Hip hop and *nueva canción* as decolonial pedagogies of epistemic justice

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Abstract

In this essay we describe our work as Chicana and Chicano Studies scholars teaching Latino Cultural Studies to majority students-of-color classrooms. In our courses we examine music as decolonial pedagogical praxis through the use of *nueva canción* and hip-hop, both musical forms which have political roots and exemplify counterhegemonic movements against cultural imperialism in the U.S. and in Latin America. We begin with the premise that education is a political act and, as such, we draw from creative forms and styles that problematize what decolonial scholars call the “colonial matrix of power” in shaping the Latino subaltern experience (Mignolo, 1991, 2001; Quijano, 2000). Using music as a political and aesthetic expression against empire (Anzaldúa, 2012; Sandoval, 2000; Pérez, 1999), we argue that hip-hop and *nueva canción* offer students possibilities to critique and delink from coloniality in their everyday lives. Committed to decoloniality as a political, epistemological, and spiritual project, we are intent on creating spaces that value transcultural understanding and solidarity between and across subaltern peoples of the Global North and the Global South, with particular attention to Chicanas and Chicanos and Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. and other peoples in the hemisphere. Musical forms like hip-hop and *nueva canción* also provide ways to critically explore and engage in decolonial horizons that break silences, disrupt dominant narratives, and create a transformative consciousness among our students, particularly around issues of...
economic globalization, immigrant rights, cultural resistance, ethnic relations, poverty, and educational inequality in the Americas.

**Keywords:** decolonial theory; coloniality; nueva canción; hip-hop; performance pedagogy

**Introduction**

“Creative forms are forms of political activism employing definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms and are not merely aesthetic exercises.”

*Gloria Anzaldúa (1995, p. xxiv)*

During one of Chilean rapper Ana Tijoux’s stops in Texas at a crowded amphitheater off of San Antonio’s Riverwalk, the rapper stopped in-between songs and announced, in English, the next song was “about our skin color.” As the crowd cheered and the drum roll introduced “Verdad,” Tijoux began rapping, “*Por mi piel morena borraron mi identidad /me sentí pisoteado por toda la sociedad*” [My identity was erased because of my dark skin. I felt trampled by society]. As the turntable, drums, bass, and guitar worked in unison, Tijoux continued to expound on the injustices of coloniality, racial otherness and class and gendered oppression, while emphasizing the spirit of self-determination as a subaltern subject. The chorus punched through a packed amphitheater as Tijoux sang: “*Verdad, verdad mi verdad /no quiero tu autoridad/solo quiero caminar con dignidad/ y conquistar mi libertad*” [Truth, truth, my truth. I don’t want your authority. I just want to walk with dignity and pursue my freedom]. Tijoux’s ability to entertain and teach presents a performative pedagogy that simultaneously educates and entertains the public. The words of her songs communicate the need to address injustices that Black and Indigenous peoples face in the US and Latin America. The next day in class, students who attended the event remarked on the ways the live performance communicated themes of decolonial resistance and self-determination – themes that configure prominent in our Latino Cultural Expressions class discussions.

Throughout this essay, we examine music as decolonial pedagogical praxis in our work as Chicana and Chicano Studies scholars teaching mostly students of color, with the majority identifying as Latinos or Hispanic. As professors, activist scholars, intellectuals, and artists, we are teaching a Latino Cultural Expressions class at an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in San Antonio, Texas, we focus on musical forms like *nueva canción* and hip-hop which have political roots and exemplify counterhegemonic movements against cultural imperialism in the U.S. and
in Latin America. The objective of the course, which fulfills a humanities requirement for students, is to introduce students to Latino creative expressions, with an emphasis on performing, visual, musical, and folk arts, from Indigenous to the later blending of cultures spanning multiple colonialisms in Latin America and the United States. As Chicana and Chicano scholar activists, we begin with the critical awareness that education is a political act and, as such, we draw from creative forms and styles that problematize what decolonial scholars call the “colonial matrix of power” in shaping the Latino subaltern experience (Mignolo, 1991, 2001; Quijano, 2000).

