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I Look to the Ground Beneath My Feet: An Insurgent Performance (Auto)ethnography

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**I LOOK TO THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET:
AN INSURGENT PERFORMANCE (AUTO)ETHNOGRAPHY**

A Dissertation Presented

by

TIMOTHY MATTHEW LEE SUTTON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2018

Department of Communication

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AN INSURGENT PERFORMANCE (AUTO)ETHNOGRAPHY

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TIMOTHY MATTHEW LEE SUTTON

Approved as to style and content by:

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Caught in my struggle for higher achievement
And my search for love
That don't seem to cease

“The Same Situation” by Joni Mitchell (1974)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My dissertation project began with an epistemological crisis. In 2011, the state of Arizona passed a law which effectively outlawed the teaching of Mexican American Studies in public K-12 schools. As a result, the wildly successful MAS program in Tucson was shut down. School administrators entered classrooms that were in session in order to box up books (including Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*). I was preparing to work on my prospectus at the time, and began to wonder how I was supposed to ethically engage in a project of knowledge creation when specific knowledge was being denied to specific students in specific places.

Roberto (Dr. Cintli) Rodriguez's blog posts for *Truthout.org* helped to put what was happening in Arizona into perspective. At the time, he wrote, "If people want to see what erasure or a disappeared curriculum looks like, they can look not to Tucson, but to every K-12 curriculum in the nation. This is not hyperbole" (2012, n.p.). It is the curriculum and pedagogy of Tucson's Raza Studies program that taught me to begin by looking to the ground beneath my feet. Rodriguez continues:

Among those who look on in horror at what is happening in Arizona, many are blinded to the fact that this has already occurred in every state of the union. Arizona was the last holdout. ... This alludes to the teaching of the so-called master narrative of history, traditionally taught in US schools as the story of this nation and continent, beginning with the pilgrims or with

Christopher Columbus, an event that set in motion the ideas of providence and manifest destiny - the belief that God had bestowed upon Europeans/European Americans the right to conquer all of the Americas. ... Asking what is at stake in Arizona is not only asking the wrong question, but it is asking it a few centuries too late. (2012, n.p.)

Rodriguez' words continued to percolate as I attended the ninth Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in 2013. I eagerly anticipated attending a panel organized by Bryant Keith Alexander titled, "The Iconography of the West: Auto/Ethnographic Representations of the West(erns)," but more for the participants than the topic. As I found my seat, I noticed a flyer had been placed on every chair. It was a call to respond to the panelists' presentations to be published together as a special issue of a journal. Sitting down while reading the call, a light went on. Rodriguez' blog posts, Bryant's invitations to critically examine the Western genre, Norman Denzin's book *Searching for Yellowstone*, and a brief autoethnographic essay written for Claudio's seminar where I began by asking, "Why don't I speak Spanish?" all fell into place, like pieces in a game of Tetris. (Of course nothing is ever so neat, but it seems like that in retrospect.)

This was the inspiration for writing "John Wayne in the Irvine Ranch Farmers' Market." I submitted the first, rambling version as my prospectus. That was pared down into a conference performance for QI 2014, and once again expanded into my response for Bryant's third panel of autoethnographic encounters with the West(ern), "Don't Take Your Guns to Town." These essays

were published in a special issue of the *International Review of Qualitative Research* (Fall 2015, Vol. 8, No. 3). Chapter 3 of this dissertation is, I think, the final, most complete version of this essay.

I gathered much of the information about outlawing the Mexican American Studies program in Tucson, Arizona by reporting for a podcast and community radio program called Education Radio.¹ We devoted two hour-long programs to the issue which aired on WWOJ in the Northampton, MA area the week of July 1 (part 1) and July 7 (part 2), 2012, six months after the department was dismantled. The podcast has been available online ever since. For this two-part episode titled “Arizona Goddam! The Fight for Raza Studies in Tucson,” We interviewed MAS student activists, as well as Jose Gonzales, who taught American government and history classes from a MAS perspective and Roberto (Dr. Cintli) Rodriguez from the Chicana/o Studies dept. at the University of Arizona. In addition to maestros Gonzales and Rodriguez, I’d like to thank the Education Radio Collective including Barbara Madeloni, Tim Scott, Deborah Keisch, Dani O’Brien, Kate Way, Hannah Mills, and Chris Herland.

* * *

The International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry deserves to be mentioned as the incubator for quite nearly every word written here. Held annually at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign since 2005, I was

¹ Available here: <http://education-radio.blogspot.com/2012/07/arizona-goddam-fight-for-raza-studies.html>

uncertain whether to attend in 2015. Resulting from the controversy over UI-UC firing Steven Salaita, some academics responded by boycotting the University. I did ultimately go, but wrote my performance to specifically address the situation. Chapter 4 of this dissertation is a polished version of what I presented at QI 2015 at the University of Illinois, under the title, “What am I doing here? Isn’t there a boycott going on? Or, reflections on academic freedom and decolonizing knowledge production.” Earlier, I performed a trial run at SUNY Albany for their Latin American, Caribbean & U.S. Latino Studies graduate conference, “Decolonization in the 21st Century: Revolutionary perspectives from Latin America and beyond.”

* * *

Chapter 5, “Heart Murmur” appears in the journal *Qualitative Inquiry* (2017, Vol. 23, No. 6). I presented a previous version at UMass Amherst on April 2, 2016, under the title, “Between the World and (My)Self: Affecting Performance” as part of Forms of Feeling: Navigating the Affective Turn, the eighth annual interdisciplinary graduate conference sponsored by the UMass Amherst English Graduate Student Organization. I’d like to thank Kimberlee Pérez not only for her thoughtful comments, but also for being one of the few in attendance at that panel.

* * *

A condensed version of chapter 6, “Avatar, Tar Sands and Dad” was first performed at the 2016 International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign with the generous assistance of Claudio Moreira, Ayshia Stephenson and Carmen Hernandez-Ojeda. A revised version, closer to this version here, was performed for a graduate seminar on qualitative inquiry taught by Kate Way in the Leadership and Policy Program at UMass Dartmouth's School of Education. It has also been performed for an undergraduate class titled, "Monsters, Tales and Going to the Dark Side" taught by Robin McLean for the English Department at Clark College in Worcester, MA. My thanks to Kate Way, Robin McLean and the many students who volunteered to read and asked such brilliant questions, and to the anonymous reviewers for their close reading and careful comments which helped to improve this text.

I'd like to thank Karen Werner for leading me to the documentary *Tipping Point*, and for inviting Clayton Thomas-Müller to speak at Goddard College. It was there, while having lunch with the two of you that one of the crucial pieces for "Avatar, Tar Sands and Dad" clicked into place.

* * *

I want to acknowledge the members of two activist collectives I was a part of before and during this project, Education Radio and Can't Be Neutral. So much activist work never makes it into dissertation form, but the Education Radio collective was central to my understanding of the politics of neoliberal education reform—and its broader impact on society—far more than any class I took. More importantly, Can't Be Neutral took that knowledge and put it into action. The work we did building connections across race and class, though not always

successful, is an example of spiritual activism at its heart. In a world that privileges liberal individualism, building community is a radical act of love. Love, human connection and solidarity are the best antidotes we have to fear, uncertainty and precarity. In particular, Dani O'Brien and Barbara Madeloni, who overlapped with me across both groups, your compassion and brilliance and commitment to changing the world are inspirations. I am a better human being for having known you.

Thanks, especially, to Robin McLean and to Pearly for offering refuge, hiking excursions and a writers' retreat at the Crows' Nest. This dissertation benefits from Robin's close readings at early stages. Robin witnessed its construction and is built into its foundation. I know I stole at least one of your lines. Your writing and our ongoing discussions of writing and the writing life are not just catalysts, but the fuel to persevere. It was through our discussions that that I came to a dialogical, embodied awareness of Anzaldúa's theory of composition: "The art of composition, whether you are composing a work of fiction or your life, or whether you are composing reality, always means pulling off fragmented pieces and putting them together into a whole that makes sense" (1999, p. 238).

I cannot imagine a better committee to work with. Kimberlee and Kysa, thank you both for your careful reading, and for the questions you raised, because it is in that moment that this work is located. I want to recognize an earlier version of my committee, too. Ron Welburn agreed to read my prospectus, when

no one else did. In his reading, he saw things I did not know were there. And Demetria Shabazz, you picked me up off the ground and set me back on my feet again.

Last to thank, because his influence is so significant to my development as a researcher, comes Claudio. Seeing your performances at conferences and in classrooms has opened my eyes to new forms of academic scholarship. Reading your words, alone and with Marcelo, has opened a door that I didn't know was closed. I am so grateful to our department for bringing you to Amherst where I had the chance to work with you. I remember running into you outside of Machmer, beneath the towering Du Bois Library one day, not long after you arrived. Most likely you were smoking. I was dissatisfied with the forms of representation available to me from my limited reading of ethnographies. I wanted to challenge the ethical relationship between researcher and researched. You replied, "Ah, you're talking about decolonizing research." That's where it all began.

ABSTRACT

I LOOK TO THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET: AN INSURGENT PERFORMANCE (AUTO)ETHNOGRAPHY

FEBRUARY 2018

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This is a methodological dissertation written as a performance text within a performance paradigm. I use performance (auto)ethnography to turn the researchers' gaze back on Western systems of knowledge creation. My approach is based on Diversi & Moreira's (2009, 2016) between autoethnographies. While drawing on performance theory, I employ performance principally as my method (Spry, 2011). Within this performance paradigm, (auto)ethnography is a critically reflexive methodology that demands a commitment to embodiment in an ethical symbiosis with representation. This work is located at the intersection of the political, the performative and the pedagogical (Denzin, 2003a). From this center, I turn to examine my surroundings.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

VIII

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the “emergency situation” in which we live is the rule. We must arrive at a concept of history which corresponds to this. Then it will become clear that the task before us is the introduction of a real state of emergency; and our position in the struggle against Fascism will thereby improve. Not the least reason that the latter has a chance is that its opponents, in the name of progress, greet it as a historical norm. – The astonishment that the things we are experiencing in the 20th century are “still” possible is by no means philosophical. It is not the beginning of knowledge, unless it would be the knowledge that the conception of history on which it rests is untenable.

Walter Benjamin (1940) – *8th Thesis on the Philosophy of History*

Sitting down to write this morning, I first clear my desk and find scraps of paper, notes, records of thoughts jotted down, externalized memories. One offers an insight, a possible point of departure for thinking about writing: Writing is like life, it is always a struggle (Claudio, in class). There will always be rewriting. Work through this writing. To quote Claudio quoting Norman: “Writing creates the worlds we inhabit” (Denzin, 2003a, p. xii; Diversi & Moreira, 2009, p. 73).

Another thought: Maestro Jose Gonzales was interviewed for the documentary *Precious Knowledge* (Palos & McGinnis, 2011), about the elimination of the Mexican American Studies program in Tucson, Arizona. In it, he describes the Indigenous, Nahuatl concept of *Xinachtli*; he says, “You plant the seed, and that seed will grow.” That is what this dissertation is to me. These are seeds I am

scattering. Already some have sprouted. I have created more than one discreet performance from the soil tilled here.

So, I am experimenting, trying out some new things. This involves imitation and citation, for which I make the argument that that is part of performativity. This is a methodological dissertation written as a performance text within a performance paradigm. I use performance (auto)ethnography to turn the researchers' gaze back on Western systems of knowledge creation. While drawing on performance theory, I employ performance principally as my method (Spry, 2011). Within this performance paradigm, (auto)ethnography is a critically reflexive methodology that demands a commitment to embodiment in an ethical symbiosis with representation. From this center, I turn to examine my surroundings.

To read this text, I invite you to shift your perspective. The old rules don't apply. Ask not what I have proved, but what do you feel while reading? To continue to read in the old ways means you won't be able to see it. It can't be seen, except like an anamorphosis, by shifting your perspective. You might not be the same after you're done reading. I know I'm not the same after writing.

I divide this introduction into three parts. I begin by first exploring writing as a form of inquiry. I discuss performative writing as theorized by Della Pollock, and Tami Spry's approach to performance as method. I go into the performative "I" stance from which the text is written. This is a subject position that attempts consciously to engage in the process of identity de/re/construction.

It is not a moment set off in italics where I talk about the intersection of class/race/gender/sexuality, etc. from which I write, never to be mentioned again; rather, it is a starting place that hopes to more actively engage in that discussion.

In part two, with the section “Onto-epistemology, or a Pedagogy of the Land,” I attempt a first step toward not just embodiment, but incorporating my *located* body into the text. I use Denzin, Lincoln and Smith’s (2008) approach to critical Indigenous pedagogies, and highlight four obstacles that lie between critical and Indigenous methods.

I conclude with part three by demonstrating my approach to writing about history. Framed by Norman Denzin on one side and Walter Benjamin on the other, I refuse linear narratives. Like Denzin, I’m looking for a new (hi)story, new endings (or beginnings?) with which to script this life. Taking inspiration from Walter Benjamin’s description of the *Angelus Novus*, my approach to history takes the past out of its context to create new meanings in the present. This opens up a performance of possibilities which offers no guarantees, but dwells in hope.

Throughout the second half of the chapter, a number of topics arise. Not so much as subjects to be researched, but rather to demonstrate how I approach writing from the position of performance (auto)ethnography. This is not to say this is a dissertation *about* Teatro Campesino, for example, but rather to demonstrate that taking the stance of performance (auto)ethnography offers an

ethical position to engage in these discussions. From this position, I challenge U.S. capitalist imperialism, colonialism, and Western epistemology while trying to make space for Indigenous epistemologies, *Red Pedagogy* (Grande, 2004), a pedagogy of the land. As much as possible, this is an attempt to put these ideas into practice—to both write about and to demonstrate.

PART I

Writing is my method of inquiry

Writing is sensuous, sensing the body, bodily senses. Writing is an embodied activity. Writing, as a form of inquiry, is my method. And as such, I seek to make my writing perform.

* * *

It can be difficult to write *about* performance because it's ephemeral, because what happens between the performer and the audience is important, because embodiment is important, because the act of reading (performing) aloud in front of an audience is important, because connecting with people is important.

For example, I want to write about the body of work Bryant Keith Alexander has brought to the field, but all I can think of is his body. His height, his smile, his dreads that he cut off a few years back. The big hug he gave me at the end of his panel, "Don't Take Your Guns to Town." Bryant offers more than scholarship, he offers other ways of being in academic spaces (Alexander, 2013). He offers love, encouragement, collaboration in an environment that privileges

ego, competition, and who's first author. He demonstrates that to make private details and personal truths the material of scholarship is a "critical intervention in social, political, and cultural life" (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 763).

Bryant Keith Alexander (2005): I make the strong suggestion that performance ethnography is and can be a strategic method of inciting culture. The collaborative power of performance and ethnography utilizes an embodied aesthetic practice coupled with the descriptive knowledge of lives and the conditions of living, to stir up feeling and provoke audiences to a critical social realization and possible response. (pp. 411-412)

I am attracted to Alexander's description of scholarship as "inciting culture." It feels like a radical move in an academic environment that tends to ignore the role scholarship plays in contributing to the very culture under critique. Stacy Holman Jones (2005) describes autoethnography as a "balancing act" between writing autoethnography and writing about it, between the showing and the telling, the doing and the done.

Stacy Holman Jones (2005): How do I balance telling (about autoethnography's history, methods, responsibilities, and possibilities) with showing (doing the work of autoethnography here on these pages)? How much of myself do I put in or leave out? (p. 764)

This balancing act is precisely the tightrope that performance (auto)ethnography walks. It is what makes autoethnography performative. As Della Pollock (1998b) states: "performative writing collapses distinctions by which creative and critical

writing are typically isolated” (p. 80). It balances between the showing and the telling, the creative and the critical. Mary Weems describes this high wire act as the “Imagination-Intellect” suggesting that each requires the other:

Mary Weems (2001): Like the human heart and its arteries, the imagination and intellect are inextricably linked, they develop simultaneously and, I suggest, one is not possible without the other. (p. 179)

For Tami Spry this distinction falls between the text (the telling, or writing about) and the body (meaning embodiment, i.e. showing or doing autoethnography). And it is this distinction that turns attention to the aesthetics of writing into part of the epistemic process of knowledge creation—the, “embodied aesthetic practice” (Alexander, 2005, p. 411) mentioned by Bryant above.

Tami Spry (2011): If words are our means of expressing the complexity of being human, then analyzing the aesthetics of writing are tantamount to the check and balance of agency and representation. ... Words and body are a praxis reflected through language, thus the aesthetic construction of language is part and parcel of this method of scholarship (p. 105).

Craig Gingrich-Philbrook (2005): In the case of autoethnography, the two strands of barbed wire manifest as a demand to create knowledge (the epistemic) and a demand to create art (the aesthetic). While we need not see these demands as diametrically opposed, neither need we see them as

synonymous. In any event, we leave the relationship between them
unconsidered at our peril. (p. 303; Also quoted in Spry, 2011, p. 105)

Gingrich-Philbrook's twin strands of barbed wire forms the double helix of
performance (auto)ethnography's DNA. The aesthetics of performative writing
demonstrates a commitment to embodiment, to sensing and feeling. This
commitment to aesthetics and embodiment, in turn, demands attention to the
ethics of representation.

* * *

Writing is sensuous, sensing the body, bodily senses. Writing is an
embodied activity. Writing, as a form of inquiry, is my method. And as such, I
seek to make my writing perform.

* * *

I'd like to offer a guide through the pages that follow—like Virgil guided
Dante through his Inferno? No, too Biblical. Like Sacagawea guiding Lewis and
Clark to the Pacific Northwest? No, too colonial. Don't know about these guides.
Who's there to guide Western society's others through its stories? Where are the
white porters? Or as my good friends hari and Claudio so eloquently ask,
“Where's my fucking horse?” (kumar & Moreira, 2012). No, perhaps not. I think
I'd rather make you work. This isn't going to be easy for either of us. If you're
having trouble crossing over, you can find your own coyote to take you across the
border, but if you do, be warned. He may bite.

THIS IS A MESSY VISCERAL TEXT
WRITTEN IN DESPAIR AND DESPERATION
WE ASK YOU TO MEET US
HALF-WAY BETWEEN HELL AND NARRATIVES
BETWEEN BEING HUMAN AND THE POLITICS
OF REPRESENTATION IN THESE DAYS OF
GLOBALIZATION
GLOBALIZATION
GLOBALIZATION
THE MODERN FACE OF COLONIZATION (Diversi & Moreira, 2012,
p. 192)

These words are not my own, but Claudio and Marcelo's, two beautiful people on whose shoulders I stand. This passage is from a recent text with a long title, "Decolonizing Constructions of Childhood and History: Interrupting Narratives of Avoidance to Children's Questions About Social Injustice." In it they ask some important questions about how colonialist ideals are transmitted to children across generations. In a similar vein, Deborah Miranda's (2013) book, *Bad Indians*, investigates the inheritance of colonial violence across generations and through California public schools' 4th grade Mission project. Her writing is particularly poignant in tracing the abuse in her own childhood back to the enslavement of California's Indigenous peoples by the Franciscan padres.

With these beautiful people as inspiration, I investigate the role of culture and politics as pedagogical moments where the violent legacy of settler colonialism is passed on. I locate my body within the Western film genre in order to more carefully examine the patrimony I have inherited (see Chapter 3, "John Wayne in the Irvine Ranch Farmers' Market"). My inquiry must be directed

inward as much as it is toward external structures that shape me, to root out ways I have internalized forms of oppression.

Standing here, north of the Rio Grande, I reach out my hand attempting to bridge the gap, to meet you half-way. “Then we can talk. There in the halfway place, we can have a dialogue” (Diversi & Moreira, 2009, p. 27).

I write a betweener text (see Diversi & Moreira, 2009):

A found poem:

Between disciplines,
between writer and reader,
between Hell and narrative (Diversi & Moreira, 2012, p. 202),
between grad school and professorship,
between social science and humanities,
between science and art,
between the imagination and the intellect (Weems, 2001),
between creativity and analysis,
between art and critique,
between text and context,
between fact and fiction,
between reality and imagination,
between being and knowing,
between epistemology and ontology,
between reason and emotion,
between the past and the future,
between us and them,
 between you and me,
between native and settler,
between cowboys and Indians,
between the documented and the undocumented,
between self and structure (Pollock, 1998b, p. 87),
between nature and culture,
between wilderness and civilization,
between story and self,
between body and mind,

between subject and object,
“between speaking and acting” (Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. v),
“between the body and language” (Spry, 2011, p. 27),
between *Text and Performance*,
between performance and performativity,
between the doing and the done (Denzin, 2003a),
between private troubles and political issues (Mills, 1959),
between the personal and the historical,
between storytelling and research (Moreira, 2008, p. 665)
between anecdotes and data,
between memories and field notes,
between theory and experience (Moreira, 2008, p. 665),
between theory and practice (Smith, 2006, p. 152),
between the symbol & the symbolized,
entre la luz y la sombra (Subcommandante Insurgente Galeano, 2014),
between Spanish and English,
between self and other,
 between friends.

Let’s start with the introduction. This is a preamble, meant to point the way forward. It is not a text that stands alone. It is a stepping stone on the way to the dissertation, which not many folks will be reading, if we’re honest with each other. Maybe once the dissertation is filed away in the library databases, it might could turn into something. That’s still a ways off, however. This, here and now, is an introduction. Think of it like a map—a document that points the way, stakes out a territory, surveys the lay of the land. Funny, these metaphors... All about claiming territory.

It’s not just a text, though. It’s also a performance, and a record. This is a performance insofar as I’m participating in this ceremony, this excruciatingly

drawn out, poverty-stricken process of graduate school. It's a performance in that I am an active body typing these words, as you are bodily reading them, evaluating them, wondering what the hell I'm up to. It's like a dance, which is a simile, or should I say, it is a dance, which is a metaphor. I want to stop there, however, before getting into too deep water (another metaphor). These metaphors are not without their problems, as Claudio (Moreira, 2010) knows. Metaphors, like language, are laden with power, and like performance, tend to overflow their containers.

I'm not supposed to be talking to you like I know you, even when that formality is a pretense. You're most likely one of three people on my committee, or one of about three friends who have kindly been offering comments on drafts. Still, it's generally expected I write in a voice that addresses the "community" of scholars working in this discipline. And that's what trips me up. Just who has access to this community, and who has been left out? Who gets to determine what looks or sounds "professional" (Alexander, 2013) or "collegial" (Trask, 1999)?

Performative "I", or Nahualismo

I was talking recently with Lisa Brooks at Amherst College about the poetry of Deborah Miranda (specifically her book *Bad Indian*, 2013). Lisa said that for too long scholars have approached Native American stories as texts to which theory is

applied. “They look at this as data to be analyzed. We’re saying, ‘No. This is *theory!*’” (Brooks, 2014, personal communication).

* * *

This is not a metaphor:

Performances are stories.

Stories are theories.

Performance is method.

Stories are ways of knowing.

Performances are ways of being,
onto-epistemologies.

Stories are performances,
performances and pedagogy.

This is not a metaphor.

* * *

Performance (auto)ethnography is both theory and method—my method of self. The self is a story, and this is its telling.

* * *

Gloria Anzaldúa (1999): *Nepantla* is a stage that women and men, and whoever is willing to change into a new person and further grow and develop, go through. The concept is articulated as a process of writing: it is one of the stages of writing, the stage where you have all these ideas, all these images, sentences and paragraphs, and where you are trying to make them

into one piece, a story, plot or whatever—it is all very chaotic. So you feel like you are living in that mist of chaos. It is also a little bit of an agony you experience. My symbol of that is *Coyolxauhqui*, the moongoddess, who was dismembered by her brother *Huitzilopochtli*. The art of composition, whether you are composing a work of fiction or your life, or whether you are composing reality, always means pulling off fragmented pieces and putting them together into a whole that makes sense. A lot of my composition theories are not just about writing but about how people live their lives, construct their cultures, so actually about how people construct reality (p. 237-238).

* * *

Split into fragments thus, I begin to reconstruct this fragmented identity. I try to fit the pieces together, but it's like they are pieces from a different puzzle. I never was satisfied with the picture on the front of the box. And so I assemble them into something new. This fragmented writing style reflects a fragmented existence.

Narrator 1: Via Denzin, I employ Derridean deconstruction.

Narrator 2: How about: “Denzin employs a Derridean deconstruction.” You can even cite the workshop you attended with him. That's what he said, “This is a Derridean project. If it was a Deleuzean project, it would look different” (Denzin, 2013, personal communication).

Narrator 1: I know he said that, but I had no idea what he was talking about.

Narrator 3: But wait, this is not exclusively deconstructive. I'm inspired by Stuart Hall, too. I seek to re-articulate meanings, to reconstruct my identity, to change what it means to be a Western hero, a cowboy. Reconstruction follows along after the deconstruction.

Narrator 1: But I do not employ Derridean deconstruction. I've never *read* Derrida. I am using Gloria Anzaldúa! Are there similarities? Yes, probably, but how would I know?

Narrator 2: This could also be Foucaultian "technologies of the self" or self-cultivation.

Narrator 3: But why should understanding always and only come through European theory? Stuart Hall will always remain my entry point, but this is pure Anzaldúa. You don't need Foucault to understand Anzaldúa. In fact it's through Anzaldúa (and Hall) that I have come to know Foucault and Derrida.

* * *

Nahualismo. This I learned from Anzaldúa, nahualismo, shape-shifting. I am learning. "I am an un/learning body in the process of feeling" (Madison, 1999, p. 109).

* * *

In the pages that follow I turn my scattered, fragmented body/mind-scape into a messy, visceral/cerebral text. This itself is a magician's trick, using representation to fool you into thinking this is the real thing (that is, critical

realism). You know it's not, but go along with the pretense, and in the process you might start to wonder whether anything's real (that is, when you begin to peel back the layers of representation and performance to find only more layers of representation and performance). You see, my body has long left the text. The "I" that claims to author this text, the story of self residing in my body which is not a story, is no longer present. In its place, I leave behind a marker, this performative "I" that lives in the text as a mnemonic device, a symbol, or representation of its author. Or is it an icon, as there's some connection that remains behind? What could it be? Some aspect of my performance of self that lingers... You've picked it up and now, what's this? Ah, that's interesting! Where did that come from? You made that, this image that forms in your mind of the author that is me. Where do you picture me typing these words?

I know that the writing "I" is no longer present when the text is read. That the reader brings her/his/their own understandings of the text, its author and themselves. That different things stand out to different readers. That this "I" is in the process of stringing together these thoughts that never ends. That is already underway. ~~Is under revision.~~ Has been edited for content and style. Has all been said before (see Pollock, 2007; and Spry, 2011).

The performative "I" stands in direct contrast to the "eye"-witness, to the traditional ethnographer engaged in "participant observation," or the privileged witness able to objectively chronicle the actions of an "Other." A standpoint on shifting ground, this performative "I", in relation to audience, to text, to

body/embodiment. This performative “I”, not fully visible to me, not yet envisioned. This performative “I”, which is me the writer, and later the editor, and later the reader, and at some points all three, or something else yet again.

Tami Spry (2011): I argue that a persona exists in the autoethnographic text that is and is not the autoethnographer. It is a performative-I persona, a particular construction of self, that the autoethnographer seeks to embody through performance. (p. 30)

Something lingers across these words from the embodied I that thinks and writes, to the written “I” that performs and triggers your idea of me. Is it voice? Thought? Relationship? But, is this your story or ours? It is no longer exclusively mine. Who’s the performer now? I share it with you, gentle reader, to make it into something new. Do with it what you will. I send this performance text out into the world, not knowing what will come of it, but hoping. In a workshop at QI, Soyini Madison taught me there is power in performance to move us. Where—we can’t predict, but we can hope.

PART II

Onto-Epistemology, or A Pedagogy of the Land

Sitting on the 26th floor of the W.E.B. DuBois library, looking out the high-rise window at the landscape. I’m here for a writing retreat. Five days of uninterrupted writing, reflection & instruction. A welcome respite offered to

fifteen lucky participants (but as a friend said, “all grad students should have that opportunity.”).

Today I look to the South, to the town of Amherst & the Holyoke Range, across the undulating hills. I know there is a grid of streets, a network of houses, of homes, but I can’t tell from where I sit looking on from above. Hidden by the tree tops in summer (which begins in three days—the longest day of the year) a green carpet of leaves hides the people who live on the ground below. There’s Mount Tom and Mount Holyoke with the Connecticut River snaking between, across the valley floor. Though I can’t see it from where I sit, I know that Mount Sugarloaf lies behind me to the north.

Spires poking above the trees like a picture postcard seem unreal to my West Coast eyes. The steeple of the church overlooks the town common, and a tower on Amherst College’s campus beyond. Of course I sit atop the tallest tower in the valley—a great phallus of learning, this library at UMass. It stands out from its surroundings, a landmark seen from afar towering above the campus. Sitting up here writing, looking out the window allows me to view the landscape from above, appreciate the beauty of the valley, this “Pioneer” valley, but as I look out, I also try to change my perspective. To change how I perceive the land, and my place in it. Leslie Marmon Silko teaches me that the landscape is not something separate, something out there. No, I am as much a part of the landscape as it is a part of me, whether standing on a rock, or this carpeted floor, concrete, brick and steel.

Leslie Marmon Silko (1996): So long as the human consciousness remains *within* the hills, canyons, cliffs, and the plants, clouds and sky, the term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. “A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view” does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *outside* or *separate from* the territory she or he surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on. There is no high mesa edge or mountain peak where one can stand and not immediately be part of all that surrounds. (pp. 27-28)

Once I attempt this ontological shift, a great number of questions follow:

Can I engage in an ontological shift in my relationship with the land through writing? Does this honor my commitment to decolonizing methodologies? Or am I colonizing Indigenous stories and relationships to this land? What stories does this land hold? Can I tell these stories? What is the proper way to tell them? What do I contribute in the telling?

Manulani Aluli Meyer (2008): Land is more than a physical place. It is an idea that engages knowledge and contextualizes knowing. It is the key that turns the doors inward to reflect on how space shapes us. Space as fullness, as interaction, as thoughts planted. It is not about emptiness, but consciousness. It is an epistemological idea because it conceptualizes those things of value to embed them in a context. Land is more than just a

physical locale; it is a mental one that becomes water on the rock of our being. Consideration of our place, our mother, is the point here. And she is more than beautiful, or not. *She is your mother* (p. 219).

I seek an onto-epistemological (Barad, 2003) shift that rejects the self/other dialectic and an embrace of the self/world relationship. Informed by Indigenous worldviews, this is a reframing of what is not-self *not* as outside, different and other, but rather reseeing the self as part of a network of familial relationships with both humans and nonhumans. These relationships are both historically situated and storied. Manulani Meyer (2008), speaking about Hawaiian epistemology, tells us that difference is what we all have in common. This can unite, instead of divide.

Manulani Aluli Meyer: One does not simply learn about land, we learn best *from* land. This knowing makes you intelligent to my people (p. 219).

* * *

These hills or mountains, the Holyoke Range, once sheltered Daniel Shays in his revolt against repressive taxation following the Revolutionary War, having thrown off one tyrant only to replace him with another. Two centuries later, George W. Bush cut taxes on the wealthy and corporations while waging two wars overseas. And once again working people bear the cost in lives lost at war, and jobs and homes lost in the recession.

Insurgency

Adam Gaudry (2011): Research on Indigenous peoples tends to reproduce tired colonial narratives that justify occupation and oppression. It also effectively renders the validity of Indigenous cultural knowledge meaningless through its appropriation and translation by knowledge-extraction industries such as anthropology, sociology, policy studies, and law. The extraction approach to research involves removing knowledge from its immediate context and presenting it to a highly specialized group of outsiders. In most academic settings, applying this model constitutes “good academic research” and is usually rewarded with degrees, jobs, tenure, and research funding. (pp. 113 – 114)

I seek an insurgent research (Gaudry, 2011). I use the word “insurgent” with full cognizance of its dangerous connotations in a post-9/11, anti-terrorism era. I choose this word because it is dangerous. Because “revolution” has lost its radical edge, as has “radical”. Insurgency is necessarily part of the process of decolonization. It is dangerous (see Madison, 2009; Giroux, 2014b).

Norman Denzin: “At stake is an ‘insurgent cultural politics’ that challenges neo-fascist state apparatuses. This cultural politics encourages a critical race consciousness that flourishes within the free and open spaces of a ‘vibrant democratic public culture and society’” (2003b, p. 258; paraphrasing Giroux, 2000, p. 127).

I describe my work as insurgent because I seek to disrupt the neoliberal empire of corporate capitalism based in the U.S.; the occupation of Indigenous lands—including Puerto Rico and Hawaii; mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline that feeds it; and environmental injustice—all of which preys on Black, Brown and Red bodies disproportionately.

Soyini Madison (2009): A dangerous ethnography seeks to enter surfaces, but, moreover, enters what is often hidden in plain sight—the convolutions and complications below the surface, the systems that generate and keep surfaces in place. (p. 190)

That’s a lot to ask of a dissertation.

I start from the point of social justice. I cannot in good conscience conduct research that investigates various communicative practices in the media or across cultures that does not have social justice as its starting point. I want my work to be without value to corporate and military funding agencies. This is not an easy proposition given the current neoliberal university climate.

Henry Giroux (2014b): Defining theory and dangerous thinking as part of a critical pedagogy and emancipatory project becomes increasingly difficult for part-time faculty and those not on the tenure line who are harnessed with the increased pressures posed by the corporate university coupled with the market-driven production of an ongoing culture of uncertainty, insecurity and fear. (para. 12)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2006): Increasingly, research is viewed as an activity that must be measured and assessed for quality as part of a researcher's performance, and an individual's performance is linked directly to a department's and institution's ranking. A researcher working for social justice is likely to be involved in hours of work that does not lead to a "quality" academic publication—they may contribute to major social change but their research ranking will not reflect their contribution to society. (p. 161)

With Linda Tuhiwai Smith, I cast my lot with Indigenous researchers who, "work the borders, betwixt and between institutions and communities, systems of power and systemic injustice, cultures of dominance and cultures in survival mode, politics and theory, theory and practice" (p. 152). Insurgent research is, "written from that messy intersection, from the borders of the vast and expanding territory that is the margin, that exists "outside" the security zone, outside the gated and fortified community" (p. 152). Insurgent research engages in struggle. It takes sides. It knows where it stands; it has a standpoint. Insurgent research questions dominant paradigms of research. It "unsettles the status quo" (p. 161); it is unsettling.

We all know
you can't use the master's tools
to dismantle the master's house.

So I put down these tools I've inherited,
and start looking for new tools.

Here's one.

I know that dismantling the master's house
leaves me without a roof.

I stand out here under the open sky.

The wind and the rain say
give it all away

What have I got
to lose?

This is, in part, why I choose performance (auto)ethnography, or really why, as Claudio says, I didn't choose (auto)ethnography, it chose me (Moreira, 2008, p. 668). These are *not* the master's tools. Neither is ethnographic poetry, nor testimonio, nor ethnodrama/ethnotheater. Performance (auto)ethnography is insurgent.

in·sur·gent (in-sûr'-dʒənt)

adj.

1. Rising in active revolt against established authority.
 - 1.1. Of or relating to rebels.

n.

2. One who is insurgent.

Performance (auto)ethnography gets under your skin. It is "thinking in skin," to

quote Joy Harjo.¹ It grabs hold of you and once it sinks its claws in, piercing the surface, it doesn't let go.

Like Claudio, I put the “auto” in parenthesis because I feel that *all* ethnography is autoethnography. All ethnographies have been written by a situated author. The extent to which each author places her/himself into the text varies, but whether reflexively acknowledged or not, every ethnographic text is produced by a specific body(ies) in a specific time and place in conversation with others. Autoethnographers recognize this standpoint, and highlight it. (Auto)ethnographers take for ourselves the power of representation, claimed elsewhere by academics as their exclusive right to represent “the other.” This is characterized by the ethical relationship between embodiment (or agency) and representation (Spry, 2011).

Democracy That Is Yet to Be

Soyini Madison & Judith Hamera (2006): “[Performative writing] is

particularly well suited to the complexities of setting bodies—and theories—in motion into language” (p. xxii).

