one of the most progressive individuals dealing with Indians. So, that was the complexity of that chapter and it was my original research which is going to appear in a book that I'm just about finishing now dealing with Martí's racism, sexism, and heterosexism. And I'll leave it at that and pass it on to one of the other contributors of the of the manuscript.

Edward Antonio: I would like to say thank you very much to Professor Tink Tinker, the person we honored in writing for this book, and I want to say thank you to Professor Miguel De La Torre for putting this book together. My chapter in the book gave me an opportunity to do something that, at least at the beginning of the chapter, I've never done before, and that is to attend to my own name in public. Edward Phillip Jose Antonio, colonial through and through. There's, not a single African name in the concatenation of names. And as I began to write this chapter and pay attention to the question of, what it means to be an indigenous person? and what kind of indigenous person? and why am I in this company of indigenous people who are in some ways, different from the indigenous people of Africa? It occurred to me that one of the things I needed to do is to come to terms with my name. So, one of the very first things I do in the book in a section "The Location of the Indigenous Self" is to admit that I have never used my last name. I have an indigenous last name, it's not Antonio, it is Gatawa. So, it would be Edward Phillip Jose Gatawa. And this is actually the first time I'm also saying it at a conference. So, the book did give me an opportunity to do that. And then, secondly, I moved on to sort of engage with this question of colonial compromise.

And I struggled. I wanted to write a chapter in which I compared indigenous cultures and experiences and rituals, looking at American indigenous cultures and African cultures. I never quite got there because I began to focus more and more on the ways in which colonialism, is a demand on the colonized to compromise. It is a demand to compromise, if you are to survive in the modern world. It is a demand to give up who you are as a person, to become something else. Which is why we end up with all these foreign names and that brought me to the question of language.

And I think this is germane to the theme of this conference. Think about it for a moment, we are conducting this conference in a language other than our own. This is one of the ways in which the colonial process has kind of absolutized itself, made itself in some ways, indispensable, and has left us, therefore, struggling with this question of how we compromise what we want to say when we speak in and through the Masters language. So, throughout the essay I touched on various ways in which compromise works. I interrogate the notion of compromise itself, I interrogate the notion of complicity, the threat of the Gospel—I look at that in in a detailed kind of way—and I look at how Indigenous cultures throughout the world have consistently been put down, denigrated, divided, and rejected as a way of subjugating indigenous peoples.

Ward Churchill: This was a very easy book to participate in due to, in a certain sense, once the abstract was presented and accepted, latitude was given to say what you want. And I would like to thank Miguel for that. But I'd like also to thank Tink for giving me something to say in this regard. The topic I chose to emphasize really goes to the nature of our interaction, intellectually, through the third of a century, at least, that we engaged, not as colleagues in the sense that we taught in the same school but in a broader sense of working on a common project and that project was a praxical one—both intellectually and in application. We've laughed together, cried together, and gone to jail together, been in ceremony together. Tink saw me through major personal crisis. So, the relationship comes closer to what, in this language, would be referred to as brothers, in a very real sense. Not in terms of common lineage, but in terms of the nature of our connection.

I say that the focus of my contribution to the volume really had to do with something that was core to what we were working on, and still are working on, and that is the notion of genocide, the word that was coined by Raphael Lemkin, exiled Polish Jewish jurist, in 1944. It didn't really exist prior to that. The word generates a sort of visceral response, both repugnance—

people recoiling and horror from it—and in terms of a biting, compulsive, obsessive need or drive to deny by the perpetrators of genocide. In my work, I've taken Lemkin at his word that genocide, first of all, is not a synonym for killing. Killing can enter in but it's not a simple matter of mass murder, which is how it is popularly understood, certainly in the United States, but I would say by perpetrator populations more generally. Genocide might be framed this way: any policy undertaken with the intent, expressed or not, to bring about the dissolution and ultimate disappearance of an identified or identifiable human group, culture, society as such is genocide. It can be accomplished, as has been pointed out by Lemkin himself, even if hypothetically no individual human being, were to be killed in the process.

That is true in a biological sense, no less than in a cultural sense. Biologically, all that would be required—this is a mouthful, "all that would be required"—would be to bring about cessation of reproduction within a group. This can be undertaken by compulsory sterilization, by compulsory abortion, by segregation of the sexes and we find all three of those practice. Know that without killing a single human being, you would take the targeted group out of existence in a single generation—that is, approximately a half century—killing no one; physically disappearing. There are many nuances that are attached to it, but he pointed out that genocide, in the sense that we're discussing it here, has been perpetrated—the crime is as ancient as the term is new, is how he put it—primarily through cultural means. The destruction of language; spiritual belief systems; continuity, in terms of social organization and so on; dispersal; ways which do not figured necessarily in terms of the biological eradication of the targeted group, you can still bring about the dissolution and disappearance as a human group, even though all of the individuals hypothetically, again—theoretically—might survive and reproduce biologically in the future as parts of other societies.

This is the focus that Tink has had particularly important effect on. As for myself, I focused essentially on the physical, always mentioning the fact that killing, whether by direct means of extermination, or by what Lemkin referred to as slow death measures, the imposition of them the eradication of subsistence economy, the deprivation of the ability to obtain medical care, whether that's from the perpetrator society or traditionally, and so on. Well, absent food, absent ability to treat disease, you have mass death. It can be imposed as a matter of policy by denial of healthcare, denial of proper nutrition, and so forth.

