

Pedagogy of Absence, Conflict, and Emergence

Contributions to the Decolonization of Education from the Native American, Afro-Portuguese, and Romani Experiences

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Pedagogy of Absence, Conflict, and Emergence:
Contributions to the Decolonization of Education
from the Native American, Afro-Portuguese,
and Romani Experiences

MIYE NADYA TOM, JULIA SUÁREZ-KRABBE, AND TRINIDAD CABALLERO CASTRO

This article employs the pedagogy of absence, conflict, and emergence (PACE), as an analytical approach to study concrete contributions to the decolonization of education. PACE seeks to transcend Eurocentric knowledge construction, and hence one of its fundamental efforts is to think from and for places, experiences, temporalities, and life projects otherwise rendered absent or negated in dominant education. The nonformal education projects studied are *SNAG* magazine in the Native American community of San Francisco, California (United States); efforts to “standardize” education among Romani communities in Córdoba, Spain; and hip-hop culture in Lisbon, Portugal. By challenging received practices of education and contributing to thinking of diversity from frameworks unconfined to dominant Eurocentric understandings, the case studies provide important insights to the multifaceted process of decolonization. The article concludes that PACE’s implications for educational research involve the methodological recentralization of the realities ignored by Eurocentric colonial education.

Introduction

What might Native American communities in the United States,¹ communities of Cape Verdean origin in Portugal, and Romani communities (*gitanos*) in Spain have in common?² The cases included in this article offer important insights pertaining to the decolonization of education, often only marginally addressed in fields like comparative and international education,

¹ In this article we use “Indigenous” or “Native American” in reference to First Peoples, which are diverse communities in and of themselves. We also make reference to specific tribes/nations when applicable.

² While the terms “Roma” and “Romani” are politically correct in English, it is common to refer to oneself as “Gypsy” in Spain (*gitano* as the masculine term for Gypsy and *gitana* as feminine). In the cases in which we use these last terms in this article, we do so to allude to the definitions or perceptions of each of these respective communities.

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global citizenship education, and scholarship on public pedagogy.³ These fields tend to remain anchored in the Western paradigm, which is the unquestioned perspective from which “particularities” are also addressed (Grande 2004, 165–66). In this sense, theirs is often a “reading from the center” (Connell 2007, 44–45). From an international and comparative perspective, we can conceive of education as a means to challenge and transform imposed Eurocentric models of education that, throughout history, have been exported and imposed on Indigenous peoples and the Global South as the region most subjected to imperial and neocolonial domination by the Global North, such as Europe and the United States (Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist 2003; Hickling-Hudson 2011). Consequently, our point of departure is the colonial problem in relation to pedagogy and education and not modern pedagogy per se (Walsh 2013, 42).

We focus this article on pedagogies and educational practices that have never entered school but have preceded, endured, or challenged modern schooling. Certainly, such a feat has been undertaken by Hickling-Hudson (2014), both in Aboriginal and postcolonial or settler colonial spaces. However, this work has largely focused on the Anglophone world while also emphasizing the Global South. We cross languages and legacies of colonial imperialism to further contribute to these discussions. In addition to the US settler colonial context, we focus on Spain and Portugal. These two southern European countries have molded the world we live in today, as their colonial practices were important in the making of coloniality in early modernity. As such, our outset is that the colonial question penetrates the origins of Western modernity. By focusing on Native Americans, Roma peoples in Europe, and legacies of hip-hop culture, we also surpass the Global North/South binaries commonly reproduced in mainstream postcolonial and anticolonial approaches (Tom 2013). These approaches, in turn, subalternize and invisibilize populations, such as the Roma and members of the African diaspora in Europe and Native Americans in the United States.

Our “reading from the margins” (hooks 1990) is situated apart from mainstream approaches mentioned in our opening paragraph: instead of employing a conceptual and methodological nationalist or postnationalist approach to education, we propose the pedagogy of absence, conflict, and emergence (PACE) as a method that works from the pedagogies and educational projects of communities marginalized through coloniality and as a pedagogy that can prove useful in changing dominant education practices in different colonial and “postcolonial” contexts.⁴ PACE seeks to transcend

³ For an overview of the issues commonly addressed in public pedagogy, see Sandlin et al. (2011) and in comparative international education, see Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014), and for a critical discussion concerning the field of global citizenship education, see Tranekjær and Suárez-Krabbe (2016).

⁴ As a Latina/Mestiza working in a northern European university, Suárez-Krabbe initially elaborated PACE to address her pedagogical endeavor in relation to students who, for the most part, are in the privileged side of colonial and racial relations (Suárez-Krabbe 2015a; see also Barenco 2008).

Eurocentric knowledge construction. One of its fundamental efforts is to think from and for places, experiences, temporalities, and life projects otherwise rendered absent or negated in dominant education. Furthermore, this article aims to address colonialism and education by learning from the Global South in the Global North (see also Santos 2014).

As part of a process of decolonization, PACE entails articulating the conditions shaping who and what we are, and it involves taking responsibility for thoughts and ideas (Gordon 2015; Suárez-Krabbe 2015b). As a specific form of articulation between racism, capitalism, and patriarchy generated through the processes of domination that became globalized in the wake of colonialism, coloniality continues to socially produce what Fanon called *le damné de la terre* (1963); people whose humanity has been negated. In our understanding, being human entails civil, political, epistemological, and social access, participation, and impact on the world and society (cf. Gilmore 2007; Davis 2012, 165–76). The social production of nonbeing—an ontological process—is what Fanon referred to as sociogenesis (1986). The cases analyzed in this article have been chosen because they offer an empirically based understanding of how different groups may share the condition of being *damné* while displaying how the process of damnation has also produced them differently in sociogenic terms. As we will see, because these groups have distinct knowledges and onto-epistemic groundings, their work toward “a new humanity” is different, attesting precisely to the need to take plurality seriously. Indeed, PACE relates to difference not as something to be “merely tolerated but as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (Lorde 1984, 110).

We employ PACE as an analytical approach to study concrete contributions to the decolonization of knowledge and education in the following case studies: digital media in the Native American community of San Francisco, California (United States); efforts to “standardize” education among Romani/Gypsy communities in Córdoba, Spain; and, finally, hip-hop culture/rap music and social intervention in Lisbon, Portugal.⁵ The choice of these specific cases and these locations is based on our recognition that it is important to understand coloniality and decoloniality as they take place in the “south inside the north.”