¹ I am actually quoting Lisa Brooks quoting Robert Warrior quoting Joy Harjo. At this point, so far removed from the original text, I have to wonder if any of the poem's original meaning is retained? Is it even a quote any more? But, in a way, is this not the essence of Judith Butler's take on performativity—the citational, performative aspect of meaning? That as you peel back the layers of citation, there is no original, authentic self, only more performances?

At the same time, I do not want to take away from the beauty of embodiment in Joy Harjo's erotic poetry.

Tim Sutton: But how do you free bodies frozen by text to move once again?

Narrator 2: Tami Spry uses the construction: “Body, Paper, Stage.”

Performative writing sets it down; reading and performance bring it to life. So, in this sense, reading as part of performative writing may itself also be an answer to that question!

Soyini Madison & Judith Hamera (2006): “This work is another example of performance at the intersection of method, of research, object of research, and method of representing research” (p. xxii).

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989): Performative writing, “does not translate a reality outside itself but, more precisely, allows the emergence of a new reality” (Minh-ha, 1989, p. 22; and Pollock, 1998b, p. 78).

Della Pollock (1998b): Performing writing is, “the constitutive form of unrealized democracies” (p. 78).

Narrator 2: And as with our democracy that is yet to be, performance includes us all as co-participants performing together, writing and rewriting our collective histories.

Tim Sutton: Performative writing, then, is a useful tool: the lens through which I examine the violence of representation and stereotypes, and the mechanism with which to pry apart articulations between meaning and representation and power.

* * *

I read the voices above as yet another dialogue scripted by my hand. I think that all of these beautiful people point to transformations that are possible, that I have experienced myself in the reading of Gloria Anzaldúa, Rudolfo Acuña, Ward Churchill, Deborah Miranda, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, so many others. Transformations that are necessary to walk forward on the road to justice. But an unarmed Michael Brown was just killed by a cop while jaywalking at the dangerous intersection of race and poverty, of past and present, of youth and manhood. Through the media we hear white voices asking how such savage inequalities still persist. Here. Now. In 2014. As if violence is a thing of the past. As if white supremacy is a thing of the past. As if racial segregation is a thing of the past. Benjamin's *Eighth Thesis on the Philosophy of History* tells us that when current events create disillusionment in our conception of these times, then it is our notion of history that prevents our seeing what is right in front of us.

Freddie Gray, Baltimore, MD 4/19/2015

Walter Scott, North Charleston, NC 4/5/2015

Tamir Rice, Cleveland, OH 11/22/2014

Ezell Ford, Los Angeles CA 8/11/2014

Michael Brown, Ferguson, MO 8/9/2014

Eric Garner, Staten Island, NYC 7/17/2014

Trayvon Martin, Sanford, FL 2/26/2012

Marc Duggan, Tottenham, London, UK 8/4/2011

Oscar Grant, Oakland, CA 1/1/2009

Sean Bell, Queens, NYC 11/25/2006

Amadou Diallo, Bronx, NYC 2/4/1999

Medgar Evers, Jackson, MS 6/12/1963

Emmett Till, Glendora, MS 8/28/1955

These are just the deaths we hear about. The Malcom X Grassroots Movement issued a report in 2013 that determined 313 Black men and women were killed in 2012. That's one extra-judicial killing every 28 hours. This is far greater than the number of lynchings during Jim Crow. A Black man or woman is killed by police or vigilante every 28 hours in the U.S. This does not include the number of Native Americans or Latinos/Chicanos killed by police/INS/vigilantes in this country or along the border.

John T. Williams (Nuu-chah-nulth), Seattle, WA 8/30/2011²

Manuel Angel Diaz, Anaheim, CA 7/21/2012

Joel Acevedo, Anaheim, CA 7/22/2012³

² John T. Williams, a master carver of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, was shot four times by Seattle police in 2010. The police reported he was carrying a knife and was advancing toward the officer. *Indian Country Today* reports, "His only crime appears to have been walking across the street carrying a carving knife and a chunk of cedar" (Renville, 2011, n.p.). The following year, a totem pole was erected as part of a healing ceremony in his honor at the Seattle Center (see <http://youtu.be/FnzoZB2E3bQ> for a documentary produced by Seattle community television).

³ Residents of the city of Anaheim, CA responded in anger to the fatal shooting of Manuel Angel Diaz by police. Police responded by firing rubber bullets and "accidentally" releasing a police dog into the crowd. One day later, Joel Mathew Acevedo was shot and killed by cops. The outrage over what was the fifth fatal shooting by Anaheim police that year resulted in four days of protests.

IN DESPAIR

I ask you

what good is another academic article, another classroom lecture, another blogpost when our Black, Brown and Red sons and brothers are being killed by the structures that bar their entry to society?

This work, these performances must be pedagogical. Taking it into the classroom, creating decolonizing spaces in academic settings refreshes a stagnant pool with life. Opening up dialogue challenges racist and classist assumptions that violence and criminality reside in a racialized culture (Black/urban/gang culture), or in individuals and not structures—or that poor and working class black and brown bodies should look and act more white, should assimilate, should become acculturated through the process of education, until they no longer recognize themselves on the other side.

Anaheim is also home to Disneyland, which advertises itself as, “The Happiest Place on Earth.” Gustavo Arellano, editor of the *OC Weekly* and author of the column “¡Ask a Mexican!” blogged during the protests:

If ever you needed a Nero fiddling moment for the mess that is Anaheim, it happened this night, just around the time when protestors angry at the police shooting deaths of Manuel Diaz and Joel Acevedo were facing off against police: Disneyland shot off its fireworks, completely oblivious of the chaos going on just up Harbor Boulevard, about 5 minutes away. For reals. ... The surreal site of Disneyland's fireworks blowing up at the most inappropriate moment possible ... encapsulates the bizarre reality that is Orange County more than ANYTHING that's ever happened or ever will. (Arellano, 2012)

⁴ Jose Antonio Elena Rodriguez, age 16, was shot by a border patrol agent through the fence marking the border near Nogales, Mexico. The agent claimed Jose was throwing rocks. Jose was shot 10 times in the back (Ortega, 2014).

As we are moved by performances, to what extent are we moved to action?

The key is from looking inward, from looking for the ways that I am complicit in forces of oppression, this search gets transformed into action. This realization brings about transformation, and a commitment to challenge these forces first within myself, and then without. It doesn't happen alone—to externalize this inner struggle, and continue the struggle on multiple fields of culture, politics, pedagogy, *AND* the streets. It's a recursive process, too. I learn from others' struggles and activism to continue to examine myself more thoroughly. To not rest complacent that I have eliminated internal structures of oppression. All we have is struggle, from the streets to the classroom. There are times to leave the classroom and take the streets. And then, later, having actively engaged in the struggle against oppression, *return* to the classrooms! How is my curriculum changed by Ferguson, MO? By Hurricane Katrina? By Trayvon Martin? Tucson, AZ?

The difference between a text and a performance text is that performance plays on the constitutive role that texts play in culture. I see academic texts as not solely analysis or critique. They also contribute to the sum total of culture, including the political economy of intellectual property, that we are swimming in. And so decisions about what and whom to study and how I represent them and how I am represented become ethical decisions about what kind of society/community I want to be contributing to. This is about where and how we

live. Writing is making culture. I start where I am, and look to the ground beneath my feet. Seek the truth in the roots.

Writing is one way that this internal struggle gets externalized—moving through thinking to writing to performing, be it teaching or marching. And so in writing, I am concerned with forms of representation that this text, this dissertation takes on. How to move from bodies to the page to the classroom? From body to page to street? There is much work that comes from a critical realist paradigm that I admire, that has influenced my understanding of how the world works, that influences my writing. Marx and Freire not the least of these. But my work does not fit that paradigm, I work within a performance paradigm. The point is to move beyond texts to the lives they inform (Conquergood, 1998; Giroux, 2001), to intervene at those sites where the personal aspects of our lives are crossed by politics and history. Through performance, private troubles become public matters. C. Wright Mills calls this “the sociological imagination.”

When I talk about insurgent research, I’m also talking about a politics of uncomfortability, a pedagogy of uncomfortability. This system of white privilege/supremacy rests on the dead bodies of African and Native Americans. If we cannot find a way to talk about this in our classrooms, then nothing’s going to change. How are we re/producing a system that devalues black men’s lives? White teachers, especially brand new graduate students, are poorly equipped to talk about issues of race. Most avoid the topic because they feel uncomfortable and it makes students uncomfortable. Maybe it seems too far off topic. Young

black men today don't have the luxury of avoiding the topic of race because they feel uncomfortable. Their race *is* the topic.

I seek out those locations that make me uncomfortable. That make me squirm in my seat while I'm reading. I have felt this while reading Rudolfo Acuña. Eve Tuck. Because they implicate me. Because I am implicated. They draw uncomfortable connections between our daily lives and sources of oppression. If social justice is my goal, how am I going to act any different? If I want a different world, what changes do I make in my own life, in my syllabi, in my actions and behavior to produce it? To make it real?

How are you going to act any different? What changes will you make in your syllabi, actions and life?

Henry Giroux: I think you gotta live standing up rather than on your knees. I think you have to believe in something other than yourself. I think you have to believe that the world can be a better place and you need to fight for it. I think you have to believe you can't do it alone, you have to do it collectively. And I think you have to believe that justice is going dead in us all the time, and we have to find ways to revive that. And we have to do it in ways that are compassionate, engages the notion of social responsibility, takes seriously what it means to be intellectually alive, and always to spark the imagination. And to *always* take a risk. (2014a, n.p.)

Critical Performance Pedagogy, or No More Minstrel Shows⁵

Norman Denzin (2003a) suggests in the preface to his book *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture* that it is founded on, “a simple yet complex thesis.” That is, “We inhabit a performance-based, dramaturgical culture. The dividing line between performer and audience blurs, and culture itself becomes a dramatic performance” (p. x). Moreover, radical democratic pedagogy recognizes that media operate as forms of pedagogy, shaping knowledge, and forming culture (Giroux, 2001). This offers an opening to not simply critique processes of constructing meaning, but to change them (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011).

In the classes I have taught at the University of Oregon and at UMass Amherst, I have frequently used the *Frontline* documentaries, “Merchants of Cool”, and “The Persuaders” (which aired on PBS) produced by Douglas Rushkoff, and Rachel Dretzin. They specialize in critiquing marketing to youth and promote critical media literacy. Rushkoff’s most recent documentary, “Generation Like” updates the arguments from “Merchants of Cool” to look at the impact of social media on youth, and the brands and marketers that target them.

Douglas Rushkoff: The makers of teen TV argue they’re only reflecting the real world. ... Media is just a mirror after all. Or is it? ... Who is mirroring

⁵ This subheading is adapted from the following quote by Norman Denzin (2013): “The commercialization and appropriation of Native culture by whites must end. No more Wild West shows. To repeat, not ‘How the West Was Won,’ but, ‘How the West Was Lost,’ or ‘Recovering A West That Never Was’” (p. 35).

whom? Real life and TV life have begun to blur. Is the media really reflecting the world of kids? Or is it the other way around? The answer is increasingly hard to make out. (Dretzin & Goodman, 2001, n.p.)

One of the takeaways I try to emphasize to my classes is this “hall of mirrors” effect, how marketers mine youth culture trying to ferret out what is cool, and youth culture itself which is constantly on the move, constantly updating itself, citing and reciting fashions and styles they consume through media. Like a hall of mirrors in a fun house, where reflections reflect each other on to an infinite regression, you find one passage out, only to encounter yourself in a new reflection.

Douglas Rushkoff: I’ll never forget the moment that thirteen year old Barbara and her friends spotted our crew during a party between their auditions. They appear to be dancing for us, for our camera. As if to sell back to us, the media, what we had sold to them. And that’s when it hit me. It’s a giant feedback loop. The media watches kids and then sells them an image of themselves, then kids watch those images and aspire to be that “mook” or “midriff” [*advertising demographics*] in the TV set. And the media is there watching them do that in order to craft new images for them, and so on. (Dretzin & Goodman, 2001, n.p.)

Rushkoff and Dretzin look at the consumption of images, while Denzin is more concerned with their production. Where they connect is in this mediated

hall of mirrors, once production and consumption merge into reproduction, and the gap between identity and representation is closed through performance.

Claudio: Where the doing and the done collide.

* * *

Denzin (2008) advances a “critical performance pedagogy” that turns the, “ethnographic into the performative and the performative into the political” (p. 23). In his recent work, for example, by replaying and altering Wild West and minstrel shows (Denzin, 2011 & 2013), Denzin cuts to the heart of the originating moment where cowboys became white and disparate Native American nations became Indian (Injun, Redskin, Digger). These are racialized performances, the performance of race, minstrelsy: “Race is performative, contextual, and historical” (Denzin, 2008, p. 23). This minstrelsy, begun on the stage, was deepened, made indelible by film.

Norman Denzin (2008): By unraveling these myths and their meanings and origins, I point to the diversity and complexity of racial representations and racial performances in American popular culture. I seek to replace old stereotypes with new understandings. I want to show how historical discourse can in fact turn back on itself, revise its stance toward the past, and perform new, progressive representations of cultural difference. (p. 23)

Walter Benjamin (1983): “To write history therefore means to quote history back to itself” (p. 24). (Also quoted by Ulmer (1989, p. 211); also quoted by Denzin (2008, p. 2); also repeated by Claudio, and now me, ad infinitum.)

Della Pollock (1998a): Performativity is *what happens* when history/textuality sees itself in the mirror—and suddenly sees double; it is the disorienting, disruptive double-voiced double-plays that rise to the otherwise smooth surface of textuality and rival the slick and seamless ways of the “pedagogical” imperative guiding much historical narration. (p. 43)

* * *

In an essay titled “The Big Movie,” Paul Chaat Smith (2009), Associate Curator of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC, offers an almost Lacanian view of western film narratives. He refers to this “master narrative” as “the Big Movie” (reminiscent of Lacan’s “big other”) noting that this narrative as it has evolved into the 21st Century, “will admit good Indians and bad whites yet still not challenge the basic premise of a frontier, a wilderness, an inevitable clash of cultures that ends in conquest” (p. 50). Smith mentions *Dances With Wolves*, I would offer Disney’s latest western, *The Lone Ranger*. Worth mentioning is that although both films appear to portray U. S. expansion in a negative light, they still feature Native Americans helping and guiding white

protagonists, and both feature prominent white actors performing in redface.⁶

The inevitability of westward expansion goes unquestioned.

Paul Chaat Smith would agree with Norman Denzin and Stuart Hall that it's not enough to simply replace negative stereotypes with positive representations:

Paul Chaat Smith (2009): Simply reversing the bogus dichotomies doesn't get us anywhere. The project isn't about the good guys being bad, and the bad guys being good, but about finding new ways of seeing and thinking about the history that is all around us." (p. 75)

Stuart Hall (1996): I'm tired of those two continuous grand counter-narratives. To remain within them is to become trapped in that endless either/or, either total victory or total incorporation, which almost never happens in cultural politics, but with which cultural critics put themselves to bed. ... Now cultural strategies that can make a difference, that's what I'm interested in—those that can make a difference and can shift the dispositions of power. (p. 467-468)

⁶ It should be noted that during the 2014 Academy Awards, which should be remembered for the historic Best Picture win by Steve McQueen's *12 Years A Slave*, that *The Lone Ranger*, which featured Johnny Depp's face painted white with black stripes and sporting a dead crow on his head, was nominated for Best Make-up and Hairstyling. Thankfully, this regressive piece of redface minstrelsy did not win.

Norman Denzin (2005): The positive-negative debate essentializes racial identity and denies its dynamic relation to constructions of class, gender, sexuality, and region. (p. 937)

Paul Chaat Smith (2009) points out that at the time of Columbus' "discovery" there were no "Indians," or even a shared sense of what it meant to be European (p. 74). Europeans needed Indians and "The New World" to define themselves. Without heathen savages, there could be no Christian civilization. The idea of the savage, closer to a state of nature, was essential to the enlightenment philosophers of the 18th century.

Denzin excerpts blackface minstrelsy (not unlike Spike Lee's film *Bamboozled*) and Wild West shows (as with the Robert Altman film *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* which was based on Arthur Kopit's play *Indians*), recasting them in the present—both excavating and undermining the roots of racialized performances in the U.S., when Native Americans became "Indians" and Anglo-Americans became "White". In "quoting history back to itself," these performances push back against biological interpretations of race, either the one-drop rule or blood quantum (see Tuck & Yang, 2012). They question and challenge how such meanings get attached to performances of race, and in so doing offer possibilities for new meanings to be created in their place.

Norman Denzin (2013): "My topic goes beyond playing Indian, or the images of Native Americans in Wild West shows. It is about the ritual of

reenactment, the use of actors and sometimes actual historical figures to reenact historical events, including battles. It is about how reenactments, as simulations, keep only one version of history alive” (pp. 21-22).

Tim (as narrator): These reenactments took place not just in Wild West shows:

There is photography (Curtis, etc.), sculpture (Remington), paintings

(George Catlin, Charles Bird King), museums (Buffalo Bill Center of the

West in Cody, WY; Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles;

The National Museum of the American Indian in both NYC and Washington

DC), National Parks (Denzin writes about

Yellowstone, but what of Yosemite, Mesa

Verde, Chaco Canyon, etc.?), films, then

radio, then television. What about books?

(Zane Grey, Owen Wister and Louis

L’Amour? Larry McMurty?) How about

cowboy singers (like Tex Ritter, Marty

Robbins or Sons of the Pioneers)?

Disneyland? Don’t forget comic books...

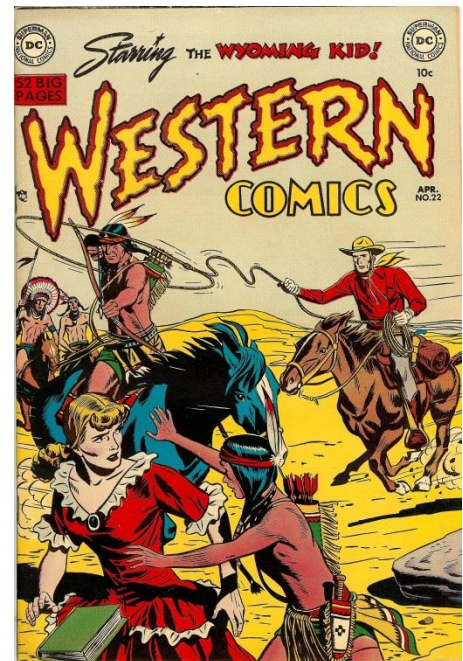


Figure 1: Western Comics

Narrator 2: But don’t miss the point, Tim, you’re moving to position film as one

of the principle originating moments when Indians became Red and

Cowboys became White.

Paul Chaat Smith (2009): “Indians and Hollywood go way back, further than

either one of us might care to remember... One of the first movies ever

released (1894) starred Indians and was directed by Thomas Edison.

Something about a Ghost Dance. We've been acting in movies for more than a century, cursing them and loving them since day one" (p. 37).

Tim Sutton: But, ultimately Westerns are not about Indians.

Paul Chaat Smith (1992): "The promise of film was to deliver what the stage could not, and the taming of the frontier, the winning of the West, the building of the nation was the obvious, perfect choice. Indians and Hollywood. We grew up together" (p. 98).

Tim Sutton: But they hardly ever appear. Both Jane Tompkins and Paul Chaat Smith have pointed it out.

Jane Tompkins (1992): When I sat down to watch western movies ... I expected to see a great many Indians. ... But the Indians I expected did not appear. The ones I saw functioned as props, bits of local color, textural effects. As people they had no existence (pp. 7-8).

Paul Chaat Smith (2009): "Some westerns demonstrate a real interest in Indians, but in most we exist as a metaphor" (p. 49).

Jane Tompkins (1992): "Indians are repressed in Westerns—there but not there—in the same way women are" (p. 9).

Tim Sutton: Thanks for bringing that up! In these westerns, white men are defined in relation to the (lack of) representations of both Indians *and* women. I look to western films as a form of cultural pedagogy where men

learn to be men, and where a nation formed on stolen land learned what it meant to be American.

Narrator 2: Look at John Wayne. How many of his films are about shaping the next generation of whippersnappers into becoming soldiers, cowboys, and men—away from the dandifying influence of women? *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *Red River*, *Rio Grande*, *El Dorado*, *True Grit*, *The Cowboys*, *Hondo*, *Big Jake* (Levy, 1988).

Emanuel Levy (1988): “In most of his movies there are children, and the intergenerational interaction has both real and symbolic meaning. One of Wayne’s most typical screen roles is that of patriarch involved in teaching his children (or his soldiers) to behave courageously. His cinematic function was truly sociological, having to initiate a group of youngsters into manhood through a series of ceremonies and rites of passage. ... His paternalist treatment of the younger generation is based on the assumption that it is the elders’ duty to look after their children until they can assume mature responsibility and stand on their own” (p. 61).

Tim Sutton: This is patriarchy.

Narrator 2: A critical approach would offer a number of close readings of these film texts, unpacking the meanings and processes by which “the West was won” and passed on to the boys of the next generation through patriarchy.

Tim Sutton: I think this has already been done by others better than me.

Richard Slotkin wrote both *Gunfighter Nation*, and *Regeneration Through*

Violence; John Cawelti wrote *The Six-Gun Mystique* and its *Sequel*; Jim Kitses, *Horizons West*; Will Wright, *Sixguns & Society*—

Narrator 2 [*As an aside*]: That list of authors' names sounds a lot like cowboys' names from the movies and books they discuss. Tough. Monosyllabic. Masculine.

Tim Sutton: But most inspiring to me is Jane Tompkins' *West of Everything*. She offers a perspective missing from those guys—that of the Western hero's others, not just women and Native Americans, but also cows and horses, and the landscape. I am asking, so what's next? What are we gonna do about it?

Decolonizing/Indigenizing the University

Norman Denzin (2005): “Critical indigenist pedagogies contest the complicity of the modern university with neocolonial forces” (p. 944).

Denzin (2005) cites “the emergence and proliferation of Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies including the arguments of African American, Chicana/o, Latina/o, Native American, First Nations, Native Hawaiian, and Māori scholars” (p. 942). These are mostly North American arguments, along with the perspective of Pacific Islanders. While deeper connections need to be drawn to post- and decolonial literatures from Africa and Asia, as well as Indigenous communities outside of academia, these are the voices of resistance. They are kicking down the door, refusing to cede this territory which has historically

claimed the sole privilege of producing knowledge about the Other. These academic spaces of representation and knowledge construction are the ground of struggle.

I embrace not only critical and radical pedagogies, but a Red Pedagogy (Sandy Grande), Kaupapa Māori research (Russell Bishop; Linda Tuhiwai Smith & Graham Hingaroa Smith), Hawaiian epistemology (Haunani-Kay Trask, J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, Manulani Aluli Meyer) a pedagogy of the land (Glen Coulthard, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson). These pedagogies refuse the universal emancipatory goals of critical theory, opting instead for a situated, local, communitarian vision. A critical indigenist pedagogy imagines a society that honors difference and promotes healing (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008, p. 12).

Yes, there is much to learn by reading these literatures, but I cannot claim them as my own. Denzin (2005) warns of four difficulties that must be overcome for a dialogue between critical and Indigenous theorists to take place. I've summarized Denzin's points in the following list:

- 1) Colonizing research—Denzin warns first that, “scholars must resist the legacy of the colonizing other” (p. 935). This is an extractive approach to knowledge creation founded in the “discovery” of exotic others, who as objects of study are then excluded from the discussion.
- 2) Incommensurability—Second, Denzin says, “Critical interpretive performance theory and critical race theory will not work within

Indigenous settings without modification” (p. 935). Denzin here takes up Smith’s (2012) and others’ (Grande, 2004; Churchill, 1983; Tuck & Yang, 2012) critiques of critical theory from an Indigenous perspective.

3) Western epistemology– His third warning lies in the need for Western scholars to “decolonize and deconstruct” those structures that privilege Western forms of knowing. Indigenous knowledge has for too long been characterized as data to which theory is applied. “The decolonizing project reverses this equation, making Western systems of knowledge the object of inquiry” (Denzin, 2005, p. 936).

4) Sovereignty– Last, Denzin warns non-Indigenous researchers must recognize sovereignty of research whereby Indigenous communities determine for themselves, “what constitutes acceptable research,” (p. 936) what counts as data, what projects to undertake, what constitutes ethical relationships and what questions to ask. This stands at odds with current standards of human subjects compliance/IRBs and positivist/evidence-based research being promoted by universities and granting agencies. They continue to assume an extractive model where Indigenous communities remain the “subjects” of research. No less than who gets to determine “truth and validity” (p. 936) is a question of sovereignty.

Denzin wrote this in “Emancipatory Discourses and the Ethics and Politics of Interpretation,” his contribution to the 3rd edition of *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, which updates and expands his argument from the 2003

book *Performance Ethnography*. That chapter, written as a manifesto, draws from his then in-progress book, *Searching for Yellowstone* (2008). This could also be seen as building toward the discussion which would take place in the co-edited collection with Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Yvonne Lincoln, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (2008). In this way, Denzin lays the groundwork for the methodology he puts into practice in his four books: *Searching for Yellowstone* (2008), *Custer on Canvas* (2011), *Indians on Display* (2013), and *Indians in Color* (2015).

Indigenous Theater, or a Performance of Possibilities

I take inspiration from Denzin's Western series (2008; 2011; 2013; 2015), all of them performance texts, written in the form of a script (see Saldaña, 2011). Where Denzin calls on Indigenous theater, looking, for example, to the work of Daniel David Moses who wrote the play *Almighty Voice and his Wife*, I find inspiration in the rasquache⁷ theater of Teatro Campesino. This work and the Chicano theater it inspired, such as the "docu-dramas" of Teatro de la Esperanza (Huerta, 1989), emerged and grew up in California only a few years before I did, yet I knew nothing about them until well after I left the state. What does it tell me today? I am ready to listen.

⁷ *Rasquache* was originally a pejorative for "lower class," but the term has been reclaimed to refer to an aesthetic of making do with whatever materials are available (not unlike *bricolage*). In terms of content, it includes a sense of resistance that is more tongue-in-cheek or ironic than confrontational, while continuing to address the daily lived experiences of racism in dealing with police, social services, INS, employers, etc.

As in Denzin's discussion of Indigenous theater, farmworkers and labor union activists in Teatro Campesino took on the roles of campesinos, white landowners, Mexican coyotes, and la migra. In this way they poked fun at essentialized performances of race, class and gender while searching for deeper, spiritual roots of their families and communities. For example, Huerta (1989) describes the character of Mingo (short for Domingo) in Luis Valdez' play *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* as a "vendido" (p. 144) who denies his Chicano heritage and tries to pass or assimilate. The character's internal struggle, which the play's audience may relate to, is externalized through both brown- and whiteface minstrelsy, "when Mingo comes on with a face that is half brown and half white" (p. 143).

Helen Hunt Jackson's story *Ramona* is another historic performance of race in Old California. I'm curious what I might find by examining this story, which started as a novel, part of a white, New England woman from Amherst's (misguided or ahead of her time?) campaign for justice for California's Mission Indians. The story has been translated to numerous film adaptations, including one by D. W. Griffith, and to a celebrated outdoor production which, since its premier in 1926, continues to be performed annually on an outdoor stage near Hemet, CA.

In what ways does this story redraw/reinscribe dividing racial lines between Mexicans and Indians, while celebrating Spanish colonialism at the same time as it effaces subsequent U.S. colonialism/racism? There's the erasure of the

“Indio” in both “Hispanic” and “Latinidad”. Both privilege the European in the words themselves—at the level of the sign—whether “Spain” or “Latin”. With the romanticizing of Spanish colonization comes this reinforcing of racial difference between Spanish/European/White heritage of the Mexican settler (the Ranchero, Hacendado or Californio) vs. the Indigenous heritage of the Indio (peasant, neophyte, or campesina/o), ultimately erasing the reality of mestizaje. Meanwhile, in contemporary racist discourse this distinction is irrelevant; all are subsumed under the epithet “illegals.”

Written in marker on a piece of cardboard, or
Printed on the back of a T-shirt worn by a protester marching in “A Day
Without Immigrants”⁸



Figure 2: Day Without an Immigrant Sign

Perhaps the lesson for me is not in *Ramona*'s text, but rather in its author? What kind of example does Helen Hunt Jackson set? Am I just another well-meaning white person from Amherst?

⁸ Inspired by Denzin's (2011) use of the bumper sticker "Custer Died for Your Sins" in *Custer on Canvas*, p. 34.

What I want to ask is how might re-reading these readings alter our relationships? This sort of ethnodrama I seek to create sets these authors into conversation with their own work and with contemporary artists and the people being represented. What would they say to each other? The point here is not to add another text to be analyzed, but to look at historical representations and performances of race and gender of Californios and Mission Indians in the light of the contemporary debate over immigration and militarization of the border. To bring their voices into the present. To begin to listen to what they have to say to us today.

* * *

Indigenous theater

Teatro Campesino

Augusto Boal's *Rainbow of Desire* and *Legislative Theater*

Performance artists Guillermo Gomez Peña and Coco Fusco

Conceptual artist James Luna (Luiseño)

I bring up this cast list of inspirations not as a list of texts to be read and analyzed, but as a technique (modeled by Denzin) in the writing of ethnodrama. Jackson's *Ramona* becomes then, not yet another location for fieldwork, but a source for characters to engage in dialogue in this text, my dissertation. The characters from the book may interact with their counterparts from D.W. Griffith's film or the live production in Hemet, CA. Contemporary artists like James Luna could meet Ishi in a museum. What would Caliban and Prospero

from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* say to Tom Horne, the architect of the ban on Mexican American Studies in Tucson, AZ? How did Curtis Acosta, forbidden from teaching the play in his classroom, navigate this storm?

* * *

Perhaps more than any of these I am inspired by the multiple performances on a global stage by Zapatistas. Theirs is an ontological politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006)—the possibility of living and being otherwise. Not off in some post-revolutionary future, but here, now. They engage in ongoing political and pedagogical performances of resistance in the face of state violence, most recently enacted by the dissolution of the persona (performance? hologram?) of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos as spokesperson for the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional).

Subcomandante Insurgente Galeano (2014): In the earliest hours of the morning on the first day of the first month of the year 1994, an army of giants, that is to say, of Indigenous rebels, descended on the cities to shake the world with its step. Only a few days later, with the blood of our fallen soldiers still fresh on the city streets, we noticed that those from outside did not see us. Accustomed to looking down on the Indigenous from above, they didn't lift their gaze to look at us. Accustomed to seeing us humiliated, their heart did not understand our dignified rebellion. Their gaze had stopped on the only *mestizo* they saw with a ski mask, that is, they didn't see. Our authorities, our commanders, then said to us: "They

can only see those who are as small as they are. Let's make someone as small as they are, so that they can see him and through him, they can see us." And so began a complex maneuver of distraction, a terrible and marvelous magic trick, a malicious move from the Indigenous heart that we are, with Indigenous wisdom challenging one of the bastions of modernity: the media. And so began the construction of the character named "Marcos."

* * *

In relating their story, I need to follow Norman Denzin's example not to forget Terry Tempest Williams' warning that telling someone else's story will not work. We must find our own stories.

Norman Denzin (2005): "I am mindful of Terry Tempest Williams' cautious advice about borrowing stories and narratives from Indigenous peoples. ... She praises the wisdom of Navajo storytellers and the stories they tell. But she also warns her nonindigenous readers: We cannot emulate native peoples" (p. 936).

Terry Tempest Williams (1984): "We are not Navajo ... their traditional stories don't work for us. ... Their stories hold meaning for us only as examples. They can teach us what is possible. We must create and find our own stories" (p. 5).

And so I look to the EZLN, to la otra campaña, and to the "Sixth Declaration from the Lacondón Jungle" for inspiration. Not to tell their stories,

not to claim them as my own, but for new models, for an example of how to tell a new story, or one that might be very old.

Simon Ortiz (2001): “A story is more than a story, I believe. ... Yes. Or *Haah-ah, mah-eemah* (Yes, it’s the very truth) in the Keres language of the Acoma people from whom I come. Story is what we live. It is not just what we tell and it is not just what we hear. Story and the telling of story is what ‘living the story’ is. ... *Haah-ah, mah-eemah*” (p. 52).

Norman Denzin (2003a): “An improvisatory politics of resistance is anchored in the spaces where the doing and the done collide” (p. 11).

PART III

The Angel of History in the City of Angels

One way of approaching history, of writing about John Wayne, is hermeneutically. That is, to analyze John Wayne in *Stagecoach* (1939), his first starring role, while placing it within his whole body of work, or the history of cinema, or the history of the West. Its significance becomes apparent by looking at what came next, the relationship of the part to the whole. Up until John Ford cast him in the movie, he’d only had a single memorable role in Raoul Walsh’s *The Big Trail* (1930). He then spent a decade as a contract player for “poverty row” studios churning out B westerns and serials. From this perspective, it was John Ford who saw Wayne’s star potential, and crafted a movie that made it shine. This is the perspective that the latest hagiography, *John Wayne: The Life*

and Legend by Scott Eyman (2014) is written from. It is a traditional biography telling his lifestory as a linear narrative, with a beginning, middle and end.

Eyman prefaces his book with an extended description of the iconic moment in *Stagecoach* when John Wayne steps up a rise on a hill and cocks his Winchester repeating rifle one-handed, by spinning it under his arm. In this moment, Eyman sees the arrival of a star.

Scott Eyman: And then Yakima Cannutt, Wayne’s friend and the stunt coordinator on the film, offered an idea. When Cannutt was a boy he had seen Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show. As the overland stage raced around the arena, a messenger trailing behind the stagecoach had carried a rifle with a large ring loop which allowed him to spin the rifle in the air, cocking it with one hand. The crowd went wild. Cannutt said that it had been thirty years ago and he still remembered the moment. More to the point, he had never seen anyone else do it. (p. 2).

In contrast to this linear approach to writing history, Denzin offers another perspective—that of Walter Benjamin’s “Angel of History.” In his “Ninth Thesis on the Philosophy of History,” Benjamin (1940) uses the imagery of a painting to describe what could be called the essence of postmodernism:

Walter Benjamin: “A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned

toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet” (n.p.).

From this perspective the shot introducing John Wayne in *Stagecoach* represents the arrival of the white, American male to this land. The doctrine of discovery, the claiming of *terra nullius*.



Figure 3: Angelus Novus by Paul Klee

Just as Yakima Cannutt copied a move from Buffalo Bill’s Wild West, this same motion is repeated across time by Arnold Swarzenegger in *Terminator II*, in reference, a filmmaker’s homage, an iteration, a citation. But then Ford’s framing of Wayne is itself citational because what else is this, but the landing of Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock? It is Cortez’ reading of the Requerimiento. The flag carried by Portuguese Bandeirantes (see Diversi & Moreira, 2012). Neal Armstrong’s “giant leap for mankind.” Austin’s (1962) speech act.

I write from this perspective that replays scenes from the past here in the present, that quotes history back to itself. Each time it is framed differently, from a different angle, a different standpoint which offers a different view. Bringing these aspects of history into the present is a performative act, in quoting history back to itself, its politics stand revealed. I learn something new each time, and

hope for a different ending. The endings, though, never come. That is the other lesson of the Angelus Novus.

Walter Benjamin (1940): “The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.”

To say that endings never come, I don't mean to fall into a cynic's trap. The impossibility of closure is not a source of despair; rather it offers me the possibility of hope. As structures of oppression are and have been constructed by people, so they can be dismantled, “deconstructed.” This (discursively) makes space for something else to be built in their place. This is the utopian horizon, always just out of sight, but I continue to walk in that direction.

History Sits In Places

Trading Away A World For Coats of Blue

(Northampton, Hadley, Deerfield, Northfield)

By Michael Mauri, 2013

Trading away a world for coats of blue,
and cloth, of indigo
— perhaps you knew —
(such a long time ago)
it was all but over,
anyway.

Mauri's poem addresses the change in trade from barter to a credit system between John Pynchon and people native to the region around the Connecticut River, the Pocumtuc, Norwottuck, Abenaki, Mahican, and Pequot. British trade goods (blue coats) were supplied in exchange for future fur yields using the land as collateral. Due to the high demand for beaver pelts in Britain, what had for a brief time been a thriving fur trade declined due to overhunting (Lisa Brooks [2008] elaborates on the clash of cultures this economic exchange represents).

