

# MOBILIZED 4 MOVEMENT

## Making History Matter

*Teaching Comparative African American and Latina/o Histories in an Age of Neoliberal Crisis*

Paul Ortiz

*Well, if one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law’s protection most!—and listens to their testimony. Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person—ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not the country is just, but whether or not it has any love for justice, or any concept of it. It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.*

—James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*

*What we need to counteract the three, four hundred years of colonial propaganda is a tourism thrust of our own. We need to look at ourselves afresh. We need to look at ourselves with a new curiosity. The truth is that we do not know who we are. And we will never know until we see ourselves with new eyes.*

—Earl Lovelace, *Salt: A Novel*

This article critically evaluates a comparative ethnic studies course that I have taught at three different universities during the past fifteen years, called “African American and Latina/o Histories.”<sup>1</sup> I am especially interested in the impact this form of education has on participants, many of whom are first-generation college students of color, as well as the ways that course alumni have taken what they have learned in the classroom into their work as com-

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munity organizers, teachers, prison educators, art workers, parents, and other roles. An overarching concern here is how we can design courses that address the challenges that working-class students face in an era of mass incarceration, anti-immigrant hysteria, and anti-Black racism. As one of my students notes, “The agents of law and order encourage us to live in the shadows and their bulky flashlights keep us hiding.”<sup>2</sup> In the current climate of fear, and in the shadow of family incarceration and deportations that so many of our students live under, how can educators create spaces where students are encouraged to critically examine the world they (we) live in?<sup>3</sup> Equally important, how can students move from rigorous analysis to effective action and civic engagement?

Over the years, this interdisciplinary course has evolved in response to students’ needs and has been enriched with invaluable ideas and suggestions made by Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez, Patricia Zavella, Carlos Muñoz, Cedric J. Robinson, Larry Trujillo, Dana Frank, David Anthony, and many other colleagues.<sup>4</sup> The spirit of resistance that students brought with them into the classroom has also productively shaped the course. In my career as a college instructor, I have been deeply influenced by the pedagogical model practiced by the teachers and students of the Mississippi Freedom School movement of the 1960s, especially the idea that the most effective learning is dialogical, characterized by mutual learning of teacher and student alike.<sup>5</sup>

I will highlight the voices of course alumni who have been organizers in the immigration rights movement, Dream Defenders, Black Lives Matter, El Gran Paro Estadounidense (the great American strike) of 2006, and other struggles that have profoundly influenced the way the course has been taught. Some students brought organizing or “civic engagement” skills with them to the seminar; many more course veterans used the curriculum to inform their subsequent efforts to weave together new interracial coalitions for equality informed by history and the experiences of their ancestors in struggle. These experiences with liberation pedagogy may be useful to educators, movement organizers, and others attempting to promote learning and solidarity among aggrieved individuals and groups who are besieged by the forces of racial capitalism, state violence, and a system of education that rarely takes their aspirations seriously.<sup>6</sup> As one course alumna put it, “Education has been accustomed to telling us our place in the world, instead of putting us in a place where we can find ourselves; it should be a catalyst of rebirth, and re-education.”<sup>7</sup>

In this class, we have sought to instill what Trinidadian novelist Earl Lovelace calls a “new curiosity” about the lives of historically marginalized people.<sup>8</sup> Throughout my experiences in developing course plans for the African American and Latina/o Histories class, I have been inspired by Edward W. Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*, where he describes the goals of the comparative study of cultures:

Merely to urge students to insist on one's own identity, history, tradition, uniqueness, may initially get them to name their basic requirements for democracy and for the right to an assured, decently humane existence. But we need to go on and to situate these in a geography of other identities, peoples, cultures, and then to study how, despite their differences, they have always overlapped one another, through unhierarchical influence, crossing, incorporation, recollection, deliberate forgetfulness, and, of course, conflict.<sup>9</sup>

Bringing the overlapping literatures, cultures, and chronologies of African, Latin American, and Caribbean history together is especially important in a time when artists, scholars, and filmmakers in countries like Mexico, Peru, and Colombia are creating a resurgence of interest in the importance of African heritage in Latin America.<sup>10</sup>

It is equally crucial that people in the United States begin to understand how their political traditions have been deeply informed by people from Latin America and the broader Global South for centuries. Thanks to advances in scholarship, we can now expel Eurocentrism from our classrooms. Historian Greg Grandin observed that

Latin America is famous for revolutionaries, but Latin America practically invented social democracy. The world's first fully realized social democratic constitution was Mexico. The right to organize, the right to education, the right to health care: those rights disseminated throughout Latin America, and then they found their way into the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Latin America invented what we think of as modern social democracy, and it never gets credit for it.<sup>11</sup>

Ethnic studies, grounded in an approach that places social movements and democratic insurgencies at the center, creates the intellectual spaces needed to bring this knowledge to the forefront. In this essay, I provide examples of curricula and other course materials that we have used in the making of African American and Latina/o Histories as well as the rationale for teaching the course today.

Chicana activist and scholar Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez has called the comparative study of African Americans and Latinas/os one of the most critical political issues of our time.<sup>12</sup> One of the major arguments in this essay is based on what I have learned from my students: a major roadblock in the building of positive African American and Latina/o intergroup relations—or any intergroup relations in this day and age, for that matter—is an appalling ignorance of our distinctive and shared histories.<sup>13</sup> As the student comments point out in the body of this essay, many younger people who hail from places like Mexico City, Los Angeles, or

Miami arrive at the university with minimal knowledge of their own people's histories of resistance and revolution. One remedy for this particular problem is the promotion of comparative ethnic studies at all levels of the educational system, in connection with the needs of people in underserved communities. In addition, as course alumni narrators point out, it is critical to make this knowledge available to incipient social movements for equal justice. What Lawrence Goodwyn has called "movement cultures" create democratic spaces where new knowledge and new types of interactions between different groups of people can take place.<sup>14</sup> C. L. R. James argued that people who are active interpret their experiences through their self-activity; those who are passive allow others to interpret the world for them.<sup>15</sup> Herein lies the reason that ethnic studies curricula are under assault across the country: from the perspective of institutions and individuals that desire to perpetuate the status quo and to stave off democratic changes in the broader society, this is an inherently dangerous form of knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

