EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS FOR DECOLONIZATION: ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN ALLYSHIP AND RESISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE AMERICAS

by

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Abstract

This thesis covers the topic of decolonizing anti-authoritarian educational spaces in North America. It outlines historical perspectives on anarchist and anti-authoritarian alternative educational movements that are non-coercive and opposed to hierarchy including the free skool, Modern School, unschooling, and the free university. Further, it examines indigenous educational spaces that originate in decolonizing social justice struggles such as the survival schools, intercultural bilingual education, and educación autonoma. The analysis focuses around discursive practices by free skools in producing a vision of freedom and liberation, and enacting a decolonization agenda. The thesis draws on theory by indigenous women, most centrally Sandy Grande and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, as a way of engaging anti-authoritarian education for decolonization with a critical indigenous lens.

The first section of analysis consists of content analysis of web-based free skool mission statements. I code for discursive units that refer to forms of freedom and liberation, defined as overcoming oppressions presented by Iris Marion Young in *Five Faces of Oppression.* The results of this quantitative analysis demonstrate that free skools, in mission statements, have a tendency to prefer addressing labor/consumer exploitation and powerlessness as sites of oppression significantly more frequently than cultural imperialism, the site of oppression where colonialism is enacted. This demonstrates that free skools place a value in their mission statements of discursively engaging a limited vision of freedom and liberation that disproportionately excludes decolonization in envisioning liberation.

The second section of analysis focuses on documents such as curriculum, readings, and personal narratives produced for and by decolonizing anti-authoritarian educational projects such as Unsettling Minnesota, the Purple Thistle Institute, and POOR Magazine's PeopleSkool. My engagement with these documents has determined that in many ways these projects find affinity with the work of Sandy Grande and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. In this way, the documents are useful in understanding a theoretically supported anti-authoritarian education for decolonization and in the formulation of future work that can build upon this base.

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Introduction

This study considers movement schools for decolonization in the Americas that sit at the intersections of such projects as autonomous schools, free skools/free universities, and indigenous community-based educational projects. These schools, which fall under the broad categories either of anti-authoritarian or anti-colonial education, find their historical roots in anarchist theory and indigenous resistance movements respectively. Where these educational projects overlap is what I will refer to as *anti-authoritarian allyship education for decolonization*, a location where sites of struggle from different historical traditions converge. The allyship of indigenous and anarchist struggles, an affinity at least dating to the time when colonialism and domination made these struggles necessary, finds their current collaboration through a mutual interest in challenging the dominance of the capitalist economic system, the settler-colonial state in the Americas, and patriarchy, three intimately intertwined sites of oppression as discussed by Lasky (2011). In particular, an anarch@indigenist[1] allyship education challenges narratives of domination common to national education that legitimize settler-colonial states, white supremacy, and capitalist expansion. In more constructive expressions, anarcho-indigenist educational projects share in valuing the formation of autonomous, resistance-based, decolonizing, non-hierarchical social and political institutions, including that of education.

Examples in the secondary literature from historical and current educational projects that contextualize anti-authoritarianism and decolonization in real-world struggles demonstrate the practical aspects of building a movement for a decolonizing anti-authoritarian education and are discussed as a way to frame my analysis. In my research I look at documents produced by anti-authoritarian educational projects in two parts. First, I look at mission and vision statements put forward by free skools, engaging in a quantitative analysis of their expressions of freedom and

[1] Anarch@Indigenism is the term used by Lasky, drawn from Taiaiake Alfred's work but including a more explicit feminist analysis.

liberation. I utilize the methods of content analysis to measure the likelihood that these skools will include decolonization as a component of their vision for what constitutes a liberating education. In the second portion I focus on documents produced by decolonizing educational projects in free skools including Unsettling Minnesota at the Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota traditional land of the Lakota, the Purple Thistle Institute in Vancouver, British Columbia on unceded Sḵwxwú7mesh, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh territories, and the POOR Magazine PeopleSkool in the Bay Area of California, on the ancestral lands of the Ohlone. Through a discourse analysis of documents produced by these projects, including curricular coursebooks, syllabi, and reflective autobiographical writings produced by participants, I will critically analyze the points of tension and affinity between anti-authoritarian educational projects and movements for decolonization.

My analysis will utilize anti-authoritarian and indigenous anti-colonial educational theories to understand the production and implementation of curriculum and pedagogy within anti-authoritarian educational projects. I am interested in the ways that free skools express their visions of freedom and liberation, and how these visions of freedom and liberation find affinity or points of tension with decolonization struggles. In addition, I am interested in the ways that radical[2] anti-authoritarian education for decolonization finds expression through its self-produced documents. A central theoretical influence in exploring these expressions is presented in Quechua scholar Sandy Grande's *Red Pedagogy*, in which she outlines how critical pedagogy, with its foundation in Marxist theory, has failed to adequately address the educational and political issues faced by indigenous communities. Are anarchist educational theories, theories that originate in European intellectual traditions, capable of creating decolonizing educational projects? Or do they merely replicate colonialist assumptions as Grande claims critical pedagogy has done? My central question is: Can the educational theories stemming from traditions of anti-

2 I use the term "radical" to mean something that "gets at the root" when addressing a problem rather than as a synonym for extremist thought, an altogether too common usage.

authoritarianism and anarchism address the educational concerns of indigenous and settler-ally communities working towards freedom and liberation in the form of decolonization? In this paper, I argue that anti-authoritarian educational theories and projects both succeed and fail in addressing Grande's criticisms and I conclude by theorizing the potential formation of an anarch@indigenist education that will hopefully be of use for those creating decolonizing anti-authoritarian educational projects in their own communities.

Situating myself

I'd like to make it clear that I make no claims to indigeneity as an identity. Although I do know that my family lineage contains a concealed indigenous ancestry, I was raised within settler culture with the language and privileges of the colonizers of the North American continent. Where I do find some affinity is with the notion of the mestizaje, a notion explored in the work of Gloria Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa 1999). Mestizaje, the idea of a mixed or transnational identity, is an identity whose very existence stands as a challenge against essentialist frames in the context of the indigenous-settler relationship and holds a special position as bridge in the ally relationship which is central to this project.

However, embracing mestizaje comes with the danger of erasing the indigeneity of others by employing the concept of hybridity, a concept found in social constructivist critiques of essentialist identities. As Glen Coulthard contends, "the social constructivist critique of … identity may not only over-estimate the emancipatory potential of anti-essentialist political projects, but it also fails to confront the oppressive relations of power that often serve to proliferate exclusionary and authoritarian identity formations to begin with" (Coulthard 2009). I want to be clear that mestizaje is solely a lens through which I make sense of the ideas and materials that I engage with, and is not intended to express any wider political project. My intent in invoking mestizaje and choosing to "wear" this identity is a way of clearly addressing both my settler-privileges (English language fluency, access to education, relative economic stability)

as well as the ongoing systems of colonial oppression that have an impact on me (racism, family histories of poverty and alcoholism, first-generation immigration). I aim to actively oppose the tendency for the erasure of indigeneity through a theoretical valorization of mixed trans-national identities that results in the diminution of a stable sense of indigeneity. I understand that indigenous identity needs to remain robust for anti-colonial and decolonizing work to proceed and I see no necessary contradiction in embracing a mestizaje identity for myself and understanding the need for continued nourishment of indigenous identity within indigenous communities. In this way I employ Gayatri Spivak's notion of a strategic essentialism (Spivak 1990) which counteracts some possible erasures of these identities by post-modern visions of hybridity, identities that are necessary for the survival of indigenous communities.

As a non-indigenous person who is interested in decolonization it is necessary to situate myself as an ally. Allyship, as a concept, stems from terminology used in social justice struggles to refer to "members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership" (Broido 2000). Allyship in practice is fraught with the danger of reproducing oppressive dynamics including paternalism, unconscious domination, and unchecked privilege in all its manifestations. Operating from my position as a bridge between privileged and marginalized, a characteristic of the mestizaje identity, I hope to foster dialogue on issues of privilege and oppression; particularly I encourage an interrogation of possible colonial tendencies within the anti-authoritarian educational movement. This interrogation can occur through the critical examination of the aims and values of anti-authoritarian educational projects, as well as through the fostering of a "pedagogy of the privileged" (Curry-Stevens 2007) that intends to create educational spaces for settlers to understand and enact decolonization.

Another key component in situating myself within this research is to acknowledge the

active and productive role I play within the communities studied, namely the free skool community. Though the research implications of my involvement with free skools is addressed in greater depth in my theoretical framework, I will provide full disclosure here of my direct involvement with the projects that I study. From the data set of free skools, I was directly involved with the now defunct Barrington Collective Free Skool (not included in my analysis) and the formation of the Ann Arbor Free Skool. I am the founder and curator of the Free Skools Project Wiki, the primary source of my data set. Through this wiki and the Free Skool Solidarity listserv I am in direct regular communication with free skool projects around North America. In addition, I am an anchor at the Purple Thistle Centre where I act in a coordinating role with the Eat the Rich! Community Kitchen project. I attended the Purple Thistle Institute, where I was both a participant and received some compensation as an organizer, including waived fees. I also contributed an article and some editing assistance to the Unsettling Education zine (RAIN Collective 2012) produced by the RAIN Collective. The RAIN collective is a zine publishing project of the Purple Thistle Centre who produced the Unsettling Education zine as one issue of their regular periodical and as a way to document the Purple Thistle Institute. I see no conflict of interest arising from my hybrid roles as researcher, organizer, and participant in the Purple Thistle Institute.

In order to understand the justifiable ethical and scholarly basis for my research of the Purple Thistle Institute while receiving a paycheck from them, it is important to understand the ways in which the Purple Thistle makes decisions regarding both research and compensation. The Purple Thistle is a non-profit, collectively-run, anti-capitalist organizing space. Central to their policy on research is a sense of reciprocity. No researchers are allowed to conduct studies at the Purple Thistle without participating directly in day-to-day organizing on-site. Researchers are expected to “give back more than they take” (personal correspondence with Carla Bergman) which I have done by not orienting myself primarily as a researcher in the space, but rather as a

participant and anchor for the Eat the Rich! Community Kitchen pod[3].

Compensation at the Purple Thistle is distributed according to need and determined via consensus democracy at collective meetings. As the Purple Thistle is a non-profit charitable organization depending on grants for survival, paid positions are few and far between. I have received $4,500 in total from the Purple Thistle as a means of support during my two years as anchor for Eat the Rich! as well as programming assistant at the Purple Thistle Institute. As my goal is the critical analysis of program documents from various projects, including the Purple Thistle Institute, I must be wary of possible bias stemming from any financial support provided to me by the Purple Thistle. The Purple Thistle has no obligation to me for any future wage, and inasmuch as wages are distributed on an as-needed basis, I have no incentive to inaccurately portray my assessment of Purple Thistle Institute programming. Further, I have an incentive to provide a fair critique because of my interest in improving decolonizing curriculum and programs run by anti-authoritarian projects.

Situating myself as a researcher studying anti-institutional educational projects leads to some deep contradictions regarding the values and purpose behind my study. I am interested in contributing to the literature that critiques contemporary universities as places that reinforce the inequities of the capitalist system by claiming monopolies on legitimate knowledge, creating certification systems that influence access to employment by (supposedly) providing increased opportunities to graduates, and that function as research centers for global capitalism to improve its craft. That I am present in a university, with all the critiques that I have of it, seeking a Master's degree is a contradiction that I have learned to live with. One lens through which I understand my role as an educational researcher within anti-institutional educational spaces is that of the *ecology metaphor* (Hightower-Weaver 2008), originally applied to educational policy

[3] "Anchors" are positions within the Purple Thistle that make a long-term commitment of responsibility for a project. I have made a two-year commitment to the Eat the Rich! Kitchen. "Pods" are decentralized projects that operate relationally with the Purple Thistle. There are many pods including a gardening group, zine publication group, and the Purple Thistle Institute itself.

contexts. In embracing the complexity and inherently contradictory nature of my situation, I am able to see my role as an actor within multiple niches. In particular, I hope to dissolve and grapple with the inside-outside dichotomy sometimes seen as a tension between revolutionary action and reform. I have made a variety of compromises with the university in order to gain access to resources and spaces, to connect with unlikely audiences, and to justify (with yet greater contradiction) my legitimate presence in the Canadian state as a foreign national. Seeing my situation as one of complexity, with a dynamic and holistic view, I can recognize the contradictions and work with them without a need for reconciliation. My goal is not to reach a state of ideological purity regarding my educational interventions, but rather to transform and deconstruct the educational system by whatever means, and these means are likely to be multi-faceted, complex, and messy.

I am not opposed to the university at a fundamental conceptual level. This is to say that I agree with the need in society for a place where people come together with a common commitment to rigorous scholarly work. I believe that theory has its place, though it could be de-privileged a bit in favor of a more balanced integral education. I believe in a commons of ideas where difficult and complex theories can be subject to scrutiny, debate, and study. In this sense, and out of a realistic pragmatism, I am interested in interfacing with the university which is one space where something approximating a community that undertakes thorough theoretical engagements is possible. So from within and without (and transcending this binaristic duality) I work to both dismantle and reformulate the neoliberal, corporatized, and state-centric university as well as to help create an autonomous intellectual commons outside its bounds.

Theoretical Framework

At its most basic the framework by which I approach my research is one of praxis, defined by Paulo Freire as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire 2000, 51). The theoretical framing of this research only makes sense in that it practically engages critically with the real world, not as a theoretical work relegated to the echoing halls of the academy or dusty shelves in libraries. As the educational projects that I study are distinctly anarchist in flavor, it is necessary to take seriously the challenges posed by anarchist educational theorists who claim that, "concrete aspects of social justice, distribution of goods, and the material well-being of the community is always at the forefront of educational thought and practice" (Suissa 109). In this sense, the aim of an anarchist educational theory is not to produce better theories or theorizers, but rather to create theory that has utility for practically building a society based upon the foundations of social cooperation as well as undermining the oppressive nature of the capitalist system and authoritarian state.

The ironies and contradictions are not lost on me as I write this thesis to engage in obtaining advanced credentials from a research university. By completing this thesis exploring, and in ways heralding, anti-authoritarian educational projects that reject and attempt to undermine the university I am also simultaneously cooperating with the often oppressive and increasingly neoliberal project of the university. I am not interested in picking sides in the insider-outsider, reform vs. revolution debate to resolve this contradiction. As I expressed in my situating statement I have embraced a hybrid identity as a mestizaje person. Similarly, in this bridge role I see that I have a part to play in both the creation of alternative, autonomous counter-institutions and in the transformation of oppressive institutions, as well as the appropriation of resources from the neoliberal university, and the creation of a university of the commons. In this way my participation in the university is partially an act of hope that the

university, and schools in general, can and do make positive changes towards non-coercive pedagogies. Though I work in the university in the context of producing this body of research, I also spend a great deal of my time and energy organizing within radical educational spaces as well as a way to more fully embody the bridge role.

My theoretical approach is one of critical engagement and strategic theorizing for the improvement of the anti-authoritarian educational projects I study. I aim to contribute to a theoretical analysis that enables free skools to fully embody educational projects with a well-expressed liberatory potential. In determining how to proceed with what can be seen as a contradictory theoretical formulation, I provide an analysis toward the works of research militancy, anarchist educational theory, and indigenous forms of decolonization theory as it applies to research.

Research militancy and critical engagement

The radical Argentinian collaborative writers group Colectivo Situaciones defines the researcher militant as one "whose quest is to carry out theoretical and practical work oriented to co-produce the knowledges and modes of an alternative sociability, beginning with the power of those *subaltern knowledges"* (Colectivo Situaciones 2003). Free skools are one current manifestation of an alternative sociability, an educational form that makes horizontal a system that has been traditionally hierarchical. My work focuses on co-production of the mode of the free skool, though the question remains: do free skools fully engage subaltern knowledges, particularly those of indigenous people working toward decolonization? Later in this thesis, as I contextualize anti-authoritarian education I discuss the ways in which various anti-authoritarian educational projects have faced criticism for lacking participation by the subaltern. Free schools, unschoolers, progressive educators, free universities, and free skools need to remain vigilant to ensure that their projects produce alternative sociabilities with the participation of subaltern classes, rather than merely creating a more liberating educational environment for the privileged.

Research militancy distances itself from many aspects of the university and academic work, in general eschewing the alienation it sees as endemic in academic life. Colectivo Situaciones instead offers an embedded form of theorization and research that "tries to generate a capacity for struggles to read themselves and, consequently, to recapture and *disseminate* [original emphasis] the advances and productions of other social practices" (Colectivo Situaciones 2003). In researching the free skool, a project and movement in which I am already engaged, I both support this form of alternative sociability (non-hierarchical, anti-oppressive education) and generate a capacity for the free skool movement to reflect upon itself and increase the liberatory potential of its work.

Militant research is work done in community and in consistent, organic communication with that community. In this research my community is the free skool community, as evidenced by my work organizing free skools, since 2002 with the Barrington Collective Free Skool and later with the Ann Arbor Free Skool and the Purple Thistle Centre. In this sense, I am performing "research without an object" or research without performing the act of *objectualizing*[4]. Colectivo Situaciones discusses the problematics of objectualizing research, wherein only the researcher has subjectivity and conversely the researched are rendered impotent through the violent act of making them into an object. This concept finds echoes in Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* in which she describes western research as requiring a disconnection from community and a detached methodological approach that dissects and categorizes people for the purposes of extracting useful information from the subaltern classes, an act that furthers the project of colonialism (Smith 1999).

