International Journal of Human Rights Education

Volume 3
Issue 1 *Indigenous Women in Research: Global Conversations on Indigeneity, Rights, and Education*

Article 9

2019

Decolonizing in Unexpected Places

Floridalma Boj Lopez
California State University, Los Angeles, fbojlop@calstatela.edu

Sandy Grande
Connecticut College, smgra@conncoll.edu

Recommended Citation

Boj Lopez, Floridalma and Grande, Sandy. (2019) . "Decolonizing in Unexpected Places," *International Journal of Human Rights Education, 3*(1) .
Retrieved from https://repository.usfca.edu/ijhre/vol3/iss1/9

This Notes from the Field is brought to you for free and open access by USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in International Journal of Human Rights Education by an authorized editor of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.

Notes From The Field

Decolonizing in Unexpected Places

Floridalma Boj Lopez (K'iche' Maya)[*]
California State University, Los Angeles

Sandy Grande (Quechua)[**]
Connecticut College

---

[*] Floridalma Boj Lopez *(K'iche' Maya)* is an Assistant Professor in Sociology at CSULA. Her research examines cultural production among the Guatemalan Maya diaspora with an emphasis on intergenerational imaginaries, gender, and the production of Indigenous migrant community in Los Angeles. Boj Lopez uses a hemispheric framework to bring together Critical Indigenous Studies, Latino Studies and Latin American Studies to analyze the experiences of Maya migrants as they encounter settler colonialism while also facing intra-Latino racism from non-indigenous Latinx. Her work is featured in the *Latino Studies Journal* and in *U.S. Central Americans: Reconstructing Memories, Struggles, and Communities of Resistance*. fbojlop@calstatela.edu

[**] Sandy Grande (Quechua) is a Professor of Education and the Director of the Center for the Critical Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) at Connecticut College. Her research and teaching interfaces Native American and Indigenous Studies, Education and critical theory toward the development of more nuanced analyses of the colonial present. In addition to publishing numerous chapters and articles, her landmark book, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* was recently published in a 10th anniversary edition and a Portuguese translation is anticipated to be published in Brazil in 2019. She is also a founding member of *New York Stands for Standing Rock,* which works to forward the aims of Native American and Indigenous sovereignty and resurgence. As one of their projects, they published the Standing Rock Syllabus. In addition to her scholarly pursuits she has provided eldercare for her parents for over ten years and remains the primary caregiver for her 91-year old father. smgra@conncoll.edu

Abstract

Our "Notes from the Field" article focuses on our engagement with Hacer Escuela/Inventing School, a project of West Chester University that bridges critical theory and the Global South to re-think pedagogical practices and theoretical frameworks in education. By reviewing the discussions that occurred over the course of the conference and our contributions around teaching teachers about Indigenous issues in a settler colonial and anti-immigrant context, we analyze schools as settler institutions and sites of ongoing Indigenous dispossession. We critique rights discourses that often position multicultural education as an opportunity for inclusion without having to unpack that inclusion, which thereby functions at the expense of a decolonial praxis.

Keywords: Critical Indigenous Studies; Settler Colonialism; Multicultural Education

In March 2019, Flori and Sandy were invited to present at the Hacer Escuela/Inventing School: Rethinking the Pedagogy of Critical Theory II workshop at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. The workshop is a sub-project of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant: Critical Theory in the Global South. Hacer Escuela was the second gathering of scholars and practitioners from across the Americas, coming together to share their work from the field. Specifically, participants discussed how the impact of neoliberal policies on education movements across the U.S and Global South have, "given rise to new understandings of pedagogical relations, of what it means to be a subject of education, and how educational practice can refigure public space" (Hacer Escuela, 2019).