I initially offered this class at Duke as part of a one-year visiting assistant professorship after I finished my history doctorate there in 2000. I had already taught separate courses in African American and Latina/o studies at the university as a graduate student. However, Duke students involved in labor organizing, human rights, health advocacy, and other initiatives told me that what they desperately needed was a new kind of class that placed the histories of the Black and Latina/o diasporas in dialogue. What student activists were searching for was a course of study that addressed the upsurge of immigration of people from Central America and Mexico to North Carolina as well as insights into how these demographic shifts would impact prospects for social change in a state where African Americans had historically been oppressed and marginalized.<sup>17</sup> I chose historical case studies that allowed students to see that Indigenous and Africa-descended peoples have always been at the center of struggles for liberation in the Americas—sometimes together, other times in conflict. More often than not, they operate on parallel tracks, as illustrated in Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano's *Memory of Fire* trilogy, which tells the history of five centuries of resistance to colonialism and racism in the Western hemisphere.<sup>18</sup> Drawing heavily on Galeano's creative framework, students in the class examine connections among the Haitian Revolution, the Mexican War of Independence, slavery abolition, *Sandinismo*, Black anti-imperialism, and other events instead of seeing them as discrete occurrences. Through these examples, we learn that Native Americans, enslaved people, and individuals of mixed European, African, and Indigenous descent repeatedly struggled to create democratic spaces and societies, only to be forgotten when it came time to write official national histories.

The historical synthesis of Black and Latina/o narratives challenges the corporate media discourse, whose tendency is to use the "new story" of Latina/o immigration to erase histories of slavery, segregation, and anti-Black racism in the US South. Manuel Pastor (a frequent guest speaker when I taught the course

at the University of California, Santa Cruz) and Angela Glover urge scholars to avoid the trap of historical amnesia:

In a time of increasing diversity, it might be tempting to look beyond the black-white framework that structures race relations and social and economic opportunity. To the contrary, as other racial minorities grow, it becomes increasingly important to address the fundamental question of fairness for African Americans, which affects the fortunes of the other groups. The black-white economic and social divide created by slavery and cemented through years of servitude and subjugation has endured and helped shape America.<sup>19</sup>

The course was initially titled “Black/Latino Histories, Cultures, and Politics,” and was offered as an undergraduate research seminar through Duke’s anthropology department and the Center for Documentary Studies.<sup>20</sup> Key texts in the beginning included Juan Gonzalez’s newly published *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, Barbara Kingsolver’s  *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mine Strike of 1983*, and Charles Payne’s *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. The class has always featured a large number of guest speakers involved in organizing for historical, cultural, and economic justice. The inaugural seminar featured visiting speakers including Henry Armijo, of the Orange County Human Rights Commission, who talked about “Black and Latino Coalitions in the Triangle”; Ramiro Arceo, of Student Action with Farmworkers, speaking on “Latino School Children and Drop-Out Prevention”; and Stan Goff, Master Sergeant (US Army) (retired) on “Haiti, White Supremacy, and Global Capitalism.”<sup>21</sup>

The first book we read together in the 2001 seminar has remained a foundational text for every subsequent class: *Down These Mean Streets*, Piri Thomas’s memoir about coming of age in Depression-era Spanish Harlem, first published in 1967. Thomas, who wrote much of the book while he was serving prison time for armed robbery, tells the story of a dark-skinned boy of African, Puerto Rican, and Cuban descent who is constantly out of place in an immigrant family that desperately wants to hide its African roots. (Thomas’s parents and siblings explain to Piri, the darkest-skinned member of the family, that he owes his color solely to the “Indian” in their ancestry.) The book quickly establishes the fact that the racial categories of “Black” and “Latino” are not exclusive but in fact overlap in important ways. Thomas’s journey to find wholeness in a supposedly colorblind society that denigrates Blackness is an experience that viscerally touches students, particularly sons and daughters of Caribbean, African, or Latino immigrants. In fact, *Down These Mean Streets* often elicits strong feelings—and, quite often, a productive educational catharsis—from students of color, many of whom continue to grapple with the same types of familial and societal anti-Black racism

that confronted Thomas decades earlier. We also watch Gordon Parks's remarkable documentary film, *The World of Piri Thomas*. Parks shines a grim light on economic oppression in East Harlem while simultaneously emphasizing the pride and resilience of the African American and Puerto Rican communities there.<sup>22</sup>

What students find instructive in *Down These Mean Streets* is Thomas's refusal to reject either his African or Puerto Rican heritage in a bid for assimilation to the dominant culture. Instead, he embraces all sides of his colonized ancestry and fashions a new identity born of solidarity with others. In an interview with Puerto Rican scholar Carmen Hernández, Thomas observes, "They [colonizers] have forced us to be universal. We now consider ourselves citizens of the world, wherever our feet are, that's our turf."<sup>23</sup> Several years later, Thomas expressed his opposition to US neocolonialism and his critique of racial capitalism in a review of *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*, a collection of speeches by that movement's leaders:

I learned from reading *Nicaragua* that Big Brother, Big Business, has long considered Nicaragua (among others) as a source for resources, with its people as cheap labor, forced into the rape of their own homeland. South Africa, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and the Philippines are among others who can attest to the facts of puppet rule backed by US military might, while the multi-national carpet-baggers pick the people's freedom clean.<sup>24</sup>

One of the examples of Black/Brown coalition building that served as an early case study in the class was the 2001 Juneteenth celebration in North Carolina, jointly organized by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), Black Workers for Justice, and United Electrical Workers Local 150. FLOC was in the midst of a difficult union-organizing campaign that led to the union calling for a boycott of the Mt. Olive Pickle Company.<sup>25</sup> According to a publicity flier, the 2001 event would "celebrate the end of chattel slavery, and celebrate unity of Black and Latino workers in the new movement for justice in the South." Class discussion about this event focused on the possibilities as well as tensions in using a venerable historical commemoration to promote a contemporary interracial union-organizing campaign. According to the event flier:

The Juneteenth celebration will focus on the following issues:

- An end to racial profiling;
- Amnesty for undocumented workers;
- The rights of workers to organize into unions (including support for the Mt. Olive Pickles boycott and support for organizing efforts by public employees);

A living wage for all workers;  
 Language and culture rights; and  
 Reparations for African Americans, Black Farmers, and Mexican Bra-  
 ceros.<sup>26</sup>

Students were inspired by the ways that organizers of this event carefully blended historical concerns of injustices against African Americans and Mexican workers with demands for justice for undocumented immigrant workers in the present.<sup>27</sup>

