

# Visions

2024

*In* Community, Liberation,  
Indigenous, & Eco-Psychologies

Mejuba  
Yansa



## EDITORS

Nuria Ciofalo  
Susan James  
Beth Anne Boardman  
Susan James  
Kamee Abrahamian  
Juana Ochoa

## CREATIVE CURATION & DESIGN

## FEATURED ARTIST

## SPONSORSHIP



PGIAA

## COPYRIGHT

Visions is a publication of the [Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies](#) (CLIE) specialization of the M.A./Ph.D. program in Depth Psychology

© Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2023 | Pacifica.edu  
All Rights Reserved  
249 Lambert Road  
Carpinteria, CA 93013

**PACIFICA**  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE

“...the task of decolonial artists, scholars and activists is not simply to offer amendments or edits to the current world, but to display the mutual sacrifice and relationality needed to sabotage colonial systems of thought and power for the purpose of liberatory alternatives.” (Martineau and Ritskes, 2014)



*Visions* features the work of students, faculty, and alumni in the Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies (CLIE) M.A./Ph.D. specialization; it represents our efforts to co-create transdisciplinary curriculum and support the transformative practices, and artistic and theoretical innovations that we encounter in various spaces and bioregions that we inhabit and work in. We gather on campus in residential sessions three days a month for nine months of the year from around the U.S. and abroad. During the summer, students are involved in community praxis and research in sites of their own choosing, based on interest, commitment, and solidarities. Our program brings together community, liberation, and depth psychologies with environmental justice, and relational and Indigenous ontologies in order to be part of the critical work of establishing a 21st century curriculum and practice that might attend to some of the most pressing issues of our time. In the first section of this issue, we offer a

theoretical lens into our engagement, with concepts of counter-modernism, decoloniality, and pluriversal possibilities. The second section focuses the application of these concepts throughout a range of praxes. As prospective students consider applying to CLIE, their most common and pressing question is, “What kinds of projects are students and alumni engaged in?” The student and alumni news section in each issue of [Hearing Voices](#) (now *Visions*), provides an excellent overview of their work.

We are always grateful to the incredible student artists who have contributed to this edition.

*Nuria Ciofalo, Jenny Escobar, & Susan James, Core Faculty*



**CLIE students and faculty enjoy lunch-break discussions with Pacifica President, Dr. Leonie Mattison**

*(Left to right, Mosey Brown, Hana Truscott, Jennifer Luecht, Gilbert Salazar, Dr. James Moura, Dr. Mattison, Karissa Williams, Lenea Sims, Carrie Thomas)*



“The will to flourish brings every living thing into relationship with other living and non-living parts of its environment. When those relationships work to enable life to flourish, the system may be said to be resilient...I am particularly concerned with doubled violence. The doubling I refer to is a continuous act of wounding that not only kills parts of a living system but actually disables or kills the capacity of a living system to repair itself...Whereas antimodernity is reactive against modernity, counter-modernity is generously responsive. It seeks to offer radical and challenging alternatives to the modernity that underlies so much of contemporary social and ecological violence.” Deborah Bird Rose, 2004

# COUNTERMODERNISM and

# Regenerative Transformations

By Susan James and Helene Lorenz

**M**any local environments and communities shaped by the institutions of modernism/coloniality are being violently, deeply, and rapidly depleted and destroyed by a lack of care that seemingly cannot be transformed by reactive critique and resistance alone. A climate crisis leading to the intense global warming already beginning has forced many (but apparently not yet enough) people to search for alternative, countermodern ways to live.

Decoloniality theories and applications propose a path forward through defection, refusal, and fugitivity leading to the formation of innovative constellations of relationality and care. They are creating local place-based projects that model regenerative repair and protection of soils, rivers, forests, commons, schools, neighborhoods, rituals, arts, histories, and memorials. We wonder if there are also radical and challenging alternatives and a possibility of repair for those still opposing these efforts? Perhaps as the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg in Southern Ontario and

Collage by Serena Kottmeir, In Memoriam

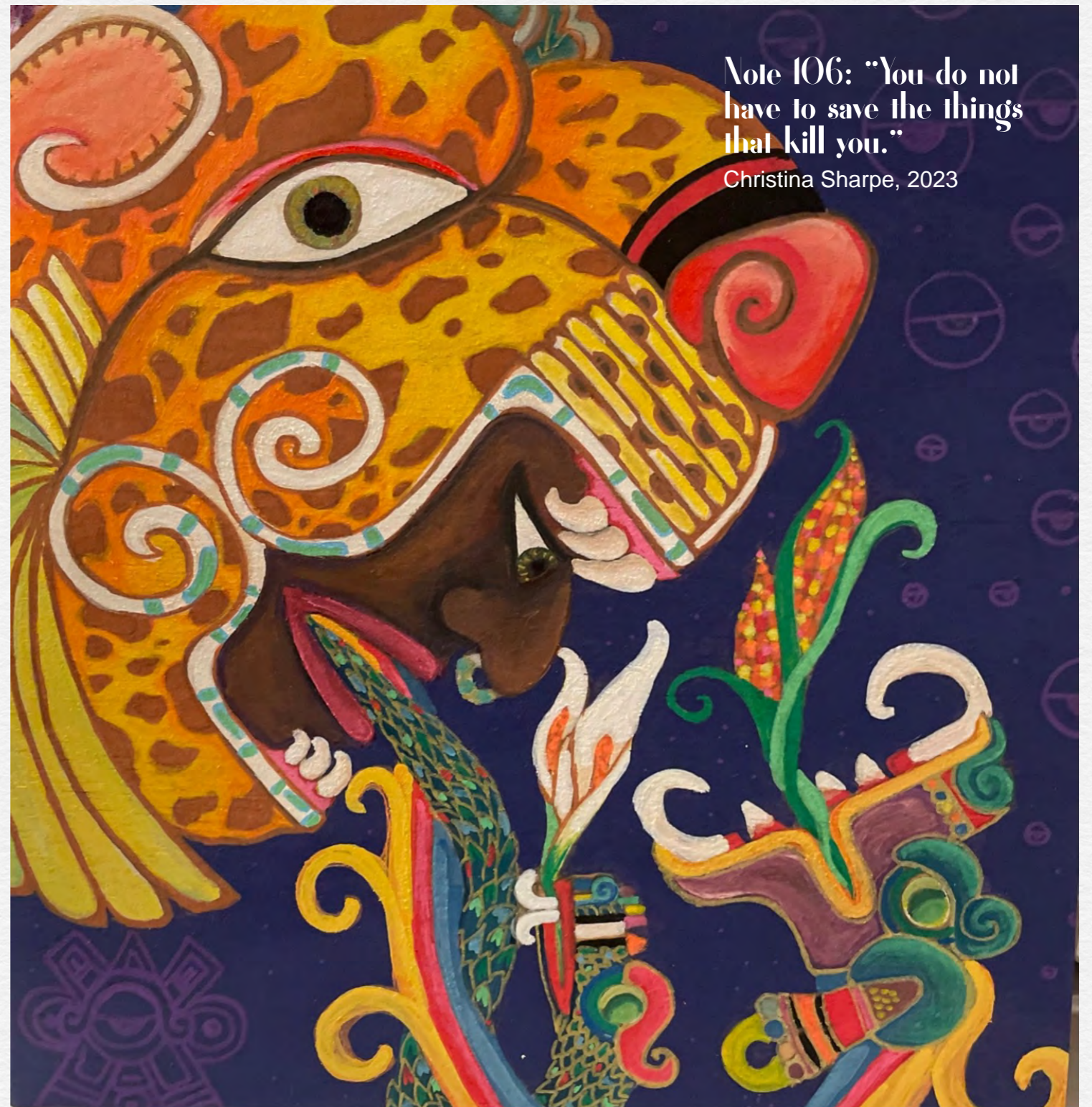
Note 181: “Regard is a habit of care. It is appreciation and esteem. It is the right of repair”

Christina Sharpe, 2023



Michigan suggest, the land will be the best teacher of the need for care and resilience as we are visited by sweltering heat, devastating floods, violent storms, and ruined harvests caused by modernist extractivism and resulting climate change. Thousands of transition efforts globally make this historical epoch a time of disjunctions, questionings, displacements, and conflicts. Modernism has no language for this type of era because it is based in fixed notions of linear time and progress, but cultures in living systems or relational ontologies often conjure special periods where profound changes of direction may occur. In the Andes, Quecha communities have used the concept of pachacutig to name a recurring era of turnings, uprisings, or reversals.

The Yoruba of Nigeria, as well as practitioners of Yoruba-derived traditions in the diaspora, honor Ọya (Yansā in Brazil), the powerful Orisa arising as a red water buffalo from the Niger River, who brings wind, storms, and lightning that rapidly change the atmosphere and environment. Reigning over the marketplace and cemetery gates, she wields the turbulent forces of expansion, reduction, and death. With the ability to transpose into a woman warrior, Ọya carries a sword and *irukere* (whisk) of nine feathers that is often wrapped with ribbons of her ritual colors. She communicates with Egungun (ancestors) and other Orisa and promotes insight, clairvoyance, and rebirth. Her metamorphic ability to shift between human and non-human forms by donning or removing a buffalo skin recalls the illusive and subversive practices of fugitive resistance across African and Indigenous diasporas. Ọya is especially a protector of women and children as well as both inner and outer transformation. This year's edition and cover of *Visions* are a tribute to her fierce energies that are urgently needed now for the survival of life on earth.



Note 106: "You do not have to save the things that kill you."

Christina Sharpe, 2023

OCELOTL. Acrylic on Wood Canvas by Juana Ochoa, Dissertation Student. Ocelotl or Jaguar Warrior represents balance of masculine and feminine, sky and earth, head and heart; she is the past in the present moment, fighting without weapons.



**Excerpts From, *Story-Timeless: Tales of Sacredness & Pluriversal Explorative Lessons in Love (Loss), Ancestral Longings, Liberation and Legacy through Relational Ontologies***

by Jackel Agboola, First-Year Student & Collage Artist

Oya is, in my opinion, one of many instrumental goddesses churning the shifting waters of our budding pluriversal vision for a new tomorrow. As decolonial agents of change who sometimes must take subversive action, Oya is a perfect model for what politician John Lewis calls, *necessary trouble*. Oya is a shapeshifter. Just like the changing winds she commands; her form is flexible and elusive (Dorsey, 2020, p. 68).

Oya's powerful story told in class last fall was quite poignant and moving to me. It was a medicine long overdue or a medicine administered just in time, opening portals that connect my consciousness to other kingdoms of

Earth's sphere, as well as intangible worlds. Story as a timeless tool of relational ontologies is medicine in and of itself. It was also the love language of my maternal grandmother and grand aunts growing up. I heard stories while planting herbs and picking berries. I heard songs while hand washing clothes and walking barefoot on earth's green bed, watching the stars illuminate the dark skies. Indigenous storytelling traditions convey knowledge about the land and its creatures and how to sustain life from living with them...The silencing of indigenous languages and stories has meant the loss of local ecological knowledge that took millennia to build—knowledge not only about the creatures native to the lands in question but about the relationships of predation, pollination, competition, and cooperation among them (Nanson, 2021, p. 11). The budding, collapsing and re-emerging of indigenous systems of knowing is so crucial to the animation of human existence.

Storytelling was the favorite pastime of our family. It was utilized as an oral landscape tying us to our diverse lineages. As a child I remembered hearing stories seasoned with folkloric imagery of my great great great grandmother and 3x-great grandfather. Their love story was also quite tragic. My 3GiGi (as I affectionally called her), endured her own experiences of heartbreak and longings through the sorrows of the slave trade and the dismantling of her family between the waters of the Mississippi to the shores of Caribbean Sea. In this, I am made to think about another goddess of the vodun religion tradition introduced to me by my grand aunts as a little girl. A goddess who has had many transmutations since her origin, a goddess who also had three lovers who served varying purposes, Erzulie is a love Goddess who developed during a time when slave owners broke up families and separated husbands and wives at will. She is sometimes considered a triple Goddess. Like Oya, she has three husbands Damballah (sky God), Agwe (sea God), and Ogoun (God of fire and iron), and she wears three wedding bands because of this (Adela, 2015).

In preparing to write this paper, many dreams and visions came to me. recalling the days when I was young, remembering the feeling of getting my

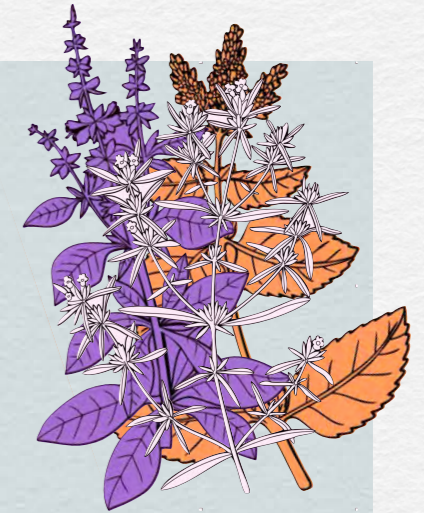
hair braided while my grandmother or grand aunties told stories about my 3GiGi and our family. The vivid images are still present, the sounds still alive in my ear. I felt as though I was teleported, viewing my 3GiGi weave baskets and wash clothes. I could see the grass, the sun, and her hands. I always looked forward to getting my hair braided. It was the only time in waking life I felt the walls of time collapse. There is such tenderness in braiding the hair of someone you love.

Kindness and something more flow between the braider and the braided, the two connected by the cord of the plait. Wiingaashk, sweet grass, waves in strands, long and shining like a woman's freshly washed hair. And so, we say it is the flowing hair of Mother Earth. When we braid sweet grass, we are braiding the hair of Mother Earth, showing her our loving attention, our care for her beauty and well-being, in gratitude for all she has given us (Kimmerer, 2015). The feelings that these experiences invoke are too deep for words. As I grew older, I too had to tell stories that were told to me to my younger cousins, as I braided their hair. Working with our hands, touching strands of hair, of course we found textures and felt the electricity coursing through it. The time spent together brought everyone, not just those of us braiding hair on the porch of our family home, but also the ancestors that dwell within the stories we tell, waiting for our hands to turn the invisible pages hidden in our scalps once more.

Haptic systems stem from the fact that the hands are both perceptual systems able to explore the environment and motor organs performing daily actions controlled by tactile-kinesthetic reafferences (Gentaz, et. al, 2003, p. 4). Hapticality, as I am understanding it in the decolonial sense, is a way of learning through listening and sensing. Intentionality is another valuable lesson I have learned throughout my life but presently re-centered due to the teachings in CLIE: remembering that which came before and is still present today in the intangible realms, here, between, and beyond. Braiding hair while telling stories was one way to speak, to keep alive the memory of the ancestors. Relational ontologies that edify ancestors through ritual and sacred spiritualities also keep our antennas attuned to their memory. Weekly, if not daily, offerings and prayers are respectfully given to ancestors...food,

drink, candles, money, and more. If enough sincere and proper care is given to those who are gone, they elevate to the realm of honored ancestors—possibly even becoming loas themselves. Some conceive of these loas as saints, or gods, or just representations of divine energy. In any case, they are very powerful, and they can be very helpful to the living if the proper tributes are given. So, in addition to remembering that our loved ones are on another level of existence, we also must remember to help them on their journey so that they can continue to help us (Dorsey, 2020, p. 26-27). It is a fabric— a weave of relations— in which an individual is only ever present as an after-effect of the primacy of the operative and dynamic nature of the fabric of existence (Benjamin, 2015, p. 30). This fabric of existence is inextricably connected to our ancestors; our destiny starts, is guided by, ends, and restarts with them. Daily ritual is a way of training the fickle conscious mind in the severity and sacredness of our connection to our ancestors, for Ubuntu also extends to them! This theme was also prevalent in our last residential session: intentionality, consistency, developing rapport, sanctioning, and sanctifying soul level connections. In this, we are accepting there is a dire active need to restore tribal dignity and identities and rematriate indigenous ways of life to bring personal, societal, and planetary dynamics back into a state of homeostasis; re-mem-bering the stories and rituals is a means of conscious social integration which prioritizes our sacred return home.

Through relational ontologies and ritual spiritualities connected to our primacy, we can reintroduce what was deemed lost. Understanding the African concepts of the unconscious has also opened haptic portals of discerning and traversing. Reintroducing rhythms, tones, and sounds of native tongues by way of meditation or even dreaming has allowed me to access reservoirs long forgotten. This is equally so in the deep-structure syntax of language; for language and grammar, even universal grammar, has embedded in them the ideas, preferences, and intuitive apprehensions of reality. The unconscious here, therefore, is not to be identified exclusively with the Freudian

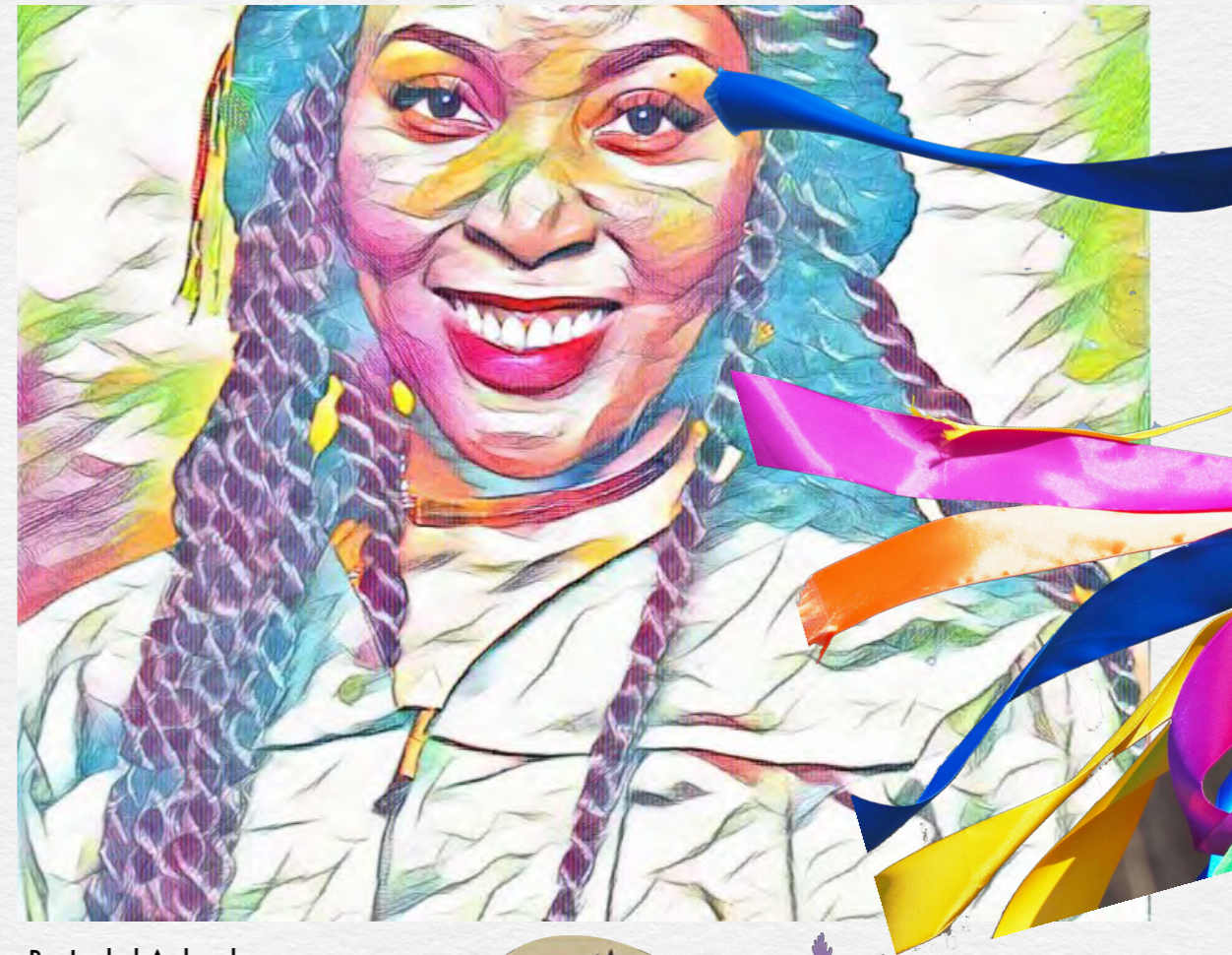


unconscious, but rather contains or subsumes it. It also, like Jung's fuller conception, embraces deep and primordial racial memories that are passed across the waves and waves of human generations and are implicated or enfolded in each of us.

The ego is a local boundary-setting process. The unconscious, or the ancient Kemetic Amenta, is a nonlocal phenomenon. The basic "building block" of the psyche and soma is not the isolated, egoic "atom," so to speak, but rather the interconnected, nonlocal "quantum of action." Nonlocality is a feature of the everyday world! (Bynum, 1999, p. 84). Again, through this collapsing of timelines experienced by way of ritual or storytelling, veiled dimensions are accessible. In indigenous thought all realms seen and unseen are intertwined; spirit or ancestors are always longing to draw near to us, whispering and guiding us in our waking life. I have witnessed and even experienced the intensity of working with spirit. Too often we label and ridicule those who are sensitive to, or simply tapped into, non-local consciousnesses crazy, insane, or mentally disturbed. Many times, if not most, one may be experiencing phenomena that simply cannot be explained within the framework and *paradigm* of colonized thinking.

The dead do not like to be forgotten. Sentience soaks all things, caresses all things, enlivens all things. Water overflows with memory: emotional memory, bodily memory, sacred memory. Crossings are never taken all at once, and never once and for all. African-based cosmological systems are complex manifestations of the geographies of crossing and dislocation. They are at the same time manifestations of locatedness, rootedness, and belonging that map individual and collective relationships to the Divine (Alexander, 2005). Mutual relation and reciprocity are weaved together for descendants of lineages tangible and intangible, to give meaning to their experiences and to help sustain their lives and the undeniable eternal connection to our pluriversal source.

Reviewing themes of intentionality, consistency, care, cultivation, and change in prioritizing ancestral and intangible relationships we create memoranda of remembrance. Surrendering to our ancestral stream, reservoir, and expanse of nonlocality, we have a wealth of relationships to learn from, witness and experience. Nothing is ever lost! Forgotten, unconsciously embedded; yes! In this deep acceptance, we slay victimized narratives, and we access true liberation.



By Jackel Agboola





# HONOR THE TREATIES



By Rebecca Niiha

**H**onor the Treaties. This piece encapsulates my worldview and understanding of Indigenous thought, values, and healing. The background shows: a church in black shadow with a red handprint; the words “Honor the Treaties” and “Land Back;” and additional handprints in black and red. These represent boarding schools, assimilation, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP), dishonored promises, and the theft of this land and space. My perspective holds that acknowledgement of the committed atrocities accompanies healing, the sacred knowledge that transcended settler colonialism, and the regrowth of ourselves that exists. This piece honors our sovereignty, self-determination, sacred existence, and future. On top of these historical brutalities lie these central teachings. Corn, the center of Hopi culture; Tawa, the sun; the morning and evening stars; rain clouds; our adobe houses; the kiva; a dragonfly; sea shells; feathers; a recognition of all who came before and are protected. We are still here. Rebecca Niiha, Hopi, Yavapai.

## Invitation for a Decolonized Pluriverse in Community Psychology Scholarship

By Rebecca Niiha, First-Year Student

As we examine the layers of land acknowledgements in the academic scholarship of Community Psychology, I invite us to assert Re-Indigenizing Community Psychology through the repatriation of Land Back in publishing.

Land acknowledgements are becoming more common in universities and at academic events (Wark, 2021, Huntington, 2021, Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020, Duong, et al., 2017). Land acknowledgement is a practice of issuing public statements that the land currently occupied by institutions, or resided upon by others, was originally stewarded by American Indian, Indigenous, Native, and/or First Nation Peoples. “The acknowledgments take different forms but typically name the Indigenous inhabitants of the place in question, often describe the status of the lands today, and may include an expression of gratitude for Indigenous stewardship as well as other information and appreciation” (Huntington, 2021).



Rebecca Niiha, Corn and Child of a Butterfly Clan (Hopi, Yavapai), and son, Caleb Kallestewa, Corn and Child of a Fire Clan, (Hopi, Zuni, Yavapai) at CLIE’s “2023 end-of-Year” celebration. Caleb offered our community a Hopi Butterfly Dance song and an explanation of how Badger and Butterfly clans are related, as well as a short history of the Butterfly Clan at First Mesa.

The irony is that while a plethora of institutions and organizations have begun the practice of attempting inclusivity of and bringing awareness to Indigenous Nations and the ceded or unceded territories of Tribal Nations, Indigenous People are facing growing violence against efforts to uphold treaty rights, protect sacred lands and spaces against capital interest, and reclaim sovereignty rights and protections through court battles against laws and corporations that disproportionately affect Black and Brown lives.

Land acknowledgments reflect awareness of history, but recognition does not require action. Recognizing an unjust present, on the other hand, creates a moral obligation to act for justice and equity, a value that directly coincides with the discipline of Community Psychology. “Although awareness is a necessary precursor to action, a signpost acknowledging Indigenous

occupancy does little to resolve deep-rooted inequities” (Huntington, 2020). While storytelling is a powerful form of illuminating those within Community Psychology, how can we also interweave embodied experiences, storytelling, transfer of knowledge/identity, and untold/undertold history? There exists an archive and repertoire in Community Psychology that dryly describes people, land, communities, and histories that don't fully embody a record of the complexities, derivations, languages, art, and repertoire. My invitation is from this born. In defining decolonization through a specific land repatriation viewpoint, *Decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, all of the land, and not just symbolically* (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7).

I invite the Community Psychology field to join in the pluriversal scholarship addressing Land Back repatriation through a collective library that goes beyond statements of land treaties, territories, gratitude, and watered-down recognition of the stewards of said land. To hold ourselves to an inclusive field that embraces Indigenous knowledges and praxes, we must consider that, “Indigenous community psychologies are not anthropocentric and are centered on the sacredness of nature, the cultivation of spirituality, and accountability to maintain harmonious ecosystem relationships” (Ciofalo et al, 2022, p. 291).

I invite the insertion of creation stories, languages spoken, laws created that oppress or liberate, storytelling, and the current interdisciplinary movements of each place we research into the composition of every written text and archive. I invite the inclusion of every broken treaty that still currently exists in every geographical place we reside, occupy, and research. Through this, we illuminate systemic structural landscapes that oppress and highlight the voices of those most proximate to the land we write about and on.

Community Psychology seeks to situate those most marginalized as leading the work in representation and interventions, but the field itself sits in colonialism as it cannot truly decolonize its written record. We need our writing to contribute to Land Back repatriation in at least the barest of ways:



Regeneration by Rebecca Niiha

through embedded acknowledgements of action that emphasize overarching systemic oppressions, specify the violation of laws that assert Tribal Sovereignty, center a multiplicity of embodied stories and voices of place, and create an interwoven historical and modern story that teaches ourselves and others the impacts of a violent coloniality perpetuated by academic disciplines in every archived record of research in the field.

# Liberation is Fertile: Regenerative Kinship Towards Land Tending & Community Care

By Sarah María Acosta Ahmad, Third-Year Student

Out in the field, we lay the seeds at least a foot apart in order for them to germinate with enough space to thrive. The echoes of mycelial relationships trickle upwards from the earth, the thin white earth-veins disturbed as we poke three fingers into the soil, spin them around, and make a bed for the seeds. Corn, beans, squash, marigolds, amaranth, okra, elderberry, kale — the seeds go into the soil and get tucked in. Just yesterday we tasted the layers of the earth's skin. The bitterness of sandy loam, the coarse salt-like feel of clay crunched between my teeth — our people have used the “feel method”- of farming for generations, and here we were passing on that lineage through creating soil ribbons like the black strands of our thick coarse hair. I trace roads of dirt embedded into the creases of my light skin, a gentle reminder. I notice a large yellow butterfly stuck in the metal ridges of the hoop house, and I cup it in my hands, walk into open air, and place it on a cherry tomato trellis. It stays there for a bit, lightly fluttering, likely exhausted from trying to get out. It's a reminder to take a break and drink some water.

This thirst for reconnection was where I began my community praxis work last summer. In August, I had the opportunity to travel to participate in Soul Fire Farm's immersion program for BIPOC farmers. Soul Fire Farm is nestled in Petersburg, New York, straddling the borders of Vermont and Massachusetts. Having existed for almost a decade, Soul Fire centers Afro-Indigenous agroforestry and spiritual farming practices in seeking liberation from systems and state violence that targets ancestral food systems and lifeways. Their goal is to further provide land-based education to those targeted by this violence while using ancestral farming practices within healing justice frameworks. As my research and personal interests aligned, I sought to learn/experience more by understanding how racism and colonization has divided people of color from land. This FIRE (Farming In Relationship to Earth) Program encouraged me to build skills in



regenerative agriculture, furthering my relationship to land, healing deeply rooted historical traumas, and to value food sovereignty for more than just a delicious meal, and thus ultimately engaging the main tenets of the CLIE (Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Ecopsychology) program concentration.

As Indigenous ways of knowing continue to be erased, our food systems and land-access threatened, it is imperative that we reinstall these skills amongst our communities. Farming is inherently political; as such, my firsthand experiences with decoloniality and reclamation are wrapped up in the existence of a program like this and tending to the communities I call home afterwards. Indigenous people come from earth-based lineages that have been passed down and passed on (Williams, 2015). Cultivating networks of community care across BIPOC folks is integral to liberation efforts that include food justice. We can create reciprocal relationships with the land that avoid extractive and capitalistic gains, and instead focus on

shared meals, teachings, questioning systems, and reeducating families. Colonization wins every time we disassociate ourselves from the soil and the sky. Since land access was taken from my family after my grandfather had to sell his farm in Mexico, my living family has not been able to acquire land or farm it. One of the co-dreamers of Soul Fire Farm, Leah Penniman, writes in her piece “Black to the Land” that, “despite the colonial projects of chattel slavery, sharecropping, convict leasing, redlining, lynching, and systemic discrimination, our people held tight to the seeds and cultural wisdom they inherited. They are our rememberers, and we celebrate them” (Baszile, 2021, p. 63). It is from these stories that I see the little mycelial networks connecting food justice, sovereignty, farm work, and community building. I remain honored and forever longing to feel the impact of this work sporulate into the gardens of all those connected through movement building.

## A Critique of an Educational Model: Equipping Youth to be Agents of Culturcide

By Nordia Simmonds, First-Year Student

### Positioning Myself

In writing this paper, I would like to first acknowledge that I am a participant in and benefactor of the very educational system which I will be critiquing. I attended public school in the United States through the 12th grade; I have earned a Bachelor’s degree in this system, and as I write this paper, I am enrolled in a Master/Doctoral program at Pacifica Graduate Institute. Having lived in the United States for my entire life, my experiences in systems of education outside of the U.S. are limited. My only direct knowledge of these systems originates from the stories shared with me by family and friends who have been educated under systems with continued influences of coloniality (i.e., Jamaica and Nigeria). Within this paper, culture is defined as proposed by Mariolga Reyes Cruz and Christopher Sonn as “a product and process, an ongoing social construction that speaks of the ways in which we learn to live and make sense of life always in relationship to others within specific social/economic/political/historical contexts” (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011, p. 205).



### Undermining Indigenous Knowledge(s) & Devaluing the Individual

The current dominant education model is structured in such a way that it gatekeeps the knowledge which it has acquired, often through violence and extractivist methods, while excluding the peoples and cultures from which it has pulled the knowledge. In the academic setting, far removed from the context and belief systems from which they originated, the potency of these knowledge(s) is diluted and returned to the offspring of the indigenous knowledges as a lackluster attempt at understanding the world. As Ijeoma Clement-Akomolafe has written in her 2017 chapter in *We Will Tell Our Own Story: The Lions of Africa Speak!*, this education model does not question the ownership of the knowledge, who it is for, or whether the realities of those who receive it are reflected in its curriculum.

These communities, then, are seen--as is the knowledge and culture extracted from them--as objects of inquiry and not as partners in knowledge production (Dutta, 2018). Clement-Akomolafe speaks of indigenous ways of learning being casual and fostering sustainability, affirming the earth and learning for the mere purpose of belonging (Clement Akomolafe, 2017). These practices often point towards multiple ways of knowing, being, and walking in the world. They assume respect for each member of the community as a unique contributor: the young, the elders, the ancestors, and animal and plant life (Somé, 1999). In this environment, learning becomes a space for expansion and growth in the unique timing of the individual who is held by their communal place. It does not require competition or tactics of scarcity; instead, thoughts and feelings of abundance lend themselves to a way of walking in collaboration with one another for the purpose of maintaining a space for similarities and differences to coexist (Ciofalo, 2022). Unfortunately, the model of education as informed by the “colonial genius of the 18th century” is based on a curriculum of epistemological singularism, where the dominant culture is accepted as the norm as it disrupts the indigenous realities and fragments the identities of those within its structure (Clement Akomolafe, 2017, p. 325). These actions of oppression, extraction, and erasure are tactics used in the violent theft of land, people, and knowledge(s). Thus, it is of little surprise that these same tactics have been employed for the project of the colonization of the psyche.

## Together Anew

By Jacy Bowles,  
Second-Year Student

Maia Butler (2020) warns, “the soil in which we operate is this: Academia is not and has never been a meritocracy” (p. 136).

Truth. Another? Academia is dead. No, no... not in the way we know death: not as an offering, a sign of a new life to come, and most certainly not to be with spirit. Academia is dead in the way that it never was alive.

Robotically, it bestrewed itself over the earth, always taking without asking before it left. It *needed* these things to build itself the finest shrine of all, bound tight with stolen muslin, obsidian, jade, and gold.

It's dead in a way that attempts to shame the living.

Yet here I am, allegedly an academic. Otherwise filled with love, curiosity, respect, beauty, and play, I now oscillate between fits of quiet rage and bouts of numbness. I came here to learn. I came here to help my communities. I came to create. Why do I feel so hopeless?

I close my eyes and see the shrine. My fists are balled tight; I feel it gazing back at me. It's mocking me, smirking almost: a lot of fight for a little girl. Don't they see that just behind me is an army of ancestors who could crumble their wannabe *ofrenda* with just one exhale? Boy I oughta knock... I catch myself. I roll my eyes. What kind of fool argues with the dead?

I don't want my life's work to be defined only by the work of the dead: dead thinkers, dead concepts, dead relationships, and dead dreams. But death, the way



we know it, *is* necessary for rebirth. At times, it is only when we see a part of us die that we can bring something new into being, into life. In truth, I have dreamed of myself dead, cold on the ground, and was filled at that moment with an intense feeling of compassion. More so, I was filled with curiosity. What happened? Why? What led up to this moment? Only with the felt sense of death was I able to again begin to grow.

