Colonial Walls: Psychic Strategies in Contemporary Mining-Related Displacement

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Abstract
In May 2011, African Barrick Gold, owner of the North Mara Gold Mine in northern Tanzania, announced a plan to erect a three-metre-high concrete wall to enhance security against incursions from local (displaced) populations. Taking this wall as both metaphorical and material, this paper questions the psychological impact of displacement on "displacers." How does this subject avoid psychic implosion? My review identifies legal infrastructure, mythologies of Canadian benevolence, CSR discourses, and community consultations as operating to provide psychic scaffolding for this dominant subject, who is thus inured against psychic distress and implosion in response to conditions of what can be deemed routine structural violence.

Résumé
En mai 2011, l'African Barrick Gold, propriétaire de la mine d'or du Mara, au nord de la Tanzanie, a annoncé le projet de construire un mur de béton de trois mètres de haut afin d'augmenter la sécurité face aux incursions des populations locales (déplacées). En considérant ce mur de façon matérielle et métaphorique, cet article soulève la question de ses impacts psychologiques sur ces populations de « déplacés », et demande comment les individus concernés éviteront « l'implosion psychique ». Cette étude identifie les infrastructures légales, les mythologies de la bienfaisance canadienne, les discours de RSE et les consultations communautaires en tant que moyens pour fournir le soutien nécessaire pour aguerrir les sujets contre la détresse psychique et l'implosion en réponse à des conditions pouvant être considérées comme une violence structurelle continue.

Following the shooting in May 2011 of five Tanzanians at the perimeter of a largely Canadian-owned gold mine in northern Tanzania, the company announced a plan to construct around the mine site a 12-kilometre-long, three-meter-high concrete wall, topped with electrified barbed wire and studded with closed-circuit security cameras. This decision was a response to repeated confrontations between community residents—often artisanal miners—and the mine security. Effectively, a Canadian-financed and majority-owned gold mine was established on Tanzanian soil from which local Tanzanian citizens and miners had been successively displaced, and who were now to be more definitively walled out.

While much "displacement literature" focuses on the impact of displacement on displaced populations, the questions I want to explore pertain to the subjects inside the wall, both literally and figuratively: the expatriates, senior managers, shareholders, and investors. Casting the "walled mine" as a type of gated community with historical links to colonial-era walled forts, I draw on post-colonial and critical race theory to analyze "the displacer" as a neo-liberal subject who operates in a contemporary zone of neo-colonialist power relations. Psychologically, what is required of this subject? What psychic gymnastics does this subject engage in to "live with" complicity regarding conditions of racialized structural violence in the form of large-scale displacement, loss, death, dispossession, and impoverishment (or exclusion from wealth) as it affects those living in the
vicinity of the mine? How does or can the “displacer” relate to “the displaced”?

This study, which draws specifically on the experiences at the North Mara Gold Mine, owned by African Barrick Gold (ABG), in northern Tanzania, builds on previous research with Canadian mining professionals who had worked in numerous African countries. With reference to the North Mara gold mine, I have had no direct access to the Canadian, expatriate, or other managerial employees at the mine in question.² I characterize this lack of access as, in itself, part of the psychic shielding offered to these subjects, just as the wall is placed around the mine’s valuable resources. Methodologically, I am left to peruse the assemblage of corporate discourses, legal tactics, social technologies such as community consultations, and the installation of security and surveillance systems as a collection of mirrors through which something of the psychology of the displacer is reflected, can be discerned, and is tentatively theorized. Indeed, the extensive, interlocking nature of this assemblage is some indication of the depth of psychic risk to “displacers.”

Directing the gaze to this dominant, ostensibly secured figure is not intended to marginalize or disregard the experiences of those who have been displaced; rather, it is intended to generate some further insights into the processes that continue to make tenable colonialist systems of domination in a formally post-colonial era. I draw on the idea of the wall as a metaphor for contemporary colonial binaries, and on the actual material existence of the fence/wall around portions of the North Mara mine site, as conceptual locations from which to consider the psychological dimensions of displacement as embodied in the displacers. In drawing attention to the micro-investments and tensions at the level of individual psyches in such operations, I offer a more comprehensive assessment of what is at stake and what would have to be transformed in order to respond to and realize what Ranjana Khanna terms “the call of justice for the future.”³

Setting the Context: The North Mara Gold Mine

Mining in Tanzania predated the colonial era, then attracted the attention of both the German and British colonial rulers.⁴ In 1979, under Nyerere’s governance, a mining law was introduced that encouraged local Tanzanian mining of gemstones, gold, and other metals and minerals.⁵ During the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Tanzanians took up employment as what came to be called “small-scale” or “artisanal” miners, principally in the Lake Victoria “gold belt” region in northern Tanzania. A USAID study published in 2001 indicated not only that by 1995, some 550,000 Tanzanians made their living at least partially from small-scale mining, but that this economic activity had played a surprisingly significant role in reducing poverty.⁶ The advent of structural adjustment programs in the context of economic liberalization advocated by the World Bank and other Western donors led to the adoption of a new, foreign-investment-friendly mining code in 1998.⁷ Among other elements, such as tax concessions and the elimination of “performance requirements” (e.g., local sourcing; employment of nationals), the new law allowed total ownership of mines by foreign companies. In response, a number of Canadian and other foreign mining and mining-exploration companies entered Tanzania. By the early 2000s several major foreign-owned industrial gold mines were operating—Bulyanhulu (ABG), North Mara (ABG), Tulawaka (ABG), Buzwagi (ABG), Geita (AngloGold Ashanti), Golden Pride (Resolute)—in areas where, in most cases, Tanzanian artisanal miners had been active.