Using music as a political and aesthetic expression against empire (Anzaldúa, 2012; Sandoval, 2000; Pérez, 1999), we argue that hip-hop and nueva canción offer students possibilities to critique and delink from coloniality in their everyday lives. Committed to decoloniality as a political, epistemological, and spiritual project, we are intent on creating spaces that value transcultural understanding and solidarity between and across subaltern peoples of the Global North and the Global South, with particular attention to Chicanas and Chicanos and Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. and other peoples in the hemisphere. Musical forms like hip-hop and nueva canción also provide ways to critically explore and engage in decolonial horizons that break silences, disrupt dominant narratives, and create a transformative consciousness among our students, particularly around issues of economic globalization, immigrant rights, cultural resistance, ethnic relations, poverty, and educational inequality in the Americas.

**Epistemic breaks: Challenging invisibility, misrepresentations, and myths of Latinas/os in the U.S. through decolonial theory**

In our theorization of our use of nueva canción and hip-hop in the classroom we draw from decolonial theory, Chicana feminist theory, and hip-hop pedagogical theory. Within the field of education, the concept of decolonization and decoloniality have been examined by scholars who work to understand how to rebuild from layers of colonial history and the structural and cultural patterns of coloniality. Using music as a mode of critical consciousness, we present ways to observe and engage in what Emma Pérez calls the “decolonial imaginary,” a site for “negotiating spaces for decolonizing the subject” (p. 5). Music provides a forum for colonized subjects to transform oppressive conditions within their colonial spaces. For example, Gloria Anzaldúa writes how corridos “narrated one hundred years of border history, bringing news of events as well as entertaining...” and “made our hard lives seem bearable” (p. 41). Through music, histories, culture, chords, words, and melodies, Chicanas and Chicanos continue to decolonize knowledge and power within the U.S.

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1 According to the US Department of Education a Hispanic-Serving Institution is an institution of higher education that has “enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application” ([www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov)). UTSA meets criteria of HSI with 48 undergraduate and graduate students that are classified as Hispanic ([http://www.utsa.edu/today/2014/09/hsiweek.html](http://www.utsa.edu/today/2014/09/hsiweek.html))
The work of decoloniality involves a critical analysis of what Aníbal Quijano (2000) calls "el patrón colonial del poder," a central concept that Walter Mignolo later translated to as the “colonial matrix of power” in his analysis of modern coloniality. For Quijano (2000), the colonial matrix of power is a “model of power that is globally hegemonic today” and “presupposes an element of coloniality” tied to sixteenth century colonialism and Eurocentrism (p. 533). That is, while colonialism has different historical and geographical locations of imperial domination around the world, coloniality is the underlying web of relations that was maintained in the U.S., South American, Central America, and the Caribbean after independence from European imperial powers. In other words, as Mignolo (1991) points out, while Europe ceased to have colonies, the “same logic was maintained; only power changed hands” (p. 69).

Quijano (2000) argues that the colonial matrix of power can be understood as working through four domains of the human experience: economic, in terms of appropriating land, controlling finance, and exploiting labor; political, in terms of maintaining authority; civic life, where gender and sexuality are controlled within Western heteropatriarchal discursive practices; and the epistemological realm, an aspect of coloniality that Quijano (2000) regards as the most insidious since it impacts subjectivity, consciousness, identity, and the control, distortion, and erasure of knowledge. Once independence movements in Latin America destroyed colonialism as an explicit political project, coloniality continued to persist as a structural and cultural logic of domination. Today, coloniality is reinscribed through global capitalism within and across southern territories and nations, which are often referred to as the Global South, and northern territories and nations, which are often referred to as the Global North in decolonial discourses (Mignolo, 2011; Santos, 2014).