As invited guests and presenters, Sandy and Flori sought to consider what it means to teach about Indigenous issues in settler colonial and anti-immigrant contexts. Specifically, Flori teaches in Los Angeles, California, at a university that is predominately first generation Latinx and in a city that understands itself as a city of immigrants. Sandy teaches at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut; a small liberal arts college where the

student body is predominantly white and from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Across these geographic, race, and class-based differences however, we both teach about settler colonialism. As articulated through the foundational work of Patrick Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism[1] is different from other forms of colonialism in the following ways: (1) it is "first and foremost a territorial project" where land (as opposed to natural or human resources) is the precondition; (2) the priority is to eliminate and remove Indigenous peoples in order to expropriate their lands; and, (3) since "settlers come to stay," strategies of elimination are not simply deployed at the time of invasion, but rather serve as a structuring logic. Stated differently, this means that beyond the initial event of invasion, the "logic of elimination" not only persists as a constitutive element of settler colonialism but also "persists as a determinative feature of national territoriality and identity" (Rifkin 2013, p. 324). This is perhaps most readily visible in the history of chattel slavery in the Americas, which not only served as a means of extracting Black labor, but also of eliminating Black life.

This notes from the field article builds upon our presentation at the Hacer Escuela/Inventing School workshop—specifically how our differing contexts inform the pedagogy and methods of our classrooms. Together, we think deeply and critically about how the geography of settler colonialism matters, particularly as it shapes the particular manifestations of racism, white supremacy, and racial capitalism.[2] We also think about our work in

[1] As noted by Rachel Flowers, it is important to refer to "non-Indigenous" peoples as "settlers" since it serves to denaturalize and politicize "the presence of non-Indigenous people on Indigenous lands" (Flowers, 2015, p. 33).

[2] Racial capitalism as a theoretical framework was defined by Cedric Robinson in his classic text *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983). In addition to charting a historical legacy of Black rebellion, Robinson considers that rather than a fundamental break away from feudalism, capitalism emerges as directly co-constitutive of race/racism in the Americas. His re-orientation has been foundational to thinking about the accumulation of wealth alongside the creation of racial categories. His work has continued to have resonance in thinking about the two as always fundamentally interlinked and in this text, we extend the analysis to also note that racial capitalism is distinct, but related to settler colonialism.

relation to the political project of teacher education, especially in this moment of global neoliberalism, school privatization and anti-immigrant vitriol. This article will review some of conversations that took place at the workshop, discuss some of our own approaches to engaging settler colonialism in teacher education, and conclude with a section that reconsiders the utility of the university in relations to human rights education.

Education for Change, Education for Permanence

The *Hacer Escuela/Inventing School II* workshop brought together a wide range of educators working in and outside of the academy. True to its expansive intention, workshop organizers intentionally paired scholars and practitioners as a means of cultivating conversations that diverged from typical academic formats where scholars primarily talk to each other without necessarily considering and working towards practical and applied implications of their research. In addition, project organizers allowed for extended presentation times of approximately two hours in order to include interactive aspects to each presentation. This format compelled presenters to put critical theory into practice as a way to share skills and possibilities with each other. The offerings included presentations on the Black Lives Matter in Schools Week: Organizing for Change; Lessons from Indigenous and Campesino Movements in Latin America, and "Urban Zapatismo." If there was a common thread expressed throughout the two day experience, it would be that education is a site of struggle, wherein the erasure, marginalization, and exploitation of Indigenous, Black and Latinx communities occurs across the hemisphere. That said, the workshop also made it abundantly clear that in each context, there is a critical mass of educators, organizers, and students working together to (re)make schooling (Hacer Escuela) in a manner that abides by the needs and ethics of peoples and their relations and not the imperatives of the capitalist, settler state.

For example, Tamara Anderson and Angela Crawford from the WE Caucus and the Melanated Educators Collective in Philadelphia, discussed their work with parents and teachers from across the city who have been

organizing reading groups, events and curriculum development workshops around the 13 principles of Black Lives Matter.[3] Among their top concerns was the criminalization of students, the use of metal detectors and police presence in their schools. While the needs and concerns are systemic, so too is their organizing which has helped to animate a national movement among teachers and students.