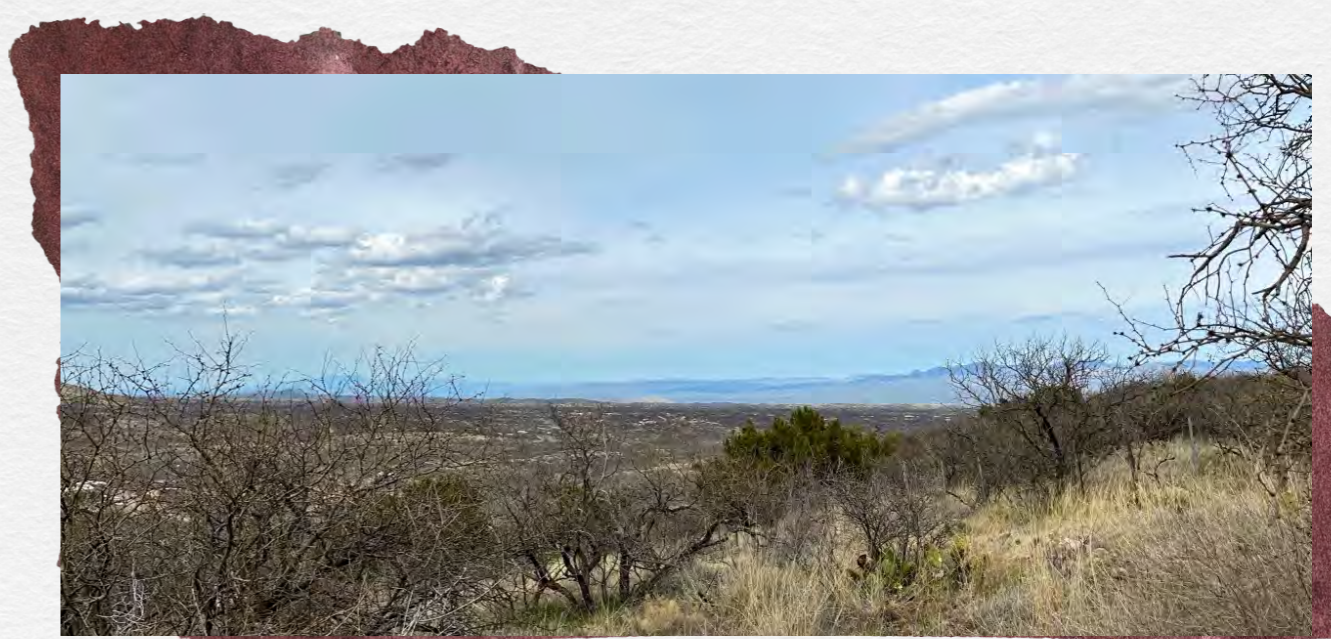
## Praxis: A Handbook for the Pluriverse

By Dena Omar, Second-Year Student

The stories we tell ourselves are crucial to our understanding of the world. That understanding determines how we treat everyone and everything around us. For over 500 years, European colonial stories have ravaged cultures, peoples, and the planet. It has become clear that European ontologies can't fix the problems created by European ontologies, because the story they're still telling is that "greed is good; other people are bad." And these ontologies are dominant, pervasive, and constant. It's the air we breathe. For those of us who are suffocating in this air, finding a way out can feel overwhelming and hopeless. Turning to the concepts of pluriversality can be a way to reclaim what was lost through colonialism.

"But," you may say to yourself, "we live in the United States and everyone owns a car and shops on Amazon and I like my fancy Starbucks coffee. And we're probably not going back to a time when we were hunter-gatherers. What can I do?" "Ah-Ha!" I say. "We can all do better, and I have just the thing to help: an actual handbook!" This is modeled after Aurora Levins Morales' work in *Medicine stories: History, culture, and the politics of integrity* (1998).

**1) Willingness to be uncomfortable.** This work is hard. It requires seeing the world and everything in it through a different lens. It can be destabilizing. It is crucial to have community who help us process and understand as we move through change.



### 2) Define terms.

Pluriverse/Relational Ontologies	Post-Modernism	Modernism
Think-feeling as a way of being	Feelings are ok in some contexts	What feelings??
Local artisanal knowledge	Cultural competence	Civilized
Aesthetics are crucial		Art is only for the wealthy Art in schools is frivolous There's a right way to do art
Everything is connected	There is no society, only individuals and their families	Dualisms, separation, individuality
Constant evolution	Change is needed, and we can do it within the current system.	Everything is fine the way it is
Trauma is better termed "displacement." The person was taken from a world where they felt safe and understood the rules. Those rules were violated and is a collective problem that can be healed in community with others	Trauma is a psychological problem to be faced by an individual, possibly with the help of a professional	Trauma is weakness in the individual
Culture/nature	What do we do to "preserve" nature? National Parks. People should stay out.	Nature and culture are absolutely separate things
Heart		Head
Complex dimensions of interaction and realities		Universal truth
Co-Creating with others	Invite more BIPOC into the conversation. DEI	Top Down

### 3) Talk less and listen more.

The beings we're trying to hear have been silenced for about 500 years. They're struggling to be heard, but it's difficult. If you listen carefully, you can hear these ancient voices vying for your attention.

### 4) On ontology

Relationships between things are the most important. All beings on this planet are in constant interaction with others, whether we can see it directly or not.

### 5) On Others

Relational ontologies don't result in dichotomies; everything moves back to connectedness and interactivity. Modernist dualisms include "culture/nature; male/female; mind/body; master/slave; reason/matter; rationality/animality; universal/particular; civilized/primitive; subject/object; self/other; noble savage/ ignoble savage or primitive" (Apffel-Marglin, 66) and each dualism posits one as normal and targets the other for eradication.

### 6) On History

History is the story we tell ourselves about how the past explains our present, and how the ways in which we tell it are shaped by contemporary needs (Morales, p. 24).

### 7) On reality

It can be hard to imagine that there are multiple realities when you've been fed modernist lies for a lifetime. The pluriverse "is a way of looking at reality that contrasts with the OWW assumption that there is a single reality to which there correspond multiple cultures, perspectives, or subjective representations. For the pluriverse proposal, there are multiple reals, yet it is not intended to 'correct' the view on a single real on the grounds of being a truer account of 'reality' (Escobar, p. 22).

### 8) On psychotherapy

Psychotherapy will also need to adjust. We are good at patching people up to go back to a fight that othered people simply cannot win. Therapists have a duty to their clients to help them understand the complexities of living in Modern times. "If this environment is not critiqued in and through analysis, the goal of psychology may become adaptation to the established cultural complex" (Shulman, p. 4).

### 9) On being

- ❖ **Be courageous.** Modernism keeps us complacent through fear of abandonment, exile, or violence. We must nonetheless push through the fear. Courage in large doses is called for.
- ❖ **Be creative** in whatever way suits you. Dance, sing, paint, write. Modernism works really hard to control our bodies and minds. Art is resistance. We deserve pleasure.
- ❖ **Be slower.** European ontologies tell us that our only value is in what we produce. We remind ourselves that other people are people, with all the humanity we want for ourselves. We remind ourselves of our innate value for just being.





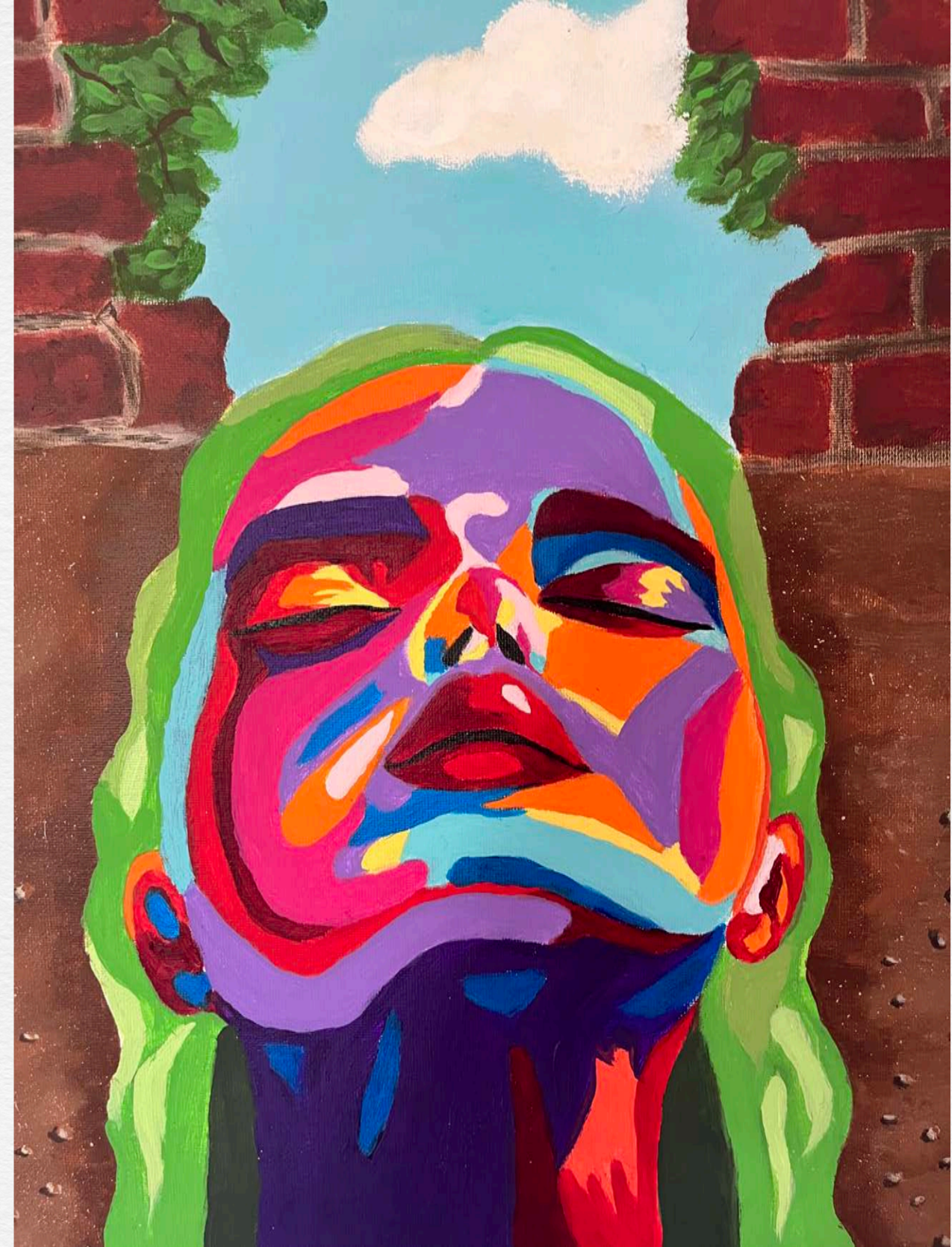
## Excerpts from, *Breaking Away from Dualism: The Either/Or Mindset*

By Hanae Gonzales, First-Year Student

According to Escobar's (2016) an ontological turn happens when one moves away from the One World World (OWW) philosophy. The way to detach from dualism is to lean into the pluriverse. Escobar writes something profound in how the pluriverse contrasts the realities with the OWW.

“The ‘pluriverse’ is a way of looking at reality that contrasts with the OWW assumption that there is a single reality to which there correspond multiple cultures, perspectives, or subjective representations. For the pluriverse proposal, there are multiple reals, yet it is not intended to ‘correct’ the view on a single real on the grounds of being a truer account of ‘reality.’ *The pluriverse is a tool to first, make alternatives to the one world plausible to one-worlders, and, second, provide resonance to those other worlds that interrupt the one-world story* (Blaser, de la Cadena, and Escobar 2014). “Displacing the centrality of this dualist ontology, while broadening the space for non-dualist ontologies, is a *sine qua non* for breaking away from the one-world story.” (Escobar 2015, pg.22)

When one moves away from a dualistic ontology, there are not only benefits for the *other* position, but there are also resources for those who have been a part of the OWW. Reflecting on what can overcome the barrier between dualism and the pluriverse, the pluriverse is the answer itself. This is because the decolonizing process starts the transition into liberation. There needs to be liberation from dualism in all the various fields it influences. One reason why the pluriverse has such a powerful drive behind it is because it presents the option to be liberated from one way of operation. Decolonization and Liberation go hand in hand and work together to move away from the OWW. So, the next question would be how does



By Hanae Gonzales, 2022

adopting the pluriverse impact areas that have been functioning in a dualistic ontology?

One of the main components of the pluriverse that stands out is relationality. Relationships between dichotomies is the major breakthrough against the either/or mindset. Escobar (2016) writes about this referring to the relationship between humans and non-humans as a *relational ontology*. When considering what it means to be relational, a collective approach is needed between worlds that have been polarized. The author explains that this relationality in knowledge produces something “Perhaps even more appropriate and meaningful than those produced from the detached perspectives of science and the academy” (pg.26). A dualistic ontology robs the relational piece that could add so much value to knowledge generation and the pluriverse restores that value and depth back.

Escobar introduces an important detail of why dualism should not be championed over the pluriverse. Something that may have been assumed throughout this analysis of dualism is that the pluriverse is a new idea to be introduced to replace dualism. The pluriverse is a not new way of thinking or a new theory untested or elementary; rather the pluriverse is in contrast the original state and dualism has minimized its multiplicity to support colonization. Relational ontology is not a new notion, but something from which everything has come. Apffel-Marglin (2020) expounds more on this idea of co-creating between the two sides that dualism isolates. Oftentimes the reality is that in these dichotomies there is a lack of collaboration. Yet if they were to collaborate, there would be richer results. The article focuses

specifically on the dichotomy between the human and non-human. There has been a lot of exclusion and exploitation that has resulted from this duality, when in reality there is an underlying codependency. There should be an agency created between the two.

“Thus, agency emerges from a flow of forces between earth beings who reciprocally make each other do things, attract, be attracted, etc. Despret insists that this is a plurivocal process in the sense that what constitutes the agent and the affected entity is a dynamic process that cannot be centered in any one being.” (p.77)

The relationship becomes a reciprocal one, where no one side wins out over the other. Instead, there is a give and take in which one side is centered when needed and will shift to the other when needed. In a way there is a communication between the two sides, and the end result is that they could eventually move as one organism as they were intended to. In continuation, the term *agencements* is a concept wherein humans instead of being observers as in a western lens approach to the environment, are instead participants (Apffel-Marglin, 2020). This is where co-creating comes in, because there is a partnership that forms between them. When there is finally movement away from dualism, the connection can be reestablished between nature and humans, leading to a creation of the world where counter-parts can flourish.

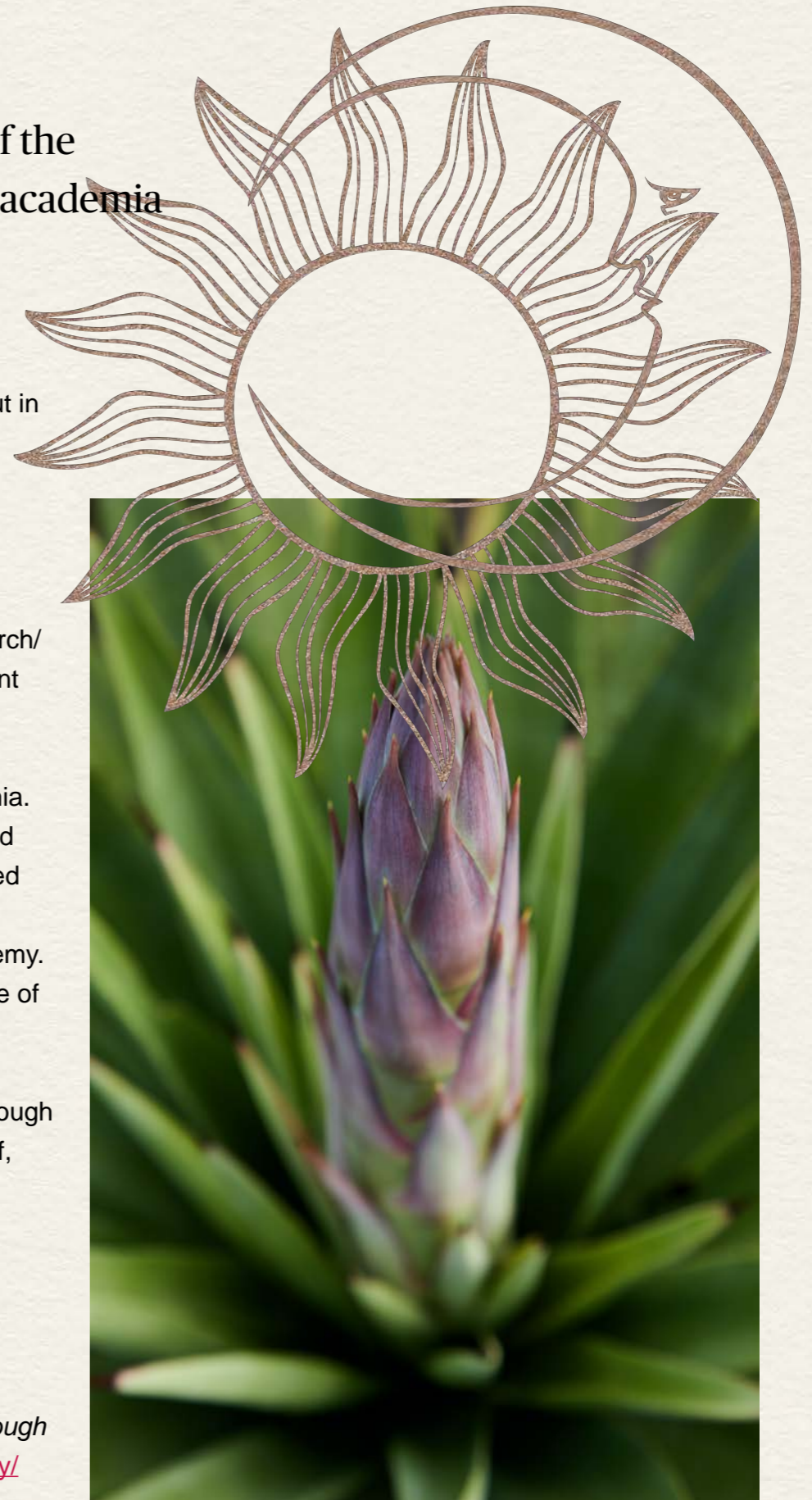
# Taíno Indigenous Psychology: The Contemporary & historical issue of the colonization of Taíno peoples & a re-centering of their knowledges in academia

By, Desiree Gonzalez, Second-Year Student

Due to the pressures of western academia to produce knowledge in the mainstream ways of what is considered legitimate research, many Indigenous epistemologies and BIPOC contributions are left out in the field of psychology and academic literature. Indigenous psychologies, however, and in this case - Taíno Indigenous psychology, present to us not only different ways of knowing and being but also different ways in which knowledge is produced outside of the western imaginary. Many BIPOC experience the colonial imposition of imposter syndrome leading to us giving into the pressures of performing in mainstream academic ways and the "politics of recognition" and legibility. Through incorporating our own cultures, critical self-reflexivity, critical cultural-reflexivity, and indigenous research/ research methods and methodologies, Taíno Indigenous psychology, for example, shows us a different way of thinking and engaging in academic research and work. When we divest from accepted and expected ways of knowledge production and research by centering our knowledges that are usually *othered*, we make space for the untold stories and cultural epistemologies typically left out of academia. We begin the process of shifting from producing knowledge from outside of ourselves to the embodied writing and sharing of our inner knowings. This can open up a deeper door into combatting internalized and imposed imposter syndrome and self-doubt, and we can move toward trust and possibility within ourselves, affirming that our indigenous ways of knowing and being are valid and belong in the academy. This can also lead to the reemergence of other epistemologies in the psychology field, the emergence of ourselves in the literature, and the integration of spirituality into our work. This is what Indigenous psychology(s), written from students with Indigenous backgrounds and/or lineages, can bring to education, all while combatting Indigenous epistemicide. This paper was my attempt at doing that through my own ancestral lineage of Taíno indigeneity and the incorporation of Taíno spirituality/spiritual belief, cosmology, and ontology.

For more information on Desiree's published paper visit The Community Psychology website link:

Gonzalez, D. (2023) Taíno Indigenous Psychology: The contemporary & historical issue of the colonization of Taíno peoples & a re-centering of their knowledges in academia. Santa Barbara, CA: Pacifica Graduate Institute. *Community Psychology: Social Justice Through Collaborative Research and Action*. <https://www.communitypsychology.com/taino-psychology/>



By Karine Bell, Second-Year Student

Here are representations of two concepts I am engaged with. One has to do with what we are cultivating; the sociology of emergences, rather than what we are *fighting*. It is about the diversion of our attention away from harmful structures, paradigms, and narratives towards the slow tending and care of the soil out of which new culture comes. In the diversion of our attention away from those structures (represented by the house), it begins to decay, and life (that formerly had to be contained and forcefully marginalized) begins to flourish. Mushrooms metabolize the structure and turn it into nutrients for new life. Animals come back, and this cultivation is done communally. I often talk about Rooted (the space I co-dream in), not as a community, but (inspired by Anna Tsing) as an assemblage of people coming together in the disturbed landscape of coloniality, attempting to find each other again in relationship, beyond the divisions that modernity/coloniality has imposed.



The second image is a representation of what that process looks like. If, in many ways, we are attempting to stretch beyond the borders, the neat lines, that have been imposed (not in some totalizing way!), then we risk uncharted waters and the unknown realm of possibility. For me, this evokes the wayfinder - the many Polynesian tribes who navigated the Pacific Ocean without the use of modern navigation technologies but relied on attunement with nature elements and their intimate relationship with them. I often speak of Rooted as not having fixed coordinates or a map that we are using to navigate this disturbed landscape of relationship, but that we are not without a navigation system. Our bodies coming together in acts of communal remembrance, joy-making, kin-making, self-and-other attunement, and reclamation (of ancestral and land-based relationship), grounded in biophilic values of reverence, relationship, and respect, become the compass points that guide us in each next turn to make. And in the process, we find our way.



## Section 1 References

- Adela. (2015, October, 26). ERZULIE: Retrieved from: <https://www.historynaked.com/erzulie/>
- Alexander, M. J. (2005). Pedagogies of the sacred: Making the invisible tangible. In Pedagogies of crossing: Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred (pp. 287-332). Duke University Press.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2007). Tlilli, Tlapelli/The path of the red and black ink. In *Borderlands, la frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute. (pp. 87-97).
- Apffel-Marglin, F. (2020). Co-creating commons with Earth others: Decolonizing the mastery of nature. *Mester*, 49(1), 65-85.
- Baszile, N. (2021). *We are each other's harvest*. Amistad Press.
- Benjamin, A.(2015). *Towards a Relational Ontology: Philosophy's Other Possibility*. State Univeristy of New York Press.
- Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, Language and Listening: The Transformations That Can Flow from Acknowledging Indigenous Land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 54(4), 1033–1046.
- Butler, M., April, P., Hamilton, P.S., Benson, K.L. (2020). An invitation. A hopeful decolonial rhizome. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 41(2), 128-142.
- Bynum, E. (1999/2012). The African unconscious. In *The African unconscious* (pp.77-102). Cosimo Books
- Ciofalo, N., Dudgeon, P., & Nikora, L. W. (2022). Indigenous community psychologies, decolonization, and radical imagination within ecologies of knowledges. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 69(3–4), 283–293.
- Dorsey, L. (2020). Orishas, Goddesses, and Voodoo Queens: The Divine Feminine in the African Religious Traditions. Weiser Books.
- Williams. J.E. (2015). Earth-based wisdom. *KOSMOS Journal for Global Transformation*.
- Escobar, A. (2016). Thinking-feeling with the Earth. *Revista de Antropologia*, 11( 1), 11-32.
- Gentaz, E.,Hatwell, Y., Streri, A. (2003). *Touching for Knowing: Cognitive Psychology of Haptic Manual Perception*. John Benjamins Publishing
- Huntington, H. P. (2021). What Do Land Acknowledgments Acknowledge? *Environment*, 63(4), 31–35.
- Intzín, J. L. (2020). Epistemologies of the heart. In M. Steurnagel & D. Taylor (Eds.), *Resistant Strategies*. Duke University Press/HemiPress.
- Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). Skywoman falling. In *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teaching of plants* (pp. 2-10). Milkweed Editions.
- Martineau, J., & Ritskes, E. (2014). Fugitive indigeneity: Reclaiming the terrain of decolonial struggle through Indigenous art. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3(1), 12.
- Morales, A. L. (1998). The historian as curandera. In *Medicine stories: History, culture, and the politics of integrity* (pp. 23-38). South End Press.
- Nanson, A.(2021). *Storytelling and Ecology: Empathy, Enchantment and Emergence in the Use of Oral Narratives*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Poonamallee, L. (2010). Advaita (Non-dualism) as Metatheory: A Constellation of Ontology, Epistemology, and Praxis. *Integral Review* 6(3), 190–200.
- Rose, D. B. (2004) *Reports from a Wild Country: Ethics for Decolonization*. University of New South Wales Press.
- Sharpe, C. (2023). *Ordinary Notes*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Shulman, H. (2000). The presence of absence: Mapping postcolonial spaces. In L. Corbett & D. Slattery (Eds.), *Depth psychology: Reflections from the field* (pp. 225-243). Daimon Verlag.
- Transformation. <https://www.kosmosjournal.org/article/earth-based-wisdom-learning-the-original-idea-from-the-living-earth/>
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).
- Wark, J. (2021). Land Acknowledgements in the Academy: Refusing the Settler Myth. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 51(2), 191–209.
- Wilkes, R., Duong, A., Kesler, L., & Ramos, H. (2017). Canadian University Acknowledgment of Indigenous Lands, Treaties, and Peoples. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 54(1), 89-120.
- Williams. J.E. (2015). Earth-based wisdom. *KOSMOS Journal for Global Transformation*.



**Two Tales of Affective  
Encounters: In Oaxaca,  
Mexico & Naples, Italy**

By Nuria Ciofalo

Photo by César Trujillo

## Encounters at Universidad de La Tierra, Oaxaca, Mexico

In the Spring Quarter of 2021, during my sabbatical, I visited the [Universidad de la Tierra](#) (University of the Earth) (Unitierra) in Oaxaca, Mexico. Unitierra is a unique peoples' organization that emerged in the 70s when its founder, Gustavo Esteva, met with Ivan Illich in Cuernavaca to discuss the impact of education in colonizing minds, bodies, and spirits. Gustavo was a well-known scholar in Mexico who critiqued the governmental practices that continue to oppress Indigenous people, such as formal education used to homogenize and assimilate them into the national colonized culture that abides by the European colonizer's standards. Indigenous children are taught following standardized lesson plans in Spanish. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI in Spanish), there are 68 different Indigenous languages and more than 350 dialects (INEGI, 2022). The pluriversality of the Indigenous culture, language, knowledge, and praxes systems is being erased and excluded through imposing the monolingual national education.

Ivan Illich (1971/2022) was a well-known pedagogue who widely critiqued the role of schools in perpetuating and maintaining the capitalist economy, training people according to their social class, race, and ethnicity to serve as masters or servants to feed the violent and devouring system. Gustavo and Ivan became friends for life and propagated Illich's philosophy of deschooling society as the best approach to change the status quo and to co-create spaces where people could come together to learn in conviviality. Gustavo continued this struggle in different ways. He became an intercultural communicator and advisor to the government during the Zapatista uprising. He was one of the few actors whom the Zapatistas trusted and with whom they were willing to negotiate. Later on, Gustavo returned to his homeland, Oaxaca, to co-create Unitierra with many allies (See Global Tapestry of Alternatives, 2022, for more information on its history, values, and foundations). The Zapatistas liked this educational space so much that they created their own in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas.

During my residency, I participated in the *conservatorios*, a space for convivial plurilogues, where we deepened in *comunalidad* (an Indigenous concept of community), forging networks with friends who came from Indigenous communities from Oaxaca, Mexico, and abroad. Jaime Luna (2015), the Zapotec scholar-activist who first coined this construct, stated,

*Comunalidad* exposes four philosophical domains that raise it to epistemic categories through a geographical, a communal, a creative-productive, and a joyful philosophy. These are domains and moments of a holistic, integrative, and dialogical thought. It is based on orality, image, and direct languages in constant movement. In *comunalidad*, a territorialized society, organized communally is produced reciprocally, collectively, celebratory, designing mechanisms, strategies, attitudes and projects that determine its quality and relations with the exterior, as well as principles, norms, instances, that define and reproduce its internal relations. The explication of its becoming takes place according to the ground on which it stands, the people and families that inhabit this ground, the daily labor that the residents execute, and the joy and wellbeing they derive from their labor, the *comunalidad* that stands on that ground. (p. 101—translation by Ciofalo)

In her work, *Entre la Emancipación y la Captura* (*Between Emancipation and Captivity*), Vilma Almendra (2015), a Nasa-Misak woman from Cauca, Colombia, proposed the construct of *palabrandar*, "walking the word," to generate an epistemology of emancipation that creates un *tejido de saberes* (a weave of knowledges), integrating the autonomous cultural struggles of an entire continent, Abya Yala. One of the main axes of this epistemology is the defense of Indigenous territories and natural resources. The other major elements are the trajectory to walk the word, the discursive location of the Indigenous *asambleas del pueblo* (town assemblies) as energetic autonomous organizational structures, and the connections between word and action. In this way, *palabrandar* embraces the discursive-

linguistic, the symbolic-narrative, and the political drivers for action. Indigenous movements such as *La Travesía para la Vida* (Trajectory for Life), that the Zapatistas conducted by sending a caravan of representatives to “counter-invade” the insurrect Europe, are vivid examples of how to *palabrandar*, walk the word. Its main mission was, “*escucharle a usted, llenarlo de preguntas, compartir pesadillas y, claro, sueños* (listen to you, fill you with questions, share nightmares and, of course, dreams)” (Enlace Zapatista, 2021).

At Unitierra’s *conversatorios, palabrandamos y tejimos saberes y haceres* (weaved knowledge and praxes), we shared our understandings, questions, confusions, nightmares, challenges, contradictions, uncertainties, excitements, dreams, and affections, while following the Zapatistas’ journey through Europe, and re-configuring our praxes. We talked about the importance of *ternura y cariño* (tenderness and affection) as radical standpoints to integrate *saberes colectivos*, learning from the Zapatista pedagogy to co-create inclusive possibilities that exist outside of the capitalist hydra, the monster with many heads. Our conviviality allowed us to shake our energies and commitments, to feel that another world is possible, and that we can co-create *comunalidad*, where the *tierno* (tender) feeling of *nosotrxs* (we) goes beyond our individual existence. We weaved committed responsibilities to care for one another and other *comunalidades*, co-creating radical alternatives outside the system where creativity, joy, and tenderness can thrive and grow.

Our beloved Gustavo passed away on March 17, 2022. Many of us who learned to love him gathered around the world on different occasions to remember his legacy and teachings within encounters of affective conviviality to walk his word, *palabrandando, tejendo his muchos saberes y haceres con tierno cariño*, celebrating his life and his beloved Unitierra.



## Encounters at the International Conference of Community Psychology in Naples, Italy

In September of 2022, I traveled to Naples to attend the International Conference of Community Psychology (ICCP). It was a rich experience as we were able to re-encounter after the long two-year pandemic and hug friends from Australia, South Africa, Hawaii, and many countries from Latin America. Friends also connected online, but it felt as if they were in the conference rooms with us fully present. The conference took place at the *Universita Federico II*, in a building that had rooms with fixed chairs arranged in rows. We had planned to have talking circles in our presentations and include everybody in sharing our reflections and hopes, moving around the room for embodied re-encountering; unfortunately, it was impossible.

We learned from the conference organizers that the chairs were attached to the floor, as the conference building was designed and constructed under the leadership of Mussolini, who wanted everything in its fixed place and according to hierarchical order. The conference location opposed our



presentation plans and content as we reflected on how to decolonize the academy and partner with communities horizontally and in relationality to co-create a different world. It was striking to realize how history continues to impact and oppress, engrained in architectural structures that warrant the crystallization of the hegemonic status quo. This is how coloniality is maintained. However, the energy and contributions of friends from the Global South magically altered the physical place into a vibrant community space where our voices were heard and supported. It was powerful to evidence our shared beliefs, assumptions, theoretical frameworks, approaches, and strategies, and open transnational pathways for prophetic imagination to co-create *muchos otros mundos* (many other worlds).

Coming from the Lacandon Rainforest in Chiapas, Carlos Chambor and Ernesto Chancayun, Maya scholar-activists who apply learnings from their bachelor's degree in natural resource management to their work with the community of Lacanjá Chansayab and from the highlands of Oaxaca, Celeste Flores-Cuevas, a Mazatec Maestra from Huautla de Jimenez, who wrote a master's thesis on the importance of water as a sacred natural resource in her

community, Zapotec community educator and elder, Maestro Melitón Bautista, who has published several books on his culture and community history, and Zapotec Maestra Wendy Juarez, Director of Unitierra, banded together at Unitierra thanks to a collection of funds from friends around the world to present online at this conference. Their presentation, entitled: *Tejiendo Rebozos de Muchos Saberes y Haceres: Sentipensar con la Tierra, Convivencia Afectiva, Solidaridad Decolonial y Comunalidad* (Weaving Shawls of Many Knowledges and Praxes: Feelingthinking with the Earth, Affective Conviviality, Decolonial Solidarity and *Comunalidad*), took place at the main auditorium. We watched them on a big screen and listened to their powerful words in Spanish, translated into English and Italian, as in the case of important keynote speakers. They were the only intergenerational Indigenous presenters. They gifted us with their rich and inspirational *saberes* and *haceres*, and shared them through Radio Unitierra with the world. The title of their recorded radio presentation is: *Hablemos de Territorio: Justicia Epistémica, Cultural y Ecológica. Huelga Climática! Diálogo Intercultural Mazateco, Zapoteco y Lacandón* (Let's Talk About Territoriality: Epistemic, Cultural, and Ecological Justice. Climate

Strike! A Mazatec, Zapotec, and Lacandon Intercultural Dialogue). You can enjoy it in Spanish in this [link](#):

Jesica Fernandez, who teaches at the University of Santa Clara in California and has taught in CLIE, and I hosted a workshop in which we talked about Unitierra, [Wendy Juarez's](#) work, and Meli Bautista's books (2015, 2022) on Indigenous epistemologies from his region. Jesica shared her work, entitled: *Madres Emprendedoras: Mosaicos de la Comunidad*, a participatory action research project that involved Mexican immigrant mothers who raised their voices against inequities and co-created a community mural. I also presented with other Latin American friends, like James Moura, a Professor from Brazil who is doing a postdoctoral residency in CLIE this year. In this amazing gathering of affective conviviality, powerful transnational solidarity, and collective dreaming, dear friends offered to visit our CLIE program. Susana Helm from the University of Hawaii, Ronelle Carolissen from Stellenbosch

University in South Africa, and the main conference organizer from University Federico II, Caterina Arcidiacono, visited us this fortunate 2023.

In a publication from Unitierra entitled: *Tejiendo Voces por la Casa Común: Re-encuentro a seis Años de Hilados y Deshilados* (Weaving Voices for the Communal House: Re-encountering six Years After Yarning and Unraveling) (2021), Gustavo Esteva commented that this book is about weaving new words and giving them new meanings to co-create new worlds. He stated:

“Words are doors of our clear perception as we experience the world according to the words we use. We are invaded by amoeba words and our old and good words have been losing meaning. A central task is thinking about how we give new meaning to words or invent new words that allow us to see the new epoch in which we are. This initiative was proposed mainly for this task. The colloquium maintained the interaction

among dozens of people from diverse localities of Mexico and the world for us to weave together a new net of words, ideas, and concepts.” (p. 10—translation by Ciofalo)

Gustavo’s friend, Arturo Escobar, who participated in this colloquium added,

“At times I say, and I do not believe I am exaggerating, that we cannot find advancement of thought in the universities or the state, nor among the great experts, and even less in the universities of the global north; we find thought advancement in the collectives, with the *compañeros* and *compañeras* in struggle; they are always producing new thoughts, because their lives are about producing thoughts. And these are, as the Indigenous from the northern Cauca say: forms of cosmoaction, which are forms of thought from the cosmovision of a great integration. ...Weaving life from the Earth, from the seeds, weaving liberation they create a strategy that emerges from that kind of thinking, from weaving life relationally, weaving a life of liberation. What does this mean?