Between the years 1658 and 1674, the English (Pynchon) acquired most of the valley from the Holyoke Range up into New Hampshire and Vermont. Concurrent encroachment across Southern New England, most notably by the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony, contributed to King Phillip's (Metacomet's) War erupting in 1675.

This is one view of history from where we stand today, a linear progression. Mauri's poem is written from this perspective. Perhaps European encroachment seems inevitable from a Western perspective, but from the point of view of the land, one familiar with its stories, the frontier has never been about progress. From this position, history does not appear over. The ghosts walk among us. The past is never over; it continues to haunt the present. It is not a progression, but happens in fits and starts, one step forward and two steps back. There are no guarantees.

“One Step Up” by Bruce Springsteen (1987)

Woke up this morning my house was cold
Checked out the furnace she wasn't burning
Went out and hopped in my old Ford
Hit the engine but she ain't turning
We've given each other some hard lessons lately
But we ain't learning
We're the same sad story that's a fact
One step up and two steps back

Route 2 crosses Massachusetts from East to West before crossing the New York border on the way to Troy. One of the first motorways carved into the Berkshires, it was dubbed “The Mohawk Trail” to promote tourism from the more populated Eastern part of the state. Supposedly it follows a path through the woods used prior to the arrival of Europeans. As it snakes into the Berkshires, you pass two “Indian trading posts”— roadside attractions combining stereotypical images like teepees and totem poles and cigar store wooden Indians.



Figure 4: Mohawk Trail Trading Post

Christine DeLucia (2012):

“Pan-Indian kitsch such as toy tomahawks and oversized bronze Indian statues along the Mohawk Trail (Route 2 in western Massachusetts) remains the immediately visible “trace” of native

presence in that part of the state, for example, even as unprecedented reconciliation ceremonies have taken place at nearby Peskeomskut/Turners Falls” (p. 996).

Route 2 passes by Turner’s Falls, just before crossing the Connecticut River right above a confluence of rivers and a waterfall that had been a fishing and gathering spot for surrounding people for centuries. The village (part of the town of Montague, where I live) is named for a British soldier responsible for, “one of the war’s [King Phillip’s War] worst massacre sites at dawn on May 19, 1676, when Capt. William Turner’s troops shot or drove hundreds of natives to their deaths over the falls” (DeLucia, 2012, p. 996).

Although the village has not renamed itself, “Great Falls,” (the place was known as Peskeomskut, or Great Falls, by the Pocumtuck) a reconciliation ceremony took place May 19, 2004, involving representatives of the Narragansett

people and the town's select board in a public ceremony. A gathering in May 2014 marked the ten years since the reconciliation.

These things sit side-by-side, but it's the souvenir shops that leave a visible trace on the land. (With apologies to Keith Basso) History sits in places, "embedded in the landscapes we travel through" (Denzin, 2005, p. 936; Williams, 1984, p. 3; see also DeLucia, 2012 for her discussion of memory and place). Which stories will we choose to tell?

One step up and two steps back

* * *

This past May, during the Tenth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Norman Denzin (2014) appeared on two consecutive panels. During the first he held up two different papers in his hands. Instead of reading what he'd planned, he read the second of the two, titled, "Cowboys and Indians at the Strand Theater, circa 1952", initially intended for the later panel session.

[FADE IN-WIPE LEFT]

INT. UI URBANA-CHAMPAIGN ILLINI UNION ROOM 314B - DAY

Panelists sit at a table in front of a conference room. The audience is more than two-thirds full for this plenary: "Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of ICQI: Body, Paper, Stage of Performance
Autoethnography as a Way of Social Transformations: Challenges and Hopes."

NORMAN DENZIN
(Stepping up to
the podium.)

I'm going to read the same paper here as in the next panel. For those of you planning to attend the next panel, this is the same paper, but the two readings will each be a different performance.

And they were, in such a beautiful way. Maybe he changed some of the words, but not many. The two performances built on each other; the emotions deepened. A different audience (some stayed, some left while new people arrived), a different context. The first panel about methodology—how far we've come. Norman offered a demonstration, the doing of it. The second was Bryant Keith Alexander's panel on autoethnographic representations of the West(ern), "Don't Take Your Guns To Town: Westerns as Moral(ity) Tales (or Lessons Learned)." In between, Norman humbly offered to forgo the second reading to leave space for others, but Bryant insisted and I'm glad he did.

At the end of Norm's (2014) paper he brings up Guy Maddin's (2007) movie *My Winnipeg*. This is a fanciful documentary, part memoir, part reenactment, part satire which stands apart from most familiar film/documentary genres. Maddin calls it, "docu-fantasia." It's a documentary but also an art film; it may be mockumentary, but also arrive at some truth. As one reviewer describes: "Personal anecdotes intertwine seamlessly with historical footage" (McElroy, n.d.). In the film, as described by Denzin, Maddin rents the house he grew up in, hires actors to play his family, including the family dog Toby

(a chihuahua, played in the film by his girlfriend's pug, Spanky). He restages scenes from his childhood that haunt his memory, moments that linger, to find the lessons he failed to learn the first time.

Denzin makes use of this device and imagines hiring actors to play his grandparents and parents, even the family dog, and renting his grandparents' old home in Iowa where he spent his summers growing up. In the reading, he imagines buying an old 1950s TV for the living room and restaging and rewriting painful memories from the moment his parents announced they were splitting up.

Denzin (and Guy Maddin) revisits personal moments from history seeking a new ending, new understanding, a new perspective (that of the Angelus Novus?), in order to arrive at a closure, but in the process reveals its impossibility. These are not endings or closures, but openings. New doorways to open, new pathways down which to walk. The possibility of living otherwise. This search for closure creates the ground on which healing becomes possible.

The Beginning

I end here, looking down a new path of scholarship. I hope this has helped you to understand my approach to research. I hope this has illustrated the type of dissertation I am writing. I also realize I may be stirring things up, muddying the waters. This is a messy process, and at times, I feel I'm making this up as I go.

But then I remember Claudio's advice, asking me, "Whose shoulders do you stand on?"

I start with Denzin's approach to race and representation which is founded in Benjamin's approach to history. I work from Denzin's model of ethnodrama, which uses Gregory Ulmer's (1989) "mystory" founded in C. Wright Mill's (1959) "sociological imagination". This performative writing takes an approach to research (i.e. onto-epistemology) that sees writing itself as a form of inquiry—an ethical approach to knowledge creation where form meets content, or as Tami Spry (2011) has it, aesthetics meets epistemology. This allows both creativity and critique using Mary Weems's (2001) "imagination/intellect". Weems recognizes both reason and creativity as integral to the process of creating knowledge whether through art, poetry, song, storytelling, or research. Moreover, as Denzin points out, the boundaries that separate these into different genres have blurred.

This is a co-performative process that asks, even requires, audience/reader participation. After Marcelo and Claudio's (Diversi & Moreira, 2009) book, after Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), I reach out my hand and ask you to meet me half-way.

CHAPTER 2
REFLEXIVITY IS NOT ENOUGH,
OR
ON WHOSE SHOULDERS DO I STAND?

I'll lay my cards on the table. We need a performance studies paradigm that understands performance simultaneously as a form of inquiry and as a form of activism, as critique, as critical citizenship. I seek a critical sociological imagination that inspires and empowers persons to act on their utopian impulses. These moments and their performances are etched in history, memory, dreams, hope, pain, resistance, and joy.

Norman Denzin (2010, p. 18)

Last night I got up in the middle of the night to pee—same as most nights, stumbling down the hallway—but last night I caught a glimpse of something through the window. A bright light in the darkness, round, orange and fiery. It was the full moon setting on the western horizon, framed perfectly through my window. It called to me, maybe even woke me up. This was around 4 a.m. The sun still had an hour or two before making its appearance. I've seen the moon rise many times, especially the harvest moon, so close to the earth it appears round and yellow above the eastern horizon in autumn's early evening. The moon hides from us when she sets. Waits till we're sleeping to sneak off to the west, or sometimes she stays up all night to greet us again on a cold, blue morning before fading away while no one is looking. The orange moon held me

there. I stood, not sleeping, but not fully awake; watching, eyes open, before heading back to bed.

* * *

What is knowledge in the age of Trump? How can I ethically engage in research and writing a dissertation, when White House spokespeople persist in foisting “alternative facts” off on the press and the public? Trump’s Chief Strategist has referred to the press as “the opposition party” (Grynbaum, 2017), while Trump called them “the enemy of the people” (Higgins, 2017). The Secretary of State is the former CEO of Exxon Mobil, a corporation that has spent the past three decades denying and undermining climate science they knew to be true (Bannerjee, Song & Hasemyer, 2015; Jerving, Jennings, Hirsch & Rust, 2015). Exxon Mobil is currently under investigation by the State Attorneys General from New York, Massachusetts and California for possible crimes as a result of misleading the public and investors (Schwartz, 2016).

Facts, truth, science. How Quixotic is this quest?

I find it extremely difficult to write, or even concentrate, with the daily outrages in the news coming from the Trump administration. It is difficult to hope, but I need hope to write. Following Trump’s election, Rebecca Solnit briefly made her book *Hope in the Darkness: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities* available to download for free. She wrote it during the depth of the Iraq War following Bush’s reelection for a second term, and has twice updated it. In it she offers a

radical theory of hope as a force for positive action which contributes to change in unforeseen ways.

Rebecca Solnit: Hope is an ax you break down doors with in an emergency, because hope should shove you out the door, because it will take everything you have to steer the future away from endless war, from the annihilation of the earth's treasures and the grinding down of the poor and marginal. Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope. (p. 29)

* * *

Arabic: Salaam maleku **السلام عليكم** or Ahlan wa sahan **أهلاً و سهلاً**

Farsi: Khosh amadid **خوش آمدید**

Sudanese: Wilujeung sumping

Somali: Soo dhowow

English: Welcome

So long as Trump continues to try to follow through on his campaign promise to prevent Muslim refugees and immigrants from entering the country I will learn to say welcome in these four languages. My friend Canan Çevik, our Graduate Student Senate President, urged students organizing to declare UMass Amherst a Sanctuary Campus to engage in this simple act of radical empathy.

Hope in the darkness

Anzaldúa's spiritual activism

Radical empathy

This project is born in a hope without guarantees. I am guided by Rebecca Solnit's *Hope in the Darkness*, and by Gloria Anzaldúa's *Light in the Dark*. These are my textbooks.

Rebecca Solnit: "Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act" (p. 15).

Hope is an ethical position that recognizes things could be better, but only if we do something about it. Hope means being clear about what obstacles stand in the way. There is room for grief in hope; it is, as Anzaldúa (1999) writes, "drenched with the stench of today's headlines" (p. 195).

* * *

The remainder of this chapter is divided, more or less, into three sections. First, I draw on Denzin and Lincoln's delineation of the history of qualitative research into a series of moments as I attempt to chart a path out of ethnography's colonizing history. Next, I trace a trajectory for performance studies that takes me to a radical performance pedagogy (after Giroux, 2000; 2001 and Denzin, 2003b; 2005), where I situate my work. Finally, I challenge the image of the "lone ethnographer." I seek new images, following Anzaldúa's Coyolxauhqui imperative. Throughout, I engage spiritual activism as informed by both Gloria Anzaldúa and by the Mexican American Studies curriculum outlawed in Tucson, Arizona.

This chapter is about the broad shoulders of those who came before, that support me.

Moments

Denzin & Lincoln (2005; 2011; see also Denzin, 2010) map at least eight moments in the history of qualitative research:¹

1. Traditional (1900 – 1950)
2. Modernist or Golden Age (1950 – 1970)
3. Blurred genres (1970 – 1986)
4. The crisis of representation (1986 – 1990)
5. Postmodern/experimental texts (1990 – 1995)
6. Postexperimental inquiry (1995 – 2000)
7. The methodologically contested present (2000 – 2010)
8. Methodological backlash (2010 – now)
9. Fractured future
10. ...?

These moments do not describe a simple evolution; rather, they mark shifts in the dominant paradigms under which qualitative research was conducted. The moments all overlap, the edges blur; different research is conducted from within multiple competing paradigms at all times. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state, “Critics assert that we believe the most recent moment is the most up-to-date, the avant-garde, the cutting edge. Naturally we dispute this reading” (p. 27).

¹ This is cobbled together from Denzin & Lincoln’s Introductions to the 2005 and 2011 editions of the *Sage Handbook for Qualitative Research*, and from Denzin’s (2010) *Qualitative Manifesto*. A new fifth edition of the *Handbook* is due for 2018, and perhaps these moments will be updated once again.

This timeline runs parallel to three paradigm wars described elsewhere by Denzin & Lincoln (2005, 2011), Denzin (2017), and by Teddlie & Tashakkori (2003) and Guba (1990):

1. The postpositivist-constructivist war against positivism (1970-1990)
2. The conflict between competing postpositivist, constructivist, and critical theory paradigms (1990-2005)
3. The current conflict between evidence-based methodologists, and the mixed-methods, interpretive, and critical theory schools (2005-present) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 1).

These conflicts erupt when criteria from one paradigm are inappropriately applied to research done in another paradigm. It is extremely difficult to step outside of your paradigm, or even see it for what it is. Research that relies on other criteria then seems illegitimate. The debates concern the politics of evidence; what constitutes reality and how we can know it; and the objectivity (or lack of it) of the researcher.

Paradigms consist of a particular ontology, or mode of being; epistemology, or way of knowing and what counts as knowledge; and methodology, or how we acquire knowledge of the world and our position in it. Denzin and Lincoln (2011), following Clifford Christians, also add ethics, or axiology, to the equation. They write, “Every epistemology ... implies an ethical-moral stance toward the world and the self of the researcher” (p. 91). Paradigms exist within interpretive communities that maintain particular ideologies, and those ideologies are themselves part of a cultural context. “Our methods are always grafted into our politics” (p. 683).

Denzin & Lincoln's first two moments mark the dominance of positivism, while the second and third saw the emergence of post-positivism. Where positivist science would say there is a world out there that can be apprehended through the senses and through experimentation, and separate the "objective" researcher from the "subject" under analysis, post-positivists would still agree there is a real world, but begin to question our ability to fully know or represent that reality. Our experiences are always mediated through language and representations of the real, like Plato's allegory of the cave. Post-positivism, however, is still tied to scientific methods of investigation, including triangulation and mixed-methods.

The third moment saw the blurring of boundaries between humanities and social sciences involving a series of theoretical turns, including feminist, linguistic, postmodern, post-structural and postcolonial. This period also saw the proliferation of critical paradigms within which research was conducted, including (British) cultural studies, critical race theory, Queer theory, critical pedagogy, and multiple standpoint epistemologies, such as womanist, and Third-World women of color feminism.

From the blurring of boundaries in the third moment emerged the crisis of representation. James Clifford and George Marcus' (1986) text *Writing Culture*, and Marcus & Michael Fischer's (1986) *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* are frequently cited as the turning point in this crisis. Alongside those two books, Renato Rosaldo's (1989/1993) *Culture & Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*

was equally ground-breaking. In the preface, Rosaldo places his discussion of methodology into the institutional context of increasing diversity in higher education, student-led protests that resulted in establishing ethnic and women's studies departments, and opening up of the "canon" of great literature to include writers of color and women.

Renato Rosaldo: "The remaking of social analysis called for in *Culture and Truth* was inspired at its heart by such struggles to remake institutions and the social relations of their members" (p. xiii).

Rosaldo draws on the work of anthropologists like Clifford Geertz, Mary Louise Pratt, and Victor Turner (among others), who had participated in the previous moment in blurring the boundaries between social science and humanities, text and context, culture and power. As explained by Rosaldo, the textual experimentation that emerged from this crisis of representation was an attempt to remake how culture was analyzed. This involved challenges to what constituted the field, and to the position of the researcher as detached observer (objectivity). Simultaneously, increased attention was paid to the role of storytelling and narrative analysis, and to the author's critical reflexivity (subjectivity).

With very few, if any, examples to rely on, Stephen Tyler (1986), in his contribution to *Writing Culture* offered a prescient vision of experimental ethnography in the fifth postmodern moment that deserves to be quoted at length:

Stephen Tyler: A post-modern ethnography is a cooperatively evolved text

consisting of fragments of discourse intended to evoke in the minds of both reader and writer an emergent fantasy of a possible world of commonsense reality, and thus to provoke an aesthetic integration that will have a therapeutic result. It is, in a word, poetry—not in its textual form, but in its return to the original context and function of poetry, which, by means of its performative break with everyday speech evoked memories of the ethos of the community and thereby provoked hearers to act ethically. Post-modern ethnography attempts to recreate textually this spiral of poetic and ritual performance. Like them it defamiliarizes commonsense reality in a bracketed context of performance, evokes a fantasy whole abducted from fragments, and then returns participants to the world of common sense—transformed, renewed, and sacralized. It has the allegorical import, though not the narrative form, of a vision quest or a religious parable. The break with everyday reality is a journey apart into strange lands with occult practices—into the heart of darkness—where fragments of the fantastic whirl about in the vortex of the quester’s disoriented consciousness, until, arrived at the maelstrom’s center, [s]he loses consciousness at the very moment of the miraculous, restorative vision, and then, unconscious, is cast upon the familiar, but forever transformed, shores of the commonplace world. (pp. 125-126)

The 4th moment, the crisis of representation, marks a creative rupture which opened up the space for experimentation and innovation to flourish in the 5th (postmodern/experimental) and 6th (post-experimental) moments. The 6th moment saw new venues, journals, book series and conferences established to showcase this work. This postmodern experimentation across moments pays attention to writing as a significant component of research. These are “messy,” reflexive texts which locate their authors in the research process and the written reports that result. There is no single model or theoretical framework for this writing. It is open-ended, and draws readers into conversation. The “object” of research may be located across multiple sites and challenge the boundaries of “the field.” The juxtaposition of disparate elements forms new relationships, or makes hidden relationships more visible. Examples include performances; visual or art-based projects; autoethnographies, critical personal narrative and testimonios; fiction and poetry; multi-voiced and co-authored texts, etc. but all share a common goal as expressions of lived experience.

George Marcus: “I find them interesting as *symptoms* of struggle within given formats and practices of analytic writing to produce unexpected connections and thus new descriptions of old realities. In so doing they critically displace sets of representations that seem no longer to account for worlds we thought we knew, or could at least name” (1994, p. 568).

These innovations have faced conservative backlash in the 7th and 8th moments. During the Bush years, “scientifically based” or “evidence” based

research was promoted under “No Child Left Behind,” while under Obama, “Race to the Top” introduced competition to public educational settings for access to Federal money. Looking ahead to the 9th and 10th moments, Denzin calls for entering into the policy arena to push back against SBR/EBR, and for opening up restrictive ethical guidelines for human subjects protocols more appropriate to bio-medical research. Indigenizing the academy and decolonizing research also represents a radical about-face for qualitative methods with their colonizing past. And it is imperative we remember Marx’ dictate that the point is not to study the world, but to change it!

Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln: “In this new era the qualitative researcher does more than observe history; he or she plays a part in it” (2005, p. 14).

* * *

Reflexivity Is Not Enough

This chapter is more than three weeks late. Out of seven chapters, I’ve submitted six. I’ve been sitting on this last chapter for days, now. And I still can’t see it. I haven’t been writing, just taking notes, collecting quotes. That’s not entirely fair to my writing process. I’ve been working non-stop, I just can’t see it, yet. The notes are a sort of writing, but they’re scattered about. I don’t know what I’m saying. The notes are a jumble of ideas. If I can just start putting them together, maybe they’ll start to take shape. It’s like a puzzle; I have all these different pieces, but they come from different boxes. How do I make it all fit?

* * *

The night wind blew fiercely last night. Rattling the door to get in. Again, I awoke in the middle of the night. The waxing moon was still high, only a few days from being full. I hear Ehēcatl blow ever fiercer when I'm not writing.

The road I live on is surrounded by farms. At the end of February, beginning of March, the ice and snow has melted, but the fields remain empty. Ehēcatl, as an aspect of Quetzalcoatl, was the wind that blew in the rain to start the growing season. Spring is still 10 days away. I watch as whirlwinds, *ehēcacoatl*, blow dirt into the air across the street. I smell the dust in the air. It gets in my sinus and makes my nose bleed.

* * *

What gives me the right to conduct research? Who gave us permission to ask all these questions? How do the research practices we engage in reproduce colonialist, extractive relationships with the objects of study? Where are the bodies of those we study in our written reports? What does it mean to seek truth in an era of 'alternative facts'? And how should we ethically situate ourselves as academics while studying and/or participating in activism?

I write messy texts that owe their allegiance to the post-modern and post-experimental moments. In response to the crisis of representation, I turn my researcher's gaze back on to the process of knowledge creation. I approach this research from my standpoint as a graduate student, cognizant that the act of writing a dissertation is a liminal, ritualized performance—a necessary, penultimate stage in the process of graduating toward something different. I am

an academic, an intellectual, and that makes me a writer. I am also a teacher. And an activist. These identities are not only fluid, but also precarious; I am not guaranteed a job from one semester to the next. I recognize that as an academic, the choices I make regarding what questions to ask and how to go about investigating them are political in nature. So, too, are the choices I make in the classroom. I temporarily occupy these many spaces, and use performance (auto)ethnography to reflect these facets, attempting to unify this fractured existence.

Autoethnography writes from the self outward (or vice-versa) connecting the personal to the political, the local to the global. The text is a cultural performance that collaborates with its readers to create meaning. Performance (auto)ethnography is both a means of investigating oppression, as well as protesting it, embodying Freire's praxis which combines reflection with action. To paraphrase J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006), it is a political act that attempts not to enlarge the known by domesticating and incorporating the unknown, but rather to participate in the always political process of creating the new (pp. xxxii-xxxiii).

I frequently write in the form of a script to emphasize that this essay, too, is nothing but a representation of my experience, scripted by my hand, while also imaginatively in/evoking the voices of others. This theatricality of a script recognizes the cinematic and performative nature of the stories we tell about our lives. Our lived experiences are interpreted through the stories we tell and the stories that are told about us—the stories we hear, both fictional and historical,

even science/speculative fictional. Structuring the words on the page in this way I, as writer, and hopefully you, as reader, cannot forget that I am an embodied author constructing this narrative. I also try to more fully enter into dialogue, on the page, with these academics, activists, filmmakers and writers. I speak across history, put people long dead into conversation with each other. I quote history, and the recent past, out of context, here in the present. I also engage with how I represent myself in the text. I am not the expert, the “lone ethnographer” with the sole power to interpret or theorize. I am yet one more character, in dialogue, moving the story along, uncertain of where we will end up, but with specific goals in mind.

* * *

It is so hard to get started. Today, another protest. This time, water protectors from Standing Rock in North Dakota are calling for a “Last Stand” to protest the Army Corps of Engineers halting an Environmental Impact Statement initiated by the Obama administration. Four p.m., in front of TD Bank in Northampton. I will go. But is this what is distracting me?

Gloria Anzaldúa: “The shadow beast and attendant desconocimientos (the ignorance we cultivate to keep ourselves from knowledge so that we can remain unaccountable) have a tenacious hold on us” (2015, p. 2).

Tim: My approach to research demands some diving. Some internal work. This internal investigation can be painful. I am implicated; the history I tell implicates me. I have benefitted from the legacy of colonizing research as

much as anyone. And so, I'm uncomfortable in this space of writing. I look at the damage piled high, heaped at my feet, propelling me skyward. With so many immediate problems in the world, mass incarceration, climate crisis, economic inequality, imperialism and neo-colonialism, neo-facism, how can I concentrate on telling stories?

Gloria Anzaldúa: “The struggle is inner. Chicano, *indio*, American Indian, *mojado*, *Mexicano*, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the bordertowns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads” (1999, p. 109).

Tim: The model of spiritual activism Anzaldúa provides is a process of transformation. And transformation is painful. The idea that I can change the world without changing myself is ludicrous.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith: “To imagine a different world is to imagine us as different people in the world. To imagine is to believe in different possibilities, ones that we can create” (2006, p. 158).

AnaLouise Keating: “Spiritual activism begins with the individual but moves outward in order to challenge and transform these unjust social structures. ... Spiritual activism combines self-reflection and self-growth with

outward-directed, compassionate acts designed to bring about material change” (2005, p. 244).

Tim: I see that it is not enough to situate myself in the research text. Reflexivity is not enough. Reflexivity is but one step toward the process of transformation. It is holding up a mirror to gain insight. But then I must put that insight into practice. Spiritual activism offers me a paradigm in which to conduct research. It is a relational onto-epistemology that unifies being with knowing, bringing together mind, body and spirit, and ethically founded in relationships with others, both human and non-human. Methodologically, Anzaldúa (2015) offers her seven stages of *conocimiento* based on her Coyolxauhqui imperative in chapter six of *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, titled, “now let us shift...*conocimiento*...inner work, public acts” (pp. 117-159).

AnaLouise Keating: “Spiritual activism is a visionary, experientially-based epistemology and ethics, a way of life and a call to action. At the epistemological level, spiritual activism posits a metaphysics of interconnectedness and employs relational modes of thinking. At the ethical level, spiritual activism includes specific actions designed to challenge individual and systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of social injustice. Spiritual activism is spirituality for social change, spirituality that recognizes the many differences among us yet insists on

our commonalities and uses these commonalities as catalysts for transformation” (2005, p. 242).

Dirty Words

Linda Tuhiwai Smith: “The term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research,’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. ... It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity. ... It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appalls us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations” (2012, pp. 30).

Vine Deloria Jr.: “Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall. Some people have bad horoscopes, others take tips on the stock market. ... But Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists” (1969, p. 83).

Norman Denzin: “From its origins in the 19th century, ethnography’s mission was to discover, study, and record the way of life of the dark-skinned primitive other. As 19th-century colonial anthropology gave way to 20th-century

urban sociology and anthropology, the focus shifted to studies of assimilation, ethnographies of the American Indian, the indigenous other, the civic other, racial minorities living in the urban ghetto, and the social problems they caused for the schooling, welfare, and health care systems” (2010, pp. 12-13).

Vidich and Lyman (1994), in their history of ethnographic methods from the first edition of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Methods*, point out that before the professionalization of sociology and anthropology into disciplines, that writings about and collecting artifacts from other cultures were carried out as part of the colonial project, from the perspective of European colonizers, “confident in [their] mission to civilize the world” (p. 26). These accounts portrayed Indigenous peoples as pre-literate and ahistorical “savages” as the means to justify colonization.

Some of the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century explorers, missionaries, and administrators have provided thick descriptions of those practices of the "primitives" made salient to the observer by his Christian value perspective. For societies studied by these observers, the author's ethnographic report is a reversed mirror image of his own ethnocultural ideal. ... These early ethnographies reveal as much about the West as about their objects of study. (p. 26)

Amateur ethnographers, tourists, BIA officials, and missionaries all contributed to ethnographic knowledge of Native Americans as exotic others

during the Western expansion of the United States from the 19th into the 20th century. Geological surveys reported information about Indian populations as if they were a natural feature of the landscape. Likewise, Denzin (2013) highlights the role of artists like George Catlin and other landscape painters as sources of (colonizing) ethnographic knowledge.

Vidich and Lyman (1994) point out that a shift occurred in the United States away from the perspectives of missionaries and the military and toward anthropologists with the establishment of the ethnology section of the Smithsonian (p. 30) in 1879. Where ethnographies had previously been written in the service of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, anthropological and archeological research lead by the Smithsonian was undertaken in relation to the Smithsonian's mission as a museum and archive. Indigenous stories were collected alongside artifacts, relics and bones to be stored in archives. Some were displayed as part of a bygone past, the first chapter of an Imperialist nation's progress narrative. The ineluctable march of progress provided its own justification for collections to preserve Indigenous cultures before they were "lost" forever.

But more importantly, this evolutionary perspective carried over into the 20th century. Instead of placing European colonizing powers at the pinnacle, American economic power was perceived to be the end point on a continuum of economic development to which other, developing nations should be encouraged to achieve. Studies during the Cold War equated industrialization with nation building and capitalism with democratization (p. 29). These assumptions

influenced not just international relations and aid organizations, but also sociological and anthropological research.

The American political economy and democratic social order replaced earlier images of the ultimate stage of cultural evolution. Changes in the rest of the nations of the world that seemed to herald movement toward adoption of an American social, political, and economic institutional structure became the standard by which social scientists could measure the “advance” of humankind. This standard provided the analyst-ethnographer with a new measure for evaluating the “progress” of the “other”. (p. 29)

This coincides with Denzin’s second moment, which he calls the “Golden Age” of qualitative research. This orientation to research reached its apotheosis with the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, and is epitomized nowhere more than Francis Fukuyama’s (1989) infamous article, “The End of History.” American exceptionalism remains endemic to U.S. politics, media and scholarship. Political candidates fall over themselves trying to be more patriotic, bordering on jingoistic. Reporters routinely cover wars and natural disasters from the assumption that American lives are more important, and more deserving of being mourned. Research is conducted on the “center” and the “periphery” with the United States always at the center. These are political, pedagogical and performative moments that convey the culture’s values.

The colonizing assumptions that supported research done during Denzin and Lincoln's first two moments are by no means gone. Social Scientists have continued into the 21st century to collaborate with the U.S. military to gather cultural knowledge during the ongoing, and escalating war on terror. Dubbed "Human Terrain System" (HTS) by the Pentagon,² the program embedded researchers from anthropology, sociology, political science and linguistics within combat units. This has led to consistent debate and controversy in the American Anthropology Association, which has led opposition to the program. The HTS was found to violate the American Anthropology Association code of ethics in 2007. It was supposed to have been shut down in 2014, but according to the AAA has continued into (at least) 2016:

New information has now come to light that shows the Army has not disbanded the program and is looking to expand it. AAA calls on the Army to immediately disband the Human Terrain System. ... The fact is that when social science research is done at gun point, with researchers surrounded by armed combatants, it is coercive, professionally

² Gonzáles (2008) wrote a damning critique for *Anthropology Today*: "Consider the words of US Army Lieutenant Colonel Edward Villacres, who leads an HTT [Human Terrain Team] in Iraq: the team's objective is to 'help the brigade leadership understand the human dimension of the environment that they are working in, just like a map analyst would try to help them understand the bridges, and the rivers, and things like that.' The unusual juxtaposition of words [human + terrain] portrays people as geographic space to be conquered—human beings as territory to be captured, as flesh-and-blood terra nullius. Much more serious is the way the term (like 'collateral damage' and 'enhanced interrogation') vividly illustrates George Orwell's notion of 'political language... designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable'" (p. 23).

irresponsible, and highly unlikely to yield reliable and accurate results.

AAA strongly urges the Army to reconsider its decision. (American Anthropological Association, 2016, n.p.)

In another example, the American Psychological Association was scandalized when it was revealed that two former presidents and the (then) sitting ethics director of the association had collaborated with the CIA and Pentagon in justifying torture for the Bush administration.³ The APA, as a result, has recently strengthened their code of ethics. The APA Council of Representatives voted to amend their code in August of 2016 to take effect January 1, 2017. Their position on “ethics and interrogation” posted to their website reads:

The American Psychological Association's (APA) position on torture is clear and unequivocal: Any direct or indirect participation in any act of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by psychologists is strictly prohibited. There are no exceptions. (American Psychological Association, n.p., n.d.)

³ James Risen (2015) reported in the *NY Times*, “Two former presidents of the psychological association were on a C.I.A. advisory committee. ... One of them gave the agency an opinion that sleep deprivation did not constitute torture, and later held a small ownership stake in a consulting company founded by two men who oversaw the agency’s interrogation program. ... The association’s ethics director, Stephen Behnke, coordinated the group’s [APA’s] public policy statements on interrogations with a top military psychologist... and then received a Pentagon contract to help train interrogators while he was working at the association, without the knowledge of the association’s board” (p. A1).

These extreme examples do not characterize qualitative research across the disciplines, but when looked at in the context of the long history of qualitative research, it sounds like more of the same. I'm reminded once again of the lyrics from Bruce Springsteen's song, "One step up and two steps back."

* * *

I am distracted by the news.

Two South Asian men were shot at a bar by a man who shouted, "Get out of my country!" Srinivas Kuchibhotla was killed. This was on 151st Street in Olathe, Kansas. I once lived on 94th Terrace, 15.7 miles, 21 minutes down I-35 in Overland Park, KS.

Not one tweet.

In Anaheim, California, an off-duty cop drew his gun and fired (no one was hurt) during a confrontation with a group of Mexican American kids, 13 years old, who crossed his yard while walking home from school. Policing his border. The corner of Euclid and Ball, 15.5 miles, 22 minutes up I-5, from where I lived in Irvine, CA.

Not one tweet?

Not *one* tweet?

I'm supposed to be writing my dissertation.

* * *

Friedrich Nietzsche said something like if a snake gets caught or tangled when shedding its skin, it could die.⁴ We're in the process of becoming something new, but caught in a Coatlicue state. Stuck in past ways, old habits and addictions.

Gloria Anzaldúa: "The painful periods of confusion that I suffer from are symptomatic of a larger creative process: cultural shifts. The stress of living with cultural ambiguity both compels me to write and blocks me" (1999, p. 96).

We, white people, "blame ourselves, hate ourselves, terrorize ourselves" (p. 67). We are in a constant state of Orange Alert. We fear something has been taken from us, and so torture others to find out where it is. In the process, we become torturers. We are George Zimmerman,⁵ Darren Wilson. We see Tamir Rice as a threat and pull the trigger. We are a prison guard in Guantanamo force feeding prisoners on hunger strike. But, in our fear, we forget what we've lost was never ours to begin with.

* * *

The moon was full last night. It begins to wane, now, on another 27-day trip around the Earth. I will pay attention to the moon's cycles while engaged in this act of creation.

⁴ "The snake that cannot shed its skin perishes. So do the spirits who are prevented from changing their opinions; they cease to be spirit." –Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Dawn*, §573, 1881 (excerpted in Nietzsche, 1954).

⁵ Because whiteness bears little relationship to skin color.

How deep can I go? How do I get there? This writing that is feeling. Writing my body. Writing myself into existence. Seeing, truly seeing me for what I am. What to change, what to keep? Because if I truly wish to engage this process, if I truly believe what I'm saying, I will not be the same person on the other side.

Gloria Anzaldúa: “When I write, it feels like I’m carving bone. It feels like I’m creating my own face, my own heart—a Nahuatl concept. My soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself in my body.” (1999, p. 95).

I keep digging. Reaching below the surface, unearthing the mud and grass and muck, and using this to form a new body. Forming bricks from manure and dirt and straw. Dancing on it barefoot. Then letting the bricks cure in the sun. This new adobe shelter made of blood and sweat and shit.

Contested Concept

After the “Old-fashioned Midwestern BBQ” with music by the “Cornstalkers Cajun String Band” which marked the end of the 2016 Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, I was invited to join some friends and new acquaintances down the street at Murphy’s Irish Pub. I was looking forward to a beer now that the conference was over.

At one point, I was left alone at a table with someone I’d only just met. I knew this woman’s name from somewhere. Had I read her work? She asked me

about my work. I am trying to write my dissertation, a performance (auto)ethnography. She replied, “Oh, so are you a performer? Do you perform?”

I paused in that moment, frozen. I wasn’t sure what was behind her question, but I was suspicious. Suspicious of my ability to answer. Suspicious of the question itself. It suggested categories, those who perform and those who do not. Or was it those who perform and those who write about it? All of this flashed through my mind, but none of it consciously.

Half-formed possible answers surfaced and again submerged. A split-second felt like minutes. Entire disciplines compressed into a fraction of time. One possible answer: “Don’t we all wear multiple masks and engage in different performances based on who we’re interacting with?” Another: “No, I do not do one-person, black-box shows.” Another: “I grew up putting on plays and singing in choirs. I began my undergrad as a theater and voice major.”

Here’s what I said: “Yes. I perform in classrooms and at conferences.”

Her response: “But, are you a performer?”

Honestly, I still don’t understand the question. I’m confused by what she was asking and why. And I’m confused by why I didn’t just ask her what she meant. I think I was too polite, or too shy. I think at the time, without being conscious of it, or having the time to even think about it, I was afraid I disagreed with her, and wanted to avoid confrontation. At least from what I know of myself, that’s what sense I can make of my behavior. Whether there was an

actual divide between our uses of the word performance/performer I may never know; however, my reaction, and my interpretations of my reactions reveals my own confusion over the ambiguity of the term.