Mignolo (2011) argues that coloniality, as a structural and cultural web of relations planted by European colonialism, is the “dark side” of modernity, the historical and contemporary narrative that celebrates Western civilization (Mignolo, 2011, pp. 2-3). Hence, he uses the term “modernity/coloniality” to refer to the ways in which modernity constitutes coloniality. As the hidden narrative of modernity, coloniality “points toward and intends to unveil the embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being for every one” (p. 6). Epistemologically and ontologically speaking, the adaptation and assimilation of the rhetoric of modernity entails the internalization of Western thought that revolves around Christianity, capitalism, and democracy. The coloniality of being is, then, the creation of a colonized subject formation that desires imperial designs and aspirations, whether these come from Europe or the United States.

The project of decoloniality is then a political and epistemic project to delink from modern colonial designs, whether political systems (like democracy or communism), neo-liberal policies, or Western epistemology (Mignolo, 2011), and to create alternatives or “decolonial turns” that reflect material and epistemic changes to the colonial matrix of power (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). Decoloniality seeks to dismantle modern colonial relations of power and create alternatives to the colonial matrix that has systematically denied the existence, knowledge, and
way of life of colonized peoples. Similarly, for us, decolonial pedagogies necessarily entail the creation of deliberate strategies to disengage from the colonial matrix of power, particularly through musical expressions like hip-hop and *nueva canción*, expressions that problematize the discourse of modernity in the U.S., while unveiling the systems of racial, gender, economic, and epistemic injustice that Chicanas and Chicanos struggle against and seek to dismantle in the modern colonial world.

As decolonial pedagogues/activist/scholars in Chicana and Chicano Studies, we begin with the notion that “the ‘discovery of America and the genocide of Indians and African slavery are the very foundation of ‘modernity’ more so than the French or Industrial Revolutions” (Mignolo, 2011, p. xiii), and that the U.S. came into existence as a global capitalist empire through coloniality. We problematize modernity—the historical process in which Europe began its process toward world hegemony—as the other side of coloniality (Mignolo, 1991, 2011). While we no longer contend with overt colonial domination of Spanish or British imperial powers, the “logic of coloniality” has remained in intact; that is, the economic, political, social, and epistemological foundations of coloniality continue to be rearticulated. As such, seeing the world through a decolonial lens entails a shift in the geography of knowledge and history. It is not just about having a different interpretation of the same set of events, but about voicing another paradigm that emerges across “the epistemic colonial difference” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 48). Within this paradigm, modernity is not a triumphal historical process but one that was achieved at the enormous cost of human lives and will continue “to be so as long as the rhetoric of modernity keeps on convincing and enforcing the idea that history is a linear process with neo-liberalism now the goal” (p. 49). This is definitely the case in Texas where the modern/colonial narrative of the Alamo and the “liberation” of Texas continues to be enforced in public schools where Mexican descent school children and youth constitute the majority of students.

Decolonial theories engage in disputes over knowledge production, the economy, sexuality, the classification and treatment of Indigenous, Black, Afromestizos, and other racialized people - all of which are epistemic, political, and emancipatory projects. Decolonial struggles over knowledge, human rights, dignity, and ways of life have existed for centuries in the Global South - the regions of the world colonized by European imperial powers that continue to be economically subjugated in the global capitalist economy (Mignolo, 2011; Santos, 2014; Wallerstein, 2011). Conversely, we argue that decolonial struggles have also existed in the Global North, the regions of the world that rule in the global capitalist economy (e.g. European countries and the U.S.). As colonized peoples in the Global North, Chicanas and Chicanos have experienced two iterations of modernity/coloniality within the boundaries of what is today the U.S.: 1) the colonial occupation of present day U.S. territories, which included the introduction of slavery, the genocide of Indigenous peoples, and the displacement of Mexican peoples, all of which the U.S. perpetuated in the name of “progress” and “civilization” and launched the U.S. in the world capitalist order; and 2) the imposition of hegemonic neo-liberal policies across the continent to make way for “economic development.” Such policies, like NAFTA, have led to a massive exodus of Mexican, Central American, and Caribbean peoples to the U.S. over the past
century, contributing to the modern-day presence of Latinos in the U.S. Struggles over immigrant worker rights, racial profiling and violence, and epistemic justice, are at the forefront of social justice movements in the U.S. For instance, in 2010, the state of Arizona effectively prohibited teaching Indigenous ancestral knowledge in the Mexican American Studies program in Tucson public schools, despite evidence that the program increased student achievement (Cabrera et al, 2014; Rodriguez, 2014). Across the state, Mexican American Studies curricular materials were banned, effectively prohibiting not only the content of books, but also a mayan nahua maiz-based epistemology that decenters Western hegemonic thought. This form of epistemic violence is reminiscent of the Church’s practice of burning sacred books and banning ceremonial practices during Spanish colonial rule (Rodriguez, 2014). The struggle for epistemic justice in Arizona is another example in which Indigenous peoples across the Global South and the Global North, including Mexican and Central American peoples, continue to engage in emancipatory projects that seek to transform the coloniality of racism, epistemological violence, language oppression, and sexism, as well as challenge Western paradigms of belonging grounded through concepts like citizenship and nationalism.