Similarly, David Morales an educator with Colectivo Zapatista (San Diego) and K. Wayne Yang (University of California, San Diego) discussed the criminalization of Black, Latinx and Indigenous youth in southern California. Specifically, they discussed the ways in which the hyper militarized U.S.-Mexico border erases the sovereignty of the Kumeyaay and Tohono O'odham peoples, conscripting into settler discourses of "immigrant" and "alien." Such discourses and politics, seep into schools through border patrol recruitment programs that target working class youth of color. In both of these contexts, schools are oppressive institutions where youth are subjected to forms of violence and criminalization through the complicity of administrators, school boards, and education decision-makers. In response to dehumanization and disempowerment, David Morales discussed the ways that his organization uses the seven principles from the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN)[4] movement to inform their work: urban Zapatismo. Those seven principles are: (1) Obedecer y No Mandar (To Obey, Not Command); (2) Proponer y No Imponer (To Propose, Not Impose); (3) Representar y No Suplantar (To Represent, Not Supplant); (4) Convencer y No Vencer (To Convince, Not Conquer); (5) Construir y No Destruir (To Construct, Not Destroy); (6)

[3] Their work can be found here: https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/

[4] The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) was a critical uprising of Indigenous people in the southern state of Chiapas, Mexico in 1994. The Maya communities of Chiapas rose up in armed rebellion to demand their autonomy from Mexico on the same date that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect. Since the initial rebellion, they have developed schools, health centers, governance structures, and political analysis in their own vision. The EZLN deeply impacted the political consciousness of communities and movements across the world and this year they celebrate the 25th anniversary of ongoing rebellion.

Servir y No Servirse (To Serve Others, Not Serve Oneself); and (7) Bajar y No Subir (To Work From Below, Not Seek To Rise). With this foundation, youth are better able to resist dehumanization as well as strengthen their communities.

Also present in the workshop was Flavio Pereira Barbosa, an organizer from *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (MST) in Brazil and Lia Pinheiro Barbosa, from the *Universidade Estadual do Ceará,* Brazil.[5] MST, also known as the Landless Workers Movement, has occupied vast estates of land over the past decades, as a means of enacting agrarian reform; redistributing land to rural workers. MST is one of the largest social movements in the Global South, with thousands of families living in settlements across Brazil. As such, organizers necessarily had to think about the interconnected nature of movement building as pedagogy *and* schooling as movement building. While the resurgence of state sanctioned violence under President Jair Bolsonaro threatens continued state and municipal funding of MST's schools, organizers are not deterred. Their central commitment remains to develop an educational experience by, for, and in rural communities with the goal of not only ending illiteracy but also contributes to, the transformation of capitalist society, the maintenance of sustainable agriculture, and protection of the environment. The aim is to ensure young people that they do not have to leave their communities to get an education; to define an education for permanence (Barbosa 2016).[6]

The notion of an education for permanence as it was presented at this conference was defined as the right for rural people in Brazil to access education without having to leave their communities. However, MST also argues that beyond this, the schools should align with their realities, their epistemologies, and support the effort of social movement building. Barbosa (2016) asserts that an "education by the countryside" is, "an

[5] Flavio Pereira Barbosa and Lia Pinheiro Barbosa attended the conference on behalf of MST or the Landless Workers Movement.

[6] While we have cited Dr. Barbosa's English language article, it is critical to note that she has published several articles about her engagement with MST which are available in Portuguese and Spanish.

education rooted in place, that is based on the culture, knowledge, wisdom and needs of rural people" (p. 2). At the crux of this conceptualization of education and pedagogy as critical sites from which to develop a political subject is the ability for education to be transformative. However, part of the issue we raise here is that it cannot be assumed that educational institutions created or accredited by settler nation states are automatically capable of engaging this type of praxis. Instead, in our work here, we document that educational institutions in the United States actually operate as sites of Indigenous dispossession where settler subjects are made.