Today, the resistance of many Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and peasants in Latin America, emerges from this great weaving or entanglement of many communal worlds and other forms of life, other forms of

seeing that continue to be alive in spite of all contradictions, tensions, pain, and all other that exists in our territories. These are societies in movement. I call them worlds in movement, Purépecha, Maya, Mixtec, Nasa,




**La Yerbera**, Clay work on Wood Canvas

By Juana Ochoa represents the infinite connection to the spirit of plants and the entangled sisterhood between land, herb, and healing .

Mizak, Black, peasants, Aymara. Worlds and worlds that stand up. What we live in is a political activation of worlds from which we must learn to name in some form, to learn from the cosmovisions, the cosmoactions, from the kind of peoples’ autonomous definition.” (pp. 156-157, translation by Ciofalo)

The inter-generational and inter-cultural group of Indigenous *compañerxs* who met at Unitierra

to present at the ICC, weaved their thoughts, words, and praxes and gifted us with a vivid *testimonio* of this movement of “worlds and words” that emerged from their cosmovisions and cosmoactions, autonomously defining their solidarity in *comunalidad*. They wove new epistemes from the Earth, from the seeds, inviting us to weave ours with them, co-creating new words, *palabrandando*, for “*un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos* (a world where many worlds fit),” as the Zapatistas have taught us.



## Community Psychology and Queer Liberation: What Can We Learn from Queer Communities?

By Elena Dengel, Second-Year Student

What might it be like to celebrate every possibility of human being beyond what we are conditioned to imagine, rather than being constrained by imposed social scripts of gender and sexuality? While non-traditional family structures are common, modern life in the West under capitalism has become increasingly individualistic, **so much so that the concept of community is seen “as antithetical, and even a threat, to individuality”** (Somé, 1999, p. 91). Queer parents and families have been considered a threat to the traditional heterosexist family unit, as “capitalism and the nation-state are invested in maintaining the ideal heteronormative family” (Jones-Yelvington, 2008, p. 30). When community members care for one another beyond biological family ties, it follows that **“being in community leads to a healthy sense of belonging, greater generosity, better distribution of resources, and a greater awareness of the needs of the self and the other”**

(Somé, 1999, p. 91); in other words, the well-being of the community increases.

An intersectional framework is necessary to examine queer issues, which are not singularly sexuality- or gender-based: **“Sexual orientation exists on a continuum or multiple continuums and crosses all dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, social class, ability, religion, etc.)”** (Jason et al., 2019, p. 148). Discrimination and violence “are deeply connected to issues of racism, classism, and heterosexism” (Riemer et al., 2010, p. 404).

A community consisting of symbiotic, mutual relationships creates “a villagelike atmosphere that allows people to drop their masks” (Somé, 1999, p. 95). Communities benefit from nurturing eldership rather than sequestering elders to nursing homes or isolating them within their own homes. However, queer elders are less ubiquitous due to the devastation of the AIDS epidemic and ongoing discrimination and

violence. This, along with heterosexism in gerontology, is why research about queer individuals beyond middle age is lacking (Reynaga-Abiko, 2011).

**Emerging in part from queer theory, crip theory weaves together compulsory heterosexuality and “compulsory able-bodiedness,” systems which, McRuer (2006) argued, are contingent on one another** (p. 2).

Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018) has described contemporary mutual aid support networks created by disabled and neurodiverse queer and trans of color communities. Queer and trans disabled folks often lack access to accommodations and resources, an issue compounded by racism and income inequality. Access needs intersect with gender and sexuality, a fact that is often ignored due to the desexualization and infantilization of disabled people and medical cisheterosexism. In relation to the mainstream gay rights movement’s hyperfocus on marriage equality, many queer and heterosexual disabled folks are still unable to get married legally in the United States because marriage can forfeit access to requisite aid.

Much of the literature about queer populations has been concerned with stigma, discrimination, and coping. This is common for all marginalized populations, and what Tuck (2009) has called “damage-centered research” (p. 409). Traditional psychological approaches to oppression are problem-focused, treat oppressive circumstances as a stressor, and seek to reduce emotional symptoms of an individual rather than addressing the unjust environment (Phillips, Adams, and Salter, 2015). By contrast, a decolonial response informed by Martín-Baró’s liberation psychology utilizes critical consciousness by de-ideologizing everyday experiences and mobilizing collective action against systems of dominance (Phillips et al., 2015). In a similar liberatory vein, we might reorient ourselves to strengths- and desire-based frameworks, tapping into the rich and varied pluriversal knowledges of queer people across the queer spectrum. We may also do well to look to the Latin American concept of *Buen Vivir*, an indigenous notion of community well-being for a self-sustaining, **“holistic, meaningful and practical existence of living in harmony with one another and with the natural environment through**

**cooperation and community solidarity”** (Ruttenberg, 2013, p. 81). Celebrating variant kinship structures, including those with more-than-human beings, will benefit everyone, including non-queer folks who seek subversive alternatives to cis- and heteronormativity.

We should consider movement beyond the traditional discourse of equality, which often seeks membership in dominating systems (such as the mainstream gay rights movement and its push for marriage equality) and implement instead emergent liberatory approaches. In Community Psychology, **“a decolonial standpoint...honors and respects the humanity of all communities, especially those that have been institutionally marginalized, and sees values in local knowledge, culture, and place”** (Jason et al., 2019, p. 174). Queerness is present across many communities all over the world, and queer liberation, “to live freely and unaffected or harmed by conditions of oppression,” means liberation for all” (Jason et al., 2019, p. 172).

Watch  
**Beyond Compliance**  
By Elena Degel



## Betwixt Orientation and Disorientation in Praxis

By Jessica Epperson-Lusty, Third-Year Student

Alongside my CLIE coursework, I am engaging in cycles of action and reflection with participant groups in Pachamama Alliance's (PA) Introduction to Community Climate Action Training (ICCAT). ICCAT is available to people who have completed PA's courses designed to engender critical consciousness to the origins and impacts of climate change. ICCAT is intended to support participants to engage in local actions to support climate justice solutions. As a participant, moderator, and facilitator as well as a student-practitioner-activist, I find myself cycling through periods of orientation and disorientation as I critically and self-reflexively attend to my insider and outsider positions along with the commitments I carry within this context (Torre & Ayala, 2009). One of my primary commitments informs my guiding inquiry: what methodologies and methods can support ICCAT participants to engage local climate justice solutions that are transformative toward decoloniality rather than merely ameliorative within the maintenance of coloniality (Thambinatan, & Kinsella, 2021; Ciofalo & Watkins, 2022; Maldonado-Torres, 2016)?

As a White colonial-settler acculturated within a US-based Cartesian, Western, neoliberal ontological, epistemological, and axiological paradigm that functions through coloniality (CWNC), I find it necessary to simultaneously orient within and disorient from my positionality and acculturation to attend to my commitments within this context. For example, taking up Tuck & Yang's (2019) call to "consider how the pursuit of critical consciousness... can also be settler moves to innocence" that function to "reconcile settler guilt and complicity... and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege" requires me to orient reflexively from within my positionality (p. 21). While these critical considerations are essential from where I and similarly positioned participants engage, different ecopsychosocial contexts will require differing considerations on methodologies and methods capable of attending to what can only arise from the particularities of participants' differing contexts (Boal, 1979).

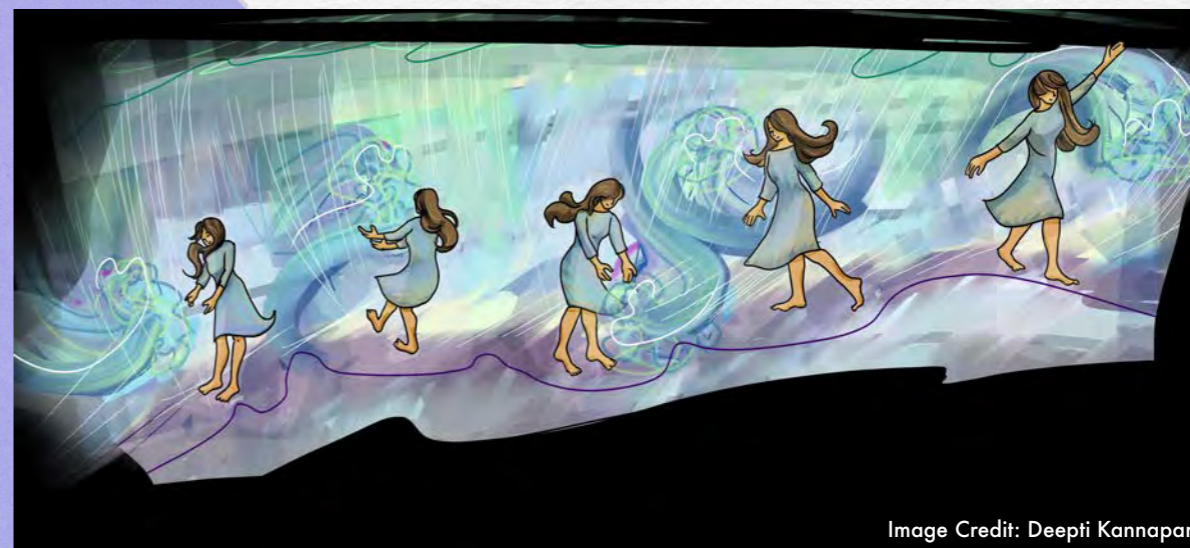


Image Credit: Deepthi Kannapan

Within this US-based online program serving cohorts engaging from differing contexts, I am orienting toward methodologies that expand our capacity to embody a relational ethic with Land/Earth, ourselves, one another, cultures, and communities (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Along these lines, I am incorporating guided inquiries intended to support participants (and myself) to "demechanize themselves, and to use their entire bodies" as well as to "witness" experiences they/we have over the course of the training from multiple orientations (Alvarez, 2014, p. 222). Our praxis centers on subjective, somatic, qualitative, spirited, and intuitive ways of being in relationship with ourselves, one another, and our experiences; ways of knowing which are often discounted and discredited within CWNC paradigms (Meyer, 2008; Anzaldúa, 2015). These methods create space in the training and local action contexts to pause, feel, note, query and be in relationship with the somatic and psychic sensations that arise as we engage with ourselves, one another, Land/Earth, and our communities.

Creating space with participants to practice self and cultural reflexivity has foregrounded internalized biases, beliefs, and assumptions about what is, what has been, and what could be. I am honored and grateful to continue to query together how what is communicated within and between Land/Earth, psyche, soma, spirit, past, present, future can help us disorient from ways of relating to the origins, impacts of, and solutions to climate change that are normalized and normativized within CWNC ways of relating to reorient toward futures that center the well-being of all beings.

## Embracing an Ecology of Knowledge in Community Health Care

By Ali Brooks, Third-Year Student

This community praxis was a small-scale application of decolonial depth psychological frameworks and methodologies to my own healing and community care practice in Teejop, aka Madison, Wisconsin on HoChunk land.

Aiming to contribute towards the imagining of community-based health care practices that transcend the individualist orientation and disconnection with the nonhuman world which shapes Western hegemonic psychology, this community praxis served the purpose of exploring the ethical and critical issues around engaging with plants as a white settler and as a healthcare practitioner.

### Inquiry

How does internalized colonization exist within me as a white settler as I repair my own lineage with Earth-based knowledge and healing practices?

As European settlers have attempted to heal the rupturing in our lineages which have severed us from place and traditional knowledge, we have often appropriated, co opted and manipulated Indigenous cultures and land-based traditions in the process. How do European descendant settlers repair our relationality with the Land and create place-based culture and identity without extracting and appropriating in the context of ongoing settler colonialism?

How is broadening our conception of psychology beyond the individual human psyche and embracing relationality with the more than human



world supportive of the shift in consciousness necessary for collective and ecological security?

Rather than finding definitive answers, the purpose was to be in the questions - and to generate more questions - while exploring methods for uncovering and co-creating local and pluriversal knowledge that bring us towards living and relating in alignment with our visions for a better world.

### Learnings

I found that working with plants facilitates my own decolonial shift in consciousness by unsettling the deep structures of coloniality and Western scientific hegemony that live within me. It requires me to believe in the validity of a knowledge system outside of a hegemonic western model of medicine and psychology, and to reclaim knowledge systems within my own lineage that better validate my own lived experience. It requires patience, which is an antidote to the high paced, immediate gratification, urgency mindset of the West.

Working with the healing powers of plants requires us to slow down, to be aware of the subtle sensations in our bodies as they shift. Working with plant medicine requires steps and rituals of

consent and reciprocity which offer us an opportunity to reflect upon our unconscious and ingrained patterns of anthropocentrism and extractivism. It requires me to think cyclically rather than linearly. Noticing the cycles and rhythms of growth and death returns me to my own cycles and rhythms of expansion and contraction, rather than expecting linearity and consistency. Practicing herbalism supports me in thinking, feeling, relating, and existing outside of the colonial paradigm, reclaiming the ancestral ways which are all of our birthright, and practicing an ethic of interdependence and reciprocity in all my relations.

### Further Questions

How can I reclaim my own ancestral ways while acting in solidarity with Black and Indigenous people who continue to be criminalized, threatened, and often prevented from accessing their own ancestral Land based and spiritual practices due to ongoing structures of settler colonialism? How can we increase access to Land based healing practices like herbalism which can make healthcare more accessible and affordable? How can white settlers who are practicing herbalism participate in a larger decolonial project of Land Back?



Herbs. Multimedia Images  
(colored & digital pencil)  
By Ali Brooks



**Honeycomb,  
Digital Painting  
by Ali Brooks**

**SCAN ME**





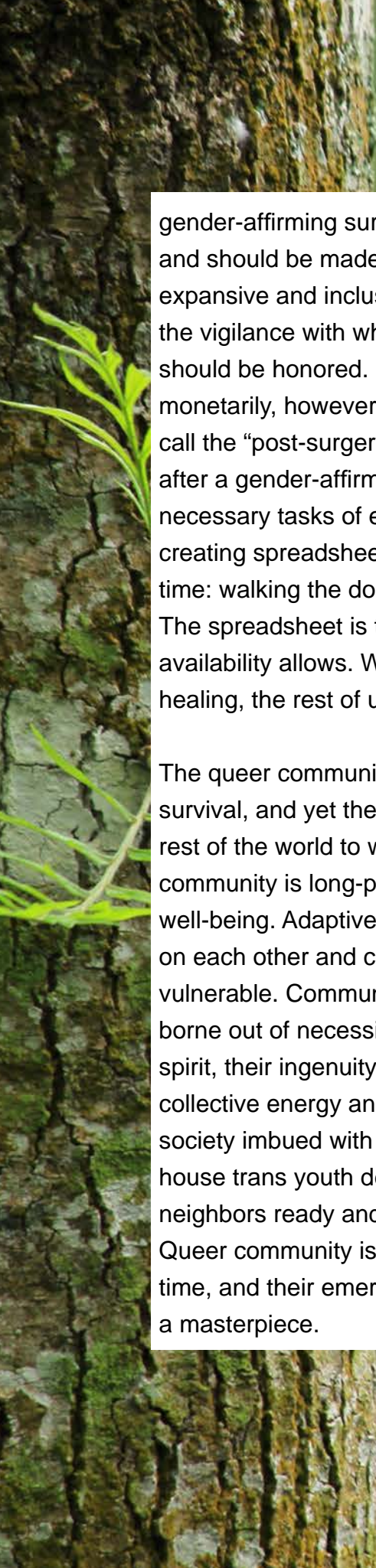


## Been There, Done That: How Queer People Are Their Own Community Psychologists

By Kiki Williams, First-Year Student

Queer community and community psychology undoubtedly have one thing in common: they both find deep value in supporting the well-being of the people in the community that they are a part of. The intersections at which these two worlds collide, however, are far and few in between. Although community psychology offers a framework with which to engage in community interventions and aims to evolve its research into real social action, the field itself has yet to do much research on the queer community (Pollitt et al., 2018); Riemer et al., 2020). This neglect distances the field from the deep pool of wisdom that this community is teeming with—wisdom that community psychologists could learn from. Queer people have themselves been providing numerous examples of how to thrive and live well for as long as time immemorial. A sort of “intervention” on its own, the culture of queer community is one that roots itself in community care. Whenever dominant society has deemed queer people as outcasts, they have survived by banding together to support each other and to create homes, places of gathering, and even healthcare services otherwise not available to them. One historical example of community care is Marsha P. Johnson and the founding of S.T.A.R. House with Sylvia Rivera. In desiring safety for the trans community of which they were a part, they procured space for trans youth to come and sleep at night, fronting all costs on their own (Coke, 2020). More recently, social media has become a prime space for the practice of community care, with stories and timelines becoming the ground from which entire

Photo Credit: [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)



gender-affirming surgeries have been funded. And while an argument can and should be made for the lack of government support in funding expansive and inclusive healthcare, these acts of care are testaments to the vigilance with which the queer community will look out for itself and should be honored. Community care need not solely be practiced monetarily, however. Throughout my life I've been a participant in what I call the "post-surgery healing train of care." Sometimes what's needed after a gender-affirming surgery is help with the seemingly mundane but necessary tasks of everyday life. Many have adopted the practice of creating spreadsheets of all they'll need help with during their recovery time: walking the dog, watering house plants, putting away groceries, etc. The spreadsheet is then sent out to the community, who sign up wherever availability allows. While someone in the community is focused on healing, the rest of us can show up in support.

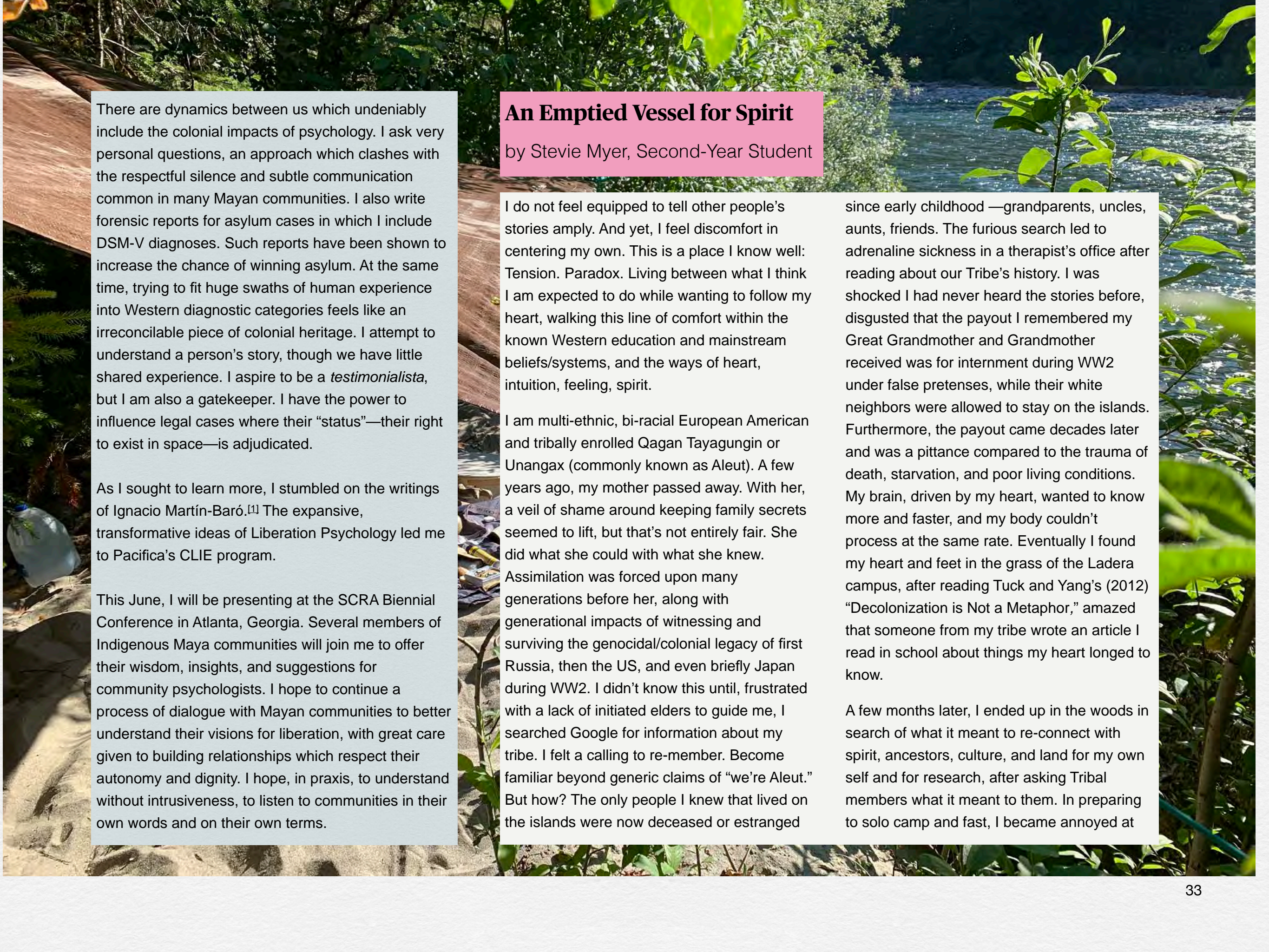
The queer community has had to band together out of necessity and survival, and yet the example that the queer community lays out for the rest of the world to witness is one that most could learn from. This community is long-practiced in ways of life that support them and their well-being. Adaptive to a society that often hoards its resources, they rely on each other and collective resources to meet the needs of those most vulnerable. Community care within the queer community may have been borne out of necessity, but it is also a testament of their generosity of spirit, their ingenuity and creativity in problem solving, and the magic of collective energy and manifestation. It is a wonder to imagine the whole of society imbued with the same care that drove Marsha P. Johnson to house trans youth despite her own limited resources, or to imagine our neighbors ready and available to step in whenever we need assistance. Queer community is an example of *buen vivir* (Ruttenberg, 2013) in real time, and their emergent strategies for survival are both an inspiration and a masterpiece.

## Striving Toward Liberation With The Mayan Diaspora

By Robin Chancer, First-Year Student

For seven years, I have worked as part of the Immigrant Worker Project (IWP), a small but mighty legal office in Canton, Ohio. IWP grew out of a dialogue between the growing immigrant population of Ohio and community leaders and activists in 1999. The majority of individuals who utilize IWP are Indigenous Maya people from Guatemala. Indigenous peoples, though they make up the majority of Guatemala's population, are often targets of brutality and discrimination. A large and growing diaspora in Ohio includes many who have fled violence, who have been recruited by transnational corporations, or who have come to join family and seek opportunity. The IWP staff provides legal clinics, interpretation/translation services, educational programs, and assistance with social services.

I first became involved when a founder of IWP approached me in search of providers to conduct psychological assessments, write forensic reports, and offer emotional support for community members. Having lived in Guatemala for a time, and focused my work on the intersection of migration and mental health, I hoped I had something to offer. As I grew acquainted with members of Indigenous communities, however, I quickly learned how irrelevant my previous training was to them. My training taught me how to help individuals build coping strategies and create healthier lives, but it did not teach me how to overthrow the systems of power that create rampant suffering, or to uplift the healing practices generated within communities. I felt the emptiness of Euro-American mental-health paradigms compared with the richness of Indigenous cultures. I also witnessed how my ideas of wellness were no match for the oppressive systems of immigration and genocide. The pain of my own privilege lives right alongside these feelings. When I meet with people, I show up in the room as a representative of the colonizers.



There are dynamics between us which undeniably include the colonial impacts of psychology. I ask very personal questions, an approach which clashes with the respectful silence and subtle communication common in many Mayan communities. I also write forensic reports for asylum cases in which I include DSM-V diagnoses. Such reports have been shown to increase the chance of winning asylum. At the same time, trying to fit huge swaths of human experience into Western diagnostic categories feels like an irreconcilable piece of colonial heritage. I attempt to understand a person's story, though we have little shared experience. I aspire to be a *testimonialista*, but I am also a gatekeeper. I have the power to influence legal cases where their "status"—their right to exist in space—is adjudicated.

As I sought to learn more, I stumbled on the writings of Ignacio Martín-Baró.<sup>[1]</sup> The expansive, transformative ideas of Liberation Psychology led me to Pacifica's CLIE program.

This June, I will be presenting at the SCRA Biennial Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Several members of Indigenous Maya communities will join me to offer their wisdom, insights, and suggestions for community psychologists. I hope to continue a process of dialogue with Mayan communities to better understand their visions for liberation, with great care given to building relationships which respect their autonomy and dignity. I hope, in praxis, to understand without intrusiveness, to listen to communities in their own words and on their own terms.

## An Emptied Vessel for Spirit

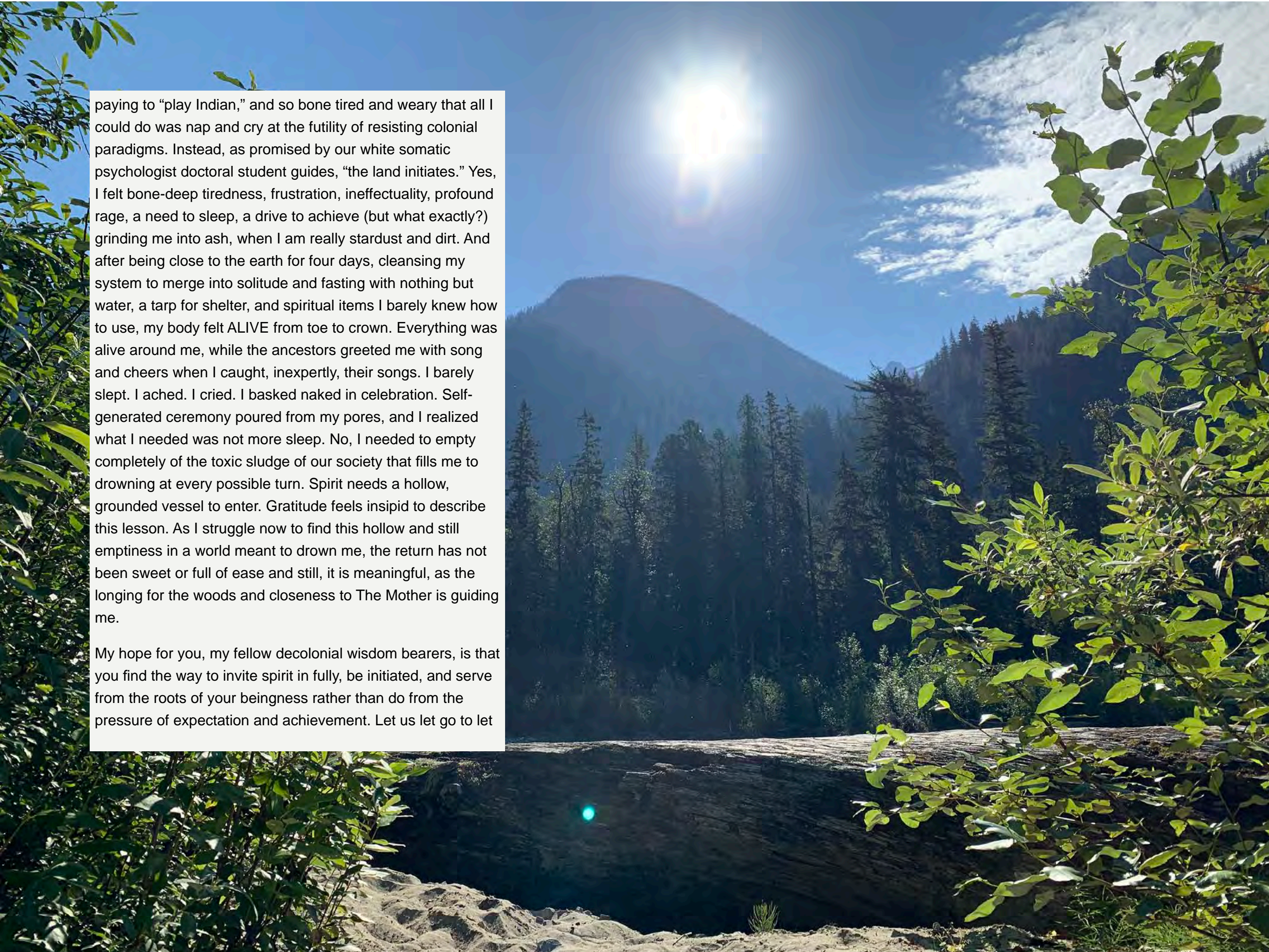
by Stevie Myer, Second-Year Student

I do not feel equipped to tell other people's stories amply. And yet, I feel discomfort in centering my own. This is a place I know well: Tension. Paradox. Living between what I think I am expected to do while wanting to follow my heart, walking this line of comfort within the known Western education and mainstream beliefs/systems, and the ways of heart, intuition, feeling, spirit.

I am multi-ethnic, bi-racial European American and tribally enrolled Qagan Tayagungin or Unangax (commonly known as Aleut). A few years ago, my mother passed away. With her, a veil of shame around keeping family secrets seemed to lift, but that's not entirely fair. She did what she could with what she knew. Assimilation was forced upon many generations before her, along with generational impacts of witnessing and surviving the genocidal/colonial legacy of first Russia, then the US, and even briefly Japan during WW2. I didn't know this until, frustrated with a lack of initiated elders to guide me, I searched Google for information about my tribe. I felt a calling to re-member. Become familiar beyond generic claims of "we're Aleut." But how? The only people I knew that lived on the islands were now deceased or estranged

since early childhood —grandparents, uncles, aunts, friends. The furious search led to adrenaline sickness in a therapist's office after reading about our Tribe's history. I was shocked I had never heard the stories before, disgusted that the payout I remembered my Great Grandmother and Grandmother received was for internment during WW2 under false pretenses, while their white neighbors were allowed to stay on the islands. Furthermore, the payout came decades later and was a pittance compared to the trauma of death, starvation, and poor living conditions. My brain, driven by my heart, wanted to know more and faster, and my body couldn't process at the same rate. Eventually I found my heart and feet in the grass of the Ladera campus, after reading Tuck and Yang's (2012) "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," amazed that someone from my tribe wrote an article I read in school about things my heart longed to know.

A few months later, I ended up in the woods in search of what it meant to re-connect with spirit, ancestors, culture, and land for my own self and for research, after asking Tribal members what it meant to them. In preparing to solo camp and fast, I became annoyed at



paying to “play Indian,” and so bone tired and weary that all I could do was nap and cry at the futility of resisting colonial paradigms. Instead, as promised by our white somatic psychologist doctoral student guides, “the land initiates.” Yes, I felt bone-deep tiredness, frustration, ineffectuality, profound rage, a need to sleep, a drive to achieve (but what exactly?) grinding me into ash, when I am really stardust and dirt. And after being close to the earth for four days, cleansing my system to merge into solitude and fasting with nothing but water, a tarp for shelter, and spiritual items I barely knew how to use, my body felt ALIVE from toe to crown. Everything was alive around me, while the ancestors greeted me with song and cheers when I caught, inexpertly, their songs. I barely slept. I ached. I cried. I basked naked in celebration. Self-generated ceremony poured from my pores, and I realized what I needed was not more sleep. No, I needed to empty completely of the toxic sludge of our society that fills me to drowning at every possible turn. Spirit needs a hollow, grounded vessel to enter. Gratitude feels insipid to describe this lesson. As I struggle now to find this hollow and still emptiness in a world meant to drown me, the return has not been sweet or full of ease and still, it is meaningful, as the longing for the woods and closeness to The Mother is guiding me.

My hope for you, my fellow decolonial wisdom bearers, is that you find the way to invite spirit in fully, be initiated, and serve from the roots of your beingness rather than do from the pressure of expectation and achievement. Let us let go to let

## Stories as Practice-Based Applications for Healing, Repair, and Expression

By Gilbert Salazar, Second-Year Student

**“ CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY AT SCHOOL? DID YOU FEEL UNSAFE AT SCHOOL?”**  
**“YES”**

**“ DID YOU HAVE AN ADULT AT SCHOOL THAT YOU FELT COMFORTABLE TELLING THAT YOU FELT UNSAFE?”**  
**“NO.”**

The students of the Youth Alternatives to Violence (YATV) program came with deeply embedded experiences of harm from not only the school-to-prison pipeline that brought them into this required program, but also from the realities of life in their communities that challenged them to claim an affiliation for survival. Gang affiliations, housing, immigration, the harshness of agricultural work, and problems within families were issues that some or many of these students faced. The school was the institution that often labeled their behaviors as criminal responses to these issues, criminal in the perceptions and biases of teachers, school staff, and school law enforcement within and outside of schools.

For months over several sessions of this program, I used Theater of the Oppressed (TO), the methodology created by Augusto Boal (1993), with YATV students, culminating with the staging of the question:

**“Show us your most violent choice or the choice that brought you to this class?”**

Once the staging of the stories occurred, I would ask:

**“And then what might have happened that didn’t happen?”**

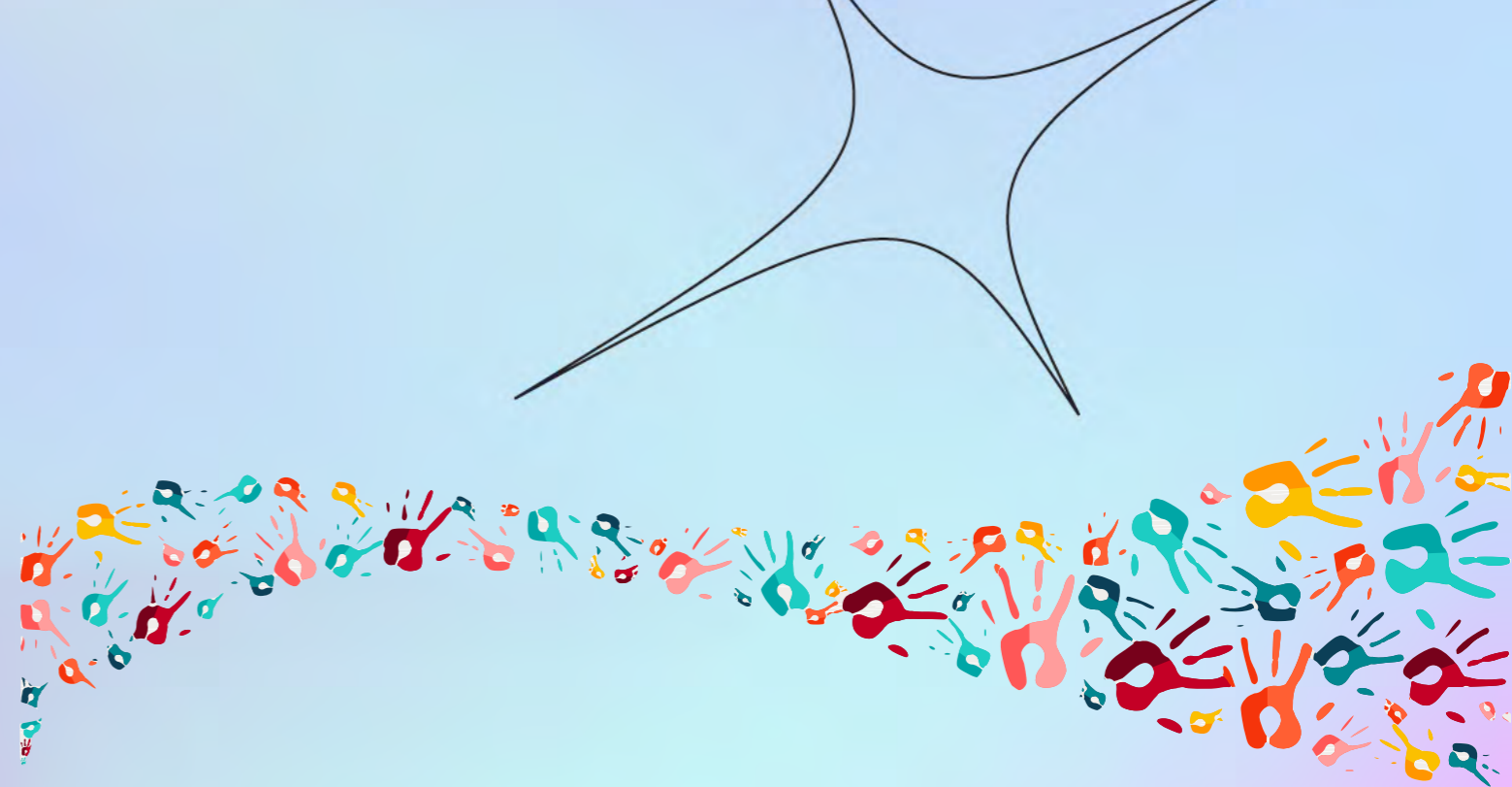
Students offered different suggestions, extending the scene to the courtroom or being locked up, by getting up and playing out another scene. Students related ideas verbally or asked to go up and show what they thought would have happened.