## Educational Reconstruction

When I moved to teach in the department of community studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, “African American/Latino Histories and Communities” became one of my regular course offerings for the department. Enrollment grew each year, and by 2008—the last year I taught the course at Santa Cruz—what started as a seminar had grown into a lecture course with multiple discussion sections. Betita Martinez, a Chicana feminist who had been an organizer in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the South in the 1960s, was a key influence in the development of the course.<sup>28</sup> Her book *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-colored Century* became a staple of the slightly revamped curriculum. Martinez’s search for a “new origin narrative” of the nation—one that would replace the propaganda of American exceptionalism—became one of the course’s overarching objectives, and the topic of the students’ midterm essay exam. In the brilliant chapter “Reinventing America,” Martinez asks the reader to imagine what a new origin narrative of the Americas would look like:

A new origin narrative and national identity could help pave the way to a more livable society for us all. A society based on cooperation. . . . The choice seems clear if not easy. We can go on living in a state of massive denial, affirming this nation’s superiority and virtue simply because we need to believe in it. We can choose to believe the destiny of the United States is still manifest: global domination. Or we can see a transformative vision that carries us forward, not backward. We can seek an origin narrative that lays the groundwork for a multicultural identity centered on the goals of social equity and democracy. We do have choices.<sup>29</sup>

The next section in this essay features the perspectives of course alumni discussing the impact of the class as well as the ways that they have used course materials in their subsequent educational work. My sources include a blend of oral history interviews, student course evaluations, and written correspondence



with former university students. At the time of the interviews and correspondence (conducted in the spring of 2010) the narrators ranged in age from 22 to 27. Most of them hail from Southern California. Many were at the forefront of activism in support of the DREAM Act and against Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 and other anti-immigrant legislation. All of the students took the class at UC Santa Cruz at some point between 2002 and 2008. Most of them went on to become teaching assistants in subsequent sessions of the course. (Peer learning has always been a pivotal aspect of the class, and course veterans often return to share experiences and insights with current students.) Some of these narrators came to the class as passionate social justice activists with family lineages in the United Farm Workers and other social movements; all are now committed workers in immigrant rights, labor, and social justice organizations.<sup>30</sup>

Three of my interviewees were AB 540 students who risked deportation by taking bold stands against Arizona's SB 1070.<sup>31</sup> Another former student is the child of Mexican American immigrant steelworkers. The oldest informant of this group, who recently graduated from law school at a prestigious California university, is the daughter of 1960s United Farm Worker activists. The youngest informant, a second-generation immigrant Chicana, worked as a grassroots organizer with the Barack Obama for President campaign on the East Coast. Among other activities, she helped defend prospective Latina/o and Asian American voters who were being harassed outside of the polls in Virginia during the 2008 presidential election. The final narrator worked for several years as a social worker in Watsonville, California.

All but one of these individuals is a first-generation college student. Of the students I interviewed, six are female, and one is male. In the interviews and correspondence, each of the course alumni choose overlapping identities that include "Mexicana," "Chicana," "Latina," and "Mexican American" as well as "community organizer," "working class," "DREAMista," "and activist." While the students' families came to the United States in different time periods, from various parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, each embraced an "immigrant" identity, thus reinforcing the old maxim that politics helps define identity. At the same time, it is important to understand the terrible stress that our students labor under in a time of mass deportations and neoliberalism. These students all needed to pursue paid employment to attend school; many of them shared with their peers the constant fear of losing family members to state violence or to deportation. Learning takes on a whole new meaning in this frightening context, as one of my former University of Florida students told me:

I have been going through a very tough time lately. For starters, as you may remember from one of my papers I wrote to you last semester, I'm the son of illegal immigrants. I'm one of the small percentage of kids who were brought to this country at a very young age illegally and now



after 20 years of being in this country I still do not have legal status. I've gone through the school system on a technicality but now that I am at the university level school is no longer free. Last semester's class had a bigger impact on me than any other class I've ever taken. The [African American and Latina/o Histories] class put me in the shoes that I am in today. I know where I come from, I know what my people's struggles were and I appreciate them that much more. It was all due to your class.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of fifteen years of working with such hard-working, talented people as this, I have become especially concerned with creating a classroom environment that reflects the experiences of today's students who face challenges that often go unrecognized in higher education.<sup>33</sup>

Students often respond to historical materials in the class with feelings of indignation at having been denied critical knowledge in the educational mainstream. "I knew from growing up that people of color had many commonalities," one self-identified Chicana student reflected,

but it was not until taking this course that I learned about former Black slaves fighting alongside Mexicans in the Mexican War of Independence, or the power of multi-ethnic mobilization in Santo Domingo (Haiti). Moreover, I also did not have the tools to articulate the distinct and separate experiences of Latinos and Blacks; in other words, to explain why both demographic groups were not homogenous despite perceived commonalities.<sup>34</sup>

Another Latina student remarked, "I was in shock that I hadn't learned this . . . throughout my whole K to 12 education. And going to college and learning this history then, to me, I felt like I was robbed in my education."<sup>35</sup>

Yolanda Martinez is a first-generation college student who grew up in East Los Angeles in the 1990s. A 2006 article in the *Christian Science Monitor* described Los Angeles as "ground zero for black-Hispanic friction these days."<sup>36</sup> Yolanda acknowledges that there are periodic tensions between African Americans and Latinos, but she also emphasizes coalition building: "I have seen the fruits of community organizations like Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles (CCSCLA), A Place Called Home (APCH), Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC), and many others by bringing both African Americans and Latina/os together when change is needed."<sup>37</sup>

Yolanda took part in the 2006 May Day protests in Los Angeles. Her experience as an organizer of El Gran Paro Estadounidense had a profound impact on her desire to deepen her knowledge of her past as well as her ability to connect with others. In her recollection, May Day helped her learn how to become a fighter:

My participation in the May Day protest did not only serve as an educational experience but it also allowed me to connect with a side I had failed to embrace. . . . Since I was born in the US and my parents became permanent residents when I was small, immigration issues had no direct impact on me (at least that is what I thought). It was in 2006 when I realized who I was and where I've come from. From this moment on I was no longer the young woman from Los Angeles. For once I represented the sweat, blood and tears of not just my parents but also all the people who came to the US with the dream to provide a better future for their families. Since 2006, I have participated in every year's May Day protest. This has brought out a side in me I never knew existed, a side that is ready to fight for what I believe in, no matter what obstacles I may have to overcome.

