decolonizing curriculum

¿How can we decolonize the curriculum? ¿What curriculum do we decolonize?

Escuela de Bellas Artes de Quito (Fotografía: Revista EBA, No8:152

currere: present active infinitive of **currō** – run, travel through
curriculum: A racecourse. https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curr%C3%ADculo_(educación)

1.
In the broadest sense, curriculum comprises all educational experiences, not only in the formal schooling context but also in the daily life context: family, community, media, culture, state. All areas reflect a curriculum aspect.

In the formal schooling context, the “official” curriculum tries to connect what we learn with the contexts in which we are involved (at least in theory). However, we should remember that the curriculum is the result of selecting validated contents and setting ideological, psychological, pedagogical and technical views to establish priorities on: **what and when should we learn? how do we learn? how our learning is assessed?**

Therefore, curriculum has been a tool of epistemic violence (Spivak 1988) because it silences, hides, neglects or alters the worldview constructed by subaltern social groups. This perpetuates the systematic disqualification of their knowledge.

In the field of Art Education, we pose the following questions: **How has the art education curriculum been developed historically in your area? Can we get evidence on the actions trying to consent and naturalize such curriculum? Based on this overview, taking into account the different geopolitical contexts, can we identify what characteristics do we share?**

2.

In this glossary session we want to discuss from a different approach the following: **what would it suppose to "decolonize" the curriculum in different contexts?**

"Decolonization" could be understood as all those processes that deal with colonial structures that are active or remains in contexts called "post" colonial.

We could also say that colonial processes are still happening in many ways in different geopolitical contexts and they are related to historical, cultural, and social processes. Then, **how can we define decolonization, in general, and the process of decolonizing the curriculum in different contexts?**

We understand that colonization involves processes that shape knowledge and how we get to know, crossing our ways of being, thinking, and feeling. Furthermore, such processes adopt different forms in terms of the place they occupy, the control over human bodies, and the exploitation of matters. The question is: **How can we decolonize curriculum to imagine a decolonizing process that responds to multiple and different colonial processes?**

Can we refer to local experiences (particular cases) that have achieved the curriculum deconstruction through the inclusion of knowledge, ways of doing, and memories that come from popular classes and their ways of reproducing life?

Participants of the virtual session held on Augost 17, 2017.

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DISSERTATION 1

Toronto Working Group. Rubén Gaztambide Fernández, Andrea Vásquez Jiménez, y Henrjette Mece. Instituto de Ontario para Estudios en Educación, Tkaronto / Toronto

What is Decolonization?

We write this brief essay from the city of Tkaronto / Toronto, on the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which is also home to the Metis Nation of Ontario and the Mississauga of the New Credit First Nation. The three of us have come to be situated in this territory through distinct trajectories and in particular relationships to colonization. Rubén Gaztambide Fernández was born in the island of Borikén, also known as Puerto Rico under United States colonial rule, and traces his ancestry to the Black Atlantic, the Arawak-Taínos, and the European settlers who colonized the island. Andrea Vásquez Jiménez was born in Tkaronto / Toronto, to Colombian parents, and identifies as Afro-Latinx. Henrjette Mece speaks to decolonization through her experience of exile and displacement, as both colonized and colonizer rooted in Europe between east and west.

The three of us acknowledge our differing positionalities as responsibilities as non-Indigenous people on the territory from which we write, and we offer our reflection on decolonization aware of how we are implicated in the ongoing colonial project that is the Canadian nation-state. We write with a sense of duty, responsibility, and accountability to Indigenous people in Turtle Island as well as the histories of colonization that shaped the conditions for our being together here at this time.

The ideas in this essay evolved in part through our dialogue in a graduate seminar titled “Introduction to Decolonization,” in which Rubén was the Faculty Instructor / Professor, and Andrea and Henrejette were graduate students (the syllabus for the course can also be found on this website). We continued the conversation that began in the course, focusing on the question of what it means to decolonize the “curriculum” and whether such a project is viable within the context of educational institutions that are fundamentally colonial. We traced our thoughts by creating a diagram, which is also included here, and which we use as a referent for our discussion in this essay. By working through this diagram, we, as a collective of three, had conversations regarding some of the key ideas related to decolonization and curriculum. First, we asked what we mean by colonization and what are different kinds of colonial rule. We then considered what is decolonization and what are the connections to curriculum as educational experiences. We then considered the (im)possibilities of decolonizing the curriculum, asking what is decolonizing work, and distinguishing decolonization from decoloniality and deconstruction.