My time with these students has stayed with me for years after teaching them and remains invaluable today. These embodied moments were shown, not told or described, through play and through posing questions that created powerful moments of dialogue and the creation of alter-realities expressed in the classroom. The students offered not just offered their stories they also witnessed other stories and created something new for themselves or someone else. I learned that although many students interacted with adults in several institutions, very few of

these adults had actually asked, “what happened?” and listened compassionately to their answers. I learned that it takes time for someone to feel safe enough to offer their story and the impact of carceral systems is a deterrent to telling one’s story. TO can contribute to individual, relational, and community change, so we must ask: how could Community Psychology integrate TO into its theories and praxes to better work with these youths?

Storytelling is a powerful method that can encompass healing, repair, and expression. Freire’s theory and TO, as a practice-based methodology, create an opportunity for a group of people gathered in community to present conflict and harms, solutions, and embodied power to protect themselves from systems that disempowered them. In storytelling, consent and choice are given through play and witnessing the stories offered by the group. TO is a praxis of power, of what De Sousa Santos (2014) called: “the rearguard theory of learning from ‘behind’ of strong questions to address specific options but also paradigms, in which certain options are possible while others are excluded or even unimaginable” (p. 40).

McKnight (1995) asserted, “Institutions learn from studies, communities learn from stories” (as cited in Wolff and Swift, 2008, p. 619). Stories are ways for individuals and communities to produce transformative knowledge toward a hopeful decolonial future (Dutta, 2016). Students produced knowledge and imagination through their own stories. More practice-based applications that incorporate story should be used within Community Psychology whenever an intervention program is used with anyone who has experienced oppression in their community.



## A Serpentinian Fieldwork: How can Community Praxis Grow us More Together than Apart?

By Kae Papula, Third-Year Student

In what ways can falling apart and entangling together in our research process be a pathway to disrupting colonial notions of the static, stable self? This question became the courier to my fieldwork practice. In the following sections, I will explore how we can allow the entangled intimacy and public nature of eco-psychosocial field life/fieldwork to create cracks and fissures that may help disrupt colonial notions of one linear, static, stable self. I hope that these disruptions demonstrate how partial truths and multiple realities can emerge into more generative inquiries that are life affirming and cross the bifurcated boundaries between homelife and fieldwork. I will expand upon the collective themes of: critical autoethnography, a queer ethics as method, and the aliveness observed in my peers' community praxis.

Our coheart (a word used, instead of cohort, to denote our shared commitment to co-enacting a heartfelt, affective learning environment) deliberately chose epistemological approaches to knowledge production that centered social and relational elements of subjectivity. By watering our passions, emotions, and transferential dynamics, we broke through the artificial borders and refused to wear the militant vests that can be required by some hegemonic research methodologies out in the field. Anzaldúa's (2015) *autohistoria-teoría* is one method that I and other coheartians applied. This embodied reemerging of self with culture, community, spirit, and theory allowed each of us to risk the personal, find ease in ambiguity, and write from within our flesh instead of through an outsider-only perspective (Arfuso, 2021). As autoethnographers,



some of us could fall apart and re-imagine ourselves back together in order to live into new metaphors that led us toward knowledge and, more importantly, into further questions. Our soulful and spiritual transformation then came through the aliveness of the incoherent mess of our inner and outer worlds colliding. It allowed us, critical autoethnographers, to take our spirits out of the box and live in the borderland between love and disgust, as Anzaldúa (2007) might have said. Behar (1996) spoke to this fine line that we walk in academia between navel gazing and allowing our personal voice to shepherd the reader into serious social issues or colonial scripts, whose ecologies can be critically problematized, swum in between, and thus shapeshifted. Rather than only gazing at our navels, as self-inscriptors, we blurred the private/academic and public/personal split where our practices became sites to identify the real lived limitations and colonial positions within our respective communities and fields of praxis.

When we fall apart and entangle together in the research process, we allow those who witness us to be carried elsewhere. This crashing, dismantling, and reconfiguring is a flight of rupture from our static, stable notions of self into the pluriversal worlds we play in (Escobar, 2020). The liberatory potential of an alternative social world begins to reveal itself as we center intimacy and vulnerability in this fieldlife praxis (Detamo, 2010). Fieldwork becomes fieldlife when we radically accept our strange world(s) as they are and allow their remarkable ambivalence to be reflected back to us without the fragmented categories the colonial order has forecasted upon them. Dutta (2021) said that we need multiplicities in our modes of sense-making. Instead of pushing away our discomfort in the research process, if we lean in and hold it gently in the center, we may be given the gift of a new way to see, produce knowledge, and make sense. A promise to feel, to fall apart, and entangle back together in the research

process opens up possibilities for complexity, nuance, situatedness, and irreconcilable, irrefutable conditions that mirror more accurate depictions of our wedded, incoherent, social lives.

Critical sensory autoethnographers can intentionally coil themselves with data, allowing this knotting to be a key feature in the transformation available to us if we choose to re-animate the research we participate in (St. Pierre, 2013). Instead of splitting off and succumbing solely to an outsider perspective, many of my coheartians became the living, breathing, beating question of their inquiry and allowed their own flesh to assemble into data. Within this Deleuzian philosophy and framework, we may begin to shed and free ourselves from rigid, colonial ideologies that oversimplify, overgeneralize and whitewash ideas of community and liberation. Wielding more feral, playful methodologies can weaken modernity's commitment to flatten our vitality and loosen the grip of its chokehold on our natural frisky inclination to experiment. This third way means actively refusing to recapitulate the status quo and blasting out from the repudiation of one static and stable notion of the egoic self. You are allowed to fall apart, to reactivate pleasure and to "leave behind the closet of your performed individuality" (B. Akomolafe, personal communication, 2021).

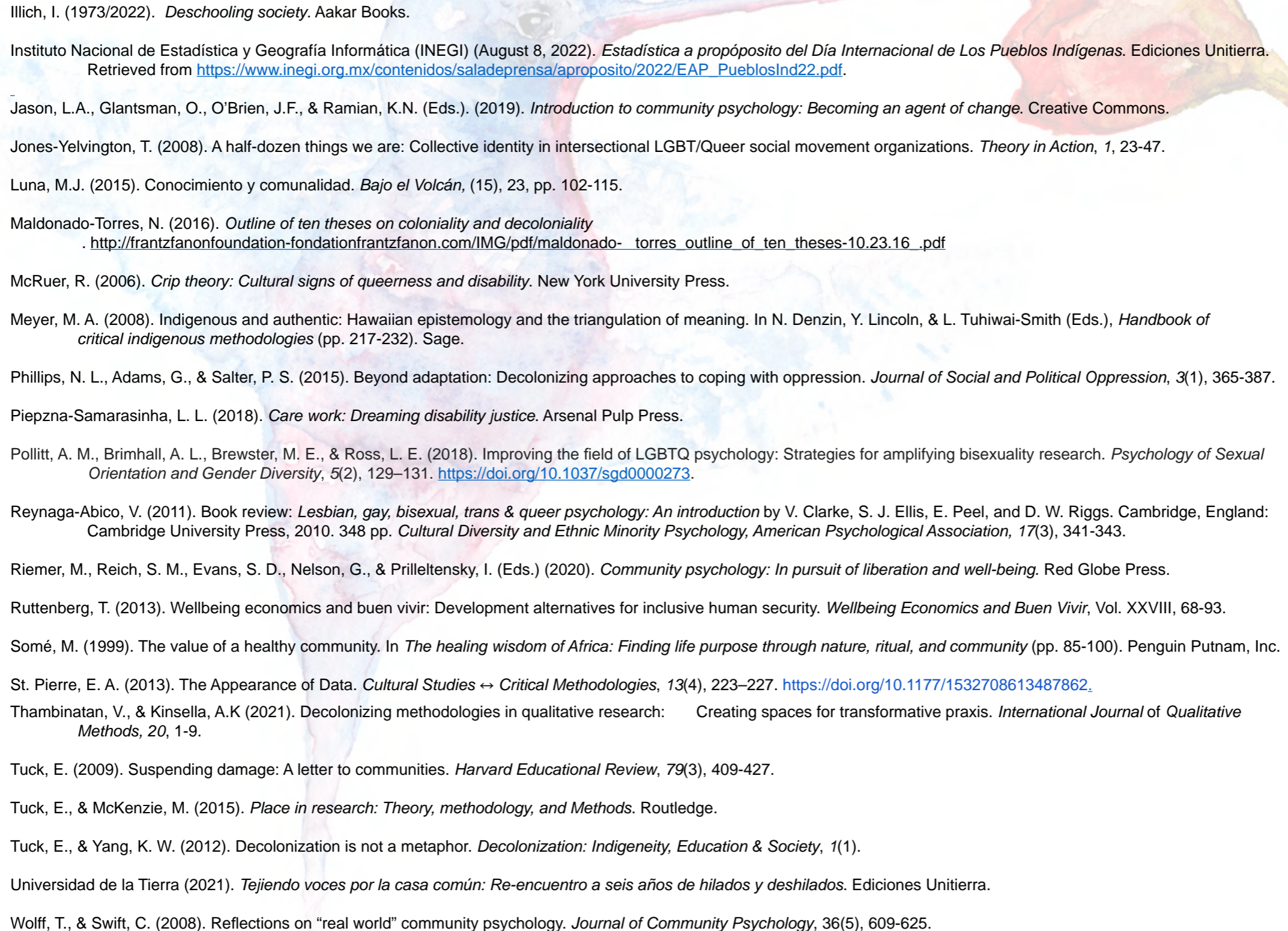
May we sit in the murky flowing waters of unanswered questions together. May we co-create nonlinear, ontological places where we can peel each other's Band-Aids off gently enough to bleed into something else together. May we develop embodied theories that breach the binaries and allow for a dynamic, more-than-dual reality together. May we reclaim magical thinking and feeling to guide us toward inquiries that generate less of the same and more of the new, thus growing more together than apart.





## Section 2 References

- Almendra, V. (2015). *Entre la Emancipación y la Captura. Memorias y caminos de la lucha Nasa en Colombia*. Barricadas Colección <http://comunizar.com.ar/la-emancipacion-la-captura-memorias-caminos-la-lucha-nasa-colombia/>.
- Alvarez, E. F., Jr. (2014). Lotería pedagogy, SWAPA, and Sandovalian approaches to liberation. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 39(1).
- Anzaldúa, G. (2007). *Tlilli, Tlapelli/The path of the red and black ink*. In *Borderlands, la frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute.
- Anzaldúa, G. (2015). *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Duke University Press.
- Arfuso, C. N. (2021). Whispers of the soul: Autohistoria-teoria as decolonial knowledge production. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1-7.
- Bautista, M. (2017). *Memoria histórica de Tapa Baa. La defensa de la Tierra, los espacios sagrados, y los principios de la vida communal de Tapaá, Oaxaca, México*. Universidad Autónoma de México <https://copitarxives.fisica.unam.mx/CD0008ES/CD0008ES.html>.
- Bautista, M. (2022). *Shela nazede che shexhe zuan xhin shixe: El saber del pueblo está en el campo: Propuesta de una educación comunitaria*. Universidad Autónoma de México <https://copitarxives.fisica.unam.mx/CD0010ES/CD0010ES.html>.
- Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer*. In *The vulnerable observer: An anthropology that breaks your heart*. Beacon Press.
- Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. Theatre Communications Group.
- Boal, A. (1993). *Theater of the oppressed*. Theater Communications Group.
- Ciofalo, N., & Watkins, M. (2022). Towards an emergent conceptualization of decolonial praxis and competencies in community psychology. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*.
- Coke, Hope. (June 25, 2020). *The inspiring life of activist and Drag Queen Marsha P. Johnson Tatler*. <https://www.tatler.com/article/who-is-marsha-p-johnson-drag-queen-gay-activist>.
- De Sousa Santos, B. (2014). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge. (Preface; Manifesto for good living; Manifesto for intellectual activists; and Introduction—all before Part I—pp. vii- 43). [http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/Epistemologies\\_of\\_the\\_South.pdf](http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/Epistemologies_of_the_South.pdf)
- Detamo, M. (2010). Queer(y)ing the ethics of research methods: Toward a politics of intimacy in researcher/researched relations. In K. Brown & C. Nash (Eds.), *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*(pp.167-182). Routledge.
- Dutta, U. (2016) Prioritizing the local in an era of globalization: A proposal for decentering community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 58, 329-338
- Dutta, U. (2021). The politics and poetics of “fieldnotes”: Decolonizing ethnographic knowing. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 27(5), 598-607.
- Enlace Zapatista (2021). *La Travesía por la vida. ¿A qué vamos?* Retrieved, May 10, 2023 from <https://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2021/06/27/la-travesia-por-la-vida-a-que-vamos/>.
- Escobar, A. (2020). *Pluriversal politics: The real and the possible*. New York, USA: Duke University Press.
- Freire, P. (1970/1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Continuum International Publishing.
- Global Tapestry of Alternatives (July 8, 2022). *Unitierra Oaxaca: Learning and hope*. <https://globaltapestryofalternatives.org/webinars:2022:learning:03>.

- 
- Illich, I. (1973/2022). *Deschooling society*. Aakar Books.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía Informática (INEGI) (August 8, 2022). *Estadística a propósito del Día Internacional de Los Pueblos Indígenas*. Ediciones Unitierra. Retrieved from [https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/aproposito/2022/EAP\\_PueblosInd22.pdf](https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/aproposito/2022/EAP_PueblosInd22.pdf).
- Jason, L.A., Glantsman, O., O'Brien, J.F., & Ramian, K.N. (Eds.). (2019). *Introduction to community psychology: Becoming an agent of change*. Creative Commons.
- Jones-Yelvington, T. (2008). A half-dozen things we are: Collective identity in intersectional LGBT/Queer social movement organizations. *Theory in Action*, 1, 23-47.
- Luna, M.J. (2015). Conocimiento y comunalidad. *Bajo el Volcán*, (15), 23, pp. 102-115.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2016). *Outline of ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality*. [http://frantzfanonfoundation-fondationfrantzfanon.com/IMG/pdf/maldonado-torres\\_outline\\_of\\_ten\\_theses-10.23.16\\_.pdf](http://frantzfanonfoundation-fondationfrantzfanon.com/IMG/pdf/maldonado-torres_outline_of_ten_theses-10.23.16_.pdf)
- McRuer, R. (2006). *Crip theory: Cultural signs of queerness and disability*. New York University Press.
- Meyer, M. A. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L. Tuhiwai-Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Sage.
- Phillips, N. L., Adams, G., & Salter, P. S. (2015). Beyond adaptation: Decolonizing approaches to coping with oppression. *Journal of Social and Political Oppression*, 3(1), 365-387.
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2018). *Care work: Dreaming disability justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Pollitt, A. M., Brimhall, A. L., Brewster, M. E., & Ross, L. E. (2018). Improving the field of LGBTQ psychology: Strategies for amplifying bisexuality research. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 5(2), 129–131. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000273>.
- Reynaga-Abico, V. (2011). Book review: *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans & queer psychology: An introduction* by V. Clarke, S. J. Ellis, E. Peel, and D. W. Riggs. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 348 pp. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, American Psychological Association*, 17(3), 341-343.
- Riemer, M., Reich, S. M., Evans, S. D., Nelson, G., & Prilleltensky, I. (Eds.) (2020). *Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being*. Red Globe Press.
- Ruttenberg, T. (2013). Wellbeing economics and buen vivir: Development alternatives for inclusive human security. *Wellbeing Economics and Buen Vivir*, Vol. XXVIII, 68-93.
- Somé, M. (1999). The value of a healthy community. In *The healing wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through nature, ritual, and community* (pp. 85-100). Penguin Putnam, Inc.
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2013). The Appearance of Data. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), 223–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708613487862>.
- Thambinatan, V., & Kinsella, A.K (2021). Decolonizing methodologies in qualitative research: Creating spaces for transformative praxis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1-9.
- Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: A letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review*, 79(3), 409-427.
- Tuck, E., & McKenzie, M. (2015). *Place in research: Theory, methodology, and Methods*. Routledge.
- Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1).
- Universidad de la Tierra (2021). *Tejiendo voces por la casa común: Re-encuentro a seis años de hilados y deshilados*. Ediciones Unitierra.
- Wolff, T., & Swift, C. (2008). Reflections on “real world” community psychology. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36(5), 609-625.



# DISSERTATION WRITERS

**LA MAESTRA**, By Juana Ochoa Acrylic, clay work on plywood

This Image represents our ancestors, particularly Felipa, my great-grandmother. This has an obsidian mirror in the center of her mouth molded in place with non-toxic resin creating a large mirror that shows us ancestors in the reflection as ourselves. There is no them and no us... we are

## La Maestra

By Juana Ochoa, Dissertation Student

I wake. With a strong urge to paint the image from a dream, La Maestra is beautiful and fierce; she frightens and captures me simultaneously, drawing me to her. She is part animal and part human? spirit. She is up, down, and sideways. She is chaos and stillness; she is mirroring, reflecting herself as me, as her. I don't know, but her message from this image was clear: "When you ask your ancestors for guidance, you are asking yourself." We indeed ask for guidance when we have an internal compass that is as old as time; we pray for forgiveness. Yet, we will not forgive ourselves; we pray for love, yet we do not know how to love ourselves; we ask for riches and do not see the abundance in our existence; we pray for peace, and yet we create suffering and anguish in our own lives and on and on and on.

These statements are bold and are not filtered to exclude those who feel that their lives are free of resentments, whose lives are packaged perfectly, or the illusions that one has worked so hard that now they find themselves in a much better situation. Because even those few whose lives seem perfect are still trapped in a patriarchal way of life which, as Arturo Escobar states in *Pluriversal Politics*, "restricts our understanding of life and of nature by making us seek to manipulate everything unidirectionally in the desires to control living." (Escobar, 2020, p. 18). This patriarchal way of the West has created rigid and linear thinkers, driven by monetary gain or credentialed success, learned person with a checklist approach to life, disconnected from the land, their community, and ultimately their humanity, forgetting that they will forever be "becoming."

There is a seesawlike, almost nauseating effect when attempting to break away from this learned linear paradigm. Not only does it become exhausting

“ It never came linearly. It tends to come the way the flower blooms. It comes unexpectedly, and it has nothing to do with ‘genius.’ It has to do with this beginning to question your own ‘consciousness...’ Sylvia Wynter in an interview with *Proud Flesh: New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* © In, Gumbs, 2020.

to go against the current, you become exiled, labeled a misfit, you slowly lose your identity...all good, but the trickster has subtle ways to revert, to fit in, all while still believing that you are far from where you once were. We become masters at masking the patriarchal being. Why do we do this? Perhaps as stated in the essay, "BLACK LIVES MATTER: But to Whom?" Bayo Akomolafe writes,

“ Despite the cold state of history, black bodies (and their slavers) didn't leave the slave ship for the plantation. They didn't disembark. The last slave ship didn't disappear into the backwaters of ignominious times. When it arrived to shore, it *became* the shore. It turned. It became the organelles of computational capitalism and its hidden algorithms of bodily reproduction. It became our hegemonic monoculture of mind that orbit around the fetish of the citizen-subject, the dissociated self of modern civilization..." (Akomolafe, 2023, p.10).

It feels like a mindfuck, like a maze, illusions of freedom. However, through symbols, art, community, and surrender, I feel disconnected from the thinker, this shell of a human body; when I connect to dreams and symbols, I feel expansive, I feel a part of everything, but most importantly, I feel the pain of a lost living sister, of motherless children, of lost land, of lost innocence, of a lost lineage. This is perhaps why I kept her hostage; it sounds silly, but "La Maestra" as much as she scared me, she pulled me in, she helped me grow, and I fell in love. I selfishly kept her unfinished in my home. Every day I passed her by and said, "I will finish you soon." I became obsessed each day, hoarding her wisdom and fierce beauty, and yet I started to neglect her; she

collected dust every day as my cat, my kids, my dogs rubbed or laid or played near her.

This is where the illusion of ownership comes in; I thought I had her and captured her, but she took something much more critical from me. As I neglected myself, I neglected her. I stopped dreaming for a while; the urge to paint and connect with that otherness and freedom was gone, and just like the colonizer gets caught in their own web of bullshit colonizes, so was I caught. Until I could see that I had to let her go and ask for forgiveness, I understood she was never mine, even though I wanted her to be. She is beyond a painting.

She is Ezili. Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, in *Ezilis Mirrors*, imagines a black Queer gender; Ezili, a *Lwa* (Divinity) in Haitian Vodou. Ezili represents the fluidity of desire and the way that love can take many forms (Tinsley, 2018). She is the request, commitment, instructions, opening, and depths of the ocean asking us to breathe, as Alexis Pauline Gumbs describes in *DUB: Finding Ceremony* (Gumbs, 2020). She is as described in *Suckling the Snake: Motherly Goddess Worship and Serpent Symbolism among Contemporary Nahua in Milpa Alta, Mexico*, by Catherine Whittaker, a primary deity for the Mesoamerican people. Similar representations exist as Tonantzin Tlalli, as Mother Earth and other Earth goddesses, such as Toci, Coatlicue (serpent-skirt), and Cihuacoatl (woman-serpent), most of which are mainly represented as serpents. She is a Coatlicue goddess associated with fertility, motherhood, and the earth, depicted wearing a skirt made of snakes and a necklace made of human hearts and hands. In some traditions, she was also associated with war and sacrifice (Whittaker, 2017, p. 4).

However, *La Maestra* is also the flesh of the living as described in the film *Yemanjá: Wisdom from the African Heart of Brazil*; las Mucamas, the enslaved women who put themselves at risk by stealing from the slaveowner to help save lives. These women were liberated early and were described by their community as humanitarians bringing forth their powerful ideas and social-political views based on liberation and ancestral traditions. They are

the heart of the Candomblé community because "for a human to give freedom to another human being is everything, it is everything." She is me, and she is you.

A moral obligation comes with understanding the psychological shackling that has bound us through what Bayo calls "white capture," through linear thinking and small ways of understanding the self and the world around us. We can't get trapped in the illusions of freedom of moving from the lower to the upper deck of the slave ship because, "all of us- are still on the damn slave ship" (Akomolafe, 2023, p. 17).

In conclusion, I take some inspiration from Arturo Escobar, who advocates for the recognition and inclusion of diverse knowledge systems, cultural practices, and ways of organizing the possibilities of embracing multiple political visions, practices, and institutions that honor and value the diversity of human experiences and ways of relating to the world. Bayo Akomolafe's, courage to hold people accountable through his politics of exile argument offers new possibilities for addressing systemic issues like racism and inequality by challenging the status quo and opening up new spaces for experimentation and transformation.

Candomblé practitioners whose families were destroyed and displaced, reconstructed their own families through community, creating their own spaces to pray, heal, honor, and keep their values and traditional ways of being alive. In my own way and at my own pace, I am connecting to other ways of understanding the self, different ways of being, connecting, and belonging, that growing pains are necessary, that fear is essential to growth, that this reality is not easy. Still, there have been many who have added some bricks to the path and given a window into possibilities and hope. Through community, openness, and connectedness, we will stop suffering clenching onto one version of reality (like I clenched on to the painting), which only continues to perpetuate the pain and suffering of those rendered voiceless, who have been marginalized to the back stairs of society.



## References

Akomolafe, B. (2023). Black lives matter, but to whom: Why we need a politics of exile in a time of troubling stuckness (pp. 10-17). Othering & Belonging Institute.

Escobar, A. (2020). Pluriversal politics: The real and the possible. Duke University (Press. Pp.18)

Roberts, D.C., & Read, D. (Directors). (2015). Yemanjá: Wisdom from the African heart of Brazil. Project Zula.

Gumbs, a. p. (2020). Dub: Finding ceremony (pp. X-27). Duke University Press.

Tinsley, O.N. (2018). Introduction. *Ezili's mirrors: Imagining Black Queer genders* (1-27). Duke University Press Books.

Whittaker, C. (2017). Suckling the Snake: Motherly Goddess Worship and Serpent Symbolism among Contemporary Nahua in Milpa Alta, Mexico. 495–504.

## Here's How I Let Them Come Close, An Excerpt

By Katie Robinson, Dissertation Student

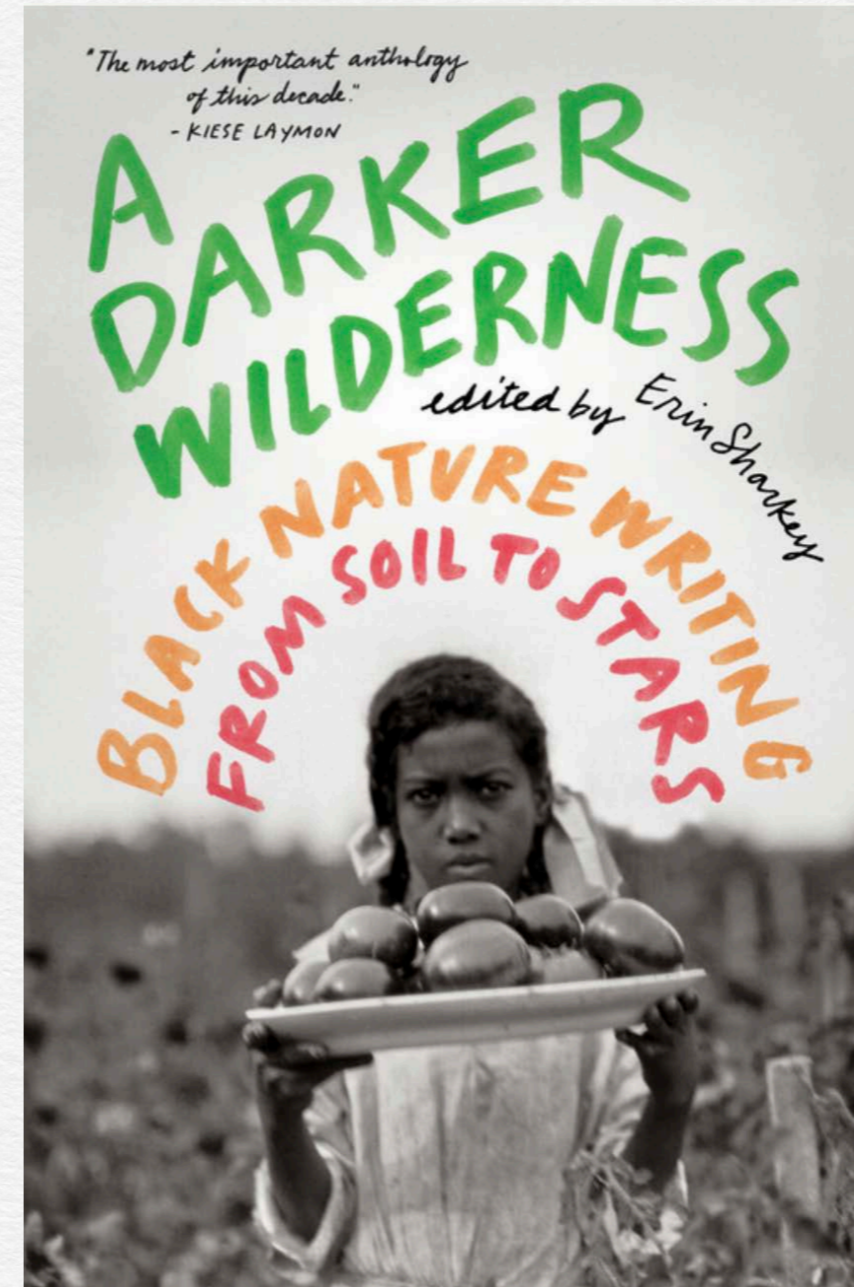
As many said would happen, the CLIE curriculum rearranged me. M. Jacqui Alexander, Gloria Anzaldúa, Carl Jung, James Hillman, Catherine Walsh, Walter Mignolo, Franz Fanon, Nelson Maldonado-Torres – decoloniality, ontology, emergence, entanglement, posthumanism – all are now a part of the fibers of my consciousness: they are my guides and accompaniment, they hurry me up and slow me down, they show me dimensions of existence I never thought possible. And yet, perhaps paradoxically, while I have been led to new worlds, I have also had the otherworldly experience of feeling found, and of feeling belonging. I have been given language and precedent for what I am: a decolonial depth psychologist, a meanderer in the borderlands, a defector, a co-conspirator with the immaterial, a servant to nuance, an appendage of the vastness of the pluriverse reaching up and away from itself to learn something new. I have found an intellectual home in CLIE, which has allowed me to, as Joyce Carol Oats might say, not change, but “become more myself.”

Both my academic as well as my creative work has benefitted from this rearrangement

recovery, and it is captured in a creative nonfiction essay I recently had published in a collection called *A Darker Wilderness: Black Nature Writing from Soil to Stars*, edited by Erin Sharkey. My essay, entitled “Here’s How I Let Them Come Close,” is a posthumanist meditation on fear, extraterrestrials, encounters, and art making. The following is an excerpt. It doesn’t have an epigraph, but if it did, it would be from Bayo Akomolafe (2017) in “Libations at the Crossroads”: “to be human was to be immersed a sensuous world that did things to you.”

For your enchantment,  
katie

I was surprised to find, upon looking up its etymology, that encounter has an inherently oppositional connotation. From the old French *encontre*, it is described as a “meeting of adversaries,” a “confrontation,” a “fight,” or an “opportunity.” *En* means in, “near, at, in, on, within,” while *contra* means “against, opposite,” or “in comparison with.” What strikes me, perhaps unsurprisingly, is the within-ness of the definition: that even in the midst of conflict or fighting, one is in, queering



the purported opposition. It suggests that any against-ness necessarily exists within a shared body or some other kind of field of entanglement. There is a preceding in-ness to our encounters, even as they categorically bifurcate.

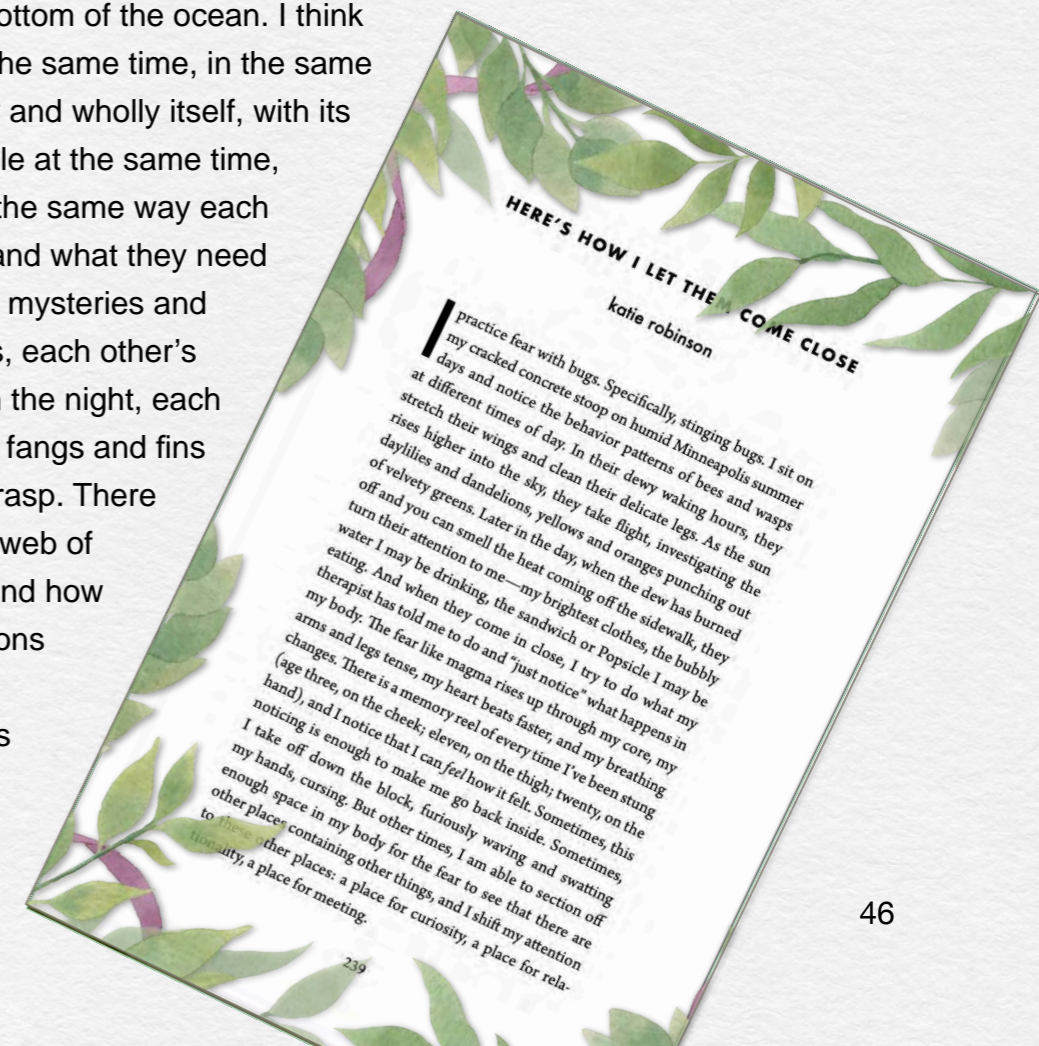
Once, I was scrolling Instagram and I came across what seemed like a hotep-adjacent inspirational page full of archived videos. I couldn't tell you why, but I clicked on one of a woman talking about lessons her elders had taught her. I can't for the life of me remember the page, or the clip, or anything else about it, but I'll never forget the lesson. Her elder had told her, she said, "You meet no one but yourself." My first reaction was instant bodily resonance, like simultaneous expansion and settling. Then I was quickly flung into walking it back, critiquing the message for Western, white, colonial assumptions: My god, what a self-centered, navel-gazey thing to say. Is that just pure ego? Does it assume individualism and omnipotence? But then I remembered that I had learned the practice of critique within Western education, so I went back to resonance, and sat with it for a minute. What moved me? Sure, I love the idea that what we think about others has everything to do with ourselves and our history and not much to do with them. I also appreciate the call to self-reflect, and to remember the power of self-knowledge. I can even somewhat get behind the subtle law of attraction written in between the words. However, the thing that grabbed me was what it might mean to expand the singular.

In my graduate studies, which have traversed theories of individual and collective suffering through depth psychological, Indigenous, decolonial, and Black feminist lenses, I have returned time and again to the ancient teaching that we are not individuals, but rather parts in a field of relationality: we are one, wasps, ETs, and all. An expanded you, yourself, me, or I is wide enough to contain the so-called other, the one being met or confronted, and not in a way that negates the other. There is an I that does not conflict with the omnipresence of we, where both are co-constitutively contained; a cell that is a

singular cell at the same time it is my body; a way of being we that does not colonize, dominate, or clone; a way of being we that folds no one's particulars and experiences into an amorphous abyss.