There continue to be conflicting assessments regarding the benefits to the nation of artisanal mining versus foreign-investment-led industrial mining. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address this question in depth, a brief synopsis helps to set the context for understanding circumstances at North Mara. On one side, it is asserted that artisanal mining employs a vastly greater number of people and sees far more of the revenues reinvested in local communities and economies, as well as in the national economy, and is thus more significant in terms of poverty-reduction.⁸ By contrast, advocates of foreign-owned industrial mining argue that the smaller number of jobs provided are safer and pay better, that there are far greater tax revenues that go into government coffers, and that industrial mining is able to access the resource at greater depths than can artisanal methods. Both sides accuse the other of illicit and illegal financial practices that reduce the revenues available to the nation (for example, smuggling on the part of artisans;⁹ corporate accounting practices that reduce taxes and other fees payable by foreign companies to the “host” government).¹⁰

The North Mara gold mine, owned initially by Afrika Masharki Gold Mines, an Australian company, came into production in 2002. It was acquired in 2003 by Placer Dome Tanzania (wholly owned by Vancouver-based Placer Dome Inc. of Canada), which in turn was acquired in 2006 by Barrick Gold Inc. In 2010 Barrick Gold created a separate company, African Barrick Gold (ABG), which is 74 per cent owned by Barrick. The North Mara Gold Mine is currently owned by ABG. The mine consisted initially of one open pit, the Nyabirama pit, with two additional pits, the Nyabigrena and Gokona pits, subsequently opened. In 2011, production at North Mara was reported at 170,000 ounces of gold, at a production cost of US$810/ounce;¹¹ at that time, gold was
selling in the range of US$1,900 an ounce. The value of gold produced in one year from the North Mara mine alone was thus in the range of US$170 million.

There are a number of communities located in the vicinity of the pits, with the urbanized town of Nyangoto, at the edge of the Nyabirama pit, being the largest. The area is reported to be unique in that there was historically little immigration to engage in mining; rather, most of the artisanal miners and local citizens are ethnically Wakuria, born in the area or indigenous to the area for generations. This suggests that there was considerable local sense of ownership of the territory and its resources, and it may explain why, from the arrival of the foreign companies in this mining area up to the present, there has been continuing discontent, complaints, and opposition from local community members.

While the number of Canadians and other expatriates who are employed by North Mara Gold Mine is relatively modest (approximately 15 per cent of the workforce, which totalled 2,329 employees in 2011), the company is perceived as Canadian and signifies the installation of a Canadian presence in Tanzania. Its operation and expansion has been financed largely by capital raised on Canadian stock markets, as well as, since 2010, on the London Stock Exchange, where ABG is listed. Moreover, to the extent that Canada is perceived as a "white man country" with a British heritage, this presence assumes racialized dimensions with relatively recent historical colonial associations. I suggest that such associations subtend the chronic conflicts that have occurred at North Mara.

The first major traumas experienced by local residents due to the arrival of foreign mining companies were the land appropriations and forced evictions. A study funded by a global mining industry association, the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), presents the history:

Mineral rights to some of the land required for the Nyabirama and Nyabigena pits was acquired by means of agreements with holders of mining claims—11 mineral rights holders at Nyabirama and five villages and two individual mineral rights holders at Nyabigena, as well as surface rights holders …

The majority of land required was compulsorily acquired from over 500 surface rights holders who were relocated, over a number of years, to allow the mine and its infrastructure to be built. Over one thousand others were also compensated for loss of crops or surface improvements on land which was needed for roads, the airstrip or other mine infrastructure.

Another account of these events appears in a complaint lodged by the Lawyers Environmental Action Team (LEAT), with the Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance. LEAT’s "Complaint relating to Violations of Fundamental Rights and Duties Arising from Forced Evictions of Artisanal Miners from Afrika Mashariki Gold Mine, Tarime" described the events in graphic terms:

On or about August 6, 2001, a heavily armed police Field Force Unit ("FFU") squadron … invaded the complainants’ villages and, after four days of armed operations, violently drove the complainants out of their settlements and properties at Nyabigena and Nyabirama. During this violent operation, the said FFU squadron shot and wounded numerous villagers and—in collaboration with employees, workmen and/or agents of EAGM / Afrika Mashariki—destroyed the complainants’ residential and commercial houses, mine workings, equipment, farms and growing crops. In addition, as a result of the said violent and forced evictions, EAGM / Afrika Mashariki took possession of the Nyabigena and Nyabirama sites including the properties lawfully held and owned by the complainants and have, since November 2002, operated the Afrika Mashariki Mine. At no point before, during or after the forced evictions did EAGM / Afrika Mashariki ever pay or offer to pay just, fair and reasonable compensation to the complainants for losses arising out of, or connected with, the forced evictions. At no point before, or subsequent to, the evictions did EAGM / Afrika Mashariki prepare or plan, finance or implement any resettlement or relocation plan or provide alternative lands; complainants, their families and dependants have been forced to live in great hardship. The combined loss suffered by the complainants as a result of these actions or omissions is conservatively estimated at Tanzania Shillings 50,920,000,000 (fifty billion, nine hundred and twenty million only) at the 1996 value of the Tanzania Shillings.

Despite the assertion in the ICMM-funded study that "compensation has been processed for all landholders and lease and claim holders, which is designed to offset the inconvenience of loss of land," there are other indications that many of the claims for compensation for these and subsequent losses remain unresolved. African Barrick Gold’s Responsible Mining Report 2012 notes that of 443 grievances filed with ABG in 2012, 396 were lodged at the North Mara mine, where "the majority of new grievances continue to relate to historic land compensation matters."