Most of the material was produced during Tom’s doctoral research (2013). Tom is a researcher of mixed Native American (Paiute and Pomo) and Russian descent who has sought to challenge prevailing North/South binaries by examining how youth from different marginalized communities use global hip-hop culture to speak from different experiences of racism, colonialism, and displacement/diaspora. Her doctoral research, conducted for the University of Coimbra in Portugal, included black Portuguese youth (predominately of Cape

⁵ See also Mato (2000); Walsh (2013); Suárez-Krabbe (2015b).

Verdean descent) in Lisbon and Native American youth in the United States, with an emphasis on the urban context of San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area in California. San Francisco was selected because of a youth-centered media project developed by an Indigenous hip-hop artist of Pomo and African American descent. In Portugal, Tom sought to examine how the colonial question applied to the country where she was studying. Lisbon was selected because of its concentration of communities of African origin in the aftermath of Portugal's colonial endeavors in Africa. Drawing from Tom's doctoral research, we address challenges presented by the project of decolonization—at least as part of a broader philosophical project or research agenda (Smith 1999).

The discussion of these case studies starts with Native American perspectives forged by different chapters of colonialism in California history—from Catholic Spanish missionaries up until the present. Drawing from California history, we then look toward two “postcolonial” metropolises to broadly address global dimensions of coloniality and decoloniality. We have focused on Roma communities in Córdoba, Spain, to examine how similar historical experiences of genocide and resistance frame similar issues in education today. Information here was collected while Tom was a visiting scholar at a nearby university. While researching, she also volunteered as an English tutor for a local nongovernmental organization (NGO). Further information was collected and coanalyzed by Caballero Castro, a Roma university student and teacher who is currently developing culturally relevant curriculum for children and youth from her community. Finally, we return to Tom's doctoral research in Lisbon, where we cross languages and historical legacies to examine how Black Portuguese youth of Cape Verdean descent use hip-hop culture/rap music to create alternative modes of education. While rap music is commonly regarded as an emblem of American cultural imperialism and globalization, its spread to Lisbon and pedagogical uses are based on transnational histories of black and anticolonial resistance.

In all three instances, the methods involved participatory observation and semistructured interviews, and implicated high levels of dialogue with members of the communities. In the context of this article, the cases were selected because they, although diverse, involve processes in which groups take responsibility for thoughts and ideas and articulate the conditions that have made them who and what they are while also building grounds for changing these conditions through concrete actions. In each context, education is a means of transformation; it endeavors to break from Eurocentricity—both in terms of knowledge and in terms of forging ideas and practices that can undergird radical social change. As such, groups' sociogenic efforts are carried out through PACE.

Pedagogy of Absence, Conflict, and Emergence

PACE includes articulating the conditions shaping who and what we are. It involves taking responsibility for thought and ideas, making it part of a de-

colonizing process. This effort includes scrutinizing various sociohistorical and economic-political experiences shaped by coloniality and considering the intellectual contributions that have emerged from diverse struggles for decolonization. As such, PACE involves a decolonial historical realist approach that rejects the relativism embedded in the idea that history will always be partial as it is always told by the winner.⁶ While history does entail interpretation and can be used to legitimate power or resist it, there are also facts of such crucial importance that we, as scholars struggling for decolonization, insist are not trivialized through discussions of various interpretations. The transatlantic slave trade is one of these realities, settler colonialism another.

A decolonial realist approach defends that one cannot deal with contemporary problems without taking into account the historically constituted structures within which they continue to be produced. For example, a necessary step in understanding what the struggles of Native Americans, Romani in Spain, and Afro-Portuguese are is to take into account how coloniality shaped them in different but relational ways. This means taking seriously the fact that, as Quijano (2000) argues, coloniality manifests at global, regional, and national levels. Coloniality can be observed in the power the Global North (the white United States and Western Europe) exerts over the Global South (regions such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America, regarded as “underdeveloped” or “developing countries,” and racialized populations in the Global North). Understanding coloniality implies taking into account historical and regional differences in the ways in which this globalized system of oppression has localized. Hence, the making of the Americas (Mignolo 2005) and the invention of Africa (Mudimbe 1988; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013) both similarly involved the work of explorers, cartographers, missionaries, travelers, colonial anthropologists, slave masters, enslaved Africans, conquerors, Indigenous peoples, historians, imperialists, communists, socialists, Catholics, and so on. And the making of Europe correspondingly involved the work of actors overlapping with those mentioned. But, race ranked and ordered people and places into these power relations and in the institutional functions from which this hierarchy is articulated, such as the modern nation-state or in social categories of difference, and what constitutes hegemonic Western knowledge. Additionally, these processes happened at the expense of something and someone else who was sociogenically produced as absent. It is no wonder that similar challenges toward the study of “Othered” peoples can be found by Indigenous peoples (Smith 1999) and Roma scholars, such as Adrian Marsh (2007).

As its name signals, PACE is divided into three fundamental—albeit often interrelated and overlapping—steps. First, the pedagogy of absence implicates the conceptualization and location of how colonized subjects have

⁶ This section includes adapted parts on “decolonial historical realism” previously published in Suárez-Krabbe (2015b).

been produced as absent in history, in knowledge production, and within the confines of public schooling. This production of absences (Santos 2014) is part of what Fanon (1963) conceptualized as the “zone of nonbeing”—a zone created through the countless negations on which colonial rationality, knowledge, and education are constructed. Second, the pedagogy of conflict “seeks to provoke epistemological conflict in order to make vulnerable the arguments of hegemonic thinking and of the application of science. . . . Human experience and the historical understanding at the basis of the knowledge linked to that sort of educational project will destabilize the instrumental rationality of mono-logic thinking that sustains imperialisms in order to recover ‘our capacity of bewilderment and indignation’, pushing forth emancipatory educational projects” (Fontella Santiago 2012, 2–3; translated from Portuguese).