Within the writings of Colectivo Situaciones, there are theoretical and methodological cautions presented for the militant researcher. First, it is important to avoid idealization, or the process of directing ones research toward the fulfillment of abstract, unattainable concepts. It is

[4] Objectualizing, in the jargon of Colectivo Situaciones, is the creation of an "object" that is falsely presumed to exist independent of one's subjectivity in the creation of a research stance. This false premise is the foundation of empirical research as formulated by western epistemologies.

necessary to avoid projecting ones own values onto the researched, even (especially?) in the most well-intended circumstances. Colectivo Situaciones claim the solution to this dilemma is to turn the focus of research toward the researchers, to formulate a “research without an object”. Research militancy goes further, attempting to dissolve the self-other/inside-outside dichotomy moving instead toward what it refers to as *immanence*. Immanence, in Colectivo Situaciones' somewhat unnecessarily jargon-laden theory, is defined as “a modality of *inhabiting* the *situation* and operates from *composition* [original emphasis]” wherein composition refers to love and friendship as the foundations of ones work (Colectivo Situaciones 2003). In this way research militancy is an approach that situates the researcher within the bounds of research and where the research done is openly acknowledged as constitutive of one's identity. The subject-object divide that defines most traditional research methods is turned on its head and the researcher, embedded in a community, analyzes the world because they are a part of it and hope to transform it/themselves.

Free skools interface readily with the concept of composition as they are places where composition in the form of love and friendship are cultivated and these concepts form the cornerstones of what free skools hope to achieve, as Niki Thorne articulates (Thorne 2011). Free skools are places where people freely come and go not compelled by promises of diplomas, credentials, better jobs, or even knowledge that can be used to exert power over others. People come to free skools out of a sense of shared purpose and conviviality. Ivan Illich discusses the concept of convivial institutions where people are free to share and use the resources of the community, places where institutions (examples would include public libraries and parks) are created that are voluntarily accessible, provided by the community, constitute a sort of commons, and are life-affirming places that cultivate healthy communities and ecosystems (Illich 1996). The free skool requires by its nature both the conviviality of Illich and the composition proposed by Colectivo Situaciones.

Composition, this idea of friendship and love, is the way in which we are embedded in our communities. It is the way out of an objectifying relationship with the other that militant researchers see as the hallmark of "traditional" research. I find this concept to be particularly useful as it is connected to the concept of allyship. Composition is necessary for the ally relationship to form in a real, authentic way. As such, composition allows for an escape from the problems of co-optation, appropriation, and cultural theft, all very real concerns when addressing issues related to indigeneity and decolonization.

Anti-authoritarian educational theory

Understanding a theoretical approach to free skools requires a well-elaborated and articulated anti-authoritarian educational theory. Anti-authoritarian educational theory's foundational principles consist of: a belief in a vision of human nature that allows for the nurturing of an innate capacity for good, a belief in cooperation as the central aspect of a healthy social community, an emphasis on rationality and scientific progress as the guide for developing cultural and social institutions, and the belief that the state will inevitably lead to authoritarianism and as such should be actively resisted (Suissa 2006).[5]

In her book *Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Perspective*, Judith Suissa points out that anarchists are not anti-authoritarian or anti-statist per se, but rather anti-hierarchical favoring decentralized social arrangements that originate from the bottom-up, or emerge spontaneously from within communities, rather than those that are top-down and centralized (Suissa 2006, 62). Nonetheless, I am going to continue to use the term "anti-authoritarian" due to its common usage and its relative lack of ideological baggage. This anti-hierarchical nature is at the core of the educational projects that are being considered in this paper. Most free skools completely reject any attempts at external mandates from any organization, the state or otherwise, that would guide their curriculum, mission, or selection of facilitators, instead

[5] Judith Suissa writes specifically about anarchist educational theory, which I have renamed anti-authoritarian educational theory to avoid ideological divisions and petty squabbling, a phenomenon endemic to some radical scholarly communities. I'm not particularly interested in deciding what is or is not anarchist.

embracing a consensus-based collective mode of organization that emerges from the groups themselves. This is not to say that free skools are isolated or insular, but that they believe wide organizing should be done in a solidarity-based form of federation or cooperation among a collection of autonomous groups who follow principles that maintain an anti-oppressive and liberating culture.

The formation of decentralized, horizontal networks has also been theorized by Deleuze and Guattari in their concept of rhizomatic vs. arborescent structures (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Rhizomatic structures are characterized by their multiplicity, by the many nodes that connect to each other. As free skools are composed of self-organized groups brought together voluntarily through affinity, they resemble the rhizome. Conversely, the authoritarian hierarchical structure of traditional education resemble the arborescent. These schools are hierarchical, with a "command and control" structure (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

Anti-authoritarian educational theory operates from a belief in the innate capacity for good in society. This core principle allows for the possibility of voluntarily giving without expectation of remuneration as well as the fundamental belief that the aim of creating a moral education that fosters pro-social values is possible. The anarchist value of *mutual aid* as outlined by Kropotkin (1995) is embodied in the foundational act of freely donating and volunteering ones time, skills, and resources for the betterment of the community. The gift economy, an act of radical generosity, undermines the capitalist ethic of the profit motive and is commonly practiced within free skool circles. This aspect of anti-authoritarian educational theory is useful for determining notions of economic freedom, or freedom from exploitation, expressed by free skools, one of the most often highlighted forms of freedom and liberation within free skools.

Anti-authoritarian educational projects believe that the state is intrinsically constituted by authoritarian relationships, using the definition of the state paraphrased from Weber as consisting of *those who claim a monopoly on the use of legitimate force within a society*. These

projects counter state control over education through their ultimate refusal to participate in any form of state legitimization or sanction of the educational process and its purported outcomes. For example, certificates, diplomas, transcripts, grades, or other official evaluations that reinforce the legitimacy of the state and its claims of authority over knowledge and values in education are generally not included in such projects. Within anti-authoritarian educational projects there is a tendency to value skills for their intrinsic utility and not for the purpose of increased employment prospects or utility in the capitalist wage economy.

Egalitarianism is a foundational principle to anarchist theory and in theorizing anti-authoritarian forms of education. Suissa makes the claim that anarchists have the tendency to describe egalitarianism in terms of distributive social justice where the necessary material conditions for life are to be equally accessible to all (Suissa 2006, 65). This should not be confused with more liberal conceptions of egalitarianism that afford equal rights to individuals who are members of a polity. The early anarchists were clear that the State has no legitimate role in determining who has rights or who is a member of a polity, as it will always define some as benefiting from the machinations of the State and others as excluded from those rights by definition. As explained by Kropotkin in his work *The State: Its Historic Role* (1943),

> "The State idea means something quite different from the idea of government. It not only includes the existence of a power situated above society, but also of a territorial concentration as well as the concentration in the hands of a few of many functions in the life of societies. It implies some new relationships between members of society which did not exist before the formation of the State. *A whole mechanism of legislation and of policing has to be developed in order to subject some classes to the domination of others* [emphasis mine]" (Kropotkin 1943, 10)

To counter this tendency for domination, in concert with the role of the nation-state in neo-liberal globalization, egalitarianism needs to extend beyond political boundaries and identities and as such anti-authoritarian educational projects are freely open to all. In addition they include schemes for redistribution of material wealth, and treat all who participate within them as having equal rights by virtue of their humanity[6] alone. Suissa points out that this is not to say that all

[6] Or in the case of deep ecology, manifesting as the deep green resistance movement in anarchist circles, equality

members of an anti-authoritarian projects are otherwise equal, but that diversity and multiplicity are valued and fostered as intrinsically necessary to these projects and their success.

Theorizing power in anti-authoritarianism and decolonization

Within the framework of an anti-authoritarian educational theory, an explicitly stated theory of power is necessary in order to avoid some of the pitfalls associated with ideas of anti-authoritarianism. Here power is conceived in the words of Michel Foucault, "power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted "above" society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. ... A society without power relations can only be an abstraction" (Foucault 1982). In this sense, all subjects within a society are actors within power relationships. In other words, perhaps running counter to Foucault's sense of subjectivities and how they are formed, everyone possesses some amount of power. Power is not held by the state alone, but rather is intrinsic and necessary to all political and social relationships. Authoritarianism then can be challenged and not all power is synonymous with authoritarian structure. There are forms of power that can, in its subtle complexity, manifest horizontally, be wielded consensually, and that can also be congruent with justice.

As Jeff Shantz (2011) explains, "For many contemporary Anarchists, including prominent commentators such as [Richard] Day and David Graeber, those who conceive of theory as a struggle against power work according to a logic of affinity rather than a logic of hegemony." In this affinity-hegemony counter-position an anarchist vision of power emerges wherein theory is recuperated from its usual realm of reinforcing and solidifying the base of dominating actors within society towards a more egalitarian form of complex, shifting forms of micro-power.

In the context of decolonization, while looking at relationships characterized by authoritarianism among and between indigenous communities, as well as in particular viewing these relationships between indigenous communities and the white supremacist state, it is both

among all living things.

tricky and extremely important to address differing views on power and authoritarianism. Andrea Smith addresses the notion of a supposed authoritarianism within indigenous communities in her essay “Against the Law: Indigenous Feminism and the Nation State”. Smith challenges the idea that a sovereignist nationalism, often seen as an authoritarian expression, is necessarily oppressive or divisive. She points out that within the context of colonialism, a movement for ethnic nationalism by a subaltern group can be a liberating force. These ideas are more complicated, of course. Through an indigenous feminist perspective there are aspects of what is referred to as “tradition” within indigenous communities, a concept that Smith challenges, that can be seen as perpetuating patriarchal forms of oppression and authoritarian power (Smith 2011). It is extremely important to highlight that determinations of oppressive behavior by a subaltern group within the context of systemic oppressions need to come from members of that subaltern class, and that their external determination particularly by a privileged member of the same oppressive system would be inappropriate and could easily become a re-inscription of the same paternalistic dynamic that characterizes the relationship between privileged and subaltern.

Another frame for understanding this tension between liberatory subaltern expressions of power and oppressive dynamics within and between subaltern communities is the frame of identity, particularly essentialist identity. In his essay “Resisting Culture: Seyla Benhabib's Deliberative Approach to the Politics of Recognition in Colonial Contexts”, Glen Coulthard asserts the importance of essentialist identity to the survival of indigenous communities faced with cultural assimilation into multi-cultural democracies. Coulthard makes the argument that constructivist critiques of essentialist identities, in the case of indigenous struggles to seek justice from colonialism, run the risk of framing indigenous communities as the proposed site of transformational change while ignoring the wider context of colonial domination (Coulthard 2009).

Indigeneity and the “politics of recognition” in educational practice

One useful framework for examining the relationship between the state and anti-colonial educational practices is that of 'politics of recognition', a concept heralded by Charles Taylor and critiqued by Glen Coulthard (2007). Within this framework the question arises; what effect does it have on a people for indigenous education to exist as a program ultimately finding its basis and legitimacy from within a colonizing state apparatus? As discussed in this thesis there are multiple examples of indigenous educational projects that challenge colonialism in a variety of ways, and in fact that originally emerged as manifestations of indigenous resistance and political organizing, but that are or have become essentially programs approved, operated, or at least limited by the colonial state. As I demonstrate when contextualizing these projects, many of the educational projects that propose some form of indigenous-centric education are operated through or molded by a colonial state apparatus and as such are positioned to frame indigenous education as solely rights-based (ie. seeking rights and legitimacy from the state) or overwhelmingly focused on the, albeit necessary, project of cultural revitalization without a sufficient emphasis on building indigenous educational spaces that challenge the core political structures of colonial society. This leads to the question: How well do anti-authoritarian educational projects address the possibility of creating an educational space that supports decolonization without appeals for legitimacy from the state? And further, how can anti-authoritarian educational projects and indigenous education for decolonization find affinity in constructing educational liberation movements?

This question is briefly taken up in Niels Barmeyer's article “Taking on the State: Resistance, Education, and other Challenges Facing the Zapatista Autonomy Project.” Barmeyer discusses the ways in which indigenous people across what is known as Mexico, while facing repression from the Mexican state, accepted progressive and indigenous-focused government educational programs into their communities. These same programs, and the teachers who promoted and facilitated them, eventually co-opted social movements and paved the way for

state domination of indigenous communities (Barmeyer 2008, 518). In spite of the the progressive nature of the education programs, as well as their relatively beneficial promises of free education for indigenous children, they enabled the state to dispossess indigenous people of their land, begin massive resource extraction campaigns, and contributed to the cultural genocide of indigenous people in Mexico. The Zapatistas by contrast were able to create, albeit horribly under-resourced, autonomous schools that taught from indigenous perspectives and actively maintained indigenous communities and traditions.

The Zapatistas, by creating autonomous institutions away from the Mexican state, were moving toward what Taiaiake Alfred refers to as a 'radical imagination' necessary for decolonization to begin in any real, tangible way. Alfred states,

> "Radical imagination...? In today's North America it would mean rejecting the image of this land and everything on it and in it as mere resources for capitalist enterprise. Would it be possible for people cultured in the North American mainstream to reimagine themselves in relation to the land and others and start to see it as a real, sacred homeland, instead of an encountered commodity destined to be used and abused to satisfy impulses and desires implanted in their heads by European imperial texts?" (Alfred 2010, 6).

Alfred is describing an educational challenge. Is it possible for education to undo the cultural chauvinism of the settler society on this land? An important possibility is posed here; the state and capitalism are questioned and there lies a nascent potential for the form of society that the anarchists envisioned, one freed from the fetters of the modern colonial nation-state. Alfred goes on to say, "In order to decolonize, Canadians and Americans have to sever their emotional attachment to their countries and reimagine themselves, not as citizens with the privileges conferred by being a descendant of colonizers … but as human beings in equal and respectful relation to other human beings and the natural environment" (Alfred 2010, 6).

Indigenous feminism and decolonizing theory

I look to indigenous feminism as a theoretical lens, drawing from critiques of hierarchical power that not only challenges state and capitalist power, but hetero-patriarchal power as well. These intersections are highlighted by Andrea Smith who makes the assertion

that colonialism and hetero-patriarchy do not exist independently of each other, but that these forms of domination act in concert stating that, “it is precisely through gender violence that colonialism and white supremacy works” (Smith 2011, 65). One way in which I employ indigenous feminism is to center the voices of indigenous women in my thesis, placing the work of Sandy Grande and Linda Tuhiwai Smith at the core of my theoretical frames and by drawing on the works of Waziyatawin and Andrea Smith to further this trajectory. Indigenous feminisms further inform my study by bringing to my awareness a recognition that the aim of my liberatory analysis should not be toward the reification of power as conceived by the hetero-patriarchal expression that is the nation-state but rather toward a vision of liberation that encompasses a broad anti-oppression analysis that interrogates all forms of domination and recognizes patriarchy as at its root. Patriarchy is a force which Andrea Smith asserts needs to be interrogated as it acts to naturalize hierarchy in our lives; this naturalization of hierarchy not only leads toward the nation-state, but toward all forms of domination systematized or not.

Critical decolonizing educational theory

A few scholars have undertaken the task of articulating, and situating in theory, an anti-colonial approach to education in terms of pedagogy and research. For example, Sandy Grande's ideas in *Red Pedagogy* are central to the decolonizing educational work that I am undertaking. Grande defines red pedagogy as, “an indigenous pedagogy that operates at the crossroads of Western theory – particularly critical pedagogy – and indigenous knowledge.” In her mind, red pedagogy is a “space of engagement … the liminal and intellectual borderlands where indigenous and non-indigenous scholars encounter one another, working to remember, redefine, and reverse the devastation of the original colonialist 'encounter'” (Grande 2008). Grande, in exploring the intersections of Indigenous and Western theory, critiques critical pedagogy's eurocentricity and on this basis she problematizes the inherent contradiction of utilizing critical pedagogy as an effective tool for educational change in indigenous communities (Grande 2004).

It is important, in seeking to understand Grande's critique, to elucidate the concept of critical pedagogy. Peter McLaren defines critical pedagogy as locating its central importance in, “the formidable task of understanding the mechanisms of oppression imposed by the established order … from the perspective of the dispossessed and oppressed themselves.” McLaren goes on to say that the central project of critical pedagogy has been, “to adumbrate the problems and opportunities of political struggle through educational means as a way of challenging the alienation of intellectual capacity and human labor” (McLaren 2003). There are some limitations to critical pedagogy which has been critiqued as overly abstracted, ungrounded in political or pedagogical reality, and hopelessly steeped in a eurocentric world-view while plagued with a paradoxically classist and pretentious focus on esoteric theoretical terminology (Ellsworth 1989, Grande 2004). Although critical pedagogy is sympathetic to anti-authoritarian education, as it is a wide-ranging cluster of disparate educational philosophies that gravitate around some notion of social justice and anti-oppression analysis, it still is critiqued for its central problems of writing off “identity politics” as a post-modern distraction and privileging enlightenment-based rationalism as the appropriate approach for the construction of knowledge. My intention is not to engage critical pedagogy fully, but merely to present the basic ideas of critical pedagogy to set it apart from the kind of anti-authoritarian education I hope to theorize, as well as to provide some context for the critiques that have been put forward by indigenous educational theorists such as Grande.