There is a principle in "classical" philosophy called the law of noncontradiction, which states, essentially, that where A and B are distinct entities, it is impossible for them to be the same thing, at the same time, in the same respect. I completely disagree. Or, rather, I have observed and prefer a reality in which this isn't the case. Perhaps it is my poet-self, or my reverence for metaphor, or my decolonial assignment to question and often reject the Western "rational," but I know that A can be B, C, and D, all at the same time, in the same place, in the same respect.

I think this is why I love watching murmurations, why I go to check on all my favorite trees on my daily walks, and why I've never been able to stop thinking about the bottom of the ocean. I think each is me and not me, at the same time, in the same respect. Each is completely and wholly itself, with its own agential existence, while at the same time, each is us, giving us us, in the same way each person knows themselves and what they need best. They are each other's mysteries and mythologies and metaphors, each other's encounterers and visitors in the night, each other's reasons for growing fangs and fins and learning to swim and grasp. There is an unending, whispering web of stories about how we met and how we know each other. Relations have always catalyzed our transformations, and what is encountered was already entangled.





# Reaching For Relationality Through Living Public Curriculum

Leah Garza, Dissertation Student

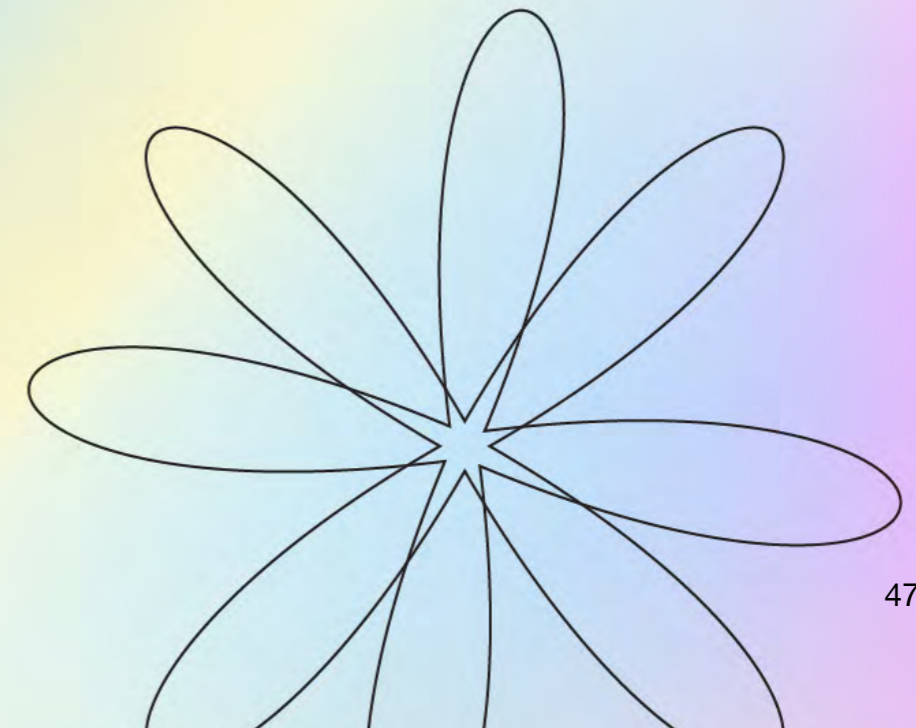
Early in the Ph.D. process I was drawn to the study of ontology, or what counts as reality and how important it is in understanding relationality and the rejection of colonial logics, or decoloniality. These two concepts are intrinsically intertwined for me, and as such, I seek to know them together as I navigate the dissertation inquiry. Donna Haraway wrote,

“It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories” (Haraway, 2016).

Haraway (2016) suggests that efforts for transformational change look at the stories people believe about who they are in order to decipher what is possible.. Her pronouncement that “it matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories,” is a clue for concentrated exploration of the limitations of efforts residing in beliefs about the world we live in. It is time for another story. I wonder about how ontological shifts can happen for people, specifically people of the

Global North, people like myself, born and raised in the long legacy of modernism, coloniality, and staunch individualism. I wonder what happens when folks, who are not part of the academy, learn about and grapple with concepts like decoloniality.

Part of my research has involved the creation of a public scholarship course called *Living Systems*, named in honor of the work of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. On the surface, *Living Systems* is a yearlong online public scholarship course. Under the surface, it is an offering for the creation of a new narrative to support all forms of life. The curriculum offers a relational lens on the lasting impact colonialism, modernism, and fixed individualism have on the world we live in today, where recent practices have brought us to the brink of mass extinction, and dreams of conservation/justice/change can never truly make a dent in the collision course it has created. *Living Systems* presupposes that participants need not have a background in academia in order to understand and work with these concepts. One of the dreams of this course is that it is not didactic, it does profess a calcified, immutable truth, but that it is a series of concepts as offerings for learners to take into



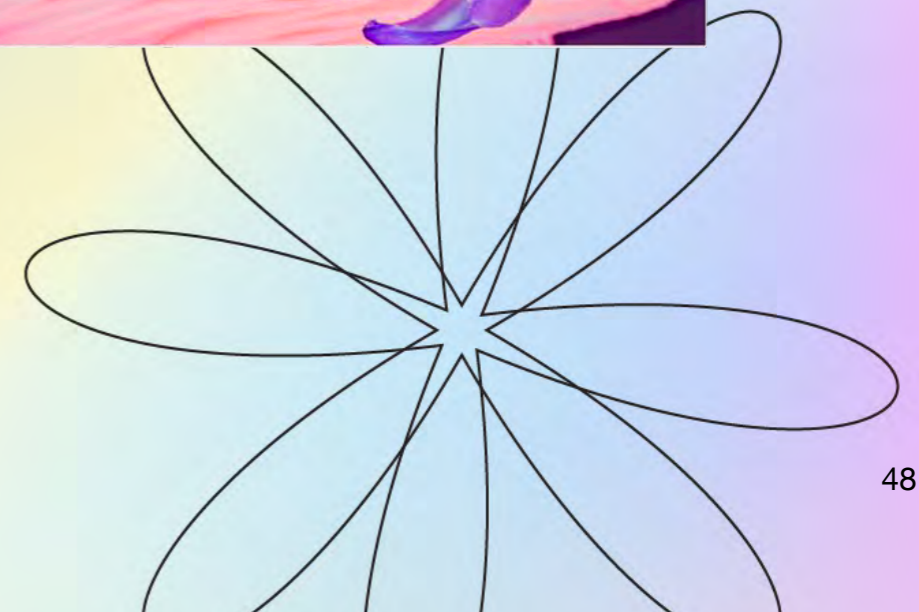
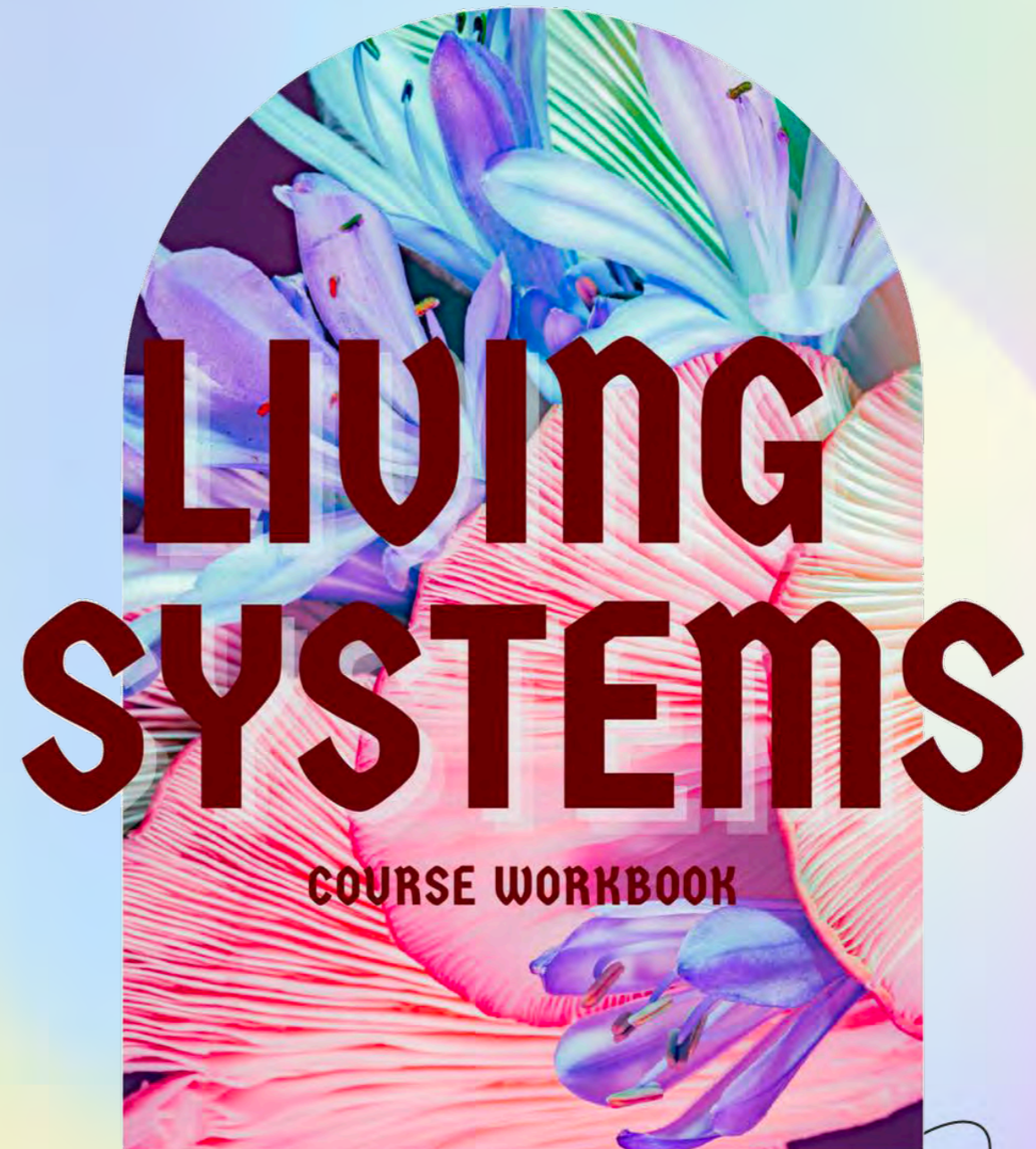
their own communities and allow to ripple out. Decoloniality asks us to be local, praxistical, and pluriversal (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) and to this end, the intended relationship between student and curriculum is that they might make use of concepts in just those ways in their homeplaces.

Right now, *Living Systems* is in its second cohort, serving 57 students, and hosting 11 guest teachers. The goal of this course is to facilitate participant learning to see themselves as inherently in relationship with everyone and everything. The goal is to make space away from the fixed individualism and separation from nature rooted in *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am) philosophy and make moves toward relationality. This curriculum is something of an experiment to see what happens when participants engage in nature not as saviors, but from a new understanding that we are nature. At this moment, the only way to story new stories might be through experimenting wildly.

Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 240-270.

Mignolo, W. D., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press.



## Experience of Artmaking in Community with Unhoused Women at the Downtown Women’s Center, Skid Row, California, USA.

By Karen Silton, Dissertation Student

“Home is not a territorial construction, a mere roof over one’s head but signifies a potential restorative sense of belonging”—Malidoma Somé

Unhousedness is a global crisis. As of the recently released 2023 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count in Los Angeles County, California, homelessness for women increased 6% in one year to 22,320 (LAHSA). Eighty-two percent are women of color, 53.2% have experienced domestic or interpersonal violence, and 59.7% assess their mental health as fair to poor. Until recently, solutions to unhousedness have focused on reinstating the physical aspect of home, leaving vital dimensions underserved including overwhelming psychological, spiritual, social, and emotional fallout. If, as Carson McCullers asserts, “to know who you are, you have to have a place to come from,” unhousing threatens an individual’s core sense of self. One unhoused man put it in this way, “I never realized I was homeless when I lost my housing, only when I lost my family and friends” (Epatko, 2018, p. 1).

My dissertation research explores the experience of artmaking in community by unhoused women served by the Downtown Women’s Center (DWC), Skid Row, Los Angeles, USA and how insights might support restorative paths of wellbeing. My focal approach was Arts-Based Research (ABR), and more specifically a/r/tography which uses artmaking as the primary mode of inquiry to decenter *a priori* definitions of knowledge and epistemic authority. Responses by both DWC staff and participants have been overwhelmingly positive. One key theme to emerge is the essentiality of creating a container of security, a safe space to nurture inner freedom and renewal. In the space of safety and invitation, artmaking in community reveals as a medium for restoring wholeness, through the melding of outer – sitting around the table, talking with each other, creating art – and inner – relaxation, security, concentration, self-appreciation – processes. As one participant described, “The trust I feel here – I put it to work. In my mind, in my thoughts, in my heart, in many ways...Self-expression is about you, your spirit, your soul, your being...[and] it’s going to exude in your art and people can see that it’s you coming through.” Another expression of inner restoration nurtured in the artmaking workshops is the joy and self-appreciation that accompanied the gifting of artwork. Many workshop participants gave their artwork to DWC staff members, friends, and family. Based on qualitative data analysis from group discussions, the emergence of gift giving appears highly meaningful. By all definitions, DWC women are under tremendous pressures. Inner and outer resources are under constant challenge. There is not enough money, not

enough shelter, not enough time to fill out forms and make critical appointments, and so on. Life teeters on a hairline of survival. To care enough to give something made by oneself away to another indicates possible feelings of enoughness. Not only does an individual feel she has renewed sufficient inner resources to give to someone else, she feels that the art is worthy of giving – she herself is worthy. She touches into a renewed sense of wholeness.





Coyolxāuhqui Stone

## Plants, People, and the Psychology of the Pluriverse

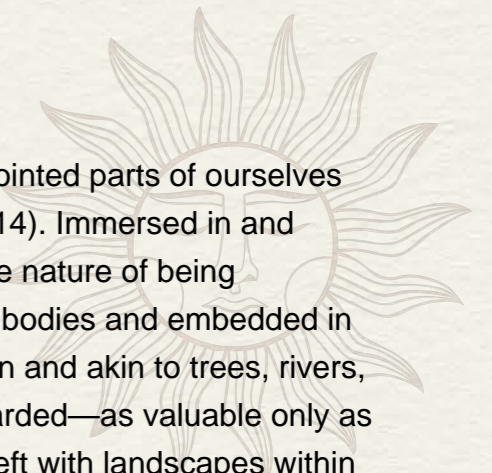
By Ramón Alvarado, Dissertation Student

The idea of psychology as solely an individual science is an absurdity of the Anthropocene—for to be human is to be social. Here I use the word *social* as inclusive of our relationships to the human, the more than human, and the other than human. In *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, psychiatrist Jean-Michel Oughourlian shared that “we must give due recognition to the interchangeability, the porosity, and the constant interaction between the self and the other... The self as psychological entity, is a structure in constant becoming at the heart of continuous exchanges” (Mimesis and Science, 2011, p. 49). As such, our psychology cannot be understood as a singularity, that is, without the understanding of how it is *in relationship* to the many worlds and beings around us. My dissertation journey in the Depth Psychology CLIE program at Pacifica has found its pathway emerge through my own relationship to bringing into being several community gardens in Santa Monica, California’s affordable housing communities.

Gardens represent the original members of community without whose generous partnership there would be no permanent community. Yanomami shaman, Davi Kopenawa, centers the role of generosity as a way to generate and solidify social bonds, instead of the modernist proclivity for subjective ideas around values and the “incapacity of understanding the eternal things such as water, stones, earth, sky, sun, and the *xapiri*—all of the spirits who live in one’s respective lands” (Kopenawa and Albert, 2013, p. 330). Here, it is important to recognize that social bonds extend far beyond the limitations of *the human*. With the occurrence of a global pandemic and the interruption of neoliberal-centered modes of production, distribution, and access, many populations are recognizing both the interconnectivity and the fragility of industrialized food systems. Indeed, all of humankind’s systems appear now appear quite tenuous and most easily uprooted



Ramón Alvarado (far left) and Carolyn Day (right), Founder of Growing Hope Gardens with resident participants in a Harvest Donation and Planting Workshop

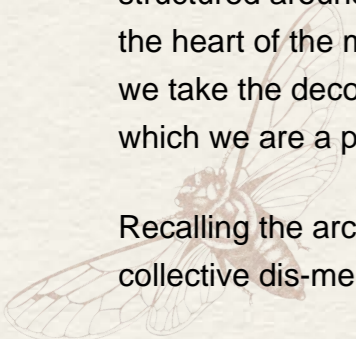


by the tiniest of agents, be they viruses or the viral thought-contagions of the toilet paper kind.

So what are the pathways to our return to right-relationship? In my project, community gardens have revealed themselves to be sites of liberation away from systems of domination that are built through relational landscape solidarities between all *xapiri* (spirits) of the land, air, water, and sky. Humankind, in all our historiography, has never been so cut off from the non-human partnerships that make living possible at all. The imposed modernist separation between the human-as-neoliberal and the connection to the pluriverse has resulted in widely documented abuses to *Pachamama* occurring on an epic scale. The recognition of ourselves as part of a living-system-as-lineage has been thoroughly obscured.

In my own Indigenous diasporic lineage, *Tonalli* (soul), is reflected back to us through our plant relatives, stones, mountains, and earth—each a living *testimonio* and visible *Tonalli* of deities and ancestors (Furst, 1995, pp. 71-75). Make no mistake, it is our plant relatives that have continued to support us through the entirety of human history. Human histories and plant histories are intertwined by an intrinsic and irrefutable relationality that has been obscured by capitalism and the insidious neoliberal ontologies that label autonomous subjects as non-agential objects to be owned, de-animated, and extracted from. Within modernist ontologies, we do endure, but only as fractured and disembodied products of what Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2013) termed the coloniality of power, referring “to the interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination (power)” (Maldonado-Torres, p. 242). And the very basis of what has “become modern identity, inescapably framed by world capitalism and a system of domination structured around the idea of race... [enacts] this model of power [that] is at the heart of the modern experience” (Maldonado-Torres, p. 244). So how do we take the decolonial turn to honor our relationship to the living systems of which we are a part?

Recalling the archetypal image of the Azteca goddess Coyolxauhqui, our collective dis-memberment, as hers, obscures the totality of our being and



relegates us to recognizing only glimpses of the disjointed parts of ourselves (Moraga 1993, Anzaldúa 2015, Gaspar de Alba 2014). Immersed in and consumed by neoliberal selfways, our souls and the nature of being (ontology) have been cut off from our psyches and bodies and embedded in the concretizing stone of modernity. We are both kin and akin to trees, rivers, and original ranges: cut up, dislocated, and disregarded—as valuable only as we are useful to the service of capitalism. We are left with landscapes within and without that speak to us in wide, barren desolations that are as spiritual as they are topographic.

Despite this current dystopic ecopsychological reality, we can recall and return to the root, and thus are called toward the “taking back [of] the scattered energy and soul loss wrought by [multiple] woundings. Healing means using the life force and strength that comes with *el ánimo* to act positively on one’s own and [especially] others’ behalf” (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 90). Community gardens offer some of that ground from which we might, together, root and enrich the living system which makes up our life community. We must make the return to conceptions of “wellness from a Native American perspective [that] considers the communal context for individuals [who] seek a balance of mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of living” (Rybak & Decker-Fitts p. 335).

Indigenous-based practice is far older than the colonizing forces that brought European ways to *Abya Yala* —the name that the Kuna-Tule people gave to the “Americas” before colonial invasion [signifying] “land in full maturity” or “land of vital blood” (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, p.21). As I vision with communities of people, plant, and planet, I wonder how affordable housing residents in Santa Monica, CA, and indeed each of us, can co-create liberatory community gardens and cultivate both food and frameworks of solidarity and resistance through relational ways of being in the world. The Indigenous psychological approach to how we relate to gardens and one another might generate a sort of re-existence (i.e., resistance from abyssal exclusion) (Santos 2018), and reshape environmental/ecological landscapes by being in an actively acknowledged relationship with the land. At heart, my dissertation project has flowered into a resistance to neoliberal

epistemologies as a component of well-being through diasporic *survivance* (Vizenor, 2008) strategies elicited through community gardening.

The current and dominant modernist ontology situated in late-stage capitalism centers the human as individual while the true “psychological actuality is the relationship between the two... [an] *interdividual* relation” (Mimesis and Science, 2011, p. 50). Relational ontologies are characteristic of Indigenous cosmovisions and have influenced the social justice movements in the Global South in places like Ecuador and Bolivia, where the rights of Nature have been written into constitutions. The integration of community gardens as subject-relationships, and not as objects to be extracted from, could inform the consideration of realities that extend beyond empirically driven knowledge alone, and might be revealed in non-traditional ways: perhaps in oral traditions from Ethiopia, or the use of medicinal herbs from Mexico for example. Confronting the dehumanizing policies and systems intended to maintain modernist constraints of *rules and regulations* is a matter of eliciting the praxis of Indigenous concepts like *survivance* (Vizenor, 2008). If we are to move beyond colonialist trappings of absence and powerlessness characteristic of Eurocentric and individualist models that obscure our embeddedness within a living ecosystem and deep history within it, we must make the return to relational selfways. If “the contemporary experience commits us to the present—*aka pacha*—which in turn contains within it the seeds of the future that emerge from the depths of the past [*qhip nayr uñtasis sarnaqapxañani*]” (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012, p. 96) then perhaps the collective unconscious might help to guide a decolonial path through community gardens as agential partners that become part of that which guides us toward the end of coloniality and an emergence of pluriversal politics (Escobar, 2020).

My research with community gardens as emergent liberatory sites situated in landscape solidarities represents a distinct departure from the western ontologies of mainstream psychology, and is often not appreciated by the neoliberal *status quo*. Yet, as we root down through our ancestral lineages and into decolonial Indigenous psychologies, we can reveal powerful

liberatory tools that allow a describing and analyzing of our human experience while honoring the relational realities of all life on *Pachamama*.




 amoxtli\_andante

Photo by @Amoxtli Andante, during Día de los Muertos, Honoring El Maíz Sagrado from Copalillo in Guerrero, Mexico

The role of decolonial scholarship and research is to co-construct the praxis of Indigenous psychology engaged directly and intentionally with liberation and relationality to create progressive social justice change in the context of agitation and the dissolution of the capitalist and modernist empire. Through this pluriversal lens, we might yet reap our resistance.

## REFERENCES

- Anzaldúa, Gloria (1987). *Borderlands: The New Mestiza/La Frontera*. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Press.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria, and Ana Louise Keating (2015). *Light in the Dark/ Luz En Lo Oscuro : Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Duke University Press.
- Garrels, Scott R.(editor) Mimesis and Science (2011). *Empirical Research on Imitation and the Mimetic Theory of Culture and Religion, Studies in Violence, Mimesis and Culture Series*, Michigan State University Press.
- Escobar, Arturo (2020). *Pluriversal Politics, The Real and the Possible*. Durham and London. \_\_\_Duke University Press.
- Furst, J. L. M. (1995). *To the tonalli as sumptuary art*. In *The Natural History of the Soul in Ancient Mexico* (pp. 71–75). Yale University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1cc2k5p.13>
- Gaspar, de Alba, Alicia (2014). [Un]framing the "bad woman": Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui, and Other Rebels with a Cause., Print.
- Kopenawa, Davi Yanomami, and Bruce Albert (2013). *The falling sky: Words of a Yanomami shaman*. Translated by Nicholas Elliott and Alison Dundy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Nelson Maldonado-Torres, N. (2013). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of the concept. In W. Mignolo & A. Escobar (Eds.), *Globalization and the decolonial option* (pp. 94-124). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Moraga, Cherríe, and Gloria Anzaldúa (1983). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. NewYork: KitchenTable, Women of Color Press.
- Moraga, Cherríe (1993). *The last generation: Prose and poetry*. Univeristy of California Press.
- Mignolo, W., & Walsh, C. E. (2018). *On decoloniality: Concepts, analytics, praxis*. Duke University Press.
- Rivera, Cusicanqui, S. (2012). Ch'ixinakax utxiwa. Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. Duke University Press.
- Rybak, Christopher, and Decker-Fitts, Amanda (2009), Understanding Native American healing practices. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* 22.3: 333-342.
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2018). *The End of the Cognitive Empire, The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*. Durham and London. Duke University Press.
- Vizenor, Gerald (2008). *Survivance, Narratives of Native Presence*. Lincoln and London. University of Nebraska Press.

## dreaming of genderless possibilities...

By Tayler Thompson, Dissertation Student

I was asked to write a piece on gender, and I have to say... I'm over it. Every time I sat down to give voice to the swirling colors in my mind, I was met with the same awareness; I'm over it. I'm over talking about trans rights, gender equality, all of it. Or at least I thought I was over it. I thought so until I realized it isn't specifically the topic that I'm tired of talking about, but how the topic is currently discussed. It isn't that I'm over talking about trans rights, but that I am over the ongoing politicking and policing of and by trans people in an effort to keep those like myself, "engaged in the fight."

It's the fight. When I say that I'm over it, it's the fight that I am over.

Don't get me wrong. I think that the fight must go on. As a non-cisgender person, I live the reality of that fight every day. As a psychotherapist with a caseload of nearly 20 trans folks, I see first-hand the immediate, life-changing effects of gender affirming care when my clients receive it, not just from me but from other providers as well. Anecdotally, I see a decrease in anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideations and behaviors when a trans person gets beyond-adequate care. Also, I see the way that trans people who do not get access to that care are caught up in a spiral of shame, isolation, depression, anxiety, etc. So, let me say it again more clearly: I know that gender-affirming care is life-affirming care.

And still, I'm over the fight. Will I take heat for speaking that truth? Probably. Will it change my orientation to the issue? No. In fact, it may further it along even more. This is where my dissertation research comes in. Developing around this topic of curiously considering what else is possible, the intention of my project is to consider an additional strategy in the way in which the rights of trans lives are honored and respected.

In *Emergent Strategy*, adrienne marie brown writes, "There are a million paths into the future, and many of them can be transformative for the whole" (p. 8). Gender-affirming care is one such path. Bodily autonomy for transgender people has the potential to be a pathway toward bodily autonomy for the whole. But a hyper-focus on this within the social activist circles I've been a

part of has left me wondering: What else is possible? Could we create a world in which gender-affirming care isn't a necessity simply because care, in and of itself, is the politic at large? Is it possible to envision a future that consists of pluriversal recognition and acceptance of all people; a future that rejects the antiquated identity markers of the past?

Continuing to follow brown's calling, I find myself resonating with her when she writes, "What we pay attention to grows, so I wanted to stop growing the crises, the critique" (p. 46). The way my body ignites when I read those words and then type them here is a sign that I know I am seeking something other than the fight. It is the same feeling I had in class when Professor Bayo Akomolafe asked, "What if the way we are handling the problem is the problem?"

While the fight for trans rights is necessary, it can't be all there is. After all, we cannot expect the oppressor who benefits from our oppression to simply surrender one day. And what energy remains for the building of the pluriverse if all our energy is spent in an attempt to burn down the colonial universal? As I've danced with my dissertation ponderings, this has been perhaps the most important message that rises up over and over again. M. Jacqui Alexander writes in *Pedagogies of Crossing*, "What we have devised as an oppositional politic has been necessary, but it will never sustain us, for while it may give us some temporary gains... it can never ultimately feed that deep place within us: that space of erotic, that space of Soul, that space of Divine" (2005, p. 282).

My friend and co-conspirator, k-rob, tells me that this piece I was reticent to write is a call to action. They're not wrong. The question is, who will bring their dreams and heed the call? Who is ready to join me as I step into the decolonial beyond?

Alexander, M.J. (2006). *Pedagogies of Crossing*. Duke University Press.

Brown, A. (2017). *Emergent strategy*. AK Press.



## A Conversation on Race with my Ancestors

By Tierra Patterson, Dissertation Student



Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise. I rise. I rise.” **Maya Angelou**

For I am my mother’s daughter, and the drums of Africa still beat in my heart.” **Mary McLeod Bethune (Juma, 2020)**

Ancestors I seek you for strength. I seek your perseverance, your legacy of survival and existence. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately killing Black people, the Racial Uprising, and the resistance against police brutality against Black people, I am losing my faith, my hope that things will get better, that I can make a difference. How do I function in the midst of obliteration? How do I meet demands of productivity when my people are the targets of a systemic genocide that is being disavowed by what feels like the whole world? How do I feel and live and be present to my experience when I am constantly being told that it is not real? I feel myself falling deeper into the abyss of despair. Our world is in chaos, our earth is sick, and with the environmental crisis, I am not sure if we will have a viable environment in the next ten years. Is it even worth the fight? Can we ever have a post racial society?

Ancestors hear me. Help me. Guide me. “My child, we see you, we hear you, and we are with you. We are your ancestors. You are related to us through shared history, love, origins, trauma, beliefs, culture, and blood. We are collective with diversity in our responses to your queries. There is nothing that you have experienced so far that you did not survive. You have encountered despair before and still you rise. Look at where you are. Look at what you have done. Look at who loves you and who you love.”



Colors of the Heart, By Sadie Patterson, Tierra’s great aunt

I don't think any of that matters. I am not sure that I continue to rise, as I feel as if I am drowning. I have lost so many people who said they loved me, and though I have others in my life, I still feel the weight of loss and rejection. My degrees, professional success, home ownership and friendships feel slippery and transient. I feel the need to keep seeking security as everything feels like it can be lost. I have watched my parents lose home, after home, after home. The system is corrupt and the justice we Black people receive is a game of Russian Roulette. How can I trust that things will be fair when fairness never applied to my people? While it feels like everyone is affected by pain, loss, poverty, war, and poor health? The afflictions of the world seem to be worse for Black people, My people.

"Yes, you have lost many, as they were not supposed to walk with you in the next part of your journey. You have new companions now, that are able to provide and gain support from you that the others could not. We love you and mourn with you. Not everything is meant to be kept, and what is ours has often been stolen from us."

It feels as if this world was not meant for me. That my people are being rejected and our histories erased. I am fed information about the history of my people and the history of Africa that doesn't follow logic. I feel disconnected from my indigeneity and relegated to be a second-class citizen of the world, just because of my black

female body. The historical narratives I have been taught about my people speak of survival and resistance but only to continue to be oppressed. I am tired and feel the futility of continuing to exist.

"But you are not alone. It's impossible. You are intimately known and intimately loved and the struggle you know is the struggle we knew; the struggle we know. Because the path you take is not taken alone. We aren't just guides; but the strength and propelling you feel is the understanding of what's to come. We know and we see. We've been enveloped in the infinite and power your strength with the infinite. You are resilient and what you know is not what you will always know. There is more. Think on this:"

“By creating a new mythos - that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave - *la mestiza* creates a new consciousness. The work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject/object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 102)

We, Black people, live in the aftermath of oppression and trauma and in turn become our own perpetrators. I feel so weak in the shadow of your long suffering. I find myself imposing irrational expectations.

Despite the seeming self-actualization that is conveyed in my professional achievements; my various degrees; or my position as the covering and provider for my family, I am lost. My footing hasn't been stable and I can't help but lament at the status of the society and notice that the fractured state of my family is a microcosm of society.

"Extricate yourself from the duality of your position. Black/White; BIPOC, non-BIPOC; he/she; Christian/Atheist. What if the classifications melted away? Close your eyes and breathe. You are infinite. Limitless. Unbound by the laws of duality and society. Allow your mind to break free from the limits you've known. You are uniquely equipped to enter systems and shift them. Refuse to be limited by what you know. 'Heal the split.'"

Isn't existing outside of the duality of society ignoring the history and pain that white supremacy has inflicted globally? That makes no sense to me. People who say they, "see no race," see none of the pain that comes with the Black story in America. They don't see how governmental policy has been weaponized against my skin and how it's literally trickled down to the actual physical health of my people.

“Not enough has been written about the psycho history of racism in the United States, the ways in which the traumas that are a consequence of exploitation and oppression leave their mark” (hooks, 2008, p. 55). That seems too unfair to just forget.

“But transcendence releases. In order to exist in this post-racial world you asked about, you must release. Weight must be perfectly balanced to soar. No burdens of yesterday. We just move forward. Transcend beyond the oppressive hold of white supremacy and the western paradigms. Be open to other epistemologies and ontologies (Nelson, 1999, p. 115). Use your resources, do the work of self-healing, earth healing, the work to be whole and holy (hooks, 2008, p. 68). What do you gain by holding on?”

There is too much inequity to just release everything and move forward now. There are grave differences in our access to nature, housing, our health, physical, and economic, and even the jobs we can obtain. I can't just forget all these things.

“Oh, but you can! Close your eyes and breathe. Focus on your breath. That breath you take is the same breath every one of your brothers and sisters that exist in your dimension with you need. The infinite is the same infinite you and all of your brothers and sisters will experience. Shared. Commonality. Together. Collective. We are one.” How does that make sense to you? “Move away from the questions of how and what will be lost and focus on the gain. Tell us what you see as you breathe.”

Well, I see commonality. My preconceived notions don't exist. Society looks different. It's a communal governance. Law enforcement exists, but not as I've ever known it. The natural human tendency to rank itself doesn't exist—it's almost as if that was a symptom of racialization. All things are shared. It's the Acts 4 church from the Christian Bible:

32. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that bought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Acts. 4: 2:7)

Ancestors, may my calling of your name conjure your wisdom, your covering, and that of the lineage before you. Allow the strength of our family that survived the Middle Passage, chattel slavery, and *de jure* racism, arise as I converse with you. You are acknowledged and you are welcome.

I say your name, to honor you, to remember you, to accept your wisdom and to stay connected. Daddy, Eric Murphy; Papa, Rodgner Thomas; Big Mama, Lenore Mixon; Auntie Rita Jones; Auntie Toni Carter; Aunt Ella Cooper; Grand Mama Mindy Ware; Auntie Rosa Goode; Ganny Annie Mae Goode; Father Dermond Patterson II; Grandma Ruth Patterson; Grandfather Dermond Patterson; Auntie Marsha Patterson; Uncle Ethan Patterson; Grand Daddy Matthew Mixon; and the unnamed ancestors who I feel in my soul, in the earth, and in my body, thank you.

## References

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Publishers.

hooks, b. (2008). *Belonging: A culture of place*. London: Routledge.

English Standard Version Bible. (2001). ESV Online. Retrieved October 12, 2020: <https://esv.literalword.com>

Juma N. (2020). 70 black history month quotes celebrating African American contributions. Retrieved October 11, 2020: <https://everydaypower.com/black-history-month-quotes/>

Nelson, M. (1999). Becoming Metis. In J. L. Barnhill (Ed.), *At home on the earth: Becoming native to our place* (pp. 113-118). University of California Press.

# ALUMNI STORIES

## A Path Beyond CLIE: Finding A Vocational Home at the University for Peace

By Stephanie Steiner, PhD, CLIE Alum

When I began looking into attending the CLIE program in 2016, I was teaching as an adjunct professor in peace studies programs at several colleges in southern California. I loved teaching, and really yearned to be teaching full-time, and I was seeing job postings I couldn't apply for without a PhD I already had a masters in Peace Education from the University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica, which allowed me to teach as an adjunct, but the full-time positions remained elusive without a PhD.

I chose CLIE because to me it was peace studies by other names, the most important names, the heart of peace studies (and cultivating peace) to me. Six years, a child, and a pandemic later, I successfully defended my dissertation on decolonial, pluriversal, vitality-centered pedagogies, and a few short months later, I began a full-time resident faculty position at my alma mater, UPEACE.