Having been displaced from the gold-rich areas, or lacking other sources of comparable income, many youth and adults "scavenge" for gold among the rock piles at the perimeter of the mine property. In some places, the original fence around the site had been torn down. These circumstances led to recurrent confrontations with security guards and police seconded to guard the mine. In 2005, two deaths
were reported; in 2006 another villager was shot by police; in 2008 a young man was shot by a security guard; in 2011 five young men aged 25–35, among a large number of people hunting for gold-bearing ore at the perimeter of the mine, were shot and killed; and two more deaths at North Mara Gold Mine, under similar circumstances, were reported in March 2013. On several occasions, the deaths triggered mass protests from local community members who invaded the mine and caused extensive damage. Many arrests ensued. Moreover, a number of cases of sexual assault, allegedly perpetrated by North Mara mine security, were reported. In addition, environmental complaints related to spills, contamination of the local river, and consequent ill health had been made. In response, a 2009 study investigating the presence of trace metal concentrations in local soil and water sources, conducted jointly by the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and the University of Dar es Salaam, Department of Botany, found evidence of high levels of arsenic and expressed concern regarding the lack of protection of local food and water sources from mine-related contamination.

Although this paper is not focused directly on the impact of all these events on the members of local communities, such impacts have been documented by, among others, Tanzania’s Legal and Human Rights Centre and Canadian documentary photographer Allan Lissner, who reports:

Since the mine opened in 2002, the Mwita family say that they live in a state of constant anxiety because they have been repeatedly harassed and intimidated by the mine’s private security forces and by government police. There have been several deadly confrontations in the area and every time there are problems at the mine, the Mwita family say their compound is the first place the police come looking. During police operations the family scatters in fear to hide in the bush, “like fugitives,” for weeks at a time waiting for the situation to calm down. They used to farm and raise livestock, “but now there are no pastures because the mine has almost taken the whole of the land … we have no sources of income and we are living only through God’s wishes … We had never experienced poverty before the mine came here.” They say they would like to be relocated, but the application process has been complicated, and they feel the amount of compensation they have been offered is ‘candy’.

The accumulation of complaints at North Mara culminated most recently in the decision of 12 local residents to launch a civil law suit. On 30 July 2013, Leigh Day, a British law firm, filed proceedings in the United Kingdom High Court against African Barrick Gold and North Mara Gold Mine Ltd. for “deaths and injuries.” The allegations, which have yet to be tested in court, are vigorously denied by the companies.

Of course, the company actively responded to all these events and problems, not only with “enhanced security” projects but with a number of widely publicized community outreach and community development programs. The North Mara Co-Existence Plan encompasses Village Benefits Implementation Agreements that have been signed with seven villages in the region. These agreements, totaling some $8.5 million over a three-year period (with likely prospects of a second three-year tranche at similar funding levels), typically feature provision of school infrastructure, access to water supply, upgraded health services, road improvements, and electricity supply. The company also supports community projects through its Maendaleo Fund, which is financed at $10 million/year and touted as the largest such development fund in Tanzania. According to ABG’s Responsible Mining Report 2012, $1.4 million was spent on community development projects in the vicinity of the North Mara mine. A non-governmental organization called CanEducate, created by ABG employees, raised a further $127,000 for educational projects in 2012. In a discussion about events (particularly the number of deaths) at the North Mara Gold Mine in the British House of Lords on 26 November 2013, it was noted that the British high commissioner to Tanzania had visited North Mara and learned that “up to $12 million-worth has been spent on corporate social responsibility, including healthcare centres, schools and water boreholes.” The company also contracted the services of a conflict-resolution agency, Search for Common Ground, to provide human rights and conflict-reduction training with police, security personnel, and other relevant community groups.

“Forting Up”: Walls, Displacement, and Neocolonial Power

Population displacement and the rise of “gated communities” have been identified as phenomena that often characterize contemporary capitalist “globalization.” The emergence of gated communities, featuring walls, security cameras, alarms, and private guards—a phenomenon Dupuis and Thorns call “forting up”—is explained as a fear of crime and feelings of insecurity in contexts of both growing affluence of the elite class, and growing economic disparity. While there are occasional reports of benefits to neighbouring poor communities, much of the literature on gating identifies it as a classed and raced bunker mentality, an exclusionary choice on the part of a dominant class to “not know” how the Other actually lives and to accede to a comfortable existence of non-awareness and non-accountability. While Dupuis and Thorns analyze the phenomenon
as a psychological response to risk—with allusions to the walled forts erected by European colonizers—they do not explicitly extend their analysis of the psychology of risk to the risks that could be deemed inherent in a global order characterized by racialized structural inequality rooted in colonial histories of land and resource appropriation. It is the anxiety of the historical “usurper” that I posit as a problem to be managed for the contemporary subject secured inside the walls (literally and figuratively) at the North Mara Gold Mine.

As was clear during European imperialism, there is often a direct correspondence between gating/forting, territorial incursions, and population displacements. In the context of the neo-liberal development model, foreign-investment-led industrial mining is understood to foster economic growth and thus contribute to poverty reduction. For such reasons, local population displacements are deemed a reasonable trade-off, given the economic benefits that are purported to accrue to the nation and the local region. The challenge then is to design effective methods for the movement of populations, resettlement, and compensation packages in order to maintain a “social licence” to operate. However, the empirical evidence demonstrating the incidence of increased impoverishment resulting from development-induced displacement has been sobering. Cernea notes that payments of compensation to those who have been displaced are “universally insufficient and inherently prone to distortion”; this results in “project-induced impoverishment.”30 He cites likely risks from displacement as encompassing landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, educational losses, food insecurity, loss of common property, and social disarticulation.31 He notes that “if resettlers become worse off, it is nearly always an indicator that project costs have not been properly internalized. They have been transferred to resettlers, who end up poorer than they were before the project” (and who could therefore, he adds, be regarded as investors—albeit involuntary ones—in the mining project).32 Still, despite Cernea’s important recognition of the cultural, social, and psychological dimensions of the experience of displacement for those displaced, the problem of displacement remains primarily technical—a matter of “getting it right.”