Grande's criticisms may or may not apply to anarchist and anti-authoritarian pedagogical theories and methods. In exploring Grande's concept of “red pedagogy”, and its critiques of critical pedagogy, I will seek the ways in which anti-authoritarian educational projects are able to find affinity, as well as exist in tension, with a red pedagogy and might effectively meet the present need for a decolonizing education.

Contextualizing an Anti-Authoritarian Decolonizing Education

This contextualization covers the historical and theoretical foundations of anti-authoritarian and indigenous anti-colonial education. It begins by describing the origins of anarchist education and proceeds to trace the lineages and the spread of libertarian and anarchist pedagogies across the globe. I provide insights into early anarchist educational projects including the Modern Schools, Hobo College, unschooling movement, free universities, and free skools. From there I discuss indigenous educational projects across the Americas paying special attention to schools that make attempts at indigenizing their curricula and communities. I focus on indigenous anti-colonial educational projects including Native American and First Nations survival schools, indigenous unschooling, and educación autónoma (autonomous education) of the Zapatista movement, among others.

Through these historical reviews a coherent picture emerges which documents projects that have both attempted an anti-authoritarian education and an indigenous anti-colonial education. It is at the nexus of these two different educational communities that my inquiry lies. Similarly, in order to understand the characteristics and historical progression of anti-authoritarian educational projects for decolonization, it is important to understand their opposite. As such I will begin with a brief discussion on authoritarian nationalist state schooling intended to frame the remainder of this work.

A brief history of education for nationalism and citizenship in the United States

In his book *The Underground History of American Education*, John Taylor Gatto (2001)[7] outlines the design of the American project of state-run compulsory education as facilitating the creation of a docile, patriotic, and manageable citizenry suitable for nation building. Additionally, American compulsory education was heavily informed by the ideology of

[7] Gatto's work points toward many truths, though includes no citations. I recognize the possible dubiousness of his claims, while using it as a starting point.

industrial capitalism, as the education system was designed to produce a class-segmented labor force to fulfill the needs of the ruling class for appropriately trained workers. The ideological basis for education as a nation-building institution was not unique to the United States and in fact drew direct and deliberate influence from a 19th century Prussian model of military education that allowed heavily militarized Prussia to become a powerful world player despite its relative lack of resources (Gatto 2001).

Horace Mann, sometimes considered the "father of American education," extolled the virtues of Prussian educational practices and pushed to implement the Prussian system in the newly forming state-mandated, compulsory education schools in America. The Prussian system utilized the now common-place disciplinary institution of schooling characterized by bells to denote periodic transitions, rigid spatial and temporal organization of the classroom and grounds (ie. rows of desks, separate classrooms) the authoritarian impositions of the teacher, bureaucratic surveillance of the students, grade level segregation based on age and achievement, and standardized performative measures (Gatto 2001). Each of these techniques were used to embody citizenship as an experience of uniformity and segmentation within society. These are techniques that typify Foucault's disciplinary institution, an environment designed for observation, training for obedience, and the scrutiny of the subject (Foucault 1979). The legitimizing purpose of these disciplinary techniques is to establish whether or not students have met expectations of achievement in a highly performance-oriented schooling environment.

The physical circumstances of the schooling environment were not the only means by which education for citizenship expressed its agenda. Curriculum in American schools was also designed for reinforcing a particular notion of citizenship. An analysis of American history textbooks during the time period immediately following the institution of American compulsory schooling serves as an indicator for the historic notions of citizenship that were taught in the United States. Textbooks tended to depict American citizens as white, English-speaking, and

middle or upper-middle class (Foster 1999). This marginalization of the substantially large populations of immigrants (from non-western-European countries) and indigenous people, has served to exclude these populations from a perceived sense of full citizenship. Most of the popular history textbooks of the time spoke frequently and positively of the European-American project of 'manifest destiny' whereby the Nordic races, along with Protestant Christianity, were divinely gifted with the American continent (Foster 1999). The reinforcement of manifest destiny in the curriculum supported the nationalism of white America in the minds of schoolchildren of the time, while delegitimizing the national identities of indigenous people and immigrants from other parts of the world.

Despite, or perhaps because of curricular narratives of ethnic/linguistic minority cultures in the United States as less-than citizens, these groups have been subject to a rigidly disciplinary and nationalistic citizenship education. The schooling systems in immigrant, indigenous, and low-income communities (as in all communities in the United States) predominantly use English as the language of instruction, employ techniques that train the embodiment of citizenry, and strive toward performative outcomes. In one historical example, substantial documentation of the Native American boarding schools demonstrates that acculturation to white European society was an explicit goal of the education system as exemplified in the quote by Richard Henry Pratt, founder of the Carlisle School, “Kill the Indian, save the man” (Lalire 2007). The Native American boarding schools emphasized white, European identity as the measure of citizenship by banning indigenous languages, requiring western clothing, and utilizing various disciplinary techniques to 'civilize' the Indians into hegemonic definitions of American citizenship.

Of course, the United States is not the only nation-state to utilize education as a force for the production of citizens and the extermination of indigenous people. This strategy for the inculcation of hegemonic nationalist identity through schooling appears ubiquitously in contexts where the dispossession of indigenous people from their land was government policy. Mona

Gleason describes the process by which the Canadian state constructed children as citizens, “All children in Canada, regardless of their individual situation, were expected to obey and conform to the school’s role as an agent not only of “proper” socialization, but also of 'Canadianization'” (Gleason 2001). Reid and Gill have documented the ways in which the construction of Australian citizenship, a similarly colonial context, occurs through schooling (Reid and Gill 2009). Quite a bit has been written on the topic of indigenous boarding schools globally and their assimilationist program of nationalistic white European cultural imperialism. A review of sources specifically on boardings schools for native youth is included in my introduction to anti-colonial education. Not all educational projects have focused on nationalism and the formation of citizenship as their political goal. In the next section I discuss some of the historical and contemporary manifestations of an anti-nationalist education that comes from the anti-authoritarian and anarchist educational traditions.

Historical perspectives on libertarian anarchist education

Michael Smith, in attempting to document what constitutes a libertarian anarchist education, distinguishes between libertarian education as a *position* and a *movement*. The position, he claims, “cannot be related so specifically to a particular historical moment... It seems to be, that is, an attitude or stance which recurs rather than a tradition that is added to” (Smith 1983, 1). Smith points to the ways in which the positions held by those who espouse a libertarian education share a series of principles and tropes but elude formalization or institutionalization. In this way, the ideal of a non-coercive pedagogical style could be as old as education itself. Smith is careful to point out that the movement of libertarian education does have a traceable lineage and rather than having an interest in non-coercive pedagogy, it is interested in “an education which does not leave the individual politically helpless” (Smith 1983, 1).

In his 1793 tract *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Political Justice,* William

Godwin wrote an early yet comprehensive and fundamental framework of an anarchist education including such principles as criticizing the coercion of children by adults, supporting the inherent goodwill and intrinsic interest of the child, and the recognition of education as a tool of authoritarian state power (Smith 1983, 8). These basic principles of a libertarian or anarchist[8] education are consistent with the philosophical conceptions of the early anarchists Kropotkin, Bakunin, Proudhon, Tolstoy, and Godwin; most of these writers incorporated an educational component into their writings on political philosophy (Suissa 2006).

A concept central to most forms of anti-authoritarian education is that of integral education which, as originally outlined by utopian theorist Charles Fourier, is in essence a project to reform society into harmoniousness through the deliberate use of education (Smith 1983, 19). Integral education aims to provide an education that blends intellectual pursuits with the learning of manual skills, affording no privilege or special status to intellectual work in a deliberate attempt to undermine the class hierarchies that are created by more segregated forms of education. Fourier's ideas were incorporated by a variety of anarchist and libertarian educators that followed him including, Sebastien Faure, Paul Robin, and Francisco Ferrer (Smith 1983). As such, integral education became a central component of anarchist education through to the present day and is essential to anti-authoritarian educational projects today.

The Modern School movement

Perhaps the most well known of the libertarian anarchist schools was the Escuela Moderna or Modern School, founded in 1901 in Spain by Francisco Ferrer y Guardia, a libertarian and free thinker from Catalonia. Ferrer drew his influences for the formation of the Escuela Moderna from the anarchist critique of capitalism and the modern state. He was opposed to authoritarian state schools, as he saw them as tools used by the capitalist state to produce citizens and workers whose inherent dignity to live as free people was usurped for the

[8] I will be using these two terms interchangeably to reflect their usage in the educational literature of the time.

purposes of capitalism's need for a labor force and a compliant citizenry (Avrich 1980, 9).

The Escuela Moderna did not spring from a common language, common people, or any nationalist identity; rather, Ferrer's inspiration for the Escuela Moderna came from an anti-authoritarian political tradition with cosmopolitan roots across Europe and the United States. The curriculum of the school consisted of anarchist ideology, including the reading of works by influential and prominent anarchist thinkers such as Kropotkin and Robin. The school taught a combination of manual labor skills such as construction and farming as well as theoretical studies in libertarian philosophy, languages, literature, and history. The Escuela Moderna actively taught anti-nationalist and anti-imperialist courses including topics such as the "injustices connected with patriotism" and the "iniquity of conquest." The goal of the school was no less than the complete revolutionary transformation of society towards a utopian vision of a libertarian world (Avrich 1980, 23).

Though the school was similar to the progressive schools in its child-centered approach, the Escuela Moderna went further in radicalizing the educational environment. The children in the Escuela Moderna, who came from mixed class backgrounds due to the school's sliding-scale tuition, were emancipated to a greater degree than in progressive educational models, being given nearly total self-determination for their daily activities. Additionally, they were given the ability (and responsibility) of looking after the administrative affairs of the school alongside the adults. If the state-run schools were viewed as building disciplinary institutions with architectural and physical features encouraging obedience, surveillance, and hierarchy, the Escuela Moderna was structured in such a way that it encouraged the free and unfettered development of the individual with little regard for the embodiment of discipline that was so common in nationalistic education.

In regard to language, the Escuela Moderna was generally taught in Castilian Spanish, though there were courses in Esperanto (Avrich 1980, 24). This emphasis on the usage of the

attempted international language of Esperanto further establishes the Escuela Moderna's place as an anti-nationalist school. Esperanto was, at the time, part of a pan-European effort to transcend nationalist language segregation and decrease international hostility through a shared form of communication. That the Escuela Moderna adopted it for study demonstrates Ferrer's awareness of the importance of language in the formation of national identity and in building effective solidarity networks across different nationalities.

The Escuela Moderna was a short lived but radical experiment in education, lasting only five years. It was forcibly closed in 1906 by the Spanish authorities in a flurry of bombings and assassinations (including an attempted assassination of King Alfonso XIII) with loose circumstantial connection to the school and its collaborating institutions[9]. Though there were never any proven connections in courts, the outspoken and anti-authoritarian nature of the school drew widespread scrutiny from political conservatives as well as the Catholic Church. Shortly after the school closed Ferrer was arrested for his supposed involvement in the plot against King Alfonso. For several years Ferrer was in and out of prison and eventually acquitted of all charges. In 1909, Ferrer was arrested amidst widespread general rebellion against the Spanish state and was soon executed by a firing squad for allegedly masterminding the insurrection, despite a lack of any firm evidence to support this claim (Avrich 1980, 32).

Ferrer's execution made him a martyr to the anarchist cause around the world. It also acted as an overt display of the punitive force of the Spanish sovereign. Foucault reminds us that “execution displayed for all to see the power relation that gave ... force to the law” (Foucault 1979, 50). Ferrer's execution served as a statement by the Spanish state that any group who posed a material threat to the established authoritarian power structures, even by merely providing education in an anti-nationalist ideology, would potentially face a similar fate. It is important to point out here that early 20th century Spain was immersed in a time of massive social upheaval. The state was responding to a series of chaotic events that were roiling

[9]Ferrer also ran a publishing house and other anarchist organizing centers in and around the school.

throughout Spain at the time. In usual circumstances it could be assumed that the Spanish state would not have executed a schoolteacher, libertarian, and avowed pacifist. Indeed, it was a strategic mistake for the Spanish state as the martyrdom of Ferrer sparked international protests and the ensuing years saw the emergence in Catalonia and the Basque country of the world's only known anarchist governing bodies (Avrich 1980, 32).

The Escuela Moderna operated outside of any Spanish educational authority. In countering the hegemonic and nationalist education of Spain, the Escuela Moderna posed a threat to the established order and to the mission of nation-building that Spain's educational institutions were undertaking. Despite the fact that the Escuela Moderna came into existence at a period of relative progressivism and a fracturing nationalist identity, none of the other educational or political institutions operating during the pre-civil war era in Spain called for an end to nationalism, an end to the hegemony of the Catholic church, or solidarity with an international movement of activists that opposed all states and all religion.

Francisco Ferrer's martyrdom attracted the attention of anarchists around the world, including American anarchists such as Emma Goldman, who wrote about the Escuela Moderna in her periodical *Mother Earth*. Goldman's writings were partially responsible for bringing the Escuela Moderna to the Americas, specifically New York, where in 1911 the Ferrer Center originally opened its doors. The Ferrer Center existed as the most well known of anarchist educational projects in the United States before changing its name to the Modern School. The Modern School was a reinterpretation and continuation of Ferrer's ideals and educational theories which Paul Avrich has meticulously documented providing many source documents and a rich overview of the archival materials available regarding these projects (Avrich 1980).

The Ferrer Center in New York was quite active, drawing in philosophers, poets, radicals, and other prominent artists and academics into its rich intellectual atmosphere. In 1914 the school was rocked with controversy after some members of the Modern School community

were implicated in an attempted assassination plot on industrialist John D. Rockefeller. Though the police were unable to acquire sufficient evidence to secure any arrests, the conspiracy was acknowledged by one of the involved in 1975 (Avrich 1980, 200). After this, the Ferrer Center closed amidst repression from the wider community. A group involved in the Ferrer Center relocated to Stelton, New Jersey where they founded the Ferrer Colony and continued to teach in a libertarian style while incorporating more hands-on agrarian education into the school. The last of the Modern Schools, the Modern School at Lakewood, New Jersey, closed in 1958 (Avrich 1980).

The Hobo College

Free skools today, similarly to the Modern Schools[10], attract many students and organizers who benefit from class privilege. Though this is not true in all cases, the POOR Magazine PeopleSkool being a prime counter-example, many free skools arise in university communities and their organizers are college students or those with some access to cultural and financial capital. One historical example of an anti-authoritarian educational project that was primarily organized explicitly for the working-poor and lower classes in the United States is the Hobo College.

The Hobo College was an institution initially founded by James Eads How in 1905, through his organization the International Brotherhood Welfare Organization (IBWO), for the education of migratory and itinerant workers. The IBWO was a mutual aid society for hobos which organized for labor rights, provided food and shelter, and created a forum for political discussion and education. The Hobo College was a place for workers and the workless to learn and discuss philosophy, often in the company of professors and students from state-recognized schools. Additionally the Hobo College was a place for itinerant workers to discuss radical political theory and to exchange practical skills regarding health, nutrition, traveling, and

[10] Though the Modern Schools were operated by anarchists with a strong class analysis, many involved held educational and class privilege. Organizers and lecturers with the Modern School included such intellectual luminaries as photographer Man Ray, historian Will Durant, and author Upton Sinclair (Avrich 1980).

traditions from hobo culture (Bruns 2001). In this way the Hobo College was an educational program that actively sought to end economic barriers for the poor in their attempts to access educational opportunities and a healthy dignified life.

Though the Hobo College was not explicitly political in its ideology, there was a direct anarchist connection. While Emma Goldman was an advocate and organizer for the Modern Schools, her good friend Dr. Ben Reitman was furthering the cause of the Hobo College. Reitman, known as the "hobo doctor", was an agitator and physician for the poor and marginalized. Reitman found a place in How's Hobo College as a lecturer and as a celebrated spokesman (Bruns 2001, 205). Reitman worked for the liberation of poor communities by lecturing on illegal and taboo topics such as birth control and abortion, as well as labor rights and practical strategies for hobo living. The Hobo College did not have an anti-nationalist focus to courses, as the Modern Schools did, rather the Hobo College focused on freely accessible educational opportunities for the very poor on topics that provided ideas and skills that supported their lifestyles at the margins of the economic system. In this way the Hobo College was not a challenge to the state but served as a means for challenging some aspects of the capitalist economic system.

Unschooling

While the Modern Schools put forward an anti-statist and anti-clerical vision of education as liberated from authoritarian power, and the Hobo College provided education that defied legal and economic barriers for those experiencing poverty, unschooling has expressed a connected yet distinct vision of anti-authoritarian education. Unschooling, also sometimes referred to as deschooling[11], is a radical approach to the de-institutionalization of schooling. Some of the most thorough discussions of unschooling have been taken up by Paul Goodman (1971), Ivan Illich (1996), Grace Llewelyn (1998), Gustavo Esteva (1998), and Matt Hern

[11] Deschooling refers to the process of unlearning the "hidden curriculum" of school, or removing institutionalized thought patterns from one's mind. Unschooling, rather, is the radical home schooling movement described here.

