Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition
Glen Coulthard
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In his book, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, Glen Coulthard essentially presents the theory behind the Idle No More movement in Canada. The work offers a critical reading of a range of political theory, but at times and with convincing cases and logic, it reads as a manifesto for righteous rebellion in the Canadian state. He raises the question of what would purposeful "recognition" look like. He rejects almost every government policy in Canada. His five theses put forth at the end of the book are direct action, anti-capitalism, sovereignty in cities, gender justice and a movement beyond the nation state towards a refurbishment of the traditional political and economic practices of indigenous people. In a bold theoretical move, this work invokes authors at the heart of the African anti-colonial movements in the 1960s and 1970s and attempts to narrate and shape the basis of First Nations (FN) resurgence and the strengthening of anti-colonialism in Canada.

Situating the discussion within the Canadian politics of recognition, Coulthard effectively argues that both the academic and policy debates in Canada are little more than a furtherance of colonial thinking. Of particular note is a rather complete critique of Seyla Benhabib's theory of nonessentialist deliberative democracy, which, he claims, "reinforce a colonial structure of dominance" (97). For instance, Coulthard argues, gender disparity in FN communities mostly arose from the creation of Canada, and therefore Benhabib's proposition that gender equality within FN communities will be achieved through recognition in the Canadian state seems paradoxical at best (99).

Coulthard's main point is clear, namely, that First Nations can use their valid resentments to further strengthen themselves individually and as communities. As he aptly documents through several white papers, bills and agreements, being "recognized" by the Canadian state does not often work in favour of First Peoples (FP). He invokes Marx in part to show that within the current politico-economic system it is not possible for indigenous communities to regain their strength, land and practices.

Although Coulthard connects with literature related to Africa's sovereignty and independence, he does not mention the long debates about modernization in global politics, but he may well have in order to further illustrate his point. Modernization theory, related to indigenous dispossession, has been a central part of postcolonial criticism. As Edward Said so aptly discusses in *Orientalism*, the portrayal of the "other" as weak and incapable is a fundamental first step of colonialism and the related modernization theory (New York: Knopf, 1978). Mamood Mamdani has illustrated how deeply modernization has affected political systems and traditions in Uganda and the surrounding region (*Citizen and Subject,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Coulthard is discussing the "settler colony" of Canada, a term he uses throughout the book, yet part of the problem with invoking the international postcolonial movements is that one is left wondering what the difference is between settler colonies and colonies in general. This is further complicated because much of the contemporary literature of postcolonialism itself questions the extent to which colonialism has ended and to which it is still operating through global structures and ideological systems (Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Coulthard's use of Franz Fanon could be said to be vague. Given the sexualization of FN females in Canada and the extent to which they are victims of violence, it is easy to draw a parallel to the detailed analysis in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* (New York: Grove Press, 1997). Yet Coulthard almost seems to lean more heavily on Fanon's more

activist work *Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1961). Though not a Freudian analyst like Fanon, some of Coulthard's accounts of the feelings and experiences of missing FN women would have strengthened his point that rebirth of a civilization must start with the inner gaze that Fanon describes in *Black Skin, White Mask.*

Coulthard discusses the spirit of "south-south" politics as it was in the 1970s when groups like the Dene in British Columbia travelled across the world to meet anti-colonial leaders in Africa. He invokes what Mustapha Pasha ("The Bandung Impulse in International Relations," in *Postcolonial Theory and International Relations,* ed. Sanjay Seth, Oxford: Routledge, 2013) has called the "Bandung Impulse," where, in 1956, many cultures came together to establish peaceful global relationships and fair terms of trade. Coulthard demonstrates how recognition debates in Canada do much to perpetuate Canada's colonial position, demanding a response of resistance in order to protect First People's culture and self-worth. This book is an important step toward reconnecting FN with anti-colonial movements throughout the world.

SABINA S. SINGH *Victoria BC*

Obama face à Poutine. Deux visions réalistes du monde
Gilles Vandal
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Gilles Vandal est professeur titulaire à l'École de politique appliquée de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Il a publié divers ouvrages sur la politique étrangère des États-Unis. Dans ce livre, il cherche à expliquer pourquoi, en dépit de la fin de la guerre froide, des désaccords persistent entre les deux pays, dont les relations se sont nettement détériorées depuis 2009.

L'auteur définit d'abord la « doctrine Poutine », tournée vers l'objectif de restaurer la grandeur passée de la Russie tout en cherchant à faire respecter les caractéristiques qui lui sont propres et forment son identité. La restauration du prestige de la Russie exige un État fort, plus centralisé. Ce faisant, il invite le lecteur à une description du régime. Toutefois, les chapitres et passages sur la politique intérieure et l'économie témoignent d'un certain manque de cohésion. Par exemple, l'auteur écrit, avec raison, que Poutine n'a fait qu'utiliser les outils légués par ses prédécesseurs (13). Mais plus loin, il impute au président russe un système « où les amis du régime obtiennent d'énormes contrats pour leur soutien au gouvernement central » (61). Eltsine est pourtant allé beaucoup plus loin en 1996 en transférant à des prix dérisoires les joyaux de l'économie à des individus proches des cercles dirigeants. C'est ce qui a permis à l'oligarchie de prendre un élan dont on connaît peu d'équivalents dans l'histoire. Et Eltsine lui-même faisait face à des allégations de corruption à la veille de son départ. La démonstration que fait l'auteur dans le deuxième chapitre sous-estime un peu trop les éléments de continuité dans les méthodes d'exercice du pouvoir des deux premiers présidents de la Russie postsoviétique.

En voulant mettre en évidence les liens entre politique intérieure et politique extérieure, l'auteur aurait dû faire l'analyse des rapports sociaux spécifiques à la Russie. On ne peut en faire l'économie lorsqu'il s'agit d'expliquer l'évolution autoritaire du régime depuis le coup d'État de Boris Eltsine, la montée de l'oligarchie, le rôle de l'État, et ainsi de suite. À défaut, il aurait mieux valu s'en tenir à quelques généralités relativement consensuelles sur le fonctionnement du régime. Le reste de la démonstration, fort intéressant au demeurant, n'en aurait pas souffert et plusieurs affirmations erronées ou imprudentes auraient été évitées, comme celle attribuant aux