

Reserach Note: Reimagining Creative Economy through the Lens of Multiple Colonialisms

A D A M S A I F E R

In April 2017, I travelled to Edmonton, Canada to sit in on the *Reimagining Creative Economy: Transnational Histories, Local Practices, Regional Struggles* workshop (RCE) at the University of Alberta. Two weeks earlier, Richard Florida—originator of the celebrated and derided (depending on who you ask) theory of the creative class—published his newest tome, *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class—and What We Can Do About It* (2017). A number of RCE workshop contributors noted the fortuitousness of this timing. Here was Florida who, after 15 years of sustained critique, was suddenly keen to acknowledge the consequences of his theories put into practice—namely, rapidly growing urban inequality. Asked about this during a public Q & A session, RCE workshop organizer and contributor Dia Da Costa stated that she was unsurprised to learn that Florida was capitalizing on this realization—motivated, perhaps, by his white bourgeois guilt—producing what is sure to be a bestseller that repeats what critics have argued about creative class theory since he coined the term back in 2002. At the same time, 16 international and interdisciplinary artists, activists, and scholars gathered for three days of closed door workshops and public lectures, working toward a critique of creative economy discourse and practice that moved beyond the simplistic identification of it as a catalyst for neoliberal restructuring. Specifically, the RCE organizers sought to foster a space for examining the colonial, national, and regional histories—both discursive and material—that shape the meanings, power, and politics of creative economy in specific contexts, as well as “creativity,” in general (RCE Webpage).

Rather than a review of the RCE as an “object,” this essay reflects on the current state of creative economy theories by drawing on the contributions to, and conversations had at, the workshop. Through an engagement with the theme *multiple colonialisms*, which crystallized after three days of workshop discussions, this piece highlights the novel and politically pressing interventions into creative economy scholarship made at the RCE, with a particular emphasis on: 1) how *multiple colonialisms* shape “whose

creativity counts” (see D. Da Costa, *Whose Creativity?*); 2) how *multiple colonialisms* map onto creative economy discourse’s sanitization of the politics of development; and 3) how creativity is not solely a resource for colonial capitalism, but also a tool to resist and reimagine creative economy. The *multiple colonialisms* lens highlights the historical relations and legacies of power and development that go into producing the creative economy; how ongoing processes of colonization and capitalist accumulation structure the creative economy; how dominant knowledges and ways of being shape how the creative economy is understood in policy and practice; and how a globalized creative economy maps onto the legacies of a colonial political economy. It also highlights how the creative economy approach might not be as new as its proponents claim, as creativity has been mobilized both discursively and materially in the face of multiple colonial relations. In addition to a critique of creative economy discourse that foregrounds *multiple colonialisms* in a way that it has not been before, the critique developed at the RCE workshop carves a path to move beyond a narrow and economic view of culture and creativity as a development strategy or as a thing to be ‘captured’ to generate surplus value.

Whose Creativity Counts?

Mainstream creative economy discourse—and the theories it informs including the Creative City (e.g., Landry) and the Creative Class (e.g., Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*)—is dependent on the supposed objectivity and moral import of qualities such as tolerance, talent, diversity, and, most notably, creativity. These concepts are treated as things that can be isolated and known, that can be measured, produced, and cultivated to produce predictable, mostly economic, outcomes. And so it isn’t particularly surprising that critics of these policies, particularly in Western urban contexts, have problematized how “creativity” becomes known and mobilized for development (Banks and O’Connor 366), as well as the power relations that produce certain cultural practices and products as “creative,” and others as something else. Foregrounding the primacy of culture in social reproduction, as well as how class relations map onto how we interpret cultural practices and forms, critics argue that creative economy discourse mobilizes class-privileging notions of creativity. Here, creativity functions as a “mystificatory” concept, where dominant group cultural practices are misrecognized as “creative” and the product of “talent” (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Saifer, and Desai 133), while “the remarkable reflexivity and creativity” of the poor is erased (Wilson and Keil 842). The answer to the question “whose creativity counts?”—a question posed by the RCE organizers—has thus contributed one rationale for development policies and programs that redirect public funds to elite institutions, justified the shift toward the precarious organization of work (Ross 44), encouraged gentrifying development projects (Pratt 127), and reinforced fallacious

right-wing stereotypes of the poor as lazy to legitimize the slashing of social programs.