Decolonial studies scholar Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) argues that epistemologies of the Global South encompass counterhegemonic movements against the political, social, economic, and epistemological hegemony of the West, namely neo-liberal globalization and the cognitive and social structures that maintain present day forms of coloniality. Santos (2014) asserts that these emancipatory epistemologies problematize the logic of Western epistemology, such as individualistic conceptions of law, as well as Eurocentric political models like liberal democracy and the pervasive hegemony of Western thought. Unlike Western epistemologies, these bodies of knowledge and ways of thinking stress collective identities, concepts of human dignity (like buen vivir which roughly translates to “good living” from the Quechua term “sumay kaway”), cultural and bio-diversity, and human rights. When discussing the limits of perspectives offered by the Global North, de Sousa Santos writes, “it looks as if colonialism has disabled the Global North from learning in non colonial terms” (p. 19). In response to this concern, hip-hop and nueva canción produced in the Global South present tools to engage students in decolonial movements and ways of thinking across the globe. We show how texts from the Global South can present refreshing new ways to challenge modern colonial power structures surrounding the Global North, and demonstrate how histories of Chicanas and Chicanos and Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. are connected to the struggles of the Global South. Like Santos (2014), we argue that a new critical theory and new emancipatory language is needed to confront the coloniality of knowledge and power - global capitalism, epistemic dominance, language oppression, cultural imperialism, and racism. As Santos (2014) notes, epistemological diversity “must be at the core of the global resistance against capitalism and of the formulation of alternative forms of sociability” (p. xix). Hip-hop and nueva canción, as political projects that critique and expose domination and consciously aim to dismantle neo-colonial designs, create lyrical and musical spaces for epistemological resistance and decolonial praxis.
**Nueva canción as a decolonial epistemology**

Literally meaning “new song,” nueva canción is a folk-inspired genre of socially conscious protest music that emerged in Latin America during the 1960s and the political struggles for human rights and social justice. With origins in Chile, “la nueva canción chilena,” played a powerful role in speaking against US-backed military regimes through its two basic elements—it's music and lyrics. Musicians and composers like Violeta Parra, considered by many to be the godmother of nueva canción, drew from earlier musical movements like nueva ola (new wave), a genre that did not contain explicit revolutionary themes. For the most part, rural Chilean songs highlighted romanticized themes of peasant life and were considered to be “low culture” by the ruling elite (San Román, 2014). As a link between nueva ola and nueva canción, Parra popularized Indigenous instruments from the Andean highlands of Bolivia and Peru and bridged traditional elements—like themes of love of rural music—with new song elements that launched nueva canción as a new musical and lyrical genre.