UPEACE is a graduate institute that was mandated by the United Nations (which means it was founded by and is affiliated with the UN but does not receive funding from it) as a center of higher education and research dedicated to peace. Located in Costa Rica, UPEACE receives students from all over the world to study peace at the masters and doctoral levels in specializations such as peace education, gender, media, environment and development, and international law. In my role as Assistant Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies and coordinator of the Peace Education masters programme, I teach courses across the department and supervise the Peace Education masters students. This year I am teaching classes on peace education, gender and media, strategic nonviolent resistance, and educating in emergencies. I also have the opportunity to lead workshops with visiting groups, such as local schools or visiting universities, and support student-led events and activities.

I pursued a PD because I wanted to have the option of a full-time faculty position, but after writing a dissertation that was highly critical of mainstream higher education, as well as exploring the possibilities within and beyond it, I was no longer sure if academia was going to be my path. I am actively involved with (and my dissertation was deeply nourished and inspired by) the Ecoversities Alliance, which is a group of folks from around the world who are committed to re-imagining higher education, and they [published a piece I wrote](#) last year, based on my dissertation, about the possibilities, challenges, and tensions of re-imagining higher education from within. My greatest fear was that academia might crush my soul, and that I wouldn't be able to bring my gifts fully to a role there. Yet I also know and understand that one of my gifts is being able to navigate the spaces in between formal and emergent spaces, to dwell in this tension and reach for the possibilities.

I am happy to report that I have found a vocational home, I have really been able to bring my gifts to this role, and they are valued, most especially by the students I am fortunate to work with. UPEACE was already my home as my alma mater, but returning 12 years later after my time in CLIE, I am able to bring so much of value back with me, particularly a decolonial standpoint, a deeper understanding of systemic violences of coloniality, and myriad ways to engage with transrational ways of knowing that feels so essential to decolonizing higher education. I am drawing from my dissertation work every day as I slowly continue to weave my findings into my pedagogical praxis. Spending two plus years devoted to a dissertation topic weaves its way into your being, and while this is an ongoing process, it feels less like *applying* what I learned and more like *living in the unfolding* of it. Having only been here six months, I am still in the early stages of this cycle of praxis, and yet I can say with confidence that CLIE prepared me for this path, and that what I have found post-CLIE is beyond my wildest dreams and imaginings.



Stephanie Steiner

“Teaching Introduction to Peace Education: Theory and Practice in the bamboo hut, my dream classroom!”



# ENSOULED

BY KAMEE ABRAHAMIAN PhD, CLIE Alum

*For as long as I can remember, I've turned to the page, stage, and screen as a sanctuary and a language to make meaning, to heal, and to be in relationship with the families and communities I belong to.*

I have long worked towards generating queer and feminist content by/for SWANA communities. They are ultimately who I make this work for. My approach in general is to center the reclamation of ancestral memory as a crucial aspect of SWANA solidarity and resistance. In this way, a large measure of success for my work is how community builds around it - because relationships are integral to building and visioning new worlds. Most recently I've been working on an episodic series called Ensouled. The narrative follows a solitary hacker as they face mounting pressure to join an underground liberation movement, when they discover secret correspondences between their ancestors who survived the Armenian Genocide. While they experience a resurfacing of painful childhood memories, their lover is kidnapped by state soldiers - forcing them to embrace resistance as their birthright.

Ensouled foregrounds the survival of communities most often underrepresented in mainstream media and visions into the futures of those who have survived and thrived since time immemorial. ***It is queer, feminist, ancestral, traumatic, healing, dystopian, utopian, tragic, historical, futuristic.*** The story asks - when faced with existential crisis, how do SWANA women and queers survive and thrive on their own terms? The storyworld evokes visionary fiction as conceptualized by Walidah Imarisha, in how it "pulls from real life experience, inequalities and movement building to create innovative ways of understanding the world around us, paint visions of new worlds that could be, and teach us new ways of interacting with one another." The guiding thread of this series is that resistance is the birthright of those of us who are surviving the insurmountable. Our liberation is grown from seeds planted by those who came before us, ultimately manifested in myriad ways.

My hope is to portray SWANA women and queers across generations fighting for self-determination, justice, and ancestral reclamation. As they face distinct but connected existential struggles - from genocide to sexual violence to cultural erasure - each character actively decides to live and fight on their own terms. This becomes possible by relying on each other and a long line of badass-to-the-bone ancestors as a support system, because resistance can only happen in community and in relationship with others.



There is little to no SWANA speculative fiction media out there, let alone narratives that center feminist and queer paradigms, or SWANA stories that aren't rooted solely in tragedy and victimhood. In this way, my intention here is to strategically shift away from typical Hollywood paradigms of heroic saviors and rugged individualism, while also undoing white-washed and damage-centered representations of SWANA peoples continuously prevalent in the series landscape. *Ensouled* explicitly highlights both the survival of queer SWANA people and our capacity to thrive. ***As a visionary fiction series, Ensouled is not only genre-bending but it is also genre-making.***

In all the pitches and applications I've crafted to bring this story to the screen, the most common questions I am prompted to answer is ***why me, why this story, why now?*** But I can't answer any of these questions without explaining where it came from and who it's for.

*Ensouled* comes from ancestral memories that live in my bones. I hear whispers of their stories in my dreams. I invoke them in the smell of frankincense and coffee with cardamom and no there is no such thing as too much garlic and yes you can make jam with roses.

***This story came from all our grandmothers and their grandmothers as well, who sowed the seeds of our collective liberation.***

***This story is ours.*** It tells of how we thrive as women and queers in a world that is designed to make us small. It complicates the idea of survival, how we idealize and sensationalize it. It's about agency, how we hold our lives in our hands and share it with others. It's about laughing and fucking through all the war, displacement, and trauma. It's about fuck the trauma, it doesn't define us. We make our own futures by drawing on the spirits of those who came before us, who dreamed us into existence.

For these reasons, the development of this story became all the more potent during the pandemic as we faced the loss of our elders. ***As keepers of ancestral memory and knowledge, the gravity of this loss is potent for many diasporic and migrant communities whose ancestors are/were their only connection to home-culture, family histories, and the healing of intergenerational trauma.*** For *Ensouled*'s protagonist, although these connections have been systematically severed, they continue to fight tooth and nail to reconnect even when there is no hope. The stakes are high whichever way you look at it: in the storyworld, for those who no longer have access to their ancestral stories, practices, and languages; in my personal experience as a queer SWANA daughter and mother raised in the diaspora; and for audiences, who empathize with the grief and relentless determination that permeates through each character's journey.

*Ensouled is currently in development and looking for partners. I received research and development funding from the Canada Council for the Arts and Ontario Arts Council, out of which a proof of concept film was produced (featured in Outfest Museum and shown at Outfest Fusion in Los Angeles in March 2023). In the fall of 2022, I was taken on as a mentee by Lilly Wachowski, who has been supporting my process in developing Ensouled.*



# Dissertation Reflections on Radical Love Traditions: Exploring the Decolonial Turn in Maternal Healthcare for Black Women

By Amber McZeal, PhD, CLIE Alum

In August of 2022, I had the privilege of defending my dissertation *Radical Love Traditions: Exploring the Decolonial Turn in Maternal Healthcare for Black Women*. The decolonial turn, as defined by Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2008), my mentor and external reader, is the definitive entry of formerly enslaved and colonized subjectivities into the realm of thought at previously unknown institutional levels. My work centered phenomenology as the meta-methodology, supported by a decolonial theoretical framework. Within this meta-methodology, I employed performance ethnography, under which embodied-archetypal and narrative inquiry were subsumed. This transdisciplinary methodological constellation intended to apply the principles, values, and approaches of phenomenology to explore, in an embodied and aesthetically participatory way, what D. Soyini Madison (1998) referred to as **the performance of possibilities**, which centers on the principles of transformation and transgression, dialogue and interrogation, as well as acceptance and imagination to build worlds that are possible (p. 472). My intention here was to cultivate the emergence of an embodied understanding of psychological life and well-being for Black women and mothers, from an African-centered archetypal perspective, and to utilize that knowledge to transform maternal healthcare ethos and praxis.

Reflecting on the decolonial turn and the entrance of new subjectivities previously unknown or dismissed at the institutional level, I was humbled and awe-inspired by the process of ancestral reverence practices which became a central feature in my work. This expanded relational field—the inclusion of ancestral wisdom as a valid site of knowledge-production—transformed my

conceptualizations and approach to cultivating a radical care ethic in the field of maternal healthcare. This sacred scholarship ritual dissolved unconscious tendencies toward *objectivity* and ignited an embodied epistemology that



[Yusimi Moya Rodriguez, formerly of Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba demonstrating dance for Yemaya in the Lukumí tradition.](#)



continues to reveal itself. At the cellular level, the process carried me through the borderlands of coloniality/modernity to reveal a radical love current that resides at the root of my ancestors' experiences. I arrived at this deeper current through an emergent process I call an African Indigenous archetypal psychological approach.



## References

- Brewster, F. (2019). *Archetypal grief: Slavery's legacy of intergenerational child loss*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Bynum, E. (1999). *The african unconscious: roots of ancient mysticism and modern psychology*. New York, NY: Cosimo, Inc.
- Karade, B. I. (1994). *The handbook of Yoruba religious concepts*. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc.
- Madison, D. S. (1998). Performance, personal narratives, and the politics of possibility. In S. Dailey (Ed.), *The future of performance studies: Visions and revisions* (pp. 276-86). Annandale, VA: National Communication Association.
- Martin, D. (2012). African mythic science or Vodou methodology. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 83-100.
- Mason, J. (1992). *Orin orisa: Songs for selected heads*. Brooklyn: Yoruba Theological Archministry.
- Okoro, C. (2011). The notion of integrative metaphysics and its relevance to contemporary world order. *Integrative Humanism Journal-Ghana*, 3-28.
- Olupona, J. K. (2014). *African religions: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Somé, M. (1993). *Ritual: Power, healing and community*. New York: Penguin Putnam.
- Somé, M. (1994). *Of water and the spirit: Ritual, magic, and initiation in the life of an African shaman*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Somé, M. (1998). *The healing wisdom of Africa: Finding life purpose through nature, ritual, and community*. New York: Penguin Putnam .

From the amalgamation of phenomenology, narrative inquiry, embodied inquiry, and critical performance ethnography, co-constructing knowledge with my co-researchers produced a new, emergent methodology which I named an “African Indigenous Archetypal” methodology. As an African-centered psychological framework, African Indigenous Archetypal inquiry includes engagement with narrative, art, symbol, embodiment, psyche, social, and ecological life. This methodology centers what Denise Martin (2012) calls the mythic mind. In her writing on Vodou methodology and African mythic sciences, she explained, “African cultures, from a classic viewpoint, use myth to define, describe and give meaning to all aspects of life—natural, civil, sacred and social” (p. 83). She continued,

“Mythic science is an integral part of an African-centered theoretical perspective which challenges the researcher to place African values at the center of their analysis. African cultures view their societies as extensions of their myths. Where scientific inquiry stagnates or stalls, the mythic mind begins. Further, engagement with myth stimulates an expanded sensorial territory, which includes the body as an intellectual faculty, “intuition, extrasensory perception, humility, and a holistic worldview. (p. 85).

This methodology affirms and recognizes the myriad ways that African Traditional Religious Technologies (ATR) as an embodied knowledge system were used to preserve cultural memory, sustain the dignity of Being, and promote personal and collective healing (Brewster, 2019; Bynum, 1999; Karade, 1994; Mason, 1992; Okoro, 2011; Olupona, 2014; Somé, 1993, 1994, 1998). As I continue the process of integrating this depth journey, it becomes strikingly clear how the application of Indigenous psychologies at the institutional level supports the decolonization—the process of making things whole—that our culture yearns for.

*Deep gratitude to my committee—Dr. Nuria Ciofalo, Dr. Fanny Brewster and Dr. Nelson Maldonado-Torres—for their tremendous support and care.*



# Òṣun Consciousness: Honoring the Goddess of the Journey of Finding Home

By Alisa D. Orduña, PhD, CLIE Alum

I am the daughter of the late Dora Aliese Jones Brou; I am the granddaughter of the late Florence Orduna Hickerson and Aliese Lucille Robinson Jones; I am the great granddaughter of Callie Butler, Manwilla Jones, Pearl Tolbert, and Bessie Hill; I am the great, great granddaughter of Mary Looney Jones, Phoebe Briggs, Dora Durham Butler, Jennie Bell, Velmer Saunders, Martha Howard, and Bruna Lopez; I am the great, great, great granddaughter of Minerva Foster Looney, Tena Bell, Mary Strange, Nancy Houston; and I am the great, great, great, great granddaughter of Roxanne Campbell. My name is Alisa. I am an Afro-Feminine Ingenious scholar, policy practitioner, and facilitator of beloved community through dialogue, storytelling, and action.

For years, I ran away from a spiritual calling heralded at birth, until a classmate in my first class at Pacifica shared a vision of my priesthood calling and asked why I was running. I knew at that moment that the Goddess, the primordial energy of the Divine Feminine, had after years of longing, called me home and initiated me into the dissertation journey.

During this process, I would come to know the Goddess' desire for me to integrate my Grandmothers' ways of knowing – those I knew and those from my ancestral lineage – into my emerging professional practice in homelessness services. The Goddess

guided me to Cuba, Haiti, Nigeria, New Orleans, Skid Row (Los Angeles), Inglewood (CA), and later Kentucky, to re-member their ways and inform the development of a process of conscientization named Òṣun Consciousness after the West African Yoruba Oriṣa (deity) named Òṣun.

At the same time, I sought understanding of the overrepresentation of Black men, and later Black women, who experienced the phenomenon of homelessness in my hometown of Los Angeles. Although I had worked in homelessness services for twenty years prior, I had not had time to reflect and study the historical roots of homelessness within the context of the Black experience in the United States that I believed were contributing to this phenomenon. Òṣun Consciousness became a framework to collectively re-member the meaning of home through a decolonial lens.

Òṣun Consciousness emerged from a mandala constellating the embodied memory of a shared West African value system that honored land, Elders (i.e., community, family lineages and kin), tradition (i.e., culture, language, religion), and the Ancestors, as an antidote to the existential experience of homelessness projected through the frequent collective experience of micro-and macro acts of racial terror, social control, and media's visualization of inferiority. Hence, my



Greeting the Elders: Cheif Òṣun Priestess Ode Remo, Nigeria. 2019.

dissertation *Òṣun Consciousness: Unearthing Anti-Black Biases in the Los Angeles Homeless System Soul as reflected in the Sacred Histories of the African American Experience* (2021) was born. Since completing my dissertation, I wasn't sure if my integration of my spiritual calling and vocation in homelessness services would sustain; however, thankfully, the Goddess continues to accompany me in activating the epistemology of *Òṣun Consciousness* into my practitioner work. I have grown my strategic advisement firm, Florence Aliese Advancement Network, LLC (named after both of my grandmothers) to work with cities, counties, philanthropic organizations, and technical assistance firms to develop life-affirming homelessness response systems through a racial and gender equity lens. I have been appointed to the California Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness Advisory Board and the Los Angeles County Black People Experiencing Homelessness Implementation Committee. I have also joined the adjunct faculty at the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy, teaching my first semester-long class, a Seminar in Social Justice in Public Policy. Finally, I am a proud board member of the Pacifica Graduate Institute Alumni Association.

In sharing my story, I hope it offers light and support to current dissertation students, particularly students of color. As transformative leaders, our ideas are often ahead of our times, yet as one of my advisors, Dr. Fanny Brewster said, "birth it anyways." Give something for the world to strive towards. Pacifica is a sacred, disruptive space where the archetypes of the collective psyche and your own ancestors will support you and the birthing of ideas that only you can bring to the planet. Surrender.

I give thanks to the Pacifica faculty, alumni, cohort members, the Goddess and all of the Ancestors, including those who still walk on Pacifica's land, for guiding me.



## Stepping and its Potential as a Liberatory Praxis

By Dominic King, PhD, CLIE Alum

My dissertation research explored step dancing and its capacity as a liberatory praxis. I examined how stepping could advance social and political movements spearheaded by Black Americans. Stepping has been a practice in the African American community for decades in communal spaces and college campuses. My research was to understand the power and lineage of stepping as a culmination of different African cultural practices. In various African cultures, dance is an essential part of life. It helps teach basic skills, aids in ceremonies and worship, and creates new norms and tools to resist colonial powers. Stepping has the potential to assist African Americans in the United States to engage in a practice that has deep ancestral roots and ties to our homeland. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, I interviewed members of historically Black Greek Lettered Organizations to gain their perspectives, as each organization has different styles and techniques of stepping. I attempted to interview representatives from each of these groups, but unfortunately, one organization did not respond promptly and was therefore not included in this research. The Covid-19 pandemic also affected plans for this research, but I could carry on and complete it.

In this study, I discussed the numerous dances in African countries, such as the Gumbo dances, the Toyi-Toyi, Capoeira, and many others that have assisted in creating social and political movements of power and resistance. I then discussed the capacity stepping has to impart wisdom and connect African American youth to their roots. This capacity could manifest through programs where youth present themselves to the community, similar to a coming-of-age ceremony. In my research, the four main thematic concepts identified were: **Embodied African Artistic Praxis to Resist Colonial Powers, White Mainstream Society Theft of Black Art and Expression, Utilizing Dance in Diasporic Communities to Fight Colonial Traumas,**

**and Black & African Art's Connections to Social and Political Advancement Movements.** From my research, I can say that stepping represents so much more than a dance. It is a practice that has the power to connect the past to the present in a visceral way that can instill feelings of pride. As a practitioner of stepping myself, I hope this dance form is revered as a genuine spiritual and cultural practice, as stepping can open up doors and opportunities in a liberatory and transformative way.



2020 Long Beach Step Show. Kids Perform”  
Plugged by tc. Alpha’s performance. Photo by Christopher, T.

# FACULTY VOICES

## Òsun Ladekoju, Osogbo, Nigeria: Diasporic Ajé

By Susan James

Since 2021, I've collaborated with Kwayera Archer, Managing Director and team members of [Ladekoju Arts and Culture Foundation](#) to secure grant funding for the restoration of an historic sacred arts site, educational center, spiritual residence, and sustainable farm located in Osogbo, Òsun State, Nigeria. Under the guidance of Chief Priestess Chief Adedoyin Talabi Olosun, Òsun Ladekoju is committed to the restitution of *Ise* (Ancestral) practices and spiritual technologies that were suppressed under colonialism but have proliferated globally. The project operates within a unique staff and volunteer model that engages members from within Nigeria and across several other countries to generate *ajé* (communal forces). Osogbo is home to the Sacred Groves, a Unesco World Heritage site, and represents the origin and lineage source of venerated traditions that proliferated across the diaspora, taking on new and modified forms following the Middle Passage. Although largely unacknowledged in the west, numerous adapted versions of these religious and cosmological interpretations are observed by practitioners globally and they serve as sources of relevant, current, and highly valued epistemologies within the African Indigenous canon. Often addressed from an anthropological perspective and within the colonial project, their cultural influence is relegated to a conquered past, labeled as superstition and belief, rather than longstanding critical ecological systems. These realities are endemic to earth-based ways of knowing and being that have survived for millennia despite concerted efforts to extinguish them through perpetual direct and indirect forms of violence and exclusion from legitimized discourse.

Ladekoju Arts and Culture Foundation operates through the *àse* (power) of the Yoruba *Orisa Òsun*, representing feminine principles, collective social responsibility, and the balance between birth and ancestry, as expressed through her flowing waters. With generous support from Open Society Foundations, the initial restoration phases have begun, and we eagerly anticipate the next phases, looking toward the rivers as guides.



In July 2023, we were honored to welcome **Dr. Jenny Escobar** as Core Faculty in the CLIE specialization. Dr. Escobar is committed to ending cycles of violence and oppression by creating opportunities for individuals and groups who have experienced systemic and historical trauma to (re)imagine living a life in full alignment with their heart, mind, and spirit leading towards liberation. As a weaver of multiple knowledges, Dr. Escobar is able to integrate academic research, community and culturally based curriculum, and spiritual practices into her work as an ally and advocate for healing. Being born in Colombia, a country of intergenerational warfare, and growing up as an undocumented immigrant in Jackson Heights, New York, she has been fortunate to learn and personally witness the incredible strength and resiliency of humans' capacity to live through and from unspeakable forms of violence.

Through all of this, her spiritual gifts and connection to a higher being guide her intentions and practices. She is convinced that our most powerful and creative resource lies within spirit and God, and she taps into this energy through the non-human living beings around her, with water having a special connection to her heart.

## Community Psychology Encounters with Pitaguary Indigenous Knowledge in the Northeast of Brazil to Build Transnational Alliances

Since last fall, I have been doing my postdoctoral research in the Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies Program at Pacifica Graduate Institute. I have been attending some of Nuria Ciofalo's and Susan James's classes. In these settings, I have met students from diverse regions of the United States eager to learn more about decolonizing Psychology applied to their professional endeavors. CLIE provides clues to this enormous task by using Black, Indigenous, Latino, and Global South authors to present other alternatives. The walks through the corridors of the Ladera Campus, the conversations in the dining hall, and the virtual and face-to-face classes have helped me to sediment some of the accomplishments of this decolonizing task. I am increasingly convinced that learning with Indigenous people can contribute to this decolonization process (Ciofalo, 2019). I have been in contact with several Indigenous communities in Brazil (Pindorama) and Latin America (Abya Yala) through my participation in the Latin American Training Network on Community Psychology. The Training Network provides me with an understanding of how Community Psychology can be co-constructed with different Indigenous peoples in the region. These learnings underpin the Participatory Action Research (Fals Borda, 2013) with the Pitaguary Indigenous people in Northeast Brazil.

I wrote this text in collaboration with my research team (Ph.D. students in Psychology at the Federal University of Ceara) and the Pajés (spiritual leaders) of the Pitaguary people in a counter-storytelling perspective (Dutta, Azad, & Hussain, 2021), recognizing the legitimacy of their oral, ancestral, and spiritual knowledge. Brazil is the Indigenous land of the Pindorama peoples (Dias & Almeida, 2011) in Latin America (Abya Yala). This region was the cradle of participatory and community methodologies in the Human and Social Sciences, specifically within

**By James Ferreira Moura Jr.**  
Professor at the University for  
International Integration of the Afro-  
Brazilian Lusophony, Brazil, Fulbright  
Fellow, and CLIE Postdoctoral Fellow  
2022/2023, USA

Photo by James Moura. "The Quarry and the Dragon" The Quarry is recognized as a sacred space by the Pitaguary people. On this hill, a lying dragon, an enchanted being, protects the Pitaguary Indigenous territory.

Liberation Psychology. Communities apply various practices of empowerment, healing, and mobilization (Gois, 2003). The native peoples of Pindorama have experienced and continue to experience the colonial traumas implanted by the colonization of being, power, and knowledge (Castro & Mayorga, 2019). However, they continue resisting and creating new possibilities of existence informed by their ancestral knowledge, collective struggles, and the use of herbs, dances, music, rituals, and prayers. Applying Participatory Action Research, we developed a Pitaguary Community Psychology. This way of doing grounded Psychology comes from Martin-Baró's Liberation Psychology (2017) which points to colonization as one of the leading causes of violence, inequality, and oppression in Latin America. We also realize that the participatory and community theories and methodologies produced in the Latin American context are associated with Indigenous knowledges, especially that of the Pitaguary Indigenous community in the Northeast of Brazil. Pitaguary's care practices are based on collective decisions and their ancestral knowledge linked to spirituality.

Among the actions taken in the engaged Indigenous communities of the Pitaguary territory are care practices informed by Community Psychology and the knowledge produced by the Pitaguarys. We had deep experiences interspersed with the practices of listening, such as: 1) dancing and spirituality through the *toré* that includes circularity and body movement as producers of energy; 2) Indigenous body painting through the ancestral practice of graphs in which the energy of the person who receives it is renewed; and 3) listening based on direct contact with nature as a sacred space that produces well-being and healing from suffering. Thus, based on a participative and critical approach, we integrated learnings in Community Psychology with the ancestral knowledge of the Pitaguary People and applied healing practices informed by their spirituality, relationships with nature, art, and dance. Allies can build solidarity and support the struggle of the Indigenous peoples. At the beginning of 2023, we received a student from the Pacifica CLIE program in Brazil to learn about the activities we have been conducting in collaboration with these communities. If you are interested in knowing more about these practices of Community Psychology aligned with the knowledge of the Pitaguary people, you can email James Moura at [james.moura@unilab.edu.br](mailto:james.moura@unilab.edu.br).



Left to Right. James Ferriera Moura, Karissa Williams (2nd Year CLIE Student), Paje AlexBarbosa (Pitaguary spiritual leader), Liduina Barbosa (Pitaguary healer)

- Castro, Ricardo Dias de, & Mayorga, Claudia. (2019). Decolonialidade e pesquisas narrativas: contribuições para a Psicologia Comunitária. *Pesquisas e Práticas Psicossociais*, 14(3), 1-18.
- Ciofalo, N. (Ed.) (2019). *Indigenous psychologies in an era of decolonization*. Springer.
- Dias, C. L. & Almeida, M. R. C. (2011). Os índios na história do Brasil. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2010. *Revista De História*, (165), 481-484.
- Dutta, U., Azad, A. K. & Hussain, S. M. (2021). Counterstorytelling as epistemic justice: decolonial community-based praxis from the global south. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 69, 59-70.
- Fals Borda, O. (2013). Romper el monopolio del conocimiento. In: Herrera, N. A. H., & Gusman, L. L. (Org.). *Compromiso y cambio social. Textos de Orlando Fals Borda* (pp. 253-263). Buenos Aires: El Colectivo Lanzas.
- Gois, Cezar Wagner de Lima. (2003). Psicologia Comunitária. *Universitas: Ciências da Saúde*, 1(2), 277-297.
- Kelley, A. N. (2021). An Autoethnography of the Cross-Cultural Researcher. Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, USA. *The Qualitative Report*, 26(12), 3724-3733.
- Martin-Baró, Ignacio. (2017). *Crítica e libertação na Psicologia: Estudos psicossociais*. Editora Vozes Limitada



## Short Reflection on a Scholarly Visit to Pacifica Graduate Institute

By Ronelle Carolissen, PhD

Visiting Professor from the Stellenbosch University, South Africa

During the week of 20 February, I was privileged to spend the week at Pacifica Graduate Institute as a visiting scholar. I had always wanted to experience first-hand what a programme that integrates psychologies of liberation, critical community inquiry, Indigenous Psychologies, and psychoanalytic traditions may look like. I was therefore eager to learn about the Ph.D. Depth Psychology programme with Specialization in Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies but also to exchange ideas on some of my own work. Both my contributions, a guest lecture, “Student Experiences of (Non) Participation in Student Protest: A Decolonial Feminist Approach of Refusal” and a two-hour seminar on “Decolonising Psychology” were well received. In the seminar, offered as part of Dr. Ciofalo’s class on Indigenous Psychologies, I drew on student-situated knowledges via photovoice to illicit their pre-existing understanding of approaches to decolonising Psychology. The students found the session meaningful and valuable, especially since some of their own work had been integrated into the lecture. This session stimulated much animated and engaged discussion.

The classes offered in this programme are rich, and I would have loved to attend more of these stimulating sessions. I attended Dr Mingo’s session on Advocacy and Policy and joined Dr Kanyako’s class on reconciliation and peacebuilding where he asked me to reflect on some of my own experiences of living through a truth and reconciliation commission in a democratic South Africa.

This was my first visit to Santa Barbara, in apparently unseasonably cold weather and threatening storms. Yet the lush green tropical vegetation and palms were food for the soul and offered me some valuable time for reflection and writing. The park-like surroundings at PGI, where students learn and faculty teach, is indeed a privilege and inspiration for thinking and learning. The generosity and kindness of colleagues, especially Drs. Ciofalo and James, exude care, an often ignored but crucial component of decoloniality in our contemporary world.



Dr. Ronelle Carolissen, Pacifica Graduate Institute

## Huaka`i to Pacifica, Susana Helm, Ph.D. [HelmS@dop.hawaii.edu](mailto:HelmS@dop.hawaii.edu)

Visiting Professor from the Department of Psychiatry, University of Hawai`i at Mānoa

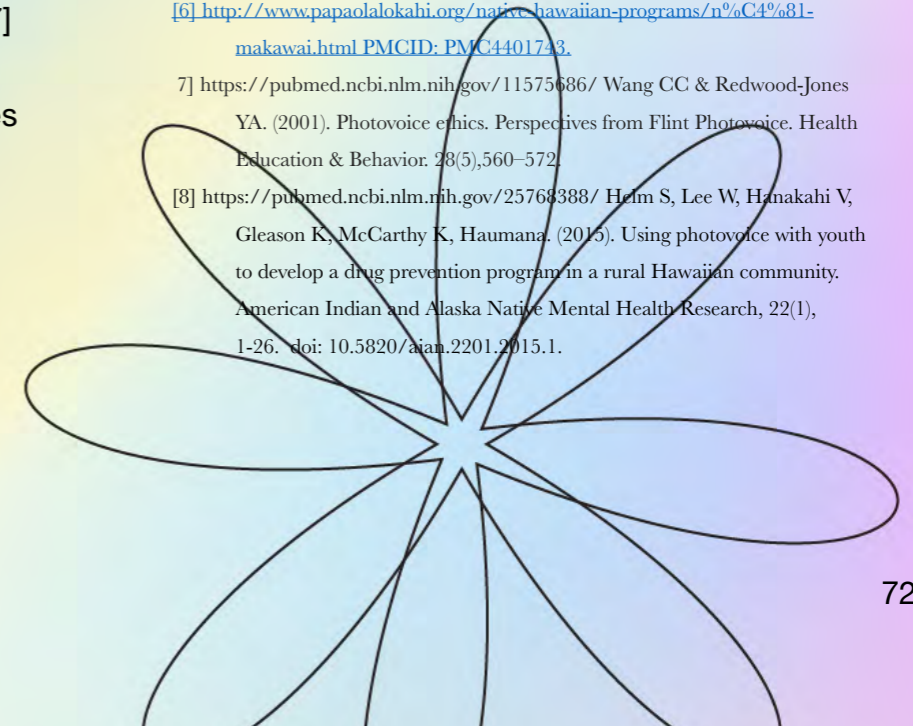
I awoke on January 24, 2023 to the pink morning sky unfurling across the steep slope bordering the Pacifica campus. *Mahalo* to the administrative team for facilitating my stay, and to Professor Nuria Ciofalo for inviting me.

Having lived and worked in Hawai`i[1] where the Indigenous population continues to strive and thrive in spite of settler-colonial destruction since 1778, I was honored to participate in Professor Ciofalo's Community, Liberation, Indigenous, & EcoPsychology (CLIE) program. Professor Ciofalo and I have been friends since our student days in the community-cultural/social/planning doctoral program at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa Department of Psychology. I have much gratitude for my friend, colleague, and mentor Professor Ciofalo, who created a participatory action research course for UHM in which I enrolled (1997?). Her class helped me crystalize what I had learned in practicum in Tijuana with San Diego based S.H.A.R.E. (Self Help and Resource Exchange) in 1993 where I was introduced to the works of Paulo Freire's and Franz Fanon's liberation psychology. I continue to be inspired by Nuria's pledge to liberation and de-coloniality[2] in her teaching and practice. I have much to learn. I appreciate the critical and decolonial views shared by the CLIE students in

response to my presentation related to Indigenous Culture-as-Health[3] (C-as-H). As my professional career has evolved from training in western and adapted approaches, I am proud of my more recent work in culturally grounded[4] and Culture-as-Health with Native Hawaiian youth and communities. I am grateful for the CLIE students' insights on my professional huaka`i (journey) that I shared in the DPC860 class, and am hopeful about the students' collective commitment to liberation.

I am pleased to share that our state's Department of Health, Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division[5] and Papa Ola Lokahi[6] have/are supporting the implementation, adoption, and sustainability of our C-as-H intervention called *Puni Ke Ola+* (PiKO+, life flourishes in a healthy community). PiKO+ combines a PhotoVoice[7] inspired pedagogy, both in intervention development[8] as well as in program activities with haumana[1] (apprentice, in the case of PiKO+ the *haumana* are adolescents, also referred to as '*opio*'). I hope my presentations inspired CLIE students and faculty to use PhotoVoice as a participatory action research strategy in their own health justice, wellness sovereignty, and liberation work.

- [1] [https://osa.jabsom.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2021/07/Maui-Issue1\\_v7.pdf](https://osa.jabsom.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2021/07/Maui-Issue1_v7.pdf) Davis K, Davis M, Valette Y, Wilhelm MB, Ng-Osorio J, & Helm S. (2021). PhotoVoice with healers and leaders. Concept and exemplars from Puni Ke Ola. Maui. Art & Literary Journal at JABSOM. 1(1), 44-53. <https://osa.jabsom.hawaii.edu/maui/issue-1/>.
- [2] [https://www.scrs27.org/files/5816/4686/6041/TCP\\_Spring\\_2022\\_V552.pdf](https://www.scrs27.org/files/5816/4686/6041/TCP_Spring_2022_V552.pdf) Burrage R, Riley L, Helm S. (2022). Trauma informed care, colonial oppression, and community & cultural resilience. The Community Psychologist, 55(2), 35-36.
- [3] <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ajcp.12562> Ciofalo N. (2022). Making the road caminando de otra manera. Co-constructing decolonial community psychologies from the Global South. American Journal of Community Psychology, 69(3-4), 426-427.
- [4] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35286545/> Yamane CYEW & Helm S. (2022). Indigenous Culture-as-Health. A systematized literature review. Journal of Prevention 43(2), 167-190. DOI 10.1007/s10935-022-00666-3.
- [5] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23463854/> Helm S, Okamoto SK. (2013). Developing the Ho`ouana Pono substance use prevention curriculum. Collaborating with Hawaiian youth and communities. Hawaii Journal of Medicine and Public Health, 72(2), 66-69. PMC3585502
- [6] <https://health.hawaii.gov/substance-abuse/prevention-treatment/prevention/>
- [7] <http://www.papaolalokahi.org/native-hawaiian-programs/n%C4%81-makawai.html> PMID: PMC4401743.
- [8] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11575686/> Wang CC & Redwood-Jones YA. (2001). Photovoice ethics. Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. Health Education & Behavior. 28(5),560-572.
- [9] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25768388/> Helm S, Lee W, Hanakahi V, Gleason K, McCarthy K, Haumana. (2015). Using photovoice with youth to develop a drug prevention program in a rural Hawaiian community. American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research, 22(1), 1-26. doi: 10.5820/aian.2201.2015.1.



# Sentipensar and the Pedagogy of Healing: My Experience Teaching at Pacifica

By Eduardo A. Lugo-Hernández, Ph.D.  
University of Puerto Rico

Sociologist Orlando Fals Borda shared the concept *sentipensar* as a way to represent the integration of thought and emotions in working with oppressed communities. In sharing this concept with the academic world, he also exemplified the value of mutual learning, epistemic humility, and openness to a process of liberation based on mutuality and caring. In an interview, Fals Borda acknowledged that the concept *sentipensante* was given to him by a fisherman. This simple action of recognition is a profound moment for me as a professor who positions myself as a Liberation Psychology proponent. You see, Fals Borda could have appropriated the term, making the concept captive of the academic realm and benefiting from the prestige of coining a concept that has provoked so much reflection because it breaks with Western positivist ways of knowing and challenges the role of researchers and our ways of seeing the communities we engage with. It drives us to visualize the liberation process as a mutual one where *conscientización*, deideologization and liberation are built through walking together, learning together, feeling together, healing together.