Finally, the pedagogy of emergence, often a result of or dependent on, the pedagogy of absence and conflict, relates to the social, political, historical, and existential affirmation of the existence of marginalized/historically dispossessed groups: an emergence as historical subjects and as agents of history and social change. The pedagogy of emergence corresponds to the sociogenic production of a new humanity and is framed by the imperative to “transgress, displace and influence in the ontological, epistemic and cosmogonic-spiritual negation which has been—and is—strategy, end and result of the power of coloniality” (Walsh 2009, 13; translated from Spanish).

PACE then also involves addressing and redressing several privileges that are otherwise invisibilized in knowledge and education. Indeed, “Although the white body is regarded as Presence, it lives the mode of Absence, and it offers, instead, its perspective as Presence. In other words, the white body is expected to be seen by others without seeing itself being seen. Its presence is therefore its perspectivity. Its mode of being, being self-justified, is never superfluous” (Gordon 1999, 103). The white perspectivity is what we are taught in schools. It includes three primary privileges and several derivative—but no less important—ones.⁷ Teleological privilege is concerned with time and with the future. It implies that those who hold it determine the projects for the future of all, monopolizing politics, economic organization, and social change. The privilege of epistemic perspective can be likened to the problem faced by white feminists, who addressed the tendency of dominant scholarship to “add women” to traditional analyses (Harding 1987, 3) without abandoning the patriarchal frameworks of thinking. In the case of epistemic racism, the problem involves the addition of some selected “other” scholars, histories, or events into Eurocentric scholarship without engaging with their

⁷ These privileges were initially conceptualized by Julia Suárez-Krabbe in her work with the Decoloniality Europe network that involved elaborating a “Charter of Decolonial Research Ethics.” Some elaboration on these privileges is found in Suárez-Krabbe (2015b), 109–34.

conceptualizations, critiques, and consequences. This problem relates to the fact that many of the scholars and educators alike who pretend to have transcended the problems of racism and coloniality in their scientific or educational practices continue to enjoy and defend the privilege of epistemic perspective.

The privilege of epistemic perspective is inseparable from another privilege, which regards ontology. By this we mean the privilege to define what is and what is not on the basis of ideas about validity, scientificity, and method. It implies, for example, understanding students ontologically as retrograde or reproducing normative truths about a supposed inexistence of coloniality. In the end, the privilege of ontology is the privilege of sociogenesis.⁸ These primary privileges carry with them several other privileges, among which we highlight the privilege to choose and define subject matter in schools, the privilege to define the context from and in which it is taught, and the privilege to define what is relevant and irrelevant (knowledges, histories, methods, questions, concerns). Any attempt at working toward decolonial social change from within education must address these privileges—both among colleagues and students but also in relation to how we, as decolonial scholars, develop techniques and strategies to work against these privileges. We argue that the three cases studied in this article take a necessary step in the direction of decolonization by displaying how white perspectivity upholds itself as self-justified educational practice (see also Biermann 2011, 394–95). As we will see in the following sections, PACE also presents a useful tool to gain a thorough understanding of what taking responsibility for thought and ideas means and implies for different groups. Through PACE we approach insights of how distinct groups articulate the conditions that make them who and what they are in a world where epistemicide and imposition have been intrinsic to the colonial endeavor and where the frameworks of understanding that legitimated that colonial endeavor are still presented as true, scientific, universal, and objective. This approach allows understanding difference, including colonial hierarchical difference, in ways that work against coloniality in knowledge and education.

Urban Native American Youth

Settler colonialism is a structure involving the continued appropriation of Indigenous lands (Wolfe 2006). What we learn from Indigenous peoples in territories, such as those in California, and around the world is how the continued existence of settler colonialist structures and legacies is a problem that cannot be dissolved by disregarding the ways in which different racial or ethnic groups—in the US context—are also products of and instrumental to

⁸ For significant elaborations on sociogenesis, see also Gordon (1999), Wynter (2003), and Maldonado-Torres (2007).

its violent perpetuation (Tuck and Yang 2012). If, as Tuck and Yang argue, decolonization has become a metaphor broadly used to address matters of social justice rather than the repatriation of Indigenous lands, how may we honor these distinct sociohistorical experiences and ongoing struggles while also using the concept to broadly challenging coloniality at large? Bearing these contexts in mind, this section illustrates how the conquest of the Americas and the ongoing reality of settler colonialism shape the context within which the Native American community of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area operates.

The period regarded as California’s founding chapter in dominant history is the mission system between 1769 and 1850. Indigenous peoples were enslaved and forcibly converted to Catholicism, and many died as a result of brutalization and disease. After the eventual accession of California to the US government from Mexico on September 9, 1850, the US government undertook several initiatives to assimilate Indigenous tribes and nations into mainstream society. Up until the mid-twentieth century, education was dominated by the federal government and had two thrusts: isolation and assimilation (Reyhner and Eder 2004). Additionally, the Termination Act of 1953 initiated the Relocation Era (1950s–1960s), which aimed to “improve” Native Americans’ standards of living by encouraging individuals to migrate to cities and assimilate (Fixico 1986). The US government offered opportunities for job training in major cities, such as Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Chicago, and the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area, among others. Under the rhetoric of “living without federal support,” this era significantly reduced 13 tribes, who reversed this process in decades following Native American uprisings during the late 1960s and 1970s. Interestingly, urban Native American communities, such as in the Bay Area, were political epicenters (e.g., the occupation of Alcatraz Island from November 20, 1969, to June 11, 1971).

According to the 2010 US census, roughly two-thirds of the general Native American population currently resides in cities, and Native Americans represent 1 percent of the entire US population. The diverse and multilayered Native community of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area remains invisible, mostly because of the dominant imaginary of Native peoples being isolated to reservation life, far away from the influences of mainstream society hence produced as absent. Furthermore, the Bay Area itself sits on the traditional land of the Ohlone people who have not disappeared. In public schools, Native students rarely see themselves reflected in school curriculum. Fourth grade California curriculum is a particularly contentious terrain, and students typically build miniature models and learn about the early civilizing efforts of an imperial presence (Spain) that soon gave way to the superiority of the United States. Since the Native American and Mexican American (Chicano) uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s, many struggles have shown the reality of genocide that occurred under various colonial regimes from

the perspectives of these populations. As Weber (1992) observed, both the Spanish or Latin and Indigenous presences fold into same ideology, wherein the former is celebrated for its earlier efforts of civilizing the latter, and each would succumb, eventually, to the superiority of the Anglo-American national project. Indeed, “[recent] education reformers have sought a middle ground by offering a consensus curriculum that includes evidence from both the fantasy and victimization narratives and encourages students to interpret the past for themselves” (Gutfreund 2010, 163). Nevertheless, these pedagogies of conflict remain invisible efforts that are delegitimized in Gutfreund’s text when referred to as undertaken by “militants.”