Within nueva canción, instruments like the sikus (pan pipes), quena (a high-pitched vertical flute), and charango (a small ten string guitar from Bolivia) were reinterpreted in a new urban style and became “immediately recognizable icons of neighboring cultures that came to represent a regional and, later, with nueva canción, continental source of identity and pride” (San Román, 2014, p. vi). During this time, rock and pop music from the United States and England dominated the airwaves. Chilean rock and pop singers often Americanized their names to gain acceptance in mainstream society (e.g., Los Hermanos Carrasco became the Carr Twins). Nueva canción musicians rebelled against this form of cultural imperialism by popularizing folk sounds, coalescing the sounds of Indigenous instruments with socially conscious lyrics that reflected the social and economic conditions of the countryside. This is evident of Parra’s work as a musician and composer. While some of her songs spoke against military repression, others centered on peasant revolutionaries like Emiliano Zapata. Other songs like “Porque los pobres no tienen nada” (“Because the poor have nothing”) delivered sharp critiques of the role of the Church in oppressing the poor (San Román, 2014). Other prominent musicians like Victor Jara continued with this tradition, infusing powerful lyrics that denounced the colonial legacies of race, class, and gender hierarchies. Groups like Inti-Illimi and Quilapayun, created by leftist middle-class university students, contributed new songs that mirrored the ideas of the Left and tied them “intimately to the country’s emerging left-wing politics” (San Román, 2014, p. 7). These groups were particularly important in expanding nueva canción to international audiences since they performed abroad while in exile.

The spirit of nueva canción chilena inspired the creation of protest music in other countries like Argentina, Mexico, El Salvador, and Nicaragua that critiqued U.S. military intervention and economic domination. The work of Mexican composer Gabino Palomares speaks to the political legacy of nueva canción outside of Chile. His composition, “La Maldición de Malinche,” is an exemplary piece that critiques colonial racism and neo-liberal policies. Still, while his song exposes the pervasive history of economic exploitation of Mexican people, it
continues to perpetuate an androcentric and misogynist interpretation of modern colonialism, one that is strongly present in Chicana feminist thought.

The (de)colonial imaginary of Gabino Palomares’ “La Maldición de Malinche”

Gabino Palomares’ nueva canción composition, “La Maldición de Malinche” (“The curse of Malinche”), as sung and arranged by Mexican folk-singer Amparo Ochoa, begins with the reverberating sounds of the ayoyotes and the light, sonorous sound of the ceremonial conch shell. It tells the story of the conquest of Mexico and the brutal patterns of coloniality that continue to subjugate Mexican Indigenous peoples, even after 300 years of emancipation from Spanish colonial rule. Employing a counterhegemonic musical form like the corrido, Palomares affirms an Indigenous subaltern lens, as he tells the story of how his ancestors (“my feathered brothers and sisters”) witnessed the arrival of the bearded and armor-clad Spaniards who made their entry into Mexico through the port of Veracruz. Palomares points to the colonial narrative in which Moctezuma II, tlatoani of the Mexica empire, welcomed Hernán Cortés believing he was the reincarnation of the warrior god, Quetzalcoatl. While this account, propagated in post-conquest texts (like the Florentine Codex), portrays Moctezuma as a leader willingly acquiescing power to Cortés, Palomares flips the colonial narrative. Rather than portraying Moctezuma as a passive leader, the songwriter portrays him as distrustful of the Spaniards who exhibited differential military power.

The songwriter continues to express the tragic outcome of conquest for his ancestors - the bloodshed and irreversible damage brought about by colonialism. Echoing the eloquent and painful words of Aimé Césaire (2001), in his Discourse on Colonialism, Palomares argues that Mexican people lost the “greatness of the past,” a tragedy that has besieged Mexican Indigenous people for 300 years. Palomares continues to offer a decolonial analysis of racial and class oppression in the last stanza of his corrido:

Se nos quedo el maleficio / de brindar al extranjero / nuestra fe, nuestra cultura / nuestro pan, nuestro dinero
[The curse remained with us/ of offering the foreigners/ our faith, our culture/ our bread, our money]

Hoy les seguimos cambiando/ oro por cuentas de vidrios/ y damos nuestra riquezas/ por sus especjos con brillos
[Today, we continue exchanging/ gold for glass beads/ and give up our wealth/ por their shiny mirrors]

Hoy, en pleno siglo veinte/ nos siguen llegando rubios/ y les abrimos la casa/ y les llamamos amigos
[Today, in midst of the 20th century/ blond people keep coming/ and we open our homes/ and we call them friends.]