(2008). The basic premise of unschooling is that schools are an overly formalized system for the social reproduction of values that mimic the most alienating and hierarchical aspects of authoritarianism and industrial capitalism; as such, the solution is to abandon the institution of schooling. Unschooling's main aim is to reclaim learning from schooling. This concept has manifested in the creation of informal learning networks and has been foundational in the popularity of home schooling in left-leaning radical circles[12]. This form of anti-institutional and non-hierarchical learning has provided a rich tradition from which free skools can draw.

Paul Goodman's *Compulsory Mis-education and the Community of Scholars* articulates one of the central ideas of unschooling – that the institution of education is not necessary.

> "Education is a natural community function and occurs inevitably, since the young grow up on the old, towards their activities, and into (or against) their institutions; and the old foster, teach, train, exploit and abuse the young. Even neglect of the young, except physical neglect, has an educational effect -- not the worst possible" (Goodman 1971).

Goodman goes to great lengths to describe the ways in which compulsory education, posed as a universal and unquestioned good, is instead a detrimental force in the lives of students.

Unschooling consists of a more self-directed pedagogy, and is not specifically as focused on anti-capitalist political projects as the Moderns Schools or Hobo Colleges. Unschoolers are defined by their tendency to spend time developing their own interests without the guidance of teachers or schools. As Grace Llewellyn explains in describing the purpose of her guide for unschooling students, *The Teenage Liberation Handbook,* which aims to take power and control away from schools and place it in the hands of students, "I have plenty of faith that *people*— you, your friends-- can intelligently take greater control of your own lives" (Llewellyn 1998, 11). This position of empowering students who are systematically dis-empowered by the authoritarian schooling system is a foundational concept in free skools.

One way in which the unschooling movement is connected to the seemingly more

[12] This stands in stark contrast to conservative homeschoolers, who constitute the vast majority of home-educated students in the United States and Canada. These students are most often fundamentalist Christians whose parents disagree with the public schools addressing sex education and evolution, among other topics.

rebellious threads of the Modern Schools and Hobo Colleges is by its defiance of compulsory education laws. Though these laws have changed dramatically over the past 30 years, many unschoolers have had to face the reality that until recently home schooling was illegal in many parts of the world. Unschooling has been, and in some contexts continues to be, an embodied act of civil disobedience against compulsory education. It is worth noting, in the context of schooling for nationalism, that unschoolers have been exempt from requirements of citizenship education built into the core of public school curriculum and as such are able to form different notions of citizenship and relationship to the state.

Unschooling has been criticized as a movement that is largely composed of white, middle-class liberals who have the necessary cultural capital to navigate the world without institutional schooling. In *Other People's Children,* Lisa Delpit addresses the ways in which all progressive educational projects ignore the systematic disadvantages faced by poor children, particularly poor children of color (Delpit 1995). Though Delpit is not speaking directly to unschooling, she highlights what she calls the *gatekeeping* nature of education whereby schooling acts to control access in society. Delpit argues that those engaging in more liberal forms of education, with a greater emphasis on self-pacing and student-led learning process, can hold students back who lack the privileges of an educated family. This critique echoes critiques of the free school[13] movement by Jonathan Kozol who describes some free schools as "physically isolated, politically non-controversial, and generally all-white, high-tuition" places (Kozol 1972). Unlike Delpit, Kozol critiques free schools not as places where self-guidance produces low expectations and its ensuing lack of opportunity for the poor and marginalized, but rather places where the most privileged children in society are given an even more liberated environment in which to learn.

Grace Llewellyn attempts to engage these critiques of unschooling communities in her edited volume *Freedom Challenge: African-American Homeschoolers* (Llewellyn 1996).

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[13] The differences between "free school" and "free skool" will be discussed in a later section.

Llewellyn publishes articles and testimonials by people-of-color who are currently involved in home education to demonstrate that, while perhaps people-of-color are small in numbers, home schooling is not an exclusively white community. This tension is something that needs to be fully engaged in unschooling communities and across all anti-authoritarian educational projects if liberation is to be taken seriously as a pedagogical aim.

Free schools

Another form of alternative education that ranges from radical to progressive in political character is the free school. Free schools, also sometimes referred to as "brick and mortar" free schools to differentiate them from community free skools, tend to issue diplomas, pay employees, and have some relationship with the state and other certification and accreditation bureaus. Some free schools have a sliding-scale tuition that reaches zero, while many others have rather high tuition prices focusing on the freedom of their students to choose curriculum rather than offering free-of-charge education. Free schools, also sometimes referred to as democratic schools, differ from traditional education in that they are student-centered, have democratic process in which the students have access to power, and have an orientation toward non-compulsory curriculum.

Many contemporary free schools are based on the ideas of A.S. Neill, who founded the Summerhill School in the UK in 1921. His book *Summerhill: A radical approach to child rearing* (1960) spawned a generation of devoted followers who created free schools across the world, mostly in North America. Due to the progressive and often isolated nature of free schools, they can at times reproduce some of the inequalities of white supremacy and class privilege in ways similar to unschooling. As mentioned earlier, Jonathon Kozol's book *Free Schools* (1972) discusses the the practicalities and potential problems with organizing free schools in poor and marginalized communities, particularly in the case of a free school in a poor black community in the Boston area. Perhaps the writing on free schools that is most

representative of an isolationist education for privileged children is what has been written by Daniel Greenberg, particularly *Free at Last: The Sudbury Valley School* (1987), Greenberg's most popular work which rarely or never even mentions issues of race or class. One example of a free school that has engaged in a sustained attempt to create an anti-oppressive free school environment is that of the Albany Free School in Albany, New York. The story of the Albany Free School has been written about by former long-time director of the school, Chris Mercogliano in his book *Making it up as we go along: The story of the Albany Free School* (1998). Free schools have been written about most broadly by Ron Miller (2002) who provides the most thorough historical review of the subject. Overall the free school movement needs to fully address the critiques against them regarding the reinscription of oppressive dynamics if they hope to have a fully liberating form of education, a problem echoed throughout the many forms of anti-authoritarian education.

The free universities

The free universities, anti-authoritarian educational projects that emerged from the student protest movements on college campuses throughout the 1960s, are perhaps the most similar to free skools in structure of the educational projects discussed here. Hundreds of free universities sprouted up during the 1960s offering courses that ranged across a wide spectrum. The initial free universities grew out of Free Speech Movement organizing on the UC - Berkeley campus (Draves 1980). Much of free university theory came from the Port Huron Statement, one of the defining documents of the new left (Lauter and Howe 1970). Though many free universities came out of the radically political anti-establishment sentiment of the 1960s, over time they matured and calcified into institutional community education programs that offered deradicalized curriculum including practical skills and recreational courses often for a set fee (Lichtman 1973).

Free universities often were situated on college campuses and existed as a sort of

community education component of the very universities that free university proponents criticized as corporate tools for an industrial capitalist order. Free universities offered courses, sometimes numbering in the hundreds on a variety of topics that ranged from “Zen Basketball” to “Revolutionary Organizing, Terrorism and Sabotage.” The free universities were not always inherently political, but many of them did organize around left-wing politics. Later in the development of the free university movement, many free universities became community learning networks and were quite widespread, even considered mainstream (Draves 1980).

When looking at the philosophy of education employed by the free universities, one will find a series of concepts still used today by the free skools. These concepts, outlined by Draves (1980, 121), are: The responsibility for learning rests with the teacher and the participants, Anyone can learn, Anyone can teach, Informal structure, Credentials as meaningless, The community as learning environment, Linking knowledge and action, Process over content, Low cost and/or free education, Responsiveness to the community's characteristics, and Education for social change. In these ways, the free university could be seen as the most immediate influence on free skools, with some free universities referring to themselves as “free schools” or “experimental colleges.”

Free skools

The inheritor today of the legacy of the Modern School, free universities, and other similar anarchist educational projects, and the focus of my study, is the free skool. A free skool is a horizontally-organized and monetarily-free network of learners that come together with a DIY[14] ethic to share the skills and knowledge needed for the liberation and well-being of their community. Free skools are run by a group of volunteers who coordinate classes, organize facilitators, promote the free skool, and find the other necessary resources for the free skool to

[14] DIY, Do It Yourself, in the sense used here is drawn from punk rock and and amateur hobbyist culture. The basis of DIY is as an ethic of self-production, as opposed to reliance on corporate production of consumer goods. This is differentiated from a more neo-liberal, individualistic vision of DIY as non-reliance on a socialized system. For a deeper understanding of how DIY relates to free skools see Hemphill and Leskowitz (2012).

operate. In its most pure sense, the free skool locates donated spaces and charges no fees for attendance, though there are practical exceptions made.

The types of classes one might encounter in a free skool are limitless, or limited only by the imagination of the groups involved. There is, however, a cultural tendency for free skools to offer courses that aim to liberate people either theoretically or materially from authoritarianism and consumer capitalism. Common courses one may find at a free skool are perhaps typified by this selected list from the Toronto Anarchist Free Skool, “Love Songs of the 20s and 30s”, “Street Art”, “Understanding Violence Against Women”, and “Alternative Economics” (Shantz 2010) or this list selected from the Free Skool Santa Cruz spring 2012 calendar “Intro to Bikes”, “Yoga for the People”, “Occupy Santa Cruz”, “Anarchy Fundamentalz [sic]”, and “Hacktivism” (Free Skool Santa Cruz 2012).

Free skool is spelled with a 'k' to differentiate it from a free school, which as noted earlier are most often limited to K-12 education as an alternative to traditional education. The free skool is informal, unaffiliated, and offers no certification or legitimization of ones knowledge or skills obtained. Rather, the skools focus on learning skills for their own sake or due to an intrinsic interest on the part of the learner. Attendees at a free skool, based on my experience, range from left-learning university age folks (the majority) to radical community members of all-ages. Some perhaps stereotypical members of free skool communities are anarchists who are connected to counter-cultural communities such as the punk scene, cooperative living, and back-to-the-land style urban farming. Another stereotypical group of free skool attendees are liberal progressives with an interest in sustainability, hobbyist crafting projects, and local economies. There have not been any systematic studies regarding the demographic composition of attendees and organizers of free skools, to my knowledge. As such these hypothesized demographic types are based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence, both methods rife with potential problems.

There have been a few pieces of published academic writing in reference to current free skools. Jeff Shantz writes about his experiences organizing the Anarchist Free Skool in Toronto, Ontario in his chapter *Anarchy Goes to School: The Anarchist Free Skool* (Shantz 2010). Shantz sees the free skool as a heterotopia, a Foucaultian concept which he explains as an "already existing utopia". Unlike the utopia which is "no place", Foucault articulates the heterotopia as a counter-site or an "effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 1986). Through this lens, Shantz sees free skools as prefigurative counter-sites wherein radically transformative educational spaces are able to give birth to new sociabilities. One example that Shantz gives is the transformation of class-alienated relationships in the ways that the free skool is "bringing students and street-involved people together in contexts in which people are simultaneously teachers and learners" (Shantz 2010 and 2011). In this way, the Toronto Free Skool is continuing the work of making education accessible to all, regardless of income and creating an egalitarian pedagogical space.

Hemphill and Leskowitz (2012) performed a series of interviews on educational theory and values with a group that they refer to as "DIY Activists"; activists who are involved in organizing community free skool projects. The authors outline a historical trajectory of radical informal education with an anarchist ethos and apply the values of anti-authoritarian and critical education in understanding the self-identifying statements of their selected activist group. Hemphill and Leskowitz discuss the ways in which the DIY activists understand and express their vision of education as meeting certain aims, "autonomy and choice, self-direction, cooperative learning, learning from community, and breaking down hierarchy in roles" (Hemphill and Leskowitz 2012, 9). These values, as the authors point out, are very much in line with anarchist educational theory and typify the types of values seen in free skools.

Niki Thorne has published a thesis taking an anarchist anthropological approach to

understanding the Hamilton Free Skool, a site where Thorne organized and researched (Thorne 2011). Thorne employs the method of auto-ethnography in an attempt to explore the resonances between anarchism and social-cultural anthropology as viewed through the practice of organizing a free skool. In her thesis entitled *An experiment in liberation fuelled by love….Hamilton FreeSkool, Prefigurative Politics & Anthropological Practice*, Thorne pays special attention to the ways in which the free skool transforms her own experiences and relationships, particularly in reference to love and liberation. This emphasis on relationship is central to anarchist theory and practice and has echoes in the ideas of composition put forward by Colectivo Situaciones, discussed in my theoretical framework.

Alan Antliff documents the Toronto Anarchist Free School[15] and the Anarchist U, which was the successor of the free school, in his chapter "Breaking Free: Anarchist Pedagogy" (Antliff 2007). Antliff chronicles the initial organizing of the Anarchist U, situated in the context of established anarchist social experiments happening in the Kensington Market neighborhood of Toronto including organizing strategies and the nuts and bolts of courses. This is all framed as an attempt to create a liberated education against the forces of repression present in what Antliff calls a "capitalized education." With the explicit incorporation of anarchist ideas and educational theories, these anarchist free skools at least take seriously the wider political context of their educational projects.

Meyerhoff and Boehnke provide insights on anti-oppressive organizing strategies in anti-authoritarian education through their experience operating Experimental Community Education of the Twin cities (EXCO-TC) as documented in their article "Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities: Tools for Struggles within, against, and beyond the University" (Meyerhoff and Boehnke 2011). In their words, EXCO "attempts to prefigure a model of liberating, mutually supportive, community-led education while, simultaneously, realizing those

[15] It is interesting to note the apparent and confusing interchangeability of the spellings "skool" and "school" as Antliff and Shantz use the two spellings to refer to the same project.

values on a wider scale through transforming the dominant institutions, resisting their mechanisms of co-optation, and re-appropriating their resources." One of the most impressive aspects of EXCO-TC is its sheer size and scope, offering 40-70 courses per term organized through three autonomous chapters. Though the experimental college does not describe itself as a free skool, it has all the components of a free skool and goes yet further by making attempts to transform the university system as well. The most fully elaborated articulations of a socially just and anti-oppression focused education put forward by EXCO are discussed later when I look at the Unsettling Minnesota project.

As demonstrated, anti-authoritarian education has come in many forms, each of which support facets of a complex vision of freedom and liberation. As it is the aim of my study to find affinities with decolonization struggles, another central body of literature that I encounter is that of indigenous education, in particular anti-colonial and decolonizing educational projects that are not of anti-authoritarian or anarchist origin.

Indigenous anti-colonial education

The history of indigenous education around the world since the onset of the colonial onslaught has traditionally been a tragic one. Indigenous young people were taken forcibly from their homes and sent to boarding schools designed for the extermination of indigenous minds and bodies. This occurred across the Americas, as the church and the white supremacist state expanded across both continents. The exact progression of the native boarding school has varied from region to region with some only closing as recently as the 1990s. There have been many papers and books (Smith 2005, Steckley and Cummings 2001, Miller 1997, Lomawaima 1994, Fournier and Crey 1997, Lalire 2007) written on the oppressive and brutal nature of native education in boarding schools; my aim here is to document educational alternatives to the boarding schools which express an indigenous anti-colonial education.

There have been indigenous responses to the boarding school legacy in Canada that

attempt to politically resituate how indigenous education is structured and administered. One prime example is the *Indian Control of Indian Education* (ICIE) policy paper (1972) drafted by the National Indian Brotherhood and Assembly of First Nations, presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Developments. The summary of the paper outlines the sites of intervention in bringing Indian education under Indian control. These are local control (meaning band council control) of Indian education, federal laws enforcing representation by Indian people on school boards, transfer of jurisdiction from federal to provincial/territorial governments, and Indian control expressed generally. Though these are progressive steps away from placing educational policy decisions for indigenous people entirely in the hands of the colonial Canadian government, they do not address the needs for indigenous communities regarding decolonization and self-determination.

Another policy document, *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (FNCFNE) of 2009 attempted to address some of the shortcomings of the ICIE document which it identified as not leading to "the comprehensive learning infrastructure / mechanisms that were envisioned by First Nations", changes that were hoped to improve learning outcomes (FNCFNE 2009). FNCFNE goes on to outline specific programs and infrastructure that Canada has the "fiduciary responsibility" to provide. Again, these programs and resources will doubtlessly help First Nations communities provide much needed educational opportunities that, within the framework of a capitalist economic system and a settler-colonial state, currently act as gate-keepers to accessing resources. This policy, similarly to the ICIE paper, does not address the issue of decolonization in reference to First Nations education, rather focusing on resource allocation and infrastructure.

In the papers drafted by the National Indian Brotherhood and the Assembly of First Nations a policy-based approach appealing to colonial governing bodies and utilizing legal structures marked attempts to address the educational problems caused by colonialism. These

papers cited the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the Canadian Constitution, Stephen Harper's apology for the boarding schools, and existing treaty law as grounds for the allocation of resources *by Canada* to promote educational programs in First Nations communities. In other circumstances, outlined in the following section, some indigenous groups have undertaken grassroots campaigns of direct action to change the balance of power regarding the education of their people instead of requesting rights through regular bureaucratic channels.

State-sanctioned indigenous intercultural education

There are several indigenous organizations across Latin America that have assembled for a variety of purposes that often included political advocacy and activism, language revitalization efforts, educational projects and reforms, land reclamation, and cultural celebration, among other initiatives. Some of these organizations have been responsible for innovative projects (or attempted projects) that have included such efforts as the creation of an Indigenous University, training of indigenous people for positions of leadership as defined by their own traditions and communities, and the creation of governable spaces that are under the control of indigenous communities (Laurie, et. al. 2005). Many such organizations have formed, merged, allied with each other, and cooperated internationally over the past several decades.