Madison and Hamera (2006) describe performance as an essentially contested concept: “Performance is often referred to as a ‘contested concept’ because as a concept, method, event, and practice it is variously envisioned and employed” (p. xi).

I object to the exclusivity of drawing boundaries around those who perform and those who do not. In part, one of the multiple reasons as an undergrad I changed majors from theater to anthropology was I was tired of being on stage and having people stare at me. I always experienced stage fright (though no more or less than anyone else). I still do. But now I earn a paycheck as a teacher, at the front of the classroom, engaging in a constant improv, trying to entertain and maintain interest, all in order to convey a message.

“But are you a performer?”

Soyini Madison: “Recently, I have experienced momentary pangs, uneasy feelings, of wanting to claim turf, of unhappily wincing, when I hear the word *performance* slip so easily through the lips of “progressives” who still, deep down, primarily regard performance as “pretending.” Mimesis rules!” (1999, p. 107).

Tim: I paused because I reject the premise of the question itself. I couldn't answer because I do not see performance as only enacting, as staging, as reproducing. Madison continues:

Soyini Madison: "The others, a substantial few, who know and do more of performance, are more helpful. But too many of them see performance as all of everyday life or only everyday life. So, I worry ... and I wonder about their singleness of vision for quotidian locations and for art. Can we see the stage in the dark?" (1999, pp. 107-108).

* * *

Richard Schechner: "The sidewinder snake moves across the desert floor by contracting and extending itself in a sideways motion. Wherever this beautiful rattlesnake points, it is not going there" (1998, p. 357).

* * *

This difficulty in naming performance, I didn't know it until I'd experienced it. Even then, there was no aha! moment. And still I read, I write, I embody my learning by doing.

There are many origin stories for performance studies. One trajectory emerges out of elocution and moves from oral interpretation of literature (Wallace Bacon) to performance studies. At the same time, anthropologists examined rituals as cultural performances (Victor Turner). For Kenneth Burke, language and rhetoric were symbolic actions to be interpreted as dramas. Over in sociology, Erving Goffman looked at social interaction as a type of dramaturgy.

Cultural studies (Stuart Hall) and critical pedagogy (Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren) all contributed to critical performance pedagogy. Dwight Conquergood brought ethnography and performance together at Northwestern in Chicago. Meanwhile, Victor Turner and Richard Schechner were hanging out in Greenwich Village drinking coffee and exchanging ideas about liminality in ritual and theater across cultures.

* * *

Peggy Phelan drew on feminist psychoanalytic theory to write performance art criticism, as well as Austin's (1962) division of speech into constative and performative speech acts. A constative statement describes a world external to itself, while a performative statement brings its own world into being. Unlike paintings, for example, it is difficult to make copies of performance art. Phelan (1993) refers to this ontology of performance as, "representation without reproduction" (p. 146). According to Phelan, this allowed performance art to elude the regulatory mechanisms of capitalist reproduction.

Peggy Phelan: "Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control" (p. 148).

Performative utterances cannot be reproduced; they are self-referential and constitute reality. Moreover, according to Derrida, the performative's lack of reproducibility reinforces language's gap between the sign and the symbolized. A

promise refers only to itself. Phelan says that for Derrida, “The performative enacts the now of writing in the present time” (Phelan, 1993, p. 149).

A performative speech act, like performance art, is never the same twice. They can never be reproduced, only performed anew. This poses a challenge to writing about performance. To document the undocumentable inevitably freezes it, preserving it in writing. Rather than refusing to write about performance, Phelan says, “The challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performance possibilities of writing itself” (p. 148). Phelan draws on Tania Modleski to argue further that “‘feminist critical writing is simultaneously performative and utopian.’ That is, feminist critical writing is an enactment of belief in a better future; the act of writing brings that future closer” (p. 150).

For the most part, performances as events vs. discursive performative acts had been kept apart as distinct theoretical categories by what John McKenzie (1998) called, “disciplinary guardrails” (p. 217). The guardrails had been reinforced by separating departments of theater from English or speech communication; however, as described by Denzin and Lincoln’s third moment, the blurring of disciplinary boundaries erupted into the crisis of representation, and as McKenzie writes, “Different genres of performance collide at high speeds across different fields of research” (p. 217).

Judith Butler (1988) was as responsible for this as anyone else, by shifting attention from speech acts to bodily acts, i.e. “doing” your body (p. 521), or

performing gender by citing past performances within contexts not entirely of your own making. Here is where performance meets performativity and the “doing” and the “done” collide. Elin Diamond explains:

Elin Diamond: “When performativity materializes as a performance in that risky and dangerous negotiation between a doing (a reiteration of norms) and a thing done (discursive conventions that frame our interpretations), between someone’s body and the conventions of embodiment, we have access to cultural meanings and critique. Performativity, I would suggest, must be rooted in the materiality and historical density of performance” (1996, p. 5).

Where Peggy Phelan was concerned with writing *about* performances, Elin Diamond calls for merging the critique of performance with the performance of critique. Finally, Della Pollock turns writing into performance. For Phelan, performative utterances resisted the reproductive economy of representation through our inability to capture performances in writing. Pollock (1998b) takes up Phelan’s call for writing that is utopian and performative.

Della Pollock: “The writer and the world’s bodies intertwine in evocative writing, in intimate coperformance of language and experience” (p. 81).

From writing that is subjective, evocative, nervous and consequential, a performative self emerges that is, “a possibility rather than a fact, a figure of relation” (p. 87). Performance writing moves, “from documenting ‘me’ to reconstituting an operative, possible ‘we’” (p. 87).

Della Pollock: “In its enunciation ... the performative self ... *moves* forward (into survival? into democracy?) and between selves/structures, projecting in turn alternative figures of social relation” (1998b, p. 87).

* * *

I trace a path here from writing about performance to writing as performance. Performance events collide with performative discourses in postmodern experimental writing. Going further, Dwight Conquergood once and for all rejects the division between acting and interpreting.

Dwight Conquergood: “The performance studies project makes its most radical intervention, I believe, by embracing both written scholarship and creative work, papers and performances. ... Performance studies brings this rare hybridity into the academy, a commingling of analytical and artistic ways of knowing that un-settles the institutional organization of knowledge and disciplines. The constitutive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry” (2002, 151-152).

In his classic work “Beyond the Text,” Dwight Conquergood (1998) challenges the scriptocentric nature of Western academia, and suggests performance is better suited to studying what Rosaldo (1989/1993) calls, “Culture in motion.” Conquergood cites Clifford Geertz when he writes, “The ‘inscription’ of meaning is tantamount to ‘the fixation of meaning’—and this drive to pin down

meaning, to privilege ‘the said, not the saying,’ is the defining agenda of the textual paradigm” (1998, p. 30).

This is an approach to research that chloroforms culture, pins its carapace to a board, and affixes labels using Latin and Greek taxonomy. In this way culture is made recognizable to Western science. Conquergood offers performance as a way of knowing to challenge the textualization of culture, i.e. the tendency to “read” embodied performances as texts. This is a reworked understanding of performance, though, that shifts it from *mimesis* through *poesis* to *kinesis*.

The interpretation of performance as *mimesis*, or imitation, enters the social sciences from Goffman’s dramaturgy. This view, according to Conquergood, too often reinforces the Platonic ideal which distinguishes reality from appearances. Along with Austin’s performative speech acts, Victor Turner brought attention to performance as *poesis*, or creative acts. Finally, Conquergood follows Homi Bhabha’s view of the performative as a “punctum” or interruption of hegemonic performances, to arrive at performance as *kinesis*.

Dwight Conquergood: “From Turner's emphatic view of performance as making, not faking we move to Bhabha's politically urgent view of performance as breaking and remaking. This is a move from cultural invention to intervention” (1998, p. 32).

Critical, Reflexive Performance Ethnography is Critical Performance

Pedagogy

So long as Trump threatens to build his wall along the U.S./Mexico border and targets Muslim immigrants and refugees with a ban on entering the United States (not to mention targeting with drone strikes), the need for crossing borders has never been greater. In this sense, Henry Giroux situates artists and educators as principle actors in this theater. Oppositional public intellectuals engage in border crossing by challenging the ways that the market defines cultural work, having filtered out the political from the social from the aesthetic.

Henry Giroux: “At stake here is not merely the call to link art and other forms of cultural work to practices that are transgressive and oppositional, but to articulate a wider project that connects artists, educators, and other cultural workers to an insurgent cultural politics that challenges the growing incursions of corporate power while simultaneously developing a vibrant democratic public culture and society.” (2000, p. 127)

Henry Giroux was seemingly prescient in calling for a radical, critical, performative pedagogy back in 2000. His urgency in opposing neo-fascist trends in American governance only intensified after 9/11. Giroux draws on parallel discourses of critical pedagogy and cultural studies. He emphasizes the performative and pedagogical nature of both politics and popular culture, while identifying culture as a main site for struggle. Though each arrived in the U.S.

academy separately, by the 1990s, they were beginning to converge even while discussions remained within disciplinary silos. Giroux in *Impure Acts* (2000):

Henry Giroux: “My call to make the pedagogical a defining feature of cultural studies is meant to accentuate the performative as an act of doing—a work in progress informed by a cultural politics that translates knowledge back into practice, places theory in the political space of the performative, and invigorates the pedagogical as a practice through which collective struggles can be waged to revive and maintain the fabric of democratic institutions” (p. 135).

Giroux calls for teaching to become political, to take sides, and for cultural studies to look beyond textualizing culture and ground analyses in people’s lives. They meet at the intersection of politics, pedagogy and performativity. Giroux (2001) identifies academic labor as, “a social endeavor,” and emphasizes that theorizing is not simply a textual exercise, “but becomes meaningful when we use it to find ways to connect private troubles and public concerns” (p. 11). This is a utopian project located in, “the terrain of culture and education to actually intervene in the world” (p. 8). It is utopian in that it that offers hope without guarantees.

As described by Norman Denzin (2003a), critical performance autoethnographies work back and forth between body and text, between self, history and social structures to turn representations of experience into “evocative performances that have the ability to move audiences to reflective, critical action,

not just emotional catharsis” (p. 37). Denzin draws on Peter McLaren to say critical, reflexive performance ethnography works both as, “a method of representation and a method of understanding,” that, “reframes and reposes the question of understanding itself” (p. 33). This is an embodied epistemology that situates the researcher in capitalist culture in order to, “expose the ways in which power and ideology shape self, desire, and human consciousness” (p. 33).

Denzin and Giroux draw important links between pedagogy, cultural studies and performance. They advocate for radical, insurgent scholarship in order to intervene in cultural politics. This is public intellectual work that is “a moral and political practice” (Giroux, 2001, p. 9). As I’ve said before, reflexivity is not enough. Critical reflection is a step forward, but not a destination in itself. What realizations or epiphanies arise are put into practice, intending to incite critical reflection and action in others. Critical reflection moves through praxis toward transformation.

Norman Denzin: “Critical performance autoethnography is catalytic; it moves persons to action, helping them to understand their world and its oppressions in new ways. Critical ethnographers go beyond thick description of local situations to resistance performance texts/events that urge social transformations. ... The final arbiter of any critical ethnographic practice is its power to affect the world through praxis. Performance is praxis; words have material effects in the world” (2003a, p. 33).

It's all Greek to me, or Dialogical Performance

While Dwight Conquergood called us to go, “Beyond the Text,” by seeking performances that *move* us, he also recognized that textualism participates in colonization. Texts underpin the hegemony of Western knowledge, and Conquergood challenged their innocence.

Dwight Conquergood: For many people throughout the world, however,

particularly subaltern groups, texts are often inaccessible, or threatening, charged with the regulatory powers of the state. More often than not, subordinate people experience texts and the bureaucracy of literacy as instruments of control and displacement, e.g., green cards, passports, arrest warrants, deportation orders. ... Among the most oppressed people in the United States today are the “undocumented” immigrants, the so-called “illegal aliens,” known in the vernacular as the people “sin papeles,” the people without papers, *indocumentado/as*. They are illegal because they are not legible” (2002, p. 147).

I’m concerned more by the dominance of texts and writing in the Americas (or Turtle Island and Abya Yala) where previous forms of writing already existed. Anthropologists acknowledge the importance of the oral tradition among Native American people. But few seem to remember the destruction of books on a massive scale. Aztec amoxtli, Mayan codices, Incan quipu.

In tlilli in tlapalli = the black ink and red paint = writing & wisdom

In xōchitl in cuīcatl = *flor y canto*, flower and song = poetry

Huehuetlatolli = wisdom of the ancestors = Nahuatl rhetorical practices

One version of textuality is superimposed on the suppression of other forms of textuality. And these forms were often closer to performances—many involved recitation, song, oral interpretation. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo (1994) have published a collection of essays about this in *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*. Walter Mignolo's (1995/2003) *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* chronicles the role of writing in Spain's colonization of the Americas. Damian Baca's (2008) *Mestiz@ Scripts* draws on this work to challenge how writing is taught in contemporary college classrooms.

Elizabeth Hill Boone: “The graphic systems of communication in Pre-Columbian Mexico never intended to communicate speech. European alphabetic texts preserve the words, sentences, and paragraphs of a spoken language. In contrast, the Pre-Columbian texts in central Mexico bypass spoken language and preserve meaning visually and within its own pictorial conventions. Although an oral discourse would accompany the interpretation/performance of a book, the images themselves encode, structure, and present knowledge graphically. As with a musical score or mathematical notation, one can read a pictorial document without constructing a verbal narrative.” (1998, p. 158).

Gloria Anzaldúa: “An image is a bridge between evoked emotion and conscious knowledge; words are the cables that hold up the bridge. Images are more direct, more immediate than words, and closer to the unconscious. Picture language precedes thinking in words, the metaphorical mind precedes analytical consciousness” (1999, p. 91).

Tim: Absent the violence of colonization by the Spanish and other European powers—absent the missionary zeal of the Catholic Church in New Spain and the Puritans in New England, what might have emerged?

Sherman Alexie: “Indians, with our storytelling and artistic ability could have created Hollywood. We could have created American comedy” (Alexie, Moyers & Winship, 2013, n.p.).

Western history teaches Europeans brought systems of writing to the New World, were the first to write down indigenous languages, usually to create orthographies to translate *The Bible*. Indigenous people in the Americas were considered prehistoric because they did not have written documents. This is only true if you keep one eye closed. Mesoamerican cultures had complex systems of writing, traditions of oratory and universities to study them. This was all suppressed, burned in *auto-de-fe's*. Only a handful of books from this time remain. Further north, complex systems of meaning were expressed through the patterns woven into rugs and baskets, painted onto clay jars and onto rock walls. Wiigwaasabak, or birch bark scrolls, continue to be used by the Anishinabek to pass on knowledge. Here in the northeast, wampum belts remain relevant today

as written and performed ceremonial expressions of relationships between and within native groups, most notably the Haudenosaunee, but also the Abenaki and Wampanoag. In South America, Quipu represent yet another early form of writing.

After the books have been burned and banned, the schools torn down and outlawed, the languages suppressed, then we describe the people indigenous to the Americas as pre-literate and pre-historic. This continues today with the suppression of Mexican-American studies in K-12 schools in Tucson, Arizona.

* * *

The wind blows out of the west. It's a cold wind. It confuses me, living in New England for almost ten years, and I still have not learned how to read it. I intimately knew the winds of my youth, knew them by smell.

Gloria Anzaldúa: "Tu autohistoria is not carved in stone but drawn on sand and subject to shifting winds" (2015, p. 142).

This springtime wind is an agitated wind. Un viento agitado. It didn't snow in January this year, but waited until February. At the same time, this past February was the second warmest on record. Both things happened, temperatures soaring and plunging, brought by the wind.

Anzaldúa names the second half of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, filled with poetry, "Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, the Wind." According to Inéz Hernández-Ávila (2005), Ehēcatl, as a manifestation of Quetzalcoatl, appears as the night wind.

Inéz Hernández-Ávila: Ehécatl/Quetzalcoatl is associated with justice, with the search within the heart for truth. This search is the arduous path of the poet, the artist, and the *tlamatinime*—the wise ones who write in the red and the black ink, who offer the perforated mirror by which to see and learn reflection. (p. 234)

* * *

The wind has been blowing for days. It rattles my screens, creeps in under the door, around the window. This wind exposes the cracks that let the draft in, the cracks between outside and in.

* * *

Doña Coyotl (a Tlamatini,⁶ or trickster⁷): But Tim, by relying on all of this Indigenous Nahua and Mexica imagery, aren't you guilty of cultural appropriation, which is what you're preaching against?

Tim: Maybe I am. I can't say I don't worry about that. But, at the same time, do we accept these gifts when they're offered? Or do we throw them on the fire, like an *auto-de-fé*, burning the Aztec *amoxtlis*, Mayan codices and Incan quipu? Do we turn these ancient stories into tales of human sacrifice while we sacrifice our youth on the altar of "standards" and

⁶ The *tlamatinime* (plural for *tlamatini*) were Nahua philosophers, astronomers and poets who taught in *telpochcalli* and *calmecac*, or schools (let's call them high school and college, though I know it is inaccurate). They wrote and performed texts in the black ink and red paint, *in tilli in tlapalli*, using poetry, *in xōchitl in cuīcatl*, or flower and song, to pass on *huehuetlatolli*, or words of the ancestors.

⁷ Don Coyote was an archetypal character that appeared in "actos" produced by Teatro Campesino (Valdez, 1990/1971).

“high-stakes testing”?⁸ Taking such a position would fall into Conquergood’s (1985) ethical pitfall of the “Skeptic’s Cop-Out.” This is what I mean when I say I will learn *from*, not *about* indigenous peoples.

Dwight Conquergood: “It is only members of the dominant culture who can hold to this high purity argument regarding cultural intercourse. It is a fact of life of being a member of a minority or disenfranchised subculture that one must and can learn how to perform cultural scripts and play roles that do not arise out of one’s own culture” (1985, p. 8). “The skeptic, detached and estranged, with no sense of the other, sits alone in an echo-chamber of his own making, with only the sound of his own scoffing laughter ringing in his ears” (p. 9).

Maria Frederico Brummer (leading discussion of the four Tezcatlipocas, during the MAS Encuentros, Tucson Freedom Summer 2012): “These are universal concepts, as well. ... In our classes we traditionally have used the Nahui Ollin, the Aztec Tezcatlipocas, and of course the Mayan concepts as well, because they are the largest indigenous groups that the students can relate to.”

Alexandro ‘Salo’ Escamilla: “And also, also the Aztec knowledge wasn’t created by them. They’re the ones who kind of take credit for a lot of these ideas, but there were people for thousands of years before them who developed

⁸ I refer here, once again, to the elimination of Mexican-American Studies in Tucson, Arizona. You might say this one event lies underneath every sentence in this dissertation.

these kinds of ideas. So it's not only for Mexican people. It's for all humanity" (Morales, 2012b, n.p.).

Luis Valdez: "Chicano Studies is quite simply the root of American Studies.

Human history in this hemisphere does not begin in 1492 C.E. but rather in 3113 B.C.E. with the creation of the Mayan calendar, if not before with the Ancients in Peru. ... In Lak'Ech is a timeless Mayan precept I incorporated into a larger poem called "Pensamiento Serpentino." ... The meaning of the phrase is affiliated with the Mayan definition of the human being, which they called "huinik'lil" or "vibrant being." In this regard, we are all part of the same universal vibration. This was the origin of the recitation, excerpted from my poem, that celebrated our collective human being in Tucson's MAS [Mexican American Studies] classes" (Valdez & Paredes, n.d., paras. 2-3).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith: "Indigenous communities also have something to offer the non-indigenous world. ... Indigenous people's ideas and beliefs about the origins of the world, their explanations of the environment, often embedded in complicated metaphors and mythic tales, are now being sought as the basis for thinking more laterally about current theories about the environment, the earth and the universe" (2012, p. 264, also cited by Magnat, 2012, p. 33).

Gloria Anzaldúa: “Let’s all stop importing Greek myths and the Western

Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil of this continent” (1999, p. 90).

The Sun Sinks Slowly in the West

In an earlier draft of my chapter “*Avatar*, Tar Sands and Dad” (chapter 6), I concluded by stating, “I cannot offer answers, only connections.” When sent out for publication, an anonymous reviewer commented, “I was admittedly let down when you wrote ‘I cannot offer answers, only connections.’ COP OUT! Think more and the answers—or at the very least hunches and speculations—will come to you. Only lazy researchers do not produce answers.”

That is a complete misinterpretation of why I write. I do not seek answers, but action. I refuse the position of the “Lone Ethnographer” who rides off into the sunset having handed down truth from high on my horse. In a polyvocal, messy text like that (Ch. 6), the answers are not mine alone. The contributions I try to make come from the juxtaposition of voices ripped from history and placed into a new context.

I do not seek the closure of answers; I am looking for new openings, a way out. What answers I stumble across might work for me, but I do not assume my answers are right, or that they work for everyone. Answers also assume I begin writing with a question in mind. What I question is the basis on which Western

knowledge is founded. The corpses that lie buried there have been quiet for too long. I want to resurrect the dead, not store them in some archive.

Inéz Hernández-Ávila: “‘Más antes en los ranchos,’ the first section of “Un

Agitado Viento,” begins with verses from the popular Mexican song “La Llorona,” which says, “They say I have no sorrow, Llorona, because no one sees me weep. But there are dead ones who make no sound, Llorona, and their pain is even greater” [Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 123]. The dead make no noise, but they imbue the land with their stories, with their bones, with their heartsblood, and with their spirit” (Hernández-Ávila, 2005, p. 235).

* * *

Denzin & Lincoln’s research moments may seem to show a linear progression, with the most recent moment being the most current, relevant, even avant-garde, but contemporary research may fall into any of the proposed categories. The moments overlap temporally, and every subsequent moment contains its precursors, even if only in response or reaction.

The point is that these moments are not just moments, but illustrate a legacy of colonizing research. Past moments are not even past. Research is still done in extractive ways that contributes to neo-colonizing policies and laws, to developing new drugs, to the U.S. military, to NGOs focused on neoliberal development. This work advances academic careers. Denzin & Lincoln never claimed they illustrate a linear progression. They’re more like a wind sock that shows which way the wind blows. They describe the eighth moment we’re in as a

return to pushing back against the movement for “evidence-based research” (particularly in education and health-related fields like nursing), fighting battles that had already been won.

Renato Rosaldo: Once upon a time, the Lone Ethnographer rode off into the sunset in search of “his native.” After undergoing a series of trials, he encounters the object of his quest in a distant land. There, he underwent his rite of passage by enduring the ultimate ordeal of “fieldwork.” After collecting “the data,” the Lone Ethnographer returned home and wrote a “true” account of “the culture.” (1989/1993, p. 30)

Rosaldo is describing the classical era of Anthropology, which he dates from 1921 to 1971. This is Denzin and Lincoln’s second moment, or the “Golden Age” of qualitative research. This approach, however, is far from over. While the discipline of Anthropology may have transformed itself, ethnographers from other disciplines still adopt classical approaches to ethnography, particularly those responding to the politics of evidence under audit culture.

For example, Sally Campbell Galman, Assistant Professor in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, has published two guidebooks for graduate students engaging in ethnographic research: *Shane, the Lone Ethnographer: A Beginner’s Guide to Ethnography* (2007) and *The Good, The Bad, and the Data: Shane the Lone Ethnographer’s Basic Guide to Qualitative Data*

Analysis (2013).⁹ Twenty-four years after Rosaldo used the image of the Lone Ranger to satirize his field, Galman strips it of irony to use uncritically as a model for how good research is done. The tragic part is she's right. Grad students who use her guidance will likely get published, find grants, make tenure and advance in their careers.

Claudio: What gives you the right to ask your questions? Where are the missing bodies?

Norman: Enough is enough! Let's put the cowboy as colonizer to rest.

Galman draws her graphic novels in a cartoony style. She not only uses the imagery of the Lone Ranger, but also names her character "Shane." Shane is another Western icon, the "reformed" gunslinger come out of retirement to fight one more righteous battle—demonstrating, once again for the last time, his mastery of violence for a 'just cause.'

In the guidebook's narrative, Shane drifts off during a graduate seminar to imagine:

Yes—the West was wild—wild and undocumented. Unexplored by social science, its landscape was undescribed—its practices, processes and patterns are unknown, its problems both unknown and unsolved, and even

⁹ Unfortunately, Galman has continued her theme into 2016 with *Naptime at the OK Corral: Shane's Beginner's Guide to Childhood Ethnography*, even as she no longer refers to the "lone ethnographer" in the title.

if they were, the solutions would remain unevaluated. It is a land without mercy—without theory... (Galman, 2007, p. 4)

This text is accompanied by drawings of a western horizon, with the sun sinking low behind big flat-topped mesas, saguaro cactuses, and the bleached skull of a longhorn cow. The text continues on the next page as if narrating a Western radio drama:

...Clearly, this was a land in need of ethnography! Suddenly the wind shifts... It sweeps across the hot, barren plain... A silhouette appears on the horizon... She's tall in the saddle, proud—at high noon with a tape recorder in hand as she rides—a loner, a rebel bent on utilizing multiple data sources to provide emic perspectives in naturalistic settings, she's—SHANE, The Lone Ethnographer! Yes, only she can describe this untamed land!" (p. 5)

If this imagery was unpacked, if the figure of the cowboy or the representation of the Western landscape as uninhabited was challenged, if the legacy of the colonizing relationship between anthropology and Native Americans recognized, if the author suggested that graduate students just setting out to learn about ethnography should try to avoid occupying the position of "The Lone Ethnographer," if there was any discussion of the role of ethnographer as writer, if there was any challenge whatsoever given to what constitutes "the field," or what counts as "data," then I would find the passages quoted above amusing. I would accept the tongue-in-cheek tone as intended.

But I can't.

It's like the crisis of representation never happened.



Figure 4: Shane, *The Lone Ethnographer*, page 4

What images are you drawing on? This is precisely the level that Anzaldúa engages, the “imaginal.” To look at what images are available, to take them apart and change them or create new ones where they’re found wanting. This is her Coyolxauhqui imperative.

AnaLouise Keating: The force that drives Anzaldúa’s writing is her, “aspiration to evoke healing and transformation, her desire to go beyond description and representation by using words, images, and theories that stimulate, create, and in other ways facilitate radical physical-psycho change in herself, her readers, and the various worlds in which we exist and to which we aspire” (2015, p. xxiii).

Norman Denzin: “The purpose of research is not the production of new knowledge per se. Rather the purposes are pedagogical, political, moral, and ethical, involving the enhancement of moral agency, the production of moral discernment, a commitment to praxis, justice, an ethic of resistance, and a performative pedagogy that resists oppression” (2005, p. 951).

Tim: This is inquiry that draws on a legacy of resistance to both learn from the past and update it for the present moment in order to make space for new utopian possibilities to emerge.

* * *

I return to two of the questions I posed toward the beginning of this chapter.

What gives me the right to conduct research?

There has been a long history of resistance toward colonizing research that makes it possible for me to do this work in an academic setting. It has not been an easy road. There are twists and turns, as well as counter-insurgency (SBR, EBR). I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, Claudio and Marcelo, hari steven kumar, Mary Weems. It has been done before.

What does it mean to seek truth? That question deserves to be asked on its own, but I am also asking how will qualitative researchers address the post-factual era of Trump and “fake news” (by which I mean both unsubstantiated reports, conspiracy theories and lies, as well as politically motivated attacks against legitimate news sources)?

What does it mean to seek truth?

It means searching within yourself to eliminate desconocimientos and seeking transformation. It means insurgent research for social and environmental justice (which are the same thing). It means challenging racism, sexism, homophobia, able-ism. It means seeking our historical roots (and routes) in the land where we live and work. It means working to build connections and bridges to cross the borders which divide us, whether by gender, class, race, ideology or nationality. It means bearing witness to the injustices of our lives. It means practicing radical empathy—of seeing us in them and the other in the self, Anzaldúa’s “nos/otras.”

Gloria Anzaldúa is looking for an “unmapped common ground” (2015, p. 151). *El mundo zurdo*. I find common ground through the connections made possible by performance. The irreproducibility of performance generates a space that cannot be mapped because it is never the same twice. It is a common space because it cannot be entirely claimed by either performers or audience, even erodes the distinctions between them. We recognize each-other’s humanity. “We are the other, the other is us” (p. 151). This is Anzaldúa’s “nos/otras” position. *In Lak’ech, tu eres mi otro yo*. She says getting there, “requires a different way of thinking and relating to others; it requires that we act on our interconnectivity” (p. 151). Similarly, The Mayan concept of *In Lak’ech*¹⁰ teaches us that as we are a

¹⁰ *In Lak’ech* is one of three Mayan concepts at the heart of the Mexican American Studies curriculum that was outlawed in Tucson, Arizona. *In Lak’ech* can be translated to

part of humanity, then to love others is to love yourself. As we are a part of the earth, then to pollute it also causes harm to yourself. Violence, oppression and environmental injustice in this worldview are a form of self-hatred.

* * *

I situate my work in Denzin and Lincoln’s seventh moment as a response to the crisis of representation, and the eighth as an answer to the encroachment of neoliberalism into university life. I write experimental, messy texts that push against the movements for “scientifically based research” which deepen the audit culture as a function of the neoliberal project to transform the university. I also shift my work toward Denzin & Lincoln’s ninth and tenth moments by heeding the call to social action and transformation. Decolonizing methodology is a step toward this end. I locate my work at the nexus of the political, the pedagogical, and the performative.

Norman Denzin: “We can no longer separate ideology and politics from methodology” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 683).

Gloria Anzaldúa: “By formulating new ways of knowing, new objects of knowledge, new perspectives, and new orderings of experiences, I grapple, half unconsciously, with a new methodology—one that I hope does not reinforce prevailing modes” (2015, p. 4).

mean you are my other me. The other two concepts were *Panche Be*, or seek the root of the truth, and *Hunab Ku*, an abstract concept that I’ll briefly summarize as the great mystery at the heart of creation (Rodriguez, 2010). I go into this more in chapters 4 and 7.

Yvonna Lincoln: “Language is a key. If new forms of social text are created, then new voices are heard—the voices of change, the voices of resistance.

Research is thereby connected to political action. Systems of language and meaning and paradigms of knowing are changed. When this happens, the world changes” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 683).

My approach to inquiry is performative, poetic, messy, fragmented, political and reflexive. I hold a mirror up to myself and to society, in order to smash it. This is an intervention that works toward social justice by drawing connections between private troubles and political issues; that refracts multiple perspectives and voices; that recognizes itself as partial and incomplete; that attempts to move from a dominant/mainstream/whitestream (Grande, 2004) consciousness toward oppositional or differential (Sandoval, 2000) consciousness; that, more than interdisciplinary, is anti-disciplinary; that does not simply describe or interpret reality (Anzaldúa, 2015), but creates new ways of being and knowing that are decolonizing, healing, transformational, and mobilizing (Smith, 2012/1999). Bearing witness to the rise of right-wing nationalism (Trump, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, Rodrigo Duterte, Nigel Farage, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan), these are emancipatory, utopian performances seeking to fully and finally leave behind the colonial imaginary to become a bridge to multiple decolonial imaginaries (Pérez, 1999).

CHAPTER 3
JOHN WAYNE
IN
THE IRVINE RANCH FARMERS' MARKET

A Western hero must play his part,
Even though it will break his heart.

“Western Stars” by Chris Isaak (1985)

I want to start by honoring the original inhabitants of the region of Southern California where I grew up, today known as Orange County. The Tongva and Acjachemen, the Chumash to our north and Payómkawichum and Kumeyaay to the South. Or the Gabrieliño, Juaneño, the Luiseño, and Diegueño as they were called by the Spanish colonizers—linking them by name to the missions that enslaved them. And the Abenaki and Pocumtuc, who were the first to reside in the area where I live today in the shadow of Ktsi Amiskw, the Great Beaver.¹

Daniel Heath Justice (2004) reminds us that “there is not a University in this country that is not built on what was once native land” (p. 101). Particularly for land grant institutions, the question is exactly who is granting what land to whom? Justice continues: “We should reflect on this over and over” (p. 101).

[FADE IN:]

¹ The area is known to residents of the Kwanitekw river valley today as Mount Sugarloaf and Pocumtuc Ridge in Deerfield, Massachusetts.

“The West” of Massachusetts

Although I sit in Massachusetts, I hear coyotes yelp while writing this. Crickets chirrup. And most summer nights I fall asleep to the chant of the barred owls, “Wh-who-cooks-for-you?” I ran into a mama bear and cub, black bears, on the streets of Northampton while walking to a friend’s house. Western Massachusetts is far more wild than Orange County where I grew up.

But weren’t there mountain lions in Turtle Rock?

The last wild California condors were brought into a captive breeding program at the San Diego Zoo in 1987. I recall riding in the car, hearing the radio report their numbers dwindle from year to year. I thought then, the condors were here before us. Maybe we’re the ones who should leave?

[DISSOLVE TO:]

John Wayne in the Irvine Ranch Farmers’ Market

Why do I remember this? Perhaps because my mother has retold the story, reinscribed it, preventing it from fading. I remember looking, but not seeing. This is not a visual memory, but a feeling.

We’d been here before, but it was not Safeway or Alpha Beta where we usually shopped. Mom got really excited. “Don’t look, don’t look.”

Don’t look where, I wondered. Looking around, all I saw was the store.

Mom, what is it? Mom, Mom, Mom, what did you see? Mom? Mom?

John Wayne is buying some oranges.

“Who’s John Wayne?”

“It’s really sad, he looks so ill. Worn and drawn.”

I was too little to have ever seen a John Wayne movie. I was small enough to ride in the child’s seat of the grocery cart. Or was I holding my Mom’s hand, too small to see over the mounds of oranges through which John Wayne picked?

This was 1979. I was 7. John Wayne would die from stomach cancer within three months. What stands out to my Mom, whom I just called to hear the story one more time, was his granddaughter, who said in her teenaged voice, “Oh, Grandpa.” She wasn’t impressed by who he was. They were shopping for vegetables, avocados, oranges. His granddaughter was driving; they had a big Cadillac in the parking lot. My Mom remembers he was living in Newport Beach at the time, in a big house on the water. My Dad thinks it was Lido Isle.

The Orange County Airport between Irvine and Newport Beach was named John Wayne Airport after his death in 1979. There is a statue of him there in bronze, larger than life, that though unmoving, seems to capture his inimitable walk midstride. The statue is indoors now, but in my memory, when the statue first went up, it stood in front, outdoors. I’m not sure if my memory is accurate. I’m not old enough to remember the airport before its name was changed. I was 7 years old. Had I even been on a plane, yet? Nonetheless, this naming—the John Wayne Airport—has always seemed strange to me. Something imposed on what came before.

California has always been a tabula rasa for new arrivals remaking and renaming themselves and the land. The Irvine Ranch was Rancho San Joaquin. The Tongva village Lisanchanga became Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, which stands today at the heart of Los Angeles County. Each of these namings comes with an erasure, a forgetting, an amnesia of what was before. The Acjachemen are no longer themselves, but rather Juaneño, which often gets subsumed under the category “Mission Indians.”

John Wayne’s name was changed from Marion Morrison after he started working in Hollywood. Raoul Walsh and some Fox Film Corp. execs gave him the name while working on *The Big Trail* (Walsh, 1930).

[CUT TO:]

Frontierland

This is a performance (auto)ethnography (Diversi & Moreira, 2009; Moreira, 2008), using the “Western” genre as a framing device. I ask the question, “Why don’t I speak Spanish?” as the entry point to begin to unravel the tangled legacy of colonialism in California (and the United States) and to locate my body within it. In examining this history, I am trying to learn from, rather than about, the indigenous people of this continent. Overall, I hope to contribute to the project of decolonizing knowledge production by turning the lens of the researcher’s gaze back upon my straight, white, male academic body.