Adding to the above critique, when asking, “whose creativity counts?” in creative economy policy and planning, RCE organizers emphasized that activist and academic analyses need to foreground how histories of colonial capitalist development and nation building shape understandings of creativity as well. As critical development scholars like Da Costa note, this alternative emphasis is all the more imperative as the creative economy is increasingly mobilized as a “feasible” development option in the Global South, touted, for example, by organizations such as UNESCO and UNCTAD (Sentimental 75). But what happens to notions of “creativity” as the exclusive property of the capitalist class when creative economy (as a development tool) reframes poverty as opportunity, climate change as a risk to be managed, and the poor as potential entrepreneurs that can draw on their creativity, culture, and heritage to generate livelihoods?

Dia Da Costa’s RCE contribution highlights how this tension around “whose creativity counts?” takes shape in the Indian context. She explains that while creative economy planners argue that creativity is “in India’s DNA,” creativity, heritage, and intellect have historically been produced as the sole attribute of upper-caste Hindus. Moreover, securing “creativity” as upper-caste property has been, and continues to be, a violent process involving the purging and erasure of indigenous, Dalit, and Muslim creative and cultural practices. What we see here is a particular manifestation of creative economy—one that is shaped by a colonial and religious history that has produced a nation with “the largest number of economically vulnerable people” (Ahluwalia 6 cited in D. Da Costa, *Heritage 2*), and one that frames this reality as India’s competitive advantage in the global marketplace. The RCE’s explicit use of a cultural politics approach (see Escobar; Murray Li) stresses that it is India’s unique discursive and material history that produces the specific ways that creative economy initiatives take shape in this context. Likewise, while planners in Jamaica, for example, may similarly frame creative economy as a development opportunity due to Jamaicans’ entrepreneurial and creative spirit, Meaghan Frauts’ RCE contribution demonstrates that this is accomplished through the repeated reference to Jamaica’s colonial history—specifically, instances of creative adaptation and resilience during slavery. In this case, it is Jamaica’s history as the world’s largest importer of slave labour during the trans-Atlantic slave trade that shapes the contours of how creativity and creative economy manifest in this national context.

When creative economy planners make claims like “creativity is in India’s DNA” or that Jamaicans have an “inherent creative spirit,” they are referring to a specific conception of the (usually marginalized) creative entrepreneur, seen through the eyes of power. This is the creativity that counts in creative economy discourse. For example,

Frauts notes that in Jamaica, creative economy development discourse takes shape around an ideal poor “resilient subject citizen” (3) who is self-sufficient and seeks to be competitive in a global economy. Going into more detail on this process in his RCE workshop contribution, John F. Collins describes how the Brazilian state increasingly seeks to capitalize on the everyday cultural practices of Afro-Bahian’s located in the Brazilian city of Salvador—a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Within Brazil’s multicultural marketplace where particular cultural practices and products function as a resource for capital accumulation (Yudice 9), state-led CE initiatives attempt to transform citizens (and their creative practices) into exhibitors of an idealized (and commodified) Afro-Brazilian heritage. Here, as Collins notes, citizens themselves are treated like cultural heritage objects—not too dissimilar from the Portuguese colonial buildings that are designated as cultural heritage sites—and like these buildings, these citizens “require polishing, restoration, and forms of care that would allow their true beauty to shine through” (6).