In Ecuador, the largest indigenous political organization is the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, or CONAIE. CONAIE was founded in 1986 as an independent indigenous rights organization with no formal ties to political parties or churches (CONAIE n.d.). CONAIE grew out of two prior organizations ECUARUNARI, a group cohering indigenous Ecuadorians from the mountainous areas and CONFENIAE, a group that brought together indigenous Ecuadorians from the Amazonian lowlands of the country. CONAIE was able to establish itself as a formidable political force following several radical political demonstrations and direct actions in the early 1990s. The group was responsible for

such dramatic actions as shut-downs of roads and widespread halting of commerce throughout the country (Yashar 1998, 25). CONAIE does not solely operate through direct action to disrupt state neo-colonial expansion; it and other indigenous organizations have long been involved in prefigurative programs including the facilitation of educational workshops and programs intended as sites for skill and knowledge sharing in indigenous communities. Specifically, ECUARUNARI runs a training program for indigenous women that is based in Freirean principles of the pedagogy of the oppressed, a training program described by its proponents as comparable to a university education, though it is not officially recognized as such by the state (Laurie, et. al. 2005, 481). Beyond activism and adult education for indigenous leadership, CONAIE has played an important role in the creation of indigenous space within the primary and secondary educational policies of Ecuador. CONAIE was able to advocate throughout the process of the creation of the national program of intercultural and bilingual schools for the explicit and fundamental inclusion of the needs of indigenous peoples and communities in the drafting and the implementation of intercultural education policy documents and institutions (Hornberger 2000, 183).

The 1988 creation of the the Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural y Bilingue (DINEIIB), or the National Department of Intercultural and Bilingual Education, marked a turning point in indigenous education in Ecuador. DINEIIB enacted a series of educational reforms in Ecuador, most notably the creation of bilingual primary and secondary schools where indigenous languages are the primary language of instruction with Spanish taught as a foreign language or as the language of intercultural business. The DINEIIB program was widely implemented in a relatively short time span, with over 600 elementary schools in Ecuador utilizing DINEIIB materials in their classrooms by 1991. The implementation of DINEIIB as a government program did not originate from the political motivations of Ecuadorian government officials, but rather CONAIE spent a great deal of political energy organizing a grassroots base

that led to the creation of DINEIIB as a response to the inequalities perpetuated in indigenous communities through the lack of access to a quality education that recognized and represented the identities of indigenous people (King 1994, 41). The reformation of the Ecuadorian educational system to make space for indigenous students and for the fostering of indigenous culture and language was the result of a struggle within heavily contested political spaces and is perhaps one type of strategy that could be used by indigenous people worldwide to expropriate resources from the state for the purpose of creating educational spaces that cultivate indigeneity and socially reproduce indigenous culture and values.

In 1989 Peru also was able to create an indigenous educational program with official sponsorship of the national government, the Directorate of Bilingual Education (DIGEBIL). Similarly to the Ecuadorian DINEIIB, the Peruvian government implemented this program in the Ministry of Education as a response to pressure from grassroots indigenous organizations, international NGOs, as well as alliances with other indigenous organizations in the region (Aikman 1997, 466). The DIGEBIL program was an incredibly radical change in the educational experiences of Peruvian indigenous people in that it recognized the legitimacy of indigenous world views in the development of curriculum. This was solidified as a value with the creation of an indigenous teacher education program created for the express purpose of allowing indigenous people to have control over the content of curriculum within indigenous intercultural schools. Furthermore, the DIGEBIL program was the first in the Peruvian government to officially recognize cultural and political pluralism within Peru, specifically in reference to indigenous people (Aikman 1997, 467).

The Bolivian *Ley de Reforma Educativa* is the set of legal documents that establish intercultural education in the country. The Bolivian intercultural educational laws are a particularly strong response to colonial educational models in a few key areas. First of all, Bolivian intercultural education law incorporates the requirement that indigenous language

education is not relegated to indigenous communities, as is the case in Peru and Ecuador. Bolivian schools that are populated predominantly by Spanish speaking students also teach indigenous languages as part of the language curriculum. Moreover, Bolivian educational law emphasizes a core similarity in rights and citizenship identity that encompasses all members of the nation (Hornberger 2000, 181). Though the Bolivian *Ley de Reforma Educativa* is very progressive in its goals of equal rights for education under the law, it runs the risk of assuming equality at the expense of failing to recognize the lack of tangible rights and the potentially harsh and oppressive daily realities of indigenous and other marginalized people. There is the potential of this official policy of equality effectively erasing difference in the eyes of the law, while simultaneously ignoring the structural and historical inequalities that can continue to perpetuate oppression.

The survival schools

Another expression of First Nations education undertaken to challenge colonialism are the survival schools. Survival schools are urban native and on-reserve schools in the United States and Canada that aim to "constitute liberating responses to cultural alienation, social dislocation, and academic failure of native students as well as the political marginalization of native parents" (Regnier 1987). In his article "Survival Schools as Emancipatory Education", Regnier directly contrasts the survival schools with the free school movement, which he claims had a short-lived burst in the 1960s.[16] Regnier discusses how the survival schools needed to interface with publicly legitimated funding and governance systems in order to maintain their own institutional existence. This strategy has led to the continuation of some survival schools by gradually becoming native-centric public schools whose pedagogical methods risk assimilation of their students into the dominant colonial society. As explained by the First Nations School of Toronto, formerly Wandering Spirit Survival School, "The goal is to ensure that urban Native

[16] Free schools did indeed have a large burst in the 1960s as extensively documented by Miller (2002), although there was a resurgence in the free school in the 1990s and 2000s. This did not bring numbers back to the 1960s levels but contradicts some of Regnier's contentions regarding the eventual demise of the free school.

children will have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and the traditional Anishinaabe cultural perspective while acquiring the skills necessary to survive in today's world" (TDSB 2012). It can only be inferred that the "skills necessary" referred to are those that allow easy incorporation into a capitalist economic system and to living in a settler-colonial state dominated by English and French speaking vocational opportunities. It is worth noting that in the First Nations School of Toronto, Ojibway is taught as a second language. At the First Nations School of Toronto native culture is incorporated into the curriculum, though there is little mention of indigenous governance models or active decolonization struggles on the school website. Marie Battiste, in her report *Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy in First Nations Education* brings special attention to the tendency for First Nations schools to enact pedagogies that reinforce colonial dynamics. Battiste notes the ways in which "under most funding agreements in Canada, First Nations schools have had to follow provincial or territorial curricula." These provincial curricula often decenter indigenous knowledge and language substantially and provide no meaningful challenge to the education of First Nations children in a school system, ostensibly designed for them, that places euro-Canadian identity at its core.

Sandy Grande addresses some of the problems she observes with this form of *multicultural education* or *culturally-based education* for Indian students. Grande cites William Demmert and John Towner as listing these six elements of a culturally-based education:

1. Recognition and use of Native languages
2. Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions
3. Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture and ways of knowing and learning
4. Curriculum that is based on traditional culture and that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality
5. Strong Native community participation in educating children and in the planning and operation of school activities

6. Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community

Grande provides these examples to illustrate what she sees as a glaring limitation of a solely culturally-based education that fails to address colonialism and its impacts in indigenous communities. “While virtually no one would dispute the relevance of the above elements as being critical to the academic success of Native students, I maintain that unless educational reform also happens concurrently with an analysis of colonialism, it is bound to suffocate from the tentacles of imperialism” (Grande 2008). In this way a multi-cultural education or a culturally-based education for First Nations students, one that purely focuses on fostering indigenous identity, culture, and knowledge, can be contrasted with an anti-colonial education that actively challenges colonial structures and programs into its curriculum and pedagogy with decolonization as a focus.

More radical than the First Nations schools or even most survival schools was the Yellow Thunder School that existed for a brief period on a piece of land reclaimed from the United States by the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM had opened Heart of the Earth Survival School in Minneapolis in 1971, as the first native American survival school to exist within the borders of the United States. Like other survival schools, Heart of the Earth made its purpose to both teach indigenous-based skills and wisdom through indigenous pedagogies, and to teach assimilationist knowledge to help native students adjust to whitestream[17] settler-colonial society. Yellow Thunder School differed in a number of ways from the typical survival school. It was located at the Yellow Thunder Camp which was taken by AIM in 1981 as an unauthorized camp whose goal was to reclaim a portion of the Black Hills through direct action and occupation. The fact that Yellow Thunder School's existence was an (illegal from the perspective of the U.S. Government) act of resistance to colonialism and was located in a rural area, distinctly changed the character of the school (Kincheloe and Kincheloe 1984). In these ways Yellow Thunder

[17] “Whitestream” is a term I have adopted from Sandy Grande to refer to what is often called “mainstream” within a settler-colonial state. This term is chosen to actively resist hegemonic ideas of whiteness as normal.

enacted a decolonization agenda in their school, though the school and the camp endured a precarious existence due to the inherently contentious nature of their occupation.

The Dechinta Bush University Centre for Research and Learning, located on the unceded territory of the Yellowknives Dene, is an educational project that has centered decolonization at the core of its work is. Dechinta is a program offering university credits through the University of Alberta that teaches a northern-based curriculum in "an educational setting committed to decolonization and Indigenous self-determination" (Dechinta 2011). Dechinta teaches, among other skills and theories, traditional land-based knowledge of the north and a political course on indigenous self-determination entitled "Dene Self-Determination in Theory and in Practice".[18] Dechinta professes and embodies education for decolonization in that it teaches material skills to enable self-sufficiency from the capitalist economy and socialized Canadian state as well as asserting through rigorous political argument the self-determination of the Dene people in a contested space where the colonial government has a tenuous hold on the territory. However, the compromise with Dechinta is the affiliation with a state University, as well as the high financial cost of participation of $13,000 per semester. These compromises and tensions appear to be constant characteristics of attempts at decolonizing education, where iniquities between settler-colonial and indigenous communities continues to necessitate navigation of the current capitalist reality.

The EZLN educación autónoma

One of the most relatively successful groups to create a decolonizing education is the Ejército Zapatista de Liberacion Naciónal (EZLN), commonly known as the Zapatistas, in southern Mexico. The Zapatistas emerged on the political scene in the southern state of Chiapas, Mexico on January 1st, 1994, when they marched from their homes in the Lacandon jungle to the Mexican capital, occupying government buildings along the way. They chose January 1st, 1994

[18] This course is taught by Glen Coulthard who is a member of my thesis committee and was a faculty member at the Purple Thistle Institute.

symbolically to coincide with the commencement of the North American Free Trade Agreement, overtly situating their movement as a counter-movement to the globalizing neoliberal project. Simultaneously the Zapatista's voiced strong opposition to state policies of the Mexican government, defining themselves as anti-statist and anti-neoliberal. In the realm of education, the Zapatistas reject Mexican state education as operating in a capacity to render the indigenous people of Mexico dependent and subjugated by the Mexican state. Zapatista education utilizes a system referred to as 'educación autónoma,' a system that supports community decision making in curricular and pedagogical decisions, the use of indigenous languages as the language of instruction, and adopts some Freirian principles of popular education. Educación autónoma challenges neoliberalism in more than just ideological terms. Zapatista schools teach traditional medicine and agriculture as survival tactics and also as means of economic self-sufficiency that aim to assist Zapatista communities in their resistance to neoliberalism (Barmeyer 2008).

Anti-authoritarian education for decolonization

A handful of writings have been published that speak directly to radical anti-authoritarian educational projects for decolonization. In “Solidarities of Resistance: Liberation from Education”, Carla Bergman and Mike Jo Brownlee draw parallels between unschooling and educational decolonization. The article contains quotes by Dustin Rivers and Cheyenne La Vallee, two youth from the Sḵwxwú7mesh Nation who have unschooled for some portion of their education. La Vallee states, “Once I left school I found a deep love for my family and myself, my community and culture, life and my landbase, where I got to actually learn my culture, language and land. Going back to my land taught me about how my ancestors lived and I saw that as a way to decolonize” (Bergman and Brownlee 2011) Bergman and Brownlee, both organizers at the Purple Thistle Centre, and hosts of the Purple Thistle Institute, briefly outline the ways in which the institution of schooling supports colonial endeavors and how counter-institutions based in a radical critique of schooling can assist in decolonization.

Sḵwxwú7mesh activist and language teacher Dustin Rivers authored a blog post entitled "Indigenous People and the Mis-education" where he asserts that indigenous pedagogy, giving specific examples from his Sḵwxwú7mesh upbringing, is centered in experiential learning guided by and situated within the whole community. "The process of knowledge sharing, or "education," was a community effort, with no institutionalized force to "educate children." Children would grow and through growing they would learn" (Rivers 2008). Rivers makes it clear that what is referred to as an alternative style of teaching and learning, unschooling, was the community norm for the Sḵwxwú7mesh prior to the colonial imposition of boarding schools and western education.

Activist and "deprofessionalized intellectual" Gustavo Esteva is an organizer of the Unitierra project, a grassroots university that originated in Oaxaca in response to a pattern of indigenous communities expelling teachers and closing schools in their communities, which Unitierra took as evidence that education was not serving indigenous communities. Unitierra, a sort of alternative university, is a convivial institution[19] where learning is said to happen in a community of equals through direct experience. Unitierra creates space where people are able to come together to share skills and ideas, engage in apprenticeships, and to change the world (Esteva 2007). Esteva draws on the ideas of Ivan Illich, John Holt, and Paul Goodman to put forward a radical anarchist unschooling critique of education that applies to the needs of indigenous communities. In his article "Beyond Education", Esteva makes a bold statement in regards to indigenous education. "The expression 'indigenous education' can be seen as an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. Education is a strictly Western enterprise and it cannot be separated from the capitalist project. It is not an indigenous initiative" (Esteva 2010).

Looking at the breadth of the historical record of each of these radical attempts at addressing colonial and oppressive state intervention in education (anarchist, indigenous intercultural,and radical indigenous anti-colonial) a picture emerges of each struggle and the

[19] Esteva's work draws extensively from Ivan Illich who originated the concept of the convivial institution.

unique approaches that they have taken toward addressing and prefiguring radical alternatives to this massive and multifaceted problem. My method for moving forward is to theorize what it means both to conduct research in a liberating way and how to educate for liberation and decolonization, paying special attention to ways in which free skools can enact an anti-colonial and liberating education project.

Methodology

Discourse analysis

I employ discourse analysis of historical and contemporary educational documents from anti-authoritarian educational projects to conduct my study in two parts. In the first part of my analysis I generate meaning regarding expressed notions of freedom and liberation in free skools. During the second portion I map the relevance of anti-authoritarian educational projects for decolonization in addressing the concerns posed by theorists Sandy Grande, regarding the deep structures of colonialist consciousness, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, with selections from her 25 decolonizing projects. In this study I pay special attention to language that either negates or supports the presence of paternalistic forms of white supremacy within the free skool community in relation to decolonization efforts and other forms of anti-oppression struggle. Additionally I pay attention to the omission of relevant discourses regarding decolonization especially in the cases where “multi-culturalism” and “inclusion” discourses are invoked.

Discourse analysis is well suited to this study in that it looks at the ways in which language serves to produce and reproduce social reality through discursive means. As Phillips and Hardy (2002) explain, “whereas other qualitative methodologies work to understand or interpret social reality as it exists, discourse analysis endeavors to uncover the way in which it is produced” (p. 6). In particular, I am interested in the ways that liberatory values of activists and organizers of free skools are expressed through their mission statements, and how these expressions operate to produce our vision of the possible meanings of freedom and liberation within an anti-authoritarian educational context. Further, I am interested in the ways in which concepts of decolonization as a freedom are constructed within free skool discourses.

When I speak of *discourse,* I refer to “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being” (Phillips and

Hardy, 2002, p. 3). The discourses that I am working with consist of distinctive *discursive units* – portions of language that appear repeatedly throughout my data – as discussed by Phillips and Hardy (2002, 4). Discursive themes emerge from these discursive units in a manner discussed in the next section. The discursive themes that I have selected for the first part of my study, seen in the headings of Table 1, express specific notions of freedom and liberation as they emerge from free skool mission statements. In Table 1, I have included a selection of discursive units representative of each of the themes.

Cultural anti-imperialism • Indigenous • Indigenous-people led • Anti-racist • Regardless of race • Across race	Empowerment • Do away with hierarchy • Non-hierarchical • Egalitarian • Horizontal • Decentralized • Away from hierarchy • Confronting hierarchy • Free of hierarchy • Non-authoritarian • Community of equals • Beyond institutional control • Autonomous	Anti-marginalization • Equal opportunity • Inclusive • Accessible • People of all backgrounds • Non-discriminatory • All people, all cultures • All ages • Without exclusivity • Radically inclusive • Diversity • Confronting inequality • Welcoming
Anti-exploitation • Outside monetary economic system • Without money • Decommodify • Free • Non-commercial • Anti-capitalist • Volunteer-based • Without money as an obstacle • Free-of-charge	Anti-violence • Safe • Non-coercive • Safe space	

Table 1. Discursive Themes with Example Discursive Units.