Across the presentations, it was evident that the gathered educators and organizers shared a vision and urgency for social change that operate beyond the liberal, multicultural horizon of justice. That is, one predicated on modes of "diversity" and "inclusion" that presume the continuance of the settler state. Presenters, for example, were interested in stopping the militarization of youth and ending police violence, not fighting for a more diverse and inclusive military and police force. To achieve these aims, participants imagined themselves to be "in, but not of" their institutional contexts (Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 26). As articulated by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten in their landmark text, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (2013), the liminal space of being "in" but not "of," is, "the path of the subversive intellectual" (p. 26).

Settler Education and Teacher Training

Rethinking "Rights"

Within this context of critical fellowship—gathering, sharing, and dialogue—we presented on teaching settler colonialism within universities that are themselves settler institutions. The tensions we centered arise from our work in teacher education programs and/or teacher professional development. The contradiction of "training" teachers to exist in settler institutions, but to do the work of refusing the normalization of eliminatory politics re-positions what we understand education to be. Conceptualized as a "right," education, which is inextricable from educational achievement,

often becomes articulated through a framework of socioeconomic mobility. Education becomes an act of benevolence; it becomes the state's resolution to systemic inequality produced by racial capitalism in service of settler colonialism. When education is conceptualized as an individual right within a liberal framework, achieving an education becomes the avenue through which immigrant and working class "bootstraps[7]" logics are fulfilled. Within the contemporary and global neoliberal moment—where individualized rights have also become the apparatus through which state responsibility has shrunk in order to make way for private capital—the notion that an individual educational degree will allow you to be "successful" only reinscribes settler colonialism. Comanche scholar John Tippeconnic III (2015) writes,

> Formal education within the enclosed walls of schools continues to be a forceful weapon used by dominant powers to create boundaries to control and mold the minds of youth and adults, to eradicate or weaken their Indigenous identity, and to assimilate them into mainstream society (p. 36).

As a result of these observations and critiques, for those of us invested in Indigenous sovereignty and Black freedom,[8] we must learn to begin from a place of questioning the ground upon which "our" institutions are built. For example, educators and students must ask, how does defining our success through educational attainment actually uphold settler

---

[7] Bootstraps refers to the vernacular reference of "pulling oneself up by the bootstraps" or self-reliance, which blinds other historical and contemporary colonial processes that (continue to) cause oppression.

[8] Indigenous sovereignty and Black freedom are noted here as two distinct, but deeply inter-related political projects. The United States has been a direct product of Black and Indigenous genocide from its historical formation to its contemporary moment. As a result, thinking of these systems as interlinked also forces our analysis to consider how our visions for the future must also account for the multiplicity of violence enacted by the U.S. More recently, scholars have not only charted solidarities among these two projects, but also considered tensions that arise when we think of these together (Day 2015; Grande, 2018). The hope is that in thinking through these projects we may be able to envision and build a critical understanding that accounts for both Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation, because both are necessary.

colonialism? How do we challenge these institutions when our livelihoods are still dependent on them? Is it possible to radically shift these institutions given their foundation and ongoing practice of dispossession and marginalization? Furthermore, making Kindergarten-12th grade a legal requirement for all children in the U.S. has not fulfilled frameworks that conceptualize education as potentially transformative: What we see is that dominant educational systems simply become new spaces to fold into economic systems already established to benefit the few.