The RCE contributions of D. Da Costa, Frauts, and Collins demonstrate ways in which multiple colonial relations, intersecting and/or place-specific, shape the limits of “whose creativity counts.” If, however, as Kim TallBear suggests in her RCE workshop contribution, anti-indigenous racism can take on *implicit* forms including romantic and essentialized appropriations of indigenous culture, ceremonies, and identities, then the question of “whose creativity counts?” is also a question of *on whose terms* it counts. TallBear’s distinction indicates that creativity is only legible within creative economy discourse when it is on the terms of the colonizer—when political struggle becomes reworked as a struggle for aestheticized culture (Goonewardena and Kipfer 675). Asking a related question, Travis Wysote’s RCE contribution examines creative forms of protest used by indigenous activists to reject, resist, and refuse Canadian sovereignty. Focusing on the arrest of Suzanne Patles, a Mi’gmaq Warrior engaged in a traditional ceremony as part of the 2013 New Brunswick anti-fracking conflict, he draws upon the idea of the “state of exception” when making sense of nation-to-nation relations between Mi’kmaq and settlers. A state of exception, he writes, is similar to a state of emergency, providing temporary legal provisions that enable the sovereign to legally suspend the law itself, usually in the case of an uprising, a formal declaration of war, or a natural disaster. Wysote writes that when a state of exception is in effect, the meaning of terms like ‘temporary,’ ‘uprising,’ and ‘enemy’ are determined by the sovereign. However, the case of Patles’ creative resistance also points to the fact that, in nation-to-nation relations, meanings of creativity are determined by the sovereign as well. In this example, ceremony is constructed as uncreative, as dangerous, as an uprising, since it interferes with the interests of the state and the colonial capitalist logics of Big Oil. Interestingly, as TallBear’s work suggests, that same ceremony—politics removed and aesthetic foregrounded—would likely function as a resource for creative economy development, and would therefore be

read as “creative” by the state.

Though she bypasses the language of “whose creativity counts,” Deepti Misri’s RCE contribution gets at the core of this question by asking how creativity—specifically visual culture—shapes whose *humanity* counts. Looking at the production of Kashmiri lives as “ungrievable life, unrepresentable loss” (2) within India and the global community, she examines the creative visual strategies mobilized by Kashmiri artists and activists—specifically, references to the Indian army’s tactic of deliberately blinding Kashmiri protesters with so-called “non-lethal” pellet guns—to attempt to reclaim that status of human. One such example is a campaign where Kashmiri graphic artists photoshop eye wounds onto images of Indian and Western celebrities. Although these campaigns have been extremely popular, they show how “injuries unintelligible on Kashmiri bodies are made legible by being transposed onto those celebrity bodies, which serve as referents for humanity” (13).

While some critics have suggested that “whose creativity counts” in creative economy is a function of what is discursively legible, this critique has focused almost exclusively on how class relations shape meanings of creativity in a Western urban context. In addressing this question—as well as the question *whose humanity counts?*—RCE participants stress that meanings of creativity, creative economy, and humanity, are a product of the discursive and material contexts within which they are mobilized. In other words, *whose creativity counts* and what forms of creativity and loss are legible are shaped by the particularities of national and colonial histories of place.

Sanitizing Multiple Colonialisms

The framing of “creativity” as an objective, knowable, and measurable *thing* or *substance* is principle to creative economy logic. It also demonstrates the mechanism through which creative economy discourse sanitizes and depoliticizes histories of uneven development, and the power relations and structures that continue to shape it. These histories of uneven development manifest on both a global scale—where colonial and imperial relations shape the exploitative nature of global production, trade, and accumulation within a capitalist world system (Frank; Harvey; Wallerstein)—as well as in particular places and times through colonial capitalist techniques of rule, domination, and exploitation (Escobar; Ferguson). By drawing on statistical models and quantifiable measures, proponents of creative economy policies frame them as scientific, value neutral, and sanitized. Creative City planners reference a multiplicity of indexes to rationalize the implementation of creative economy urban development policies, from popular Creativity (Florida, Mellander, and King), Bohemian (Florida *Bohemia and Economic Geography*), and Gay indexes (Gates and Florida) to

less heralded ones, such as the Porn index (Edelman). And yet, as Sourayan Mookerjee noted during one informal RCE discussion: a scientific (or economic) lens may reveal much, but it also renders much invisible. Many of the RCE contributions highlighted the immense scope of this erasure, from the sanitization of the violence of creative economy-prompted gentrification to the obscuring of exploitative labour relations unequally distributed along the global supply chains that produce creative economy goods.