Freedom and liberation are difficult concepts to engage, with a murky philosophical foundation. The types of freedom and liberation that I code for are all forms of negative liberty

as explicated by Isaiah Berlin in his essay “Two Concepts of Liberty”. Berlin describes negative liberty, where the concept of freedom is defined by its absence, as such, “If I am prevented by other persons from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree” (Berlin 1999, 156). In this sense, freedom can be defined as a lack of barriers imposed by others. It is this type of negative liberty that I am looking at in free skool mission statements; my discursive themes are chosen as counter-distinctions to freedom. I choose to invoke the concept of oppression as representative of the barriers which infringe upon liberty using Iris Marion Young's *The Five Faces of Oppression* (1990) as my framework for articulating different types of oppression which map to corresponding notions of freedom and liberation.

Definition and discussion of discursive themes

Using Young's framework I have selected discursive themes, which Jóhannesson (2010) defines as *robust discursive units*, that express particular values and aims included in mission statements by free skools. Jóhannesson describes these discursive themes as creating,

> “patterns in the discourse, patterns that are shaped and reshaped in the social and political atmosphere of the past and the present. These patterns are historical and political legitimating principles that constitute the available means for the participants for what is appropriate or safe to say at certain moments or in certain places ” (Jóhannesson, 2010, p. 252).

The discursive themes in my data set, are derived from the faces of oppression invoked by Young (1990): cultural imperialism, violence, marginalization, exploitation, and powerlessness. To formulate these as negative freedoms from each of the respective faces of oppression I have recast each oppression as a form of freedom: cultural anti-imperialism, anti-violence, anti-marginalization, anti-exploitation, and empowerment. As these discursive themes create parameters for what forms of liberation are spoken about, some visions and theories of liberation are possibly more present than others. It is necessary to examine each of these discursive themes to fully articulate the case for their inclusion, the type of freedom or liberation that they express, and to discuss nuances in meaning between the different discursive units that constitute the

discursive themes.

Cultural imperialism is “how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other” (Young 1990, 58). Thus *cultural anti-imperialism* is the discursive theme that includes the idea of liberation from colonialism for indigenous people, or decolonization. Some of the discursive units in the data that specifically refer to decolonization as a way of overcoming the oppression of cultural imperialism include: “indigenous people-led” projects and indigenous-focused projects. The Indigenous Free Skool from Hamilton, Ontario is explicitly focused on indigenous liberation from colonialism as its central goal, though it appears to now be defunct and is not included in the data set that I draw from. I speak more about the Indigenous Free Skool in the qualitative analysis portion of my data analysis.

The discursive theme of cultural anti-imperialism also includes race/racism which encompasses free skools who make a point of mentioning race specifically as a liberatory dimension in their project, as well as any free skools that are explicitly anti-racist in their mission, curriculum, and philosophy. This theme is intended to highlight projects that view racial liberation from white supremacy and other forms of racial domination as a key goal toward freedom. The concept of racism in the cultural anti-imperialism discursive theme operates in relationship to colonialism, as indigenous subjects within a settler-colonial state are frequently assigned racialized identities (Ferguson 2005) which is one aspect of the experience of oppression through cultural imperialism within a dominant settler-society.

A related discursive theme, *anti-violence* seeks to locate projects that highlight relationships of physical dominance as points of intervention for liberation. Lines along which violence generally operates include incarceration, physical abuse, torture, and intimidation. This discursive theme is intended to elucidate the tendency for free skools to engage in anti-violence discourses such as the creation of “safe spaces” as they apply to ideas of liberation. This is to say

that understanding the perspectives of free skools in response to structures that systematically abuse people with certain identities is integral to understanding these free skools' approaches to liberation and freedom.

Young makes a point regarding a differentiation she makes between cultural imperialism and violence as sites of oppression on one hand and marginalization, exploitation, and powerlessness on the other. “Exploitation, marginalization, and powerlessness all refer to relations of power and oppression that occur by virtue of the social division of labor … to structural and institutional relations that delimit people's material lives” (Young 1990, 58). Cultural imperialism and violence differ from the more materially focused oppressions in that they are based in identities whether by targeting, in the case of violence or by paradoxical erasure and simultaneous stereotyping, in the case of cultural imperialism. As I discuss in my results, there is a significant discrepancy in the data regarding the emphasis by free skools on material vs. identity focused oppressions.

The discursive theme of *anti-marginalization* expresses the value that free skools intend to allow meaningful participation and involvement by all people. As Young puts it, “A whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (Young 1990, 53). This theme holds echoes of liberal discourses of multi-culturalism and inclusion whereby an imagined, hegemonic identity allows access by those who are systemically othered. This is a common theme in free skools whereby a claim is made that one's project is available to be accessed, though the question remains; to what are they gaining access? It is important to note that marginalization is an integral component to the process of colonization, as are all of the oppressions outlined by Young, however the difference between marginalization and cultural imperialism is in the respective responses. Countering marginalization results in inclusion to a system that may be dominated by one culture, whereas countering cultural imperialism

necessitates the formation of bases of power for subaltern groups.

The most prevalent discursive theme across the data set is *anti-exploitation* which manifests in several different types of discursive units regarding liberation from the appropriation of ones labor or wealth. This can be expressed as the "free as in lunch" principle in some instantiations, where there is an analysis of economic barriers existing that keep the poor away from education. Free skools will express this value of freedom from exploitation as low-to-no cost education, barter and gift economies, and non-commercial education. This particular theme comes in response to what is seen as a commodification of the educational system. High tuition rates in universities, corporate sponsorship of educational facilities, and the creeping presence of advertising within schools and curriculum are being actively critiqued by those writing in critical pedagogy circles (McLaren 2003, Giroux 2007) regarding neoliberalism and education. Often this theme occurs as freedom from consumer exploitation, a form of exploitation recognized in neo-Marxist theories of labor and value (Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008). Other discursive units that are placed within the theme of anti-exploitation constitute a value for teaching anti-capitalist economics and speaking critically of capitalism in free skool classes. In some ways certain expressions of exploitation are similar to marginalization in that the poor are excluded from meaningful participation in educational environments, but even beyond this the tuition and labor power (in the case of graduate students) that is extracted from students within the academic-industrial complex constitutes a form of exploitation as well.

The discursive theme of *empowerment* refers to the ways in which free skools organize their pedagogies to reflect an egalitarianism or horizontalism where power is distributed equitably. Teachers and students are presented as co-equals without the imbalanced top-down power relationships present in the traditional, or in Freire's terms "banking model", of education (Freire 2000). Hierarchies of power are a focus of analysis by free skools and it is evident that this is due to an influence by the early anarchists (Suissa 2006). Curricular offerings in free

skools will generally include space to discuss and plan ways to live without hierarchy, including practices such as consensus decision making, cooperative business and housing models, and other practices designed to foster horizontal decision-making and lateral power. Free skools counter powerlessness by actively challenging hierarchies, by forming more equitable decision making structures, and by a focus on decentralization of power away from institutional or governmental control and into the hands of the participants.

Following the identification and selection of these discursive themes that emerge from the data, the next step in my content analysis of mission statements is to code for the discursive themes, noting which discursive units apply to each discursive theme. Following this I produce statistics on the prevalence of discursive themes within the mission statements in my data set. Each discursive theme is calculated to determine what percentage of anti-authoritarian educational projects contain discursive units that fall within that theme. A simple comparison is made to see which discursive themes are most representative of the values and aims of anti-authoritarian educational projects.

Content analysis, case selection, and emergent coding of discursive themes

I follow a model given by Stemler and Bebell (2009) who outline a methodology for conducting a content analysis on school mission statements. Their method begins with stating the research question, which I have identified for the first portion of my analysis to consist of determining what concepts related to freedom and liberation are expressed in free skool mission statements. Next, Stemler and Bebell discuss the selection criteria of their cases. Stemler and Bebell, however, are drawing from a much larger data set (all schools elementary through university). As such my study did not require a random sampling, because I was able to include a nearly complete representation of all free skools locatable online that meet my criteria for an anti-authoritarian educational project as outlined earlier[20]. I created a wiki entitled the Free

[20] a horizontally-organized and monetarily-free (or consciously very low cost) network of learners that come together with a DIY ethic to share the skills and knowledge needed for the liberation and well-being of their community

Skools Project Wiki: http://freeskools.wikispaces.com, which I used to collect my cases. I searched via Google and Facebook for the key terms “free skool”, “free university”, and “experimental college” adding relevant projects to the wiki. I contacted the Free Skool Solidarity listserv owners and solicited submissions. I posted links advertising the wiki on every free skool Facebook page that I was able to locate, allowing groups to self-edit the wiki, many of whom did so. In addition, I referenced a very comprehensive database of free skool projects once curated as a matter of interest by the now defunct Freeschool Community of Olympia.

There are some limitations to this methodology for case selection. It is possible that there are other free skools in existence that have no web-based presence and are not represented in my data set. Similarly, it is possible that free skools who have not expressed a sufficient presence on the internet have been left out of the data set, a distinct possibility as there are “underground free skools” referred to on the internet which are specifically only advertised through word-of-mouth. Though I have regularly checked the links in the free skool directory of the wiki to ensure that the projects represented in this study at the time of writing are current and active, free skools are inherently ephemeral in nature and many may have come and gone by the time this thesis reaches publication.[21]

An additional limitation to this methodology is that the mission statements of free skools may not accurately reflect what free skools do in practice. Mission statements are ways for free skools to self-define their community values and pedagogical aims, this does not necessarily mean that free skools will fulfill their stated aims. I am examining mission statements as a way of understanding the values espoused by free skools; to understand their educational intentions in relation to the visions of freedom that they aspire toward and not necessarily to understand how they practically fulfill their intentions. This limitation leads to an inconsistency in my data. that I discuss in depth in my analysis section, where even some of those projects that I look to as

[21] In the time between writing my research proposal and writing this thesis seven of my known projects have become inactive and four new ones have been added to wiki.

models for a decolonizing anti-authoritarian education (Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities and the Purple Thistle Centre) have no mention of cultural imperialism as a site of oppression or decolonization as a mode of liberation in their mission statements.

Social engagement of activist discourses of decolonization in radical pedagogy

Free skools, as educational sites of radical political struggle against authoritarian state power, are uniquely situated spaces in which to perform a critical analysis of the discursive elements of their materials. What it means to be an organizer of a free skool and to practice a non-hierarchical form of education work can be contradictory and contentious. In free skools, as in the activist community in general, there are competing notions of what legitimate radical political struggle looks like and how such a radical praxis can be enacted.

With this tension around competing ideas of legitimate political struggle in mind, I am interested in the ways that decolonization is situated within anti-authoritarian discourses of freedom and liberation. My methodology for analyzing decolonization discourses in anti-authoritarian educational texts comes from Sandy Grande's *social engagement of ideas,* a method that she outlines by describing thus. “I engage them [ideas] 'in motion' through a process of active and close observation wherein I live with, try on, and wrestle with ideas in a manner akin to Geertz's notion of 'deep hanging out' but without the distinction between participant/observer” (Grande 2008). Grande discusses this methodology within a context of admitting that she is not sure whether or not she has a method at all.

I am undertaking an social engagement of the ideas present within Unsettling Minnesota's *Unsettling Ourselves: Reflections and Resources for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality* (Unsettling Minnesota 2009), POOR Magazine's *Decolonizers Guide to a Humble Revolution* (Poor Press 2011) and the Purple Thistle's *Unsettling Education* (RAIN Collective 2012) zine by, as Grande explains, “surveying viewpoints on the genealogy of ideas, their representation and potential power to speak across boundaries, borders and margins” (Grande

2008). One piece of this method differs between myself and Grande is that I do not filter the data through an indigenous perspective, as I have no such perspective. I rather filter the data through a critically-engaged activist perspective and a mestizaje perspective. I do draw from indigenous perspectives in my analysis, looking to indigenous writings as a central orientation of my analysis and including indigenous feminism as a lens through with I view anti-authoritarian decolonizing pedagogies.

My framework for examining selected anti-authoritarian educational projects using a lens of “red pedagogy” centers on Grande's five deep structures of colonialist consciousness. Grande describes the five deep structures of colonialist consciousness in the context of discussing problems inherent to the theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy, as rationalist, enlightenment-based assumptions. First, Grande explains the belief of *progress as change and change as progress.* Within this belief structure economic and technological growth are seen as the goals of a society and all work in such a society is competitively attuned to the fulfillment of these aims. There is little space within such a system for a world view based in a cyclical understanding of time or a sense of viewing the values of harmony, balance, and reciprocity as potential hopeful goals of a society. Second, Grande describes the *separateness of faith and reason* which defines scientific rationalism as superseding subjective or spiritual understandings of the world. Third, Grande describes a belief of *the universe as secular, mechanistic, material, and impersonal* where humans have no relationship with the wider world, but see it as an objective other. Fourth, the *subscription to ontological individualism* is a concept whereby the individual self is viewed as the basic social unit, discounting the importance of the community as a potential frame for ontological understanding. Lastly, Grande describes a deep structure of colonialist consciousness that views *humans as separate from and superior to nature.* In this structure, humans are able to transcend the interrelatedness of life to assume a position of dominance over nature whereby they can assert ownership and dominion. This concept is

reinforced by the notion that only humans are capable of rational thought, and thus that the land and other animals, plants, and beings are dispassionate about their own existence and therefore incapable of making decisions concerning their own affairs (Grande 2004, 69).

These core structures of colonialist consciousness may or may not be structurally reproduced in anti-authoritarian educational philosophies. I attempt to systematically determine whether such problematics occur within the educational projects forwarded by anarchists and other anti-authoritarians by analyzing the documentary evidence produced by these projects. Further, I contribute to the literature that will create educational theories and projects that actively undermine the colonial mentality in education through a pedagogy that centers allyship and decolonization.

Similarly to Grande, Linda Tihuwai Smith has outlined a series of coherent concepts that are applicable to my analysis. In her work, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith discusses the practice of research from an indigenous perspective from which I draw a selection of her 25 indigenous projects (Smith 1999, 142) as a lens through which to view selected documents, which will be discussed as case studies in my data set, in order to analyze the ways in which anti-authoritarian education tends to support, enact, or obstruct a decolonization agenda.

Anti-authoritarian education may have the potential to further the project of *indigenizing*. Indigenizing is a project proposed by Smith that serves to create space for indigenous identity and world views and value systems to exist. More than merely creating space, indigenizing centers indigenous world views in the academic disciplines as legitimate expressions of knowledge. Designing educational projects that centralize indigenous ways of knowing and models of governance is imperative to the act of fostering a decolonizing agenda within an educational project. In order to determine whether the anti-authoritarian educational projects that I am looking at are actively indigenizing, I will seek moments within their documents that express the "centering of the landscapes, images, languages, themes, metaphors, and stories in

the indigenous world" (Smith 1999, 146). Additionally, to further document the centering of indigenous world-views (or lack thereof), I look for the occurrence of courses, materials, and pedagogies that are organized and produced by or in collaboration with indigenous people.

Necessary for the project of indigenizing is another of Smith's projects, that of *revitalizing*. Traditionally revitalization efforts focus on language revitalization, but I believe that this needs to broaden beyond language to include cultural modes of governance and other core values and knowledges. This is a difficult project, as indigenous communities have faced, and continue to face, centuries of colonization, genocide, and cultural repression. Often there are few elders present to teach a language, much less to revitalize ecological knowledge, mathematical knowledge, political structures, history, art, and indigenous sources of every other discipline that is missing from indigenous schools across the world. Free skools, in order to have a decolonizing pedagogy, can not teach indigenous life as a historical artifact or even as a cultural form that is othered, exoticized, and reduced to foods and fashions. Indigenous life needs to be rejuvenated through authentic, lived experience where the ways of knowing and cultural forms of indigenous communities are embodied and practiced. By examining whether free skools support revitalization in their course documents through the organization of revitalizing practices, it becomes clear whether or not this value is present.

Just as the effort to indigenize needs revitalization to create a base of core knowledge and traditions from which indigenism can grow, revitalization depends on a land base and political self-determination. Smith refers to two projects, *returning* and *claiming*, that are projects for the creation of political and spatial bases where indigenous groups can allow their livelihoods to emerge. This is perhaps the most difficult project. The settler state will potentially allow for knowledge and culture to live and thrive, but convincing the settler state to relinquish land will have to be a political struggle utilizing all possible means. Anti-authoritarian educational projects often focus on learning-through-doing, an integral education that supports

action as a necessary component of the learning process. I will analyze source documents to determine when and how anti-authoritarian educational projects support tangible efforts for action toward the concrete realization of political and economic power by indigenous people, a practice that will lead toward a more realized vision of decolonization.

Another of Smith's projects, *reading*, urges a critical analysis of the documents of colonialism. The process of decolonization must include facing histories of oppression and dispossession. A decolonizing education needs to frankly confront histories of theft and cultural genocide as a way to heal and to rightfully locate indigenous peoples on their land. This process of returning is the connecting point between the historical and political in a contemporary indigenous pedagogy. Looking at the ways in which anti-authoritarian educational projects address hegemonic narratives within documents produced by colonialism will give insight into how these projects are framing larger power structures.

Analysis

Quantitative analysis of free skool values

In a quantitative analysis of the notions of freedom and liberation expressed in free skool mission statements, the prevalence of certain discourses is the primary tool I utilize. The most prevalent discursive theme in free skool mission statements is that of anti-exploitation which was mentioned in 36 out 44 (81.8%) free skools. The least prevalent discursive themes was cultural anti-imperialism with 5 of 44 (11.4%) free skools mentioning. In Table 2, you will see the tallies from the analysis of discursive themes presented in order from least prevalent to most prevalent. The full data set is available in Appendix A.