I focus there, but always mentioning that killing, whether one variety or the other, or some combination of two, represents

one fifth of the definition, legally speaking, of genocide that is promulgated by the United Nations in 1948. Lemkin drafted it, but it was a great diminishment in the scope of what he was talking about. They, to all intents and purposes, eliminated the cultural dimension and tried to make it something else, something referred to in the literature, since roughly 1950 as ethnocide. But if you look at the first page of the chapter on Genocide where the term was coined, in his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944), you'll find in a footnote at the bottom of the very first page that what he's terming genocide, he could have easily have called ethnocide, but stylistically appears he preferred genocide. He explains the derivation of both neologisms, that ethnocide is not something different from genocide it's simply a form of genocide.

I took as my particular project, during this 30-year period of our interactive effort, to bring Indigenous people, particularly Indians of North America, into the discourse involving genocide, into that debate, into consciousness. Tink, on the other hand, from the get-go, used genocide to refer, almost solely, to the cultural dimensions, particularly the eradication of spiritual belief systems. And there is a lot to be covered there. But where I was recognized as focusing on the best-known element of genocide, the most distortive element of what is believably comprehensive genocide and sometimes expounding on the broader definition that Lemkin had originally advanced, Tink reversed the process.

So, I end up being, at least until the last five or 10 years, the most cited scholar, with regard to the genocide of American Indians. Tink, on the other hand, brought the rest of the definition to bear and ends up being, to all intents and purposes, so far as I know, in the same timeframe, pretty much up to current, the only scholar repetitively referenced with regard to cultural genocide. And, in that particular combination of elements, both introducing indigenous people full-fledged into the discourse, consideration of having undergone genocide in ongoing fashion, we arrive at a point where we understand that there can be no compromise.

Sartre, in 1967, famously observed that colonialism is genocide. The point made there is, you cannot compromise with genocide. Genocide in a framework or context of compromise simply consummated itself. We are in a position where the colonial compromise is itself something to be rejected. Decolonization, for lack of a better term, is the only method of ending genocide and decolonization requires a reconstitution, a resurgence, a reconstruction, if you will, of what is, by Tink's definition, an indigenous worldview. That is, not only to understand the world in ways contrary to the colonial tradition

but to apply that knowledge practically to organize societies, economies, and so forth, in a way free from not simply what particular set of relations but the whole context that gave rise to colonialism. It has to do with the attempted, in some cases successful, epistemicide that has attended the colonizing process, reversing course to open up the future for the reactualization of the indigenous world

Natsu Taylor Saito: In thinking about what I wanted to address for this book, I was thinking about Tink's scholarship and the impact it had on me and the amazing contributions he's made, and they're really, really difficult to summarize, but what I wanted to address was Tink's critique and his explanations of what what's happening in the world, what's been happening to indigenous peoples—certainly in North America—throughout the colonization since 1492. We think of it often as focusing on religion and on the destruction that has been wrought by the eurochristian worldview, and often I think it's easy to limit that to Christianity. Tink always says eurochristian, but often we think of it as, *yes, the missionaries came and did this harm by imposing a Christian framework on various understandings of the world*. What I wanted to address is the fact that all of his critique and all of his insights apply equally well to those of us who may have long ago rejected Christianity and may therefore think, *oh well, yes, I can join in this critique of Christianity, because I don't believe all that and, yes, Christianity has done horrible things through the centuries to indigenous peoples all over the world* and to be sort of self-righteous about it. And I wanted to emphasize that all of what he's saying also applies to what is often viewed as a secular Western worldview. So that his critique applies not just to religion but to what we often think of as science or scientific truth. And, of course, right there we have this dichotomy that Western society imposes, dividing religion and science, or, as I put in my title of my chapter faith and facts.

And, in the course of doing that, what I did was look at various pieces that Tink has written that I think are have been particularly influential to me and try to look at sort of some of the themes. And what I saw coming out of it was the colonial presumptions underlying both religion and science as understood in this Western worldview that is dominant in our society now. Some of those presumptions—some of them we've already mentioned today—have to do with organizing the world hierarchically with the notion of dominion, of humans exercising control over nature, of individuation and atomization, of temporality versus spatiality, and of this whole notion of progress, that things are going in this unilinear direction and getting better and better, and that those presumptions come with

both the religious and secular worldview in colonial society. And working with those, I then saw that he articulates the choices that we're being forced to make within this framework, and that how they are choices that then reinforce the framework or the paradigm, regardless of which side of it you take. So, we think that we're looking at both sides of the issue here, or more than one side, more than one perspective by having, say, discussions about scientific truth, or these faith based perspectives, but in fact, by choosing one or the other, we are, in fact, reinforcing the paradigm that divides them, and into which those presumptions are built. And what Tink's work does really is help us think outside of this paradigm, by identifying sort of structural distinctions between worldviews, distinctions between space and time, between the notion of progress or salvation and balance or harmony.

A third one is the distinction between individuation or atomization and interrelatedness and then a fourth is his emphasis on how we're not just related to all living things—and living is understood in the most encompassing possible way—but that it's specific. It's not just some kind of generic *oh, we're all related* but it's tied to specific relatives in the place where we are and therefore to specific lands. And then finally, I think he identifies in his work ways that we can get beyond this right move into a worldview that is not colonized and to a more liberatory perspective.