Yolanda enrolled in the African American and Latina/o histories class in 2007. After serving as a teaching assistant the following year, she argued that this curriculum should be shared beyond the walls of the university. She observed:

As for my community, one of the main causes of crimes and violence is the lack of knowledge of each other's history. A missing piece is the lack of critical connections between African-American and Latina/o histories in the mainstream K-12 school curriculum. We need to focus on the importance of teaching young people the historical intersections between African-American and Latina/o communities and call for curricular interventions that emphasize shared histories and a critical understanding of cultural differences. In an increasingly multiracial society, how do we educate the next generation to live and work together?<sup>38</sup>

Martinez's insights can inform the way educators approach the teaching of comparative ethnic studies. How can we educate ourselves to live and work together to build a just society if we are ignorant of each other's histories—much less our own? Martinez's experiences also demonstrate that people with an awareness of their own lineages of struggle are better able to interact democratically with others from different backgrounds. In this class, we always read August Wilson's *Piano Lesson* (a student favorite). Wilson uses the play to pose the question "Can you acquire a sense of self-worth by denying your past?"<sup>39</sup> Or, as Luisa Ortiz, a recent immigrant from Mexico, explained in one of her course essays, "I think we cannot impose freedom on to others until we ourselves are free. To me, liberation is about understanding where I come from and who my ancestors once were. . . . I do not need to be rich or educated; all I need is my family to be free."<sup>40</sup>

First-generation college students at Duke, UC Santa Cruz, and the University of Florida have consistently told me that they do not see themselves reflected in their high school history and social studies curricula. "Personally I never

learned the history of my community until I attended college,” Yolanda Martinez reflects. “Unfortunately,” she notes, “many African American and Latina/o children in South Los Angeles never attend college. Therefore, they never obtain the knowledge of each other’s history.” She concludes: “It’s time our children learn more about themselves and what better way to do so than by studying African American and Latina/o histories?”<sup>41</sup>

The next student narrator, Jason Guerrero, brought a wealth of comparative ethnic studies experiences to our classroom. Jason also had alienating experiences in primary and secondary school in East Los Angeles in the 1990s. However, he had an educational epiphany at East Los Angeles College in 2004. “For me this was a time where I was exposed [to] a different style of teaching,” Jason recalls:

It wasn’t so much what was said [as] the feeling the instructors created in class. They were motivated in a different way than most of my teachers in my high school experience. We were “getting at the root,” as one instructor told me. We were uncovering a people’s history, between the Black and Brown community, that I had known existed, felt existed, yet was never presented. When learning of the history of our peoples I felt cheated and sad. It was a rough time for me. I remember wanting to scream with frustration at the end of lectures, for many reasons. One reason included having grown up not respecting my family’s history.<sup>42</sup>

Jason took what he was learning at East Los Angeles College back to his *familia*. Suddenly, a new world of communication opened up between Jason and his grandfather, who began relating his own experiences as a Bethlehem Steel worker: “The race relations were horrible [my grandfather said]. He would tell me about hierarchy, the dual wage system, and inferior conditions depending on your race. I remember him telling me that ‘*Mexicanos* and Blacks had it bad, *mijo!*’ exaggerating on the bad. Infrapolitical solidarities existed outside the union hall.”<sup>43</sup>

Jason’s education became an increasingly rich blend of experience, conversations with his elders, and classroom learning (hence his invocation of the theoretical term “infrapolitical”). As his understanding of history progressed, Jason gained greater insights into the evolution of his own identity in tandem with the possibilities of building larger solidarities:

More than naming, history allows people to uncover alliances between people thought and presented to society as having concerns and needs that are mutually exclusive, though in reality run together. With history I see myself a part of a lineage of working-class struggle, of a righteous people[’]s fighting for justice and an end of exploitation in its many forms across gender and racial lines, to say the least. History reminds people that our steps follow people before us. History allows for people

to have a constant reminder of the radical potential that comes from walking with others in struggle. The more we are familiar with yesterday, the more we can see ourselves as part of something that transcends any one individual and has potential as a future force.<sup>44</sup>

It is important to emphasize that Jason's hard-fought education was learned in a variety of sites: on picket lines with striking UC Santa Cruz workers, in the streets on May Day 2006, in conversation with the man he calls his "Big Dad," and at East Los Angeles College. This is illustrated in his discussion of the intimate connections between his classroom readings and his *abuelo's* stories: "I would have to read books like Chester Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go* and Luis Rodriguez's *Music of the Mill* to be exposed again to some of the things my Big Dad would share with me as I sat on his lap as a young boy. This time around I knew it was important."<sup>45</sup>

Like the other activist students I have interviewed, Jason returned time and time again to the importance of learning history as a prelude to engaging in politics and in building new, interracial coalitions:

In regards to Latino and African American history, knowledge is the key to forging solidarity. The more one knows about our histories the closer we come together as we have in the past. We recognize that our paths have crossed more than once, and at a time that goes further back than this lifetime. We recognize the efforts made by social groups that profit from our division, and our losses at their hands. Even though we want to win the victory of liberation, victory and defeat are not mutually exclusive.<sup>46</sup>

Like Jason, Aida Gomez self-identifies as a third-generation Mexican American from Los Angeles. Her educational odyssey began in the heart of an activist family as her mother was a rank-and-file activist with the United Farm Workers. Aida's father was also active in municipal politics. She explains the connections between education and community organizing as well as some of the limitations of that education:

Growing up in an East Los Angeles barrio to two socially conscious parents, as a third/fourth-generation Chicana, my education was cemented in the community.

Whether it was my brother and I protesting a California ballot initiative seeking to eliminate Affirmative Action or marching with my mother's former union—the United Farm Workers—a new history was ingrained in me. A history that gave me a cultural reference point to my social positioning, an inkling that the history taught in California's

public schools was not holistic, and pride. Although I was privileged to live in a progressive home, be exposed to multiethnic identities and histories, and given the tools to navigate higher education, this community education was still missing a critical component—a deeply rooted historical perspective on colonization, imperialism, and globalization as it relates to both Black and Latino communities.<sup>47</sup>

Aida arrived in our African American and Latina/o Histories classroom ready to engage with the course materials; she quickly became a leader in seminar discussions and subsequently served as a teaching assistant in the class the following year. Like several other students presented here, she took part in university labor struggles in solidarity with service workers, and she was heavily engaged in recruiting first-generation students of color to campus. Her prior and ongoing activist experiences enriched her engagement with the course readings:

As an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz, I was immersed in scholar activism and research that focused on the systemic inequities embedded in society and institutions. . . . Learning about migration patterns, the differences between slavery and indentured servitude, and distinct demographic variations whether in language, geography, or customs, helped me create a new working framework for studying urban communities of color.