This is my response to Norman Denzin's (2003b) call for reflexive ethnography that engages in radical cultural critique at the "intersection of the pedagogical, the performative, and the political" (p. 266). Denzin quotes Montana writer William Kittredge (1987) who says that "in the American West we are struggling to revise our dominant mythology, and to find a new story to inhabit" (p. 67; quoted in Denzin, 2003a, p. 134). Denzin picks up Kittredge's invitation, saying "we need new stories about the West. ... The West is a place for performances, a place where myth circulates with reality." (p. 132). With Denzin, I "play my part in the Westward movement" (p. 132), and like Chris Isaak says, it breaks my heart. But this is a remapping of the frontier, an unmapping. Where the Western frontier has historically been an encounter between East and West, self and other, between civilization and nature, between European and Native, cowboys and Indians, Denzin says:

My version of the frontier is a meeting point between my past and my future. ... In this model the personal frontier resides on a horizon that is always just out of reach. Turner was wrong. The wilderness never comes to a close. We are constantly restaging our personal version of the primal struggle. (pp. 132-133)

I seek to engage in what Gaudry (2011) terms "insurgent" research, as opposed to research that is "extractive". For Gaudry, making claims of scientific objectivity involves an extractive approach to knowledge production, and serves to mystify the workings of colonialism. Insurgent research is a liberatory praxis

that acknowledges that, “In truth, *all research is propaganda*—so why not make it openly so?” (p. 133)(*italics in original*). And as Tuck & Yang (2012) remind us, “Decolonization is not a metaphor.” They say it is always about land. I agree, but I think it is also about bodies and souls. Colonialism has been so complete that bodies, lives, languages and landscapes are all transformed. Settler colonialism displaces bodies, destroys cultures, erases languages, rewrites history. Stories, then—herstory, mystory, our stories—become a form of resistance. Sium & Ritskes (2013) recognize indigenous storytelling as “acts of creative rebellion” (p. v). They go on, “Stories in Indigenous epistemologies are disruptive, sustaining, knowledge producing, and theory-in-action. Stories are decolonization theory in its most natural form” (p. ii).

Deborah Miranda: California is a story. California is many stories. As Leslie Silko tells us, don’t be fooled by stories! Stories are “all we have,” she says. And it is true. Human beings have no other way of knowing that we exist, or what we have survived, except through the vehicle of story. (2013, p. xi)

Joan Didion: We tell each other stories in order to live. (1979, p. 11)

This is another of California’s stories. It is a Western.

[DISSOLVE TO:]

Tumbleweeds

As a child, I saw tumbleweeds blow down my street. This was as odd to me then as it sounds now. I lived on a suburban street with a pool in the park at the end of the block. Riding bikes was one of our favorite games after school. We'd ride around and around, circling in front of our houses till the sun went down. Where did this tumbleweed come from?

Southern California's well-known perfect climate comes from the tempering ocean breeze that always blows in from the west. Even when temperatures reached 98 degrees, it still cooled off at night once the breeze started blowing. Except in the Fall, when the wind suddenly changed direction. In October the Santa Ana winds blew in from the east, across the Mojave Desert, over the Santa Ana Hills, down my street. The wind was hot, and dry, and dirty. Full of dust and grit blown in from the desert. These winds originate in the Great Basin which lies between the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and Utah on one side and the Sierra Nevadas of California and Oregon's Cascade Range on the other.

[CLOSE-UP ON:]

California Wildfire Threat:

Classic Santa Ana Winds Howl Through Southern Cal

LOS ANGELES — Santa Ana winds are howling through Southern California this weekend, forcing officials to post Red Flag warnings. Forecasters say the winds could push any small fire out-of-control swiftly. "A classic set up for Santa Ana winds occurs when high pressure begins building in over the Great Basin," meteorologist Alan Raymond explained. "As the high builds, it pushes cool, dry desert air over the mountains of Southern California. They begin to flow 'downslope' as they exit the mountain range. As they drop in elevation the air

begins to warm dramatically, causing hot and windy conditions and increasing the threat of fire danger." ...

State fire officials have moved "strike teams" into position in anticipation of fire outbreaks; called hundreds of firefighters in from off-duty and have 23 firefighting aircraft standing by, he added. Red flag fire danger alerts were posted for much of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, as well as other areas. (Associated Press, 2013)

Was it my imagination? Or could that tumbleweed have been picked up by the wind in Death Valley, carried over the hills, and down my street?

These celebrity winds fan the flames that burn movie star's houses up in the hills, making for dramatic news coverage every autumn. These same hills where the condors once perched. These same winds that lifted the condors' nine-foot wingspan aloft on thermals.

Joan Didion: It is hard for people who have not lived in Los Angeles to realize how radically the Santa Ana figures in the local imagination. ... Just as the reliably long and bitter winters of New England determine the way life is lived there, so the violence and the unpredictability of the Santa Ana affect the entire quality of life in Los Angeles, accentuate its impermanence, its unreliability. The wind shows us how close to the edge we are. (1968, pp. 220 - 221)

Orange County sits perched on the edge of the continent. Between Los Angeles and San Diego, it is the end of the trail. West of everything. West of California lies the Pacific, lies Hawaii, and then Japan. West of California lies the

East. We were on the edge of the urban sprawl reaching from L.A. down to San Diego,

but not

quite

there,

yet.

[CUT TO:]

Bricolage

I am composing a bricolage, a montage, and juxtaposing truth, lies, and myths we tell ourselves about ourselves. We use these conflicting stories that make up our identities to explain who we are and where we came from. Sometimes we find truth in the movies and lies in history books, but are they so far apart? These are fragments, hyperlinked like a jumble of websites, but remixed here seeking new meanings, new articulations, new relationships. I find Joe Kincheloe (2001) and Yvonne Lincoln (2001) to help explain what I'm trying to do.

Kincheloe's bricoleur ... looks for not yet imagined tools, fashioning them with not yet imagined connections. This handyman is searching for the

nodes, the nexuses, the linkages, the interconnections, the fragile bonds between disciplines, between bodies of knowledge, [between bodies, I would add] between knowing and understanding themselves. (Lincoln, 2001, pp. 693–694)

Just as Gloria Anzaldúa, with her own form of alchemy,² or rather Nahualismo,³ retells old stories to constitute her identity anew in *el mundo zurdo*, this is my attempt to reframe the myths that have been used to construct American identity.

Gloria Anzaldúa: I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you (1981, p. 169).

I attempt an experimental writing style advocated by Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (Denzin, 2003a; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008) that combines bricolage (Kincheloe, 2001; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011) with ethnodrama (Saldaña, 2011) in the form of a screenplay. In this way, I highlight and echo the mediated, filmic origin of the mythical West(ern). I also find inspiration in the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, Leslie Marmon Silko, Joan Didion, and Deborah Miranda. Again, Lincoln (2001):

² According to Anzaldúa (1999), “the act of writing is the act of making soul, alchemy” (p. 169).

³ Anzaldúa (1999) writes that “the grounding of my spiritual reality is based on indigenous Mexican spirituality, which is Nahualismo, which loosely translates as ‘shamanism.’ But the Nahual was a shapeshifter, a shaman that could shift shapes, that could become a person or an animal” (p. 239).

It is “boundary-work” taken to the extreme, boundary-work beyond race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class. It works the margins and liminal spaces between both formal knowledge, and what has been proposed as boundary knowledge, knitting them together, forming a new consciousness. (pp. 693–694)

[DISSOLVE TO:]

Why Don't I Speak Spanish?

When summer turned to fall, the town smelled foul from unpicked tomatoes left to rot in the fields. It was a sour smell, unavoidable because the car windows were always rolled down from the heat. Those tomato fields are houses now, condos. I can remember when my high school was orange groves. I feel nostalgia for a place that was always changing, for the point in time at which I first encountered it. Those orange groves and eucalyptus trees were themselves immigrants, legacies of colonialism.

My high school mascot was the vaquero. For much of the time I attended that school, I did not know what a vaquero was. Before that, I went to Venado Middle School in a housing track named Deerfield, but never understood the connection—*venado* is Spanish for deer. My elementary school was named *El Camino Real*, the royal road. Except it was not written in italics. El Camino Real. I did not know it was Spanish. It was the road that linked the missions from Baja California to San Francisco, as we all learned in fourth grade. It ran by my school.

California public school students all do the “Mission project” in fourth grade, still.

We took school field trips to Mission San Juan Capistrano, always being dug up and buried, square by square on a grid, in yet another archeological expedition. We learned from these midden sites, from visiting the mission in fourth grade, that native Californians and the Spaniards that Christianized them are things of the past, certainly not living among us in our communities. They left the missions shortly after Mexican independence from Spain and had somehow disappeared by the time gold was discovered. By no means did this have anything to do with contemporary debates around “illegal” immigration.

Historic markers

shaped like mission bells
run alongside
the Pacific Coast Highway
retracing,
reinscribing
the route of the
Franciscan friars
through Alta California,
El Camino Real.



Figure 6: El Camino Real

I grew up in the tract housing of a “planned” community begun by the Irvine Co. in the late 1960s. Before that, the land was part of the Irvine Ranch. James Irvine bought the land with his business partners in 1864. The land had previously been part of three different ranchos: Rancho San Joaquin, Rancho Lomas de Santiago, and Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. The Irvine Co. ran cattle on that land for more than 100 years, up until the late 1970s. There were also orange groves and fields of vegetables, celery, and tomatoes. Cowboys were actively ranching on Irvine Co. land when my family moved there in 1972. Mom loves to tell of the time she ran into two cowboys, with boots and spurs, lasso, and hat in the checkout line of Safeway.

The ranchos of California were mostly land grants from Spanish and Mexican governors in return for soldiers’ military service. Some land was offered to the Mission Indians after completing their 10-year indenture to the missions, though this was often more of a promise than a reality (Miranda, 2013). Following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, the new U.S. government in California claimed to uphold existing Spanish land grants, but the legal process was so onerous that many Californios had already sold their land by the time their grant was patented. What wasn’t sold was stolen. Native land holdings were not even recognized.

Friar Junípero Serra founded Alta California’s first mission, Mission San Diego de Alcalá, in 1769 in an area long inhabited by the Kumeyaay. Mission San Francisco Solano in 1823 was the final mission established in what today is

Sonoma. It was built in the Coast Miwok's village of Huchi ("San Francisco Solano," n.d.). Twenty-one missions dot the coast of California linked by El Camino Real, each positioned a day's ride (by horse) apart. All of California's schoolchildren learn this in fourth grade. We don't learn that the "Mission Indians" were enslaved, forced to work making adobe bricks to build the missions, forced to raise crops and cattle to support the occupying army, raped by the soldiers and padres, forced to speak Spanish, forced to convert to Christianity, beaten and whipped if they disobeyed. We don't learn the Mission Indians' names; they were given Christian names when baptized by the padres, the tribes from then on referred to by the mission where they labored—Juaneño for San Juan Capistrano, Gabrieliño for San Gabriel Arcángel, Luiseno for San Luis Rey. We don't learn how the Mission Indians, having been forced into a state of dependency, were abandoned, left homeless when the missions were secularized following Mexican independence. We don't learn that 1 million people were reduced to 150,000 between 1765 and 1845 (Miranda, 2013). Over the next 10 years, by 1855 during the Gold Rush—celebrated in history and film—another 100,000 were killed. Those who weren't murdered died of disease or starvation (Young, 1981, p. 159). By the turn of the twentieth century, Indigenous Californians numbered fewer than 20,000.

Deborah Miranda: The Mission Unit is all too often a lesson in imperialism, racism, and Manifest Destiny rather than actually educational or a jumping off point for critical thinking or accurate history. ... That's why it's time for

the Mission Fantasy Fairy Tale to end. This story has done more damage to California Indians than any conquistador, any priest, any *soldado de cuera* (leather-jacket soldier), any small pox, measles, or influenza virus. This story has not just killed us, it has taught us how to kill ourselves with alcohol, domestic violence, horizontal racism, internalized hatred. This story is a kind of evil, a kind of witchery. We have to put an end to it now. (2013, pp. xvii-xix)

[CUT TO:]

Preservation or Reservation?

I did experience the “Old West” as it was depicted on film, but not from the movies or television. I did not start watching Westerns till I was older. No, we would drive east across the desert of California and Arizona to New Mexico to visit my uncle, aunt, and cousins who lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. One family vacation was spent riding horses on a dude ranch in Arizona. We had to travel east to see the West. My parents always pointed out the flat-topped mesas and saguaro cactuses (few there were) passing by the car window. I may not then have had many associations with this Western landscape, but this is how it was passed on to me. I loved driving through the sparse, gradually changing landscape. What stands out in my memory were the seemingly endless open spaces—the vast distance we traveled between destinations.

The sagebrush and beaver-tail cactuses stream past my memory in a gray-green blur, and if we were lucky, when I was really young, my parents would point out an antelope loping above the sage. But by the time I looked, it was gone.

Yes, I grew up in the desert, and I can shape my memories to fit the pictures painted by John Ford, but I also remember trees. My memories are scented by bristlecone and ponderosa pine, piñon, white fir, and juniper. My Western narrative was told more by national parks and monuments than by Hollywood. Bryce, Zion, Natural Bridges, Mesa Verde, Bandelier, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef. Filmmaker Ken Burns calls the national parks America's "best idea." But even our "best" idea was stolen.

[DISSOLVE TO:]

Dialogue from the film *Red River* (Hawks & Rosson, 1948):

EXT. WIDE TEXAS PLAIN - DAY

THOMAS DUNSON (John Wayne) is branding a cow while his companions NADINE GROOT (Walter Brennan) and young MATTHEW GARTH (Mickey Kuhn in this scene, later portrayed by Montgomery Clift) look on.

They are surprised as two VAQUEROS ride suddenly over a ridge. Dunson tosses the iron back into the fire.

VAQUERO
Buenos días, señor.

THOMAS DUNSON
Hello.

VAQUERO
Saw the smoke of your fire.

DUNSON
Yes?

VAQUERO

Where do you travel?

DUNSON

Nowhere!

VAQUERO

Remain here on Don Diego's
land, you are welcome for a
night, a week, maybe—

DUNSON

Are you Diego?

VAQUERO

No señor, I'm—

DUNSON

(interrupting)

Where is he?

VAQUERO

At his home across the river,
600 kilometers south.

NADINE GROOT

How fer s'that?

DUNSON

About 400 miles.

GROOT

That's too much land fer one
man. Why it ain't decent.
Here's all this land achin'
to be used, never has been,
and I tell you it ain't
decent!

VAQUERO

Señor, it is for Don Diego to
do as he chooses. This land
is Don Diego's.

DUNSON

What is that river you were
talking about?

VAQUERO

Rio Grande, but I told you
that—

DUNSON

(interrupting)

Well tell Don Diego, tell him
that all the land north of
that river is mine. Tell him
to stay off of it.

VAQUERO

Oh, but the land is his.

DUNSON

Where did he get it?

VAQUERO

Oh, many years ago by grant
and patent inscribed by the
King of all the Spain.

DUNSON

You mean he took it away from
whoever was here before.
Indians, maybe.

VAQUERO

Maybe so.

DUNSON

Well, I'm taking it away from
him.

VAQUERO

Others have thought as you,
señor. Others have tried.

DUNSON

And you've always been good
enough to stop 'em?

VAQUERO

(pats pistol in
holster)

Amigo, it is my work.

DUNSON
Pretty unhealthy job.
(backing up)
Get away Matt.

VAQUERO
Sorry for you, señor—

The Vaquero reaches for his gun, but Dunson draws faster. One shot rings out and the Vaquero falls dead off his horse.

The 2nd VAQUERO steadies his own horse.

DUNSON
How 'bout you? You want some
of it?

2nd VAQUERO
It is not my land, señor. I
will wait until Don Diego
tells me what to do.

DUNSON
Alright, go tell him what
happened. Tell him what I
said. Take your friend's
horse. We'll bury him.
Move!

[CUT TO:]

Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

I thought it odd at first, the honesty by which the film showed the theft of land in Texas from Mexican landowners in the immediate aftermath of the Mexican American War and Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It stands out to me, perhaps in a way that it did not to white audiences in 1948. It starts to make sense given the worldview espoused by John Wayne decades later in a Playboy interview from 1971. Controversial at the time for his vocal support for the Vietnam War and for

Richard Nixon, Wayne here verbalizes the unspoken ideology at the heart of Western films from Stagecoach to Red River to The Alamo—at the heart of his popularity that kept him one of the top box office attractions for the three central decades of the 20th century:

John Wayne: I believe in white supremacy, until the blacks are educated to a point of responsibility. I don't believe giving authority and positions of leadership and judgment to irresponsible people. ... I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them [Native Americans]. ... Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves. (R. W. Lewis, 1971/2012)

This is Manifest Destiny. Theft and murder. Justified by the righteous knowledge of white supremacy and capitalism. The land is ours because whites are superior to both the Indians and the Mexicans. Also, as Walter Brennan's *Red River* character, Nadine Groot, points out, land left to itself, or even preserved for the future, is a crime so long as it fails to produce a profit.

Meanwhile, Wayne's gender politics, though unspoken, are implicit not just in the location of the interview in *Playboy*, but in the bodies of his three wives. While onscreen killing Mexican men and taking their land, offscreen he was married three times to Latina women. John Wayne's children and grandchildren's bodies bear the mark of the colonial rape. Though white, they are

also LatinX, Chican@, Mestiza/o, by which I mean Indigenous, at the same time they experience the white privilege of being movie star and cultural icon John Wayne's descendants. They lived in Newport Beach, grew up in Orange County, shopped at the Irvine Ranch Farmer's Market.

Just like me.

Yet, in revealing this small truth, *Red River* hides a bigger lie. Howard Hawks' film claims to tell the story of the first cattle drive from the Rio Grande to Abilene, Kansas, along the Chisholm Trail. John Wayne, in the role of Thomas Dunson, builds up his herd to nearly 10,000 cattle, but because the Civil War prevented access to Northern markets, creating a glut in the market, the price for beef in Texas plummeted. Dunson decides to take his herd north to Missouri or Kansas where they can be shipped to Chicago by rail. This is a highly fictionalized version of events that claims such a feat had never been attempted before. Only by driving his men as hard as the cattle do they make it.

Quoting the subsection, "Vaqueros" from Wikipedia's entry on "Cowboys":
Though popularly considered American, the traditional cowboy began with the Spanish tradition, which evolved further in what today is Mexico and the Southwestern United States into the *vaquero* of northern Mexico and the *charro* of the Jalisco and Michoacán regions. While most *hacendados* (ranch owners) were ethnically Spanish *criollos*, many early *vaqueros* were Native Americans trained to work for the Spanish missions in caring for the mission herds. *Vaqueros* went north with livestock. In 1598, Don Juan

de Oñate sent an expedition across the Rio Grande into New Mexico, bringing along 7,000 head of cattle. From this beginning, *vaqueros* of mestizo heritage drove cattle from New Mexico and later Texas to Mexico City. Mexican traditions spread both South and North, influencing equestrian traditions from Argentina to Canada. (“Cowboy,” n.d.)

The story of the Chisholm Trail as fictionalized in *Red River* erases the accomplishment of Don Juan de Oñate centuries earlier, just as the myth of the American Cowboy erases its origin in Mexico and New Spain. This Western mythology is a form of colonialism that erases indigenous origins and connection to the land. On top of this erasure is (re)written a new myth tying this landscape to the cowboy, to the white, American male, to John Wayne. Queering these American myths we tell is significant in terms of the current anti-Mexican racist furor surrounding discussions of immigration—queering in the sense of seeing the indigenous in the Mexican and the Mexican in what are profoundly “American” traditions and identity. As the Wikipedia contributors above point out, cowboys *were* Indians. The vaquero emblazoned on my high school’s walls might have been Juaneño or Acjachemen, herding cattle from San Juan Capistrano to the cliffs above Dana Point.

[CUT TO:]

Etymology

Why don’t I speak Spanish? I do speak Spanish (see Smead, 2005):

buckaroo = vaquero (there is little distinction between the letters v and b in Spanish)

ranch = rancho

chaps = chaparreras

buffalo = búfalo

lasso = lazo

lariat = la reata

bronco = bronco

adobe = adobe

canyon = cañón

arroyo = arroyo

mesa = mesa

patio = patio

rodeo = rodeo

bandido = desesperado

El Camino Real = El Camino Real

San Diego = San Diego

San Francisco = San Francisco

L.A. = Los Angeles = El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río de Porciúncula

Smead (2005) says, “Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca was the first to apply erroneously the Spanish term búfalo to the American bison because it was similar in appearance to the Indian or African wild ox or buffalo” (p. 31).

Why don't I speak Spanish? Why don't I speak Gabrieliño, Juaneño or Luiseño? Why don't I speak Acjachemen, or Tongva? Chumash? How about Nahuatl?

tomato = tomate = tomatl⁴

avocado = aguacate = ahuacatl

guacamole = guacamole = ahuacamolli

chocolate = chocolate = xocolatl

chili = chile = xilli

cocoa = cacao = cacaua or cacahuatl

coyote = coyote = coyotl

mesquite = mesquite = mizquitl

Within this erasure of the indigenous roots of these staples of our diet, and these central images of “The West” lies not a collective forgetting, not amnesia. It is intentional, a reinscription, rewriting. Still, within this reinscription, some insurgent names remain. Topanga canyon, north of Los Angeles is a Tongva place name that lingers. It lies to the east of Malibu, which the Chumash called “humaliwu” meaning “where the surf crashes loudly” (Sampson, n.d.).

[DISSOLVE TO:]

Showdown

INT. LARGE CONFERENCE CENTER ROOM – HIGH NOON

⁴ See Harper & McCormick (2013) for Nahuatl roots of these words. See also Baca (2008) for a pronunciation guide (p. xxi-xxii). Stephanie Wood, at the University of Oregon, also maintains an online English/Spanish/Nahuatl dictionary here: <http://whp.uoregon.edu/dictionaries/nahuatl/>

Imagine JOHN WAYNE is the keynote speaker on a plenary panel at a conference on The West and the Western, ready for a showdown with the following respondents: Cherokee and Canadian author THOMAS KING, conference organizer NORMAN DENZIN, and feminist literary critic JANE TOMPKINS. What would they say to him? (Of course, as author, I get the final word.)

THOMAS KING

Stories can control our lives [and keep us in particular stories], chained to these stories [as long as we live]. ... Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous. (as cited in Lewis, et.al, 2013, p. 483)

NORMAN DENZIN

It is no longer enough to criticize the old myths. We need performance events and public ceremonies that honor counter memories of grief and loss, a politics of possibility which can turn history around. These performances move in two directions at the same time, attempting to unravel the knot that links postmodern selfhood with idealized versions of Native Americans and the landscapes of the West. The knot connects consumption and criticism. It asks: Can I be a consumer and critic of the West at the same time? How do I balance these two identities? Laurel Richardson calls this the "both/and dilemma." (Denzin, 2008, p. 204)

JANE TOMPKINS

The desert offers itself as the white sheet on which to trace a figure. It is a tabula rasa on which a man can write, as if for the first time, the story he wants to live. That is why the first moment of Western movies is so full of promise. It is the New World, represented here, not for the first time, as a void, the *vacuum domicilium* the Puritans had imagined, waiting to be peopled. The apparent emptiness makes the land desirable not only as a space to be

(MORE)

JANE TOMPKINS (CONT'D)

filled but also as a stage on which to perform and as a territory to master. (Thompkins, 1992, p. 74)

JOHN WAYNE

We're remembering that the past can't be so bad. We built a nation on it. We must also look always to the future. Tomorrow—the time that gives a man or a country just one more chance—is just one of many things that I feel are wonderful in life. So's a good horse under you. Or the only campfire for miles around. Or a quiet night and a nice soft hunk of ground to sleep on. Or church bells sending out their invitations. A mother meeting her first-born. The sound of a kid calling you Dad for the first time. There's a lot of things great about life. But I think tomorrow is the most important thing. Comes in to us at midnight very clean, ya know. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself in our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday. (R. W. Lewis, 1971/2012)

Tompkins and Wayne both show that the Western has always been about hope. That is the story of California. The Western as a Hollywood film genre was born in and of California. But where John Wayne's conservatism sees the past as redeemable, the foundation on which our greatness stands, he overlooks, erases a great deal of suffering resulting from that past. In turning to the future, he turns his back on genocide. Our project as decolonial scholars is to reinscribe the reinscriptions. To rewrite ourselves back into history. To tell our own stories and no longer let our stories be told by someone else.

[IRIS OUT]

TIM SUTTON
Why don't I speak Spanish?
Because I live in a Western.

TITLE OVER:

THE END

[FADE OUT]

CHAPTER 4

INTERLUDE 1

An ethnography of early 21st Century gun violence

(This isn't poetry, this is science.)

c. June, 2016¹

... And now I'm asked to stop everything to mourn 50 more casualties in the Global War on Whatever. But I find I cannot. I find I cannot grieve. I have no tears left to shed. I've cried them all. There's nothing left.

In the wake of Sandy Hook, the response was to arm our elementary school teachers. It's clear now this doesn't go far enough. Some states have taken the lead in allowing concealed carry permits on college campuses. But not fast enough to prevent the deaths at UCLA or UC Santa Barbara?

Still, this didn't protect folks at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. It's time to arm our pastors. The ministers who shepherd their congregations, are they not the sheepdogs who protect their flock from the wolves?

But this doesn't go far enough. After the shooting at the movie theater in Colorado, shouldn't the ushers be packing heat? Shouldn't the high school students who tear our tickets and butter our popcorn be armed? After all, isn't that the message of Batman—that it is up to us to devote the entirety of our

¹ Doubly inspired by House Speaker Paul Ryan calling for a moment of silence in the wake of the mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, FL, and by the 1987 poster of a pink triangle on a black background above the phrase, "silence = death," created by activists who would go on to form ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power).

inherited wealth and personal fortunes to beating up those who would hurt us?

But even this doesn't go far enough. We should arm the DJs to make sure our clubs are safe. The baristas to protect us while innocently surfing the internet at the coffee shop. The lifeguards are not worth their title if they cannot protect us from an "active shooter" while enjoying the sun at the community pool.

So no, I can't take a moment of silence. I can't shed a tear for the dead without also crying for the unseen, unknown bodies we may never hear about. For the men and women and children left behind crossing the Sonoran Desert (240 reported in 2015. How many will it be this year?),² or the missing and murdered First Nations women across the other border. I cannot mourn Orlando without also mourning Raqqa. I cannot mourn for Brussels without mourning Fallujah. Tel Aviv, but not Gaza. Paris, but not Waziristan. Boston, but not Ciudad Juárez.

I cannot hold a moment of silence when I know that queer youth of color are far too often silenced across their lives.

I cannot participate in a public spectacle of grief when I know with my heart that these loving, GLBT2S people of color would not want their tragedy to be used as an excuse for more bloodshed.

This isn't poetry, this is science.

² I'm not sure of the total in 2016, but the *Arizona Daily Star* reports 171 deaths along the border in the state of Arizona alone (see <http://speedway.tucson.com/borderdeaths/?name=&from=2016&to=2016>).

CHAPTER 5

WHAT IS “CIVIL” ABOUT CIVILIZATION? OR, REFLECTIONS ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DECOLONIZING KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Remember
First to possess his books.

—Shakespeare, *The Tempest* [III, ii, 94-95]

I'd like to start by recognizing the people indigenous to the land I now walk on. The Abenaki and Pocumtuc who were the first to reside in the villages of Nonotuck (Northampton) and Norwottuck (Hadley and Amherst) where I live and work today along the banks of the Kwanitekwa. Jaimie Singson, the Director of the Native American House on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus raised an important question during the Indigenous Inquiries Circle at 2015 Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (QI): “What is the responsibility for land-grant Universities to the original inhabitants of the land where they are located?”

* * *

In elementary school, I often won, “good citizenship” awards for always being quiet, remaining in my seat, and generally following directions. I was pretty shy as a child, didn't talk much. I never felt I was putting any effort into “being good.” At the same time, I was also encouraged by my teachers to speak up more, and come out of my shell. Jump forward in time to 2010, the state of

Arizona outlawed Mexican American Studies in Tucson’s public K-12 schools because it stood “outside” of Western civilization. And in 2014, Steven Salaita was “un-hired” by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign because of a few “un-civil” tweets. Reflecting on these events, I offer a performance (auto)ethnography which critiques my own performance of “civility,” and thereby attempts to open up spaces for new performances previously unacceptable in the halls of academia.

* * *

I start where I am, and look to the ground beneath my feet. Seek the truth in the roots.

* * *

Sixth grade. Mr. Hamaras’ class. El Camino Real Elementary School in Irvine, California. Early in the school year we were assigned seats. I was seated next to Kenya. I can’t remember her last name. She was one of two Black girls in my class. The other was Theresa. I never got to know her well. At least not as well as Kenya. We sat together that whole year, and as the boys and girls, for the most part, did not play together, I probably interacted with Kenya more than any other girl in the class. We were always laughing.

We were placed together on the seating chart in an attempt to have each of us rub off on the other. This is not some realization I’ve had in later years. We were told as much at the time. Kenya talked too much in class, and was disruptive to the other students. I was too quiet, never spoke, and always did

what I was told. What are two children to make of this? What lessons were internalized?

Black girls (and women) need to keep quiet and behave, while White boys (and men) ought to speak up more?

Thinking back on this now, I'm astonished at the potential damage of Mr. Hamaras' good intentions. If asked to describe myself, still to this day I sometimes use the word, "quiet," though I'm not really sure it applies. I wonder what words Kenya uses to describe herself?

* * *

I start where I am, and look to the ground beneath my feet. Seek the root of the truth.

* * *

October 2013 Steven Salaita was offered a faculty position, Associate Professor with tenure, on condition of approval by the board of Trustees. Just a formality. He was hired by the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Salaita resigned his position at Virginia Tech. Preparing to move with his family, he sold his house.

On the 8th of July 2014 Israel launched Operation "Protective Edge." Ultimately, Israel killed 2200 Palestinians, 500 of them children. Twenty-thousand homes were destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people displaced. Salaita, like so many others, took to social media to express his outrage.

August 1, 2014, Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise wrote to Salaita saying that that they had chosen not to present his potential appointment to the Board. On September 10 the trustees voted down a proposal to reconsider his offer of employment.

All over a few ‘tweets’ they identified as “uncivil.”

One year after Operation Protective Edge—this was reported by *Democracy Now!* in 2015—Israeli veterans group, Breaking the Silence, came out with a report of soldiers’ testimonies from Gaza. The soldiers were told “there are no innocent civilians in Gaza,” and to assume anyone within 200 or 400 meters of the Israeli Defense Forces was an enemy (“Kill anything,” 2014; see also “Protective edge,” n.d.).

Four Palestinian boys, cousins, killed as they played football on a beach— they weren’t innocent?¹

¹ The boys names were Ahed Atef Bakr, Zakaria Ahed Bakr, Mohamed Ramez Bakr, and Ismael Mohamed Bakr, all between the ages of 9 and 11.

Ayman Moyeldin, reporting for NBC News, witnessed the attack, as did reporters for Agence France-Presse. He had been kicking the soccer ball with the boys before it happened. In addition to appearing on television, Moyeldin reported the deaths widely on Twitter, Instagram and NBCNews.com. He wrote, “The terrible human toll from the nine-day Gaza conflict was laid bare Wednesday when four Palestinian boys from the same family were killed as they played football on a beach. Three other children were wounded – one of them critically - in the attack, which appeared to be from Israeli naval shelling near the port area of Gaza City” (Moyeldin & Nassar, 2014, n.p.).

NBC News subsequently pulled Moyeldin from reporting in Gaza, and replaced him with another reporter who continued to cover the boys’ deaths, but from Tel Aviv. This decision was later reversed, after it received widespread negative attention (see Greenwald, 2014).

It was widely reported during the operation that the bodies of children and babies had to be stored in ice cream freezers, or deep freezes, until they could be identified by relatives, because the morgues and hospitals were full.²

Where is the civility in that?

The United Nations in April of 2015 issued a report that determined that 44 Palestinians were killed and 227 others injured while sheltering at UN schools (“Gaza,” 2015). Of course, the locations of all UN buildings – including schools actively used as shelters – are routinely provided to the Israeli military and updated in times of conflict (Krähenbühl & Turner, 2014). As described by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2014):

Children continue to bear the brunt of the crisis. ... A minimum of 373,000 children require direct and specialised psychosocial support based on the number of families who have experienced death, injury or loss of home since the beginning of the emergency. ... These conditions worsen with the

² Al Jazeera reported, “Corpses of Palestinians have overwhelmed morgues at Rafah's hospitals, and some relatives have been left with no option but to keep their loved ones in commercial refrigerators ... the city [Rafah] had been excluded from ‘humanitarian windows’ to provide relief for besieged families and allow them to bury the dead ... the task of holding funerals has become precarious because of Israel's shelling of the Rafah cemetery. ‘Where else can we bury our relatives when Israel is bombing the cemeteries?’ asked Abu Mohammed Abusuliman, a resident of Rafah, as he wept over the deaths of seven family members” (Omer, 2014, n.p.).

realization that there is no guaranteed safe space in Gaza, including UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency] schools. (p. 2)³

* * *

I have to wonder precisely why speaking out in favor of Palestinians, and against Israel is effectively the “third rail” of academia. I have to conclude it is the same reason that Steven Salaita was first hired by the Dept. of American Indian Studies at UI-UC.

To begin to question Israel’s treatment of Palestinians and the theft of land for settlements is to begin to question settler colonialism. The United States has more in common with Israel than it cares to admit. The story of Israel is familiar to Americans (Salaita, 2014). Herein lies the danger: If settler colonialism is wrong there, then it is wrong here. To begin to question Israel’s right to exist (or expand its territory) is to begin to question the existence (and the expansion of territory) of the U.S. itself. To question Zionism is to question Manifest Destiny.

What is civil about Western Civilization? The ‘un-hiring’ of Steven Salaita appears to be some orientalist move defining Salaita as outside of civility, thereby placing the University of Illinois (and possibly all of academia by extension) as lying within the bounds of civil discourse. Civil discourse is defined through the

³ The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimated there were 485,000 thousand internally displaced people, nearly a quarter of the population of Gaza, as a result of Operation Protective Edge. Of those displaced, 269,793 took shelter in 90 UN schools throughout the Gaza Strip (OCHA, 2014). Seven of those schools were directly bombed by the IDF (Burke, 2014). This does not include government run schools also used as shelters.

exclusion of Salaita’s speech, thereby illuminating what is permissible. What type of research, what type of public speech. Moreover, it disguises as within the bounds of civility the severe violence perpetrated by public Universities’ embrace of neoliberalism and public austerity, which results in the imposition of debt funded education.

You could trace the origins of “civility” in the English language, as Salaita himself did at a recent talk at UMass, to a European nobility attempting to distance itself from a growing middle class in Europe. It is not insignificant that civility shares the same Greek roots as civilization, which when opposed to either nature or to savagery, was used by European colonists to justify their invasion and enslavement of Native People on this continent. They were bringing civilization to both untouched nature and to heathen savages (Salaita, 2015).

This usage lays bare the settler colonial project taking place in Israel today. Israeli settlements **read=civilization** should be defended against Hamas, the terrorists **read=savages**. Criticism of this project, becomes, therefore, “incivil” by definition.

* * *

What makes speech civil?

Where is the line?

Show me the line.

Have I crossed it?

Am I over the line?

I'll show you a line. This line is a border—the frontier. It separates civilization from savagery, civility from incivility. It is the frontier in the American West. It is the wall in Palestine. The Arizona desert. The Mediterranean. You'd best not cross it. There are check points staffed by armed guards. There's one here at UI-UC in the Chancellor's office patrolled by the Board of Trustees. That's where they caught Steven Salaita trying to sneak across.

But I need to ask, where's the civility in bombing a contained population with nowhere to go?

How do you speak civilly when children are murdered while playing soccer on the beach?

How has civility come to be defined as unquestioned support of settler colonialism backed by a military empire?

Oh!

That's what it's always meant.

To begin to question the premise that lies at the foundation of our civilization?

Now you've crossed the line!

* * *

I want to make this link clear—why was Steven Salaita, a Palestinian-American studying Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine hired by a department of American Indian Studies?

In a video produced by the IDF veterans' group Breaking the Silence, and aired by Democracy Now!, an IDF soldier, with his face and voice obscured, states:

We shot at houses just because, without even knowing if anyone was there. We shot at cars, at ambulances, doing things I was raised not to do—not to kill the innocent, not to shoot at an ambulance. It's like the Wild West out there, and it was all approved by the commanders. ("Kill anything," 2015)

* * *

"It's like the Wild West out there."

* * *

Caliban: This island's mine by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me. When thou camest first,
Thou strokedst me and made much of me; wouldst give me
Water with berries in't; and teach me how
To name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day, and night; and then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
Cursed be I that did so! All the charms
Of Sycorax—toads, beetles, bats light on you!
For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
The rest o' the island.