One manner in which creative economy is able to cleanse politics from development is through the gathering, manipulation, and reliance on data. Creative economy logic not only depends on the production of knowledge about what creativity is (or whose creativity counts); it necessitates the production of knowledge about citizens whose culture and cultural practices—from the ceremonial to the mundane—can be mobilized as a resource to attract investment (Yudice 9). While data can be mobilized to reimagine creative economy policies as sanitized and apolitical, the nature of data, as Collins’ RCE contribution points out, and what it is used to do, is specific to the creative economy context. For example, a prominent Brazilian urban renewal project that seeks to turn “a space of vice and putative deviance associated with Afro-Bahians into a gleaming celebration of Portuguese baroque architecture and the vernacular habits of its inhabitants” (2) can only be facilitated by the gathering and manipulation of data about the area’s residents. Specifically, Collins describes how the separation of residents into those who would remain—as they presented the embodied traits of the “correct” Afro-Bahian—and those that were forced out, is justified through data. This sort of technocratic approach to development, further bolstered by the celebration of an ideal multicultural citizen as heritage site, sanitizes the violence of creative economy urban development projects, presenting them as rational, efficient, and scientific initiatives. For example, drawing on the work of anthropologist Christen Smith, Alexandre Da Costa’s RCE contribution details how Brazil’s culturalist celebration of black culture—one that reifies, folklorizes, and depoliticizes blackness—and the routine killing of black Brazilians are actually “two sides of the same coin” (Smith 3 cited in A. Da Costa 7). Da Costa explains that depoliticized or sanitized black creative life works to sustain a genocidal anti-black Brazilian state, functioning as a central element of its economic and cultural formation while normalizing black life and black lives as insignificant.

Many RCE contributors acknowledged that creative economy proponents’ reliance on data to depoliticize pulls on methods and frameworks developed, institutionalized, and reproduced in the academy. For this reason, RCE contributor Natalie Loveless’ discussion of what constitutes “knowledge” and “data” within the university was a generative addition to the workshop. Through her examination of both interdisciplinarity, as well as the research-creation options increasingly offered in some

PhD programs, she implicitly calls into question the objectivity of metrics and forms of accounting mobilized by creative economy planners, as well as the types of data and knowledge that can be generated about, and mobilized to “know” populations. Probing the source of creative economy’s methods, while foregrounding the possibilities and tensions within research-creation, enables one to think about creativity in research that moves beyond the types of metrics underlying mainstream creative economy discourse.

Sourayan Mookerjea’s RCE workshop contribution makes a number of interesting interventions, one of which focuses on how creative economy theory’s sanitization of power and politics relies equally on the aesthetics of a techno-rational Utopianism as it does on the actual gathering and mobilization of data. While pointing out how creative economy discourse invokes the utopianism of a new development paradigm led by a once neglected arts and culture sector, what is really interesting is how he points to the relationship between “apolitical” data collection and “apolitical” utopian aesthetics. It is the aesthetics of the non-political, of the scientific, of the sanitized, he argues, that drives creative economy logic and branding. Although creative economy discourse utopianizes creative labourers, framing them as model entrepreneurs or a new labour aristocracy known as the “creative class” (Kong 599), some creative economy critics are beginning to understand those working in creative industries as “the poster boys and girls of the new ‘precariat’ — a neologism that brings together the meanings of precariousness and proletariat to signify both an experience of exploitation and a (potential) new political subjectivity” (Gill and Pratt 3). The theme of utopian branding in creative economy is also analyzed by RCE contributor Kyle T. Mays, who draws on the work of literary scholar Anne McClintock to argue that the modern day settler does not seek out new shores, planting a nation’s flag; rather, they buy up buildings, and brand the city as an empty space to settle. Writing in the Detroit context, he points to the role of brandings/aesthetics in sanitizing creative economy-driven gentrification. Mays gives the example of “Detroit 2.0,” a term coined by Cleveland Cavaliers owner and Quicken Loans CEO Dan Gilbert. He argues that this initiative (also known as “Opportunity Detroit”) echoes Creative Class rhetoric, seeking to attract young white entrepreneurs and creative types to revitalize a supposedly vacant city through creativity in the arts, technology, and business. Mays makes the very important point that the rhetoric around “Detroit 2.0” and other Creative City/Class projects rings quite similar to that of 19th century pioneer rhetoric. In this case, Detroit becomes the new “frontier,” a place where venture capitalists and hipsters can settle supposedly empty lands and create business opportunities.