Dominant discourses on education often occlude the reality that institutions of learning emerged through a colonial project that sought to "civilize" Indigenous and Black peoples. Simpson (2015) argues that the possibility of a transformative education is, "a far step for many who are engaged in the colonial present, as that present resides in a past that simply does not get transcended, or transcended evenly" (p. 80). In addition, scholars like Corntassel and Holder (2008) and Coulthard (2007; 2014) demonstrate the limits of recognition frameworks designed by the nation state and that strive to apologize for past wrongdoings and recognize the (cultural) rights of Indigenous people without actual material transformation. These so-called reconciliatory politics leave settler and extractivist states intact and simply attempt to ameliorate the condition Indigenous people are in without actually accounting for the fact that they and their institutions are dependent on Black and Indigenous dispossession. This means that since their inception, institutions of education have always furthered the imperative of the settler state: nation-building and expansion through chattel slavery and genocide (Grande 2004; 2018). As such, whether from a historical or contemporary vantage point, the field of Native American and Indigenous Studies, engages in analyses of education as primarily a settler colonial project. Scholars like Dolores Calderon (2014) and Sarah Shear (2017) have documented the ways in which Native history taught in U.S. schools often colludes with settler projects because as Calderon states, "gaps in knowledge are actively produced to protect settler futurity" (Calderon, 2014, p. 322). How then, as Indigenous educators deeply committed to Indigenous life and sovereignty do we enact a decolonial process in the very institutions that are utterly reliant on

settler colonialism?

Flori and Sandy's observations

How we enact decolonial processes from within institutions that both establish and perpetuate settler colonialism is not a singular question but rather an ongoing project, and the responses of our students to this project varies. Flori addresses this in teacher professional development workshops in Los Angeles, California, where only 28.4% of those who live in the city are white.[9] In such a dominantly non-white city, educators of color have led the way for critical interventions that span across academic disciplines, grade levels, and public/charter schooling divides. Flori notes that the most interesting teacher trainings have been in the Camino Nuevo Charter Academy school system where despite being a charter, teachers are unionized, and they have prioritized allocating material resources to training teachers in ethnic studies curriculum. For instance, as part of the workshop Flori conducts, educators receive a copy of *Colors of Guatemala*, a multilingual book created by the Maya diaspora of Los Angeles that includes a series of activities that range from interviewing elders to word searches, and so forth. Educators are given time to think about how they can incorporate activities into their curriculum whether it be the geography and math of migration, or the development of narrative texts in language arts.[10] As a result of a collective of radical educator-organizers led by Ron Espiritu[11], an ethnic studies teacher, Flori has been invited to present about Indigenous migrant youth because this charter system has been seeing an

[9] Demographic data continues to have definitions that make it hard to measure Latinx communities, but only 28.4% identified as solely white and not of Hispanic or Latino origin. This is taken from the 2017 American Community Survey available at https://www.census.gov.

[10] For more about the creation and significance of this text, see Boj Lopez (2017) and Grande (2018).

[11] For more information on Ron Espiritu, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvvMgujD4i8

increase of Maya youth who are Indigenous language speakers or come from families where Indigenous languages remain the primary language. While many state that the majority of these young migrants are from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, it is necessary to point out that Guatemalan migrants tend to be Mayan because Mayans are the majority population, and they experience extreme forms of marginalization. In 2018 and 2019, we have seen several cases of young Mayan migrants killed at the U.S.-Mexico border either through direct violence or neglect.[12]

Within this context, the educators that attend the trainings often have a strong sense of how white supremacy functions, but they are being introduced to settler colonialism as a framework premised on *terra nullius*[13] logics that encase seemingly radical projects like immigrant rights movements that claim that Los Angeles is a city of immigrants. In this context teaching educators about settler colonialism also does the necessary work of challenging teachers of color to think about the racial logics that exist within their communities. Their responses create the opportunity to reopen explicit conversation on intra-Latinx racism and the ongoing legacies of racism in Latin America. For example, often these teachers feel challenged to understand the ways in which a land and language-centered form of Indigeneity challenges pan-Indigeneity that was popularized during the Chicano movement in which all Chicanos were purportedly Indians.[14] And while Chicanx claimed Indigeneity, they at best ignored and at worst

---

[12] For more information about these children, please see http://www.youthcirculations.com/blog/2019/6/5/open-letter-from-mayab-scholars-in-diaspora-to-the-united-states-mexican-and-guatemalan-governments

[13] Terra nullius is defined as land that is empty and unoccupied and remains a central tenant of settler occupation but was especially used a legal right by the settler nation of Australia. The recent anthology *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* thoroughly reviews how terra nullius has been utilized in the service of land theft, Indigenous dispossession, and settler colonialism (Miller, Ruru, Behrendt, & Lindberg 2012).