_Pero si llega cansado/ un indio de andar la sierra/ lo humillamos y los vemos/ como extraño por su tierra_

[But if an Indian arrives/ tired of walking the mountains/ we humiliate him and we see him/ like a stranger in his own land.]

Palomares makes a powerful analytic connection between colonial relations of power that transpired over three centuries (1521-1821) when Spain ruled Mexico and the neo-colonial relations of power that continue to persist in a capitalist world economy where Mexico is exploited for the benefit of foreign markets (“rubios”). Unlike the Indigenous population that put up resistance to the Spanish invaders, Palomares argues that Mexico welcomes these foreigners, resonating with what Walter Mignolo calls a hegemonic “modern colonialty” – the logic of domination and exploitation often disguised in the language of economic prosperity and modernization. Within this colonial matrix of power, these foreigners or “rubios” (i.e. American and European corporations) extract and commodify Mexico’s natural resources and its culture, all in exchange for glass beads and shiny mirrors, a metaphor that points to the voracity of global capitalism as a racist and inequitable economic system. Alternatively, Indigenous people, who cultivate the land and whose labor is exploited for the benefit of the capitalist elite, continue to be denigrated and treated as foreigners on their ancestral land. While Palomares critiques the pervasive pattern of economic domination, his analysis is ultimately misguided by a masculinist master-narrative that places the responsibility on Malintzin Tenepal, a Mayan woman who acted as Cortés’ translator, mediator, and sexual partner. She is often regarded pejoratively as “la Malinche” in Mexican nationalist accounts. Rather than placing the onus of this brutality on a complex web of colonial power (Quijano, 2000), Palomares blames “la Malinche” for the oppression of Indigenous peoples over the centuries. In the last stanza of the song, Palomares cries:

_Oh, maldición de Malinche, enfermedad del presente. Cuándo dejarás mi tierra, cuándo harás libre a mi gente._

[Oh, curse of Malinche, sickness of the present. When will you leave my land, when will you liberate my people.]

Within this narrative, “La Malinche” is situated as a traitor to her people, a cultural imperialist who privileges the ways of foreigners (similar to present day neo-liberal policies), while devaluing what is Indigenous. Essentially, she is portrayed as the one responsible for the pattern of exploitation in which Indigenous people are subjugated for the benefit of foreign markets. Chicana feminist scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa critique this patriarchal analysis of Malinche, taking a feminist decolonial turn: “Not me sold my people but they me,” Anzaldúa
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(1999) states (p. 43). In her critique of the masculinist narrative, Anzaldúa (1999) argues that it was the very Aztec empire itself that had subverted any solidarity with the masses who, in turn, sided with Cortés. A Chicana feminist analysis reclaims “La Malinche,” not as a traitor to her people but as a diplomat, a translator to Cortéz, and a mediator who skillfully minimizes the devastating impact of conquest with strategic discernment. In sum, while Palomares exposes the legacies of colonality through neo-liberal policies that continue to brutalize Indigenous peoples and opens the door for an anti-colonial critique of power, his lyrics continue to perpetuate an androcentric analysis of colonality. Musically, his work points to the possibilities for decoloniality as he honors Indigenous instruments and third space counterhegemonic musical forms like the corrido, a genre of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In many ways, this is similar to hip-hop artists like Ana Tijoux who privilege Indigenous sounds, blending them with hip-hop electronic beats.