Discursive Theme	Cultural anti-imperialism	Anti-violence	Anti-marginalization	Empowerment	Anti-exploitation
# out of 44	5	6	25	34	36
Percent	11.4%	13.6%	56.8%	77.3%	81.8%

Table 2. Percentage prevalence of discursive themes in free skool missions statements.

Looking at this data it is apparent that free skools represent themselves as liberating through economic and political means most frequently. In this sense, free skools do not put forward a vision that places equal focus on challenging cultural imperialism or violence as sites of oppression in society, areas that Young (1990) refers to as more focused on identity-based than material in nature. Though just more than half of free skools envision a liberation from marginalization, this form of liberation is frequently articulated in terms of inclusion and access discourses where all people are expected to be able to access the free skool, for example using such discursive units as “anyone can participate”, “inclusive”, or “equality” to describe this value. This does little to challenge potentially hegemonic educational forms where colonial language, political ideals, and pedagogies could reinscribe a eurocentric educational space.

The focus of free skools on non-hierarchical structures does find affinities with some indigenous political and social structures. Andrea Smith discusses the ways in which we can “look to alternative visions of governance articulated by Native women activists that do not

depend on domination and force but rely on systems of kinship, respect, and reciprocity" (Smith 2005, 136). Taiaiake Alfred explains the ways in which indigenous governance systems are based in formulations that are "non-intrusive and build frameworks of respectful coexistence by acknowledging the integrity and autonomy of the various constituent elements of the relationship" (Alfred 2001, 30). In Alfred's formulation of an indigenous political discourse, interconnectedness and respectful relations for all living things is at the center of many indigenous philosophies. By this guideline, state sovereignty and hierarchical political institutions are uncommon to indigenous approaches to power and governance. Regardless of this affinity, if the sites where free skools challenge hierarchy are relegated solely to a focus on decentralization and autonomy, free skools redistribute power only among who engage in their project but not among the powerless in a more broad sense. Since this poses no inherent challenge to the basic frameworks of colonialism, free skools are only maintaining an educational space where potentially those who are already settler-privileged can exercise a degree of agency relative to those engaged in more coercive forms of schooling.

This data is limited in that it only expresses the vision and mission of the free skool and does not focus on the practical programs that the free skool puts forward. One prime example of this limitation can be seen in the mission statements of the Purple Thistle Centre and Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities. The mission of the Purple Thistle Centre is as follows,

> "The Purple Thistle is a youth-run community centre for arts and activism. We are located in East Vancouver and have a couple of hundred regular participants.
> We are a free place (both free-of-charge, and we are interested in freedom) where youth can engage with each other and their community. The Centre is a physical space to root ourselves, a place to work together, and a site to learn new ways for radical organizing for social change" (Purple Thistle n.d.).

Though this mission statement makes no mention of decolonization or any form of challenging cultural imperialism, the Purple Thistle hosted the Purple Thistle Institute which had a primary aim of decolonization. Similarly, the mission statement for Experimental Community Education

of the Twin Cities is,

> "The Experimental College of the Twin Cities (EXCO) is a collective dedicated to supporting community initiated educational opportunities as a means for social change. Classes organized through EXCO are spaces of learning where people share their talents in an inclusive, open, non-hierarchal [sic], and non-coercive setting. EXCO brings together community members, organizations, and movements to engage in a shared education mission" (EXCO n.d.).

EXCO claims to value an education free of hierarchy and coercion, but neglects to mention their focus on decolonization and other forms of challenging cultural imperialism despite the fact that they had hosted the longest running series of decolonization centered curriculum, the Dakota Decolonization and Unsettling Ourselves courses and were the site for the formation of Unsettling Minnesota. In addition, EXCO has an entire chapter[22] named 'Academia Comunitaria' that consists of classes taught by and for members of the working class Spanish-speaking community (Meyerhoff and Boehnke 2011, 23).

The only project included in this study that both offers some decolonizing programs and notes decolonization in any way in their mission statement is the POOR Magazine Escuela de la Gente/PeopleSkool. Their missions statement reads, "Educación para todos los pueblos fuera de la Institución. Education for all peoples outside the Institution. Poor People-led/Indigenous People-led Media, Education, and Art - Medios de comunicacion, educación, y arte de lideres indigenas y pobres" (POOR Magazine n.d.). POOR Magazine organizers are vigilant about including Spanish in all of their materials, which in itself poses a challenge to the cultural imperialism inherent in English-speaking North America. Though Spanish is a colonial language itself, there are many oppressions that occur on the basis of race and nationality for people who speak Spanish as a first language.

My response to this limitation comes in the form of a question. If these anti-authoritarian educational projects are hosting decolonizing curriculum and are structurally focused on countering cultural imperialism in their organizations, why do they not address these sites of

[22] EXCO – Twin Cities is composed of three chapters or "campuses".

oppression as a component of their mission? When defining their vision statements free skools so seldom engage such a fundamental form of oppression, colonialism in North America, that even those working towards decolonization neglect its mention. One way to address this limitation would be to perform a study on curricular offerings at free skools to determine how often they attempt to address the problem of colonialism[23]. In a cursory glance at free skools course offerings it is important to note that a handful of free skools do hold decolonization oriented workshops, for example the Richmond Free School held a three part "Colonization and Decolonization Class" in August of 2011 and Camas FreeSkool in Victoria, British Columbia is offering a one-time class "Colonialism in Victoria and Beyond" on May 23rd, 2012.

Toward an unsettling curriculum

At this point, I will analyze the documents produced by decolonization efforts in selected anti-authoritarian educational projects. I perform this analysis not only for the purposes of determining whether these projects reinscribe colonial attitudes in their work, but also how they challenge colonialism by furthering the decolonizing projects outlined by Linda Tuhiwai Smith. In addition, my aim is to begin developing my own curriculum for an Unsettling Vancouver project. Outside of the bounds of this thesis, I have started organizing with others interested in forming a collective to follow the work done by Unsettling Minnesota, the Purple Thistle Institute, and the POOR Magazine Escuela de la Gente/PeopleSkool. Unsettling Vancouver, which may be included as a component of the ongoing Purple Thistle Institute, will be a group of settler and indigenous allies focused on educational and practical projects for decolonization. As a starting point in forming Unsettling Vancouver, my analysis of the documents written by other anti-authoritarian educational projects for decolonization will form the way forward.

Unsettling ourselves

The Unsettling Minnesota collective was a group of white settler allies who worked in

[23] I have not performed this study but I can state most un-empirically with no method other than examination and experience that there are not very many decolonization programs being organized by free skools.

conjunction with Dakota activists in Minneapolis and the surrounding areas. The group's foundations were in the Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies course at Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities, a free university that has existed for several decades. In the course description for Unsettling Minnesota, they describe their aims as such,

> "This course is designed to create community, education, and organized networks for non-Dakota allies to act in solidarity with upcoming Dakota decolonization struggles. We will listen to the desires, demands, knowledge and goals of Dakota community members struggling for liberation and decolonization. We will educate ourselves about Dakota perspectives on "Minnesotan" history, de/colonization and liberation, white and settler/colonizer privilege, solidarity politics, and racism, through carefully chosen texts and group discussion. Together, we will build a collective knowledge base that centers decolonization within our ideas of anti-oppression. Dakota traditional knowledge and spirituality will not be shared and this is not a space for non- Dakota people to seek appropriation of Dakota culture or an "in" to spiritual practices. Cultural appropriation will be discussed and confronted as an act of colonization. For white people in the class, acknowledgment, commitment, and vulnerability to confronting white and colonizer privilege, as well as working to transform feelings of guilt into action towards decolonization will be crucial and necessary personal work required. The end goal is to create active ally solidarity networks that can be mobilized when need be — in answer to Dakota calls for solidarity from non-Dakota folks, based on direct communication with and knowledge of Dakota desires. Class members will be asked to act not as individuals, but as members of their own communities—to act within their networks to further spread knowledge and mobilize solidarity" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009).

The Unsettling Minnesota project aims for a deep and radical re-transformation of the relationship of settlers to the reality and the legacy of colonialism. By questioning the authoritarian relationship of the settler's very existence on stolen land and by attempting to undermine and dissolve the racist American settler-colonial mentality, Unsettling Minnesota poses a firm challenge to colonialism. I first heard of this project in a talk given by Waziyatawin, who also uses the name Angela Cavender Wilson, a Dakota scholar who works at the University of Victoria. Waziyatawin described how the Unsettling Minnesota project not only creates a forum for settlers to study analysis and histories of colonialism, but also works to actively aid the Dakota in the return of land to Dakota communities. One such project is fund-raising in settler communities to support Oyate Nipi Kte, a land project run by Waziyatawin, whose goal is

to purchase traditional sugar bushing and wild ricing lands for the Dakota. The Unsettling Minnesota collective has contributed to fundraising efforts for Oyate Nipi Kte in attempts to repatriate stolen land to the Dakota people. In this way Unsettling Minnesota expresses not only theoretical challenges to colonialism laden with empty rhetoric, but very real material challenges as well.

Unsettling Minnesota produced *Unsettling Ourselves: Resources and Reflections for Deconstructing Colonial Mentality* (Unsettling Minnesota 2009), the coursebook compiled for their classes Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies and Unsettling Ourselves held at the Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities for several years in the late 2000s. *Unsettling Ourselves* is a 211 page resource guide for a course in decolonization including readings by scholars such as Andrea Smith, Dee Brown, Waziyatawin, and others. The coursebook includes curricular materials such as the syllabus for Dakota Decolonization, writings by several people who participated in Unsettling Minnesota, the Unsettling Minnesota points of unity, and more. The coursebook is organized in progressive sections that guide the course through a predetermined path. It begins with "Foundations," historical accounts of colonial occupation in the Americas, basic definitions, and some theory. Then, it proceeds to "Allyship," which consists primarily of autobiographical narratives and anti-oppression writings. The coursebook concludes with "Organizing" where concrete strategies for decolonization are discussed.

I begin my analysis by looking at *Unsettling Ourselves* using Grande's five deep structures of colonialist consciousness. Grande's concept of 'progress as change, change as progress' is directly contradicted in *Unsettling Ourselves* by the orientation of indigenous critiques of settler-colonial society, where the changes brought by European colonizers of this continent were seen as deeply regressive and damaging for colonized people. This concept of progress as change is starkly challenged in the definition of assimilation taken from Unsettling

Minnesota's 'working definitions' section of the coursebook. “Assimilation: ihdutákudaåßni – to make yourself into nothing. The process of indigenous people being incorporated into colonial society. As a part of colonization, indigenous society and culture must be dismantled and erased. This is institutionalized within the Colonial society with boarding schools” (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 42). To make oneself into nothing cannot be a progressive act. Through this definition, expressed in the Dakota language, there is a recognition that the act of change through assimilation, seen perhaps as progress by those instituting the boarding schools, was in fact deeply regressive for indigenous people.

Grande's concept of the 'separateness of faith and reason' is addressed in the ways that the Unsettling Minnesota coursebook approaches spiritual appropriation. Spirituality is not portrayed as a superstitious belief to be moved beyond, but rather a sacred and integral aspect of indigenous identity that needs to be protected from “New-Age fruitcakes” (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 6), who hope to appropriate native spiritual practices, taking them as their own. It is worth mentioning that many of the early anarchist educators, most prominently seen in the works of Francisco Ferrer, have heralded reason and a scientific education as necessary safeguards against the superstitions of the church who claimed authoritarian control over education within their social context (Avrich 1980, 7). As many free skools continue the thread of libertarian education, so strongly influenced by Ferrer's Escuela Moderna, it is important to consider closely tendencies toward eurocentric ideas of rationalism that directly contradict forms of spiritual knowledge inherent in indigenous epistemology. I have found little evidence that influence of Ferrer has brought this concept of separation of faith and reason to become a common component of free skool mission statements, which is likely due to the contextual differences between education today and in Ferrer's time. Ferrer was opposed to what he saw a superstitious and powerful church which contrasts directly with educational alternatives that now struggle against scientific rationalism and neoliberalism in dominant educational models.

Grande discusses 'subscription to ontological individualism' where the individual is the basic social unit. *Unsettling Ourselves* counters ontological individualism simply with the statement, from the introduction, “Deconstruction of colonizer mentality inside one's self is important, but it is not enough” (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 6). With this statement, the Unsettling Minnesota collective shows a value of collective liberation and, above all, action as a way to demonstrate one's commitment to decolonization. Individualism is a particularly common component of anarchist and libertarian thought, with an entire strain of egoist or individualist anarchism following the work of Max Stirner (1995). It is this individualism that leads free skools to place value in “autonomy”, “self reliance”, and a “DIY” ethic. By insisting on the limitations of personal work toward shedding colonialist attitudes and by emphasizing concrete action toward collective liberation, Unsettling Minnesota demonstrates an ontological understanding of group identity as integral to the transformation of oppressive colonial society toward decolonization.

The idea of colonialist consciousness viewing “humans as separate from and superior to nature” is addressed directly in *Unsettling Ourselves* in the foreword written by activist and author Derrick Jensen who states, “Decolonization is the process of breaking your identity with and loyalty to this culture – industrial capitalism, and more broadly civilization – and remembering your identification with and loyalty to the real physical world, including the land where you live” (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 9). This vision of a land-centered orientation to the world is foundational to indigenous perspectives on how humans are interconnected to place and to other living beings in our world. *Unsettling Ourselves* goes further to describe Unsettling Minnesota's understanding of an intimate inseparability of humans from the land in their definition of sustainability, “The ability to live with the land and the environment instead of exploiting the land and the environment. Evidence of sustainability includes: more buffalo, cleaner water, more rainforests, fewer coal factories, less carbon emissions, less pavement, and

fewer dams than the year before" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 46). This definition implies that living with other organisms, ecosystems, and the elements (buffalo, rainforests, water) has value while the exploitation and abuse of the land for solely human benefit (coal extraction, pavement, and damming) is less valuable. In this sense, *Unsettling Ourselves* situates humanity, particularly their utopian vision of a potentially sustainable humanity as deeply connected to the land and environment.

In a general sense, Unsettling Minnesota places value in deconstructing colonialist consciousness, a topic they cover in the Points of Unity section of their coursebook. "As settlers and non-Dakota people acting in solidarity, it is our responsibility to proactively challenge and dismantle colonialist thought and behavior in the communities we identify ourselves to be part of" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 11). The Unsettling Minnesota collective at least makes the claim that they work to undermine and eliminate colonial mentalities from themselves, which is a step toward fulfilling Grande's hopes for a Red Pedagogy.

Unsettling Minnesota undertakes several of Smith's projects for decolonization, perhaps most frequently that of 'indigenizing'. *Unsettling Ourselves* begins its introduction with words from Wicanhpi Iyotan Win, an indigenous activist, daughter of Waziyatawin, who is placed prominently at the outset of the coursebook. This simple act centers a female indigenous voice welcoming us into the work of decolonization. Further indigenizing occurs with the usage of Dakota terminology and concepts throughout the coursebook, such as "waßicu" a term for settler-colonials that literally means "one who takes the fat" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009. 46). Additionally many of the contributors to the coursebook are indigenous women, with Andrea Smith and Waziyatawin featured with multiple writings throughout the text.

The Unsettling Minnesota collective makes statements in support of Smith's projects of 'returning' and 'claiming'. In their Points of Unity, Unsettling Minnesota share the following value, "We accept that decolonization means the revitalization of Dakota sovereignty, and an

end to settler domination of life, lands, and peoples in Dakota territories. All decisions regarding human interaction with this land base, including who lives on it, are rightfully those of the Dakota Oyate and the Oceti Sakowin" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 11). Although theorists such as Taiaiake Alfred would take issue with sovereignty as a political goal, rather than a vision of self-determination rooted in indigenous concepts of governance, this sentiment still expresses a value of returning tangible political power to indigenous communities.

In regard to Smith's project of 'reading', *Unsettling Ourselves* is full of critical histories of indigenous experience, from Waziyatawin's "How Minnesotans Wrested the Land From Dakota People" to selections of Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,* the coursebook has many entries that reframe history in pursuit of social justice for indigenous people. The first entry in the Points of Unity for Unsettling Minnesota is, "All people not indigenous to North America who are living on this continent are settlers on stolen land... We acknowledge that the state of Minnesota was founded through genocide and colonization of indigenous peoples – which continues today and from which settlers directly benefit" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 11). This direct recognition of the genocidal origins of the current government in the United States and Minnesota is a profound critique of the historical narratives put forward to legitimate the presence of settlers on indigenous land.

The Unsettling Minnesota collective appears to have engaged and taken seriously many of the points put forward by both Grande and Smith in regards to the creation of a decolonizing education. As pointed out earlier, there is no necessary connection between the discursive creations of a project and the way a project concretely transforms the world. In her introduction Wicanhpi Iyotan Win expresses her doubts that anything concrete will come of the work of Unsettling Minnesota. In regards to rhetorical support extended by ally communities she says, "Like we have said many times, we are not looking for apologies, promises, or confessions of guilt. We have gotten all of those and more in the past" (Unsettling Minnesota 2009, 6). The

documents produced can only tell us so much about any project, and with a decolonizing educational project the proof is in the tangible outcomes, in seeing what real transformations to the conditions of life for indigenous people have resulted from these projects.