The settler colonial logics of the creative economy, however, are not always so explicit. For example, Nishant Upadhyay’s RCE contribution argues that while drag creativity is generally understood as the “antithesis of hegemonic cis-heteropatriarchal con-

structs of gender and sexuality [and] it is often a celebrated practice of queerness, gender-nonconformity, and genderfucking” (2), it can be coopted by dominant power structures, and creative economy logics. Focusing on the popular television show *Drag Race*, Upadhyay explains how drag creativity can reproduce white settler colonial logics of the state through the bodies of racialized drag subjects “playing Indian.” Their work shows that creativity is never just that—it is always shaped by larger systems of power. So while Creative City scholars, as well as Creative City proponents like Dan Gilbert, cite things like Richard Florida’s Gay index, and the importance of diverse sexualities for attracting the “talented” and “creative,” it can quite insidiously reproduce settler colonial discourses. As Upadhyay notes, drawing on Jodi Byrd, “indigeneity is antithetical to liberalism” (8).

Erin Morton’s RCE contribution further demonstrates how settlers creatively delimit the possibilities for indigenous life. Through an examination of the forms of creativity employed in settler colonial violence to feed mythologies of the white proletariat, she shows how white settler creativity is mobilized to maintain and depoliticize the foundational liberal doctrine of private property, even when it results in the murder of indigenous peoples. She argues that white settler artists continue to produce creatively nostalgic visions of the white settler mythologies of toiling and building empty land, sanitizing the violence of settler processes and the economic logic of private property that laid the foundations of, and continues to maintain, the settler nation. This creative emphasis on making “rational” use of empty land in order to modernize and develop is a fundamental aspect of the liberalism of both Adam Smith and John Locke. This logic underlies forms of colonial governmentality, as well as the dependency relationships of the colonial (and now global) division of labour, which were justified using the logic of liberal progress. Likewise, as we can see in both Morton and Mays’ contributions, ongoing processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey)—and the explicit colonial violences that accompany it—draw upon this liberal notion that land not rationally developed is akin to waste (Gidwani 1626).

Marxian political economy holds that someone’s land has to be taken away to harness the power of rent to realize a nation’s creative economy potential (D. Da Costa, Heritage 4). Likewise, space for creative economy development can only be produced through the subalternization of other modes of socio-ecological reproduction (Mookerjee 4). To reimagine creative economy is to ask which communities are being dispossessed of their land in rural India so that they are forced to engage in creative entrepreneurship to secure livelihoods. It is to ask which bodies are forced out of the historic *Pelourinho* as part of Brazilian creative economy restoration projects. It means asking who is left homeless and what forms of racial erasure occur when Dan Gilbert advocates creative economy initiatives such as Detroit 2.0., or how the murder of indigenous people is justified through creative celebration of the economic

