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Science, Colonialism, and Indigenous Peoples: The Cultural Politics of Law and Knowledge. By Laurelyn Whitt.

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1919 and 1920 are among those of special interest. The first flood prophecy appears to have been made by a Protestant missionary in 1919 (481).

The Navajo as Seen by the Franciscans also contains considerable material as to the personalities and character of prominent individuals, Navajos as well as non-Navajos. I found the brief mention of the Hubbells and Brother Simeon Schwenberger frustrating (Paul V. Long, *Big Eyes: The Southwestern Photographs of Simeon Schwenberger, 1902–1908*, 1992), but considerable detail regarding the Days, Blackhorse, the Chinle Gormans, Chee Dodge, and Father Emanuel Trockur is included.

The major lack in the editing is that there is no explanation of the ways in which Navajo words are spelled. These writings predate the standardization of Navajo orthography, and writers struggled then to render Navajo in written form. Here common terms, such as the Navajo word for *man*, are found with the spellings *hastiin*, *hastin*, *hasten*, *qastqin*, *qastquin*, and *qastqui*. More complex constrictions suffer convoluted variations, often far from transparent even for a reader with some knowledge of the Navajo language. A few correlations of Navajo and English translations of personal names appear in the index, but there are others that do not, leaving individuals mentioned by Navajo names, translations of Navajo names, and sometimes very different English names unconnected.

In conclusion, I can recommend this book highly for those doing research in Navajo history and ethnohistory as a source of writings contemporary with most events mentioned, but must warn more casual readers that it will not be easy going without some background knowledge of things Navajo.

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Science, Colonialism, and Indigenous Peoples: The Cultural Politics of Law and Knowledge. By Laurelyn Whitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 284 pages. $85.00 cloth.

Colonialism is most pernicious, thorough, and invisible—even to the colonized—when it is embedded in the assumptions that order the world and the worldview of the colonizers, naturalizing "coloniality" (in the words of the Peruvian scholar, Anibal Quijano) as a condition of existence. In this exemplary work of cultural criticism, Laurelyn Whitt undertakes to deconstruct three such assumptions of Euro-modernity that have been complicit in the incarceration of indigenous peoples in the "iron cage" of coloniality: science as the only way of knowing the world, market-driven property regimes as the

guiding principle of political economy, and a legal order that guarantees the hegemony of both. Written from indigenous perspectives, the study nevertheless has significant implications for contemporary political struggles in general.

The author brings impressive credentials as a scholar of the philosophy of science and of legal studies to the analysis. But the work is an activist work, conceived first and foremost as a contribution to indigenous struggles against "biocolonialist" plunder of indigenous knowledge and genetic material by "demonstrating how biocolonialism arises from the ideology, the policies, and the practices of a new imperial science, marked by the confluence of science with capitalism—a relationship mediated by a distinctively American, increasingly international, intellectual property system." Where the science is concerned, the issue is "no longer science *in* imperial history but science *as* imperial history" (xiv). Imperialism is understood throughout as the imposition on indigenous peoples of the knowledge systems, economic practices, and legal norms of the dominant, which Whitt illustrates through the juxtaposition of indigenous and imperial rhetoric. She views biological colonialism as a form of neocolonialism marked by the prominence of cultural imperialism. Imperialism was built into science all along in its claims to being the only proper way of knowing. What renders the new imperial science as new is the leading part it plays in the plunder of spirituality, knowledge, resources, and bodies. These constitute the *terra nullius* of the new imperialism. As laws pertaining to land use justified the territorial conquests of the old imperialism, the new cultural imperialism is protected and justified by the property-rights regime of the market economy.

Whitt uses the Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP) as the most recent illustration of biocolonialism. Indigenous people have been of particular interest to the project because, as one advocate states, "indigenous peoples are disappearing across the globe. . . . As they vanish, they are taking with them a wealth of information buried in their genes about human origins, evolution, and diversity" (84). The statement is a reminder that where indigenous peoples are concerned, science has not progressed much from the Social Darwinian assumptions of the late nineteenth century that anticipated the inevitable extinction of those unable to keep up with the demands of Euro-modernity. In the debates regarding HGDP, Whitt identifies two lasting characteristics of "Western" science that have justified imperialism regardless of the intentions of individual researchers: "value-bifurcation" and "value-neutrality." Value-bifurcation refers to the distinction between pure and applied research, which advocates of HGDP have advanced as evidence of the "disinterestedness" of their work in its financial and political consequences—even if some were quite excited by the "free money" that the project would bring (102). Value-neutrality refers to the bracketing of ethical and political issues in the pursuit of such

research. In either case, in the rhetoric of research we may hear an ongoing conversation between scientists and their sponsors about people objectified by their research that, even when it takes into account their worldviews and sentiments, subordinates them to the business at hand: the cause of science.

Claims to disinterestedness ring hollow, moreover, when viewed in the perspective of the broader context of research in the political economy of capitalism and its property-rights regime. The rendering of indigenous genetic makeup into public property in the name of a common humanity is only the first step that inevitably opens the way to the privatization of the products of research (170). The patenting of indigenous knowledge and genes is then enforced by the state in the name of the law that, like science, feeds off the rhetoric of value-bifurcation and value-neutrality.