Prospero: Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes⁴ may move, not kindness! I have used thee

⁴ "stripes" meaning the marks left behind by lashes from a whip.

(Filth as thou art) with humane care, and lodged thee
In mine own cell till thou didst seek to violate
The honor of my child.

[*The Tempest*, I, ii, 406-427]

* * *

Back in February of 2015, UMass Amherst announced it would stop admitting students from Iran to graduate programs in computer, chemical and mechanical engineering, and anything loosely connected to nuclear energy in the college of natural sciences. It made national headlines, nearly all the press was negative. It caught even the US State Department by surprise (when UMass tried to claim they were simply complying with Department of Homeland Security policy, based on a 2012 federal law). UMass received such universally negative attention, they reversed the policy within seven days.

I brought up the ban on Iranian students at UMass with my students as it was taking place. None had heard about it, and most, though possibly confused (why was I bringing it up?), at least thought it was a bad idea. One student raised his hand to offer his view. He thought it was a good thing to ban Iranian students because some of the hijackers on 9/11 came to the United States to study at a flight school in Florida.

Faced with this gut-punch, I did not want to react out of anger and say something I might regret—but if I was totally honest, I think I was speechless. I asked the rest of the class does anyone disagree? And one woman did respond. I honestly cannot recall a word she said because I was so stunned by the comment

I'd just heard. I still am grateful to the woman in my class who spoke up when I could not.

Of course later, after the class, I keep thinking of new things I should have said: *Iran had nothing to do with 9/11. Al Qaeda was a stateless organization, while the ban is directed only to students from Iran. Iran has never been connected to Al Qaeda, and is, in fact, leading attacks with U.S. support against ISIS/ISIL in Iraq. Iran has not threatened the U.S., in fact it's the U.S. that continues to threaten war with Iran. You're making generalizations based on ethnicity or religion or both, and seem completely uncritical of the stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs perpetuated by the media (and government), when Iran is not even an Arab state. You're penalizing an entire group based on the actions of a few individuals.* Still, I did not speak up when it mattered. Don't rock the boat.

* * *

First grade – One day my teacher, Mrs. Miller, sent me home with a note pinned to my shirt. Addressed to my Mom, it said, “you’ll be happy to know Tim got in trouble for talking today.” I rarely spoke in first grade.

Third grade – I was called to the Principal’s office. He gave me a certificate for good citizenship. He congratulated me for my behavior, always following the rules, doing what I was told, remaining in my seat, and not disrupting the class by talking out of turn. He had a box with toys and asked me to choose one. I think I picked a balsawood airplane.

“Good citizenship” = Keep quiet. Obey the rules. Stay seated. Do what you’re told. Don’t rock the boat. But you can have too much of a good thing. You should also learn to speak up, especially tow-headed boys like you. It seems like it’s always heads I win, tails you lose. I am rewarded both for speaking up and keeping quiet, while people of color can either suffer the status quo and remain silent in the face of violence and oppression, or be declared outside the bounds of “civility” for speaking out of turn and being disruptive to their classmates.

* * *

Steven Salaita spoke at UMass in April, 2015. The title of his talk was, “Civility, Academic Freedom & Indigenous People.” I prepared a question for the event:

UMass Amherst recently made national headlines when the administration decided to stop admitting graduate students from Iran to certain programs related to nuclear energy. Simultaneously, the Chancellor has directed the campus community to engage in developing a strategic plan around diversity. Some of the same administrators involved in the decision to stop admitting Iranian students also participate in the diversity strategic planning committee.⁵

⁵ I’m not sure that this was reported in any of the news coverage of the policy changes. I learned about it from the administrators themselves while attending a forum sponsored by the UMass Graduate Student Senate.

I've heard of a similar program at Illinois (UI-UC) called "Inclusive Illinois" that uses the twitter hashtag #ManyVoices.

What do you [are we to] make of these administrative led efforts to promote campus diversity, at the same time that specific "voices" and specific bodies are being excluded?⁶

Administrative uses of "diversity" tend to decontextualize it, removing it from the history of social movements for recognition and inclusion, while at the same time ignoring countervailing tendencies inherent to neoliberal governance that undermine attempts to diversify the campus. Diversity in the eyes of the administration is a tool for measuring how well they meet arbitrary criteria for "excellence" emphasizing numbers or "data" that can be used as "evidence" to the State and Federal Departments of Education, accreditation agencies, etc., etc. to maintain or improve rankings. This regime of accountability exists within a free market (neoliberal) paradigm that injects "entrepreneurial values" into higher education. As a result, we see the undermining of tenure concurrent with increasing reliance on part-time, adjunct labor, the devaluing of the Humanities, and rearticulation of higher education as advanced job-training, all while student debt balloons past \$1 trillion. Efforts to increase "diversity" within this context seem misguided at best, disingenuous at worst.

⁶ If I remember correctly, Salaita responded by pointing out the managerial mindset of administrators at neoliberal Universities, and that "diversity" is a buzz word that has been imported from business administration intended to allow American universities to compete in a global educational marketplace.

* * *

An excerpt from the Inclusive Illinois Impact Report (2014) titled *One Campus Many Voices*:

All of Illinois Theatre’s productions, which have included two Shakespeare productions—*The Tempest* and *Much Ado About Nothing*—operate under a color-blind casting policy intended to give students opportunities to express themselves and explore a wider range of emotional content than might otherwise be possible. Illinois Theatre is able to present classic plays with racially, culturally, and gender-diverse ensembles. Celebrating diversity and the various points of view in our world is the very “stuff” of making theatre. Four of our six productions were directed by women, which may well be a record for this (or any) mainstream institution. (p. 18)

Julie Taymor’s (2010) recent film adaptation of *The Tempest* cast Helen Mirren in the role of Prospero. Could this be called an effective use of gender-blind casting? The film works quite well, though it is far from “blind” to the minor, though necessary, changes made to the script.

Of course, in Shakespeare’s day, *all* the parts for women would have been played by young men and boys.

But what of Caliban? In the film the role is played by Djimon Hounsou, an actor from Benin, made up with one blue eye and strange white splotches on his Black skin. Did the UI-UC employ color-blind casting for the role of Caliban? Is Taymor’s film color-conscious?

* * *

Miranda: O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
That has such people in't!

Prospero: 'Tis new to thee.

[*The Tempest*, V, i, 211-215]

* * *

Let me tell you a story. No, even before that, let's start with a poem.

Maestro Curtis Acosta began his Latino Literature courses in Tucson, Arizona by reciting this poem with his students every day. Please, say it with me.

In Lak'ech

Tú eres mi otro yo.	You are my other me.
Si te hago daño a ti,	If I do harm to you,
Me hago daño a mi mismo.	I do harm to myself.
Si te amo y respeto,	If I love and respect you,
Me amo y respeto yo.	I love and respect myself.

This poem, *In Lak'ech*, is taken from a much longer poem by Luis Valdez' (1971) called *Pensamiento Serpentino*. The Mexican American Studies program of Tucson, Arizona, in which Acosta taught, was founded on Indigenous Aztec/Mexica and Mayan ethics and spirituality. In Lak'ech, along with Panche Be and Hunab Ku, was one of the Mayan concepts at the core of MAS-TUSD. Roberto

‘Cintli’ Rodriguez (2010) translates these as the essence of MAS-TUSD’s pedagogy.

In Lak’ech offers an ethics for being human. Rodriguez (2010) quotes Domingo Martínez Paredes (1968), who wrote, “The ethos or philosophy of In Lakech means—there is no I (and there is no you or the ‘other’). Instead, there is ‘tu eres mi otro you [*sic*]-you are my other self” (p. 19). Luis Valdez (1971) wrote these additional lines in *Pensamiento Serpentino*:

Because you that read this
are me
and I that write this am you
and I wish you well wherever
you are
Que Dios camine contigo. (p. 174)

Panche Be calls on students to seek the root of the truth, and to seek the truth in their roots. This curriculum was radical by definition, insofar as “radical” means arising from or seeking the root of a problem. Far from being simply radical, these concepts with their roots in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica stand outside the Christian and Greco-Roman traditions of Western civilization.

According to Roberto ‘Cintli’ Rodriguez, Hunab Ku is the essence from which the other two concepts come from. It has been translated as grand architect of the universe, or “Great Spirit,” but neither explains much. It is a mathematical concept based on Mayan astronomy. Hunab Ku is related to the Mayan number zero, which does not mean absence or nothing, but rather the

source from which everything emerges. Rodriguez (2010) concludes his discussion in *Amoxtli X - The X Codex* with this:

The essence of In Lak Ech-Tu Eres mi Otro Yo is Hunab Ku. But Hunab Ku is the Great Mystery. To understand it is a lifelong pursuit. Panche Be can guide us on that life-long journey, yet Panche Be without In Lak Ech will lead to arrogance. And to know Hunab Ku without In Lak Ech is useless. All three are interrelated. All three reconnect human beings to the creation process. All three lead to the creation of good human beings. All three belong to all of humanity. (p. 53)

Chicano studies programs started in the Southwest as part of the Chicano Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Students staged walkouts or “blowouts” in protest of the curriculum and their treatment in schools. Chicana/o Studies developed at colleges and universities across the southwest in response to students’ demands and to participate in El Movimiento.

Back around 1998, the Tucson Unified School District began their Hispanic Studies program in a few high schools. This was a result of Tucson’s Chicana/o community organizing in public schools to address a culture and curriculum which, from the inception of TUSD— for the entirety of its history—had never met their children’s needs. This soon developed into a district-wide K12 department first called Raza Studies, later changed to Mexican American Studies. Over a decade, teachers in the program developed a curriculum that was culturally relevant and engaged the local community, while emphasizing social justice and

Freirian critical pedagogy. It worked! The Mexican American Studies (MAS-TUSD) K-12 program turned the achievement gap on its head. Black and Brown students who went through the program were graduating and going on to college at twice the rate of their more affluent, white counterparts from suburban schools (Augustine Romero, personal communication). The program graduated nearly 95% of its students and more than 70% went on to college (Rodriguez, 2011). Courses like Latina/o Literature, and American Government and History from a Mexican American Perspective were offered at the High-School level and counted toward graduation, not as electives.

Until Tom Horne shut them down.

Tom Horne was Superintendent of Public Instruction in Arizona from 2003 to 2011 (and Attorney General from 2011 to 2014). Horne had been trying to shut the program down since 2006. He argues its success is irrelevant, that the program is anti-American. MAS-TUSD did not teach “Greco-Roman” knowledge and therefore stood outside of Western civilization (Rodriguez, 2011). In 2011, he succeeded. Horne penned legislation in 2008, 2009, and 2010 attempting to criminalize MAS-TUSD. Student protests held off legislation during the first two years, but in 2010, Arizona’s Governor, Jan Brewer, signed HB2281 into law.

ARS 15-112. Prohibited courses and classes; enforcement

- A. A school district or charter school in this state shall not include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following:
1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government.
 2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.

3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

Facing a 10% loss in of funding from the state, in 2011 Tuscon's School Superintendent, John Pedicone, capitulated and ended the program, despite an independent audit finding the District was not in violation of the law.

These classes are now criminalized.

This knowledge declared illegal.

Books banned, boxed up while students were still in their classrooms:

Critical Race Theory, by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic; *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, edited by Elizabeth Martinez; *Message to Aztlán*, by Rodolfo Corky Gonzales; *Chicano! The History of the Mexican Civil Rights Movement*, by F. Arturo Rosales; *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, by Rodolfo Acuña; *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by Paulo Freire; *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, by Bill Bigelow. The reading list from the banned curriculum includes hundreds of authors: Shakespeare, Henry David Thoreau, Isabelle Allende, Luis Alberto Urrea, Laura Esquivel, bell hooks, Howard Zinn, Ronald Takaki, Sherman Alexie, Junot Díaz, Gloria Anzaldúa, Leslie Marmon Silko.

Roberto 'Dr. Cintli' Rodriguez: In Arizona, all the battles come together... they war against our mind (HB 2281), body (SB 1070) and spirit ... but it's like the quote from [the film] *La Otra Conquista*: "They came for our Souls, but they did not know where to look" (Carrasco, 1998). That's why these

mentos will never win against us (we have already won). (Rodriguez, 2013, n.p.)

* * *

Miranda: Abhorred slave,
which any print of goodness will not take,
Being capable of all ill! I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or another. When thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
With words that made them known. But thy vile race,
Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
Could not abide to be with. Therefore wast thou
Deservedly confined into this rock, who hadst
Deserved more than a prison.

Caliban: You taught me language, and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
For learning me your language!

[*The Tempest*, I, ii, 431-446]

* * *

Following the elimination of TUSD-MAS, Curtis Acosta and another teacher vet their lesson plans past a district administrator (or lawyer) and Abel Morado, TUSD Assistant Superintendent.⁷ This conversation took place the weekend after the MAS program had been eliminated requiring Acosta to come up with an

⁷ A generous reading of this script would allow that the administrators quoted here might not themselves be in favor of the elimination of MAS, but are merely trying to figure out how to proceed under the new law. I do not know what they thought, only what they said.

entirely new curriculum and pedagogy for the upcoming week. This was transcribed from an audio recording posted to youtube⁸ (Morales, 2012a).

Curtis Acosta: Let me just throw this out here, because the next thing I got coming, which I was gonna get my students started on tomorrow—oh sorry, Friday—is *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. Now that sounds all nice and good, all right? Except for the way I teach it. Again, going back to the pedagogy. So, I teach it through a critical race theory lens, or a critical feminist lens. Both, I mean I do both. Students have a chance to analyze it through their essays through either/or. And another essay which is more like a mainstream essay. Traditional, I guess, is better. Um, No?

Man's voice (Lawyer?): I mean, when you say analyze it through a critical race theory?

Curtis: Well, for instance it's kind of like Maria teaching—'Cuz you brought up, David, the idea, like, "Watch out for oppression and racism at the center of something being problematic."

Man's voice: They seem to be buzzwords.

⁸ I find it interesting to consider how this recording was made and posted to youtube, and subsequently went viral. The video does not provide any context for how it was obtained. It is posted by David Morales, a local Tucson citizen journalist who writes a political blog called Three Sonorans <threesonorans.com>. He posted frequently about MAS-TUSD and was widely followed by activists. It makes sense, given the hostile political climate of the time that Curtis Acosta would have wanted to record this discussion. In an interview for *The Huffington Post*, Acosta offers some context, saying that the recording was made with the knowledge of everyone present (Biggers, 2012).

Curtis: Right. So those words, those words hover. And they're real powerful. So, that's the way I go at *The Tempest*. I mean *The Tempest* is the story of a European man from Italy, the Duke of Milan, taking power over an island in the New World and enslaving two of the natives and all the tensions that come with that. Pretty brilliant play, by the way—Shakespeare forecasting issues that we're having right now in this room. Uh. What do I do? And because I've built a whole unit looking at that issue as metaphoric to what we go through here, now. And there ain't no doubt that Shakespeare was going there, because at the end of *The Tempest* the Europeans get back on the boat and go home. So he had something to say. Now, do I avoid all that? Do I just scrap *The Tempest* and go to something super-duper safe? Because the only way I want and know and am prepared to teach it is through this critical view? Because I think it is the most engaging to my students, because it is about their social-relevant lives, now. And they can take this very archaic verse and live it in their own world? "That's out now because it's a little unsafe." Or, do I water it down in a way where I get a Sparks-Notes, and be a sparks-notesy teacher? Or do I just— like, I would advise Maria—Do I advise myself in the mirror and say, "Just go. Get away. Just get away. Try something else. Go get a textbook. Get away." And that's like—We're going to start reading Ronald Takaki, his take on *the Tempest*, which is in his book, *A Different Mirror*, which is a multi-cultural, revisionist history text. It's super-duper famous and beautiful.

Woman's voice (Maria?): That's probably on the list.

Curtis: It might be on the list. And that's Friday, and I'm gone Friday, so that's sub lesson plans in my mind right now. So I'm a little nervy. And I'm nervy about starting *The Tempest* if I gotta pull that back.

Man's voice: Is there a way to teach that, I mean (*pause*)—It's kind of a stupid question, but is there a way to teach those perspectives of power without talking about race?

Curtis (*talking about his students*): Here's the rub. I might not bring it up. But they're brilliant. And then we're back where Suzanne had us—

Man's voice (*interrupting*): Addressing, addressing the—

Curtis: I just—Mm-hmm?

Man's voice: Addressing the power relationships, and addressing the feminist issues regarding gender—You're safer with gender and sex.

Woman's voice: That's because we're still disempowered. But, I think that it's a little tricky, like, even when Curtis was saying, "Do I do something safe?" And I was going to be flippant and just throw out titles, but, like, for Junior Year I was going to say *Gatsby*, but that is laden with class and race and concepts of the American Dream and identity. Then I was going to say, "Oh, you can do *Huck Finn*."

Curtis: Homo-erotic tones, too.

Woman's voice: Yes, and I mean that's, um, I mean that's just part of—I mean, I think that there might be some way, but I think the issue of race and class and gender that permeates a lot of our classrooms when we're trying to

deconstruct lit, I mean, that's why we're looking at literature—as a reflection of society, as a reflection of who we are, and so—

Man's voice: reading through that opinion, the nexus of race, class and oppression is the problem, from this viewpoint.

Curtis: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I got ya.

Woman's voice: Unless it's in my classroom, then it's OK.

Man's voice: (*All three speaking over each other*) that's the best that I can glean from the opinion, and from the advice this morning. Is that, when those features converge—from the teacher—

Curtis: (*under his breath*) I can't start this unit.

Man's voice: —Then there's where the problem rests. Would you—?

TUSD Assist. Superintendent Abel Morado: I would agree. I would concur with your statement based on the information that we heard this morning. I don't know that you have to eliminate *The Tempest*. I think that once—

Curtis: I do if that's the only way I know how to teach it.

Abel Morado: In which case, then, I think you throw it out. Once you begin to describe the natives, and once you begin to delve into issues that are gonna be from a critical race theory perspective, that's when you're not in that safe harbor, so to speak.

* * *

A last thought: Caliban, when offering advice to Stephano and Trinculo on how to take over the island from Prospero, states: “Remember first to possess his books; for without them he's but a sot.” This is in essence what the elimination

of Mexican American Studies is meant to prevent. Seven books were boxed up and banned. Entire reading lists tossed out. For Caliban to gain access to Prospero's books would lead to the end of his enslavement.

* * *

Caliban: Remember
First to possess his books.

[*The Tempest*, III, ii, 94-95]

CHAPTER 6

INTERLUDE 2

Buffalo Nation

There was a farm on Route 9 that farmed bison for beef. I'd call it a Ranch, but the word doesn't work—this is the East, New England. I used to pass it every day driving from Northampton to UMass through Hadley. It's closed now. Must've happened sometime over the past few years.

The buffalo/bison are gone. Don't know what happened to them. I hope they were sold or donated to some reserve. Some great open space out west where they could join a herd. Or form their own, to roam and graze and stampede across the prairie. Maybe near Yellowstone, but more likely some rich private landowner, like Ted Turner, living out a cattle baron fantasy. This is what the buffalo are reduced to now. Trophy herds kept in pens. A new "healthy" alternative to red meat. Most likely they were sold to slaughter, trucked to a meat packing plant to become a hamburger substitute for the wealthy, some fantasy of a paleo diet.

Route 9 connects Northampton and Amherst in Massachusetts. Driving east toward Amherst from Northampton on route 9, you first pass over a bridge across the Connecticut River before driving through Hadley. Hadley is still mostly farmland, but from the highway all you can see are strip malls and big box stores that cluster on either side of the road. To the south lies the forested Holyoke range which cradles this valley through which the river meanders. The

Norwottuck and Pocumtuck people made the river's wide floodplain their home, using controlled fires to promote wildlife habitat. Early British settlers cleared the trees from much of the land. Now the farmland is cleared to make space for Starbucks, Home Depot, Whole Foods and Chipotle.

A new restaurant recently popped up, seemingly overnight, on part of that land. Right next to where the buffalo were penned now sits a Texas Roadhouse, a steak house with a "western" theme. And so once again, cows and Texas longhorns have supplanted the territory of the American Bison, this time in Western Mass. where they never belonged in the first place.

It seems somehow ironic. No, it's like that wonderful quote about history from Marx, "all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. ... The first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." Herds of buffalo roaming the prairie replaced by national parks and restaurants with a Wild West theme.

Herds of buffalo roaming the prairie

The embodiment of the West's wildness

Herds of buffalo stampede into the arena of Buffalo Bill's Wild West
and Congress of Rough Riders

The symbol of The Wild West

Herds of buffalo

They now cause traffic jams in National Parks when they wander too close to the road. The tourists get out of their cars and take photographs—souvenirs

reminiscent of the trophies hunters from the Boone & Crockett Club took home, seeking the same thrills (Tompkins, 1992, p. 188).

This is nature tamed. This is hyper-real, with real bison playing themselves in the role of wild buffalo, just as they once did in Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, just as Buffalo Bill played himself.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY OR NIGHT

TIM SUTTON and JEAN HALLEY sit in a darkened theater eating popcorn and conversing. The film *Red River* (Hawks & Rosson, 1948) is projected on to the silver screen above them.

ON SCREEN: Having just finished branding a cow and a bull, THOMAS DUNSON (John Wayne) releases them to roam free over the plain.

MATTHEW GARTH

They'll get away!

THOMAS DUNSON

Wherever they go they'll be on my land. My land. We're here and we're going to stay here. Give me ten years and I'll have that brand on the biggest ranch in Texas. The big house will be down by the river, and the corrals and the barns behind it. It'll be a good place to live in. Ten years and I'll have the Red River D on more cattle than you've ever seen. I'll have that brand on enough beef to feed the whole country. Good beef for hungry people. Beef to make them strong, make them grow. It takes work, and it takes sweat. And it takes time, lots of time. It takes years. (Hawks & Rosson, 1948, n.p.)

JEAN HALLEY

The meaning of cows' lives vacillates between economic and symbolic logics of power. They hold a central, symbolic place
(MORE)

JEAN HALLEY (CONT'D)

in a national story of origins where the righteous violence of white men (pioneers, mountain men, cowboys) replaces "savage" nature (including in the terms of the story, Native Americans and the "wild") with a uniquely American "civilization." As white people move west and domestic cows replace wild buffaloes, the Wild West is subdued. Cows, like a background to the narrative, hold a quiet yet important place in the story. (2012, p. 15)

TIM

I just can't forget those buffalo. I only saw them from the road. Never up close. What happened to them? Where are they? Even when I know they were being farmed for food. Even when I know they were wild Bison crossbred with domestic cattle, being fattened for slaughter, I still loved seeing them. It was a thrill to catch a glimpse from the corner of my eye as I zoomed past at 45 mph. Touching, tapping into this hidden, repressed desire (maybe not so repressed) for the myth and mystery to be true. For the songs to mean something other than genocide and ecocide. "Oh, give me a home..." To believe the myth, to believe I'm not guilty, to perceive myself as better, separate and not responsible. Look! There they are! Buffalo! They're not gone! I can see the past! But I know it can never be. The past is never separate. I am here now because they are gone.

So, I tell this story to illustrate the repetition or citational aspect of colonization. To show these processes are not things of the past, but very much of the present, cycles repeating themselves, variations on a theme. And as a result, attempt to change course. Here, I would like to take Madison's hammer to the mirror of performance, to break the cycle, and perform something different.

CHAPTER 7
HEART MURMUR

Sometimes it snows in April
Sometimes I feel so bad, so bad
Sometimes I wish that life was never ending,
But all good things, they say, never last

All good things they say, never last
And love, it isn't love until it's past

-Prince (1986)

I have an irregular heartbeat. I can feel my heart beat in my chest as I write this. Maybe I'm drinking too much coffee. I need to get outside, walk or bike, something cardiovascular. Anything, but sit here and write this. As a kid I was diagnosed with a heart murmur. Recently, I've noticed my heart skip a beat more often. At UHS¹, they hooked me up to an EKG², and said, "Yeah, that's an irregular heartbeat. Not much we can do about it. Probably stress."

The more I think about writing this paper, the stronger the palpitations.

I don't want to go back there. It's taken everything I have to get out.

Yet, I do write. This writing is no more or less a part of the experience I write about. In revisiting these spaces of grief, I realize they are not now "back

¹ University Health Services

² Electrocardiogram

then,” nor is there anywhere to get out of. This is who I am, now. I grieve, I write, I grieve, I move on, I’ve never left.

* * *

Yesterday.

It happened yesterday.

How am I here?

How am I functioning?

Where did I fail? When did it all fall apart? Why were our simultaneous experiences of events so different? It’s easy to think of the ways it’s Karen’s fault. How was it mine? In what ways did I fail to see her for who she is? I mean she told me many times. She said as much. It’s not like it was a mystery. She left me notes.

* * *

In the summer of 2015, I lost my relationship (of four years) and then my Grandmother, right after each other. I was supposed to be writing my dissertation. To console myself I turned to reading autoethnographic accounts of grief, trauma and loss. They didn’t help. This is a performance (auto)ethnography that examines those affective ties that stand revealed when you lose someone. I link (auto)ethnography and performance to say this is self-reflexive, embodied, body-to-body, vulnerable writing. It is also performative, the means by which I process my grief. I do not wish to choose between these

multiple meanings. I cling to these words when put together like this.

Performance (Auto)Ethnography.³ They fill in each other's gaps.

According to Ron Pelias (2013), "The self, always situated culturally, becomes an exploratory tool, an affective and cognitive opening for cultural and critical inquiry" (p. 389). He offers this advice: "Write from the heart of your humanity, be honest and self-reflexive, recognize the risks for yourself and others in your constructions, allow your body to have a speaking presence, and create a better, more ethical world" (p. 389).

* * *

Might I suggest that this is not an autoethnography about grief and loss? Maybe it is. It could be. There is an extensive conversation on this topic ongoing in the pages of *Qualitative Inquiry* and elsewhere (see Alexander, 2006; Moreira, 2012; Spry, 2009; Stewart, 2013; Tamas & Wyatt, 2013; Wyatt, 2005, 2006, 2010, 2012) to which I hope to contribute. But, while that may have been what I set out to write, I find myself, at the end of the process, somewhere very different.

Judith Butler (2004) writes:

When we lose certain people, ... something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that those ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. ... Who

³ I base my approach to performance (auto)ethnography on Diversi & Moreira's (2016) between autoethnographies. They write, "Autoethnography happens when the performance and performativity collide, in the moment of the performance, in the researcher's body as it interacts with the world, with others" (p. 582).

“am” I, without you? When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do. On one level, I think I have lost “you” only to discover that “I” have gone missing as well. (p. 22)

What does writing of grief and loss reveal? The collective aspect of these emotions, the bonds that link us each to other, like synapses that fire between neurons—how can I point to these invisible spaces? What lies between?

* * *

Jane Speedy (2013), a therapist and researcher, has written about, “struggling to unravel the knots between therapy, research, auto-ethnography and writing” (p. 31). Her subtitle: “Fragments from the spaces between,” illustrates the difficulty of what I’m trying to get at. While working on the piece, she emailed a friend about writing into silence, about what it is not possible to write, describing her paper this way: “There’s no ending by the way—just a series of fragments that fizzle out—and the middle is a mess” (p. 29). She says, “Not every personal narrative can be articulated into an autoethnography” (30).

Autoethnography, perhaps like reality, is a series of elements thrown together into some sort of composition (Stewart, 2013). How they fit together creates different textures, feelings, density and emotional weight. Like atoms that break apart and combine to form new molecules, an autoethnography depicts a series of relationships that separate and recombine in new forms, that change depending on context, that have a history, are susceptible to outside forces. What

sense we make of it is imposed, decisions about what to include or exclude, which bits to focus on, and which to sweep under the rug.

To see the world this way, makes me think that maybe, just maybe, things can be put together differently.

* * *

Do I mask my sadness when talking to Karen? Speaking civilly to not let her know how she's hurt me? Trying not to blame, and not to hurt her further. Is civility in this sense a kindness, or cruelty? It seems to distance us, holding in abeyance the true, honest connection our relationship might have been founded on.

Because connection demands an honesty, vulnerability, a willingness to reveal yourself to your partner, to know who you're dealing with, to remove your masks.

Because...

"Let me know if you want the rug in the kitchen. I will take it with me unless you want to keep it."

"You can have the kitchen rug—it's a bit worse for the wear, but I don't need it. Also, you can have the CD player upon second thought. You'll use it a lot. Good luck with the rest of the moving. I'm doing OK."

So civil

I feel like I'm wading through deep water, resistance at every step.

* * *

It's like I've set up my desk to write my dissertation, computer centered here, books and papers piled here, a cup of coffee over here, and grief comes along and pushes the table over. Everything is thrown to the floor. All I'd hoped to accomplish is put on hold while I pick up the pieces.⁴ This writing process is part of the process of putting myself together anew.

* * *

Over the summer I tried to console myself by reading autoethnographies of scholars working through grief. It didn't work. In that piece by Jane, she advocates for leaving some experiences untheorized (p. 30). Leave them be. Raw experience. What happens in the theorizing of my grief? Is it therapeutic? Perhaps, but then my grief, too, becomes part of a theoretical currency traded around an academic realm, perhaps doing some good, but it is no longer mine. I resist this move. I hold on to my grief as it is all I have left of either my relationship, or my grandmother. To quote the late David Bowie—the title of the last song on his last album— “I can't give everything away.”⁵

Some raw experience should remain just that. Raw. Instead of theorizing the social, I want to socialize theory. Rub elbows with it. This act: theorizing—it, too, is an action of the mind, privileging thinking over bodily experience,

⁴ Judith Butler (2004) writes of grief, “I think that one is hit by waves, and that one starts out the day with an aim, a project, a plan, and finds oneself foiled. One finds oneself fallen. One is exhausted but does not know why. Something is larger than one's own deliberate plan, one's own project, one's own knowing and choosing” (p. 21).

⁵ David Bowie, “I Can't Give Everything Away,” from his 2016 album, ★ (*Blackstar*).

extending the dominance of the mind over the body within Western academia. I wish to embody theory, to enact the social. Performance (auto)ethnography is an embodied act of theorizing, and as such is perfectly situated to exploring these questions of affect. As Hardt (2007) suggests, affect involves both the mind and the body, reason and emotion. I employ performance (auto)ethnography to move beyond these binary divisions. I write from my body. My body writes me.

I'm not saying that theory isn't useful or the body isn't theoretical. And I agree that narrative is the preeminent means by which humans make sense (theorize) their world. But right now (back then)? I want to just dwell. To sit in the moment of pain. To move from the shock of numbness to a throbbing, lurching, forward and backward motion through time and space that sweeps all from its path, bearing witness to this affective transformation⁶ as it unfolds.

Moreira (2012) writes:

*Because the rational does not erase the emotional in the living body;
my body! Both live there incomplete, in contradiction, in difference,
in a constant interrogation of each other.*

The rational does not erase the pain

The pain is still here

⁶ “Perhaps, rather, one mourns when one accepts that by the loss one undergoes one will be changed, possibly forever. Perhaps mourning has to do with agreeing to undergo a transformation (perhaps one should say *submitting* to a transformation) the full result of which one cannot know in advance. There is losing, as we know, but there is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned” (Butler, 2004, p. 21).

The why still remains (p. 164).

* * *

Today was the first day I woke up in my apartment alone. I've been running around all day doing useless errands just to keep moving, to keep from being alone. In the library, looking at DVDs, something to keep my mind occupied, I spotted the Swedish TV series *Wallander*. I couldn't keep looking. I left the library without checking anything out. The sadness didn't hit me then, but began to build. For a long time, all Karen and I watched was Nordic Noir.

It hits me in waves, a rising crest of sadness that washes over me. At times I feel a sadness that weighs on my chest so heavy I can't breathe. I get up, pace the room, hand at my heart beating its irregularly irregular rhythm. The air feels very thick. *Breathing* takes effort. My lungs fill to capacity as if in effort to grasp life—to hold on and contain as much life as possible.

I'd never heard the Toni Braxton song, "Breathe Again" (Braxton & Babyface, 1993) before reading Bryant write about it in his book (Alexander, 2012, pp. 158-165), but this lyric comes close to describing my experience:

"I'll never breathe again."

* * *

Meanwhile, Tamas & Wyatt (2013) question the validity of testimony by suggesting that truth matters less than the feeling of truth. They resist the therapeutic of first person, tell-all, stories of trauma and victimization. Tamas worries that she writes through loss and trauma out of vanity or narcissism, ("I

pretend it's scholarship. Helping others, when really it's just picking a scab" p. 61.), but ultimately decides she has no choice.

Is all this vulnerability just another way of hiding? Or is it a desire to connect? (p. 62).⁷ Is that why I write? Wyatt proposes, "We make use of loss by storying it. That's how we survive, as a species" (p. 61).

* * *

So I arrive at some distance from Karen that still feels intimately close. Time has passed, though time has little to do with the healing process. Every day is different; some worse than others. My apartment is not yet organized, not fully unpacked. It's now time to sort through my possessions, thin out my bookshelves. I find it difficult to begin as every page I turn raises another memory to the surface.

Grandma has gone into hospice. Mom & Dad say she is not always coherent. Last night they tell me she felt she had to get up to do some yard work. But of course she can't get up without help.

Grandma's wall is filled with family photos—her and Grandpa, her four children, Mom & Dad, all my aunts and uncles and cousins. I'm the second oldest of the grandchildren, but the first whose partner was pictured on that wall.

⁷ Wyatt & Tamas (2013) summarize: "Connection might be with others, with oneself, and/or with meaning. Connection often appears as the good that we pursue in research that cannot produce objective truth and therapies that cannot promise healing. But what is connection, and what does it do? ... How do we understand and experience it? Is connection love?" (p. 3).

It's been less than a month. I wanted to write to Grandma to explain. To say why I left Karen. To make sense of it. I was going to write a letter. First she was in the hospital, then hospice. I was going to write.

* * *

The last time I saw Grandma was over winter break. She had gone into the hospital and we moved her from her apartment into a greater assisted living facility. She was released from the hospital just in time to spend what would be her last Christmas with the family. I remember one night; one night, we were helping her out of the house to the car to take her back to her new apartment. There was one step down from the porch to the driveway hidden in darkness. Neither the porch light, nor the streetlight illuminated it. My father, my uncle and I held her as she maneuvered the step with her walker. She cried out, "I'm falling." With the three of us holding her, no way she could fall. Yet, in that darkest moment, she knew she would. She could feel it. She explained, maybe embarrassed, the next morning, "I knew you were holding me, but I could feel us all going down."

Grandma's stories

Bryant Alexander (2006) points out that the eulogy is a hybrid genre, located between a life and my story of that life (p. 162). Speaking the eulogy is a performative act; an act of remembrance (of re-member-ing) among family and friends demonstrating our mutual imbrication in the life lived and the story told.

This eulogy delivered at the First United Methodist Church in Eugene, OR,
on August 15, 2015:

The work I'm doing for my dissertation uses memories as data. Excavates stories for the truths they contain. I look at culture and history and how the accumulation of moments add up to the broad sweep of history. How memories become anecdotes become stories. How these stories contribute to our sense of history and identity. (A) Grandma's stories are some of the most important stories to be told. They tell us where we've been. Where we come from. Who we are. Who we will be.

Sometimes I check my memories (of these stories) against others. Fact check with Mom. (On the phone with Mom & Dad shortly after Grandma passed away, Mom remarked that she's the one who has to remember, now.) But at the same time, I'm not sure that's necessary. These memories are mine. They may not fit with yours, may get some details wrong. But they are the substance from which I tell my stories, stories that contribute to my sense of identity.

Grandma's story is the story of California. Of Southern California at least. That's not to say it's the only story. There are many. But this one dominates. Coming from the Mid-West during the depression, working in the defense industry of Los Angeles during the War years. Finding love in the typing pool. Relocating from LA to the edge of suburbia, Orange County, to raise a family during the Eisenhower 50s into the JFK/LBJ 60s. Then retiring into Nixon and Reagan and a pension from Boeing.

California is full of stories of new arrivals, people who come and remake the state in their own image, not always, but often at the expense of those who had been there before.

I find it somehow wonderful talking politics with my Mom. Particularly this campaign season when there stands the possibility of another Bush running against another Clinton. Mom, who supported Hillary eight years ago, wanting to see a woman in the White House as much as African Americans desired to see a Black President.