As I approached my first opportunity to teach at Pacifica, *sentipensar* was at the center of my Syllabus development and the planning of a mutual learning space for me and my students. I recognized that my Liberation Psychology course was the meeting of many different worlds that would engage in a process of co-learning. I based our sessions around exploring concepts such as coloniality of power, coloniality of being and coloniality of knowing, centering the discussion in



Dr. Eduardo Lugo-Hernández

the experience of Puerto Rico, the oldest colony in the World. We talked about recent colonial expressions of violence through the backdrop of the climate crisis which has accelerated neoliberal austerity measures and has opened up the Puerto Rican *archipiélago* to predatory practices, transforming it into a tax heaven for millionaires. This has resulted in new colonial settlements, gentrification, migration, and the beginning of a cultural shift that some fear will result in cultural genocide. Liberation psychology values were analyzed in this reality, creating critical consciousness not only about students' own work, but also their positionality in relation to U.S. colonial rule and imperialism.

We had the privilege of having amazing feminist Puerto Rican guest speakers who shared their work with us. Dr. Patricia Noboa spoke to us about her Legal Psychological Clinic working with diverse communities who face structural oppressions such as inadequate housing, lack of clean water, energy inconsistency, racism, and xenophobia. Tania Rosario, director of Taller Salud, shared the work of her long-standing community organization working with reproductive rights, violence prevention, and racism and masculinity. She centered her discussion of colonial patriarchal oppression bringing awareness about the historical violence that PR women have faced through forced sterilization and their participation in the contraceptive pills trials, through unethical processes. Dr. Yarimar Rosa-Rodríguez spoke to us about her project Siempre Vivas Metro, which has the objective of eradicating gender violence on her campus. She guided us to think about

*acompañamiento* with our students and the importance of *sentipensar* and healing.

These Puerto Rican women grounded their work on decolonial feminist theory and liberation psychology. They shared their use of diverse methodological approaches including *acompañamiento*, art-based projects, storytelling, photovoice, autoethnography and auto interviews.

I truly believe that my teaching (and learning) experience at Pacifica was a mutual journey with my students, of knowledge co-creation and the validation of our humanity. In community, engaged research and action as well as in teaching, *sentipensar* becomes transformative. It allows you to realize that in any given space we are both healers and wounded; that the exchange of knowledge, skills and resources is based on a mutual search for equity and well-being in an increasingly unequal and violent world. But we also realize that oppression has been a catalyst for projects, organizations and social movements that embody liberation psychology goals and provide hope for change. Hopefully, we can turn our classrooms and our universities into regenerative learning spaces where knowledge is shared, critical consciousness is raised, and *sentipensar* guides our relationships and methodologies.



## Ecopsychosocial Accompaniment: Co-Creating with Humility

By Mary Watkins

[Remarks on receiving the Seymour B. Sarason Award for Community Research and Action, SCRA June 2023]

Thank you so much for recognizing my work. It is both *heartening* and *encouraging* to me. I am honored to find myself placed in a line amongst previous recipients, from whom I have learned so much and respect so deeply.

My path in psychology has been both eccentric and nomadic. Initially thinking psychology was about going “inside” to know yourself, I started with an early immersion in dreams, waking dreams, and depth psychologies. Pairing this with social justice and anti-nuclear activism in the 1980’s, I discovered that when you go far enough “inside,” you come out into the world, and vice versa. Indeed, there is a steady exchange going on, making these borders more conceptual than real. When I encountered Brazilian pedagogist Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, I found a recognition of this. I stepped on to the path of studying liberation psychologies from the Global South, sympathizing with their critiques of Euro-American psychology, and inspired by their liberatory practices. My phenomenological approach to research became more critical and participatory. I began to see the kinds of understandings that can best be developed in groups, where the knowledge and wisdom of each participant enriches the discoveries necessary for community and self-transformation. Over decades, I have travelled from private practice to public practice, from the consulting room to the US-Mexico border, and then to the still segregating borders in our own towns and cities. I moved from the asylum to immigration detention centers and prisons and their abolition. Presently, I have returned to a more concerted gaze at the history of enslaving in this country, including by my own ancestors who--along with others--began to see themselves as “white” at the end of the 1600’s, a reframing of themselves and others for the sake of profit with disastrous repercussions suffered to this moment.

There are two common threads I see in the variousness of my eccentric path: 1) my attempts to understand the water I and those I am accompanying are swimming in—historically, psychologically, morally, and culturally; and, 2) trying to make use of myself in accompanying those who desire accompaniment--students, forced migrants, those suffering from individual and collective trauma, people who are imprisoned and detained. In both clinical and community practice these two threads should be tightly braided together, as I hope this becomes apparent below.

I wish I had had the opportunity to meet Professor Sarason, after whom this award is named. His queries are junctions where our work converges. He asked why did psychology grow up in the way it did in the United States? Why did it take on such an asocial, ahistorical, acultural path? He urged us to always announce our standpoint in culture, time, and place so that our theorizing and practice are circumscribed, instead of falsely universalized. Despite graduating forty years apart from a common *alma mater*, Clark University, our graduate educations failed to address these questions, and we both, in our own ways, set about afterwards to understand them.

As I was leaving Clark in 1982, I was laboring under my department’s expectation that I would teach and do research, as clinical work was deemed a second-class citizen at the time. I remember driving home one night from school, close to finishing my dissertation, and facing the truth that despite eight-and-a-half years of graduate study, I did not yet know what in psychology was truly worth teaching. I faced the fact that I was going to have to defer teaching until I did. I had to also admit that although I was turning to continue clinical work, the clinical paradigm I had been tutored in had become seriously frayed over the course of my internships.

As I worked with mothers who were struggling to bring up their young children without abuse, I dove into the history of motherhood across history and cultures and discovered that Euro-American psychology's expectations regarding nuclear family structure and childcare are novel, recent, and culture bound. In large part, they are not conducive to the psychological well-being of mothers and young children. This meant that the object relations theorists I had come to love had been trapped by their historical moment without knowing it. Next toppled the dominant model of selfhood, individualism, reflected in most of the developmental and clinical psychology of that time. This asocial paradigm is generative of unrealistic expectations of individuals that result in undue feelings of loneliness and personal failure, while keeping the social settings that generate distress and misery out beyond critique and needed transformation. Then I began to understand, largely through the work of anthropologist and psychiatric epidemiologist Arthur Kleinman (2008), that much of our bible of psychopathologies, the DSM, was also culture bound, although widely exported and inappropriately universalized. The process of dissolution was not yet complete. Through the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Mary Belenky (1996), I learned that the normative developmental theories I had been tutored in were largely based on studies of white boys and men and were laden with unannounced Euro-American cultural values. These insights sent me scrambling into critical anthropology and history and most decidedly into psychologies of liberation from the Global South (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). The latter made it clear that to understand ourselves, we need to learn history and, in particular in our time, the history of colonialism that has so brutally disrupted commons and communities across the globe for five hundred years. And, of course, there would be no way to understand colonialism without grasping its foundational pillars of racism and capitalism. Paulo Freire (1989), Frantz Fanon (1967), Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994), and Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) became my new teachers. I learned that the Euro-American psychologies I had been schooled in carried within themselves—without awareness—colonial structures and ideas. Freire (1989) made it clear that the psychological “expert” who does not know they are coming from a particular culture and a particular history—often to a community quite unlike their own—is in grave danger of “cultural invasion.” They will not only fail to

acknowledge and make use of the knowledge and wisdom that is already present, but, too often, undermine it as well. They will pursue their own interests, not those of the people they are working with. This is accomplished under the misleading banner of “helping.”

Liberation psychology introduced me to the word and practice of “accompaniment.” The root of *acompañamiento* is *compañero* or friend. It draws from the Latin *ad cum panis*, to break bread with one another. It is descriptive of the effort to be alongside another or a community in a more horizontal fashion, to respond to calls for assistance, and to make a commitment to stay the course. In Paul Farmer's (2013, p. 234) words, “To accompany someone is to go somewhere with him or her, to break bread together, to be present on a journey with a beginning and an end. There's an element of mystery, of openness, of trust, in accompaniment. The companion, the *accompagneur*, says: “I'll go with you and support you on your journey wherever it leads. I'll share your fate for a while—and by “a while,” I don't mean a little while. Accompaniment is about sticking with a task until it's deemed completed—not by the *accompagneur*, but by the person being accompanied.”

In the daily course of our lives, we enjoy the friendship of family, friends, and colleagues, and share the labors and joys of living life with one another. There is often an easy back and forth to these relationships. Inevitably, however, daily life is interrupted by crises—both acute and chronic --that call upon us for extra-ordinary efforts. At times, we are the subject of such crises and need to call upon others for help and assistance. At others, we are aware of the need of another or others who are facing challenges in which they request accompaniment. Accompaniment, one by another, is central to human life: i.e., the parent's accompaniment of the child, the partner's or close friend's accompaniment in a time of illness or duress, the adult child's accompaniment of their aging parent.

While accompaniment in community psychology overlaps with these experiences, it also diverges (Watkins, 2019). It shares the ingredients of steadfast attention, empathic attunement, and commitment. But we must ask of ourselves additional questions that enable us to understand the broader

historical, social, and ecological context of the issues that are presenting. To indicate this, I preface the term “accompaniment” with the adjective “ecopsychosocial” (Watkins, 2019). What is the historical and cultural context of those we have been invited to accompany? Only by knowing this can we begin to grasp the social structures and policies, the cultural assumptions and values that are in play in shaping the situation. Frantz Fanon (1967) called this “sociogeny.” In addition, *where* are their lives unfolding? What is the history of the place itself? By “eco-“ I am referring to the land, the water, the air, the earth, the village, town, or city. For me, ecopsychosocial accompaniment is a powerful corrective to oversteps by psychologists of all stripes who have been tutored in the role of the “expert” and the “consultant” (Barnwell, Bradshaw & Watkins, 2022; Watkins, 2019b)

I also want to underline the potential *mutuality* of accompaniment. While accompaniment may begin as an answer to a call, as the relationship develops, the community psychologist is affected, is themselves tutored, often critiqued, and can be challenged by and enjoy both the learning and the relationship. Hopefully, the practitioner grasps how their own liberation is bound up with that of others. If accompaniment unfolds in this way, it has the potential to morph into an enduring solidarity.

The critical study of history and how it plays out in the lives of individuals, families, and communities cannot be acquired by happenstance. It needs to be cultivated through the way we research and discuss community challenges in our graduate classes and in our participatory work with community members.

This is all necessary for ecopsychosocial accompaniment, but it is not sufficient. At Lompoc Federal Penitentiary in California where I co-facilitate a curriculum called *The Houses of Healing* (Casarjian, 1995), my students and I are asked to confront a core question: “Who am I, really?” This is an essential question with many layers for every community and clinical practitioner. In my own nomadic path, I was initially discovering I was a person of European American descent who had become fascinated with theories spun by other European Americans who had not asked who their theories were for and who their theories were about. They had not asked who

was absent and how their assumptions and values had disappeared those missing. The larger context of colonialism was never mentioned. I had been brought up in a highly individualistic culture and was 30 before I could begin to see that the psychology I was learning had manufactured theories taking this paradigm of selfhood for granted, contributing to the kinds of social amnesia and myopia that Russell Jacoby (1975) so aptly described. I had entered a profession that was not being troubled by its collusion with racial capitalism, despite the evidence of capitalism’s generation of pervasive psychosocial harms. My stance in the world as a white United Statesian has had to be continuously unpacked. The intersections of economic class, gender, race, and sexual identification have needed to be placed under scrutiny in an effort to address the question, “Who am I?”

An unceasing process of asking “Who am I, really?” is far from navel gazing. It ought to be a key component of our education and later of peer review. What are the implications of our positionalities for the work we engage, the people we interact with, and the conclusions we draw?

For community psychologists of European descent living in the United States and thus recipients of ongoing “white” privileges born of brutality and injustice, we need to turn our research gaze around to ourselves and our communities. In order to cease perpetuating savage inequalities, we need to come to grips with how we and our ancestors have been the problem. Contrary to the far right’s call to protect ourselves from deeply reflecting on the greed and direct and structural violence in our histories, we need to face into them and work not only on a pedagogy with those locked out of the commons but work steadily on a pedagogy for the nonpoor “white” people in the U.S. that opens beyond acknowledgment into reparations.

The tasks that liberation psychology engages with communities suffering violence and injustice—conscientization or the development of critical consciousness, de-ideologization, and prophetic imagination—need also to be deployed with willing elites and their communities to assist in returning assets, land, and power in acts of reparative justice. But there are additional and particular challenges as well. In a recent article, “A Pedagogy for the ‘White’ Non-Poor in the U.S.: Returning Stolen and Excess Wealth,

Land, and Resources to the Common Good” in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Watkins 2023), I have described some of these challenges. I name them here: bearing ongoing witness to harms perpetrated by self, one’s groups, and ancestors; opening to feelings of shame and collective remorse; mourning the spiritual poverty that has accrued, hand-in-hand with excess status and resources; deepening our sense of interdependence; disidentifying with excess wealth, by facing the fact it was neither wholly earned or deserved; resolving to end extraction from others and the earth and return excess wealth, land, and power; co-creating and accomplishing plans for this return, while engaging in ongoing processes of accountability; and, finally, all the while, investing time, energy, and resources in building horizontal relationships and mutual accompaniment, mutual aid, and solidarity.

While I am suspicious of the idea of progress, I believe that deeply understanding the effects of colonialism and racial capitalism on individual, community, and ecological well-being can decisively orient our work. It enables us to not only respond to these egregious effects, but to also address systemically what continues to perpetuate such harms.

When Seymour Sarason looked back on his life and his work that founded American community psychology, he singled out the importance of personal humility and of developing collaborative learning relationships (Trickett, 2015). In his autobiography, he says that being a psychologist “requires a strange mixture of arrogance and humility, arrogance because of the complexity you seek to understand and humility before the knowledge that understanding is inevitably partial at best” (1988, p. 415). He worried that this humility was too lacking in our profession.

The Greek root of humility comes from *humus*, the earth. Engaging in an ongoing practice of critical self-examination that grows out of a deepening understanding of our own particular historical context cultivates this humility. Realizing that when we enter another cultural context, our task is to learn from the cultural workers and community members present, not to evangelize psychological theories born from within our own particular cultural standpoint is necessary *humus* for humility. It is from this humble stance that we can imagine together, desire together, co-create, and co-sustain the kinds of decolonial spaces, places, and ways of working and living with one another that are so desperately needed.

To the students and younger practitioners present: At times I despaired I had chosen the wrong field. At more than one juncture, I was very disillusioned by the field of psychology. But as I began to realize that the work is not just to learn what the field offers and to practice it, I brightened. Psychology is not a finished discipline; it can never be. A liberatory community psychology happens in particular places amongst particular people, negotiating their histories and their dreams for the future. In each place, if we humbly labor to know who we are and the deep context of the people and place, ecopsychosocial mutual accompaniment can be a site of co-creation. This can be a fulfilling place, indeed.

#### References

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Press.
- Barnwell, G., Bradshaw, G. & Watkins, M. (2022). Grounding community psychology in practices of ecopsychosocial accompaniment. In C. Kagan, J. Akhurst, J. Alfaro, R. Lawthom, M. Richards & A. Zambrano (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of community psychology: Facing global crises with hope*. Routledge.
- Brinton Lykes, M. (1997). Activist Participatory Research Among the Maya of Guatemala: Constructing Meanings from Situated Knowledge. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53, 4, 725-746. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1997.tb02458.x>
- Casarjian, R. (1995). *Houses of healing: A prisoner’s guide to inner power and freedom*. Lionheart Foundation.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks* (C. L. Markmann, trans.). Grove Press.
- Freire, P. (1989). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Seabury.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice*. Harvard University Press.
- Jacoby, R. (1975). *Social amnesia: A critique of conformist psychology*. Beacon Press.
- Kleinman, A. (2008). *Re-thinking psychiatry: From cultural category to personal experience*. Free Press.
- Martín-Baró, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. Harvard University Press.
- Prilleltensky, I. (1995). *The morals and politics of psychology*. SUNY Press.
- Trickett, E. J. (2015). Seymour Sarason Remembered: “Plus ça change...”, “Psychology Misdirected”, and “Community Psychology and the Anarchist Insight.” *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 56, 3-4, 197-204. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9744-9>
- Watkins, M. (2023). A Pedagogy for the White Nonpoor in the United States: Returning Stolen and Excess Wealth, Land, and Resources to the Common Good. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00221678231155517>
- Watkins, M. (2019a). *Mutual accompaniment and the creation of the commons*. Yale University Press.

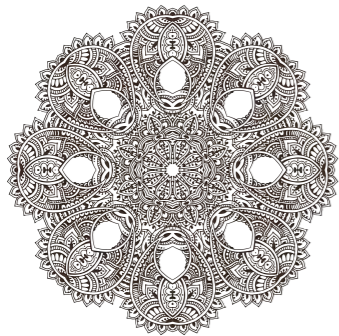


# Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) Division 27, American Psychological Association, 19th Biennial Conference

Hosted by Morehouse College, Atlanta Georgia. June 20-24, 2023



## CLIE ABSTRACTS

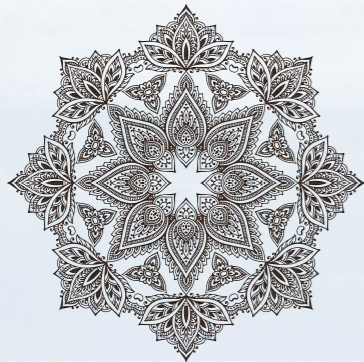


### A Decolonial Praxis of Core Competency in Community Psychology: Autoethnography of a Budding Leader

Shepsara Marion, Second-Year Student

This presentation will share my involvement in a community praxis intended to disrupt the master narratives of leadership, service, and citizenship. I volunteered for a youth travel program that takes youth from diverse backgrounds across the U.S. on international service trips to Central America. Twenty-one juniors and seniors from high-performing magnet schools in Chicago attended the two-week trip. The students were from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and mostly from low-income families. The highly selective student travel program is guided by the question: How can I think and act like a responsible global citizen? Using foundational concepts in Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-psychology, I deconstructed this question and proposed alternate questions: How can we feel and create critical solidarity with global communities? What strategies are available to avoid co-optation doing this work with and within oppressive systems? I

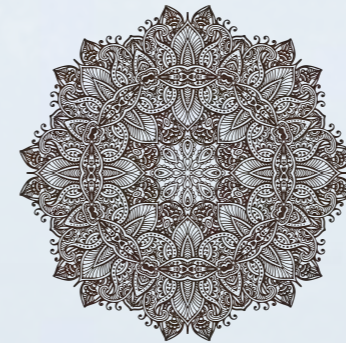
practiced the community psychology core competency of ethical reflective practice through autoethnography to address these questions. This praxis yielded an understanding that critical reflexivity, embodied subjectivity, and a theory of the flesh are strategies to resist co-optation in colonial systems. My work in the program contributed to the co-construction of a decolonial orientation to global citizenship in youth development, education, and the emergent field of decolonial depth psychology. As scholar-activists of color from the Global South working in academic and professional development programs, we are better situated to engage in critical solidarity with one another instead of competitive performances of “leadership.” As a collective, we must continue to explore how to responsibly work in questioning internal processes necessary to transform colonial ideals of leadership and citizenship. This praxis elicits a further inquiry into the use of political auto-ethnography for research in community psychology. The demonstration of my unlearning as a Leadership Coach interrupts the socialization of budding youth leaders into the colonial stance toward global citizenship and invites dialogue to co-create transformative core competencies for decolonial community praxis.



## Healing, Prevention and Wellness Promotion from Ecological Perspective

Karissa Williams, Second-Year Student

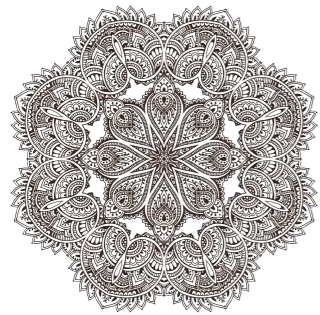
This presentation reflects critically on the history of community psychology through storytelling, re-imagining pathways toward a decolonial future. Exploring whose imagination we are embracing, we will reflect on how we think, feel, and act. We must address how the field has been shaped by a narrowed Eurocentric view and ask constantly, who has been excluded from these origin stories? DuBois offered a perspective outside the dominant narrative that “demystified” the connection between social imagination and the scientific construction of people of color. He activated a call to move away from Eurocentrism and proposed an approach rooted in a strengths-based, community-engaged liberation ethic. However, DuBois’ contributions are rarely acknowledged in the field. In dismantling this complex history and its erasures of knowledge, we must address the harm caused in communities of color, whose perspectives are marginalized and explored only as alternative opinions. While questions of this nature provoke resistance, I ask if the field has to step away from being bystander and perpetuator of violence and be honest about its history. We must look critically and calmly into the past so that there is a reconciling of truths without ego. Imagining collectively for liberation requires acknowledgement of oppression. Liberation psychotherapies are one way to promote critical awareness of ongoing coloniality. Community psychologists must acknowledge being bystanders and perpetrators of exclusion, endorsing erasure, and perpetuating assimilation for credibility. The voices of those affected by colonization and ongoing coloniality must be heard and acknowledged. Liberation psychotherapies can assist in restoring cultural memory, expanding sociopolitical consciousness, and moving people towards personal and communal liberation. Participants will walk away with a critical view of the origins of the field and begin to imagine personal and collective liberation.



## Consciousness Raising through Storytelling, Arts, and New Media

Jacy Bowles, Second-Year Student

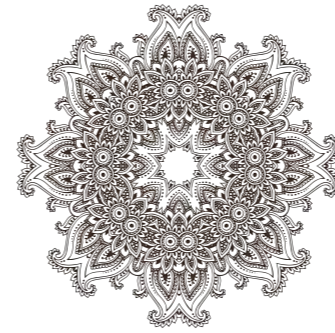
This presentation will share the work of current Indigenous artists through a critical arts-based research lens without attempting to designate artificial limits on the scope of Indigenous decolonial art or existence. I argue that by sharing their personal journeys and public-facing work, they are committing to radical acts of love of self and community, which in and of itself is a form of decolonial epistemic and ontological justice. The amplification of Indigenous storytelling counters colonial narratives as an integral element of resisting coloniality at an individual and collective level. A community praxis involved Indigenous artists who reside in Turtle Island (the so-called United States of America). The engaged artists shared stories about their artistic journeys to deeply understand their internal selves and the impact they desire to have on their communities and beyond. The analysis of the gathered stories included featured symbolism in their artworks and audience interactions with their art (and identities). The methodologies included both individual and community approaches to understand the synthesis and interconnections that community-based art creates. This participatory research delinked from a Eurocentric psychology that tends to address the individual *or* the collective and ignores the need for a holistic and intersectional approach.



## Supporting Well-Being for the Indigenous Guatemalan Community

By Robin Chancer, First-Year Student

There is a large and growing diaspora of Indigenous Guatemalan people in the United States. Often grouped under the umbrella term “Maya,” this population encounters mental health service providers and community workers in many contexts including schools, medical facilities, nonprofit organizations, and legal assistance programs. Indigenous Guatemalan communities have unique needs which are unmet by traditional service models. Mental health service providers and community psychologists must consider the ethical implications of extrapolating Western mental health practices to such distinct communities. Focusing on the Maya K’iche’ diaspora specifically, this presentation will be conducted by members of the K’iche’ community as well as a mental health practitioner specializing in the intersection of migration and mental health. The presentation will outline approaches, strategies, and competencies essential to providing culturally-sensitive care, including language, migration, culturally appropriate affect and coping mechanisms, and Mayan cosmology as distinct from Euro-American mental health paradigms. We will explore ethical dilemmas regarding the power dynamics in community psychologists’ relationship with the K’iche’ diaspora, especially in the context of colonizer history. Finally, the presentation will discuss recommendations for re-imagining the clinical relationship.

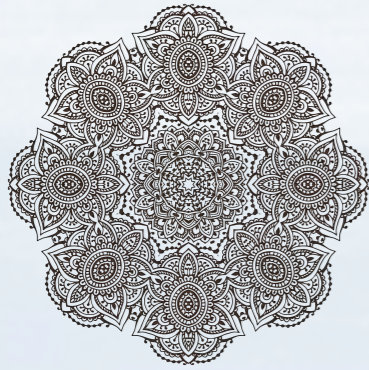


## Coloniality and Somatics

By Leah Garza and Katie Robinson,  
Dissertation Students

Psychological theories and approaches grounded in somatics, articulated by scholars such as Stephen W. Porges (2011, 2021), Peter A. Levine (1997, 2012, 2015), Kathy L. Kain (2018), Stephen J. Terrel (2018), among many others, are reshaping how trauma is considered and treated. The Window of Tolerance (Siegel, 1999) describes the different psycho-physiological states activated at the neuroception of danger or safety, where a “regulated” nervous system indicates the perception of safety, and “dysregulated” nervous system indicates the perception of danger. A descendant of the Window of Tolerance is the The Faux Window of Tolerance (Terrel & Kain, 2018), which articulates nuances between regulated and dysregulated states: a nervous system in a state of “faux” regulation, where the physiology of safety and danger are simultaneously online.

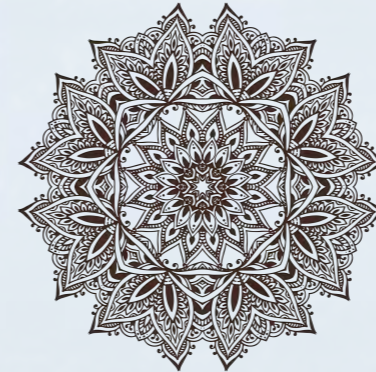
The faux window belies a greater understanding of the world from which the concept was created—the colonial world. A critical understanding of coloniality and ontology are essential to understanding why the faux window is reflective of systemic stressors and not individual bodies coping with individual traumas. Coloniality refers to the lasting impact colonization has left on our ways of being, bodies, and systems of power and knowledge (Quijano, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2010; Lugones, 2003). This presentation will explore the congruences between this “faux window” and living within a colonial ontology. Somatics defaults to placing the onus on the individual to regulate the nervous system and treat trauma. The faux window is thought to be a function of individuals with trauma. A decolonial approach would identify the reality we live in, our ontological container, as inherently traumatizing, and the faux window as a coping strategy of the collective within colonialism.



## Struggles, Hybridity, Ruptures, and Choques in Co-constructing Decolonial Community Psychologies in Classrooms and Communities

By Nuria Ciofalo

Faculty and students of the Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies Specialization (CLIE) at Pacifica Graduate Institute invite dialogue about opportunities and challenges in co-constructing decolonial community psychologies in the classroom. Colonialization, and ongoing coloniality, has created an only-one-world ideology declared as universal truth. Psychology has been legitimized within Western scientific paradigms. It has been imposed as universal truth taught in universities perpetuating colonization, oppression, exclusion, and erasure of other epistemologies and praxes. How can we delink from Eurocentric regimes of knowledge within this discipline? U.S.-centric community psychology claims to be the legitimized archive of this sub-discipline, ignoring contributions from the Global South. Consequently, we must speak of community psychologies in the plural. We will share our struggles, hybridity, *choques*, ruptures, tentative understandings, collaborative research, and strategies to decolonize the academy. Decoloniality in the academy may manifest when silenced epistemologies are centered. It may emerge in the vibrant discussions in our classrooms dismantling academia's complicity with neoliberal capitalism, anthropocentrism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, cultural genocide, epistemicide, and ecocide. It may also manifest in our work with communities. We must apply constant critical reflexivity on curricula and praxes. This town hall invites *plurilogue* to co-construct decolonial community psychologies, building transformative solidarity and imagining innovative *pluriversities* (instead of universities) that embrace alternatives to the pervasive market education caused by what the Zapatista movement calls “the capitalist hydra, the monster with many heads.”



## Exploring Fugitive Realities Through Decoloniality: Visual Arts and Praxis

By Leah Garza, Deborah Najman, Tierra Patterson, Katie Robinson (Dissertation Students), and Susan James

Movements for justice have been constructed often unwittingly with the same tools and strategies used to construct the oppressive systems themselves. Decoloniality offers alternative approaches to not only movement, but life itself. In order to develop a critical decolonial lens, it is necessary to understand the pluriversality of our planet. Ontology, the study of being and reality, asks us to consider that multiple realities can exist alongside each other, not simply the “world of the powerful” (Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018). A critical study of decoloniality reveals colonialism as the “dominant ontology of devastation” (Escobar, 2017), but that other relational ontologies resist and survive just under the surface. This Town Hall presents strategies and rationale for recognizing these distinctive paradigms, as well as understanding their role in structuring community environments, institutions, and public spaces. Specifically, theoretical application and praxis within U.S. social movement work is considered. In addition, we explore arts-based pedagogies for unlearning and relearning ways of knowing and being that are aligned with pluriversal futurities. We include examples of coded insider knowledge systems, obscured transcripts (Johnson, 2023), opaque aesthetics, and kinesthetic exchange to stimulate generative refusals (Atallah & Dutta, 2021;

Martineau, 2015) and creative transitions toward dismantling coloniality. As further illustration of agential relationality, we adopt Glissant's (1997) epistemology of errantry, or sacred wandering to chart diasporic movement as a tool for liberation and will map lifeways that reflect entangled worlding practices from African, Indigenous, Latinx, and Mesoamerican diasporic spiritualities that foster survivance (Vizenor, 2008); while focusing on epistemologies of the South as "lived knowledges" that emerge from strategies of resistance (de Sousa Santos, 2018). Lastly, the application of decolonial theory to Child Welfare service delivery will be presented to demonstrate possibilities for institutional reframing in the U.S. and offer considerations for applied research frameworks.

**We thank Pacifica Graduate Institute for its generous support, and Dianne Travis-Teague, Senior Director, Alumni Relations for extending care to ensure our safe travel.**



## **CLIE Participation in the SCRA Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse and Action Initiative**

The Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) responded to a **Call to Action on Anti-Blackness** made by its members in 2020 with the Racial Justice Inquiry, Discourse, and Action (RJIDA) initiative as a means to address the expressed demands to **eradicate racism within the field and institution**. This initiative was developed by the Chair of the Council of Education Programs, Dr. Mason Haber, to engage graduate students and professors in addressing the needs of community psychology educational programs and the broader field to achieve racial justice, address the limitations of many diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in universities and colleges, and expand resources to promote co-learning opportunities.

Through this initiative, a collective of graduate students from several national and international institutions co-created spaces for critical self-reflexivity and courageous conversations to share approaches, strategies, and tools for racial justice. CLIErs, Bobbi Keeline-Young, at the time a first-year student, Jennifer Vidal, a second-year student, and Jamilah Shabbatz, a third-year student, were involved in 2021-2022 in this initiative. They participated in student councils and ongoing plurilogues to unsettle SCRA's complicity with coloniality and racism as the decision was to start looking within the organization. Three students: Rama Agung-Igusti from Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia, Hannah Rebadulla from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and Jamilah Shabazz from Pacifica Graduate Institute, California, were more intensely involved in conducting provocative and courageous self-reflexivity and

generative interactions with the SCRA Educational Council and other SCRA members. They had three mentors, Christopher Sonn (Rama), E.J.R David (Hannah), and Nuria Ciofalo (Jamilah). This student collaborative co-conspired to co-create what they called: “A loving take over: A BIPOC student-led approach to decolonizing RJIDA, SCRA, and Community Psychology Education.” They presented this approach, experience, and provocative reflections and recommendations at the last SCRA Biennial Conference in 2021.

This courageous and creative student collaborative made space for what has been erased in U.S.-centric and colonial community psychology. They offered critical and accountable reflexive praxis as storytelling and invited others to share their reflections. They detailed a process that evidenced epistemic disobedience to the top-down, hierarchical impositions of the SCRA planning and implementation approach and changed the terms and contents of the conversation, as Walter Mignolo (2009) would say, by shifting the methodological approach and process toward relationality and collective definition of a decolonial conception of racial justice.

As a result of the collective gatherings, the main domains of the initiative were re-defined collectively: Inquiry means Indigeneity, the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges, methodologies, and praxes; Discourse means dismantling coloniality to envision possibilities toward Decoloniality, and Action leads to Anti-Racist Justice. Lastly, they invited the SCRA members to elaborate on these constructs’ definitions by imagining how they could manifest in praxis. The approach followed what Native American community psychologist Joseph Gone recommended to co-construct practice-based theories that can effectively dismantle the recalcitrant status quo.

Participating in this initiative became a community practicum inspired by decolonial inquiry into how SCRA, community psychology programs, and the broader field could achieve racial justice and the actions and resources required to promote it. You can learn more about their work and contributions in articles published on several websites: The Community Psychologist <https://scra27.org/publications/tcp/tcp-past-issues/tcpwinter2022/> and <https://scra27.org/publications/tcp/tcp-past-issues/tcpspring2021/>, and on the website of Community Psychology: Social Justice Through Collaborative Research and Action <https://www.communitypsychology.com/racial-justice-inquiry-discourse-action/>.

## References

Mignolo, W. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society* 26(7–8), 159-185 DOI: 10.1177/0263276409349275.

Gone, G.P. (2016). Alternative knowledges and the future of community psychology: Provocations from an American Indian healing traditions. *American Journal in Community Psychology*, 58, 314–321.

Society for Community Research and Action (2020). SCRA call to action on anti-blackness: Letter of love and support to Black members of SCRA. Retrieved from: [https://www.scra27.org/files/8915/9735/2183/SCRA\\_CALL\\_TO\\_ACTION\\_ON\\_ANTI-BLACKNESS.pdf](https://www.scra27.org/files/8915/9735/2183/SCRA_CALL_TO_ACTION_ON_ANTI-BLACKNESS.pdf).



**CLIE**  
**SCRA 2023**  
**MOREHOUSE**





## 12th ANNUAL DECOLONIZING CONFERENCE • NOV. 9-11, 2023

Fascism Resurgence, Logics of Dehumanization and Anti-Colonial Praxis

The Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies, University of Toronto  
Department of Social Justice Education (SJE).

### Accepted CLIE Student Abstracts

#### Reimagining Whiteness Podcast

Hana Truscott, Second-Year Student

**Submission Category:** Arts-Based Installation/New Media (podcast)

**Key words:** reimagining whiteness, ancestral roots, cultural soul wound, critical settler family history, double-consciousness.

The Reimagining Whiteness podcast explores the research question: how do we collectively reimagine whiteness? Whiteness here refers to the structures that continue to perpetuate inequities, power imbalances, and harms both in the U.S. and globally. The aim of the podcast is to contribute to collective transformation and is inspired by Indigenous research methods intended to raise consciousness (Wilson, 2008). It is also inspired by Anzaldúa's (1987) three interconnected approaches to "decolonizing reality" (p. 44): imagining through creativity, reimagining identities, and healing, all of which may contribute to transformation. The conceptual framework includes: 1) critical phenomenology, which directly relates to reimagining whiteness by illuminating and critiquing the structure of whiteness, while also imagining possibilities for solidarity through a collective reimagining of whiteness; and 2) hermeneutic phenomenology, which directly relates to the methodology of reimagining whiteness through gathering and sharing collective stories from many different lived experiences. The hope for the podcast is dreaming up new imaginings for what whiteness can look like from many angles, including but not limited to reimagining identity, illuminating a cultural soul wound of

white settler communities (specifically as it relates to being uprooted from ancestral roots to assimilate into whiteness), reclaiming ancestral roots as a possibility for healing the soul wound, building on DuBois' theory of "double-consciousness" as it relates to racial embodiment, and transforming shame and guilt from legacies of harms caused by whiteness into meaningful action.