Given the important part the state apparatus plays in the enforcement of biocolonialism, its transformation may be a necessary condition for any possibility of the success of the struggles against coloniality. Whitt sees some openings to this end in the challenge of globalization to the Westphalian order that established state sovereignty. In the initial phase of the "encounter" between indigenous people and Europeans, before the establishment of the sovereign-state system, there was some measure of interdependence across boundaries. Interdependence would give way to domination as the codification of Westphalian sovereignty established a new regime that demanded absolute state control of territory. This relationship between the state and territorial control may be showing signs of loosening, which may once again make possible the revival of indigenous traditions that have survived colonialism, most importantly the indigenous traditions of relationship to the land that, unlike the Westphalian objectification of land as a condition of sovereignty, presupposed a symbiotic relationship between the land and the people in which each nourished and drew nourishment from the other. This needs to be accompanied by an attitudinal change that valorizes mutual respect and responsibility—for people and the land—over domination and control. The world the author envisions is one in which "differing peoples retain their full distinctiveness and ability to live according to their own laws, customs and ways, yet [are] allied and interdependent" (222).

Whitt's study may be commended not for the novelty of its analytical premises or its conclusions but for its comprehensiveness in bringing together issues of science, political economy, law, and the state in elaborating the structure of domination that continues to weigh heavily on indigenous peoples and threatens their survival. The strength is also something of a weakness. Grounding issues of oppression in contrasting worldviews brings to the foreground the fundamental ideological dimension of colonialism. But it also presupposes a wholeness and coherence to the worldviews that may be more

imagined than real, rhetorical rather than empirical. The resurgence of religion in recent years makes it difficult to maintain that "Western" science, which was shaped by struggles against religion, is sufficient to define a "Western" worldview. A work such as Francis Fukuyama's *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (2003) suggests that the invasion of the human body by biogenetics is as controversial in "Western" societies as it is among indigenous critics, not just in the name of religion but also in defense of a "humanist" tradition. "Western" science, moreover, is no longer just Western, further adding to the incoherence. The resurgence of cultural traditionalism in non-Western societies such as China, a pervasive if ironic consequence of the globalization of the nation-state and the political economy of capitalism, is also motivated by a desire to distinguish Native from "Western" worldviews. Claims to a spirituality beyond science in these cultural traditions nevertheless have not led to a more benign relationship with indigenous peoples in these societies.

The same is true in regard to indigenous worldviews that no longer can claim wholeness or uniformity even within the same group. Indigenous peoples have histories, and those histories include relations to the dominant society in which they are placed that have shaped their historical and ideological trajectories. Not the least important consequence of these relationships is social and ideological diversification. Claims to wholeness under the circumstances may result in the suppression of difference in much the same way that cultural homogenization under the nation-state erases differences claimed, among others, by the indigenous peoples in its domain. These claims are rhetorical, much like the rhetoric of science that would erase or marginalize them.

The issue here is not the identity of the rhetoric of oppression and of the struggles against it, but rather is the need in such struggles to avoid slippage into essentialisms that erase differences within and replace them with oppressive consequences of their own. If cultural essentialism is a condition of successful struggle against oppression, it needs in turn to be attentive to the oppressive implications of its own homogenizing impulses; it needs to recognize above all that the holistic and coherent worldview it claims as the basis of identity is a mobilizing myth rather than the reality of the actual, living people who have suffered fragmentation and loss of identity under the weight of a colonial oppression that has denied even their humanity. A mobilizing myth can call upon the past without imprisoning the struggle within its confines to account for the differences that are the products of history.

It would also render more porous the boundaries between indigenous peoples and others, making possible alliances against oppression that may be experienced differently, but that is a common predicament. Indigenous peoples have been subjected to the most horrendous forms of oppression and

extermination. It is not to deny their special needs to argue, nevertheless, that the predicament they face presently with the latest onslaught of biocolonialism is an integral part of what Michel Foucault described as "biopolitics," a formative moment of Euro-modernity.

Although Whitt stays clear of these complications in her analysis, she recognizes them in the solutions to which she points in her concluding pages, which suggest that hers is what might be described as a post-Enlightenment indigenism, open in its defense of indigenism and indigenous traditions to the deployment of "robust legal pluralism . . . to secure justice and ensure survival for all peoples" (213). Despite the qualifications I have suggested, her study provides a valuable reminder that awareness of the colonization of indigenous peoples is indispensable not just to the cultural critique of the scientific regime of knowledge but also to any serious struggle for a just and sustainable society.

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A Son of the Fur Trade: The Memoirs of Johnny Grant. By John Francis Grant. Edited by Gerhard J. Ens. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008. 468 pages. $34.95 cloth.

John (or Johnny) Francis Grant is a person of mixed Scottish-Métis ancestry, who lived in both American and Canadian frontiers during the latter half of the nineteenth century. For the first time, the complete manuscript of his voluminous memoirs is included in this book. The memoirs shed interesting light on many different events, including his direct involvement in some of the important historic events in the North American West. For this reason, the memoirs are highly valuable historic sources for those interested in frontier lives during this period of time. The manuscript was originally dictated by Grant to his wife, Clotilde Bruneau, sometime between 1905 and 1907, and then further edited by his daughter and others. Some portion of the manuscript related to its American content was published in 1996 by Washington State University Press, whereas much of it remained unpublished in the University of Alberta archives.

Most of the memoirs are devoted to the period between Grant's childhood and his years in his thirties as a thriving trader and rancher in the American West. The descriptions of this period are most detailed and vivid. Grant was born in 1833 at Fort Edmonton to his Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trader father and Métis mother, Marie Anne Breland, who was the adopted daughter of John Rowand, chief factor of Fort Edmonton and one of the most