These histories remain highly politicized. These continued denigrations have a vast impact on how Native Peoples are perceived as well as the significance of their voices, which, alongside settler colonialism, go widely unacknowledged by the general public in the United States. Symbolically, this can be observed in the recent canonization of father Junípero Serra, a Franciscan monk who founded nine missions in California and presided over 15 of them. This canonization received much acclaim despite backlash from the Native community (especially California Natives) but is, however, part of the ways in which Native Peoples in the United States are produced as absent. Tuck and Yang note how such invisibility manifests in mainstream educational research: “Indigenous peoples are included only as asterisks, as footnotes into dominant paradigms of educational inequality in the U.S. This can be observed in the progressive literature on school discipline, on ‘underrepresented minorities’ in higher education, and in the literature of reparation, i.e., redressing ‘past’ wrongs against non-white Others” (2012, 22). Additionally, they note that, amid decolonial approaches in educational research, “‘Urban education’ . . . is a code word for the schooling of black, brown, and ghettoized youth who form the numerical majority in divested public schools” (23). In this sense, the production of Native American populations as absent is strengthened through dominant imaginaries pertaining to not only Native Americans but also other racialized groups in the United States.

As an educational project primarily focused on Native youth in the urban Bay Area, *Seventh Native American Generation* (SNAG) magazine can be seen as a pedagogy of absence in its aims to address “modern day and historical grievances” that go against the grain of the above-mentioned dominant imaginaries. The concept of “seventh generation” has deep onto-epistemological insight and positioning: it is based on a popular conception that there will be healing from the wounds of colonialism seven generations hence or that we think seven generations ahead in the actions we take today, particularly in maintaining homelands as well as the languages and cultures unique to each tribe and nation. SNAG was cofounded in 2002 by Ras K’dee, a musician of mixed Pomo (a tribe from northern California) and African American origins. At the time, Ras K’dee and his partner held workshops in which young people shared their

experiences with broader audiences. Eventually, a workshop was held with youth to brainstorm on what kinds of projects could bring their desires into fruition (<http://snagmagazine.com/>). Throughout the last 14 years, *SNAG* has not only brought arts education to generations of Native youth but also provided internships for youth and young adults pursuing careers in such areas as journalism. Community members and local community centers and organizations in San Francisco and Oakland have continued to support these efforts.

In recent years, *SNAG* has brought California Native peoples and their histories to the fore (e.g., photography projects by California Native youth). It has also sought to create open-access curricula based on past editions of the magazines using the content produced by youth themselves. Additionally, community farming and *SNAG*'s recent California basket-making workshop contribute to the decolonizing urban education endeavor. The pedagogy of absence turns into a pedagogy of conflict in cases in which the dominant imaginary of Native American people as incompatible with urban society is challenged through *SNAG*'s projects. For example, in 2016, a Pomo master weaver taught Native and non-Native participants, including youth and adults, about traditional California Native baskets. Participants then gathered *tule* near San Francisco (a grass-like multipurpose plant traditionally used by various California Native tribes) and applied techniques of California Native basket weaving. In the very practice of weaving and applying techniques also lies the pedagogy of emergence, where other ways of doing and knowing gain centrality.

Beyond printed magazines (*SNAG*'s first digital edition released in spring 2016), public events and concerts are open to the general public and include a diversity of Native participants from different backgrounds. This allows non-Native inhabitants of the Bay Area to learn of contemporary Indigenous peoples, especially in an urban dynamic. As a reclaiming of voices, they involve PACE by shedding light, addressing and elaborating on the otherwise invisible issues confronting Native American peoples (Tom 2013). As Ras K'dee elaborates: "we're creating media and making it available to the public on a large scale so we're in effect changing the perception of how Natives are viewed and what we're capable of. . . . It's a school. It's like anything involving education and liberation. We're talking about respecting young Native voices, viewing the value of young Native voices, those things" (personal interview, March 23, 2010).⁹

In a city where contact with other Native American youth is sparse, bi-weekly *SNAG* workshops and such periodic community events feed into and complement after-school programs, counseling, and weekly powwow dance classes. And, while this dancing is not traditional to the tribal origins of many

⁹ All cited interviews have been carried out by Tom.

youth (a number of whom are of Navajo—or Diné—descent), such extracurricular activities combined with *SNAG* added a welcome kinetic element to after-school tutoring. After their involvement with *SNAG*, some alumni have gone on to pursue degrees from the Institute of American Indian Arts, a multitribal Indigenous university in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Others have continued to pursue music, some under the continued guidance of Ras K'dee. A recent grant has permitted *SNAG*'s hiring some of its alumni. In recent years, however, some parents at one community center demanded more after-school tutoring geared toward academic achievement. Hence, the long-term benefits of the project are subject to interpretation and diverse values of community members themselves.

Not only has *SNAG* brought diversity to urban Native education, but it veers toward an indigenized education project that teaches of the land and its peoples in addition to challenging historical narratives that fashion Indigenous people some distant, primordial past. Given that American Indian education was one of several tools used by the US government for assimilation, *SNAG*'s extracurricular activities increase young people's awareness of the absences created by this history and their understanding of the traumas derived from its violence—they also embody the pedagogy of absence and conflict. The involvement of youth and the communities they come from are at the heart of continuing tradition while offering youth tools to construct self-knowledge through their surroundings and to represent themselves. In this light, *SNAG* can be recognized among a number of media projects that have shaped community practices and cultural identity in pantribal, generally mixed urban communities (Dowell 2013). The magazine and public events (including rap shows) function to enrich youths' own interest in learning their culture and are seen as fundamental by the participating youth. This is a question of not merely becoming active members within Native American communities or claiming a place in contemporary US society on the basis of knowledge achieved largely outside of the educational system but challenging normative notions on indigeneity, history, and territory. In other words, as a representation of PACE, *SNAG* offers young people the tools necessary to speak out, self-represent, and make interventions in the world they have inherited—starting with and from the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Area. In acknowledging the legacies of these struggles, the magazine also helps make visible the reality of settler colonialism, as it pertains to Indigenous peoples and other groups who are also part of it. Native Americans are not silenced but rather shown as contemporary peoples.