**Global South dialogues in Ana Tijoux’ “Somos Sur” (We are the South)**

In an interview with independent news media Democracy Now!, Tijoux speaks about her experiences growing up in France. A child of exiled parents, Tijoux grew up with a strong leftist political education and a social justice vision of the world (Goodman, 2014). For Tijoux, “hip-hop is the land of people without land,” reflecting a geopolitics of knowledge that comes from living in exile. Like nueva canción of the 1960s, Tijoux’s style of hip-hop blends Indigenous instrumentation and sounds with contemporary electronic beats. A deeply poetic and politically fierce composer, Tijoux engages in a “conversation, a dialogue with the world,” as she connects the political struggles of peoples across the Global South (Goodman, 2014). This emancipatory, decolonial project between and across the Global South is perhaps most evident in songs like “Somos Sur” (We are the South), a collaborative music and video project with Palestinian hip-hop artist, Shadia Mansour. Tijoux begins her song by situating herself as a subaltern subject.

*Tu nos dices que debemos sentarnos pero las ideas solo pueden levantarnos*  
[You tell us we should sit down, but ideas can only provoke us.]

*Caminar, recorrer, no rendirse ni retroceder*  
[Walk, run, not surrender or retreat.]

*Ven y aprende como es paja absurda.*  
[Come and learn why it’s absurd nonsense.]

Unlike masculinist strategies of relying on armed violence for social change, Tijoux asserts that the emancipatory struggles across the Global South are rooted in a “alegre rebeldía del baile,” that is, joyful rebellious dancing that is simultaneously counterhegemonic, non-violent, and grounded in Indigenous musical expressions. This message is significant given
colonialism’s project of eliminating cultural expressions that continue to root emancipatory struggles in the Global South. She adds: “Ni Africa, ni America Latina se subasta.” Neither Africa nor Latin America, two continents ransacked by colonialism and global capitalism, are for auction. She continues with the chorus: “Todos los callados, todos los sometidos, todos los invisibles” (All the silenced, all the subjugated, all the invisible) and names countries and territories dominated by imperial powers—Nigeria, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Tunisia, Algeria, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, to name a few. She ends the chorus with an exclamatory cry: “Fuera Yanqui de América Latina, franceses, ingleses y holandeses. Yo te quiero libre palestina” (Get out from Latin America, Yankee. The French, British, and Dutch. I want Palestine to be free). British-born Palestinian hip-hop artist, Shadia Mansour, parallels the song’s lyrics in Arabic, linking Palestine’s struggle for self-determination as an emancipatory project of the Global South. Tijoux ends the song by explicitly stating that everyone in the Global South is African and Latin American and that together, the Global South will overcome colonialism and coloniality.

Ana Tijoux’s “Somos Sur” speaks to the local/global linkages, networks, and alliances that forge the decolonial struggles of the Global South. The song’s socially conscious lyrics explicitly denounce the historical pattern of colonial exploitation, which has been at the foundation of the global capitalist order. Tijoux’s lyrics voice interconnected histories which, as Santos (2014) states, are “the product of the dynamics of imperialism, colonialism and post-colonialism which have put metropoles and dominated territories in contact with each other and have created conditions of diaspora and other forms of mobility” (p. xxv). In bringing the various musical expressions and languages of various colonized peoples across the Global South - in this case Indigenous peoples in the Americas and Palestinian people in the Middle East - Tijoux and Mansour resist the making of a “colonial epistemic monoculture” that wipes out cultural difference. Other songs like “Vengo,” which embraces indigeneity in the face of 500 years of colonial racism, and “Anti-patriarca,” a feminist manifesto that speaks to the insurgent strength of women, are about creating possibilities through collaborative alliances that honor diverse forms of knowledge, cultural expressions, and cosmologies. Within this approach, Tijoux’s decolonial musical projects invite audiences to re-conceptualize the Global South as a site of global struggle and emancipation.