[14] Scholars like Saldana Portillo (2017), Alberto (2012), and Blackwell (2017) have all laid important groundwork in thinking about the duplicitous nature of these moves to claim and erase.

perpetuated racism against Indigenous Mexicans who have maintained their ancestral connections to their land, language, spirituality, and cultural practice.

Sandy works with students in a teacher education program at Connecticut College, a predominantly white, small liberal arts college in New London, Connecticut. Current tuition at the College is $54,820, and is expected to rise. This means that, beyond being predominantly white, the College draws students from the wealthy class. To place this in greater context, consider that the current median household income in the U.S. hovers around $61,000, and that the average wage in 2017 was $48,251.57. Also, according to a recent study conducted by the Watson Institute at Brown University, there are 38 colleges and universities that matriculate more students from the top wealthy 1% than from the bottom 60%; Connecticut College is one of those schools.

That said, there is something laudable about students who have multiple career opportunities and trajectories and choose to become a public school teacher, sometimes against the will of their families. While quite a few enter the Teacher Certification program because they "love children" and also flourished in school, they quickly learn that the teaching profession generally, and the demands of a liberatory curriculum more specifically, require much more from them than an uncomplicated "love" for children. To be sure, some students exit the program as a result, but most persist. And, even beyond persistence, through the certification programs, students increasingly begin to realize the ways in which they were taught to be compliant in an educational system that cultivates and demands "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1995). Despite or because of their privilege, the students come to college largely unaware of how their "opportunities" have also been conditioned by the imperatives of a capitalist, settler state.

When introducing students to settler colonialism, Sandy takes great care to underscore that its precondition and constitutive order is land theft and Indigenous genocide and removal. The underlying European logic of extraction and accumulation was also enacted upon Black bodies through the system of chattel slavery. While Indigenous genocide and slavery are

not new topics for Connecticut College students, learning about settler colonialism as an analytic that reframes them both, not as temporally bounded events, but rather as constitutive structures of the settler state is a new concept. Understood as a structure, students begin to see the relationship between settler colonialism and present day struggles such as police violence, gentrification, anti-immigrant border violence, and incarceration. As a logic, they start to question the ways in which their own schooling has "taught" them to consume, desire, compete, individuate, control, and comply. Their trajectory of understanding is a short, albeit complicated walk from that understanding to Albert Memmi's (2003) notion that ultimately "colonization can only disfigure the colonizer" (p. 147).

Since such realizations can be un-settling for students from the dominant class, building strong relations in the classroom is imperative. We both employ a wide variety of relationship building strategies that differs with each new group of students. In the workshop, we shared one particular exercise that Sandy engages with her students with reliable success. At a chosen point in the semester, she assigns Robin D. G. Kelley's (2016) article, "*Black Study, Black Struggle,"* which appeared in the Boston Review. The article was written amidst the string of campus protests that erupted nationwide in the aftermath of Michael Brown's death in Ferguson, Missouri. Kelley characterizes his words as a "love letter" to student activists. He writes:

> …I want to draw attention to…the tension between reform and revolution, between desiring to belong and rejecting the university as a cog in the neoliberal order. I want to think about what it means for black students to seek love from an institution incapable of loving them—of loving anyone, perhaps—and to manifest this yearning by framing their lives largely through a lens of trauma. And I want to think about what it means for black students to choose to… become subversives in the academy, exposing and resisting its labor exploitation, its gentrifying practices, its endowments built on misery, its class privilege often camouflaged in multicultural garb, and its commitments to war and security.

Typically, Kelley's words hit hard. Black students and students of color, especially those who have engaged in campus activism, feel the sting of learning that their institutions were not built for them and, as such, will never "love" them. White students, especially those still compelled by the myth of the perfect democracy, grapple with the idea that anything is "beyond reform." The class is always greatly animated through the group close reading, which is invariably punctuated with cries of, "Wait! What? Professor Grande, we need to unpack that!"