What is Colonization?

It is important to begin our discussion of decolonization by specifying how we understand colonization. Colonization is, first and foremost, a structure of exploitation. By structure we mean that colonization is an ongoing process of ordering that regulates social relations and orients how we see the world. Following Patrick Wolff (1999; 2006), we understand colonization not as an “event” that occurs when someone arrives somewhere, but as the ongoing structure of domination that defines the power relations through which those who arrive exploit those who were already there, along with their land and natural resources. As a structure of exploitation, colonization takes many forms, depending on whether the colonizer seeks to exploit the people

(through slavery, for example), the natural resources (through theft), the land (through genocide), or some combination of these. The structure of colonization also depends on whether the colonizer arrives to stay and make homestead in the new land, whether it seeks to control the movement of bodies and resources across a territory, or whether it seeks to extract in order to steal and take resources elsewhere.

Diagram A - Colonization / Coloniality / Decolonization

Moreover, various structures of colonization can and do coexist, even in competition with each other, and take various forms over time and space. As such, although there are many commonalities, colonization is always a specific social, cultural, and historical formation that takes shape in response to specific contextual factors and that shifts as various kinds of colonial exploitation overlap and interact with each other. While it is possible to speak of colonization in general terms (e.g. settler colonization involves, as Wolfe points out, genocide and the disappearance of the native), how the structure of colonization unfolds and evolves always carries particularities. These particularities are important for how we think about decolonization in different contexts and historical moments, and how we think about decolonization, very much depends on the specifics of how and what colonization looks like.

By and large, structures of colonization can be described as: external colonization, where an external power seeks to control the resources – whether they be human bodies, land, or natural resources – in another place/space/territory; internal colonization, where the dynamic of power occurs within the bounds of a national sovereign state; and settler colonization, when an external force arrives in a “new land” in order to stay and to impose a social and cultural logic as well as a worldview. These forms of colonization usually overlap. While settler colonization is primarily about the elimination of Indigenous peoples in order to appropriate their land, settlers also need a labor force in order to exploit the land and its resources. Sometimes this involves the

enslavement of native people, but others, as in the case of the United States and Canada, it involves participation in the theft of bodies from other lands and territories through external colonization in order to provide labor within the settler state.

As a structure, colonization operates through various mechanisms, involving physical violence (in the form of military invasion and force), ideological imposition, and the development of discourses that impose a particular cultural logic (see L. Smith, 2013; Veracini, 2010). These mechanisms reinforce each other and connected through the logics of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, which are supported by the three pillars of (1) slavery/capitalism; (2) genocide/colonialism; (3) and orientalism/war (A. Smith, 2006). Because of their complicated interactions, these mechanisms of colonization look different depending on what kind of colonization and the contextual, historical, and cultural particularities of any given colonial situation. In addition to the physical control of land, bodies, and resources, these processes of colonization produce and impose particular orientations and worldviews. In his book *Culture and Imperialism,* Edward Said (1993) refers to these as "structures of attitude and reference," suggesting that such structures are essential in the formation of both colonizer and colonized subjectivities. This focus on how colonization produces particular subjects is also captured in the concept of "coloniality," as articulated by Anibal Quijano (2007). Quijano (2007) speaks of a "coloniality of power," to draw attention to how the power structures of colonization produce coloniality as a state of being and thinking that endures beyond the actual process of colonization. Sylvia Wynter (2003) expands the notion of coloniality to include how it shapes not just the subject and power relations, but the very ideas of truth and freedom. For Wynter, colonization requires the imposition of particular conceptions of what it means to be human in order to justify genocide and slavery. Coloniality refers to how these conceptions of the human produce subjectivities and orient various ways of being in the world, ways of thinking and feeling, as well as modes of relationality. As such, in the aftermath of colonization, coloniality outlasts and requires different modes of resistance an undoing.

What is Decolonization?