Aida concludes her reflections on the state of contemporary education the way that most of my Latina students do. She believes that Black and Brown narratives provide indispensable tools for creating social change:

As history continues to unfold a legacy of discrimination, these Black and Brown histories become increasingly important in working towards community empowerment and equity, whether through the courts or institutions. But not only is this important, but it is necessary at a young age to allow a more truthful perspective about the intricacies of history in K–5 and secondary classrooms so that tomorrow’s leaders have the tools necessary to fight for reform that is not only just, but fair.<sup>48</sup>

Scores of African American and Latina students have told me that they learn very little about their ancestors’ histories in the United States. Neither group is served well by the mythical “nation of immigrants” narrative that is still a major part of the public school curriculum.<sup>49</sup> When immigration is discussed in primary or secondary schools it is often an Ellis Island–centric version that focuses on Eastern European, German, and Irish immigrants. This flawed framework obviously excludes Latinos and African Americans. Furthermore, according to

my students, the prospect of learning the deep and centuries-long connections between African American and Latina/o experiences is nearly impossible in a society where social progress is often measured in zero-sum terms: my gain is your loss, and vice versa. As educators who strive to build stronger communities, we must address this crisis head-on: how can we talk about building healthy relationships between people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds when the histories of those groups are still often ignored or underplayed in our schools?

### “I See All These Injustices”

How do we share knowledge from the college seminar room with neighborhoods outside university campuses? My undergraduate students have taught me that young people will embrace the study of history if they are shown its relevance to their lives. Camila Ramirez was an AB 540 undergraduate.<sup>50</sup> Her parents had immigrated from Mexico, and due to her immigration status, she was ineligible to receive most university scholarships regardless of how good her grades were. Instead of allowing events beyond her control to turn her into a victim, Camila helped to organize an activist group of Latina/o students at UC Santa Cruz called Students Informing Now, or SIN. “SINistas” staged public plays about immigration issues, rallied support for the campus’s service workers, and traveled throughout California to inspire and recruit high school students from working-class communities to apply for college.<sup>51</sup>

Camila enrolled in our African American and Latina/o Histories course in 2007 and quickly established herself as an outstanding student in the class. She also insisted in our discussion seminars that what we were learning in the classroom about long-forgotten freedom struggles should be shared with people outside the university. She performed so well in the class that I asked her to be a teaching assistant in the course the following year. Camila subsequently shared the knowledge she gained in our African American and Latina/o Histories class with a much larger constituency in California through her work as public school educator. One day, she sent me the following email:

Hey Paul,

Hope you’re having a beautiful day. Today a group of students from Cesar Chavez Middle School from East Palo Alto, had the day off to celebrate Malcolm X Day and they decided to have a field trip at UC Santa Cruz. I was their tour guide and student speaker. At the end we had a panel with them and other SINistas. We touched on the importance of remembering Malcolm X and of his teachings/speeches. Many of the students were of Latino and African-American background, so we also talked about the importance of black and brown unity. (I made many references to your class :))

One of the students said, “I have a lot of anger inside of me because I see all these injustices, but I’m going to transform my anger to a positive thing. I am going to go to college and nothing is going to stop me . . .” Hearing these students speak gave me more hope for the future. Today was a great day and I just wanted to share it with you.<sup>52</sup>

The ways that Camila interpreted her own life experiences, her activism, and her critical engagement in the classroom helped her to connect to her students’ educational needs and struggles. Black and Latino kids have become disposable fodder for today’s educational reform debates. Instead of trying to meet them where they are, and encouraging them to learn about each other’s histories, schools too often force these children to conform to high-stakes testing formulas and “zero tolerance” discipline, which have led to the kind of negative educational outcomes exposed in this essay—not the least of which is a lack of self-knowledge.<sup>53</sup> Camila reached these students. She gave them a new way to understand the past, and helped them find their own voices by presenting their histories together. She brought her experiences as an AB 540 student, her community-organizing knowledge, and what she learned in the university to an after-school enrichment program with middle school students in South Central Los Angeles. Her theoretical and experiential knowledge about race and hierarchy in the Americas allowed her to make razor-sharp observations in the classroom:

I observed that the Latino students segregated themselves. The caste system rooted underneath their family trees strived to once again, divide their color and to believe in borders. They regrouped themselves amongst the Latino population based on nationality and color. For example, because of the strong tension between Mexican and Salvadorian gangs especially in Pico/Union, the students mirrored that and became that tension.

In this racialized context, African American as well as Afro-Latino students tried to assert their own identities:

Struggling to see beyond colonial mentality were the young Afro-Latinos. They jumped around just like their identity, trying to be one or the other. The language of the conquistador made them Latino, and their deep-rooted skin with kinky hair made them “Black.” I also observed that the Afro-Latino students felt some shame or embarrassment for looking “Black.” I would hear other lighter-skin[ned] Latinos call them “*negros*, *morenos*, *mayates*,” all negative and racist words to describe “Black” or dark-skinned people. I would also catch them slurring “nigguh” at each



other. While some of them just laughed it off, others would look down. As if staring deep into the Atlantic Ocean where their African souls and stories were dumped during the Middle Passage. Their eyes would reflect pain.<sup>54</sup>

Camila and her colleagues instituted a comparative ethnic studies style of education in order to deal with the divisions she found in the classroom. Drawing on materials we used in the African American and Latina/o Histories class, she introduced a new comparative curriculum to her students:

One of the highlights of this curriculum was learning and talking about the slave trade. This opened up to discussions of migration, labor, racial mixing, and of resistance. The juice of the material came from two very good books, *Latino USA: A Cartoon History*, by Ilan Stavans, illustrated by Lalo Alcaraz; and *Black History for Beginners*, by Denise Dennis, illustrated by Susan Willmarth. I wanted to give them both the Latino and Black/African American perspective, so at the end we could link up the reading discussion and find common points in both histories. I really highlighted the similarities rather than the differences. About the unity, not the contradictions.