Together but disparately the students push back, against and beyond intellectual and psychological boundaries they were not quite sure existed, ultimately rising to Kelley's initial entreaty: *to love, study, struggle*. Toward the end of the class, Sandy has students respond anonymously to the following three questions: (1) Where do you experience "love" in your life, what sustains you? (2) Where do you encounter struggle in your life, what are you struggling with right now? (3) What issues/questions are you interested in studying more deeply? Before they write, Sandy asks them to dig deep and to be as honest and vulnerable as they can manage. Their responses, which are written on Post-it's, are collected and placed on three large sheets of paper labeled, "Love," "Study," and "Struggle" respectively.

The first time Sandy did the exercise, though she was not sure what to expect, she anticipated responses to the "struggle" question to reflect the students relative privilege: "I struggle with managing my time," "I didn't get all the classes I wanted." Much to her surprise, the board is filled with responses like: "I am afraid I might be addicted to drugs," "My aunt has cancer," "I have body image problems," "My mom takes care of her father and I'm afraid of the toll it's taking on her," "I struggle with anxiety from being sexually assaulted." While we discussed the differential impact of struggle on students without means and resources, we also acknowledged that pain is a shared human experience.

The unanticipated outcome of the exercise was the immediate and significant effect it had on our learning community. It was not that the exercise leveled or worse, erased difference. Rather, it helped to peel back layers. It revealed students to each other. In short, we deepened relations and, in so doing, cultivated the grounds for learning through and with

community. These deep relationships with each other in the classroom also become the ground on which we can further engage difficult conversations about power, settler colonialism, and what it means to teach about/in U.S. society.

Conclusion: Shaping Our Impacts

> The university was not created to save my life. The university is not about the preservation of a bright brown body. The university will use me alive and use me dead. The university does not intend to love me. The university does not know how to love me. The university in fact, does not love me. But the universe does. (Gumbs, 2012[15])

The call for us to attend Hacer Escuela/Inventing School was welcomed in part because this project has sought to rethink the very foundation of education in Global South communities across the hemisphere. As Indigenous scholars we have both experienced and engaged Indigenous and anti-settler colonial epistemologies outside of the mainstream classroom. However, we also understand that engaging schools and teachers is a necessary step in unpacking the ways that settler colonialism has fashioned liberal multiculturalism as an ushering in to settler nationalism.

In working with teachers who are not Indigenous, we find that we must not only teach about Indigenous peoples, but also how settler colonialism is not just an event but an ongoing process and structure, one that implicates the university/school as a site of ongoing Indigenous dispossession. Our work as Indigenous studies faculty engaged in teacher professional development and teacher education has shaped the ways in which we approach education as a political practice rather than one encased within western liberal notions of individual rights, diversity, and multiculturalism. These individualized notions of rights often position

[15] For the full text, see: https://www.thefeministwire.com/2012/10/the-shape-of-my-impact/.

(multicultural) education as an opportunity for inclusion, without necessarily having to unpack the reality that inclusion occurs at the expense of a decolonial praxis. Our role as Indigenous educators then has been to push ourselves and our students to reconceptualize education as a terrain of struggle in which we must actively choose to learn and teach about how structures of power function.

References

Alberto, L. (2012). Topographies of indigenism: Mexico, decolonial indigenism, and the Chicana transnational subject in Ana Castillo's Mixquiahuala letters. In M. B. Castellanos, L. Gutiérrez Nájera, Aldama & Arturo J. (Eds.), *Comparative indigeneities of the Américas: Toward a hemispheric approach*. Phoenix: University of Arizona Press.

Barbosa, L. P. (2017). Educação do campo [education for and by the countryside] as a political project in the context of the struggle for land in Brazil. *The Journal of Peasant Studies, 44*(1), 118-143. doi:10.1080/03066150.2015.1119120

Blackwell, M. (2010). Lideres campesinas: Nepantala strategies and grassroots organizing at the intersection of gender and globalization. *AZTLAN - A Journal of Chicano Studies, 35*(1), 13.