And a couple of points along those lines that I thought were particularly significant, have to do with, first of all, addressing the problems that we see and that we know that indigenous communities encounter all the time, we have to go beyond characterizing them in terms of racism and poverty and therefore framing our solutions, or limiting our solutions to those which involve sort of anti-racist perspectives and attempts to address economic inequality. We have to see the problem as colonization and how colonization is something more than discrimination or dispossession. Therefore, of course, we have to start thinking in terms of what it would mean to decolonize. A part of that is his very clear assessment or articulation of how we have to think beyond states and how we have to have a different understanding of sovereignty that isn't state based and therefore isn't reliant on state formations to provide those solutions.

And finally, he talks about decolonizing our thinking and our language and that, of course, has been sort of the theme throughout all of these presentations. Something that I thought was particularly helpful, in terms of that process of decolonizing our thinking and the way we frame issues, is his emphasis on recognizing reciprocal dualities and I'm really hoping Barbara man, will be able to join us, because she certainly has written a

great deal about reciprocal dualities, just as Tink has. But those are the some of the things that I found most inspiring about his work and really helpful in terms of framing and understanding of our current colonial realities that certainly does address Christianity, but also isn't limited to what we often think of as a Christian worldview.

Roger Green: I also want to acknowledge our friend and deceased colleague, Luís León, who I think was part of this whole project, and I was trying to deal with these two mentors of mine, as I wrote the chapter for this book. Luís has this concept of religious poetics and then I have Tink, and I was sort of having, as a student, to deal with both of these perspectives and sometimes they were really clashing with each other as I was trying to reconcile this.

I want to ground some language here, especially for people who are in the audience who might not have a lot of this history. So, I think one of the grounding points for Tink's thinking is that we really do have to kind of look back to 1492, at least in this part of the world, to what really shifted and what happened there. I'm particularly attentive to this language of the papal bulls, and to the *requerimiento*, which I'm going to read from here. And just try and imagine the context of this. The Europeans knew very well that this kind of thinking would not be welcome, so much so that Robert J. Miller records instances of them passing by and yelling it off their boats that this was the requirement, that they were supposed to read—and this was this was supposed to be a human rights move, by the way. The last paragraph says—so just imagine somebody passing by in a boat yelling this off to you:

> but, if you do not do this and maliciously make delay in it, [if you don't become a Christian, if you don't acknowledge a Christian Prince] I certified to you that, with the help of God, we shall powerfully enter your country and shall make war against you in all the ways and manners that we can, and shall subject you to the yolk and the obedience of the church and of their Highnesses; we shall take you and your wives and your children and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can, as to the vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord, and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your

> fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us.

So, this is an example of what, in my chapter, I call conscripted compromised and I take that term from a book that, actually, Tink introduced me to, by David Scott, who's a Caribbean scholar, who wrote a great book called *Conscripts of Modernity* (2004). And this way that through writing, through this kind of rhetoric, people are included when they don't even know that they're being included. Most people couldn't have understood the Spanish that was being yelled off the boats, here. So, that's one just concrete example of this kind of colonial thinking that persists in our legal language, through the doctrine of discovery, through 1823's *Johnson v. M'Intosh* which came up in Sheldon Spotted Elk's talk this morning. And something that came up with Sheldon this morning, who's Northern Cheyenne, is that he was talking about the four braids that Cheyenne children wear in their hair—one for each direction, and then a fifth, one which is a connecting one that comes out of the center of their heads—and he was talking about boarding schools and being a descendant of the Sand Creek Massacre himself.

In my Chapter I was trying to think very much in terms of the Southern continent, because I was doing work related to that, and if you just look at the Wikipedia entry on the so called "Inca Empire," they say "The Inca Empire (Quechua: *Tawantinsuyu*, lit. 'four parts together')". So, how do we get this concept of empire? What comes with that concept of empire, when in the literal language it means "four parts together"? So, I've been trying very much to think about things that Barbara man has said in her book, *Spirits of Blood, Spirits of Breath* (2016), about the twinned cosmos of Indigenous America and to integrate her thinking on that and fractal genocide and Ward Churchill's scholarship of genocide into what Steven Newcomb and Tink Tinker have called *deep framing* or *deep cognitive framing*. Steve Newcomb is not here today, but he has a chapter in the book and a great book called *Pagans in the Promised Land* (2008), where he talks about deep framing and cognitive linguistics, drawing on people like George Lakoff. But what I think that both Tink Tinker and Steven Newcomb do really well is that they are able to talk about how the ways that we think in a cognitive sense is not just metaphor, we think, metaphorically, but it really does create real physical neural pathways in our brains. It's not just a matter of representation, it's a matter of the connectivity in our brains that really shapes the ways that we think about reality.

What I think Tink Tinker and Steve Newcomb are able to do in their analysis of deep framing is to connect it to something intergenerational, which I don't think is something that scholars

like George Lakoff are as interested in as well. So, how we think about the ways that persists, just like what Natsu was just saying, in terms of those of us who might think of ourselves as secular or non-Christian, how we're still carrying a eurochristian worldview with us? It's not something that I get to choose my way out of my eurochristian-ness. And, and those are the things I was wrestling with.