To elaborate on PACE and illustrate global dimensions of coloniality (as embodying similar power relations), however, it is also important to examine how similar issues penetrate other regions—namely, “postcolonial” Europe—as the origins of these histories of resistance. To contribute to these efforts, we start with Spain, whose history of conquest throughout the Amer-

icas continues to be regarded—in fourth-grade curricula—as the origin of California history.

Roma and the “Standardization” of Education

One cannot speak of Romani communities (or *gitanos*) in Andalusia, Spain, without noting how interethnic relations have vastly influenced regional culture (flamenco music) and language (Caló has penetrated the region’s Spanish), not to mention national literature (e.g., Lorca).¹⁰ As in countries throughout Europe (and the rest of the globe), the Spanish Roma have persevered despite various state-sanctioned efforts to forcibly assimilate, expel, or eradicate this population.¹¹ The first anti-Roma laws in Spain came to fruition 7 years after the “discovery” of the Americas in 1499 following alongside vast (often violent) efforts undertaken as a part of the emerging national unification. These policies spanned from outlawing their ethnic customs, their language (Caló), and their culture to imprisonment and the separation of men and women, which occurred during the eighteenth century. Such policies would continue until 1978, when changes to the Spanish constitution dictated equality of all citizens and emphasized antidiscrimination (Gómez García 2009). In that year, the illiteracy rate of Spanish Roma over age 10 was 68 percent, and the level of compulsory education only reached 55 percent (ISAM 1982). These rates were the result of the historical segregation of Romani populations and of the legally sanctioned denial of education to the Romani populations amid the outlawing of language and cultural practice under the Franco regime (Gómez García 2009). Gómez García notes: “When democracy arrived to Spain, members of the Gypsy communities created organizations to live as free citizens. Through such efforts, community members sought to challenge illiteracy without compromising the ethnic community’s unique cultural attributes” (97–98; translated and paraphrased from Spanish).

While almost all Romani children have been educated in public schools and illiteracy is almost nonexistent, it is difficult for social integration not to be assimilatory because (normative) models of education do not integrate minority cultures (Gómez García 2009). Indeed, Fernández Enguita (2000) observes how the problematic fashioning of the modern nation-state reproduces the notion that culture and ethnic differences impede Roma students’ successful schooling. Another enduring challenge highlighted by scholars is

¹⁰ While there are no precise statistics, Gamella (1996) estimated that the Roma account for 3 percent of the population in Andalusia, which is roughly half of the entire population of Roma in Spain. In more recent estimates, the Roma community accounts for roughly 7.97 percent of Cordoba’s population (Pita López et al. 2010, 35).

¹¹ According to historical documentation, the Roma entered Europe centuries ago. Comparative linguistic studies of the Romani language with Sanskrit and Hindi yield strong evidence that the Roma migrated to Europe from the Indian subcontinent, yet numerous often conflicting theories from various disciplines have not been able to discern their precise origins or details of their migration (Hancock 2002).

the reproduction of such common prejudices at the level of research and knowledge production (Macías and Redondo 2012). As in other countries that participated in the European Union's Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005–15), Romani students in Spain have poorer educational success rates when compared to their peers from the majority populations. A recent report by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2014) in Spain cites continued high absentee and dropout rates of Roma students, while only 5 percent reach higher education (Fernández Garcés et al. 2015, 42). Additionally, the existence of ghetto schools mainly made up of Roma and immigrants attests to a de facto segregation (42). Negative stereotypes of Roma also manifest in media representations that are framed from within the racist imaginaries that portray them as ignorant, lazy, criminal, and retrograde (Fernández Garcés et al. 2015). From within this dominant imaginary, there is little, if any, regard for Romani communities' cultural knowledge and practices such as oral transmission that can be recognized within the school system (Gómez García 2009). The effects are students' internalized racism, which manifests as a lack of confidence in one's own intellectual capacities and insecurity connected in knowing one's significance in the world.

Over the years, local Romani associations and NGOs have undertaken several initiatives to address dispiriting in education through a culturally based lens.¹² From this context, we center predominantly on the implementation of the project Elevate in Córdoba.¹³ The program, which was started by a pan-Romani NGO in 2009, receives funding by the European Union. One of its major objectives is to help young Romani students complete compulsory schooling and continue their studies afterward. Like the work of other Roma organizations in Córdoba and throughout Spain, these efforts aim to improve the communities' access to the labor market through concrete educational initiatives that actively address, challenge, and seek to change current practices in formal education that contribute to Roma segregation. The comprehensive range of the initiatives by the program, hence, includes raising awareness of how research and school material reproduce negative stereotypes of the Roma, as do the media, teachers, parents, and children—both within and outside the Roma communities. At the same time, Elevate works toward Roma communities' empowerment through tutoring and other nonformal educational activities. For beyond political rights, Miguel, a social educator in Córdoba, emphasized socioeconomic rights, such as equal access to housing and employment, in the face of widespread discrimination. As he elaborates: “when we say that the Roma population needs to find standardization (*normalización*), we say that

¹² Among these are Fakali; Federación Andaluza de Mujeres Gitanas (Andalusian Gypsy Women's Federation), Kamira; Federación Nacional de Mujeres Gitanas (National Gypsy Women's Federation), and Unión Romaní.

¹³ The name of the project has been changed in order to respect wished for anonymity by the organization involved.

Romani citizens should have what the rest of the population has—individual rights and obligations guaranteed by the constitution” (personal interview, August 8, 2014).

As a Roma university student and teacher in Elevate, Caballero Castro has personally experienced and observed the extent to which mainstream school curriculum marginalizes, devalues, or excludes children and youth from her community. On many occasions Caballero Castro has had to work extensively with students on a given school subject that their teachers had not explained. In Caballero Castro’s experience, students also identify absences, as when they ask her why they learn French or English and not Caló. In addressing this type of question from a Roma critical perspective, PACE takes place. Pedagogy of absence includes explaining to the students how the hierarchies of language work as part of larger sociohistorically constituted racial relations. Pedagogy of conflict and pedagogy of emergence take place to the extent that pedagogy of absence requires addressing historical and current events in ways that radically differ from and challenge dominant accounts and highlighting the ways in which formal schooling is often decontextualized from the realities of Roma students.