Anti-colonial, post-colonial, critical race, and Marxist scholars bring a different explanatory framework to industrial-mining-related displacement. European-dominated global mining—or “predatory extractivism”33—is situated as a classic instance of (in Marxist terminology) “primitive accumulation,” both a foundational and continuing requirement of the expanding capitalist system.34 Thus the account of the lands at North Mara that were “compulsorily acquired” from local Tanzanian citizens by Euro-Western mining companies exemplifies the logic and historical practice of primitive accumulation. Racist colonial attitudes and the application of colonial power—by definition non-democratic and fascist—facilitated primitive accumulation in the past, but clear continuities are identified in the present. What this suggests is that primitive accumulation cannot be temporally associated with a brutal past era of colonialism and overt racism that has ended, but rather that colonialist power relations persist in the present. This was first recognized by Kwame Nkrumah, who in 1965 coined the term “neo-colonialism”35 with reference to continued European domination of the African continental mining sector, and was more recently identified by Bohm and Misoczky who assert, with reference to their study of local resistance to the Alumbrera mine in Argentina, “Neocolonialism is precisely what we think is going on here: the term emphasizes repetition with difference, a regeneration of colonialism through other means.”36 From this perspective, population displacements are a kind of collateral damage of primitive accumulation, a form of structural violence that manifests in people’s actual lives as illness, stress, unemployment, poverty, and reduced longevity. Banerjee coined the term “necrocapitalism” to capture the death-dealing effects of such processes.37 What this indicates, additionally, is that the characteristics of colonial state-corporate power—bureaucratic, militarized, racist, and non-democratic or fascist—persist in thin disguise in some expressions of the modern state. Coloniality may be far less an aberration, or “state of exception,” vis-à-vis the Enlightenment state of democracy, equality, and human rights, than is customarily assumed. Indeed, having analyzed Nazism from the perspective of Europe’s colonies, Aimé Césaire38 challenged the supposed exceptionality of European fascism and suggested that a fascist/colonialist exercise of power lies in wait, as an ultimate possibility, in the shadows of the Western liberal democratic capitalist state. Thus colonial violence can be anticipated—and should not come as a surprise—in neoliberal modernity.

**Psychic Dimensions of Neo-colonialism**

This gives rise to questions about the kind of psychic tension and distress such a system must engender, and an appreciation for the elaborate socio-cultural architecture that must be constructed to obscure neo-colonial power and relations of domination, to garner consent and participation. How can the displacer, occupying a position of whiteness—in which whiteness, according to Tifsberger,39 is “a history of seizure”—be enabled not to feel distressed or to impede psychologically? In fact, the psychological and social processes required to inure colonizers or displacers against the traumatic knowledge of colonial-racial violence
have been developed over several centuries and are finely engrained in Western epistemology and culture. Bergland, Loomba, and Tifsberger, among others, identify psychology and psychoanalysis as a colonial discipline: as a new field of knowledge that emerged at the cusp of European colonialism (early 1900s) and was infused with the racial-colonial imaginary of colonialism. From this perspective, psychoanalysis could be interpreted as a social technology of psychic harm—reduction and management: if the source of psychoses could be located and fixed in the private realm of individual experience (especially childhood and experiences in the nuclear family, typically understood through a Eurocentric, Western lens) then historical socio-economic and political causes of psychic anxiety and distress could be denied.

Scholars such as Nelson, Chrisman, and Bergland explored the collective psychological impact and psychic adaptations of colonizer subjects in relation to British imperialism in Africa and the colonization of America. In their work, land appropriation is identified as a central source of psychological uneasiness, sometimes manifested in nightmares and the prevalence of (“Indian”) ghost stories. Welch investigates how Alexis de Tocqueville, a leading 19th-century French theorist of liberalism, and author of Democracy in America, managed the “cognitive dissonance” produced by the contradiction between his own liberal values—of which private property rights, and their legal protection, was central—and the atrocities perpetrated by the French military against Algerian peasants during the mid-1800s. These atrocities included mass killings of Algerian civilians and land seizures. Welch notes that Tocqueville repressed recognition of the rights of indigenous populations in Algeria, developed “patterns of evasion” and a practice of mental “absenting” in which “atrocious events [that] cannot be reasonably accommodated in any larger schema of the political imagination … must … be made ‘absent’ to that imagination.”

In The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon provides an account of a French-Algerian settler employed as a torturer of Algerian prisoners; this man came to Dr. Fanon for psychiatric treatment as he had become violent with his own wife and children. Fanon observes, “As he could not see his way to stop torturing people (that made nonsense to him for in that case he would have to resign) he asked me without beating about the bush to help him go on torturing Algerian patriots without any prickings of conscience, without any behaviour problems, and with complete equanimity.”

This “patient” wished to repress knowledge of his role in colonial domination in order to continue to reap its benefits (in this case, stable employment and livelihood). Colonial relations of domination appear to require dominant subjects to deny, block, suppress, or reframe the knowledge that they are harming (or killing) others, or enjoying what may rightfully belong to others. Lastly, racialization has proved central to these processes. As indicated earlier, Tifsberger identifies “whiteness” as “a history of seizure”—a synonym, certainly, for “primitive accumulation.” She asserts that such history is embedded in the white psyche, where it rests as an “unconscious memory of threat” that creates a “blank space”—a determined absence of knowledge of imperialist harm—that functions to protect and stabilize whiteness.