We also talked about the terms *mestizo/mestiza* and *Mestizaje* (racial mixing during colonial Latino America). We used the book *500 Años del pueblo chicano / 500 Years of Chicano History: In Pictures*, by Elizabeth Martinez, as our guide to facilitate the discussions of colonialism and its effects thereon. I tied these discussions to our present-day reality and how even though we may identify as being Black or Latino, we live in the same community like in South Central or have created our own communities like East LA. We mix in every detail, even mixing with the American culture and cities. We are constantly mixing, because of migration. Movement and migration are synonymous. We are in both. We migrate and we are the movement.<sup>55</sup>

Equally important, Camila used a Freedom School style of pedagogy in her classroom; she expected her students to help guide seminar discussions and she respected their experiences:

But I know that every human being has context, has stories, has life. I immediately threw away the mentality of having a hierarchy-based classroom. I was with them, in their world. My job is to learn from them. Their stories guided the way I taught. I became a student while they taught me about their experiences. I listened. With this simple act of listening, I could see that they felt valued.<sup>56</sup>

Camila and her teaching peers introduced a kind of experience-based Liberation Pedagogy into the educational lives of their students.<sup>57</sup> They encouraged each student to tell stories about his or her own life, especially stories about migration and movement because these are themes that allow youths to make connections across islands of difference:

After deep words were shared amongst the young eyes, I could feel the presence of change. The students who felt guilty, ashamed or embarrassed about their sun-kissed skin and roots that stretched across the oceans wiped out those feelings and finally felt like they were part of history. By knowing your history, you know yourself. But most importantly I saw the connections, and I saw borders disappear. They felt connected to each other, to the struggle, and to each other's lives.

I felt very blessed to be part of this transformation. I know I won't be part of these students' lives every day but my hope is that I planted a seed in each of them. There were many moments in my learning and teaching with these young warriors that inspired my visions to continue teaching for social justice and change.<sup>58</sup>

## **Dangerous Knowledge: Toward a Conclusion**

During the spring break of 2015, I took a group of students from the University of Florida's Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP)—which I direct—to Tucson, Arizona, to document the battle to save Mexican American Studies (MAS) learning in a school district that had effectively banned it years earlier. Our fieldwork project was a collaborative effort between SPOHP and Prescott College, a small liberal arts college in Arizona whose motto is “For the Liberal Arts, the Environment and Social Justice.” Students from SPOHP's Latina/o Diaspora in the Americas Project (LDAP) interviewed and talked with Tucson-area high school students, teachers, and parents who mourned the banning of ethnic studies; however, local people also vowed to continue to teach the lessons of self-knowledge, historical inquiry, and mutual aid that made Mexican American Studies such a successful program.<sup>59</sup> The success of the Tucson MAS program in lowering high school dropout rates has been demonstrated in a major empirical study as well as in the testimonies of numerous alumni; however, the Arizona legislature banned the program because it supposedly encouraged hatred of whites and “advocated ethnic solidarity,” meaning that school success for Latina/o children must be subordinate to the feelings of white adults.<sup>60</sup> Ironically, the abolition of Mexican American ethnic studies in Tucson has led to a national backlash. Increasing numbers of innovative schools and teachers across the country are now adopting ethnic studies approaches in their curriculums.<sup>61</sup>

One of the many highlights of the Proctor Program's fieldwork trip in Tucson was the participation of Jonathan Gomez, one of my former African American and Latina/o Histories students from Santa Cruz. Jonathan is now a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and has led successful poetry and social change workshops with youth in the Bay Area and other locations for several years. Jonathan joined us to take part in an evening public panel in Tucson titled "Documenting the Ethnic Studies Struggle through Oral History: A Conversation between Prescott College and the University of Florida," which featured the extraordinary teacher Sean Arce, cofounder and director of the Tucson Mexican American Studies Program.<sup>62</sup>

Jonathan Gomez's inspiring ability to weave Chicano poetry and mural art in Los Angeles into a narrative of social change had a major impact on our University of Florida students, just as they in turn inspired Mexican American and working-class high school students in Tucson with their poise and humility. A few weeks after we returned to Gainesville, Florida, Jonathan sent our Latina/o Diaspora students a letter that paid homage to their commitment to ethnic studies and social justice:

I am very happy to say that from the moment I walked into Prescott, I began to feel so empowered by all of your wonderful ideas, passion for social justice, and the *corazon* [heart] that drives you forward. As of late, I've been very moved by the book, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* by Barbara Ransby. As I read of Baker's life and commitment to community organizing I have come across lessons that remind me of the work that you do, and of the work that educators in the Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson spoke to in our conversations with them.<sup>63</sup>

In writing this letter, Jonathan Gomez echoed Earl Lovelace's dictum that "we need to look at ourselves afresh."<sup>64</sup> Jonathan combined the personal with the intellectual in sharing with my students the excitement he felt to be able to work closely with local people, university students, high school children, and parents in the common pursuit of social justice through a comparative ethnic studies learning framework that joined together Ella Baker, Mexican American Studies, and the *corazón* we will need to endure the challenges ahead. It is these new ways of seeing the world that we must defend and expand—in higher education, in our nation's *barrios*, and between cultures and communities in struggle.

## NOTES

1. This essay has its origin in a paper presented at a 2010 American Sociological Association panel titled "What Will It Take? The State of African American/Latino Relations and the Construction of Citizenship from Below." The panel was chaired by Professor Suzanne Oboler.

I am eternally grateful for Suzanne's incisive criticism of the original paper as well as fellow panelist Anani Dzidzienyo's ideas on developing the paper into an essay. The essays contained in Dzidzienyo and Oboler's edited collection *Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) have been an integral part of the readings for this course. I am indebted to Jonathan Gomez, Sonja Francine Marie Diaz, Armin Fardis, Derick Gomez, Emily Castillo, and Genesis Lara for their critiques as this essay developed. This essay is dedicated to the memory of my abuela, Julia Martinez Reyna. Her life and work touched many, and brought people together.

2. Student email communication, April 15, 2015, in author's possession. Due to the difficulties of conducting interviews in the age of mass deportations and concerns over privacy, the identities of the narrators quoted within this essay will be kept confidential. I have chosen pseudonyms for each of the informants.