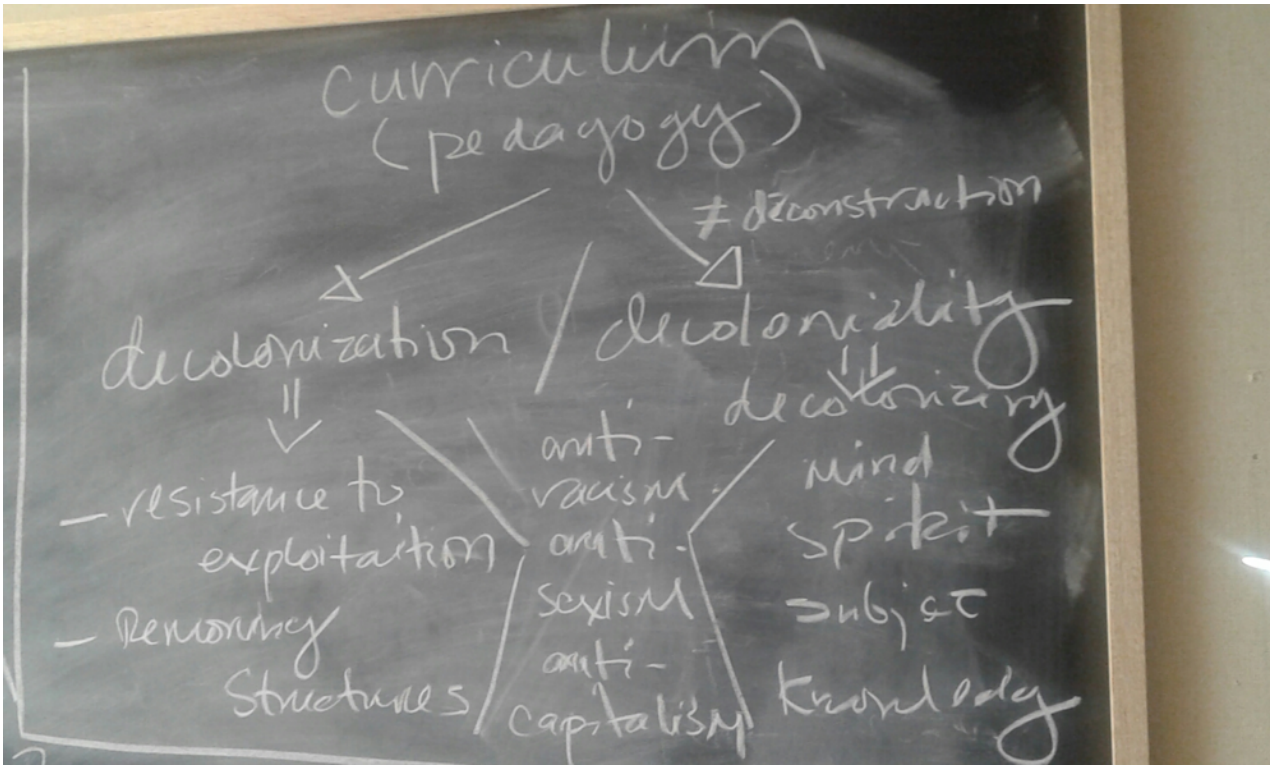
If colonization is a structure of exploitation, decolonization is about the removal of such structures, including, depending on the context, returning land, recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous, ending slavery and resource extraction. As such, decolonization is not a grand gesture or a singular move to freedom, but rather a praxis. As such, it is difficult to theorize decolonization outside of a concrete set of circumstances. It is also essential to differentiate between decolonization, as the process of removing the structures of colonization (e.g. returning Indigenous land), and decoloniality, as the ongoing praxis of undoing the aftermath of colonization, particularly on how it shapes subjectivities and relationalities.

This distinction also requires recognizing that while colonization operates in relationship to other structures of domination (e.g. racism, sexism, etc.), decolonization does not stand in for other forms of resistance and struggles for freedom; that is, "decolonization is not a metaphor" (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Because colonization is, in the first instance, about land, decolonization must be, first and foremost, about land as well. Yet, because colonization shapes subjects through coloniality, decoloniality must necessarily be linked to -- but not confused with -- other struggles against domination. Thus, decoloniality is intimately linked to struggles against racism, sexism, class exploitation, and other forms of domination that shape the structures of the subject. Likewise, the process of examining these forms of domination is necessary for processes of decolonization and decoloniality, but deconstruction alone is not decolonization, unless it is actually part of a set of practices for removing structures of colonial domination.

Can we decolonize the curriculum?

Taking the definitions above as a starting point, we suggest that any educational practice that seeks to decolonize, or for that matter, any practice that seeks to decolonize education, must be grounded specifically on a commitment to resist and remove particular structures of colonial exploitation. Decolonizing the curriculum must be explicitly committed to the rematriation of land and natural resources and to reasserting Indigenous sovereignty. Decolonizing the curriculum requires other forms of resistance, such as anti-racism and anti-capitalism, but must be confused with these.