But I take particular pleasure in Mom's anti-Royalist remarks this election season. I trace this back to Grandma. I don't really know Grandma's party affiliation, an Eisenhower Republican? I vaguely remember her saying she opposed both FDR and JFK, I think because they came from American aristocracy, from families with power. There is an important lesson there, that runs counter to the story America likes to tell itself (anyone can be President). But Grandma's egalitarian impulse is also American, and is part of my inheritance.

I grew up listening to Grandma rail against Bob Dornan (the U.S. Congressman from Garden Grove, CA elected during Reagan's Republican sweep)—don't even get started about Robert Schuler. Only recently did I learn who Aimee Semple McPherson was. From Grandma. This had a profound effect on me and my politics. The offspring of the marriage between conservative politics and evangelical Christianity was birthed in Southern California. We ignore this at our

peril (and Grandma never did); it affects us still. Just look at the field of candidates currently vying for the Republican nomination. This is another of California's stories.

When it comes to feminism, Grandma, though she might not like my saying this, was a third wave feminist during the second wave. I remember hearing Grandma disavow feminists because she felt attacked by the movement for choosing to stay at home to raise a family. While the movement was successful at transforming attitudes toward white women in the workplace, Grandma's critique was ahead of its time. Of course feminism has always been about equity for women not just in the workplace, but also equity in women's ability to make decisions that affect their lives. This idea did not become prominent until the pro-choice movement replaced the movement for ERA (the Equal Rights Amendment) in popular representations of feminism. It may seem strange to be talking about this now, but this is a part of the matriarchal family structure inherited by the Suttons from the Glenns and possibly even the Ashendens.⁸

There are so many small memories. Walnuts in Grandma's kitchen. The colored glass bottles lined up to catch the light coming through the great picture window in the front of the house in Garden Grove.

One of my fondest memories from childhood was our season tickets to the Fullerton Civic Light Opera. In my child's eye, we filled up an entire row. I would

⁸ Glenn and Ashenden are family names, following my maternal line.

frequently fall asleep before the show was over. Three shows a year. This was an education in American musical theater, which I still treasure. There I heard my first production of Kiss Me Kate; of Finnian's Rainbow. And shows I don't remember so well: Desert Song; Man of la Mancha. Even as I slept through these shows, on either Mom's or Grandma's lap, I treasure these memories as we all went together, were all together, as we are now.

In the fourth grade, at least I think it was fourth grade, it could just as easily have been seventh or eighth, as part of a history lesson, we were asked to interview a family member who lived through the depression. I talked with Grandma. It was then she told me about getting through the depression by working in a traveling repertory theater company. I'd like to know what shows they put on. Mom said it might have been excerpts from plays. Famous scenes. This is all I know, but it sounds so romantic, ripe for stories, including an episode when she finally left the troupe in Boston and a suitor named Bob drove her back to Minnesota. Grandma had no intention of marrying him, but she needed a ride. But these are not my memories. Mom heard some of these stories only in the last few years.

One more memory. Grandma had a role in a play at the Westminster Community Playhouse. At first I thought it was Front Page, but that might have been Uncle Casey. It was a production of Inherit the Wind, and while the role was small, she was magnificent. She stole the show?

*In one of Grandma's journals, Mom just showed this to me yesterday,
Grandma wrote in her borderline illegible cursive:*

*A note that touched me —from Xio—on opening night of Inherit the
Wind:*

*“In the beginning when God scattered the stars into space, he
planned treasures for us to discover—like love and life—and people like
you.”*

And added

“You are a great lady and I'm glad to have worked with you—”

I was touched to be called a “great lady”

Grandma, you will always be a Great Lady.

* * *

We're remembered by our stories. I hold on to these stories, as if they're
all I have left.

* * *

So perhaps I can work with, write about epiphanies—these moments that
stand out as significant and indicative of larger political/relational processes.
That offer useful illustrations, are instructive. But right now (back then), I'm in
the middle of it, thinking things are bad enough, and right then they get worse.
In what ways is writing part of the experience under examination? The means by

which I hold on to something when everything else has been pulled out from under me, even when I'm the one doing the pulling?

* * *

Kathleen Stewart (2013) writes, “In autoethnography, it may sometimes be possible for a detail to remain a detail. It does not have to become a symbol of meaning” (p. 668). The (ar)rhythm(ia) of a heartbeat. The angle of light and shadow on colored glass bottles. This is the work of theory.

The sting of memory

For Proust, the sensory evokes an entire world. The taste of a madeleine brings memories of his youth flooding back.

Memory lies in the body, on the tongue or a nose.

Walnuts in Grandma's kitchen.

* * *

I am in this vulnerable place. In digging through these memories, looking for epiphanies—or, really just reading Norman Denzin—I am flooded with emotion. Things long buried come floating to the top. Where did *that* come from? I thought I dealt with that long ago. I thought I'd shut that one away.

My eyes pass over and over a line of text, not really reading it, but being cast back into the past, like a spell. Oh, you thought you were done with this? No, it still hurts.

I'm just raw. The slightest provocation brings on tears. A stray thought. Like having a crook in your neck when you sleep wrong, things that normally take no effort become painful.

Usually, I think I go to great effort to avoid these moments. Find ways to distract. Don't think about it. Don't feel, read books, go to a movie, put on a record, talk about something else. But I find I need to be here now. I have no choice. No matter where I go, this loss follows me. The songs, the movies, the books, the weather. They all have something to say about it. They all reflect what I'm feeling.

* * *

Yesterday I ran into Karen at the Bookmill. Karen says, "Tim is that you?" I ask, "Did I just walk past you?"

Am I me or someone else? Butler (2004) says we are "undone" by both grief and desire.⁹ By disentangling, or undoing who I was in relationship with Karen am I someone else? Is that me? For a moment, when I walked past, I did not see Karen.

* * *

Something she said: "I always doubted your love."

⁹ "Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something. This seems clearly the case with grief, but it can be so only because it was already the case with desire. One does not always stay intact. One may want to, or manage to for a while, but despite one's best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel" (Butler, 2004, pp. 23-24).

Something I said, "If you doubted my love, then I completely failed."

Something she said, "You're not dealing with a grief that is constant and unbearable."

Something I thought, "I can't think or write about anything else."

I told her about my grief for Grandma getting mixed up with sadness over ending our relationship. I said I'd been feeling homesick, and from this she moved to suggesting we were not connecting, that she didn't feel the "heart connection" she was looking for in our communication. She wanted to talk about grief and the break-up. I thought I had been.

I can see that it appeared my primary focus was losing Grandma, while she claimed her focus was losing our relationship. For me, it's all confused. I can see that talking about missing my family and homesickness would appear to Karen that I'm not thinking of her.

I think the night before I'd been discussing my homesickness with (my friend) Fadia, but I knew I was missing the mark. Fadia may have asked me, "where is home?" It's like a nostalgia for something that's not there any more. I can't go back to California; I have no family left in Orange County. I go to see my family in Eugene, but my life is not in Oregon, not anymore. I've been reading about Renato Rosaldo's (1989) imperialist nostalgia, a longing for what is lost after having been active in its destruction through your presence. I'd not been able to pin my homesickness down. But seeing Karen again, I realize what it is I'm homesick for. It is love.

Something I said, "What is love?"

Something she said, "A place to heal and grow."

* * *

July 24, 2015

To: [Karen](#)

From: [Tim](#)

Well, I'm glad we hung out yesterday, even as it has stirred up quite a lot. I find I'm a bit useless today. I hope running into you hasn't made things more difficult than they already were. Seeing you again makes me look forward to the potential for being friends in the future.

Tim

July 24, 2015

To: [Tim](#)

From: [Karen](#)

Our unexpected visit did stir up a lot, though perhaps I would have been stirred up regardless. I am struggling right at this moment, wishing I had not done things that pushed you away. Wishing I had more techniques for self-soothing so I wouldn't take it out on you. Feel so much sadness.

I hope your visit with your family goes really well.

Karen

* * *

I read Karen's emails from today, and I find I can't breathe. Suffocating from sadness. It is as she expresses her sadness to me that my breath catches, my chest tightens, my eyes wince. My *body* is imperiled by the emotional experience I'm going through, a physical reordering through grief.

“I’ll never breathe again.

Breathe again,

breathe again.”¹⁰

* * *

According to Kathleen Stewart (2013), “Autoethnography can be a way of doing something different with theory and its relation to experience. ... Detouring into descriptive eddies, it might slow the naturalized relationship between subject, concept and world” (pp. 659-661). Addressing the death of her mother, Stewart says:

I write of death and the way that death disturbs but also activates the self-world relation. Autoethnography here is an endurance, a shift in attunement, a painful, scraping, scoring over of unbearable shifts in the self-world relation. It is a bell ringing, a reduction (a cooking down) to painful truths, a shared zone of impossibility. (p. 661)

Affective writing demands an open self ready (or not) to receive the other. Demands complicity, reflexivity, vulnerability, receptivity, an openness ready to engage. Affective writing places me at risk, allowing the vulnerable self to emerge. Affect lies between. Between the world and (my)self (Stewart, 2013). Between “the mind’s power to think,” and “the body’s power to act,” affect “straddles the divide” (Hardt, 2007, p. x). Herein lies my connection to

¹⁰ Braxton & Babyface (1993), “I’ll Never Breathe Again.”

performance (auto)ethnography. Performance seeks affect, seeks to affect another person and be changed in the process. Affect requires the radical other. Assumes it. Demands to be affected by another.

I see performance similar to how Michael Hardt describes these affects: “They illuminate ... both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between those two powers” (p. ix). In this paper, I have been interested in this “relationship between.” With autoethnography, the self is the starting point, but through writing about the self, the ties that bind us together stand revealed. I believe performance (auto)ethnography is perfectly sited to examine affect because it tries to evoke that which remains unlanguage. Through aesthetic descriptions (Spry, 2009), an author tries to establish these affective bonds with the reader. This performance text, located between me/writer and you/reader, creates the space where a connection becomes possible.

Butler (2004) shows us how we are both composed by and at the same time dispossessed by our relations, by grief, by loss, by desire. Because these affective relations flow both ways, they leave us vulnerable, able to hurt and to be hurt. For Butler, this vulnerability opens up the potential for a new politics, an ethical politics.¹¹ Our individual experiences of pain reveal humanity’s collective

¹¹ “Many people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it furnishes a sense of political community of a complex order, and it does this first of all by bringing to the fore the relational ties that

vulnerability, “The fundamental sociality of embodied life” (p. 28). To be “undone” is always a becoming, always an open horizon, an opening for new possibilities, new relations with ourselves, with each other, and with meaning (Wyatt & Tamas, 2013).

Performance (auto)ethnography is both produced by and produces the self. Or as Jane Speedy (2013) says, “This writing and I have made each other up” (p. 34). I write my way into this space between (the world and my self) where love remains my ever elusive utopian horizon.

“There’s no ending by the way—
just a series of fragments that fizzle out—
and the middle is a mess” (Speedy, 2013, p. 29).

have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility” (Butler, 2004, p. 22).

CHAPTER 8

AVATAR, TAR SANDS AND DAD

Cast of Characters

Tim PhD candidate from UMass Amherst. Grew up in California.

Dad Tim's dad

Mom Tim's mom

California Grizzly The symbol of the state of California. Mascot for three UC campuses, UCLA Bruins, UC Riverside Bears and the Cal (Berkeley) Golden Bears. The last report of a brown (grizzly) bear seen in California was in 1924. Though extinct, some conservationists advocate reintroducing grizzlies to the Sierra Nevadas.

James Cameron Filmmaker who has produced two of the all-time biggest Hollywood blockbusters: *Titanic* and *Avatar*. (Not to be confused with James Clifford)

James Clifford Anthropologist. Co-edited a little book called *Writing Culture* with which we continue to reckon. (Not to be confused with James Cameron)

Ursula K. Le Guin Author of speculative fiction. Daughter of Alfred and Theodora Kroeber.

Alfred Kroeber Founder and Director of the University of California's Department and Museum of Anthropology in San Francisco (since

relocated to Berkeley). Studied under Franz Boas. Author of *The Handbook of Indians in California*.

Theodora Kroeber Author of *Ishi in Two Worlds: A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*.

Ishi The name given to the Indigenous man captured near Oroville, CA in 1911 and housed by Alfred Kroeber in the Lowie Museum of Anthropology (since renamed for Phoebe Apperson Hearst). Died of tuberculosis in 1916. A word that means man, or one of the people in the Yahi language. Yahi means people.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst Philanthropist, suffragette, sat on board of trustees of the University of California. Mother of William Randolph Hearst.

Gerald Vizenor Novelist and scholar of Native American literature at Cal Berkeley. Known for the concept of “survivance.”

Clayton Thomas-Müller Indigenous activist and organizer formerly with Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), and currently with 350.org in Canada. Invited James Cameron to visit Fort Chipewyan as a publicity stunt to help launch the global Indigenous tar sands campaign.

Louis Owens

Richard Slotkin

Jean Perry

Renato Rosaldo

Nancy Scheper-Hughes



Chorus of academics

* * *

Tim: I have a love of science fiction television and films instilled in me by my father. Growing up, I could always count on spending an hour with him watching episodes of Star Trek reruns. “Space: The final frontier.” Perhaps that’s why we were both so eager to go see *Avatar* (Cameron, 2009) in 3D when it came out a few years ago. It was over winter break. I live in Massachusetts, he lives in Oregon, and the holidays can be a hectic time. We asked my mother to join us and she asked:

Mom: Why would I want to see a movie about blue people?

Tim: I guarantee the producers of the film asked themselves this question. Might it explain the insertion of the white, male, protagonist, Jake Sully? He’s our point of view character who leaves his human body behind for the body of a blue skinned “Na’vi” alien. The film, if you haven’t seen it, is about a corporation (space-travel has apparently been privatized) and an occupying army of mercenaries and scientists who travel to a distant moon called Pandora to mine for a mineral called “unobtainium.”

Right after the movie was over, my Dad said:

Dad: That guy up on the screen? That corporation on the planet mining for unobtainium? That was me.

* * *

Tim: One of the clearest influences on the story of *Avatar* is Ursula K. Le Guin's (1976) *The Word for World is Forest*.¹ Her story depicts a colonizing force from a deforested Earth beginning to log the lushly forested planet Asche. The story switches points of view from Captain Davidson, a military commander invested in white supremacy and colonization, to Lyubov, an anthropologist who becomes sympathetic to the Aschean cause, to Selver, indigenous to the planet Asche and Lyubov's principal research subject and translator. Selver leads the successful revolt that expels the settler-colonist invaders.

Le Guin's character of the anthropologist Lyubov parallels that of Grace Augustine, played by Sigourney Weaver in *Avatar*. Augustine, along with the other scientists act as translators, teaching the Na'vi English while gathering information about the Na'vi and their relationship to the planet Pandora. Yet, their work is funded by the corporation and is used to aid in the forced removal of the indigenous population from their home.

James Clifford (2011): "Le Guin often returns to knots and themes central to the changing anthropologist/native relationship ... colonial domination and miscomprehension; the compromised but real possibilities of cross-cultural understanding; complicity and friendship at fraught frontiers; and preservation of traditions and the dynamics of cultural transformation. Much of her work

¹ *The Word for World Is Forest* is one of many influences for *Avatar*. In interviews James Cameron has also cited the films *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (Barbenco, 1991) and *The Emerald Forest* (Boorman & Pallenberg, 1985) as influences.

shows an acute awareness of the difficult role of anthropology betwixt and between in power-laden situations” (p. 220).

Tim: Pandora in *Avatar*, and Asche in *The World for World Is Forest* are quite literally “The New World,” including their lack of newness for those who had been living there all along. Cameron & Le Guin translate narratives of settler/indigenous conflict to a distant future on another planet. They are familiar to everyone who has ever watched a Western, with a simple reversal in the outcome. The colonists/settlers are kicked off the planet.

California Grizzly: But Ursula Le Guin deftly avoids the trope of the white savior. Her book offers much more to think about.

Tim: By looking at the originary colonizing violence at the heart of American history and identity, *Avatar* deflects any uncomfortable conclusions through the character of Jake Sully abandoning his human, paraplegic body for an alien, blue-skinned, Na’vi body—literally “going native.” He then leads the Na’vi to victory over the Earthlings, absolving white, American, settler-colonist viewers of guilt. As with so-called revisionist Westerns of the 1970s, U.S. audiences root against themselves, and in doing so reinforce the myth of the “noble savage.”

Richard Slotkin: This is what I call “regeneration through violence,” the structuring metaphor of the American experience. A nation founded on rugged individualism and the myth of the hunter where the self is created and renewed through violence. You see it in stories from *The Last of the Mohicans*, through Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, to *Avatar*.

Tim: Le Guin engages these questions head on. She depicts a successful resistance led by the alien planet's indigenous population. Her character of Lyubov, the scientist closest to the Ascheans, is killed during their resistance. Also, as revisionist Westerns were very much influenced by the anti-Vietnam War movement, Le Guin's 1972 novella is clearly opposed to the Vietnam War. In it, she depicts earthling colonists napalming the alien forest in retaliation for their resistance. This anti-war stance carries over into *Avatar*, which could be interpreted as an anti-Iraq War movie; it was released in 2009 after eight long years of the Bush administration.

California Grizzly: Yes, but you're not going deep enough. Listen to what Richard Slotkin said. This cuts to the heart of the American story. Ursula K. Le Guin comes from California, like you.

Tim: The "K." in Ursula K. Le Guin stands for Kroeber. She is the daughter of Alfred and Theodora Kroeber. Alfred Kroeber founded the department of anthropology at the University of California. As a student at Columbia, he studied under Franz Boas, the principle founding figure of American Anthropology.

James Clifford (2011): "Le Guin's widely admired fiction is permeated by the Native Californian stories she heard as a child from her parents, from individual Indians who frequented the household, and that she later gleaned from wide reading in ethnographic scholarship. Her imagined, future worlds translate and transmute the land, creatures, and history of Northern California" (p. 219).

Ursula K. Le Guin: (2013): “I draw on the social sciences a great deal. I get a lot of ideas from them, particularly from anthropology. When I create another planet, another world, with a society on it, I try to hint at the complexity of the society I’m creating, instead of just referring to an empire or something like that” (n.p.).

Tim: Like Boas, Kroeber engaged in “salvage ethnography,” attempting to record the cultures of Native Californians before they “disappeared.” He authored the foundational 1925 *Handbook of Indians in California*. But outside the field of anthropology, Kroeber is probably best remembered because of Ishi.

In 1911, a lone man was captured at a slaughterhouse near Oroville, California.² Thought to be one of what were then known as the Mill Creek or Deer Creek Indians by the white settlers, Kroeber would identify him as Yahi, the southernmost band of Yana Indians. The man was placed in a jail by the sheriff, supposedly for his “protection.” On Aug. 31, Kroeber sent the following by telegram:

SHERIFF BUTTE COUNTY STOP NEWSPAPERS REPORT CAPTURE
WILD INDIAN SPEAKING LANGUAGE OTHER TRIBES UNABLE
UNDERSTAND STOP PLEASE CONFIRM OR DENY BY COLLECT
TELEGRAM AND IF STORY CORRECT HOLD INDIAN TILL ARRIVAL
PROFESSOR STATE UNIVERSITY WHO WILL TAKE CHARGE AND BE
RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM STOP MATTER IMPORTANT ACCOUNT
ABORIGINAL HISTORY (Kroeber, 1961, p. 6)

² The name “Oroville” is a play on city of gold, or golden city.

Tim: Ishi's appearance was big news as it was thought no Indians were left in the area. Fifty years prior, this was Gold Rush country.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Special Agent C. E. Kelsey: A decrease in the Indian population of 94 percent in a single century, and mostly within forty or fifty years, is certainly exceptional and would seem to be a fact in which we can neither take pride nor escape responsibility. ... In 1849 the great gold rush began. Within a year or two a considerable portion of the State was overrun by probably two hundred thousand miners. ... A majority of them had inherited the prejudices and the stories of two hundred years of border warfare with the Indians. ... Under the circumstances, it is not strange that one of the most shameful chapters in American history ensued (Kelsey, 2003, pp. 397-398).³

Theodora Kroeber (1961): "Forced migrations account for some hundreds of Yana deaths; but death by shooting and particularly by mass-murder shooting interspersed with hangings were the usual and popular techniques of extermination. The Yahi opposed to this mass murder a courageous and spirited opposition, raiding when they could, killing when they could, and killing where it hurt as they were being hurt" (p. 47).

Tim: It wasn't just the miners. Genocide and white supremacy were written into the laws of the State. Indigenous people could not testify in court;

³ C. E. Kelsey penned this report on the condition of California Indians for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1906. Sections of the report are included as an appendix to *Ishi in Three Centuries*, an edited volume put together by Karl and Clifton Kroeber, two of Ursula's brothers, both academics.

thus, whites who entered Native villages and committed rape and murder could not be prosecuted on the witness of Indians alone. Indians, if declared vagrant could be forced to work for whites, effectively as slaves. This led to an active kidnapping industry wherein children—especially young girls—were stolen from their villages and sold to white farmers and ranchers. Bounties were paid by the California government for the scalps of Indigenous Californians (Margolin, 1981; Madley, 2016).

California Grizzly: This was legally sanctioned ethnic cleansing for the purpose of acquiring territory. Rivers for mining, forests for logging, land for agriculture, territory for settling. Scenery for filmmaking, land for universities.

Bureau of Indian Affairs Special Agent C. E. Kelsey: “The first effect of the occupation of land by the miners was the muddying of the streams by mining operations and the killing or frightening away of the game. The mining population soon needed gardens, and about the only land suitable was that where the edible roots grew. The stock industry followed very soon, and even the oak trees were fenced in and forbidden to the Indians, as the acorns were needed for hogs. Later the era of wheat came and arable land passed into private ownership. The Indians were thus reduced from a state of comparative comfort to one of destitution” (Kelsey, 2003, p. 398).

Theodora Kroeber (1961): “Many of us in California number among our ancestors a grandparent or a great grandparent who came from somewhere in the ‘east,’ either with the Forty-niners or in the later waves of immigration

following close upon them ... We have been taught to regard with pride the courage and ingenuity of these ancestors, their stubbornness in carving out a good life for their children. ... It is perhaps well to remind ourselves that the best and gentlest of them did not question their right to appropriate land belonging to someone else, if Indian—the phrase was ‘justifiable conquest’” (p. 47-48).

California Grizzly: For Theodora, “us” clearly consists of white U.S. citizens, but people have long been coming to California from all over the globe. When the gold rush hit, it’s true the majority came from the eastern U.S., but miners also came from China, from Chile, Australia, Mexico and the Caribbean. Before its annexation by the U.S., Russians competed with Mexico to settle northern California. The immigrant character of California is in no way new.

Ishi: Wherever they came from, it was always at our expense.

Tim: Ishi and his family survived after most of their band had been killed by hiding out in Deer Creek Canyon in a spot called *Wowunupo Mu Tetna*, or Grizzly Bear’s Hiding Place.

Ishi: I was no more or less free in San Francisco.

California Grizzly: Grizzly Bear wasn’t just the name of their hideout. One of Ishi’s stories recorded by Edward Sapir tells about how I climbed into to sky to find fire for the people.

Theodora Kroeber (1961): “Ishi had gone a longer way than the miles which separated him from Deer Creek cañon. It was eleven o’clock in the evening of Labor Day, September 4, 1911, when Ishi the Yahi completed a trip out of the

Stone Age into the clang and glare of the Iron Age—a place of clocks and hours and a calendar; of money and labor and pay; of government and authority; of newspapers and business. Now he, too, was a modern man, a city dweller with a street address” (p. 120).

California Grizzly: Theodora makes Ishi sound like Dorothy entering Oz for the first time, or, for that matter, Jake Sully encountering Pandora.⁴

Gerald Vizenor (2003): “Ishi was christened the last of the stone agers; overnight he became the decorated orphan of cultural genocide, the curious savage of a vanishing race overcome by modernity. ... Ishi had endured the unspeakable hate crimes of miners, racial terrorists, bounty hunters, and government scalpers. Many of his family and friends were murdered, the calculated victims of cultural treason and rapacity. Truly, the miners were the savages” (p. 364).

Tim: Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who sat on the Board of Trustees of the University of California, was instrumental in funding the establishment of a department and museum of anthropology at Cal. She needed someplace to house her growing collection of antiquities from her travels to Greece, Egypt, Rome and Peru. Kroeber set up an apartment for Ishi in the museum. Two months later it opened to the public.

⁴ The character of the militarist mercenary, Colonel Quarich, even intones to the many new recruits upon Jake Sully’s arrival to Pandora, “Ladies and gentlemen, you are not in Kansas anymore.” Mendelson (2010) has more to say about the parallels between *Avatar* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Theodora Kroeber (1961): “Visitors continued to keep the museum turnstile clicking, registering numbers far above the staff’s most sanguine expectations—there were more than a thousand of them who watched Ishi at work on a single autumnal afternoon. ... His audience was indeed various. It included children who were reading *Last of the Mohicans*, Mark Twain, and the history of the wars and migrations of their own land and people; boys especially who were acquiring a first skill with a bow, sling, or shotgun” (p. 179).

Tim: On Sundays at the Museum, the man called Ishi demonstrated techniques for making fire; he chipped arrowheads and fletched arrows; he built a demonstration wickiup.

California Grizzly: Ishi, the final puzzle piece in the narrative of the vanishing Indian. His knowledge, a resource to be excavated.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2003): What options did Kroeber have? What could he have done differently? Might Kroeber have asked Ishi where he was headed when he was caught on the run? If it was, as some Maidu believe, to find sanctuary among other related Native people, might that have been a possible solution? After Ishi’s health began to fail, were the museum and hospital in urban San Francisco the best places for him? (paraphrased from p. 119)

Speaking more broadly, “What, during periods of genocide or ethnocide, is an appropriate distance to take from our subjects? What kind of “participant observation,” what sorts of eyewitnessing, are adequate to the scenes of genocide and their aftermath? When the anthropologist is witness to such crimes against

humanity, is scientific objectivity and empathy sufficient? At what point does the anthropologist as eyewitness become a bystander or even a coconspirator?” (p. 123)

Ursula K. Le Guin (2004): My father was “a postfrontiersman, a white immigrant’s son learning Indian cultures and languages in the first half of the twentieth century, he tried to save meaning. To learn and tell the stories that might otherwise be lost. The only means he had to do so was by translating, recording in his foreign language: the language of science, the language of the conqueror. An act of imperialism. An act of human solidarity” (p. 29).

Tim: Ishi was not his name. In his southern Yana dialect, “ishi” means “man” or “one of the people,” while “yahi” means “people.”

Gerald Vizenor (2003): “Ishi never revealed his sacred name or any of his nicknames, but he never concealed his humor and humanity. Lively, eager, and generous, he told tricky Wood Duck stories to his new friends. This gentle Native, rescued by culturologists, lived and worked for over four years in the Museum of Anthropology at the University of California” (p. 364).

California Grizzly: To give Ishi some spending money, Kroeber hired him as janitor in the museum. You’d think they could have paid him for his role as the museum’s main tourist attraction. No, they also made him clean up the place.

Tim: Ishi worked with the linguist Edward Sapir, who transcribed his stories phonetically. Ishi told stories of wood ducks that lasted for many hours. Wax cylinder recordings were made of portions of those stories and songs.

Ursula K. Le Guin (2004): “I was in the Lowie Museum here with Alfred Kroeber’s little great-granddaughter, ten years ago, and she showed me the headphones at the Ishi exhibit, where you can hear Ishi telling a story. I put them on and heard his voice for the first time. I broke into tears. For a moment. It seems the only appropriate response” (p. 14).

Louis Owens (2003): “The Native person called Ishi was the perfect Indian for colonial European America, the end result of five hundred years of attempts to create something called “Indian” ... a romantic artefactual savage who represented neither threat nor obstacle but instead a benign natural resource to be mined for what white America could learn about itself” (p. 377).

Tim: There are many versions of Ishi. None of them are real. There are the articles about Ishi from newspapers of the time that reinforce racial and cultural difference. Alfred Kroeber never wrote about Ishi, but he described the Yana and Yahi people in his Handbook. Theodora Kroeber would write a bestselling biography in 1961, but she never met him. She and Alfred married long after the man called Ishi had died. Gerald Vizenor has written much about Ishi, including a play based on his stories about wood ducks (1995). At the end of Vizenor’s (2000) novel *Chancers*, Ishi is resurrected and granted an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters for service to the State and University of California.

California Grizzly: What did Ishi mean to California in 1911? The man stood invisible before them. They saw right through the man—to see their own negative reflection. The last wild Indian, proof of their superiority because they

won. The land is theirs. And as soon as they've occupied it and killed the "wild" savages, they mourn their passing.

Tim: The voice of the man called Ishi can still be heard in scratchy recordings, but even these are ghostly echoes.

* * *

Tim: Ishi told this story to Edward Sapir in 1915 who transcribed it phonetically. It was never translated until recently (by Jean Perry) with the aid of computers (Perry, 2003).

Setting: Outside Ishi's room in the Museum of Anthropology on the San Francisco campus of the University of California. Edward Sapir sits across from Ishi diligently writing down (almost) everything he hears Ishi say. Standing back and observing are Alfred Kroeber and (Ishi's doctor and friend) Alexander Pope. Perhaps Phoebe Apperson Hearst even stops in to see how they're getting on.

Ishi: Grizzly Bear tied up his hair in a topknot. He got himself ready (praying and fasting). Then he rose up, floated up into the air. He swung up to the east, back and forth, until he came to the hole in the sky. Grizzly Bear went from side to side, floated up, he went through the hole in the sky. Then he sat down on the sky ground, with his legs drawn up and his arms folded. He held up his head to look west, then he looked back down seeing nothing. He turned around, looked north, then down. He looked to the northern regions. He turned around and looked east. He didn't see anything. "He doesn't see anything," said Rabbit, watching from below. Rabbit had good eyes. Grizzly Bear turned around

and looked south, he looked down, seeing nothing. The Rabbit looked up. Grizzly Bear turned around, he saw fire in the south, streaming up, blazing. ‘It’s blowing upward, blazing,’ said Grizzly Bear. ‘He’s just seen it, it seems,’ said Rabbit. ‘Now he is turning back to show us all is well,’ he said.

Grizzly Bear let himself loose and turned back from the sky. He dropped back, came back down from the sky. He crashed down and sliced off Rabbit’s mouth. ‘Wat, wat, wat!’ cried Rabbit.

The people asked, ‘Is there really any fire?’ ‘It is burning there in the south,’ Grizzly Bear said. ‘Indeed it is so,’ they said. (Perry, 2003, pp. 282-283)

California Grizzly: That’s not very dignified. In my most triumphant moment, having just found fire for the people, I slip on my way back down from the sky, landing on Rabbit! Typical.

Tim: These are Ishi’s words. I’m worried about including them here, though. Doesn’t that make me just as guilty of taking someone else’s story to use for my own purposes? Am I a salvage anthropologist, mining for stories?

California Grizzly: That’s not Ishi. This man is a speaking presence. He offered his stories when asked. Even when translated, they are difficult to understand.

Gerald Vizenor: Ishi’s stories are stories of survivance. ‘Ishi exists forever in the moment of his stories, reinventing himself within the oral tradition with each utterance’ (Owens, 2003, p. 375).

Tim: Ishi is an ‘avatar’ who remains untranslated 100 years later. Ishi never revealed his real name. The man died from tuberculosis exactly 100 years ago. March 25, 1916. I am haunted by Ishi’s absence. I am haunted by the man’s presence. Ursula K. Le Guin, too, is haunted, but by presence or absence I do not know. By writing her biography, *Ishi in Two Worlds*, Theodora Kroeber may have thought she was exorcising Ishi’s spirit, helping lay him to rest, but she was mistaken because holograms have no spirit.

Ursula K. Le Guin (2004): “I admire her [my mother’s] book as deeply as I admire its subject, but have always regretted the subtitle, *A Biography of the Last Wild Indian in North America*, for it contradicts the sense and spirit of the story she tells. Ishi was not wild. He did not come out of the wilderness, but out of a culture and tradition far more deeply rooted and soundly established than that of the frontiersmen who slaughtered his people to get their land. He did not live in a wilderness, but in a dearly familiar world he and his people knew hill by hill, river by river, stone by stone. Who made those golden hills a wilderness of blood and mourning and ignorance?” (p. 29).

California Grizzly: The miners, forty-niners. They were the true savages.

Tim: Ishi’s stories of survivance reveal the incommensurable lifeways of Indigenous Californians with settler colonialism. The taming of the wilderness involved not just the murder of Indigenous people and theft of their land, but also the extirpation of predators like wolves and bears thought to compete for resources and threaten livestock, and the felling of the giant Redwoods to build

the city of San Francisco. This is an entirely different relationship to the land and the environment—one based on extraction and profit.

California Grizzly: Seventy-five years after the discovery of gold, every grizzly bear in California had been tracked down and killed. But before dying out in California, we “thrived in the valleys and low mountains of the state, probably in greater numbers than anywhere else in the United States.” As humans populated California in increasing numbers, “the grizzly stood its ground, refusing to retreat in the face of advancing civilization. It killed livestock and interfered with settlers” (State Symbols, n.d.). The last California grizzly to be hunted was shot in 1922. Another Grizzly was sighted in the Sierra Madre Mountains near Santa Barbara in 1924. This was the last sighting of a brown bear in California; thereafter, grizzlies have never been seen again.

Tim: A group of White, U.S., undocumented immigrants adopted the symbol of the bear for the flag of the short-lived California Bear Republic in 1846. This was adapted into the state flag in 1911, when grizzlies were on the verge of extinction. The bear was designated the official State Animal in 1953, long after grizzlies were gone. The California Grizzly is the mascot for three University of California campuses, UCLA Bruins, UC Riverside Bears and the Cal (Berkeley) Golden Bears (California grizzly bear, n.d.).

Renato Rosaldo: That is a classic example of imperialist nostalgia. Having extirpated grizzlies from the state, they adopt its image as their symbol to represent themselves!

* * *

Tim: And so I'm left wondering where do I fit in this story? In the story of *Avatar*, my father recognizes himself in the corporation mining for unobtainium. Does that make me Jake Sully, trying to be the White Savior? Or do I play the role of the anthropologist—Grace Augustine in *Avatar*, Lyubov in *The Word for World is Forest*, Alfred Kroeber in the story of Ishi—writing ethnographies, inscribing otherness on those about whom they wrote. Maybe I'm more like Theodora Kroeber telling someone's story whom I've never met? Or am I Ursula in this tale? We were both raised in the privilege of extractive industries. Mining in my case, salvage anthropology in hers. Ursula and I both grew up in college towns in California. She in Berkeley, me in Irvine. We both lean politically toward anarchism, and like Sci Fi. Ursula lives in Portland, Oregon. Look {gestures}, here's my Powell's hat.

But there aren't any University buildings named after my Dad.

Dad: You know that corporation mining for unobtainium on that planet? That was me.

* * *

Tim: When I was in 7th grade—I must have been twelve years old—my family moved from Southern California to Lake Stevens, Washington where my dad started working on constructing equipment that would be shipped from the port of Everett, WA to the North Slope of Alaska in order to build a natural gas pipeline. He was a contracts manager—writing contracts—working in an office,

but eventually traveling back and forth to Alaska where he'd stay for two weeks, then be back home with us for one.

When I was an undergrad in the 1990s, my parents took off for a new job in Argentina. They started out in Chile for a few months before moving to Tucumán, Argentina where they lived for some number of years. I spent a little time with them in 1997 after I graduated. Dad was writing contracts for multi-national Canadian and Swedish mining corporations building an open pit copper mine, the roads to get there, and another pipeline to ship the ore to be exported.

After I began grad school at the University of Oregon, my parents took off again, this time for Calgary, Alberta Canada. This time dad wrote contracts with Shell Oil and Syncrude to dig up tar sands in northern Alberta.

Dad: You know that corporation mining for unobtainium on that planet? That was me.

Tim: I took this statement as a foot in the door. I raised issues of our context in relation to the global economy and resource extraction and the collapse of the Argentine economy in ways that I had not before. I'm not sure how much he heard me. Of course by this time, I was well into earning a PhD degree; I had an education that gave me the language to say these things. An education funded, in part, by the copper ore dug out of the land in Argentina and shipped overseas. By natural gas from the North Slope of Alaska, by Alberta's tar sands.