3. For the impact of deportations on families, see Scott Phillips, Jacquelin Hagan, and Nestor Rodriguez, "Brutal Borders? Examining the Treatment of Deportees during Arrest and Detention," *Social Forces* 8, no. 1 (2006), 93–110; Amnesty International, "USA: Jailed without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA," March 25, 2009, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/usa-jailed-without-justice>.

4. The course blog, syllabus, and many readings from the 2008 seminar are accessible at a student-created site: <http://cmmu126.blogspot.com/>.

5. On the development of the Freedom School approach, see Katherine Charron, *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); for an in-depth discussion of the Freedom School pedagogy, see my edited interview with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee veteran and former Freedom School teacher Liz Fusco Aaronsohn in the *Gainesville Iguana* (Paul Ortiz and Liz Fusco Aaronsohn, "History and the People Who Make It: Liz Fusco Aaronsohn," *Gainesville Iguana*, October 11, 2013, <http://www.gainesvilleiguana.org/2013/articles/history-and-the-people-who-make-it-liz-fusco-aaronsohn/>). For the curriculum of the Mississippi Freedom Schools, see "Freedom School Curriculum," *Education & Democracy* (blog), <http://www.educationanddemocracy.org/> (accessed February 14, 2016).

6. Critiques of the US educational system include Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (1991; repr. New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2012); Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2006); Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System* (2010; repr. New York: Basic Books, 2011).

7. Student email to Paul Ortiz, May 18, 2008, in author's possession.

8. Earl Lovelace, *Salt: A Novel* (New York: Persea Books, 1997), 122.

9. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 330.

10. Dan Collins, "Susana Baca: The Singer Who Became Peru's First Black Cabinet Minister," *Guardian*, October 28, 2011. For Afro-Mexico, see Ben Vinson and Bobby Vaughn, "Afro-méxico: El pulso de la población negra en México; Una historia recordada, olvidada y vuelta a recordar" (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004). For the struggles of Afro-Colombians, see Juan Mejía's beautiful film *The Battle for Land* (Colombia, 2011; for more information, see "The Battle for Land," Tribeca Film Institute, [https://tribecafilminstitute.org/films/detail/the\\_battle\\_for\\_land](https://tribecafilminstitute.org/films/detail/the_battle_for_land) [accessed February 10, 2016]).

11. "Telling Histories: A Conversation with Laurent Dubois and Greg Grandin," *Radical History Review* 115 (Winter 2013): 19. I explore these themes further in my forthcoming book, *Our Separate Struggles Are Really One: African American and Latino Histories* (Boston: Beacon Press, forthcoming).

12. Elizabeth Martinez, talk at the University of California, Santa Cruz, May 7, 2008 (notes in author's possession). See also Elizabeth Martinez, "An Open Letter to Black Americans from Latinos," *FinalCall News*, September 9, 2003, [http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article\\_993.shtml](http://www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/article_993.shtml).

13. Martín Espada's critique of actually existing multiculturalism is instructive here; his *Zapata's Disciple* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998) has been a staple of class readings.

14. Lawrence Goodwyn develops the idea of movement culture in *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

15. James articulated self-activity thus: “Politics is an activity. It is not a lecture room where the people are supposed to listen to all the government has done for them. It is not a struggle over function, how much the government gets and how much the people get. It is not a play in which the applause of the audience (the election) ensures five years of further employment for the more attractive performers. Politics is an activity, everybody, government and people. It is not an activity that is shared, divided up, it is a reciprocal activity only in appearance. The more active the people are, the more active the government can be.” C. L. R. James, *Party Politics in the West Indies* (Trinidad: Vedic Enterprises, 1962), 125.

16. Genesis Lara, “No Such Thing as Too Much Truth: Saving Ethnic Studies in Arizona,” *Truthout*, April 28, 2012, <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/8703-no-such-thing-as-too-much-truth-new-film-depicts-battle-to-save-ethnic-studies-program-in-arizona>.

17. For Latina/o immigration in North Carolina, see Hannah Gill, *The Latino Migration Experience in North Carolina: New Roots in the Old North State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

18. The three volumes in this eloquent trilogy feature unforgettable case studies in slave resistance, anticolonial uprisings, and popular insurgencies for justice drawn from throughout the entire Americas from the 1490s to the end of the twentieth century. Galeano’s poetic style and storytelling skills allow him to connect with general audiences. These books, organized chronologically—*Genesis, Faces and Masks*, and *Century of Wind*—are now available in one e-book volume, *The Memory of Fire Trilogy* (New York: Open Road Media, 2014).

19. Manuel Pastor, Stewart Kwoh, and Angela Glover Blackwell, *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002).

20. I had worked for several years at Documentary Studies on the “Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South” oral history project as a graduate researcher. Many of the interviews with African American elders who came of age in the Jim Crow South are available at the John Hope Franklin Research Center, Duke University Libraries: see “Behind the Veil,” Duke University Libraries Digital Collections, <http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/behindtheveil/>. I subsequently taught the course in the department of community studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz (2001–2008), as well as the department of history at the University of Florida (2008–present).

21. “Black/Latino Histories, Cultures, and Politics” syllabus, Duke University, spring semester, 2001, in author’s possession. Juan Gonzalez’s *Harvest of Empire* has gone through several new printings. In addition, there is now a *Harvest of Empire* documentary that brilliantly tells the story of US imperialism and Latina/o immigration to the United States and can be used alongside the text. See: “Harvest of Empire: The Film,” at <http://harvestofempiremovie.com/> (accessed February 2, 2016).

22. For a review of *The World of Piri Thomas*, see “TV Highlights,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, November 18, 1968. One of the advantages of using *Down These Mean Streets* in the classroom is the large amount of excellent film and print resources available to directly engage with the complex themes in Thomas’s memoir. For example, see Marta E. Sánchez, *Shakin’ Up Race and Gender: Intercultural Connections in Puerto Rican, African American, and Chicano Narratives and Culture (1965–1995)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005); Ian F. Haney López, “Chance, Context, and Choice in the Social Construction of Race,” in *The Latino Condition: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 9–15.

23. Carmen Dolores Hernández, “They Have Forced Us to Be Universal,” interview with Piri Thomas, March 5–6, 1995, *The World of Piri Thomas: Poet, Writer, Storyteller*, <http://cheverote.com/reviews/hernandezinterview.html>.