Diagram B - Decolonizing the Curriculum



In order to talk about decolonizing the curriculum, we want to draw a distinction between curriculum and pedagogy. By curriculum we mean educational experience, the educational trajectories of learners, what they learn and how the change. By pedagogy, we mean the set of educational relationships that shape the learning experience, including the intentions, and the relationships involved in the pedagogical encounter as fundamentally ethical relationality (Gaztambide-Fernández & Arraiz Matute, 2013). A decolonial pedagogy is an essential part of decolonizing the curriculum, and a curriculum for decolonization must be linked to a decolonial pedagogy.

A decolonial pedagogy is committed not only to supporting practices of decolonization, but also to a decolonial process that seeks to reshape subjectivity, whether through a commitment to decolonizing the “mind," the “spirit,” the “subject” and/or “knowledge.” This involves decentring Eurocentric narratives that are dominant in educational institutions, by affirming reaffirm and centering Indigenous, African, and Afro-Indigenous identifications and subjectivities. Once again,

although anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-capitalist work are not -- in and of themselves -- decolonization or decoloniality, these are very much central to decolonial work.

Decolonizing the curriculum is necessarily local project that must take into account the particular structures of colonization is specific places and times. A decolonial pedagogy addresses itself to the relationalities between subjects and to the bodies that such subjects inhabit. As such, we can engage in a decolonial pedagogy even as we seek to build a curriculum for decolonization, but we cannot decolonize the curriculum in the absence of a decolonial pedagogy.

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DISSERTATION 2

Manila Working Group.
Iris Ferrer/Eileen Legaspi Ramirez

In order to critically explore the colonial framework of education in the Philippines, the Manila Working Group proffered case studies of two artist-educators from the University of the Philippines Diliman School of Fine Arts. The college's (moreover the university's) positioning within the nation-state's narrative, with most of its alumni becoming declared National Artists, practitioners, educators and heads of institutions, places it squarely within the contested field. Geographically, it is situated in Metro Manila, the country's political and economic capital. From within this center is exercised long-established monopoly over resources, infrastructure, opportunities and the making of policies which dictate and influence pedagogy across the nation. Presently, it still stands as the country's premier Fine Arts university despite the presence of other newer educational platforms in the metropolis.

In 1821, during the Spanish colonial period, the first state-recognized school, the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura, was founded in Manila. Its manner of teaching was patterned after the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid. The local Academia's constituent mentors, Damian Domingo, Agustin Saez etc., predictably were from a class who could afford to send them to universities in Europe. Under American rule, the Academia became the Escuela de Bellas Artes, and eventually the University of the Philippines School of Fine Arts in 1908.

The subject of the first case study is Roberto Feleo, who has been teaching in the university for at least four decades. His influence extends to the Philippine High School for the Arts, a college preparatory school for children who display talent in literature, theater, dance, music and the visual arts and who compete to enter this school which was fully inscribed in the nationalist project of the Marcoses. In Feleo's own artistic practice, there is a deliberate promotion and linkage to pre-colonial tropes, the deliberate mining of which fuels the aspiration to define cultural identity as it spiked as a national project during post-independence/post WWII. This appropriation of folk and local iconography, as seen in Feleo's and his followers' works surfaces an unintended problematic born of their implicit disavowal of change while at the same time indicating a Manila-centric manner of representing the indigenous.

This mode of thinking coincides with the government's post-war projection of itself as autonomous nation-state. With the state's funding and support, there was a deliberate thrust towards creating a definitive national narrative that played up pre-colonial culture as enabling the Philippines to appear at parity with other post-colonial nations. This implied search for a singular identity, counted on branding a notion of an unmoving past that the state could utilize to complement its purported 'new democracy'. This recourse to the local and indigenous continues to underpin post Marcos governmental cultural strategy as it becomes a track to mitigate the perceived effect of Western homogenization.

Presently, Feleo and his progeny remain prominent on both market and institutional platforms --- feeding and continuously validating this particular understanding of a national narrative that enables art agents to participate in global art discourse by banking on a claimed specificity. This is a prime example of how the rhetoric of decolonialization becomes embedded in neoliberal market discourse.