Within the confines of formal schooling, some teachers themselves discriminate against Romani students on the basis of the widespread stereotype that “Gypsies” are susceptible to failure and dropping out of school. For example, young women who are in compulsory secondary education may quit attending classes, only going to school to take exams or to pick up and turn in homework because of the tradition of girls marrying young as well as because of maternity. In other cases, both boys and girls go to work with their parents in markets/peddling or harvesting to help secure household income. The latter of these situations indicates that high absentee rates leading to academic failure may often be due to a family’s socioeconomic situation versus cultural differences alone—as essentialized by Fernández Enguita (2000). In these cases, education may sometimes be regarded as a loss of time in the face of severely disadvantaged material conditions. Amid transformations (universal “intergenerational differences”) occurring within families and communities, the emphasis on formal schooling raises significant questions from within these communities. Or as Miguel further explains,

There is a tremendous mixture and uncertainty of identity. Is it good or bad? I don’t know, but I would like for [our young people] to have more knowledge of the identities they want to mix, [where these identities and cultures] come from. . . . If they could study [students would have] the opportunity of consciously selecting. Often we find that elders don’t connect with youth and youth don’t even with younger children. I didn’t have this education [or form of socialization]. I have always sat with elders and listened to them, their stories and this has always enabled me to connect better. . . . If there is not a link between generations it is difficult to understand where your identity comes from and where you are going. (Personal interview, August 8, 2014)

Faced with these problems and complex dynamics, Elevate's work addresses the main absences in relation to education and access to labor. As we have seen, these are in and by themselves important aspects for communities facing segregation, second-class citizenship, and material hardships. Keeping students within the educational system simultaneously increases pressure toward structural societal changes while also addressing racism and coloniality from the "bottom-up" perspective of Roma communities therein enacting PACE. Elevate intervenes in the reproduction of coloniality and racism at the level of research and knowledge production, as well. It closely monitors whether research reproduces social exclusion or works toward transformation by including perspectives and realities from members of Romani communities (Macías and Redondo 2012). Alongside other Roma organizations, Elevate provides a range of activities at a community level designed to facilitate the engagement of Romani parents and family with the processes of their children's learning. Beyond the confines of formal schooling and at the community level, one could argue that PACE manifests through public gatherings activities as the celebration of national and international key Romani days. The International Romani Peoples Day (Día Internacional del Pueblo Gitano), for example, is a day of remembrance of Porajmos, the often-ignored Romani holocaust that took place during World War II. Extra-institutional activities also include speech contests whereby Romani children are invited to present their own account of what being *gitana* or *gitano* entails. In spite of these efforts, the rejection of Roma remains widespread.

As one can observe, the educational system continues to serve dominant society and, as such, is structured in a way that produces absenteeism, high dropout rates, and resultant low academic achievement of minority communities. These challenges may be resolved when there is a policy that fights against exclusion and applies affective critical pedagogy and when there is both greater teacher training and greater educational resources to support such work (Abajo 1997). It is therefore also significant to note that a law mandating the inclusion of Roma culture and history in schools was recently passed in the region of Castilla y León. Such policy—if implemented nationally and in regions such as Andalusia—would significantly challenge school curricula that continue to formulate the Roma absent as historical agents. Turning to the case of Portugal, historical relations oblige us to readdress challenges of social inclusion that do not reproduce colonial legacies themselves.

Rap Kriolu: Contesting Coloniality in Lisbon, Portugal

The historical influxes of people of African (predominately Cape Verdean) descent into Portugal are tightly knit to the Portuguese imperial endeavor. These influxes can be summarized as follows: early 1960s migrations from Cape Verde were mainly an effect of Portuguese labor demand, as

well as a period of draught and famine in Cape Verde. The 1980s and 1990s saw increased immigration from former colonies due to Portugal's entrance into the European Economic Community/European Union and the consequent demand for civil construction, as Portugal sought to develop and catch up to other European Union member-states. The current picture is one of crescent complexity with apogee tides of immigration and permanent settlements that are multidirectional, multidimensional, and heterogeneous (e.g., transnational, countries of origin, familial background, class, permanence; Gusmão 2004, 80–81). As a dominant idea permeating all levels of Portuguese society, the Lusotropicalist discourse, appropriated from its Brazilian ditto (i.e., Gilberto Freyre), portrays Portugal as always having been open and loving toward alterity; the mixity and interculturality it encourages undergird a tale of Portuguese exceptionalism that denies racism in Portugal (Maeso and Araújo 2010).

Against this background, Rap Kriolu offers a counter-narrative. Kriolu, on the one hand, and rap/hip-hop, on the other, both express key processes in neglected histories of globalization. Their combination in Rap Kriolu speaks of globalized resistances. Kriolu, a creole language that emerged with the Portuguese colonial endeavor and investment in the transatlantic slave trade, “combines primarily Portuguese vocabulary with structural elements of Mandingo, Wolof, Fulani, and other West African languages” (Pardue 2012, 47). Despite its long history and continued usage, Kriolu is not an official language in Portugal or in Cape Verde. As Pardue notes, in Lisbon Kriolu has come to mean a language of immigrants. It has also become a language of resistance that articulates a way of being with its corresponding histories, conditions of oppression, and decolonial legacies, for which there is no room in dominant society and in the education system (Pardue 2012; Tom 2013). Kriolu circulates around Lisbon and Margem Sul, Lisbon's south side, operating in a local and underground scene and is largely heard in neighborhood shows. While many crews produce it, not all Kriolu rappers may be critical or “politically conscious.” Nevertheless, many rappers spoke about Kriolu as anticolonial resistance, a source of identity, as a medium through which they were able to address different audiences—often challenging others to learn their language just as they have had to learn Portuguese and English.