Walled-in at North Mara: Technologies of Protection

Contemporary global mining is thus situated in a web of unresolved historical trauma associated with colonial and racial violence; as such, it, too, requires and produces a range of psychic manoeuvres on the part of its participants. Without denying the individual agency of the displacers, I suggest that these subjects are collectively assisted and protected by an elaborate social, legal, and discursive architecture designed to make them “us” not know, not feel, not have to recognize, and not to have to be fully accountable for the meaning and effects of their (our) presence. This structure, which obscures its own foundations in order to garner consent and participation, demonstrates several common features: (1) the use of law as hegemonic power, (2) racialized representations of Self versus Other, (3) seemingly apolitical managerial and social technologies (e.g., “village benefit agreements”) packaged in progressive discourses (e.g., “corporate social responsibility”), and (4) the alignment of the “global South host state” with the interests of foreign capital. Such scaffolding protects the psyche of the colonizer/displacer and in turn secures the neo-liberal-colonialist resource extraction project.

Central to such psychic self-preservation is a strategy of ambiguity, dissemblance, and porosity. This strategy operates as a unifying logic drawing together the disparate elements identified above. For instance, the concrete wall proposed at the North Mara Gold Mine shortly after the deaths of 16 May 2011 would have replaced the existing fence that had proved to be too permeable and porous; it had gaps, places where the fence had been pulled down, and where people—local artisanal miners, for instance—could get through and obtain some partial access to the resource. The fence with gaps, the porous fence, as it were, presents a model for the psychic stance preferred by the neo-liberal subject who occupies a place inside the walled mine. If awareness of lack of personal integrity is one of the psychic traumas that must be eliminated in order for displacers to continue their work, what becomes necessary is the establishment of a “grey zone,” a political-discursive space of ambiguity and possibility in which the integrity of
the colonizer/displacer subject appears feasible.\textsuperscript{49} The paradigm of the porous fence enables the displacer to participate simultaneously in walloing out the illegalized Other, while engaging hierarchically with the Other as a benefactor. The porosity thus preserves space for the displacers to assert their goodness and civility—to hide and erase from memory and view their foundational illegitimacy, and to naturalize their presence in a pseudo-state role as provider of social services: health, education, water supply, electricity, roads, etc. This is, however, a deliberately duplicitous and ambiguous stance, as the gesture of kindliness and "win-win scenarios" (as symbolized by the Village Benefits Agreements, and disbursements from the Maendeleo Fund) vis-à-vis those who have been displaced and dispossessed is always, in the final instance, conditioned by the possibility of erecting a solid, impervious wall topped with electrified barbed wire and monitored by closed-circuit television. Symbolically, this indicates the absolute right, on the part of the white capitalist investor, to the resource. The question as to whether the colonizers/displacers is conscious of the effect of their actions—do they know what they are doing, or have they successfully suppressed and re-narrated such knowledge—remains productively open, porous, and indeterminable. This is a necessary aspect of neo-liberal authority. The construction of a more impermeable wall—the "forting up" process—is accompanied paradoxically by a simultaneous acceleration of community outreach programs\textsuperscript{50} including, as noted earlier, the hiring of a significantly named NGO, Search for Common Ground. Ironically, the erection of the concrete, barbed-wire-topped wall eliminates any actual "common ground" and effectively proclaims the foreign mining company's assertion of legal title to the concession and entitlement to Tanzanian gold. The physical porosity of the failed fence gives way now to a narrative and imaginary of porosity: the idea that the company can both wall out the local people and engage the local people in life-enhancing social programming. It is this duality that offers psychic protection to the displacer.

Paradoxically, the notion of porosity acknowledges the agency of the displaced populations. It is these populations who have broken down sections of the pre-existing fence in order to assert and acquire their means to live; it is their continuous resistance and refusal of the conditions and effects of displacement that have compelled the foreign-owned mine to engage in the host of actions itemized earlier, ranging from building a stronger wall, to contracting a consulting firm to develop conflict-resolution approaches, to directing some of the mine's profit to meeting local community needs. Unsatisfied with the response to date from the company, and perhaps in response subconsciously to what is symbolized by the concrete barbed-wire-topped wall, a group of twelve community members launched the legal suit mentioned earlier. These subjects may have lost loved ones and income, but they have not become defeated victims. The local community members’ continuing memory of displacement, frustration, refusal, anger, and outrage at the injustices experienced is a major historical force driving events at this site. It is this anger and refusal that continuously batters both the fence/wall and the mythologies and discourses established to protect the displacers’ psychological comfort and sense of integrity. However, the erection of the more impervious wall also signals a loss for the militant community members who have neither recovered their land nor forced out the foreigners, but are now subjected to a more intensified process of pacification (i.e., via the various community development projects and programs) and an aggressive response to their litigation.