This tactical claiming of the folk and indigenous is in stark contrast to what we find in the second case subject Roberto Chabet, who was similarly active in the College for five decades and whose teaching encouraged practitioners to maintain an unapologetic inclination towards Western references. Identifying himself within the rubric of conceptual art, and with a much less Philippine-centric and more post-national aesthetic, Chabet courted criticism primarily in regard to his and his peers/students being seen as too outward looking. His encouraging students to explore the semiotics of the everyday and the found (both as new sources of form and as means towards surfacing local and personal contexts) would be read as effecting detachment from the grassroots and local history.

The bone of contention in either case points to the sub/conscious denial of the need to visibly anchor art in history and context. The press around Chabet would very often position him as the "father of Philippine conceptual art", and this, along with his unwillingness to expound on his work reinforced the perception of his Western predilection, even if the work and teaching method may have actually sought parity between Filipino artists and the rest of the international artworld. This attempt to diffuse national discourse was overlaid by Chabet's own early involvement in the state

cultural infrastructure, wherein he was named the first director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Museum— a state-owned arts institution also established during Marcos's second term in office. To date and despite his passing, Chabet's practice continues to resonate and remains reified in the work of several generations of artists who have become primary players in the field.

These two extreme and disparate viewpoints embedded in the national narrative of Philippine art and art education provide the contours of how negotiations have been done in regard to diffusing the colonial mindset insipidly inculcated in art practice and education. Ray Albano, who was Chabet's successor at the CCP frames the narrative in terms of developmentalism, yet what is often considered as progressive has also been perceived as a serpent eating its own tail. Only through a critical consideration of such developmental components, i.e. situating pedagogy and more deftly interrogating the practice and influence of the network of art/art education agents within their own webbed social configurations, may we more productively break this cyclical dynamic. The effort includes critically constructing taxonomies, mining the operative languages of practice and pedagogy while reckoning with how such ideas and methods may be seen beyond merely being colonial constructions (for instance, reading in terms of alternative constructs such as internal colonialism, the idea of Asia/pan-Asia, as well as a more inclusive albeit diversity-reflexive sense of nationhood).

Parallel to these institutional accounts, mention might also be made of non/informal modes of education realized outside of the politico-economic centers, through on-the ground efforts particularly in the last few decades. Unfortunately, these broadly dispersed attempts at alternate education initiated by cultural workers (e.g. independently set-up exhibitions and programs, workshops, etc.) sometime also unreflectively draw from colonial guideposts. Needless to say, this is not always the case, but common obstacles have persisted. In terms of research, there is still limited access to local and pan-Asian scholarship given the isolated efforts in archiving, inadequate content in libraries, and lack of concern for cultural maintenance and preservation, among other reasons. Also, even some well-meaning self-organized artists' initiatives unfortunately merely mimic what they perceive as currying currency in the West, resulting in ungrounded discussions that do not lead to concrete, longer-term, and more structurally-directed programming.

Other more broadly-based agenda-propelled efforts might also be cited such as those of the Save Our Schools (SOS) Network's which takes in children and families displaced from ancestral lands due to creeping industrialization and militarization. Particularly in the case of Lumad (non-Muslim indigenous) schools in Mindanao, more than 30 out of the 50 schools independently organized by indigenous groups and allied NGOs have recently been shut (some burnt) down by the military. With the SOS network endorsed by the previous administration, the current Duterte government has directed its forces to dismantle these schools which the state alleges are merely leftist fronts. Despite this, activist groups, individuals and NGOs continue to rally behind the Lumad through volunteering time and resources to continue the refugees' education off site, providing food and shelter, etc.

When the framework of education is seen in the light of such ground conditions, real politics and questions of survival surface. We point out at this juncture that efforts towards decolonization should be seen as cumulative and for the long haul. It would seem that it is through a continuous struggling within as well as outside structures that enables sometimes tactical, sometimes longer-term gains in the eventual breaking down of such well entrenched walls of oppression. Identifying

conjectural nuances amidst these resistance attempts require a more mindful regard for circumstantial specificities pertinent to specific localities/country histories, thus guarding against easy dismissals of otherwise kindred ventures.