Hip-hop is a culture and arts movement that was originally composed of four elements: graffiti, break dancing, DJing (*deejaying*), and rapping (*emceeing/MCing*). Spread by globalized entertainment media as a planetary beacon of American commerce in the final decades of the twentieth century, hip-hop impressed many as a cultural manifestation of decadence, criminality, misogyny, and materialism. For while it is true that American culture has been disproportionately projected across the globe, subtler insidious and revolutionary aspects of hip-hop culture have transgressed such clichéd

and reductionist notions of American cultural imperialism. The culture and its elements, especially rap music, “identified with lower social classes and minority and marginalized groups throughout the world,” and society at large has been reluctant to hear and engage with the analyses, critiques, and stories that resonate from these musical expressions (Morgan 2009, 14). The forefathers of the hip-hop generation were those who inherited the promises of the United States’ post-civil rights era and were the first to find that many of these promises would not be kept, as the gains made from this monumental historical era were revoked by subsequent administrations (Lusane 2004). For those who grew up during the post-civil rights era, hip-hop was about navigating the ambiguous binaries of inclusion/exclusion from European or white American society. The arenas from which these movements have fought included (and have continued to include) education, social advancement, the fight to end legal and socioeconomic segregation, repression, and the demand for reparations of historical wrongs—all of which spoke of access and inclusion.

In the twenty-first century, hip-hop and rap have been powerful cultural forces with planetary resonance. Paralleling its commercial growth in the United States, hip-hop’s emergence in Portugal surfaced through break dance fads during the late 1980s.¹⁴ Black youth throughout Lisbon’s residential zones soon started producing rap, and rap music produced in Portuguese was subsequently appropriated into a national industry. In an interview on August 28, 2010, Mama G, manager of the first rap groups in Lisbon, explained that rap music offered youth who were immigrants and descendants of immigrants a way to talk about the second generation, kept some out of crime, and incentivized them to learn their history: “American culture, Black Culture, was important for those kids to gain some self-esteem.” The early rap music was meant to be political; its authors wanted to claim their space in Portugal and make their presence and experiences known to mainstream society.

As a “language of the periphery” in Lisbon, where not only youth of Cape Verdean descent but also youth of other African-Portuguese origins (e.g., Angolan) speak Kriolu, “Rap in kriolu articulates various subjective positions framed by the experience of growing up in racialized and marginalized urban communities while supplying a sense of the daily drama of life on the margins within and beyond Portugal” (Tom 2013, 88). Rap Kriolu is a means to convey knowledge of and from racially marginalized positions, histories, and experiences not provided in schools. To use Kriolu in rap is a way of reclaiming identity and expressing pride in their Cape Verdean

¹⁴ See Contador and Ferreira (1997); Mitchell (2001); Fradique (2003); Tickner (2008); Malone and Martínez (2010).

origins in face of Portuguese racism and maintaining historical memory of anticolonial struggles (Pardue 2012, 44; Tom 2013, 94).

While the language is a product of the imperial endeavor, and can be considered a part of the epistemicides inherent to Portuguese imperialism, to rap in Kriolu is prioritizing Africa inside Portugal. This may suggest that Kriolu is at the same time an alternative epistemological platform: a locus of enunciation that, by its mere existence, inhibits the forgetting of the imperial project, as well as being the place from which counter-narratives emerge. The MCs and educators who contributed to Tom's study underline the fact that their project is to contest the existing structures of inequality and racism, as well as to offer alternative forms of education—to help the youth learn about one's rights in relation to police violence, African or African diasporic histories of anticolonial and antiracist struggles, and about racism. In this regard, some of the younger up-and-coming MCs who have worked with established MCs affirmed that it was not just producing lyrics and having performances but screening documentaries, having sit-ins, or engaging in protest. One of Lisbon's prominent MCs, LBC (a moniker that stands for Learning Black Conception and, more recently, Luta Bu Consigi, Kriolu for "you can fight") has used rap to produce music with youth in the neighborhood of Cova da Moura. As he explains:

I teach them that the ghetto is like a prison, a social prison. I teach them that they got to see what they got before, what they got after the ghetto, what they got as opportunities in this country—all those things. What is the word African? What is the meaning of Conception—Black Conception? They don't use that. Because I teach them about the colors, why sometimes they project . . . a fight, like you fight against your color. I teach them about that. And it works. It works because you can see the self-esteem of the kids. Now when they speak they say: "Yo, I'm not what they say" because I tell them, "Yo, you got to know that we use to have queens and kings, you know, we created mathematics." Like other people, too, we have culture. I don't believe that the Ministry of Education will let us teach our history. I don't believe that. I think that we got to create our own center. We gotta get close together, the community, and find a way, independently, with no money from the government. We can do that and create a re-education center. It's not education, it's a re-education center. (Personal interview, November 6, 2010)

By addressing the ghetto as a social prison, LBC makes reference to the ways in which racism organizes spatially, creating places of exclusion that are places of confinement that reflect how the larger society is organized through structural neglect (El-Tayeb 2011, 662). Police brutality is the norm in these places, as is the deprivation or lack of quality public services. Within these spaces of confinement, or social prisons, the larger society often finds grounds to confirm the image of the people living there as being "violent," "uneducated," and "aggressive," lacking "integration," and displaying a "culture of poverty," thus obscuring the fact that the problems in the ghettos are socioeconomic and political (Hajjat 2006).

Similar to other MC educators in Lisbon and its peripheries, LBC aims to help the youth see this reality and provides them with tools to break away from it through an African-centered, or Black, Conception, what we may call a pedagogy of conflict. The pedagogy of absence appears to be the first step: it takes place by teaching the youth how the same segregationist system makes black populations be at war with themselves—what DuBois (2006) called double consciousness—and how to recognize the conditions of oppression and to transcend oppression by learning about the different social levels that it works on. As a part of this approach, Black Conception also is a pedagogy of emergences that includes the rejection of the dominant frameworks imposed on these youth to think of and about themselves and a re-centering of their own history, of Africa's legacy in terms of knowledge, and of the anticolonial and antiracist struggles led by Africans and African diasporic peoples.

Concluding Remarks

The alternative education projects examined in this article counter the historically constituted power relations of coloniality, as different communities struggle to create space for their epistemologies, histories, and ways of being and living in the world. Using PACE as an analytical framework, we have demonstrated how these initiatives, both in themselves as well as when studied together, urge us to consider education as a part of a broader decolonial project that can align our knowledge of the world with the realities excluded.