Tink Tinker: I have lots of responses, but I'm going to try and be a little brief. I want to pick up on what Natsu was saying, because far from wanting to correct any of what she says, I went to advance what she was saying. When I talk about eurochristians, I'm using that as a sociological signifier and not a religious signifier. So, eurochristian is different from Christian, yet the two are thoroughly intertwined with one another. I suppose the clearest way to see it is to read John Marshall's 1823 unanimous decision in *Johnson v. M'Intosh*, where it's perfectly clear when he gives the name of the Doctrine of Discovery, this Papal Bull of 1493 and clearly says that it is the Christianity, the religion of the European conquerors that made their conquest moral, just, and legal. And it's not just the invention of religious language that gets imposed on native people, but the invention of legal language which is equally imposed. In fact, it's the legal invention that does more to secure the conquest of the continent and the theft of the land, the conversion of the land from land into property, the baptism of the land as Christian property.

And to this day, we get snookered into believing that somehow all of this is useful language, so that we have a thousand and one Indian lawyers, from Indian nations in Oklahoma alone who think that federal Indian law somehow is Indian. And, of course, it's not Indian at all, it's colonizer language invented by the colonizer with one intention only, and that intention is to control the native peoples in order to make access to native lands more readily available to eurochristian peoples. So, there's more to this than just the religion. But, for me, talking about the colonial compromise in terms of the Gospel and the coerced conversion of Indian people's is a way of getting at that greater whole, getting at the way history is taught, getting at the American imaginary which romanticizes that conquest as somehow a good and moral process, one that didn't involve violence unless Indian people resisted. *What, you think I should not take your home? Well then, I have the right to kill you*.

Essentially, that's what the Spanish *requerimiento* said to Indian people in the Caribbean and then in in Mexico and Central America. And it is what John Marshall is saying in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* still, three-hundred years later—that we have the right. And, in fact, Marshall goes so far as to say it was a fair

trade, because in return for taking their land, we gave the Indians Christianity and civilization. That says it all, in terms of colonization in the colonial compromise. And, in fact, converting to Christianity meant essentially that American Indian people and other indigenous people around the world had a better chance of escaping sure death. So, it was death or convert. Much like the conversion of Irish Catholics during the British conquest to Protestantism in return for a bowl of soup. That's what we were up against. So, it comes across in in all academic disciplines, I mentioned history, but surely the invention of two disciplines invented in the late 19th century, say it all: comparative religions and anthropology. That's where the university exercised its muscle, it's colonizer might in terms of being the official descriptor of all things indigenous, savage, and uncivilized. And they were quick to do that before Indian people or other indigenous people became too civilize because they might become too much like us, and we could no longer catalog the wild and uncivilized nature of their social wholes that we rightfully conquered, colonized, and converted.

I'm remiss, by the way, in not starting this conversation by acknowledging that, here in Denver, where I live, and from once I'm speaking, that we're on Cheyenne and Arapaho traditional lands and I always remember those ancestors, who are still here in this place and the other some 45 Indian nations who wandered across and used this land as well. My own people made annual visits to the Rocky Mountains and visited Cheyenne and Arapaho people on their journeys. *Kakunah*.

Roger Green: There is a question in the chat which I can read. The question is: "Indigenous peoples spirituality goes beyond humans, were the principles of reciprocity, balance, and relationality keep us as part of the whole Mother Earth and not outside it. How do you extend your concept of decoloniality to all of our relations?"

Ward Churchill: I don't know all indigenous traditions, obviously. I'm familiar to a greater or lesser extent with quite a number, and one of the factors they have in common is treating the winged, the four legged, those that crawl, those that swim and the Earth itself, the sky, the totality of what we inhabit as relatives. We are related to them, they to us, but they are also to each other. And it is in that cognition that you see manifestations of culture that are intended to allow all those relations to continue and flourish, to maintain—as it was said earlier—a balance and harmony. There are ways that you can see this—defined this—as a property relation, if you want to do that. It would be radically different from the John Locke version of

property. It's a responsibility, rather than a right, but that responsibility goes to respecting the other relatives, their needs, their nature, their contributions to our existence, the whole.

Oren Lyons, I heard, put it once that we—by *we* he meant not only the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, of which he was a Faithkeeper, but indigenous people, more generally—do not have the concept of rights, really. We have a concept of responsibility. And those who are new age types, who want to practice crystal healing ceremonies and sweat lodges and all the rest of that, completely out of context, that responsibility is the one thing you're attempting to avoid by asserting your right to practice your version of our religion. And he used the word religion, because what was an issue was not spirituality, was not the worldview, the understanding, the knowledge and practice of it. It was a cultural tourism of a sort, and a presumption which attended to colonial mentality: *I have the right to that which is yours, because I want it*. Decolonization would require what Oren would call, and I would think Tink would agree with this, the exception to the rule, if you will, we have no concept of right, other than one: the right to fulfill our responsibilities. And under the colonial order, under the white supremacist order, under the materialist, Lockean property order of things, there is no way of fulfilling that responsibility.

So, decolonization would necessarily put an end to the eradication of the habitat of our other relatives, the earth itself, the contamination of the air by virtue of making a priority, not profit, not progress but sustainability, continuity, balance, and all the rest of it. You look at it that way. In decolonizing peoples, our nations, you decolonize all the relatives with whom we were able to maintain balance over millennia upon millennia. It's taken how long to totally destroy the sustainability of that which we'd occupied generation after generation after generation without destabilizing? I'll leave it right there. To me it's sort of evident if the colonization of current traditional values and ways of knowing and living were to be restored, not perfectly, but in principle, then all of the others would benefit accordingly, and all of the others would include the colonizers, ultimately.