Metaphorically, the porosity of the fence and of relations of power within the neo-liberal-colonialist context also provokes insights concerning the racial ambiguity of the displacer. As some 86 per cent of the mine employees at North Mara are national citizens—Tanzanians—the displacer figure is not always or necessarily a phenotypically white or expatriate subject, although it is a subject that occupies a position of racial dominance in the system of globalized capitalist resource extraction. In speaking of the "displacer," I assign much less complicity to those employed in working-class positions—i.e., the majority of Tanzanians employed at the mine—and rather look to those in professional, management, and senior roles, and, primarily, to the less-visible head office employees, company directors, and shareholders. In order to cut operating costs, ABG is intent on increased "localization" of professional employees. Over time, there will be fewer phenotypically white bodies in managerial, professional, and senior positions (although the Board of Directors and shareholders will remain overwhelmingly white). Similarly, many of the security officers and most police—those most likely to chase away or pull the trigger on locals accused of trespassing, stealing, etc.—are Tanzanians. A classic strategy of neo-liberalism is the blurring of what W. E. B. DuBois called “the colour line”;\textsuperscript{51} thus, the recruitment of Black Tanzanians into a colonial project of whiteness-as-seizure is another instance of the strategy of ambiguous porosity. This is a reinvention and redeployment of the older British strategy of “indirect rule” but one that still enables the white colonizer/displacer to remain invisibly in control, appropriate the bulk of the wealth, and simultaneously claim a position of innocence and benevolence. This guarantees psychic protection for phenotypically white employees (white Canadian or expatriates from another country including white South Africans) who can distance themselves from both overt and covert violence.
and maintain a sense of themselves as “civilized,” peacekeepers, etc. For example, it is still the white mine manager and his wife who appear in the media photo ops shaking hands with local village residents at the time of the signing of the Village Benefits Implementation Agreement.52 This subject can freely move outside the fence/wall into the surrounding communities and in so doing rescues his own sense of innocence, goodness, and psychological comfort. He can thus avoid confronting and coming to terms with any fundamental injustice related to his presence.

Despite Canada’s (highly ironic) official claims to have never been a colonizing power, Canada is an identifiable colonialist presence in Tanzanian gold mining. Tanzania is a formally independent nation, and Canada does not formally or directly govern the country; however, as the home-state to many of the companies that initiated the expansion of industrial mining in Tanzania since at least the mid-1990s, Canada plays a very influential role. Canadian diplomats and company executives participated in the drafting of the 1998 mining law. That input has been partially moderated with the introduction of the new 2010 mining law, even while some provisions from 1998 continue to protect companies’ interests.53 Canadian companies dominate Tanzania’s mining sector, which has positioned Tanzania as one of the most important emerging gold-producing countries globally. A Canadian company is managing the development of Tanzania’s first uranium mine.54 Canada recently signed a bilateral foreign investment protection treaty (FIPA) with Tanzania, the terms of which offer strong protections against expropriation and international dispute-resolution mechanisms for Canadian private investors in Tanzania—with very little likelihood of reciprocal benefit for Tanzanian investors in Canada.55 Indeed, this FIPA could be regarded as designed to be a hedge against the slightly more nationalist content of the revised 2010 mining act—content that reflected increased popular demands from the Tanzanian citizenry to benefit from the country’s mining wealth. As an investment destination, however, Canada touts Tanzania as an exemplary African country.56

This backing by law, by the free market legal framework, offers “displacers” a sense of entitlement, security, and thus a certain peace of mind. As a sign of rationality and fairness, the law can remain unquestioned and unidentified as a class- and race-based relation and strategy of power.57 Indeed, the neo-colonialist legal framework—despite the considerable outlay of time and energy required to introduce it—becomes naturalized and universalized. Laws deployed to secure the rights of the displacer to be present and to extract wealth are presented in the terms of a naturalized rationality that anaesthetizes and thus soothes the psyche of the displacer.

As a white settler state, Canada has an established history of hiding or recasting its colonial practices.58 As Canada’s mining industry has rapidly expanded globally in the past 25 years, the Canadian state and mining industry have been vigorously engaged in countering charges of harm and representing Canada as a benefactor vis-à-vis mining-region populations. Exemplifying this agenda is the controversial decision, announced in early 2012, to provide multi-million-dollar aid funding for Canadian NGOs delivering community development programs in partnership with Canadian mining companies, in communities adjacent to the mines, as well as the creation by the federal government of the $25-million Canadian International Institute for Extractive Industries and Development. As a discourse and set of now-routine institutional practices, “corporate social responsibility” (CSR) has been a central component of these objectives. In relation to the North Mara Gold Mine, the expanding set of community-focused programs—the Village Benefits Agreements, North Mara Co-existence Plan, Maendeleo Fund, social benefits programming, conflict-reduction training, sports programs, etc.—is evidence of the importance now placed by AGB on “securing a social licence”—i.e., gaining the acceptance or acquiescence of the local populations to their presence. Such initiatives, along with the government-funded programs mentioned, can be understood as part of the cultural-psychological scaffolding required to inure colonizer-displacers against both apprehension of and shock at structural violence of grotesque proportions. Individual displacers can rather identify with these programs of ostensible goodness, benevolence, and civility, and can reference these initiatives to protect their/our own psyches both in relation to their/our own sense of self/sense of integrity and in relation to others’ demands for accountability.