How do I write my way out of that?

* * *

Tim: Between 2010 and 2014, Indigenous women with the Keepers of the Athabasca, organized by Eriel Deranger, Crystal Lameman and Melina Laboucan-Massimo, led an annual ceremonial healing walk through the Northern Alberta tar sands landscape. I only heard about it in 2013, which is too bad. I wish I could have gone.

Eriel Deranger & Melina Laboucan-Massimo (2014): Walking through the oilsands is nothing like flying over the oilsands, or driving past them. ... On foot it starts to hit you, the size and the smell grabs at your core and leaves an indelible impact. ... The healing walk is not a protest, it is a walk to heal the land and ourselves (n.p).

Tim: The environmental activist Clayton Thomas-Müller participated as Master of Ceremonies in the healing walk more than once. Writing about it later, he used the language of dystopia to describe his experience.

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2013): “The landscape was unlike anything I had ever seen before. I walked past a tailings pond so big that it covered the horizon for miles, fed by a 24 inch wide pipe spewing a yards-high flow of liquid hydro-carbon waste so toxic that water fowl who land in it die within minutes” (n.p.).

California Grizzly: I wonder, were any of them Wood Ducks?

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2013): “We saw from up close the hellfires of the Suncor/Petro-Canada stacks, with their 50-foot flames shooting up into the sky. I wondered what madness allowed Suncor to build them 500 meters away

from the precious Athabasca River, which so many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities depend on for water” (n.p.).

California Grizzly: If I’d known what they would do with it, I would never have climbed into the sky to find fire for the people.

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2013): “The Syncrude site is like something straight out of a science fiction movie” (n.p.).

California Grizzly: Yes, that’s it! Or is it the other way around? This is some dark twist on art imitating life imitating art imitating life.

Tim: One of the art directors on the film *Avatar* is from Alberta. In the tar sands documentary *Tipping Point* (Radford & Thompson, 2011), he identifies that project as a significant influence on his designs for the film.

California Grizzly: Early in *Avatar*, just as Jake Sully arrives on Pandora, there’s a shot of a dump truck so large it looks like “a three story suburban home on wheels” (Thomas-Müller, 2013, n.p.). You see arrows sticking out of the massive tires as they roll past. These vehicles were based on vehicles actually used in extracting the tar sands. They show up frequently in photographs of the region.

Todd Cherniawsky: “What was going on in Alberta was hugely informative in building and designing this environment for Jim. And what resonated with people was posing questions in a situation that in a fantasy film, seems like another world or another situation, another civilization’s problem. Without saying directly that mining or the tar sands are bad, they are necessary

at this point to continue with the way the world is operating, but the world does not have to continue to operate like this forever” (Radford & Thompson, 2011, n.p.).

Tim: James Cameron visited the tar sands in Northeastern Alberta and the Indigenous community in Fort Chipewyan in September of 2010—right as *Avatar* became the highest grossing film in history. He was invited by the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) as a sort of publicity stunt to launch Indigenous opposition to tar sands onto a global stage. Clayton Thomas-Müller was a lead organizer of IEN’s tar sands campaign at the time.⁵

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2014b): “We knew bringing James Cameron to the tar sands, and having him talk about the human rights scandal unfolding in First Nations communities, during a time when *Avatar* was on every theater screen on the planet, would be a huge boost to our cause” (p. 377).

James Cameron: “What you see in pictures is nothing compared to what you experience when you fly over it, and you just see this devastation going from horizon to horizon. And to think that only 3% of this resource has been developed so far. The scale of this thing is just unimaginable” (Murphy, 2010, n.p.).

⁵ Much of this is depicted in a CBC documentary called *Tipping Point* (Radford & Thompson, 2011) about the impact of tar sands extraction on Mikisew Cree First Nation, Fort McKay Cree First Nation, Athabasca (Déne) Chipewyan First Nation and Métis people living in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (which includes Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan). In Canada, the film aired on the program *The Nature of Things* with narration by David Suzuki. But for the theatrical release, Sigourney Weaver is the narrator.

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2014b): “Jim Cameron came, he saw, he met with the tar sands industry, the Alberta government, and with First Nations. ... As an avid supporter of technological remedies, he did not condemn the tar sands. He spoke highly of nuclear energy as an alternative—as well as the emerging theoretical carbon capture and storage technologies” (p. 377).

James Cameron: “I did not make *Avatar* until the technology was available for me to tell the story right, and the Canadian government should not develop the tar sands until they have the technology to not poison and kill First Nations peoples with cancers” (Thomas-Müller, 2014b, p. 377).

California Grizzly: Cameron’s not that radical. His films are the biggest Hollywood blockbusters ever made! He thinks technology that doesn’t exist yet is going to save us.

Tim: His comments may have been weak, but he did far more just by showing up. *Time Magazine*, the Associated Press, *The New York Times* and *Oprah* were all there just to see him arrive at the airport (Radford & Thompson, 2011). Before he came, no one in the U.S. had heard of Alberta’s tar sands. In that sense, the campaign was successful.

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2014b): “The fallout from his visit was that every newspaper, television, computer and smartphone in America was comparing the story of *Avatar* to the real-life situation unfolding between First Nations in the tar sands” (p. 377).

California Grizzly: In each of these stories, Ishi, *Avatar*, and Alberta's Tar Sands, you see a direct link between resource extraction, environmental degradation and genocide. Researchers from the University of Manitoba have linked, "oilsands pollutants and higher levels of heavy metals in wildlife, and higher cancer rates in residents" (Bennett, 2014, n.p.). Dr. John O'Conner even had his medical license threatened by Health Canada when he blew the whistle on the high rates of cancer he was seeing in the area around Fort Chipewyan, Alberta.

Dr. John O'Connor: "Well, what happened even before that was these vivid descriptions from people—especially elders in the community—regarding the changes they'd seen in their environment. You know, consistent descriptions of the change in the water, the fish and wildlife, and particularly the plant-life that they would use as their traditional medicines. Each one of them was describing the same changes: They could no longer eat the fish or drink the water from the lake, which stood in stark contrast with what they grew up with—clean water, edible and abundant fish. There was story after story" (Toledano, 2014, n.p.).

Tim: It was these elders, with the help of organizers like Clayton Thomas-Müller and the Indigenous Environmental Network who invited James Cameron to meet with them because they were being ignored by the government (Radford & Thompson, 2011).

California Grizzly: Still, as much as he tries to be, James Cameron is not Jake Sully, the white savior.

Tim: As Clayton Thomas-Müller describes it, Indigenous activists and environmentalists are building a broad-based, international grassroots movement founded on an Indigenous treaty and rights-based strategic framework.

Clayton Thomas-Müller (2014a): “Constitutionally protected rights and title have become an important tool for First Nations struggling to protect their territories from resource companies. ... First Nations communities, environmental groups, social justice groups, labour unions and non-indigenous communities have come together and have successfully delayed or shut down projects due to protests and opposition. ... We are holding back the most powerful entities on the planet and doing it with the might of a social movement strategic framework that is about mobilizing mass pressure from the grassroots upward. ... It's time we realize that we can't fight and win these battles on our own. It's time we come out of our silos, link arms, and forge a common front against the tyranny of corporate power” (n.p.).

* * *

Tim: This movie, *Avatar*, is my father's favorite movie. He keeps it saved on his DVR. Why this one? It is spectacular. The good guys win, and it is very clear Indigenous people are the good guys. He seems to recognize himself in the narrative, and it seems to leave open the possibility for settler colonists to do the right thing. Having worked on the tar sands, it makes sense the film's imagery would seem familiar to him.

In writing this, though, I'm afraid I'm not being fair to my father. Why should I blame him for being immersed in the capitalist, colonialist system? Is he any more to blame than I am?

California Grizzly: No, which is precisely the point. It's not about him. It affects all of us; we're all immersed in it.

Tim: Today, he has solar panels on his roof and drives an electric car that when charged in his garage is powered by the sun. Is that a contradiction? Or is it simply revealing of the nature of a consumer-driven society that requires employment in the resource sector to earn an income high enough to be able to afford eco-conscious consumption? And isn't this the essence of the performance of imperialist nostalgia in *Avatar*—that settler-colonists, having destroyed the environment, are now the source of its salvation?

Jake Sully,

James Cameron,

Dad,

Me.

I cannot offer answers, only connections.

California Grizzly: COP OUT! Only lazy researchers do not produce answers.

Tim: The connections I draw are a form of answer. In my approach to qualitative inquiry, no answer is ever final, and no one answer serves for

everyone. Also, I do believe there are answers in this text, but they belong to others' voices. I do not want to take credit for Thomas-Müller's Indigenous rights-based approach to organizing, which is, I think, our last, best hope.

I draw inspiration from Ursula's work. Ursula K. Le Guin's utopian speculative fiction offers a vision of the realm of possibility. In her future realm anything is possible, but those potentialities arise out of existing conditions, which are neither equitable nor just. Ursula K. Le Guin allowed herself to dream, dream about different outcomes.

I want to see the story of *The Word for World Is Forest* in *Avatar* and realize this is not science fiction. This is California. Northern Alberta. These processes are not things of the past, nor the distant future, but very much of the present. Cycles repeating themselves, variations on a theme. The point is to expose where those stories are coming from—to expose the roots in the ground beneath our feet.

Memory, in which I include history, is always fragmented, always partial, incomplete, flawed. But the act of remembering takes place in the present. I draw on memories and history from within the colonial imaginary which relies on us/them divisions. By bringing these fragmented memories into the present, “to quote history back to itself,” I reassemble them into something new. And attempt to steer my future away from extractive models of research. I seek to embody Emma Perez' (1999) decolonial imaginary, where indigenous presence contributes to an inclusive and equitable decolonial imaginary for the future.

CHAPTER 9

INTERLUDE 3

Cuyamaca **by Gloria Anzaldúa**

*“This tribe is the most numerous
and the most restless, stubborn,
haughty, warlike and hostile
toward us. ...”*

--Don Pedro Fages, 1787¹

Driving down the canyon
on a road gouged out of the side of the mountain
red red earth and exposed roots
sticking out like amputated fingers.
145 acres for sale
the Indians safely locked up in reservations
or urban ghettos.

Driving around the mountain
inside the car
fighting for silence.
Houses stick out like pimples
on the face of the mountain.

At this skirt of the mountain ranges
I met a woman from a nearly extinct tribe,
the Kumeyaay.
Her name was Til’pu,
meaning Roadrunner.
By a stream amidst the gushing water

¹ Pedro Fages was an officer in the Spanish army, first Lieutenant Governor of the Californias (Baja and Alta) under Gaspar de Portolá, and succeeded him to become the second Governor of Alta California.

under the olive woolly head of the mountain
I met her.

Under the encina tree I sat.
She emerged out of the smooth amber flesh
of the manzanita,
in sandals of woven yucca,
skin polished bronze by the sun
she appeared
with a tattoo on her arm
pricked by cactus thorns
ground charcoal rubbed on the wound.

There's a forest fire in the Cuyamaca Peaks,
a sign: 4 Parcels For Sale,
the Indians locked up in reservations
and Til'pu behind glass in the museum.

(Anzaldúa, 1999, pp. 204-205)

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION,

OR

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

How this work was written: rung by rung, as chance offered a narrow foothold; and always like someone climbing dangerous heights, not looking around for a second, in order not to get dizzy (but also to save up the full power of the panorama stretched before him for the end).

[Nz, 4]

Walter Benjamin (1983, p. 5)

This almost finished product seems an assemblage, a montage, a beaded work with several leitmotifs and with a central core, now appearing, now disappearing in a crazy dance. The whole thing has had a mind of its own, escaping me and insisting on putting together the pieces of its own puzzle with minimal direction from my will.

Gloria Anzaldúa (1999/1987, p. 88)

So, where do we go from here? (I say “we” because I hope that you might like to come along.) In order to know where I’m going, I must first recognize where I start from. Where do I stand? I look to the ground beneath my feet. Seek the truth in the roots. (Seek the route/root of the truth)

I stand on colonized land. I live in the valley of the Kwanetikw River, under the shadow of Ktsi Amiskw, the Great Beaver. Residents of Western Massachusetts refer to it as Mount Sugarloaf. To the Pocumtuc people who first lived here it is a part of their stories. These are not my stories to tell. I look to these stories not as relics of the past, but as evidence of an indigenous present.

This is evidence not of a lost and nearly forgotten past, but of an indigenous presence that opens possibilities for different futures that include indigenous people.

Where do I stand?

Panche Be, Seek the Root of the Truth

Roberto 'Dr. Cintli' Rodriguez: "Panche Be is understanding that we are not simply part of a resistance culture, but a creation/resistance culture. We do not simply react. We create. Panche Be is the eternal pursuit of peace, dignity, equality... and justice" (2010, p. 26).

I'm not sure where else to start, so I start with where I stand. Look to the ground beneath my feet. I was born in Hollywood, California. The address of the hospital on my birth certificate reads, "Sunset Blvd." I am interested in the performance of land in southern California, the performance of how the land was colonized, the performance of land in Western movies. I intend to continue to excavate beneath the stories Hollywood tells to find the roots (and routes) of my emergence from the hills above Pasadena.

One of my models is Jill Lane's (1998) discussion, in *The Ends of Performance*, of the conquest of New Mexico by Don Juan de Oñate titled, "On Colonial Forgetting." She offers her analysis of the role of performance in colonizing territory. Other models: Norman Denzin's four books about

representations and performances of Indians across different works of art.

Deborah Miranda's book *Bad Indians*.

Crystal Lameman (Beaver Lake Cree First Nation): “Where does your history

end? You? How far back can you go? What can you tell me about your people? People always ask me that, but you? So where are your roots? I know where mine are. They're up there—in what is now known as northern Alberta. I know where I come from. And we all need to start doing that if we're all going to somehow get past these atrocities that have happened. It's not only us that has to heal” (Moe, 2014, n.p.).

Eriel Deranger (Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation): “Indigenous people are

in the process of finding themselves as well. A lot of people are in that process of decolonization—but you can also be a part of it. There's lots of non-indigenous people that are participating. ... Appropriating the romanticized parts of indigenous culture is not the way to do that. ... It's not like every native person has all the answers to the world. But we're really paying attention. Find those that do have that. Who are the traditional knowledge holders? There might be traditional knowledge holders in your own family; they exist everywhere in many different communities” (Moe, 2014, n.p.).

* * *

I began my dissertation by examining the layers of colonialism—first Spanish, then Mexican, then U.S.—in my home state of California. A popular

children's book from the time by Scott O'Dell (1960) titled *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, for example, represents its main character, a young Nicoleño (Tongva) girl, as the last of her kind. It is based on stories about a real person, usually referred to as the, "Lone Woman of San Nicolas." The moment we enter the story, Native people in California are disappearing. This is also the story of Ishi, "the last Yahi." Ishi was captured in 1911 in Northern California and turned over to anthropologists at the University of California. Dubbed "The last wild Indian" by newspaper accounts of the time, and later a best-selling book by Thedora Kroeber (1961), Ishi was housed by Alfred Kroeber in Cal's Museum of Anthropology—a living exhibit.

Of course, Ishi was neither "wild" nor "last." This story of lastness, of finality, is the story of genocide. These stories of Native absence and disappearance, whether told by films, children's books, or by Franz Boas' "salvage ethnography," are forms of what Renato Rosaldo (1989) calls "imperialist nostalgia"—a longing for what is lost after having been active in its destruction. Imperialist nostalgia, is I think a sort of performance. One I am pushing against. Colonization is repetitive, recursive, iterative, recycling itself in altered forms which my good friend Rachel Briggs (2016) points out, "Neoliberalism continuously transforms to incorporate and commodify" (p. 91). Imperialist nostalgia is packaged and sold back to us on boxes of butter and corn meal, team mascots and Halloween costumes.

I need to move beyond these stories. To tell decolonizing stories. Stories of truth and reparations. Stories of survivance, Indigenous presence and futurity.

Gerald Vizenor (2009): Survivance is an unnamable narrative chance that creates and teases a sense of presence. The word *Indian*, for instance, is a colonial invention, an absence in literature because it is a simulation without a real reference. The *Anishinaabe* and other natives are an unnamable presence; their stories create a sense of presence, and that presence is survivance, my signature and epitome of literature. The stories that grieve over absence are the burdens of victimry. (p. 23-24)

When absence is a result of genocide, then presence is a radical act of survivance, combining the words survival and resistance. Here's an example: the Luiseño, or Payómkawichum, artist James Luna used his body to play with that present/absence of Indigenous Californians in museums with his "Artifact Piece"¹ by laying in a display case. But yet, it is one thing for me to write about his performance, another to turn the corner of a museum and find a living person lying in the display case beside dioramas with taxidermied animals. His "embodied presence" in the space where indigenous absence is so often represented, shatters this version of representing history, creating a new space

¹ James Luna first performed the "Artifact Piece" in 1987 at the Museum of Man in San Diego. He lay in a glass case on a bed of sand wearing a loin cloth. For a later performance, Luna projected that first installation on to a screen above him as he discussed the difficulty of lying in the display case while people continued to speak about him, but not to him, after they realized he was alive.

where it suddenly becomes possible to reimagine and redo our relations (Spry, 2016).

James Luna reverses the role Ishi played, living and working in Cal's museum of Anthropology. Ishi's presence was all about absence—about Native disappearance and the triumph of Manifest Destiny and Westward expansion. James Luna's living body lying in a display case usually reserved for dead things was all about presence—the embodied presence of Indigenous Californians living and working and visiting museums side by side with the many other immigrants and settlers and tourists in Southern California.

Betweeners

I walk a path somewhere between Emma Pérez' (1999) *Decolonial Imaginary*, and Tuck & Yang's (2012) "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." Pérez' approach to *herstory* offers counternarratives (and differential consciousness) as the means to write unwritten bodies back into history. This means seeking new ways of writing, teaching and knowing outside the colonial imaginary. At the same time, Tuck & Yang remind us that decolonization is always about land. And that these processes, informed by "Indigenous sovereignty and futurity" (p. 35), are incommensurable with critical, Western approaches to scholarship (and activism).

Here's where it gets dangerous. As we collectively imagine other ways of knowing and being in the world, it requires performances that can be

incommensurable with existing onto-epistemologies. Tuck & Yang offer an “ethic of incommensurability” as a means of moving forward: “The Native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone—these are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability. ... Decolonization is not an ‘and’. It is an elsewhere” (p. 36). I seek these decolonizing performances that are by nature “unsettling.”

Diversi & Moreira (2016) illuminate some of these incommensurabilities. They use their Brazilian bodies to challenge the essentialist identities Tuck & Yang categorize as Indigenous v. settler colonist v. chattel slave. To use Emma Pérez’ terminology, essentialist, us/them identities are a function of the colonialist imaginary. In contrast, Claudio and Marcelo’s betweener autoethnographies point the way toward Pérez’ “decolonial imaginary”:

Claudio & Marcelo (reading arm in arm): We must reject essentialist

ontological binaries, for they have been the “masters’ tools” of colonization and oppression, and find our way toward *inclusive* and *cooperative* emancipation from our colonial history. (Diversi & Moreira, 2016, p. 586).

Yet, making space for alternative ways of knowing and being in the world requires unsettling colonizing, extractive scholarship and performances. By rejecting these colonizing forms of knowledge production, we also endanger (intentionally, necessarily) the structures built upon those foundations, including identity categories existing within these structures, settler/native, oppressor/oppressed. Given my position as settler within the colonial imaginary

embodied by Western narratives, I am looking to write myself out of that history, to push back at the westward thrust of Manifest Destiny.

I am interested in exploring the ways that Indigenous methodologies and decolonizing theory may complement Performance as both theory and method. I am interested in decolonizing Performance. Stories and storytelling may offer an area of overlap within these differing paradigms. In looking to story, I do not wish to tell others' stories for them, but rather to find new ways of telling my own—of telling a new story. This requires an ethical stance toward research that is not extractive, but rather relational. It demands attention be paid to the aesthetics and politics of representation.

I contend that performance, by cultivating relationships through dialogue, through audiencing and co-performance, offers a response to extractive scholarship. As we begin to recognize knowledge emerges as co-constructed through the cultivation of relationships, we push back against the role that research has played historically, and continues to play in settler colonialism. I mean quite literally challenging the neoliberal academic milieu in which we find ourselves. Rejecting who's first author. Rejecting ranking journals for tenure review. Rejecting orienting curriculum to maximize student numbers and the \$ attached. And rejecting models of "service" that prioritize sitting on administrative committees over community activism.

In Lak'ech, Tú Eres Mi Otro Yo

I write and perform betweener autoethnographies to both critique and create the worlds we inhabit. I practice what Gloria Anzaldúa calls “spiritual activism”; this requires both internal work and external. Between the world and my self, I seek to disrupt the self/other, us/them hierarchy and instead embrace a self/world relation. I locate my scholarship in this between place—El Mundo Zurdo (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981), Nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1999; 2015), nos/otras (Anzaldúa, 2015) the decolonial imaginary and third space feminism (Pérez, 1999), differential consciousness (Sandoval, 2000), betweener autoethnographies (Diversi & Moreira, 2016)—seeking these relationships.

I try to undermine liberal individualism by emphasizing relationship. I locate subjectivity as between, or always in relation, in effect making the term “intersubjectivity” redundant. We are always being hailed, hailing, changing, growing, imitating, satirizing, creating ourselves alongside and with those around us, and in ways that bring into question any notion of a core or authentic essence. These are relationships with not only people, but also with non-human animals and the environment, with the land. *You can't have cowboys without cows and horses. And you can't herd cattle without an open range. And if that range happens to be previously occupied, well...*

In chapter 5, I quote Judith Butler (2004) writing about grief in the wake of 9/11. She writes of how our affective relationships can leave us vulnerable; we are “undone” in the face of another, through either grief or desire, and that

rather than isolating us, this highlights the complex ethical responsibility of relationality. We are, by virtue of our collective embodiment, “Already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own” (p. 28). Butler looks for new language to describe the experience:

Judith Butler: “Despite my affinity for the term relationality, we may need other language to approach the issue that concerns us, a way of thinking about how we are not only constituted by our relations but also dispossessed by them as well” (p. 24).

In chapter 5, I discuss affect. But here, I think In Lak’ech goes further to encompass this mode of being. I find some consonance here, too, with autoethnography. The self is that starting point, but through writing about the self, the ties that bind us together stand revealed. Claudio reminded me of a comment Ron Pelias made in response to criticisms of autoethnography as navel-gazing. He said if that’s true then there is no better place to look, for the navel is our first connection to another person—our mother.

The Lakota phrase *Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ*, or “all my relations” represents a concept similar to In Lak’ech. “All my relations” extends that political community to non-human animals and the environment: the land, the earth, water and sky. As we affect the earth, we are affected by it. And while our relationships with the land are what compose us, so too they dispossess us of our selves. I am “undone” in the face of the immensity and grandeur of the land, the Grand Canyon, giant redwoods, the Milky Way across a desert night sky.

Dreaming and Waking

For the inhabitants of the planet Asche in Ursula Le Guin's novella *The Word for World Is Forest*, dreaming is a state of being that is as important as being awake. They have learned to dream while awake, and use that state of consciousness to communicate and to gain knowledge about their world. Before he was killed in the Aschean uprising, Lyubov, the anthropologist from Earth, was beginning to learn this waking dream state.

Another of Le Guin's works, *The Lathe of Heaven*, also (re)imagines how dreams shape reality.

Waking and dreaming.

* * *

Hortense Powdermaker titled her 1950 ethnography of the Hollywood studio system, *The Dream Factory*, but those stories we watch on the "silver screen" are hardly dreams. No, one of the dreams Hollywood's industrialized production system produced is "A star is born!" The idea that you can go to California and get discovered. Waiting tables one day, starring role the next. That is the dream the factory churns out for individualized consumers. But this dream, too, is a remake. It is a recurring nightmare that California cannot wake from. A star is born! Eureka, I have found it! Westward ho, the wagons! The idea that you can go to California to remake yourself and the land, and get rich in the process is manufactured by the colonial imaginary. Kerouac's *On the Road*. A

startup app. When you go to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair.

* * *

Walter Benjamin (1983) in convolute N: “Theoretics of Knowledge, Theory of Progress” from his *Arcades Project* speculates, using the form of a dialectic, that the moment of waking is the synthesis of dreaming and being awake.

Walter Benjamin: Can it be that waking is the synthesis of dream consciousness as thesis and awakened consciousness as antithesis? Then the moment of waking would be identical with the “moment of recognition,” in which things put on their true—surrealistic—face. Thus, in Proust, the importance of committing the whole of life to its ultimate dialectical breaking point—waking. (p. 9)

[N 3a, 3]

I don’t want to lose the sense of humor behind such an application of Marxist dialectics. It comes in the context of a wild montage of quotes and fragments, an unfinished project that seems to challenge Marxist dogma, specifically the linear progression of history that leads inevitably to a communist utopia. Writing in the face of fascism, in 1930s Vichy Paris, historical materialism could never have seemed more naïve. And humor never more important.

I sit here, writing in the face of Trump, a name I would prefer not be included in this dissertation. Reading Walter Benjamin might never have been

more important. Benjamin, who wrote what he could before taking his own life to avoid the holocaust. Benjamin, who held strong to both his Judaism and his Marxism, yet neither uncritically. His writings and his life show it possible to be both spiritual and materialist.

* * *

Meanwhile, Gloria Anzaldúa took a different tactic toward dreaming and wakefulness. She abandoned the dialectic in order to embrace two opposing forces, polar opposites. She described *la conciencia de la mestiza* as, “a tolerance for ambiguity” (p. 101) in *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1999). In her most recent, posthumous work, *Light In the Dark/Luz En lo Oscuro* (2015), she goes further than mere tolerance by drawing on Victor Turner’s theory of liminal space to advance her concept of *nepantla* (p. 28). She wrote:

Gloria Anzaldúa: Chamanas, curanderas, artistas, and spiritual activists, like *nepantleras*, are liminal people, at the thresholds of form, forever betwixt and between. ... They seem to perform a balancing act by standing above the contest and mastering both sides. ... The shamanic balance is not achieved by synthesis; it is not a static condition acquired by resolving opposition, a tension that exists when two forces encounter each other headlong and are not reconciled but teeter on the edge of chaos. ... One pole cannot exist without its opposite, as Westerners would like to think, seeking good without evil, pleasure without pain, god without the devil,

love without hate. But la chamana stands at the juncture of opposing forces and moves between them. (pp. 31-32).

Refuse the synthesis.

Grasp the pole at both ends.

Tim: I wonder if this is the necessary approach to live within what Tuck and Yang describe as an ethic of incommensurability? The necessary facultad to both work for an end to nations and borders and racialized divisions between *us* and *them*? Yet, at the same time recognizing Indigenous treaty rights and sovereignty as fundamental to decolonization and to Indigenous futurity.²

Craig Womack: I hope for a different kind of national story. Many postcolonial writers have written of nationalism as a pathology with roots in xenophobia, triumphalism, oppositional discourse that pits an us against a them, and isolationism, but perhaps there is some other kind of nationalism they don't know about yet—one that tribal people can explore, one that may not even yet exist except in dreams waiting to become stories. Indian country seems to me a perfect location for exploring these

² There is more to say about such a complicated issue. That treaty rights, criteria for recognition and enrollment in Native nations are often determined by (or in relation to) colonizing governments shows just how complicated. Many Indigenous scholars have been studying and writing about this for decades, Taiaiake Alfred, Audra Simpson, Glen Coulthard, Michael Yellow Bird, Waziyatawin to name a few. The #StandingRockSyllabus is a good place to start. <https://nycstandswithstandingrock.wordpress.com/>

questions, since it is a case study for what constitutes the modern nation.

(2009, p. 333)

Tim: Perhaps Craig Womack sketches a picture of the “elsewhere” Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang imagine. I consider his words, not sure if I agree. I’m not sure if I don’t agree. But I am sure that the opportunity for “exploring these questions” has never been permitted. Just look at Standing Rock, the largest gathering of Native Americans in centuries. The Očhéthi Šakówiŋ camp was just evicted—as I’ve been writing. The Sacred Stone camp continues, but the offer to revisit U.S.’s relationship with tribal nations made by the Obama administration is now no more than echoes in the wind.

Sherman Alexie: I am extremely conscious of my tribalism. And when you talk about tribalism, you talk about living in a black and white world. I mean, Native American tribalism—sovereignty, even the political fight for sovereignty, and cultural sovereignty—is a very ‘us versus them.’ And I think a lot of people in this country, especially European Americans descended from Europeans don’t see themselves as tribal. Y’know, I don’t think, for instance, Republicans see themselves as tribal. I was speaking to a Republican here in New York, a friend of mine, and y’know I asked him, “You think it’s an accident that, what, 80% of Republicans are White males?” And he did.

Bill Moyers (laughing): Coincidence.

Sherman Alexie: Yes! He couldn't even imagine that he is part of a tribe. So, as a member of a tribe, I think I have a more conscious relationship with black and white thinking. I used to be quite a black and white thinker, in public life and private life, until 9/11, y'know. And the endgame of tribalism is flying planes into buildings. That's the endgame. So, since then, I have tried, and I fail often, but I have tried to live in the in-between, to be conscious—What did Fitzgerald say? The sign of a superior mind is the ability to hold two different ideas. Keats called it negative capability.³ So, I have tried to be in that. And fail often, but I try. (Alexie, Moyers & Winship, 2013, n.p.)

Hunab Ku, or “Keats called it negative capability”

Around the time I began to think about writing this dissertation, the Mexican American Studies program had just been outlawed in Tucson, Arizona. I was struck by an ethical crisis. How can I go about the process of knowledge construction while specific forms of knowledge for specific bodies in specific locations are prohibited? I did what I could, at the time, by dedicating two hours

³ Describing his admiration for Shakespeare, Keats mentioned “negative capability” in a letter to his brothers in 1817: “I mean *Negative Capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (Keats, 1891, p. 48). Keats elaborated on this, what was for him an admirable characteristic of poets, writing in a subsequent letter that, “It is not itself—it has no self—it is everything and nothing—it has no character and enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—it has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet” (p. 184).

to the issue for a podcast I was producing called *Education Radio*. I continue to teach a chapter from *Borderlands/La Frontera*, “The Homeland Aztlán/*El Otro Mexico*” along with the documentary, *Precious Knowledge*, every semester since the elimination of MAS-TUSD. But still I am upset by the epistemic violence done to the students in these classes and the students who are now unable to take them.

Jose Gonzales, who taught history and government in the MAS program at Tucson High Magnet School, when interviewed for our podcast, said, “I am tired of going to the funerals of kids whose dreams have been deferred” (personal communication). This is merely the latest battle in a 500 year civilizational war. The banning of books began with 16th century Spanish priests who burned the Aztec amoxtlis and Mayan codices. It continued into 19th-20th century residential schools in Canada and boarding schools in the United States, where the motto was, “Save the man, kill the Indian.”

Roberto ‘Dr. Cintli’ Rodriguez: Up until recently, this has been the norm throughout history: indigenous peoples are reduced to illiterate savages, to be civilized and studied, never to be treated as co-equals (2012, para. 8).

In my writing class the fall semester of 2016/17, we read Anzaldúa and watched *Precious Knowledge* during the run-up to the 2016 presidential election. The students were outraged by the documentary, as they always are, but we still felt somewhat far removed, like, “it could never happen here.” However, it was through processing the results of the election with my students that we came to

realize that Arizona's politics had just been exported to the rest of the country. Tom Horne, Arizona's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, after writing the law that prohibited MAS-TUSD, was elected as the state's Attorney General. John Huppenthal, who replaced Horne as Superintendent, campaigned on the promise to "Stop La Raza" (Rodriguez, 2012). Eliminating Mexican American Studies was a stepping stone in their political careers. And now these anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant policies are coming from the White House.

[DISSOLVE TO:]

INT. ACADEMIC OFFICES - DAY

AMAN SIUM and ERIC RITSKES sit at a desk collaborating on their intro to the second issue of the journal *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*.

AMAN SIUM

"Colonial mappings divide land into three categories: the border, the center (metropole), and the outside. Through our forced membership into one of these categories, we either receive the privileges associated with the center, or the genocidal policies and erasures associated with its periphery."

ERIC RITSKES

"In colonial meta-narratives, the colonial holds full narrative power. The colonial controls the national story, which characters are introduced, and how they are constructed."

AMAN SIUM

"Thus, Indigenous storytelling must also be a remapping project,
(MORE)

AMAN SIUM (CONT'D)

one that challenges the sacrosanct claims of colonial borders and the hierarchies imposed on either side of the dividing line. Stories become mediums to unmake colonial borders. They help us restore the Indigenous names and relationships rooted in land" (Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. vi).

[DISSOLVE TO:]

INT. GIFT SHOP, BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST, CODY, WYOMING - DAY

JANE TOMPKINS spins a rack of postcards. She has a stack of books in her arms. Finished perusing, she selects a couple, steps over to check out and notices a sign that reads:

[CLOSE-UP ON:]

"RODEO TICKETS SOLD HERE"

JANE TOMPKINS

(Something clicks
into place)

So that's it! *Everything* is still going strong... The American people do not want to let go of the winning of The West (1992, p. 194).

[CUT TO:]

INT. MAS-TUSD CLASSROOM, TUCSON, ARIZONA - DAY

ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ

"Every child should know the amazing history of this continent. But they don't... Most of the continent has either been Hispanicized or Anglicized. Translated, what this means is that it is not ethnic studies in Tucson that needs to be saved, but rather, metaphorically, it is that "reduccion" or forced
(MORE)

ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)
assimilation needs to be reversed in every community, in every school and in every nation on this continent. A further translation: decolonization is not a project of the past, but of the present" (2012, paras. 17-20).

[CUT TO:]

EXT. A PARK IN N.Y.C. - DAY

SANDY GRANDE acts as facilitator during a teach in for the Standing Rock Syllabus. In preparation for a march, banners and posters that read WATER IS LIFE, MNI WICONI and #NoDAPL lie on the ground in front of them.

SANDY GRANDE

"The hope is that such a pedagogy will help shape schools and processes of learning around the 'decolonial imaginary.' Within this fourth space of being, the dream is that indigenous and nonindigenous peoples will work in solidarity to envision a way of life free of exploitation and replete with spirit. The invitation is for scholars, educators, and students to exercise critical consciousness at the same time they recognize that the world of knowledge far exceeds our ability to know. It beckons all of us to acknowledge that only the mountain commands reverence, the bird freedom of thought, and the land comprehension of time. With this spirit in mind, I proceed on my own journey to learn, to teach, and to be" (2004, p. 176).

[DISSOLVE TO:]

EXT. CAMPUS OF AUTONOMOUS METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY-
IZTAPALAPA, MEXICO - TWILIGHT

CÉSAR CISNEROS PUEBLA crosses the lawn, where he meets
REBECCA SOLNIT. The sky above fades from orange to
pink to indigo-blue.

CÉSAR CISNEROS PUEBLA

"In some ways, our madness is
leading us to see what other people
and/or citizens can't see. One could
say that dominant mainstream social
sciences and humanities are based on
daytime and little attention has
been put on nighttime. Scientists
have their comfort zone studying the
Other during the daylight. Few
people look for something at night.
Usually darkness is terrifying, but
at the same time beautiful secrets
are sheltered there" (2016, p. 174-
175).

REBECCA SOLNIT

"The future is dark, with a darkness
as much of the womb as the grave"
(2016, p. 30).

[WIPE LEFT:]

INT. ATTIC OFFICE SPACE ATOP OLD FARMHOUSE, HADLEY,
MASSACHUSETTS - MIDNIGHT

TIM

(Typing)

I gaze into the obsidian mirror to
learn precious and beautiful
knowledge. With this newfound
realization (conocimientos,
conscientização) I take action in
the world, in myself. Like the
snake shedding its skin, I am
transformed. Come with me to the
threshold of past and future. We
stand at a crossroads. Here, as
the day ends, we wake from our

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
colonialist dream. Stay with me
here in Nepantla, in this
betweenner place. Here we can see
both the dark day where crossing
the border can get you killed, and
luminous night when the border is
no longer visible. Here we can
dream with eyes wide open. "We are
such stuff as dreams are made on."

[IRIS OUT]

TITLE OVER:

THE END

[FADE TO BLACK]

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