Tink Tinker: I would just add one thing. I actually mentioned this, but didn't explicate it, when I talked about the conversion of the land to property. They're two distinctly different attitudes towards the land, experiences of the land, the colonizers made it property, made it theirs, whereas in Osage there is no word for *property*, just as there is no word for *it*, no word for *thing*. All are alive, our people, our relatives and the land is the mother, the grandmother of all life. So that, today, across turtle island, from the United States through Canada, the most prominent public

movement of indigenous people is something called Land back. That's what natives are calling for—Land back. And white relatives, need to be absolutely clear, Indians are not asking for property to be returned, to end in ownership. That would be a mistaken eurochristian colonialist idea. What Indian people are asking for us that our relationship to the mother be restored, our relationship to the land be restored, and along with it our cultures, our languages, and particularly the American Indian worldview. So, yes, when we're talking about the colonial compromise, we're talking about having lost all of that. And at this late date, five hundred plus years into colonialism, it's no simple task to reclaim what we have lost, what we gave up in that compromise. *Kakunah*.

Natsu Taylor Saito: I wanted to mention two points, just little side points, but things that have really struck me in this context, and one is that, as you just said, Tink, it wasn't property and indigenous peoples aren't asking for property back. And I just think that is such a difficult notion for those of us who are raised in this eurochristian environment to understand is that we're not talking about a more equitable division of property. And this is really what distinguishes this Indigenous worldview from a lot of what are considered progressive worldviews or Socialist worldviews or whatever, which focus on making the division of property or access to property more equitable and that's just not what we're talking about. And I love that emphasis you put on *Johnson v. M'Intosh* because you can see it so clearly that the land wasn't property when indigenous peoples were here, without the colonizers. It only becomes property when people claim it, and so, trying to wrap our heads around that notion of getting away from the propertization of everything is really significant.

And then, the other piece I've just been thinking about is—I hope you would be willing to expand on this a little bit, Tink—how you talk about how, in the eurochristian worldview, the newest relatives to be here are put at the top of the hierarchy, closest to God and how, in fact, in an indigenous worldview that is rooted in reality—from my perspective—it is our ancestors, who are the rocks, who are the oldest, who are the wisest and we're the newest, the most stupid ones, and we need to be learning from them, rather than imposing on them. And that distinction has just always stuck with me so strongly.

Ward Churchil: If I could, a point of clarification. I made mentioned of property, and I said it was a radically different construction or conception of it. By that I meant to convey the signification of the relation to particular components of geography of Mother Earth. I don't know single Indigenous

people that does not have a relationship with a particular area. Other Indigenous peoples may have relations to portions of it. If you try to draw a map of Indigenous North America, or anyplace else so far as I know—other than perhaps an island inhabited by one particular group—it would totally defeat your ability to comprehend, visually, whose was what, because it's based in relation not in a notion of ownership. And yet—and this, I think, is what Oren was trying to get to, and I've seen you do it, Tink—it is well understood that in that relationship, that if something comes to destroy the balance, to harm our ability to pass along what we inhabit, intact, so that it's simply the same, ecologically, seven generations into the future, we will defend that. We have a right to defend it because we have the responsibility to maintain balance within it.

That's all. It's very different. You cannot alienate it. That would be, essentially, to shirk the responsibility to maintain the balance and harmony within it. We're part of it. We can call it anything. But if it conveys the idea, that indigenous territoriality, habitat, environment—choose your term—is not up for grabs because someone does not hold a deed to it, then it's okay by me. But the restoration that Tink was describing is possible only within the acknowledgement by the Lockean culture, the eurochristian culture, that it's not inherently entitled to make a superior disposition of it. And that has been the assumption, the rationalization all along. So, I don't know if that clarified things a bit or confuses them, but I'm not in disagreement at all with the idea that property, as it has been defined in eurochristian law, is a concept diametrically opposed to that of every indigenous people I know.

Tink Tinker: I will say a little bit more about this business of property and interrelationship. When I travel, I carry an eagle wing with me. I use it here, too, when the family gets together to load a pipe or when we're going to smudge ourselves, smoke ourselves off with me medicinal smoke from one of our medicines or another. But I take it, with me when I travel. It's not my eagle wing, it is my relative who travels with me. And here at home we're very careful to make sure that we set out food every time we have a family meal in order to feed the *Wanagi* of that eagle, of my drums, of my pipe, of my staff, and the *Wanagi* of all the ancestors that we call on to come and help our family maintain harmony and balance. It's really important to do that.

Well, when I traveled to Australia for some reason, and this this eagle relative has been with me on multiple trips to Europe, to Asia, to Mexico, to Central America, South America but as we were coming into Melbourne, for a postcolonial conference at the University of Melbourne where I was a keynote

speaker, I got freaked out by the customs form that threaten me with dire consequences if I didn't claim all animal parts. Animal parts? Surely, they can't mean my eagle relative? But I know colonialism too well, to think that that wouldn't happen. So, I scribbled a long note on this back of this customs form, explaining that I had this relative that was traveling with me. All the furor that erupted, because it got escalated from one customs official, to the next, to the next, to the next. Finally, I was with the customs official of all customs officials. And I wouldn't let them touch my relative because they wouldn't know how to handle her, they would treat her as a thing, as *it*, as property and not as a relative with whom they're in close relationship. This final customs official looked up and said, "Mate, are you Native?"

"Yes sir, I'm American Indian."