Instead, more deliberate solidarity across even fringe efforts could be seen as a means towards realizing more empowered modes of education. Aligning with both the flailing attempts of the state (encouragement of mother language instruction and the privileging of local community knowledge) as well as the even peripheral/autonomous forces in terms of practice and education become starting points towards decolonizing the mind. This hopefully translates by way of a diverse set of indicators including the expansion and challenging of the canon or dispersed visibility, and perhaps eventually dispersing if not levelling power structures substantially. Although still functioning within the domain of the state and its possibly obsolete yet absolutist taxonomies, policies, and pedagogic language, tactical epistemological interference may yet be possible. And though all that has been cited here thus far might be seen as stop-gap or shortsighted modes of working/doing, this present intervention comes buoyed with hope that ominous conditions on the ground will forge the need to keep searching for ways to thwart disempowerment.
(Iris Ferrer/Eileen Legaspi Ramirez of the Manila Working Group)

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DISSERTATION 3

Sao Paulo Working Group.
Luiza Proença

Strictly, *decolonizing the curriculum* implies an opposition or denial of the guidelines that historically (via colonization) conditioned and determined the narratives of people through modern educational institutions (such as schools, universities, museums). In western or westernized societies, education (or what is understood as education) is under state control; thus, educational institutions, through their curriculum, maintain the vision and interests of the dominant groups. In Brazil, it has been very recently that some laws for a more inclusive school curriculum have emerged. Such inclusion, however, neither does seem to guarantee the restoration of social hierarchical processes – resulting from the colonial and dictatorial regimes and the development of neoliberal capitalism – nor does it prevent the repetition of acts that erase knowledge, experiences and cultures. To *decolonize the curriculum* or, broadly, to *decolonize thought* or *life*, must imply an uninterrupted effort that should subvert not only discourses but also the power relations and forms of knowledge production.

Brazil was the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery, in 1888, and still it took more a hundred years (in the constitution of 1988) for the government officially recognize the ethnic plurality of society and the need to teach "the contributions of different groups in the formation of the Brazilian people."

Although critical experiences in education were developed in Brazil, more specifically between the 1950s and 1960s by pedagogues like Paulo Freire, a discussion about the possibilities of *decolonize the curriculum* —with the use of the expression, even without specifying it— was intensified from 2003, when the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture became mandatory. The contents must, since then, be taught throughout the school curriculum, especially in the areas of art education, literature and Brazilian history. Once these policies were implemented, many publications and research were done in the academic field, and African history free courses were created. However, they seem insufficient. The teachers know little or nothing of those stories and cultures, and often end up falling into merely celebratory proposals (such as painting the faces of children on the Indigenous Day), omitting existing conflicts and struggles.

Curiously, different from the Afro-Brazilian experience, the teaching of indigenous cultures became mandatory only in 2008. Given that land demarcation has never ceased to be a claim of indigenous communities, in dispute with major local entrepreneurs, would that delay be due to a strategy of silenced annihilation?

One may also question the limitation of the laws in content taught, disregarding other conceptions of education and modes of learning. For example, indigenous peoples have the right (also from the 1988 constitution) to a differentiated, multilingual and communitarian school education –even if it is administered by the State and its homogenizing tendency. How could the non-indigenous school coincide with the experience of indigenous learning? Why not consider other pedagogies that abolish the ideas of school, discipline, teacher and student? Wouldn't it be necessary an autonomous practice in education, self-managed, where each community could choose its educational processes, taking into account its specific ways of producing knowledge and, then, transmitting them?

It would then be necessary to talk about a decolonization of the school and the forms of learning, beyond the curriculum and its contents —processes that must take into account not only histories and cultures, but which accompany social struggles and transformations, in the sense of keeping them always in motion.

The occupations of over 200 schools, between 2015 and 2016, by students against the threat of their closure by the government, have greatly contributed to produce possibilities for another curriculum or another school (though not strictly decolonized proposals). Under the motto "the school is ours" –painted on several banners that were installed on the schools facades or used during protests on the streets—, at least during the occupations period, the student movement suspended the traditional model of education from the State. The school buildings have become laboratories for the imagination of another way of learning and being in community. The students reconfigured the school desks of classrooms, divided themselves into maintenance and cleaning tasks, and organized discussions that called for more urgent guidelines for teaching, such as feminism and accessibility.

Contrary to these movements, it is the proposal for a law called Escola Sem Partido [literally, "school without a party"], which aims to establish a compulsory curriculum that is neutral, non-ideological and apolitical. The proposal of a school supposedly free of "social contamination" reveals its opposite: Escola Sem Partido is a project for a school of a single party, which is precisely the same hegemonic project of the dominant classes underlying colonial regimes.

DISSERTATION 4

Quito Working Group.
Alejandro Cevallos

NOTES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION ABOUT DECOLONIZATION OF THE CURRICULUM IN ART EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT

A brief timeline of the dismantling of intercultural bilingual education as an introduction.

