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- 1 Laudable, ambitious in scope, and voluminous, Marc Ferro's *Le livre noir du colonialisme* is an impressive contribution to current debates on worldwide violence, terrorism, and exploitation. Modeled on *Le livre noir du communisme*, by Stéphane Courtois, Ferro's project similarly documents the intended and latent consequences of an ideological enterprise. Prominent international scholars, including Ferro himself, Elikia M'Bokolo, Pierre Brocheux, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Yves Bénot, Alastair Davidson, Sylvie Dallet, and rising luminaries Pap Ndiaye, Arlette Gautier, and Nadja Vuckovic, figure among the cast of scholars contributing to this project. The data unearthed are sobering and far-ranging—extending from early colonization of the Americas to the effects of colonialism and appropriation in Africa, Asia, and Australia.
- 2 V. Y. Mudimbe¹ reminds us that the term colonialism may be traced to its Latin root, *colere*, to cultivate or organize a piece of land. As with cultivation, colonialism involves the uprooting and overturning of existing terrains and the living beings inhabiting them. The book concerns itself with the means of this uprooting through force, violence, and oppression and with the consequences of the enterprise as evidenced in domination, psychological devastation, and extermination. The volume begins with accounts of the extermination of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean, North America, and Australia. It then shifts ground in Part II to analyses of the slave trade and its consequences in North America and to processes of domination, movements of resistance, and detailed case studies of colonialism drawn from Africa and Asia in Part III. The two concluding sections of the book (Parts IV and V) and its epilogue on reparations address the past and present ideological effects of colonialism with respect to the treatment of women, the reinforcing of paradigms of racism, and the impact of lingering colonial representations emerging in art, philosophy, film, and politics.

- 3 At first glance, it appears that the term colonialism is used to cover almost every form of domination and violence involving the conquest of one group by another since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas, not to mention the roots of conquest by force in the imperial expansions of antiquity. If this were the case, of course, modern colonialism would lose its specificity as a scientific object and a subject for political analysis, and it often comes dangerously close to doing so in the book's argument. But the reader is rescued from falling into this pit by recalling the book's subtitle: "From Extermination to Repentance". Colonialism is not just the "white man's burden". It is a "double-cross" to be borne by everyone. The domination, and even extermination, of indigenous peoples requires their incorporation into the cultures and collective memories of the colonizers. In turn, the colonized share this burden, if not as accomplices and collaborators in acts of domination, then as recipients of colonial ideologies through assimilation, imitation, and passive resistance. Frantz Fanon, who ceaselessly fought for Algerian liberation, was plagued by the oppressive logic of his own sense of double consciousness. And colonizers themselves are haunted by a legacy of guilt that is difficult to expiate, a shroud that cannot easily be cast off without turning up somewhere else. The quest for redemption and its opacity sheds light on the organization of the book and its unanswered questions. The superstructural manifestations of colonialism in racist ideologies and representations are ghosts that continue to haunt us in the postmodern era. There is no real means to exorcise these pernicious spirits, although psychoanalysis, sociolinguistics, and diplomacy suggest that we might talk out the problems in a therapy of truth and reconciliation through conferences and edicts. No amount of money can repay extermination or repair the sins of our forefathers. The only hope to escape from colonialism's double-cross is to change our actions on a global scale.
- 4 One way to prepare for the future is to label past actions as crimes that it is somehow resolved will not be committed again, e.g., extermination, oppression, and slavery. The three chapters of Part I, by Yves Bénot, Pap Ndiaye, and Alastair Davidson, provide a dramatic revelation of the extent of extermination of indigenous peoples in the Americas and Australia. In Part II, Ferro and Ndiaye link the extermination of Native Americans to the rise of slavery in the British colonies and the United States. Ndiaye concludes his piece on us slavery with a curious and disjunctive fast-forward to the civil rights movement. He states: "It was necessary to wait until the aftermath of the Second World War in order for Afro-Americans, led by certain charismatic figures such as Martin Luther King, to shake off the yoke of segregation, aided by a Supreme Court newly committed to equal rights" (Ndiaye, p. 129). Ndiaye concludes this chapter with the lament that the United States did not sign the document condemning slavery and supporting reparations at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, held in Durban, South Africa. Although the absence of the symbolic support of the United States on this key issue is regrettable, following the book's logic of repentance and expiation to its fullest extent, the more important point is the continued battle to preserve equal rights for the future. This argument is revisited in Nadja Vuckovic's epilogue on crimes against humanity and reparations for them that extends the cases to be included from slavery in the Americas to injustices and human rights violations in Namibia, Australia, and Viet Nam. The case of Japanese-American reparations so hotly debated in the United States is, however, overlooked.