and moral necessity of private property. However, it also means we need to ask how these rent-seeking practices map onto historical colonial relations, and how creative economy manages to sanitize these colonial relations. Despite the incessant mobilization of discourses of creativity and the celebration of state-sanctioned forms of creativity, goods—even those driven by so-called creative industries—are produced by labour. As Laikwan Pang argues, “the creativity celebrated in the creative economy does not just happen; it involves elaborate industrial manipulation. The creative economy relies on, but also readily dismisses, the materiality of creative labour” (47). The increasingly globalized division of labour involves the outsourcing of production through increasingly fragmented (and invisibilized) global value chains (Barrientos 1059), which obscure the creativity involved in the “traditional” labour located in the Global South, or done by Global South populations in the West. Creative economy discourse’s sanitizing capacity erases the power relations involved in labour processes and global production networks. This isn’t just commodity fetishism; this is a kind of *creative commodity fetishism*: not only do consumers fail to see the labour that goes into the production of a good; they fail to see the different forms of creativity and creative survival practices that go into the production of creative economy goods as well (Da Costa, Politicizing 54).

Another Creative Economy is Possible

Most scholarship on creative economy falls into one of two camps. Either the creative economy is a “feasible development option” (UNCTAD xx), a way to grow the economy, foster inclusion, and stimulate the creative entrepreneurial spirit, particularly for marginalized communities in the Global South. Or it is a tool of neoliberalism, a Trojan Horse (Wallace) or Rorschach blot (Cunningham) that facilitates privatization, gentrification, culture as instrumental resource for capital, and rent-seeking behaviour. Taken together, however, the RCE contributions suggest that such either/or scenarios flatten the complexity of creative economy policies and practices. The alternative put forth is an approach to creative economy that foregrounds nuance, and embraces the messiness, tensions, and contradictions of creative economy’s situated realization. How creative economy takes shape is context-dependent (Waitt and Gibson 1242), for the creative economy is a site of struggle—a site of cultural politics (D. Da Costa, Sentimental 78; Moore 656). In her RCE contribution, Frauts points out that creative resilience is drawn upon to forge new paths in Jamaica for both the neoliberal state *and* NGOs resisting state-led neoliberal reform. So while the state mobilizes discourses of creative resilience to encourage adaptation to the structural violence of neoliberal reform, some NGOs forward creative resilience as the ability to continue to be *resistant to* the challenges that neoliberal reform brings with it. Frauts’ writing demonstrates that creativity is neither positive nor negative. For this

reason, we should focus less on accepting or rejecting creative economy, and more on critiquing, refusing, and reimagining dominant meanings of creativity and creative economy. As Dia Da Costa writes, “another creative economy is possible” (Eating Heritage 10). This focus on alternative possibilities is at the heart of Susan Cahill’s RCE contribution as it attempts to reframe art, creativity, and economy in such a way that it resists creative economy conceptions of these terms. Approaching art not as object, but as an encounter, which “highlights affective politics of creative practice” (6), she turns to post 9/11 surveillance practices to argue that “creative practices of surveillance produce meanings beyond a visual representation of established signifiers of surveillance, toward an embodied and inhabited confrontation with the affective register of security systems” (p. 13). Here, she conceives of the economic dimensions of creativity in a way that rejects mainstream creative economy’s market-centric conception of it. Specifically, she writes of a corporeal economy, or an economy of affects and, focusing on street art as visual disruption, reimagines engaging with this form of creativity as an affective encounter that can politicize (rather than sanitize). In addition to taking issue with creative economy discourse’s conception of creativity and economy, Cahill’s contribution also problematizes creative economy’s mobilization of sanctioned street art in pursuit of urban renewal, gentrification, and beautification. Here, reimagining what constitutes creative work moves beyond an attempt to locate and highlight the importance of creativity in work not typically associated with the creative industries (e.g., Hearn, et al.); instead, it looks at, and demonstrates the importance of, creative work that does not generate surplus value.