1.

In 2005, Ecuador signed the UN Millennium Development Goals Declaration, which included: achieving a universal basic schooling, which for Ecuador meant emphasizing the incorporation of rural sectors (mostly indigenous) to the public-school system.

2.

In 2009, the government closed the Directorate of Intercultural Bilingual Education (administered with some autonomy by the indigenous movements since 1988), accusing it of being inefficient and incompetent against international standards and of reproducing a model of "poverty." This fact brought the return of the State control over the educational models and curricula, management of indigenous school infrastructure (many of which were built by the communities themselves), and also involved the implementation of a meritocracy-based model to designate key positions in various areas of the indigenous education where the criterion: The relation that maintained the professor with the political movement and its relation with the communities, prevailed previously.

3.

Between 2009 and 2016 the Government planned to build 300 “Millennium Educational Units” and to expand the facilities of the 200 already existing schools. The Project was advertised as an investment in architecture and in unprecedented technology in national education; images of digital boards and laboratories in rural areas traveled through media (justifying/hiding the tension between the State and the indigenous communities). The Millennium Educational Units are buildings meant to host up to 1000 children that come from different territories and communities. Up to date, only 51 schools of this sort have been funded.

4.

In 2011, Ecuador declared to have reached the educational objective of the millennium plan of the UN by exceeding the rate of 95% of basic schooling tuitions. It also stated that “The National Government has overcome historic discrimination. There is no longer a difference between mestizo, indigenous, and afro-descendant children inside the Ecuadorian educational system” (National Secretariat of Planning and Development, 2015).

5.

In 2014 Ecuador entered the evaluation system known as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), which evaluated in a standardized way the knowledge of the students and generates quality rankings between educational institutions in the entire continent.

6.

Between 2005 and 2016 the government evaluated 5771 schools according to their own quality standard of international competitiveness and united curriculum, most of these schools, were schools from communities, which were intercultural, bilingual, indigenous and single-teacher schools, that had non-directive pedagogic models, in which 44% of the Ecuadorian student population attend.

7.

1997 from these schools have been closed so far.

8.

The closing of intercultural schools has been justified from the state's narrative as an advance towards a model of international competitiveness and as an attempt to change the intercultural approach and make it a part of the entire educational system (and not only for indigenous schools). Although no training processes or clear deadlines have been established to make the intercultural approach a part of the entire educational system, this has meant that art schools at university level are challenged to think: what would imply an artistic education curriculum in Intercultural terms?

fotografía de una escuela del milenio. archivo de la revista Plan V.
http://www.planv.com.ec

What questions arise or how does this scenario address the field of local artistic education?

In our introduction video, we tried to show a timeline of problematic events (2005 - 2016), related to the dismantling of the national intercultural bilingual education system in Ecuador.

An education of their own has been - and is still - a historical struggle of the 13 indigenous peoples living in what we now call Ecuador.
In 1989 this struggle got the State to recognize intercultural education and to yield some autonomy to the indigenous movement over the administration of schools within the public system. Schools that were not new, that did not appear because of a State's financing, but that had a long, self-managed trajectory, often working clandestinely, influenced by socialist syndicalism (1930) **or-later-by the theology of liberation (1970).**

The dismantling of the intercultural education system in Ecuador and the shutdown of indigenous and community schools has been justified by the idea of achieving quality standards institutions promoted by institutions such as the UN, UNESCO or PISA (international program for international student assessment) where access to technology has been a privilege indicator.
The dismantling of this institution has also been justified by saying that it is necessary to do cross-cultural approach to the whole educational system and not just for indigenous schools.
The truth is it is no "coincidence" that the first indigenous schools to be closed (with these same justifications) were located in communities that were against mining and oil extraction (Sarayaku or Saraguro).