24. Piri Thomas, “Voices of Fighters against Oppression,” *New York Amsterdam News*, November 16, 1985, reviewing *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People’s Revolution*, ed. Bruce Marcus (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1985).

25. The boycott ended with a union victory in 2005. See Nick Wood, “Mt. Olive: Blood on the Cucumbers,” *Against the Current* 102 (January–February 2003): <https://www.solidarity-us.org/node/681>. I discuss aspects of coalition building in the Farm Labor Organizing Committee’s campaign in “From Slavery to Cesar and Beyond: Farm Worker Organizing in America,” in *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers’ Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, ed. Charles D. Thompson Jr. and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 249–276.

26. Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Black Workers for Justice, UE #150, joint news release, June 16, 2001.

27. The campaign to unionize Smithfield Food’s North Carolina poultry-processing plants also provides an excellent case study of the challenges of interracial union organizing, particularly involving African American, Latina/o, and white workers. See David Bacon, “Unions Come to Smithfield,” *American Prospect*, December 17, 2008, <http://prospect.org/article/unions-come-smithfield>.

28. Betita was a constant source of inspiration and mentorship for all of us at Santa Cruz during these years. For an introduction to her life as an organizer, see Elizabeth (Betita) Sutherland Martinez, “Neither Black nor White in a Black-White World,” in *Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts by Women in SNCC*, ed. Faith S. Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, Judy Richardson, Beth Garman Robinson, Jean Smith Young, and Dorothy Zellner (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 531–539.

29. Elizabeth Martinez, *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-colored Century*, with foreword by Angela Y. Davis (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), 48.

30. Needless to say, this is not necessarily a representative sample of students who took this course; most of the students in the class were not activists. However, the insights and experiences of this smaller sample of students speak volumes about the challenges and opportunities facing their generation.

31. California State Law AB 540 was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis on October 12, 2001. It allowed qualified “undocumented students” to be exempted from exorbitant “out-of-state tuition in public colleges and universities in California.” See “AB 540—Access to College for ALL!” Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), 2009, [http://maldef.org/education/public\\_policy/ab540/](http://maldef.org/education/public_policy/ab540/) (accessed June 19, 2010). The risks of deportation increased exponentially in 2010. See Greg Moses, “Obama in Dallas,” *Counterpunch*, August 9, 2010, <http://www.counterpunch.org/moses08092010.html>.

32. Student email to Paul Ortiz, April 25, 2010, in author’s possession.

33. Kelsey Nelson, “Report: Black, Latino, and American Indian Students Facing Huge Barriers to Success,” *NEA Today*, April 15, 2014, <http://neatoday.org/2014/04/15/black-latino-and-american-indian-students-facing-huge-barriers-to-success/>.

34. Student Evaluation of “African American and Latina/o Histories,” winter semester, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2008, in author’s possession.

35. Oral history interview of Paola Rodriguez [pseudonym] by author, May 18, 2010, transcript in author’s possession.

36. Daniel B. Wood, “Rising Black-Latino Clash on Jobs,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 25, 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0525/p01s03-ussc.html>.

37. Author interview with Yolanda Martinez, June 28, 2010, transcript in author’s possession.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Bonnie Lyons and George Plimpton, “Interviews: August Wilson, the Art of Theater No. 14,” *Paris Review* 153 (Winter 1999): <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/839/the-art-of-theater-no-14-august-wilson>.

40. Luisa Ortiz [pseudonym], “African American and Latino Histories Essay,” February 9, 2008, in author’s possession.

41. Author interview with Yolanda Martinez, June 28, 2010, transcript in author’s possession.

42. Oral history interview with Jason Guerrero [pseudonym], May 16, 2010, transcript in author’s possession.

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Oral history interview with Aida Gomez [pseudonym] by author, June 3, 2010, transcript in author's possession.
48. Ibid.
49. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "Stop Saying This Is a Nation of Immigrants!" *Monthly Review Magazine*, May 29, 2006, <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/dunbarortiz290506.html>.
50. Written narrative of Camila Ramirez [pseudonym], June 15, 2010, in author's possession.
51. For an overview of the organization, see The S.I.N. Collective, "Students Informing Now (S.I.N.) Challenge the Racial State in California without Shame . . . SIN Vergüenza!" *Educational Foundations* (Winter–Spring 2007): 71–90.
52. Email communication from Camila Ramirez [pseudonym], May 19, 2008, in author's possession.
53. Russell J. Skiba, Robert H. Horner, Choong-Geun Chung, M. Karega Rausch, Seth L. May, and Tary Tobin, "Race Is Not Neutral: A National Investigation of African-American and Latino Disproportionality in School Discipline," *School Psychology Review* 40, no. 1 (2011): 85–107; National Council of La Raza, "School-To-Prison Pipeline: Zero Tolerance for Latino Youth" (Washington, DC: National Council of La Raza, 2011), 1–6.
54. Oral history interview with Camila Ramirez [pseudonym], June 14, 2010, transcript in author's possession.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).
58. Oral history interview with Camila Ramirez [pseudonym], June 14, 2010, transcript in author's possession.
59. Roque Planas, "Teachers of Banned Mexican-American Classes Push to Expand Ethnic Studies," *Huffington Post: Latino Voices*, January 12, 2015, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/12/ethnic-studies-summit\\_n\\_6458770.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/12/ethnic-studies-summit_n_6458770.html).
60. Nolan L. Cabrera, Jeffrey E. Milem, Ozan Jacqueline, and Ronald W. Marx, "Missing the (Student Achievement) Forest for All the (Political) Trees: Empiricism and the Mexican American Studies Controversy in Tucson," *American Educational Research Journal* 51, no. 6 (2014): 1084–1118; Michael Martinez, "Arizona Education Chief Moves to Ban Ethnic Studies in Tucson Schools," CNN, January 4, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/01/04/arizona.ethnic.studies.ban/>.
61. J. Weston Phippen, "How One Law Banning Ethnic Studies Led to Its Rise," *The Atlantic*, July 19, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/07/how-one-law-banning-ethnic-studies-led-to-rise/398885/>.
62. A video recording of the panel is available on *YouTube*: SPOHP111, "Documenting Ethnic Studies Struggles through Oral History," posted March 3, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esfsCw2XurY&feature=youtu.be>.
63. Jonathan Gomez, letter to the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, April 22, 2015, in author's possession.
64. Lovelace, *Salt*, 122.