Boj Lopez, F. (2017). Mobile archives of indigeneity: Building LA Comunidad Ixim through organizing in the Maya diaspora. *Latino Studies, 15*(2), 201-218. doi:10.1057/s41276-017-0056-0

Boj Lopez, F. (2018). Maya youth literatures in the diaspora. In A. Arias (Ed.), *Oxford research encyclopedia, literature* (pp. 1-21) Oxford University Press. Retrieved from 10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.436

Calderon, D. (2014). Uncovering settler grammars in curriculum. *Educational Studies, 50*(4), 313-338. doi:10.1080/00131946.2014.926904

Corntassel, J., & Holder, C. (2008). Who's sorry now? government apologies, truth commissions, and indigenous self-determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala, and Peru. *Human Rights Review, 9*(4), 465-489. doi:10.1007/s12142-008-0065-3

Coulthard, G. S. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. Minneapolis: Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Coulthard, G. S. (2007). Subjects of empire: Indigenous peoples and the 'Politics of recognition' in Canada. *Contemporary Political Theory, 6*(4), 437. doi:10.1057/palgrave.cpt.9300307

Day, I. (2015). Being or nothingness: Indigeneity, antiblackness, and settler colonial critique. *Journal of the Critical Ethnic Studies Association*, 1, 102-120.

Flowers, R. (2015). Refusal to forgive: Indigenous women's love and rage. Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 4(2), 32-49.

Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (2nd Vintage books ed.). New York: New York: Vintage Books.

Grande, S. (2015). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought* (10th Anniversary Edition). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grande, S. (2004). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Grande, S. (2018). Refusing the university. In E. Tuck, & K. W. Yang (Eds.), *Toward what justice?: Describing diverse dream of justice in education* (pp. 47-65). New York: Routledge.

Gumbs, A. P. (2012). The Shape of my Impact. *The Feminist Wire*. Retrieved From https://www.thefeministwire.com/2012/10/the-shape-of-my-impact/

Harney, S., & Moten, F. (2013). *The undercommons: Fugitive planning & black study*. Brooklyn: Wivenhoe; New York; Port Watson: Minor Compositions.

Kelley, R. D. G. (2016, March 7,). Black study, black struggle. *Boston Review: A Political and Literary Forum* Retrieved from https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle

Memmi, A. (2003). The colonizer and the colonized. London: Earthscan.

Miller, R. J., J. Ruru, L. Behrendt, & T. Lindberg; (2012). *Discovering indigenous lands: The doctrine of discovery in the English colonies*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Rifkin, M. (2013). Settler common sense. *Settler Colonial Studies, 3*(3-04), 322-340. doi:10.1080/2201473X.2013.810702

Robinson, C. J. (1983). *Black Marxism: The making of the black radical tradition*. London: Totowa, N.J.: London : Zed; Totowa, N.J. : Biblio Distribution Center.

Saldaña-Portillo, M. (2017). Critical Latinx Indigeneities: A paradigm drift. *Latino Studies, 15*(2), 138-155. doi:10.1057/s41276-017-0059-x

Shear, S.B. (2017). Settler schooling: A TribalCrit approach to teaching boarding school histories in elementary social studies. In P. Chandler & T. Hawley (Eds.), *Race Lessons: Using Inquiry to Teach about Race in Social Studies* (pp. 113-132). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Press.

Simpson, A. (2015). At the crossroads of constraint: Competing moral visions in Grande's *Red Pedagogy*: Response 1. In S. Grande 1964 (Ed.), *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought, 10th anniversary edition* (p. 79). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Tippeconnic III, J. (2015). Critical theory, red pedagogy, and indigenous knowledge: The missing links to improving education: Response 1. In S. Grande 1964 (Ed.), *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political, 10th anniversary edition* (p. 35). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research, 8*(4), 387-409. doi:10.1080/14623520601056240