"Get outta here!" he said. And I was none too quick to pick up all my stuff and to grab my relative and to head out the door. And she kept me strong through that whole conference, but then I realized back in November of last year, they thought it was property and they could have taken my relative. And my option was to get back on the plane and fly home, $2,000 in a round trip ticket that, who knows, the conference may have billed me for. But I wasn't going to leave my relative at that counter, that was for sure. But then in November I realized, maybe that wasn't an option because this woman, an Australian woman, traveling in Italy bought a $19,000 alligator purse and because she failed to file the proper paperwork for importing that alligator purse they confiscated it when she went back to Australia, at the same customs counter that I was stopped at and they destroyed the purse. So, that's the power of the colonizer, they could have destroyed my relative without much further ado. That, to me, is very, very scary because I have a responsibility, as Ward was saying, towards this relative. She travels with me. To that extent, from this colonial world, I am her protector, just as she is my protector when I take her out of her case and use her publicly. That's what our relationship is with all living things, with the trees and the mountains, the rivers, the stones, the animals, and the birds, all living things—those are all alive.

So, my daughter—I've got a 12-year-old—has had to teach her teachers, ever since kindergarten the rocks are not inert. It's the most natural thing in the world for a teacher to teach the class the difference between living things and inert objects, and rock is an inert object. In Osage, we don't have a word for inert, we don't have a word for object, thing, because stones are our close relatives. *Kakunah.*

Edward Antonio: I just wanted to echo everything that you and Ward said about reciprocity and relationships to everything

around us. I come from kind of a different Indigenous space in Zimbabwe, I am a Shona and I identify as Zebra on my father's side and on my mother's side I identify as Buffalo, that's just how our system works, and we take those relationships with the four legged and creatures that crawl and so on very, very seriously. Everything that you said about stones we believe to be to be true, everything that you said about relationships to the totality of the world, the so-called cosmos or universe, we are a part of it. So, one of the remarkable things, and you and I have talked about this over the years, is the deep structures, in terms of similarities in terms of thinking among Indigenous peoples who are in far flung places like the Americas and Africa. So, I wanted to say that because I think it does say something about what it used to be, to be an indigenous person.

I believe that when "colonialism" and colonization kicked in, they colonized not just people, they took over not just the land but the took over everything, including or these other relatives that we're talking about here. And, for me, decolonization will be incomplete to the extent that it fails to decolonize those relationships, because we now live in a world in which those relationships are commodified, they are colonized, they become objects for buying and selling. We cage animals, we put them in zoos, and we slaughter them without paying attention to, for example in my culture, the rituals that attend to the killing and eating of our relatives. So, all of this is to say that there are remarkable similarities here that cannot be easily discounted as we think about the history of colonialism, but also the need to decolonize.

Roger Green: There are a few comments in the chat. I'll read a couple of these out. Julian Kunnie says, "we belong to the earth, the earth does not belong to us, please elaborate." And then Nelson Kompf says, "could you speak a bit about what land back might look like in practice today." Alejandro Argumedo says, "an important part of the Judeo-Christian creation story is a power of naming that is a power over creation. The Bible tells the story of God, giving Adam the power to name the animals and other parts of creation. History and law, as well as literature and politics or activities of naming. Names have great power and the power of naming has been used to miss appropriate plants, crops, habitats, landscapes by naming it using colonial languages. What role do indigenous languages play in indigenous decolonial processes

Tink Tinker: Well, I will say something about this and then then hope that a couple others will jump in, too. The first thing Columbus does, and this is part of baptizing the land and turning

it into property, converting it, as he sails to the Caribbean, is to give every geographical point or feature a new name. He names everything, he names it after his majesties in Spain, he names it after particular saints or his lord and savior. So, an island might be named El Salvador [the savior], his headquarters were on Española, and the capital city was named after his queen Isabella. But he named everything, and, in fact, colonizers, as some of you know, continue to do that. Here in Colorado the tallest peaks visible to us from Denver are Pikes Peak, Mount Evans, and Longs Peak. They all have Cheyenne and Arapaho names—they have Ute names. And yet it's the colonizer names, the names of genocidere—committers of genocide.

You know John Evans, was the first territorial Governor of Colorado and he spent the whole summer of 1864, as Governor, riling up the population of Denver, in particular, and Colorado in general to kill Indians. And it was that November 29th that his close Methodist colleague—together they were two of five of the trustees, the year before, assigned to be the founding committee for what is still today the lead Methodist church in Colorado, Trinity Methodist Church in downtown Denver—the pastor John Chivington, who resigned his church to assume the rank of Colonel in the US army, that led his army units to attack a peaceful Cheyenne and Arapaho village at Sand Creek. They thought they had a treaty with the United States, they thought they were camped where the United States army told them to camp. In fact, they were. That's how Chivington was able to find them. He attacked them at dawn and murdered several hundred old people, women and children, because most of the fighting age men had been given permission to leave the camp to go out and hunt buffalo in order to feed the people. That is John Evans's immediate participation in the genocide of Indian people. And he actually brags about it twenty years later, in an interview with a famous University of California historian from Berkeley, saying it served a purpose, because it made Colorado safe for Christian people, for Christian habitation. It enables you, by killing, to steal people's homes.

Yeah, that process of renaming is beginning now because we've pressed the civil government, here, hard enough and long enough, that they are now finally beginning to talk about recovering the native names for some of these places. In the meantime, we still have to drive on Evans Avenue or Downing Street—another genocidere. Eventually, we will rename all of those streets, too. Maybe not to give them Indian names, but at least to remove the names of genocidere—committers of genocide.