#### Decolonizing Responses to Gender-Based Violence: From the Frame of Coloniality & Its Decolonial Re-Frame

Desiree Gonzalez, Second-Year Student

**Submission Category:** Individual Paper.

**Keywords:** Necropolitics, Coloniality, Narcissism, Gender-based violence, Decolonial Response, Framing & Reframing.

For this paper I will be offering a critique of a frame/position in which I believe is the cause of gender-based violence to begin with. I would like to critically analyze Necropolitics (Mbembe) in relation to coloniality utilizing a depth psychological analysis. Furthering my inquiry, I will be drawing upon the work of Marino where I'll be looking at the framing of necropolitics from the lens of coloniality in order to offer an explanation that is understood in that frame as well as offer a reframe that is a decolonial response.



I will discuss the “ghost” in the frame that is being described throughout the dominant frame: narcissism, and thus also offer a comparative analysis of narcissism and coloniality utilizing psychoanalysis to describe coloniality’s necropolitics - this way mainstream psychology can understand the type of violence being implored by coloniality.

The reason I am motivated to write this is because as a woman of color who has experienced narcissistic violence and harm from coloniality and can clearly see its linkage, I am extremely passionate about this and want to respond to this form of violence in order to help others who experience it and give some context to it in the mainstream.

Additional sources will include the work of Fanon (a decolonial psychoanalyst), and I will be including a description from the DSM-5 to offer one explanation of the unjust gender-based violence being done to all those who do not “fit” under the dominant frame of coloniality from its colonial framing.

### References

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5-TR.* American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2022.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks.* Grove Press, 1967.

Marino, D. (1988). *Wild garden: Art, education, and the culture of resistance. Between the Lines.*

*Excerpts.* Mbembe, Achille, and Steven Corcoran. *Necropolitics.* Duke University Press, 2019.

## Story and Ceremony as Remedy to Colonial Violence’:

Gilbert Salazar, Second-Year Student

**Submission Category:** Arts-Based Installations/New Media

**Keywords:** Gender and Feminisms, Labour and Work, Language, Stories, and Memory Making, Racisms and White Supremacist Logics, Indigenous Resurgence, Resistance and New Possibilities

Short narrative film: *Sippin’*: Four women of color create a ritual of tears for celebration and healing.

“Historically, the characterization of white European women as fragile and sexually passive opposed them to nonwhite, colonized women, including female slaves, who were characterized along a gamut of sexual aggression and perversion, and as strong enough to do any sort of labor” (Lugones, 2007, p. 203).

*Sippin’* is a seventeen-minute narrative film highlighting the question of: what happens when white fragility is served in a cup? This film follows the ceremony of four women of color as they discuss harms done by white supremacy through ceremony and ritual. Stories of women of color colleagues were collected and written in what was first a short ten-minute play. This play has been adapted to a screenplay. The screenplay contains stories of women colleagues of color and their experiences with white woman in professional settings. The film is intended to activate audiences into a sense of rupture, recognition, rage, and refusal. Of the many questions intended is: What does it mean to ingest harm through stories, ceremony and ritual? How does harm and accountability taste? How may the embodied practice of ingesting tea in community engage or activate healing?

# Student & Alumni Updates

## EMPLOYMENT/TEACHING

**Latriece Clark.** Director of Special Projects ReadyCT whose mission is to close the achievement gap by working in the lowest performing schools and providing access and opportunity for career readiness and exposure to high school students including internships in high growth/ high demand industries.

**Maryam Tahmasebi.** Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology, Los Angeles Pierce College

**Tiffany Raether.** Operations Manager, MindSite News

**Sarah Moselle Brown.** Realms of Inquiry. Serving a small, alternative, non-profit community school the heart of Salt Lake City as adjunct faculty, volunteer, parent and committee member. [www.realmsofinquiry.org](http://www.realmsofinquiry.org)

**Gilbert Salazar.** CSU Monterey Bay: Service Learning, "My Story of Self in Service:" Decolonial Ethics of Storytelling of service.

**Kamee Abrahamian.** Promoted to communications manager at AWID. Started working for a Yerevan-based production company as a producer for documentaries supported by Sundance, HotDocs, Catapult, and Visions du Réel.

**Amber McZeal.** partnered with The Shape Up San Francisco Coalition and San Francisco Department of Public Health's Healthy Eating Active

Living Team to offer a year-long series on Sugar & Decoloniality to support community culture-bearers, policy advocates, and health practitioners in their efforts to shift health disparities in communities most impacted by sugar-related symptoms. This experiential 4-part series dives "deeper into WHY decolonizing sugar matters and HOW we may undo the impacts of coloniality on our communities experiencing the greatest health disparities."

More information on Sugar & Decoloniality 2.0 can be found here: <https://shapeupscoalition.org/decoloniality/>

Session reflections for the the first event–The Subtle Body of the Institution– can be found here:

<http://shapeupscoalition.org/decoloniality/session1/>

**Linda Ravenswood.** Teaching: LAUSD, Employment, IKPFK radio / The Los Angeles Press; Lecturer Chapman College Lecturer San Jose State University

**Skye Keeley-Shea Innerarity.** .2021-present: Private Practice Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

**Desiree Gonzalez.** Blog. Taíno Psychology Offers Different Ways of Thinking and Engaging in Academic Research

<https://www.communitypsychology.com/taino-psychology/>

## PUBLICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL TALKS

**Linda Ravenswood.** Poem :The Children Turn Themselves Into Ice – Selected by poet Laureate of the United States Juan Felipe Herrera for Reed Magazine, Issue 156

<https://www.reedmag.org/product-page/reed-magazine-issue-156>

The Stan Poems, Pedestrian Press, (2022)

Cantadora – Letters from California, Eyewear London/ Black Spring Press Group, (2023).

A Poem is a House Madville Press, In Press

**Maryam Tahmasabi.** Online Talk, Climate coloniality: mechanisms, epistemologies, and spaces of resistance.

**Gilbert Salazar.** "Unmasked Stories Witnessing: 'Then What Might Happen'," The International Journal of Restorative Justice: Arts and Restorative Justice

**Karen Silton.** Communities Create–Downtown Women's Center, People Assisting the Homeless (PATH Orange County), Safe Place for Youth.

**Tiffany Raether.** Decolonizing Place: Public Art & The Ambiguity of Democracy, 2021 | Presentation to The Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) - Community Psychology, Division 27 of the American Psychological Association (APA), Biennial Conference

**Kamee Abrahamian.** "Motherhood is Speculative (Non)Fiction," in The Liminal Chrysalis: Imagining Reproduction and Parenting Futures Beyond the Binary, Demeter Press, (2021).

**Skye Keeley-Shea Innerarity.** Individual Presenter: "The Power of (Re)Contextualization: An Essential Tool Kit for Work-Life Balance," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2023)

Individual Presenter: "A California Indigenous Perspective on Women's Well-Being Practices," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2023)

Individual Presenter: "Food Security: Northern Sierra Miwok Practices and Community Well-Being Implications," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2023)

Individual Presenter: "LGBTQ/2S+ Community and Well-Being in the Workplace," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2023)

Panelist with Dannie Ceseña, Ezak Perez, and Wendy Schlater: "Acknowledging Indigenous Misconceptions Within Medical Institutions and Education Systems; addressing the need for policy reform and inclusive data collection," 40th Annual GLMA Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality Conference (2022)

Presenter: "Culture as Treatment: Northern Sierra Miwok Basketweaving," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2022)

Presenter: "Managing Our Mental Health in the Workplace: A Value-Guided Approach," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2022)  
Co-presenter with Sage L. Innerarity: "Northern Sierra Miwok Storytelling and Survivance," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2022)

Presenter: "Psychological Flexibility: Living a Fulfilling and Meaningful Life In and Out of the Workplace," Contra Costa Health Services Wellness Team (2022)

## COLLABORATION, ADVOCACY & SOLIDARITIES



**Skye Keeley-Shea Innerarity.** GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality Peer Reviewer: Reviewing abstract submissions to GLMA's 41st Annual Conference on LGBTQ+ Health "Power In Every Voice: Rising Up for LGBTQ+ Health Equity" for inclusion of Indigenous/Two-Spirit health components and best practice data collection methods (May 2023-present)

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality Indigenous and Two-Spirit Engagement Task Force Member (May 2023-present)

Network Therapist for the California LGBTQ Health and Services Network, a program of Health Access Foundation: (April 2023-present): Providing social and emotional support to #Out4MentalHealth project partners

Collaborator with Sage L. Innerarity and Glen Villa Jr. via Miwok Heritage Center (non profit organization): Engaging in Miwok language workshops and mentorship with Glen Villa Sr.; Development of Miwok language youth camp (February 2023-present)

Co-Researcher with Sage L. Innerarity and Glen

Villa Jr. via Miwok Heritage Center (non profit organization): Conducting research via interviews with elders re: Miwok health practices (historical through present) (February 2023-present)

Volunteer: Jennifer Bates' "California Indian Market," Tuolumne Band of Miwok Indians (2023)

Co-Researcher with Jeanette M. Innerarity and Glen Villa Jr. via Miwok Heritage Center (non profit organization): Conducting research via archive visit to Field Museum to view California basketry collection (2022)

Co-Researcher with Jeanette M. Innerarity and Glen Villa Jr. via Miwok Heritage Center (non profit organization): Conducting research via archive visit to University of Pennsylvania to view California basketry collection (2022)

Volunteer: Jennifer Bates' "California Indian Market," Tuolumne Band of Miwok Indians (2022)

Co-Researcher with Sage L. Innerarity and Glen Villa Jr. via Miwok Heritage Center (non profit organization): Conducting research via

interviews with elders re: Miwok food practices and pathways (2022)

**Karine Bell.** Member of Project Coordination Team. Pedagogical Development [Three Black Men](#).

**Linda Ravenswood.** Project 1521; Latinx advocacy ; The Poetry Society of New York; Red Light Lit.; St. James Infirmary San Francisco

**Kamee Abrahamian.** Through my work at AWID, I co-led this campaign with other feminist orgs <https://womensmajorgroup.org/feminists-demand-end-of-un-womens-partnership-with-blackrock-inc/>

**Hana Truscott.** Citizens Advisory Council for the Removal of the Racist John R. Monaghan Statue in Spokane, WA

## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS, & ARTS—BASED PROJECTS

**Sarah Moselle Brown.** Working with retreats offered in the South Western US to bring the magic of story telling and adventures in the wild to co-creating healing community experiences.

**Maryam Tahmasebi.** Member of publication committee with SCRA and Reviewer for APA 2023 annual convention

### FELLOWSHIPS/GRANTS/AWARDS

**Kamee Abrahamian.** Ontario Arts Council Media Arts Grant (2023) for "Symptom" short film  
Studio IX Mother Project grant (2023)  
Catapult Development Grant Recipient (2022) for the development of feature film "Exchange"  
Sundance Documentary Fund Recipient (2021) for the development of feature film "Exchange"  
Canada Arts Council Media Grant (2022) for the film production of "Sona and Amasia"  
Doc Alliance Award Nomination through Visions du Réel (2022) for "5 Dreamers and a Horse"  
Pushcart Prize Nomination for "Queer Motherhood is Speculative Fiction" Mizna Magazine 21.1

**Linda Ravenswood.** Oxford Prize in Poetry 22/23

The Edwin Markham Prize in Poetry from Reed Magazine, the oldest literary magazine in California

The Arthur Smith Prize in Poetry from Madville Press in 2023 for a new book – a poem is a house – upcoming in 2024

**Hana Truscott.** Peace Corps Coverdell Fellowship

**Karen Silton.** Bella Arts Foundation \$3000 grant to Communities Create, Community Impact Arts Grant \$5000 to Downtown Women's Center for Communities Create 2022-2023 art making workshops.

### ARTS BASED PROJECTS

**Kamee Abrahamian.** Monument to the Autonomous Republic of Artsakh" and #RecognizeArtsakh street art campaign: 2020-2021 with @kooyrigs, Nancy Baker Cahill, Mashinka Firunts Hakopian, and Nelli Sargsyan

**Linda Ravenswood.** Founder and EIC The Los Angeles Press – publishing the best in art & literature from Los Angeles, the West & beyond. We're dedicated to centering formerly marginalized and traditionally under-represented artists & writers.  
[theLosAngelespress.com](http://theLosAngelespress.com)

**Kate Feigin.** Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, mural with youth; No Human is Illegal on Stolen Land, mural with youth

**Gilbert Salazar.** Writer and Co-Executive Producer, "Sippin.'" Sippin' is a short narrative film highlighting the question of: what happens when white fragility is served in a cup? This film follows the ceremony of four women of color as they discuss harms done by white supremacy through ceremony and ritual.

**Karen Silton.** Downtown Women's Center, People Assisting the Homeless, Safe Place for Youth

# DISSERTATIONS

**"An Urgency for Okinawa/Ryūkyū Liberation Psychology: A Study of the Psychological Phenomena of Ongoing Violence in Okinawa and the Development of an Okinawa/Ryūkyū Liberation Psychology Method" by Fujika Ariarakawa**  
*March 7, 2023*

Since 1879, Okinawans have been subjected to cultural genocide, forced migration, physical violence, a profound loss of their connection with ancestral spirits, wisdom and languages, land rights, identities, sustainable economic and peaceful cultural exchanges, and traditional community rituals and reparative processes. As an Okinawan researcher, I used an autoethnographic research in conjunction with cross-generational interviews of other Okinawans to listen to the psychological effects of ongoing violence and identify liberatory and decolonization approaches to Okinawan revitalization. Participants reported normalization of violence, an inability to grieve with their community, feelings of hopelessness, and an inability to resolve personal and community issues—all of which have been exacerbated by the recent pandemic. This research led to the development of an Okinawa/Ryūkyū Liberation Psychology grounded in traditional ancestral values of sukubun (a sense of community belonging) and araragama seishin (ancestral spirit). Such regeneration of ancestral spirits includes three steps: 1) reconnecting with ancestral roots; 2) recognizing the importance of causes and symptoms of psychological phenomena; and 3) reclaiming sukubun.

**"Hok Danil as Bringing Spirit" by Kamee Abrahamian**  
*December 7, 2021*

This research illuminates legacies of relational ontologies and ethics of care through the experiences of women and queer folks from the South West Asian, North African (SWANA) diaspora and living in settler environments. Through performative ethnography, arts-based, and indigenous methodologies, the study will center their lived experiences and ancestral memory as expressed through ritual, relationality, performance, and aesthetics. As primary researcher and project facilitator, my approach is grounded in an experimental praxis that blends autohistoria-teoría (Anzaldúa, 1987) and biomythography (Lorde, 1982). As such, this inquiry explores the extent to which participants desire to maintain pieces of indigenous and emergent SWANA traditions, ancestral reclamation and memory; in how they are understood as crucial parts of the resistance and transformation of imposing hegemonic colonial capitalist paradigms. The ontological locus of this study is explored through the primary researcher's lens of an indigenous Armenian concept called (hok danil), defined as bringing care or bringing spirit. Hok danil is central to this research in how it orients relations of collective care as kinship, as in the act of caring for another – which includes, but is not limited to children, elders, communities, spirits, land, ancestral memory, and one's interrelated self. In contrast to mainstream notions of care that are rooted in independent selfways (Adams, et. al., 2017), hok danil relies on interdependence and collective care, which may offer the potential to disrupt the co-optation, exploitation, and institutionalization effectuated by systemic patriarchy, capitalism, and coloniality within relational formations. Although hok danil emerges from the primary researcher's indigenous Armenian framework and guides their contributions to this project, a significant part of this research will invoke concepts and practices of relations of care as brought forth by the participants and their varying cultural epistemologies. Moreover, this study seeks to better understand and contextualize the strategies of women and queers from the SWANA region as they re-create and re-claim ancestral practices from the axis of their particular decolonial positionalities. In alignment with SWANA epistemology, a set of methodological strategies that blend soliloquy and dialogue, performance, art-making, and divination are explored. By way of these strategies, this research acknowledges that relational ontologies are central and culturally embedded in SWANA practices and traditions. For this reason, its reclamation within settler environments is one of the many ways that decoloniality takes shape.

**"Radical Love Traditions: Exploring the Decolonial Turn in Maternal Healthcare for Black Women" by Amber McZeal**  
*April 29, 2023*

This research explores the phenomenon of maternal mortality in the United States and the racial health disparities embedded within it, with an emphasis on racism as the root cause. Among developed countries in the global north, the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate, which affects Black women disproportionately. Black women die in childbirth at three times the rate of other women. As with most racial health disparities, researchers who ascribe race as the root cause perpetuate damage-centered narratives which promote medical racism by pathologizing Black people through subtle and direct assertions of biological inferiority. Through a decolonial theoretical framework and African Indigenous archetypal methodology, the study investigates how and in what ways maternal healthcare practices designed to address racial disparities may be transformed, with an emphasis on shifting from race to racism as the root cause in disparities. Through digital storytelling and critical performance ethnography, the study offers new configurations around concepts of well-being, widening both the critical and cultural terrain upon which wellness is premised. From the co-research process with Black mothers and radical reproductive justice medical practitioners, this work pushes forward a theory and practice of decolonial community depth psychology in maternal health settings.

**"Decolonial Psychology and Climate Crisis: Experiences of Indigenous Women of Saman, Iran" by Maryam Tahmasebi**  
*December 11, 2021*

Climate change has reached the point of a global crisis. The need for new paradigms of thinking and conceptualizing the problems is more evident than ever. This dissertation takes a decolonial paradigm of thinking and prioritizes the experiences of indigenous women of Saman, Iran of climate change through their environmental knowledge systems. This study is a co-constructed exploration of relational experiences and perceptions of climate change among eight elderly women of Saman who are over age 60. The people of Saman are indigenous to their land and are primarily farmers. These women were horizontally interviewed by the researcher's community partner, Fahimeh, due to Covid-19 limitations. In an indigenous rural community like Saman, the climate is related to every single facet of life. They explained that lack of snow and rain; lack of water in the river, qanats, and fountains; changes in seasons, community rituals, and methods of agriculture; forced modernization; and violence against nature altogether have caused a significant long-term change in the climate. Saman used to have regenerative agriculture, no chemicals, zero waste, natural food preservation, and community rituals designed for food security. Women explained how Barakat had left life, and Jan is lacking from food that is produced by force and violence from the earth. This work intentionally refrains from offering modernist psychological analysis of these women's experiences, and instead, gives voice to their intergenerational, ecological knowledge system.

**"Dreams and Identity in Indigenous California" by Barbara Bain**  
*July 7, 2020*

**"Circling: A Phenomenological Study of Sense of Community in a Group-based Mindfulness Practice" by Peter Benedict**  
*February 16, 2021*

**"El Derecho de Ser: The Right of Being A Liberatory Tlan-Nepantla (Tlancentric) Approach to Identity" by Carl Chavez**  
*March 4, 2022*

**"Wellbeing and Connectivity to Nature: Exploring Archetypal Emergence Using Digital Generative Art" by Theresa Clearman**  
*January 11, 2022*

**"Reconstructing Collective Memory and Holding Space in Leimert Park Village" by Ralph Cummings**  
*May 8, 2020*

**"Depth Education Without Edges: The Art of Remembering, Unlearning and Reimagining" by Themis De la Pena Wing**  
*May 18, 2020*

**"The Efficacy of Relationality in a Psychedelic Community Healing Ritual: a Research-as-Ceremony Inquiry" by Noah Kramer**  
*April 15, 2022*

**"It's Not Comprehensive If It's Not Intersectional": Pedagogies for Liberatory Sexuality and Relationship Education" by Mari Larangeira**  
*March 14, 2023*

**"Virtual Storytelling in a Time of Pandemic: Building Bridges Across Social Distance" by Thomas Martinez**  
*January 18, 2022*

**"Òsun Consciousness: Unearthing Anti-Black Biases in the Los Angeles Homeless System Soul as reflected in the Sacred Histories of the African American Experience" by Alisa Orduna**  
*February 26, 2021*

**"Stepping and its Potential as a Liberatory Praxis" by Dominic King**  
*January 20, 2023*

**"Bearers of Light: Understanding the Impact of a Solar Program for Women and Girls in Rural Villages in Nepal" by Samantha Kinkaid**  
*February 22, 2022*

**"The Legacy of Agent Orange in Da Nang, Vietnam" by Hanh Le**  
*October 13, 2020*

**"Integrating the Shadow of The City: On Double Rock, HOPE SF, and Transformation" by Brandon Lott**  
*January 29, 2021*

**"Being White in America: A Study of Storied Accounts" by Jonathan Rudow**  
*October 1, 2022*

**"Decolonial, Pluriversal, Vitality-Centered Pedagogies: (Re)orienting Education Toward Serving Life" by Stephanie Steiner**  
*June 2, 2022*

**"Disrupting White Supremacy: From White Identity to Antiracist Response" by Samantha Wilson**  
*February 22, 2021*



## Sample Of Faculty Publications and Awards 2021-2023.

Akomolafe, B. (2023). [Black Lives Matter But to Whom? Why We Need a Politics of Exile in a Time of Troubling Stuckness](#) Othering and Belonging Institute. U.C. Berkeley.

Brown, K. "Crossing the Kalunga Line: Caribbean Space-Time and the Living Dead in Juan de los Muertos." *Africana Studies Review*. Vol.7, No.1 (June 2021): 108-124.

Casey, E.. *Turning Emotion Inside Out* (Northwestern University Press, 2022);

Casey, E. *Plants in Place: A Phenomenology of the Vegetal* (Columbia University Press, 2023)

Ciofalo, N. (2021). Decolonial approaches to prevention and promotion: Dismantling community psychology's complicity with coloniality. *The Community Psychologist*, 52.

Ciofalo, N. (April, 2022). Making the road caminando de otramanera: Co-constructing community psychologies from the Global South. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 69, 3-4. 426-435. <https://onlinelibrary-wiley-com.pgi.idm.oclc.org/doi/full/10.1002/ajcp.12562>.

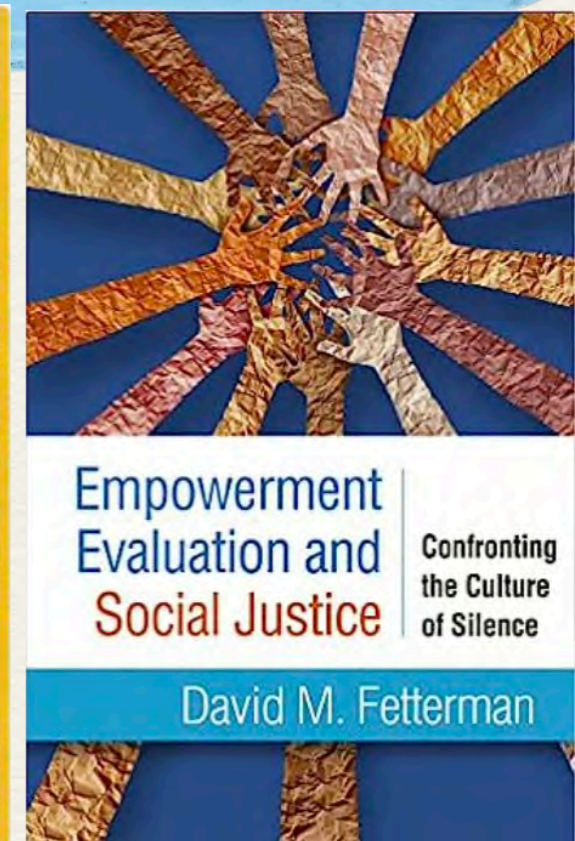
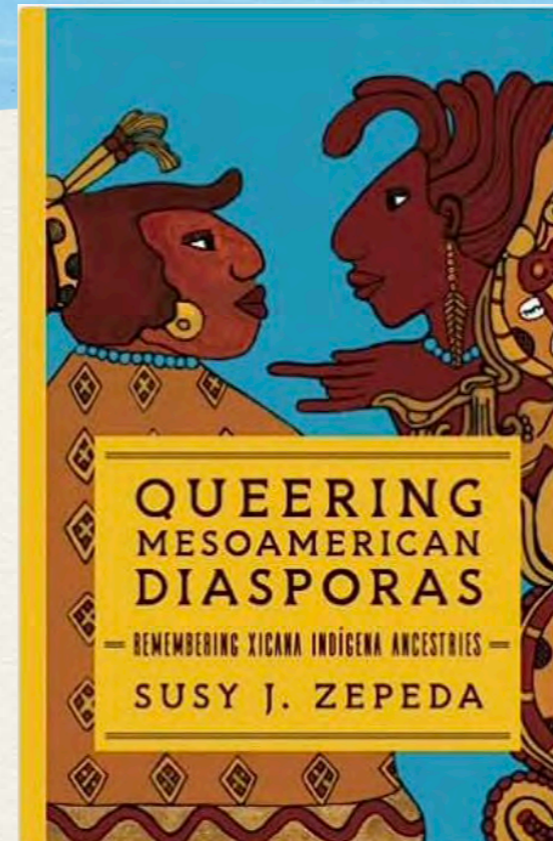
Ciofalo, N., Dudgeon, P., & Nikora, W. (2022). Indigenous community psychologies, decolonization, and radical imagination within ecologies of knowledge. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1-11. DOI: 10.1002/ajcp.12583.

Ciofalo, N., & Watkins, M. (2023). Towards an emergent conceptualization of decolonial praxis and competencies in community psychology. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*, 14 (1), <https://www.gjcpp.org/en/article.php?issue=44&article=273>.

Ciofalo, N. (2023). Mexican Indigenous psychologies, cosmovisions, and altered states of consciousness. In: R. Trnka, & R. Lorencova (Eds.) Indigenous philosophies of consciousness. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 30 (5), 103-122.

de la Cadena, M. (2023). [The "Marcha a Lima" against the Denial of Modern Political Rights: Introduction](#). Cultural Anthropology. Hot Spots, *Fieldsights*, March 30. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/the-estallido-social-against-the-denial-of-modern-political-rights-introduction>

de la Cadena, M. (2023). ["Denouncing Racism Addresses the Tip of the Iceberg . . ."](#) Cultural Anthropology. Hot Spots, *Fieldsights*, March 30. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/denouncing-racism-addresses-only-the-tip-of-the-iceberg>



Escobar, J. (2021) Spiritual solidarity: Memory as a transformative life force for survivors of state violence. *American Journal of Community Psychology*

DiPietro, P.J. Sideways Selves. The Decolonial Politics of Transing Matter across the Américas. (forthcoming with the University of Texas Press).

DiPietro, P.J. *Trans Philosophy: Meaning and Mattering*. (co-edited with Talia Mae Bettcher, Andrea Pitts, and Perry Zurn; under contract with University of Minnesota Press; in production).

"'I look too good not to be seen.' Multiple meaning realism and socio-somatics." In *Trans Philosophy: Meaning and Mattering*; edited by Perry Zurn, Andrea Pitts, Talia Bettcher, and **PJ DiPietro**, University of Minnesota Press. In production.

DiPietro, P.J. "Introduction. Situating and Desituating Trans Philosophies." In *Trans Philosophy: Meaning and Mattering*. (co-edited with Talia Mae Bettcher, Andrea Pitts, and Perry Zurn; University of Minnesota Press; in production).

Fernández, J. S., Fine, M., Madyaningrum, M., **Ciofalo, N.** (2021). Dissident women's letter writing as decolonial plurilogues of relational solidarities for epistemic justice. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 69 (1), 391, 412.

Fetterman, D. (2023). *Empowerment Evaluation and Social Justice: Confronting the Culture of Silence*. The Guilford Press; 1st edition.

Fine, M. and **Torre, M.** (2021) *Critical Participatory Action Research*. American Psychological Association; 1st edition.

James, S. and Lorenz, H. (2021). Do your first works over. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*. Special Issue: Our Present Crises: Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Social Inequality. (1-17).

James, S. and Lorenz, H. (2021). Back to the source: Moving upstream in the curricular rivers of coloniality. *Review of General Psychology*.

James, S. and Lorenz, H. (In Press). Methodologies of fugitivity: Pluriversal options. *APA Handbook of Humanistic and Existential Psychology*.

Lorenz, H. and James, S. (In Press). Liberation Psychologies and Decoloniality: Autonomous communities build their own futures. *APA Handbook of Humanistic and Existential Psychology*.

Kanyako, V. (2022). The Economic Community of West African States and the Mano River Union: Conflict, Cooperation and Accommodation. In A. Adeola & M. W. Mutua (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Democracy, Governance and Justice in Africa* (pp. 121–144). Springer International Publishing.

Moura Jr, James F., Negreiros, D., Cavalcante, Ana J., & Altamarino, Thiago. (2023). Bases of Colonial Violence Against Peripheral Black Women: Strategies of Governmental Reparation in the Realm of Justice in Northeast Brazil. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 29(2), 104–112

Fernandez, J. S., & Moura Jr. James F. (2023). Ciranda, a circle of encounter: Reflections on a decolonial pedagogical activity on human rights discourses with Latinx students. *Latino Studies Journal*, 1-11.

Moura Jr, James F., Negreiros, D. N., Lykes, M. B. & Barros, J. P. (2023) Racialized and Gendered Impoverishment and Violence in Ceará, Brazil: Narratives of Surviving Mothers and Sisters of Murdered Black Women, *Journal of Poverty*, 27(2), 1-20.

Moura Jr., James, F., Sonn, Christopher, Serrano-Garcia, Irma, & Ortiz, Blanca. (2022). Global Perspectives and Experiences of Community Psychologists for the Promotion of Social Change and the Construction of Radical Solidarities. *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice* (GJCCP), 13(2), 1-17.

Ogunnaiké, A. (2022). “Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don’t: The Paradox of Africana Religions’ Legal Status” in *Journal of Africana Religions*

Watkins, M. (2023). A Pedagogy for the White Nonpoor in the United States: Returning Stolen and Excess Wealth, Land, and Resources to the Common Good. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.

Watkins, M., Barnwell, G., Bradshaw, G. (2021). Grounding Community Psychology in Practices of Ecopsychosocial Accompaniment. In C. Kagan, J. Akhurst, J. Alfaro, A. Zambrano, R. Lawthom and M. Richards (Eds). Routledge *International Handbook of Community Psychology: Facing Global Crises with Hope*. Routledge.

Watkins, M. (2021). Toward A Decolonial Approach to Accompaniment from the “Outside.” In G. Stevens & C. Sonn (Eds.). *Decoloniality and epistemic justice in contemporary community psychology*. Springer.

Zepeda, S. (2023). *Queering Mesoamerican Diasporas: Remembering Xicana Indígena Ancestries*. University of Illinois Press; First Edition

#### GRANTS AND AWARDS:

**PJ DiPietro.** Bltácora Travesti Trans Latinoamericana. A Research Program That Seeks To Collectively Weave Travesti Theorizing From Within And Through Community Engagement. Palais De Glace And Williams Foundation. 10-4, 11, 18, 25, And 11-1, 8, 15, And 22. Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Collaboration For Unprecedented Success And Excellence (Cuse) Grant. Just Methods: Reimagining Graduate Education Through Research Collaboratives. June 1, 2021 – May 31, 2023. \$24,000. Grant Co-Author And Investigator.

**David Fetterman** USAID funded empowerment evaluation to eliminate tuberculosis in India and Feeding America funded empowerment evaluation designed to fight for food justice

Top Global Impact Anthropologist of the Year (2023); Ted Talk: Empowerment Evaluation: In Search of Self-determination and Results

**Susan James.** (In partnership) Grant award for restoration of Ladekoju Arts and Culture Foundation, Osogbo Nigeria, from Open Society Foundations.

**James Moura.** Unesco Cathedra for the Eradication of Racism in Higher Education, (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) (2022) - Project Trajectories of Indigenous and Quilombola Students at the University of the International Integration of Afro-Brazilian Lusophony: challenges and practices to destroy racism in Higher Education.

Programme of Research Productivity Scholarships and Stimulation of Technological Innovation - Foundation from Ceará to Support Scientific and Technological Development Research, Brazil (2022-2023) -

Junior Faculty Member Award for the Fulbright/Brazil - J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board (FFSB), USA (2020-2021) -

**Mary Watkins.** The Seymour B. Sarason Award for Community Research and Action, Society for Community Research and Action.

# IN MEMORIAM



We honor the life and work of CLIE dissertation student, Cheryl Chisholm who joined the ancestors on June 17, 2023.

*Cheryl: thinker, voracious reader, intellectual, aesthete, Aries, excellent cook, iconoclast, cinephile, art collector, traveler, clothes horse. Cheryl: friend, student, teacher, counselor, scholar, child, mother. Cheryl: lover of true colors, bright colors, bold colors, red and green, loather of beige. Cheryl: consumer of murder mysteries, opera, dance, theater, Dr. Who, Star Trek, Hallmark holiday movies, fried catfish and collard greens, as much of the world as she could get. Cheryl: poet, drawer of connections, explorer of metaphor and mythology, drawn to deep, multi-generational, ancestral visions, songs, dreams: apple and snake. Cheryl: bound to the ocean, to Yemaya, to the sea. Cheryl: Black all day, everyday. Cheryl: champion of our culture who reveled in global Black brilliance and creativity.*

*Cheryl: ASHE. ASHE. ASHE.*

Retrieved from: <https://pgiaa.org/featured/in-memoriam-cheryl-chisholm/>.

Follow the link or capture the code to read about Cheryl's life.



# R. JESSE MASTERSON STUDENT SUPPORT FUND FOR COMMUNITY, LIBERATION, INDIGENOUS, AND ECO-PSYCHOLOGIES (CLIE) STUDENTS, PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



R. Jesse Masterson, a beloved member of the first Community, Liberation, Indigenous, and Eco-Psychologies Specialization (CLIE) cohort of Pacifica's M.A./Ph.D. Depth Psychology Program and a treasured board member of the Depth Psychology Alliance, was a devoted educator committed to multicultural understanding. He brought attention to the impossible choices many graduates student are forced to make between paying for tuition, medical insurance and care, utility bills, and food. He died on January 7, 2016 while completing his dissertation on the embodied self in nature. This fund, sponsored by the Pacifica Graduate Institute Alumni Association (PGIAA), provides interest-free loans to CLIE students who are financially struggling to complete their graduate work. Its long-term viability depends both on contributions and on repayment of funds. A three-person committee of a faculty, an alum, and the director of the Alumni Relations reviews requests and distributes funds.

Donations may be made online (below) or by check: <https://alumni.pgiaa.org/givingx/r-jesse-masterson-student-support-fund-for-community-liberation-indigenous-and-eco-psychologies>.

Checks (via USPS) are payable to:

R. Jesse Masterson Student Support Fund, c/o Pacifica Graduate Institute Alumni Association (PGIAA), 1187 Coast Village Road, Suite 728, Santa Barbara, CA 93108



# ADMISSIONS, Financial Aid, & Scholarships



## Admissions

<http://www.pacifica.edu/admissions>

## Admissions Advisor

t. 805.879.7305 e. [CLIE@pacifica.edu](mailto:CLIE@pacifica.edu)

## Financial Aid

<http://www.pacifica.edu/financial-aid>

[financial\\_aid@pacifica.edu](mailto:financial_aid@pacifica.edu)

## Scholarship Information

<http://www.pacifica.edu/images/documents/cle/scholarships.pdf>

For information on gainful employment visit:

<https://www.pacifica.edu/gainful-employment/>

La Reyna. Acrylic, Mosaic glass tile work on plywood by Juana Ochoa

Madre Tierra, her fractured body adorned with life and crowned with Ollin and Omatelt. Through our fractures, beauty flows.



**END OF YEAR  
CELEBRATION 2023**





*Earth Monster by Juana Ochoa*