However, the declaration of mainstreaming an intercultural approach across the entire education system also served to challenge public universities, how can public universities assume an intercultural approach without depoliticizing the project? How is this done in educational practice? What does this mean in curricular terms? We are talking about schools of architecture, medicine, law, and also schools of arts that, according to State declarations, in theory, should confront, contradict themselves and from other knowledge and practices, other stories, other epistemes. Could this be an initial move towards the decolonization of curriculum?

we are far from this being a productive reality, but it serves us to make a exercise of imagination. And we ask ourselves: what can we learn from the educational practice of the indigenous schools for a decolonization of the curriculum of artistic education?

indigenous communities and independent education

The curriculum in the first indigenous schools was directly related to the struggles for the communal property of the lands and against the farming system. (the farming system in the Andes consisted of unpaid indigenous workers who work land in exchange for the loan of a small parcel for housing and a family garden, plus a church tax system and a number of other exploitation as the delivery of the first crop to the employer or the exchange of indigenous women for domestic services in exchange for Christian education)

Dolores Cacuango born under this system of exploitation was the founder of the first bilingual school (Quichua-Spanish) in 1946 that operated clandestinely, she also founded the first agricultural union of Cayambe.

On the other hand, following the second agrarian reform (1973) which meant a partial recovery of land by indigenous communities, a number of community actions were fueled in the pursuit of ethno-development and independent education, as a result of this moment, the System of Intercultural Education of Cotopaxi appears in 1976.

In both cases (Cayambe and Cotopaxi) literacy was thought as a tool for facing the State and the church in their own bureaucratic terms: judicial litigation over lands, lawsuits of scam to landowners, definition of territorial limits and the administration of community-owned agricultural production, in addition to the formation of political foundations and community leaders.

In both cases, indigenous communities take ownership of the idea of a school: claiming the use of the vernacular language and linking it directly to the struggles for the common goods (the land)

In the case of Cotopaxi, schools were characterized for integrating other activities in the curriculum for literacy such as caring for:
communal orchards, where in addition to sowing and harvest, the children approached rhythms and astral cycles, learned to see and read the moon that marked the rhythms of sowing and harvest, e.g., as part of the curriculum they learned to talk with their environment as an ecosystem which returned some prestige to work on land.

the development of handicrafts, an activity in which practical crafts were learned, produced utilitarian objects for oneself but also helped to acquire mathematical thinking, an example of this is weaving.

minor animal husbandry and the construction of infrastructure with ancestral techniques. Such activities involved the direct participation of mothers, parents, educators and communal authorities.

In this sense, the curriculum in the indigenous school linked the educational space with all areas that involve self-government and community self-management of life. **the communities related to schools debate the curriculum in assemblies (the activities,**

the times, the relationships that were necessary to incorporate to school-life according to the pertinence of its locality)

These initial experiences (among many others) fueled the Bilingual Intercultural Education Project cultural at a national level so much so, that the Ministry of Education of Ecuador created between 1985 and 1989 the National Direction of Intercultural Education by demand of the indigenous movement, already consolidated as a political actor on the national scene.

The institutionalization of intercultural education meant better working conditions for teachers, state investment in infrastructure and programs for the creation of bilingual teaching material (mainly focused on a revival of indigenous literature)
However, it also meant stewardship over the curriculum and implementation of meritocracy in which a criterion of territorial relevance to select educators prevailed.
which is another point that I want to emphasize: the indigenous communities had autonomy to decide who would play the role of educator, and we know that many times grandparents and grandmothers of the community were invited to occupy the position of the educator, telling and recreating local memories by giving preference to orality over written word.

The problems represented by institutionalization are more complex than we can debate here, but mainly we can say that the indigenous school did not intended integration, but rather cultural affirmation, an assessment of the capacity of the community to take charge of their own education and to face the local challenges that were not alien to the process of national modernization (they were controversial to the modernization model but not foreign

The stewardship of the State on a single integrationist curriculum implies implicitly converting education in a process of assimilation and aspiration of social climbing by having as a model the dominating white mestizo urban society, in this sense, one of the effects to be verified is that once the indigenous school was incorporated into the public education system, the aspiration of moving to the city from the country in search of continuing education in college increased.

the exercise that remains to be done is to try to move some of these lines from the indigenous education to artistic education, as an experiment.

what would it mean to resort to words from the vernacular language now within the arts school? how it would affect words like "creativity" or "creation" "Produce" or "project"

what would mean to link the practice of art education to a struggle for a good cause like the right to communal land for example, water, or the right to the city?

how could we fight the symptoms of hyperactivity and self-exploitation of the guild of current creative workers according to the indigenous conception of rhythms and work cycles marked by ritual, and ecosystems, the lunar cycle, climatic seasons, etc.

what would imply within our curriculum of artists educators, open a debate in assembly on what is urgent and urgent to learn, about which it is urgent to work?

and how will we as educators and artists recreate stories and reference practices if we have to go to the history of European art? Where are our local references, our genealogies and other trajectories?