- 5 All of the comparative case studies in Parts III through V of the book are exhaustive, detailed, and praiseworthy, which does not mean that they are free of minor errors here and there. Reviewer Bernard Droz in *Parutions* (www.parutions.com, 2003) cites an error in Ferro's chronology of the 1947 elections in Algeria. Mariella Villasante Cervello refers to Aimé Césaire as a poet from Guadeloupe, rather than Martinique, in a critique of négritude's negative role as a colonialist discourse and ideology in Mauritania (p. 728). On balance, however, the scholarly case studies are well argued and informative documents of the colonial enterprise and its legacies.
- 6 In his analysis of colonialism in Central Africa, Elikia M'Bokolo provides a precise overview of historical developments that interprets the motivations of key political actors and leaves open hope for the future. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch analyzes Arab colonization in Zanzibar and the demographic evolution of colonial Africa with clarity, detail, and historical depth. Arlette Gautier's fascinating chapter on women and colonialism, which occupies an autonomous section of the book (Part IV), introduces pertinent questions about the roles of European and indigenous women in the colonial enterprise, their subjugation, and their symbolic legacies. This chapter is noteworthy in its discussion of the ways in which colonial regimes in Africa and Asia blocked the access of all women to human, political, and social rights. Due to the book's logic of making an artificial separation among the material, ideological, and psychological effects of colonialism, this chapter appears to be isolated from the others, as is Nadja Vuckovic's fascinating appendix on ethnographic museums and museums of apartheid (pp. 482-489), which also touches upon the treatment of women via the famous case of the exploitation of so-called "Hottentot Venus", Saartjie Baartman, who was brutally transformed into a 19th century museum exhibit in London and Paris. One wonders whether other articles on the relevant topic of gender and colonialism were promised but did not appear.
- 7 Sylvie Dallet's important chapter on filming the colonies as a filter for colonialism is placed in the concluding section (Part V) on colonial representations. Although it is not an appendix like Vuckovic's museum chapter, this discussion deserves a more prominent space in the volume. Dallet's article documents the origins of colonial cinema as a mechanism of social control in Africa and Asia and demonstrates the ambivalent legacy of the colonial motif in Hollywood films such as *Little Big Man* (1970) and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984). Although Dallet mentions Al Jolson's 1927 *Jazz Singer* as a film following a colonialist model, she strangely omits any mention of Joséphine Baker's *Sirène des tropiques* (1927) and *Princess Tam-Tam* (1935), the latter of which was a mordant satire of the French colonial film genre. Nonetheless, Dallet's major point that the media contribute to the construction and perpetuation of the colonial imagination is well argued and would have been more central to the book of it did not privilege acts of oppression and mass destruction over the ideologies that generate and sustain them.
- 8 Paradoxically, Ferro's model of colonialism is at once too detailed and not specific enough. The authors amass a litany of facts documenting colonial violence and atrocities while often occluding a major point—the symbolic and psychological devastation engendered by the colonial enterprise for all concerned. Colonialism has a negative effect on the oppressor and the oppressed. While Ferro's collection denounces extermination, genocide, and injustice, the angst over psychological degradation troubling colonial and postcolonial theorists from Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon to

Homi Bhabha and Michael Taussig is generally absent. Instead, it has been replaced by the redemptive coda of reparations. This strategic move is precisely colonialism's double-cross-the way out of a system that masked its base of economic exploitation with a mirror of moral uplift. On numerous occasions, the authors tell us that neocolonialism, which is already in place, is the next threat to human justice on the horizon. With rising tides of south-north migration and the postcolonial restructuring of hierarchical societies trapped in the web of globalization, repentance for colonialism will be followed by a new era of struggles. Although an infallible road map cannot be produced for the future, this book warns the world not to return to the sins of a violent past.

NOTES

1. *The invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy, and the order of knowledge*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1988.