Finally, in the context of Canada’s globalized mining industry, the assertion of Canadian goodness is secured to a significant degree through counter-posing those “African Others” (e.g., artisanal miners) who challenge and resist the Canadian mining presence as lawless, criminal, violent, and savage. Through this representational move, the displacer subjects are enabled to feel secure in the justice of their presence on the land and their access to the valuable mineral resource.59 For example, in attempting to contextualize the frequent conflicts at the North Mara site, the company’s webpage presents the area as a rough, lawless place, a kind of “wild west” zone: “Among Barrick’s operations and affiliates, the Mara region of Tanzania, in which African Barrick Gold (ABG) owns and operates the North Mara mine, is especially challenging. The North Mara mine is located in a very remote, underdeveloped part of the country in close proximity to the Kenyan border. In-migration from other
areas and countries is rampant and law enforcement capacity is limited, making the area a magnet for transients, criminals and organized crime. Civil unrest due to poverty is a particular problem in the area, a fact widely recognized by Tanzanian authorities.60

Along the same line, an employee of the NGO, Search for Common Ground, contracted by the mine to develop conflict-reduction strategies with local community members, describes the local Kuria culture: “It is a warrior culture and many local men join the military.”61 Such statements can be seen to subtly evoke deeply entrenched racist imagery in Euro-American culture in which a series of cultural-psychological associations fall into place: warrior, violent, criminal, savage, primitive, incompetent. In short order, such subjects are rendered illegitimate, such that their displacement and redirection into other kinds of simplistic economic activities (“micro-enterprise”) can be regarded not as an injustice but rather as a reasonable manner of handling a militant or defiant population.

Conclusion

By introducing a micro-psychological dimension, I have suggested that what is at stake for displacers is both material advantage and psychic well-being. Transformative justice appears to threaten both. I am aware that throughout this discussion the central figures, the displacers, have remained blurred, indistinct, and abstracted. They/we—all shareholders, for instance—are not clearly seen and not directly heard. Yet, as I suggested at the outset, this very obscurity may be a necessary dimension of the scaffolding offered to these subjects. They/we must not be put in a position of having to answer for, or speak for, themselves/ourselves; rather, they/we are ensconced behind, and assigned phrases through, an elaborate system of scaffolding, consisting of, as I have shown, legal discourses and practices, mythologies of Canadian goodness, progressiveness, and benevolence, discourses of CSR, and social technologies such as Village Benefits Agreements that seem to disavow histories.

A strongly protective foreign investment protection “agreement” is leveraged into place. Aggressive legal responses are made to civil litigation. These are not necessarily the displacers’ preferred choices, but they are enacted when that is what is required to counter the justice-demanding energy of the displaced, to preserve access to lucrative resources, and to protect the displacers from psychic implosion. Inside the walls, the protected “displacer” subjects continue to apprehend themselves/ourselves as good people with kind hearts—much in the style of Fanon’s French-Algerian torturer of Arab-Algerian patriots. Such strategies serve to intercept and declaw demands for the displacers to depart, tocede territory, lands, and resources back to those who were displaced and dispossessed. It is this action that, from the colonizer’s perspective, can never be seriously considered.

Notes


2. My request to conduct 30-minute Skype interviews with personnel in management positions at any of the ABG Tanzanian mines was politely turned down by ABG in Dar

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7. For a detailed account of the content of the 1998 mining law, see McDonald and Roe, “Tanzania Country Case Study,” 34n17; and Butler, “Tanzania Country Case Study,” 68–9.


9. Such allegations are routine in commentary on artisanal mining by Western governments, corporations, and multilateral agencies. They appear in World Bank, *Strategy for African Mining*, World Technical Paper no. 181, Africa Technical Department Series, Mining Unit, Industry and Energy Division (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1992); as well as in Government of Canada diplomatic files Access to Information Request A-1997-3632, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada: “Gold was smuggled out of the country … money was laundered … no taxes or royalties were paid.” See also Lucien Bradet, “A Reality Check on Canadian Mining in Africa,” *Embassy*, 23 November 2011. Bradet states, “This means people going to a mine and using their hands and artisanal tools to collect raw materials, extract the metal and sell it through informal channels. This is a large problem, not only for the mining companies that have received formal licenses from the government, but also for governments that don’t receive any benefit, royalties or taxes.
from these operations.” http://embassymag.ca/dailyupdate/view/a_reality_check_on_canadian_mining_in_africa_11-23-2011.

10. Lissu and Curtis argue that the Tanzanian state should have received US$265.5 million more than it did—lost through loopholes, fraud, concessionary legislation, etc.—and that such an amount was not only larger than the country’s entire health budget for 2007, but could have funded the building of 44,000 secondary school classrooms. See Mark Curtis and Tundu Lissu, A Golden Opportunity: How Tanzania Is Failing to Benefit from Gold Mining (Dar es Salaam: Christian Council of Tanzania, National Council of Muslims in Tanzania and Tanzanian Episcopal Conference, 2008), 25.


12. Ibid.


15. The source of this statement appears to be the Communists for Death and Injuries in Tanzania, “North Mara Update, September 2011.”


20. On the sexual assaults, see Barrick Gold Corporation, “North Mara Update, September 2011.”


25. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon stated in the British House of Lords on 26 November 2013, “Indeed, our high commissioner, on visiting the area, found that up to $12 million-worth has been spent on corporate social responsibility, including healthcare centres, schools and water boreholes. There is more to be done. For example, she pointed out that although there is a healthcare centre, it is not properly staffed with healthcare professionals.” See “High Court Orders African Barrick Gold to Stop Suing Tanzanian Villagers,” 4 December 2013, Leight Day, http://www.leighday.co.uk/News/2013/December-2013/High-Court-orders-African-Barrick-Gold-to-stop-sui.