Cahill’s contribution carves out spaces of hope by refusing to accept creative economy’s understanding of the relationship between creativity and economy, going so far as to ask: “What if art isn’t creative?” Lasarati’s RCE contribution wrestles with this question, further engaging with TallBear and Wysote’s examination of the legibility of indigenous cultural practices, by discussing both the political possibilities and the limits of the archive of the aesthetic. Her work centers on indigenous cultural practices—specifically, dance—in post-genocide Indonesia. She identifies the potential of remembering through dance that which the State refuses to acknowledge: the systematic murder of 500,000 Indonesians in 1965-66. At the same time, she highlights how once value emerges from the forgotten (in the form of the aesthetic), it is captured by the creative economy. Still, she points to the potential politics of claim that can be achieved through a process of remembering that foregrounds a concern for the people—the forgotten originators of the dance—outside the logic of creative economy.

While Cahill and Lasarati, as well as other RCE contributors such as Wysote and Loveless, see hope in reframing the very terms upon which creativity is mobilized, other RCE contributors emphasize creative relations as a means through which to

build new relationships and solidarities. Geraldine Pratt's RCE contribution, for example, continues the conversation that Upadhayay's had begun, by examining the political possibilities of creativity—specifically, drag performance—when it emerges from intersecting migrant/labour and indigenous histories in a specific place. Looking at the play *Tlingipino Bingo*, performed at Whitehorse Nuit Blanche in June 2016, she explores how a shared love of bingo brought together First Nations and Filipino communities to share stories of incommensurate but resonant histories of colonial violence. In the co-construction of this piece, the communities creatively built relations that rejected the multicultural tropes of model minority and indigenous failure, and brought together seemingly disconnected stories, situating indigenous peoples and racialized immigrants within the settler colonial narrative. In a similar way, Shaista Patel's RCE contribution makes the case for bringing together what at first appears to be discontinuous, unrelated, incommensurable archives, separated through both colonial and academic practices, to bring new understanding to histories as well as new futures. Focusing on the figure of the Indian Queen, she situates it within the context of the colonization of the New World, slavery, Orientalism, and imperialism to show how the figure is formed through *multiple colonialisms*, which she argues are part of a 1492 episteme. For example, she notes that in addition to an exaggerated headdress that “perform[s] a colonial instantiation of a pan-Indian identity without accounting for cultural and gendered specificities of Plains nations” (8), the Indian Queen also wears indigo-dyed calicos—an Indian cotton textile. She argues that the colonial-plantation life of indigo not only brought white colonizers into contact with people of colour across continents, but also slaves into contact with indigenous peoples and inserted Indian peasants into the same history. Through this creative engagement with multiple archives, Patel's work demands we rethink the manner in which stories are kept apart to keep political struggles separate from one another.

Reimagining is a messy process, particularly when the subject in question is something as hegemonic as creative economy, and the act of reimagining is a collective effort. It isn't surprising that the RCE workshop critique involved fits and starts, frustration and uncertainty, disparate ideas and disagreement. The critique remains a work in progress. Because of this, the workshop's greatest strength initially felt like a weakness. What I mean by this is that bringing together a range of scholars coming from different disciplines, working in very different geographical and historical contexts, with different political goals for their work, presents challenges. While some workshop contributors explicitly dealt with creative economy directly (e.g., D. Da Costa, Frauts, Mookerjea, and Mays) or focused on topics like heritage that fall within the realm of creative economy planning and discourse (e.g. A. Da Costa, Collins, Larasati), others admitted early on that they weren't exactly sure what their work had to do with creative economy. Interestingly, it is precisely this engagement with unrecognized forms of creativity, those not legible within creative economy dis-

course, that challenges the logics of creative economy, further providing new and diverse ways to think about, mobilize, and sustain forms of creativity that are not yet captured by creative economy logic. While I do think more work needs to be done to bring together these individual analyses into a comprehensive and comprehensible critique of creative economy as a materializing force — perhaps by engaging creative economy policy and practice head on — I believe that the heterogeneity of this group of scholars is precisely the reason why the *multiple colonialisms* critique produced after three days of discussion is so powerful, extensive, and novel.

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