Although the histories, languages, and cultures of these populations are produced as absent in the Spanish, US, and Portuguese national education systems, access to formal schooling is essential to realizing equal citizenship rights—without renouncing the right to difference. The case of Elevate in Spain illustrates how community-based interventions that challenge barriers between schools, students, and families are part of efforts to promote scholastic achievement of Romani youth and processes of resistance against the disintegration of the Romani communities. As noted, there is a further need to address the current generational rifts. As we surmised, the nonformal educational processes call for structural and societal change addressing racism from the “bottom” up. At the same time, recent incentives are also attempting to change school curriculum. In the case of San Francisco, *SNAG* aims to teach the diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary realities of Native Peoples, with an emphasis on California. The fact that the US government historically used education—alongside policies such as relocation—to assimilate this population is underdiscussed. As a pedagogy of conflict, the project contests the drawing and redrawing of settler colonial territories alongside racist logics of displacement that continue to be at play today. The

pedagogical efforts of Romani communities in Córdoba and the Native American community of San Francisco span beyond the confines of formal schooling. In both cases, the pedagogy of absence attests to the involvement of youth within their communities and as a part of communities that continue to be invisibilized. These efforts also touch on the importance of intergenerational learning as a way to counter community dismemberment. The case of hip-hop/rap Kriolu in Portugal further exhibits how young people may be protagonists of these efforts. Hip-hop and music—born of historical marginalization—is used in different social, material, historical, and cultural contexts where producers of hip-hop/rap appropriate the medium as an alternative approach to education.

The case of Rap Kriolu in Portugal reflects the problem of the relationship between language, epistemology, and the political and the hierarchies between different languages and, of course, the people who speak these languages. Language is inseparable from culture, from how we understand the world and how we interact with it and in it (Thiong'o 1987). Kriolu emerges from imperial processes of imposition, hierarchization, and violence. Rap Kriolu, however, is part of the attempts to articulate alternatives beyond the horizon of possibilities offered by dominant colonial thinking in relation to the African experience, as it is configured globally—but distinctively localized—throughout the world. As such, Kriolu MCs use rap music as a medium of nonformal education that decolonizes or transforms monocultures of knowledge reproduced within the confines of formal schooling to promote inclusion and community sustenance from the marginalized angles of Portugal's colonial legacy and, sometimes, in dialogue with marginalized experiences resonating from the US settler colonial contexts and beyond. Challenging coloniality unique to the contemporary Portuguese context, youth confound the depoliticizing discourses of mixity and challenge historically wrought and static notions of Portugueseness through their demands for another knowledge and affirmations of being Portuguese and living in Portugal without renouncing their differences.

The counterhegemonic use of language in Rap Kriolu is not a singular case. Indeed, even though the work of SNAG with Native American youth and the standardization of education projects involving Romani communities do not center on language and function in the imperial languages (Spanish and English, respectively), it is important to understand that precisely because language is inseparable from culture, dominant language can also change through alternative interaction in and with the world, alternative modes of understanding it, and alternative political aims. In this way, “standardization” from a Romani perspective cannot be confounded with what is meant and implied by the same term from a dominant Spanish perspective on education, nor can Seventh Native American Generation be understood from within the grammar of dominant language. Yet even the

name itself requires us to place ourselves in the margins of empire and to think of ourselves not only as heirs of colonialism but also as ancestors of future generations. We affirm that challenges to the manifestation of coloniality in national school systems worldwide is a feat that can be undertaken by approaches such as PACE that engage the perspectives and practices of communities historically subjected to repression. There is much to be learned from these communities if we seek to transform education.

From the remnants of empires to the continued existence of settler colonialism, the cases studied in this article suggest that decolonization of education passes through the centralization of the knowledges and realities that are produced as absent as part of the Eurocentricity in coloniality. As such, one can say that the Native American case centralizes the Native realities, points of view, and histories, while the Romani and the Afro-Portuguese do the same from these distinct vantage points. Therefore, these projects can be seen as necessary methodological recentralizations: Africanization (Kriolization), Indigenization, and Romanization, respectively. The question of identity remains significant, as none of these populations are static or “pure.” Indeed, the process of sociogenesis as the formulation of a new humanity entails abandoning the colonial imaginaries of purity and authenticity without a priori rejecting notions of purity and authenticity stemming from “other” onto-epistemological groundings. An implicit central point throughout the article has been that, as a process involving taking responsibility for thought and ideas and articulating the conditions that make us who and what we are, applying a decolonial approach to education does not reject identity. Instead, it involves a process of articulation that respects identity and difference between peoples, knowledges, and histories and that also recognizes how past and present hierarchical difference created through coloniality continues today. For example, it includes taking seriously that being Native American is not the same as being what the wider US society understands as Native American. In other words, being Native American needs to account for the specific tribe or nation, its own historical trajectory; its ontological, spiritual, and epistemic groundings; and its current processes of sociogenesis. Decolonial historical realism allows navigating through the seeming contradictions that otherwise emerge when we address groups through the rationality imposed on them—and our understanding of them—through coloniality. It requires that we understand difference, taking outset in plurality without ignoring coloniality. In doing so, we simultaneously work toward understanding our shared histories without ignoring how these, as well as our presents and our futures, are different. We contend that in these analytical moves lie important contributions to working on a solid basis on which “our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (Lorde 1984, 110).

Acknowledging difference, in other words, implies acknowledging the continued existence of colonial hierarchies and structures that support those hi-

erarchies. The cases studied illustrated different interconnected struggles that challenge the colonial master narrative and history while they also exhibit applicability of PACE in different contexts through different mediums and approaches. For while decolonization is not a metaphor, it is a philosophical process that, on a global scale, may take into account the historical relationship between the European colonial endeavor, settler colonialism, the administration of diversity, and the processes of resistance to coloniality in contemporary societies (Suárez-Krabbe 2015b). The official histories that are taught in public schools have concrete (sociogenetic) repercussions in relation to the current inability of formal educational institutions to accept plurality and diversity in a consequential manner. The nonformal education projects studied here, in turn, seem not only to affirm difference and underscore plurality. By challenging received practices of education, and contributing to thinking of diversity from frameworks unconfined to dominant Eurocentric understandings (and, in some cases, challenging settler colonialism), they also make a difference: they are engaged in the necessarily multifaceted and manifold process of decolonization, including the construction of a new humanity.

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