31. Ibid., 40.
32. Ibid.
34. See Bohm and Misoczky, “Resisting Neocolonial Development”; see also David Harvey, The New Imperialism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
42. “This history of European relations with Native Americans is a history of murders, looted graves, illegal land transfers, and disruptions of sovereignty. Among these, land ownership may be the source of the nation’s deepest guilt … the land is haunted because it is stolen.” Bergland, National Uncanny, 8–9.
44. “The army seized property, dispensed with conventional justice, and eventually resorted to mass killings of civilians. In June 1845 General Pelissier trapped hundreds of people of the tribe of the Ouled Riah in caves, traditionally places of refuge. Refusing their terms of surrender, Pelissier ignited a fire at the cave’s mouth and asphyxiated everyone within. Other commanders imitated his actions, which were defended by then governor-general Bugeaud on grounds that salutary terror would hasten the pacification.” Welch, “Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion,” 237.
45. Ibid., 257.
48. The annual report of one Canadian mining company operating in West Africa does state explicitly, in a section entitled “Risk and Uncertainties,” that “during the past 30 months, management estimates that approximately 15% of the indicated resource … has been lost to artisanal mining activity despite security measures carried out by mine management.” This kind of admission of a direct material conflict of interest between expatriates and locals is rare, although it is evidently a real concern. Such commentary refutes claims sometimes made that there is no direct competition over resources between artisanal/citizen miners and foreign industrial miners on the grounds that artisanal miners cannot access metals below a certain depth.
49. This imitates, and is indeed productive of, the form of power that characterizes the (unexceptional) “state of exception,” in which the “rule of law” continues to exist formally but is disregarded, bypassed with impunity, and without avenues of recourse.
50. Its value, $14.4 million—of which half was spent at North Mara—for all of ABG’s Tanzanian mines in 2012, was a 95 per cent increase over the previous year. See African Barrick Gold, Annual Report and Accounts 2012, 45.
51. Sedef Arat-Koc observes, “The task is to recognize race as a technology of power that goes beyond skin colour to identify some of the ways race involves ‘historic repertoires and cultural, spatial, and signifying systems that stigmatize and deprecate one form of humanity for the purposes of another’s health, development, safety, profit and pleasure’ [Singh, p. 223]. When we approach race in this way, it seems that a race logic and a race-like language can be used in the exclusion, stigmatization, and subordination of people beyond, as much as along, the colour line.” Sedef Arat-Koc, “New Whiteness(es), beyond the Colour Line? Assessing the Contradictions and Complexities of Whiteness in the (Geo)political Economy of Capitalist Globalization,” in States of Race: Critical Race Feminism for the 21st Century, ed. Sherene Razack, Malinda Smith, and Sunera Thobani (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2010), 148.
52. Barrick Gold Corporation, “Rebuilding Trust at North Mara.”
53. This is explained in more detail in Paula Butler, Colonial Extractions: Race and Canadian Mining in Contemporary Africa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

56. This was expressed clearly by (Conservative) member of Parliament Lois Brown in her closing address, on 10 May 2013 in Ottawa, at the North-South Institute’s conference “Governing Natural Resources for Africa’s Development”: “Canada’s work in Tanzania is an excellent example. The mining sector there has played a significant role in the economic growth of Tanzania and with Canada’s assistance, Tanzania now has more transparent and accountable regulation for its extractives, it raises public revenues and in turn it is able to invest in public services. We are also working to grow businesses and improve local economic development. With support from CIDA, the World University Service Overseas, or WUSC, is providing direct skills training to 400 young people, to help diversify the local economy. We enable communities to maximize the benefits of the extractive sector through skills development for women, men and youth. This assists the mining company to hire locally … The private sector is the driver of long-term economic growth. Canada’s approach is to encourage local private sector development. We are committed to deepening our direct engagement with local and international private sector firms that can move individuals, families and countries from poverty to prosperity.” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm3M1680yCw and http://www.nsi-ins.ca/nsi-forum-governing-natural-resources-for-africas-development/.

57. If under “formal colonialism” European law was unilaterally imposed on subject peoples without their consent, while purporting to have established the “rule of law,” in contemporary neo-colonial contexts, the acceptance and adoption by African states of legal frameworks favouring the demands of foreign capital accomplishes an identical purpose: access to valuable resources. Bohm and Misoczky call this “a process of subalternization of formally sovereign national states eager to provide legal, political and administrative conditions for the extraction of their natural resources by transnational companies.” Bohm and Misoczky, “Resisting Neocolonial Development,” 314. In his study of the resource-extraction sector in Peru, Szablowski concludes that such “host states” manage the restricted sovereignty required by neoliberalism’s unexceptional exceptionalism through practices of “selective absence”: choosing not to act or intervene on behalf of Peruvian communities vis-à-vis foreign capitalist forces. David Szablowski, Transnational Law and Local Struggles: Mining, Communities and the World Bank (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2007).

58. In their respective works, both Coleman and Thobani emphasize and document the deep psycho-cultural impulse within Canadian nationhood—that is, within the Canadian national psyche—to “whitewash” and depict as “civil” the nation’s history and contemporary identity. See Daniel Coleman, White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); and Sunera Thobani, Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

59. Paula Butler, “Violence as Civility: Race, Mining and Canadian Neocolonizers in African States” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2006); and Butler, Colonial Extraction: Race and Canadian Mining in Contemporary Africa (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming). Elsewhere, I have analyzed in detail the shifting historical production of the figure of the artisanal miner in corporate and multilateral agency texts since the mid-1990s when the liberalization of African economies took place. In a context where foreign companies are re-entering the continent and competing for access to lucrative mineral resources, the indigenous artisanal (or “small-scale” or “illegal”) miner is cast as a figure who must be treated in one of three ways: discredited (cast as illegal, engaged in irresponsible behaviours such as child labour, environmental damage and unsafe use of mercury); domesticated (shown as impoverished, ignorant, and needy, in need of training, development assistance, and redirection to more benign [but less lucrative] income sources such as micro-enterprise); or destroyed (that is, when this subject becomes intolerably aggressive, assertive, or agentive, he will be evicted, removed, or at the extreme, killed).

60. http://www.humanrights.or.tz/reports.


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