The Purple Thistle Institute

The Purple Thistle Centre is a youth-run arts and activism center in East Vancouver that emerged from the radical education movement known as deschooling, wherein institutionalized schooling is abandoned in favor of an education within and connected to community. The Purple Thistle operates via consensus by a collective of youth who make the majority of the decisions concerning programs, budgeting, and volunteer staffing of the space. The program has existed for eleven years often serving as an organizing hub and fertile incubator for new projects that support social justice struggles. The Purple Thistle Institute is one such program.

In 2011, the Purple Thistle began a new program called the Purple Thistle Institute. The Purple Thistle Institute was a 3-week summer program that is, according to their website, "an alternative-to-university. The idea is to bring together a bunch of engaged, interested people to talk about theory, ideas and practice for radical social change" (Purple Thistle Institute n.d.). Decolonization was one of the main themes of the 2011 Institute. Several courses were held to actively address anti-colonial struggles and were taught by indigenous activists, academics, and organizers including Glen Coulthard, Cease Wyss, David Dennis, Gord Hill, Cheyenne La Vallee, and Dustin Rivers. Additionally, the Purple Thistle Institute offered work placements in places such as the Urban Aboriginal Community Garden at the UBC farm (Purple Thistle Institute n.d.).

The organizers of the Purple Thistle Institute put together a zine to catalog writings by the participants of the summer institute entitled *Unsettling Education*, which is issue five of the Radical Art in Nature (RAIN) zine, a regularly published zine project written and edited by members of the Purple Thistle collective. Similarly to *Unsettling Ourselves, Unsettling*

Education contains indigenous voices featuring articles by Joi T. Arcand, Ian Caplette, and Waziyatawin as well as settler-allies who provide insights learned from their experience with the Purple Thistle Institute.

In the *Unsettling Education* zine, Purple Thistle community member Adam Huggins wrote an article "Resistance is Fertile / utile" in which he explains the ways that the establishment of an urban food forest garden uniquely situates settler-allies in relationship to the land in East Vancouver by promoting decolonizing ecological work. Huggins draws connections between commercial agriculture and colonization, where the mass importation of foreign crops into a region causes an imbalance in the local ecosystem displacing native flora and fauna. Huggins writes,

> "Most native peoples of Turtle Island[24] practiced very subtle forms of agriculture … Often only a few choice, native crops that thrived on disturbance were grown; the foundations of their traditional diets were based on hunting and foraging, finely attuned to the seasons and population densities … Because of large scale resource extraction, clear cutting, and other short sighted incursions into the wild, this way of life is no longer possible in many places" (RAIN Collective 2012, 14).

Huggins points to a few key ideas such as the revitalization of indigenous agriculture, a project that fits with Linda Smith's decolonizing projects, as well as expressing a powerful metaphor linking people to land where indigenous plants and animals are seen as integral to the formation of place and invasive, settler species create problems for place in need of remediation. Huggins takes the metaphor further to describe the ways in which settler-ally projects at the Purple Thistle (whose namesake is an invasive European weed) act as pioneer species who follow ecological devastation and prepare the land and soil for a return to an indigenous and holistically balanced ecosystem.

In *Unsettling Education*, Joi Arcand writes about the efforts of Dustin Rivers to revitalize the Sḵwxwú7mesh Sníchim language in his community. Language revitalization is a key to decolonization, particularly in reference to the decolonization of consciousness and the

[24] Turtle Island is a name given to the North American continent by the Haudenosaunee, which has gained popular usage and is generally conceived of as an indigenous naming for the continent.

reclamation and renaming of spaces. Linda Smith's project of *naming* highlights the deep metaphysical implications of the use of indigenous languages, “By 'naming' the world people name their realities. For communities there are realities that can only be found in the indigenous language; the concepts which are self evident in the indigenous language can never be captured by another language” (Smith 1999, 157). This usage of indigenous names and namings of reality poses strong challenges to the deeply entrenched colonial systems of thought that have taken hold of this land and place. Taiaiake Alfred provides a politically-framed understanding of the importance of indigenous languages and world-views in the formulation of a decolonizing project, “Justice demands a recognition (intellectual, legal, political) of the diversity of languages and knowledge that exists among people – indigenous peoples' ideas about relationships and power holding the same credence as those formerly constituting the singular reality of the state” (Alfred 2001, 31). If we are to reach a place where indigenous ideas around power are taken seriously and implemented, a condition necessary for true decolonization, we will need these languages to exist and they will be brought back to usage by language activists such as Rivers.

Another project of the Purple Thistle that works toward decolonization is the Fort Good Hope exchange. Every year or two a group of youth from East Vancouver and a group of youth from Fort Good Hope in the Northwest Territories (about 800 km NW of Yellowknife) participate in an exchange involving home-stays in their respective communities. The aim of the exchange program, in the words of Matt Hern director of the Purple Thistle is to “move beyond promoting diversity and tolerance and to foster friendship, respect, and mutual comprehension between native and non-native youth.” Hern draws from Gustavo Esteva in his hope that the exchange results in *hospitality*, which Esteva defines as a willingness to embrace the incommensurable otherness of the other. Basically, the Fort Good Hope – Purple Thistle exchange hopes to break down the settler-native divide, not by erasure, inclusion, or assimilation

but by a mutual recognition and understanding that can only come with living day-to-day together (Hern 2009).

The Purple Thistle's focus on creating space that supports the life of indigenous people and setters working for decolonization differs in its attitude and outlook from the work of Unsettling Minnesota. The Purple Thistle finds its bearings in friendship and hospitality, radical generosity, and a willingness to confront the injustices of colonialism on human terms. There is certainly room within the Purple Thistle's decolonization work for anger and sorrow, as well as confrontation of colonialism, all tones that ring from the Unsettling Minnesota project, but the Purple Thistle Institute consciously supports the organizing principle of love, or composition to put it in the terminology of Colectivo Situaciones. This orientation could be criticized as creating a space where colonialism is not fully challenged, where settler society has more of an expectation of access that comes with friendship. Though working with love certainly has its advantages as well.

POOR Magazine Escuela de la Gente/PeopleSkool

The Escuela de la Gente/PeopleSkool operated by POOR Magazine in the San Francisco bay area put together a zine entitled the *Decolonizer's Guide to a Humble Revolution* (POOR Press 2011). The purpose of this zine is to,

> "share often forgotten or silenced herstories and histories of struggles and resistance that came before all of us. To share skills on resisting and movement building with humility across race, class, cultures, genders, languages, and generations. And finally, to inform resistance movements, occupations, and decolonization sites across Turtle Island about struggles and resistance movements that are currently happening and ways that folks can plug in, connect, support and get involved with fights that have been raging on, largely unnoticed and sparcely[sic] attended for years in Amerikkka" (POOR Press 2011, 1).

The PeopleSkool organizers actively fight to recenter indigenous and, perhaps in an even more challenging move, poor indigenous voices from the street. On the inside cover of their zine the authors write,

> "ATTENTION: As you read this … please understand that as a colonized and oppressed peoples in poverty we do not speak the colonizers languages with academic precision.

> We resist linguistic domination by writing an speaking and creating. There will be typos and different uses of language. These are our voices, our art and our resistance narratives. Read them with love and spirit in your hearts. Decolonize your mind one page at a time" (POOR Press 2011).

With this statement, the POOR Magazine's organizers take a firm stance against a linguistic barrier that they recognize which privileges certain languages and forms of language against others. They actively resist, what they see as, a form of domination that has systematically devalued and silenced their voices by privileging academic and elitist discourses. With this statement the Escuela de la Gente place a value on the voices of indigenous and poor people. The Decolonizer's Guide to a Humble Revolution is a compilation of many stories, theorizations, and manifestos by the poor who live their daily lives in dispossession and on the streets. Their writings constitute a form of testimony, one of Linda Smith's 25 projects where, "a form through which the voice of a 'witness' is afforded space and protection" (Smith 1999, 144). In the PeopleSkool a great deal of energy and time are put toward the establishment of space for their community to make space for their voices, often the most marginalized voices in society (poor, urban, indigenous women, single mothers, etc.).

Indigenous Free Skool

All of the aforementioned projects are collaborative projects co-coordinated by indigenous and settler groups. There are also anti-authoritarian educational projects that are run by indigenous folks that borrow from the educational models of anarchist allies in settler communities. The idea of the Indigenous Free Skool was a relatively recent and short-lived example. One Indigenous Free Skool formerly existed in Vancouver, but has since dissolved as is the tendency with many anarchist projects. Another Indigenous Freeskool briefly operated as a community free school in Hamilton, Ontario. This particular free skool ran from September of 2010 to some point in 2011. The Indigenous Free Skool described itself like so,

> "Indigenous FreeSkool is active resistance. Indigenous FreeSkool is a way for the community to show support for the youth by providing opportunities to *learn from each other and for each other*. But in the ways of our ancestors, Indigenous FreeSkool is not

only geared to youth. It is geared to anyone who has a desire to share a special skill set (like Wampum Belt Creation) or a talent (like writing) or knowledge of ancestral practices (like Hand Drumming) and anyone who has a desire to learn the knowledge that was stolen from us. It is only when we take the power of Knowledge Acquisition from institutions and governments can we move forward constructively as nations toward peace and perceivable freedom" (Indigenous Freeskool n.d.).

Conclusions

A quantitative discourse analysis of free skool mission statements indicates that decolonization is not usually included in the goals and values presented in mission and vision statements in the online presence of free skools whose general intention is the creation of an environment of freedom and liberation. Although these free skools are located in the United States and Canada, both settler-colonial states with histories of the dispossession and severe oppression of indigenous people, colonialism is distinctly missing as a central goal, as expressed in the online mission statements of their projects. In order to understand why this is the case, looking at the ways in which competing notions of freedom express themselves situated in the context of their activist discourses can provide some insights. Namely the differentiation of sites of oppression by Iris Marion Young has yielded a rich framework for analysis where cultural imperialism is seen less frequently than most other forms of oppression in free skool mission statements.

Anarchist ideals of autonomy have the possibility of veering toward more individualist strains of libertarian anarchism where individual rights, opposition to tyranny against the individual subject, is the key location of analysis around rights and freedom discourses. This focus on individualism confirms one of the deep structures of colonialist consciousness identified by Sandy Grande, 'subscription to ontological individualism', indicating a need for a more collective vision by anarchist educators. Decolonization necessitates a more collective or social location of analysis that sees collective rights and liberation in the form of indigenous self-determination, and the right to practice and pass-down ones culture, language, and social institutions. Some of the anti-authoritarian educational projects discussed do draw from ontological bases that see the self as embedded in community, and do not reaffirm the individualism of eurocentric concepts of the autonomous self. These anti-authoritarian educational projects that have undertaken decolonization as a project and colonialism as a site

for enacting freedom and liberation based pedagogies have enacted a number of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's projects for decolonization and use discourses that address the kind of problematic assumptions that Sandy Grande highlights as endemic to critical pedagogy.

Free skools have an opportunity to learn from projects such as the Unsettling Minnesota Collective, POOR Magazine's Escuela de la Gente/PeopleSkool, and the Purple Thistle Institute to begin (or continue) infusing a decolonization agenda into their free skools. In this sense free skools have the capability, perhaps still latent, to enact a more complete ideal of freedom where the wholesale dispossession and genocide of entire people no longer serves as the foundation for their societies unquestioned nationalist capitalist expansion. The clear definition and analysis of the values of free skools will aid future free skools in the formation of curricular materials and mission statements that put forward visions of freedom and liberation which encompass anti-oppressive struggles for collective liberation, particularly decolonization. In this way, I hope to create an intervention in the discursive production of expressed values within free skool and activist spaces whereby decolonization as an achievable and desirable goal becomes an integral part of the theoretical formations of free skools and where the concept of decolonization is deeply engaged.

In keeping with the practical and engaged nature of this thesis, I am currently coordinating with local organizers to launch Unsettling Vancouver. Our hope is to continue the work modeled by Unsettling Minnesota, but deeply contextualized to the political and historical situation in Vancouver, British Columbia. We have begun the initial planning stages and will meet regularly to coordinate an educational and action program. Our aim is to incorporate the Unsettling Vancouver project into the next Purple Thistle Institute project, which is set to begin in October of 2012. One of the primary goals of this study is to create a basis by which Unsettling Vancouver can organize, having looked at the many attempts at a decolonizing education that exist. The information and organizing principles examined in this thesis can serve

to help us avoid the pitfalls of past projects, and to renew the project of unsettling for this time and place.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Content Analysis Coding Chart

project	Marginalization		Violence		Cultural imperialism		Exploitation		Powerlessness	
	occurrence of each word or concept in mission statements									
Anarchist Free University Toronto		0		0		0	no fees, confronting economic power	1	non-hierarchical	1
Anhoek School		0		0		0	teacher not product, student not consumer	2		0
Ann Arbor Free Skool	inclusive, accessible	2		0		0	alternatives to consumerism/capitalism	1	self-sufficiency, empowerment	2
Ashland Free Skool		0		0		0	outside...monetary economic system	1	self-reliance, egalitarian	2
Austin Free Skool	equal opportunity	1		0		0	without paying	1	do away with … hierarchy	1
Baltimore Free School Red Emmas	all backgrounds	1		0		0	without money	1	horizontal, empowerment	2
Bloomington Free Skool	non-discriminatory	1		0		0	without money	1	self-reliance, without hierarchy	2
Butte FreeSkool		0		0		0	decommodify, free	2	autonomous, self-reliance, challenge to hierarchy	3
Camas Freeskool		0		0	unceded Lekwungen terr.	1	free, no fees	2		0
Corvid College		0		0		0	without expenses	1	autonomous, co-autonomous	2
Davis People's Free School	all people, all cultures	2	safe	1		0	free	1		0
East Bay Free Skool	all ages, equality	2		0		0	non-commercial, away from commodification	2	self-reliance, away from hierarchy	2
Eugene Free School	without exclusivity	1		0	anti-racist	1	anti-capitalist	1	self-reliance, decentralized, without authoritarianism	3
EXCO Twin Cities	inclusive	1	non-coercive	1		0		0	non-hierarchical	1
Foco Free School Network	inclusive, accessible, all identities	3		0		0	non-commercial, away from commodification	2	self-reliance, away from hierarchy, decentralized	3
Free School Denver	accessible	1		0		0	free of monetary obligation	1	free of hierarchy	1
Free School of Boone		0		0		0	why...pay large amounts, expensive	2		0
Freeskool Ashville		0		0		0		0	lives on their own terms, live more autonomously, without hierarc	3
Free Skool Santa Cruz		0		0		0		0	beyond institutional control, challenge to hierarchical relations	2
Free Skool Olympia		0	safe places	1		0	without money as an obstacle	1	non-hierarchical	1
Freeskool Prescott		0		0		0	without the barriers of cost	1	self-reliance, empowering	2
Free University of Gainesville		0		0		0	free, escaping cost, don't pay/not paid	4		0
Free University of San Francisco	any individual	1		0	regardless of color	1	free of money, not consumer/profit earner	3		0
Halifax Free Skool	accessible	1		0		0	free, volunteer-based	2	autonomous	1
Hamilton Free Skool	radically inclusive, diversity	2		0		0		0	self-sustaining, egalitarian, empowering	3
Hammer Time Free School	equality	1		0		0	away from commodification, non-commercial	2	self-reliance, away from hierarchy	2
High Desert Free Skool		0		0		0	free of monetary restrictions	1	decentralized, without hierarchy, autonomy	3
Isla Vista Free Skool		0	safe space	1		0	FREE	1	non-hierarchical	1
Ithaca Free Skool	across differences	1		0	across race	1		0	self-reliance	1
KW FreeSkool	inclusive, accessible	2	safe space	1		0		0	empowering	1
London Free School	confronting inequality	1		0		0		0	self-reliance, confronting hierarchy	2
Mercer Free School		0		0		0	without monetary exchange	1		0
Mid-Coast Free Skool	anyone can...	3		0		0	FREE	1	non-hierarchical	1
New Orleans Free School Network	all ages	1		0		0	no-cost	1		0
PeopleSkool/Escuela de la Gente	all people	1		0	indigenous people-led	1	poor people-led_	1		0
Pgh Free Skool	welcoming	1	safe	1		0	free of cost	1	autonomously, non-hierarchical	2
Philly Free Skool		0		0		0		0	decentralized, non-hierarchical	2
Portland Free Skool	anyone	1		0		0	money is never exchanged	1	self-reliance	1
Providence Free School		0		0		0	free	1	community of equals, empowerment	2
Purple Thistle Centre		0		0		0	free-of-charge	1		0
San Francisco Free School		0		0		0		0	empower	1
Seattle Free School	all are welcome	1		0		0	no money ever exchanged hands	1		0
Tampa Free Skool	all ages, freedom to participate, acc	3		0		0	free from financial payment, outside monetary	2	non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian, decentralized, self-reliance	4
Trade School	anyone can...	2		0		0	barter	1	empowering	1
West Marin Free Skool		0		0		0	money-less, spirit of giving	2	independent, non-authoritarian, empowering	3
total mentions		37		6		5		51		64
# projects that mentioned of 44		25		6		5		36		34
44										
Projects %		56.8%		13.6%		11.4%		81.8%		77.3%