Miguel De La Torre: I was planning to jump in, my dear colleague, Tinker, and bring up a point that I know both you and I disagree on, just to maybe spice things up a little bit. One of the questions asked deals with water, which is a good question, and I was thinking of how I would answer that based on the fact that I wrote a book on water that came out last week. But before I do, for me to answer that question, I will have to embrace something that I know you disagree with and that's the concept of *Nepantla*, that in-between-space that many Latinx find themselves in. So, as a Caribbean boy, obviously, I'm a light skin Latino but some of my ancestors from my mother's side are African, from the Yoruba people. So, if I was to answer the question on water, I would go to the spirituality of my abuelas and talk about Oshun or Yemọja, Oshun being, of course, the goddess of the of the rivers and Yemọja the Ocean. Two indigenous Yoruban deities that I still worship today. If you walk into my office, I have a statue of *La Vírgen del Cobre*, which of course is a Catholic Saint, but it's really Oshun, which I lite a yellow candle to. So, I find myself living in this in between space, spiritually, wherein I don't really belong in either tradition. But at the same time both traditions have defined my very identity, but I know that you have a problem with that, so I thought, how would I then deal with this.

Tink Tinker: Not a question that de la Torre and I have not talked about before. In terms of the colonial compromise, I've argued with my Chicano friends, particularly, where *Nepantla* is a doctrinal issue, as it were, that you can't stand in that in between space forever. You have to make a decision and live one worldview of the other—you can't stand torn between two separate worldviews. And, I've argued that, if you take *Nepantla* seriously then you're actually living the colonizer worldview and clinging to some romantic attachment to your native past. A lot of American Indians do exactly that. That's no longer Indian. It is something else, some new hybrid, some new mestizo hybrid, as a lot of colonized people might call it. And I would argue that, if we're serious about reclaiming indigeneity, we have to move away from that borderland, away from *Nepantla*, away from that hybridity, and reclaim, restructure, give rebirth to those traditions that made us independent and free people before the colonizer invaded our territory.

I understand what Miguel was saying, I understand the sentiment, of course, I understand the sentiment of Anzaldúa, but I don't think it's sustainable as a response to colonization. I think it ends up being a new affirmation of colonization. And at some point, we have to break that bondage. *Kakunah*.

Ward Churchill: I would respond only in this fashion, that circumstances very. Those of us in North America, by and large, have a lot further to travel in order to actually reconstitute the indigenous worldview, to follow it, to apply it, to understand it, by way of actually living it, than people, in some cases much further north, although even there circumstances have changed a lot, particularly in the last 30 years. But when you begin to move south you find ever increasing numbers of people who, to greater extent than here and greater often one as compared to another, have continued to live in those ways. And the first task, it would seem to me, is to undertake action to ensure that they are not subsumed as completely, as we have been up here, by the colonizing impulse. Which, materially in particular, needs to continue to expand.

You've got villages in Guerrero province in Mexico, for example, that their primary point of confrontation with the colonizing culture, at this point, is to prevent the mapping of their villages, the mapping of their territories, in order that you have property assignments of the sort that prevail. We've been talking a lot about property. Well, everyone understands where everyone else lives in one of the villages in Guerrero, but it's not clear to the Mexican Government. They can't assign property without mapping it out and allowing the government to assert greater degrees of control on an individual basis and allow the DEA to conduct its operations and all the rest of what's at issue. They continuing to live in the sort of collective fashion that has prevailed in that area since who knows when.

In taking the action to preserve that we can maybe facilitate, accelerate a concretization of what it is that you, Miguel, and, in a way, Tink, you, too, and I, are trying to recover. Which, in part, has to do with understanding, but larger part creating contexts for practice. So, for that understanding to become a lived reality in a sense that is much more concrete than is presently possible. That's the nature of the struggle to increase the realm of possibility, but increasing the realm of possibility may well be, to a significant extent, contingent upon preserving it where it's not been eclipsed already. Does this follow, for you?

Edward Antonio: I do think that the in-between space exists, that it is a product of colonialism. I also think that occupying the in between space is a possibility, insofar as it can be a strategy, deployed in a perpetual attempt to decolonize. But I doubt that it could ever be a destination, a place where one finds reasons for why one struggles for justice and freedom. The in-between space exists as that which invites perpetual overcoming, not settlement. So, precisely because it's created and produced in and through the imaginations of colonialism—you see, colonialism survives

by splitting humans into spaces, into categories, into identities, and so in a second sense we are all caught in some in between space. Part of what we were talking about earlier, in terms of the reciprocity and a holistic understanding of the universe, the world, and so on, has to do with sort of overcoming those splits and those dualisms and those in-between spaces. So, the in-between space is not the utopia, if I may put it like that. It is but a moment that we go through again and again and again, as we seek to repair the damage that colonialism has done.

The second thing that I would say is that the idea of belonging to the in-between is a way of allowing oneself to be claimed by it. The key thing, I think, is to claim *it* and then to use it as a tool and as an instrument, and I think there's a real distinction there. It's not just a linguistic distinction. Who owns who? You are owned by the in-between space and it becomes a kind of ontological space. Or, you own it, which means that you make choices and decisions about what you are going to do in that space.

So, those would be some thoughts that I would bring to the conversation about that space. I acknowledge that it exists, I acknowledge that it's a product of colonialism. I don't believe that it is the final reason why one resists colonialism, rather it points to something beyond itself towards which, or back to which—maybe not necessarily towards, but back to which—we must go.

Miguel De La Torre: I hear what you're saying, and I totally agree. Except I just have to say that I have no destination to go to, and I have no place to go back to. The in-between space is all I have, ever since my conquistador grandfather raped his African slave it created a new people that I'm part of. I can't go back to my conquistador Spaniard Catholicism and I can't really go back to my African grandmother slave's Yoruba religion. I'm just trying to say it's a little more complicated when you actually live in that space where both sides kind of reject you and you do the best you can to live in that little contradiction. And there is a contradiction, there's a horrible contradiction. But, then again, Miguel de Unamuno says that all of us live in contradictions and I'm just being human and that's part of my humanity.

So, I guess what I'm asking is can it be that one of the consequences of colonialism, one of the negative consequences, one of the horrible consequences of colonialism, is the creation of a new people, that is not rooted anywhere. And I would argue that some of us from the Caribbean find ourselves in that space. So, the common joke in Cuba is, when you ask how many people are Catholic they say about 80% of the island and you ask how many people follow the orishas, the answer is 100%. We've

learned how to belong to different religious traditions or different spiritualities or different ways of being that are contradictory to each other, but yet we try to find harmony within ourselves.

Edward Antonio: So, Miguel, I would agree with you that colonialism produces different kinds of things, new people's, new realities and so on. And I think what you have is a new people, and they do belong somewhere, as you said just now, everywhere, and nowhere. And that's a powerful reality, that's a decolonial reality in itself, this ability to belong—as you say, *I come from the Caribbean, and I belong to this group of new people and yet I belong nowhere*—because that allows you to transcend colonial boundaries. It allows you to overcome the imposition of the colonial way of belonging, which is that you speak this language and you belong to this category. So, I would say that in-betweenness is the ability, the resilient power, if you will, to belong everywhere, and nowhere at the same time. I would say that that sort of dialectic helps us, in fact, go through and negate, overcome in-betweenness as a final destination. In other words, maybe the destination is in the process, that the process is ongoing, that it is a process of reconstitution, self-reconstitution, and so on and so forth. I liked this Miguel, because you and I have—when I was at Iliff, at any rate—hinted at the possibility of having this kind of conversation and now we're having it and that's wonderful, and we have Tink to thank for that.

Natsu Taylor Saito: I want to just say that, as somebody who also feels very much in between cultures, I think it's important not to define ourselves as not this and not that because that sort of implies that we have to choose a singular identity and one of the things that I've really seen from a lot of Indigenous culture seems to be an understanding that identities can be multiple and overlapping and interrelated. And I think that maybe we need to think a little bit more about how to incorporate that understanding into our lives. But I also have been thinking throughout this conversation about what many said in *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965), how there aren't good colonizers and bad colonizers there are colonizers and there is the colonized and we just have to choose, essentially, which side of that equation we're going to put our energies into. And that, to me, is not a matter of our genetic heritage, but it's a question of where we are going to put our energies in this struggle, and whether the way in which we identify ourselves and participate in society is empowering the colonizers or empowering the colonized. Those are just some thoughts, because that you raised great questions.

Julian Kunnie: Thank you, panelists. I didn't want to say anything but my brother out there Tink and I go back a long way and I want to Thank you and Natsu there too. I was just thinking, I'm reading this book right now, it's called *Born a Crime* (2016) by Trevor Noah—talk about decolonization, right here. You know, when he was born in South Africa he was classified as undefined because his mother was African, she was black, and his father was Swiss. But he talks about his mother, he grew up with his mother, he speaks his mother's language, and five other indigenous languages. I think a lot of these contradictions are perpetuated through the Academy, which is part of the colonial enterprise. It has colonized us; it has made us doubt who we really are. As my teacher Hataali Jones Benally says, you can go on and be a big professor and academician and a specialist, a distinguished scientists and do all the things that you're required to do, but it will never tell you about who you really are, because we belong to the spiritual universe. And, as I reflect on this hybridity and the problem of even using language, I think Tink said it very well in terms of indigenous languages, if you look at many of the African languages, for example, there's no specific pronouns for she and he or it. It's living, it's verbal, it's active. And it's because it's related to everything in life, there is nothing that's dead, in fact we don't even die, we just change form, we turn to our essence. That's part of our indigenous being.

So, I think a lot of these discursive discussions within the Academy are really prohibitions and prescriptions against us being who we are. To decolonize, to de-academize the Academy so that it creates a space for us to advance these struggles, because I think, as Natsu made the point, we make decisions. Trevor identified with his mother, of course, because his father was never there, but he followed his mother. And so, in making those decisions, we need to determine and to realize, just like with the African people who were brought to this country against their will, they're still African people—they're not American people. I have a big problem with the term African American because America, as it stands, is a fundamental contradiction, an annihilation of African identity. They lost their names. We're African people, Africa has never abandoned us. And when the Africans were brought to Brazil and fled in Suriname into the plantations to be with indigenous people, they poured libation to this land in honor of the ancestors of indigenous people, wherever we are. So, I think that the Academy and the kinds of convoluted discussions we have all the time tend to obscure this essence of who we are under the pretext or rubric of hybridity, because that's what standardization is all about. It takes us away from our real roots

in the earth and our languages. We should, yes, struggle to really learn the languages of our ancestors as Trevor did. This is the struggle. We're here to struggle. As Hataali Jones says when we're born, we're born into jeopardy on this earth, our life is in balance, we don't know if we're going to make, but if we don't know who we are, at the essence we certainly—and Miguel was talking about destination—are headed nowhere, because we don't understand.