Tijoux’s popularity has allowed her music to inform a mass audience on the damaging effects of colonization. Exacting her performance on the main stage gives her the opportunity to engage in a public performance pedagogy that can help shift the cultural hegemonies into more decolonial lenses to view race, culture, and society. Tijoux’s mainstream success was not instantaneous, but rather a process in which she was engaged in communities of artists and activist engaged in movements towards decolonizing occupied spaces around the U.S. and Latin America. Artists such as Mexico City’s Bocafloja, Siete Nueve, and Krudas Cubensi, for example continue to work towards disrupting cultural hegemony and decolonizing spaces in which they display glocalized knowledge.
Global hip-hop movements and decolonial hip-hop pedagogies

Hip-hop culture arose from the disenfranchised communities of New York’s South Bronx, where Black and Brown youth engaged in artistic expressions such as DJing, Breaking, Graffiti, and Rap (Rose, 1994; Perry, 2004; Chang, 2005). As a musical expression, hip-hop has crossed borders since its inception and global hip-hop studies examines the impact the genre has made worldwide. Tony Mitchell's (2001) edited collection, Global Noise, introduced focused examinations of the global and local implications of hip-hop. H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (2008) analyze how “glocal” performances of hip-hop present “global linguistic flows,” that reveal relationships among language, power and cultural identity and production (p. 4). Ibrahim (2009) further examines the usefulness of applying global hip-hop in the classroom and discusses how “hip-hop pedagogy” exists within a “pedagogical framework that links Hip Hop, identity, investment, and the process of critical teaching and learning” (p. 242). Using hip-hop pedagogy as a methodology of decolonization presents opportunities to challenge land rights, racism, and patriarchy within colonial societies. Indicating how these global hip-hop performances reflect histories of colonization and inform decolonial hip-hop epistemologies can present methods towards informing colonized subjects in spaces inside and outside of the classroom.

As a reflection of hip-hop’s force as a countercultural and at times decolonial expression, hip-hop academics and educators continue to demonstrate the importance of employing hip-hop culture as an educational tool. Marc Lamont Hill (2009) describes academics and educators who apply hip-hop to their research and pedagogy as “Hip Hop Based Scholars” who have constructed a strong case for the pedagogical value of hip-hop in the classroom (p. 11). These “Hip-Hop Based Scholars” continue to use the genre as a vehicle to: (a) critique social policies aimed at youth of color (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994); (b) analyze linguistic hip-hop elements (Smitherman, 1997; Alim 2007, Pennycook, 2007); (c) examine development of identity formation (Dimitriadis, 2001; Gin Wright, 2004; Petchauer, 2007; Hill 2009); (d) promote critical literacy (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Duncan-Andrade &Morrell, 2005); and (e) increase student engagement and critical consciousness, (Mahiri, 1998; Stovall, 2006; Dimitriadis, 2001; Pardue, 2004). While hip-hop continues to have a place in curriculum and pedagogies across the world, its consumerist capitalistic qualities must be examined before engaging in the decolonial possibilities of the art form.

It is indisputable that hip-hop’s popularity around the world emerged because of the genre’s relationship to capitalism and consumerism. As Robin G. Kelly (2006) notes, hip-hop music has been spread as a “global commodity distributed by the US dominated networks of production and exchange” (p. xv). As globalized economies continue to be deeply affected by capitalism, hip-hop artists find it impossible to escape its strong hold and, at times, find it necessary to mobilize through consumerism as a mode to combat the colonial project. Though Joseph Heath (2005) argues, “from its very inception” the idea of a “counterculture” reflects the “the most authentic experience of capitalism,” hip-hop artists have used the medium to challenge systems built off of conquest and imperialism (p. 5). As Dan Charnas (2011) writes, “The
commodification of hip hop fostered a multiracial generation of young Americans brought up on a culture forged largely by Black youth, and transformed the racial dynamic of the United States” (p. xi). Through lyrical content, rhymes, beats and aesthetics, hip-hop artists in the US have commented on histories of racialized oppression and have addressed U.S. histories of slavery, Jim Crow, and the prison industrial complex.

Furthermore, through the use of hip-hop expression, activists/artists have spoken to occupation of Native American land (Reddnation, Miss Christie Lee, Tall Paul, Supaman); events culminating into Arab Spring (El General, Deeb, Omar Offendum); and movements to free Palestine (Shadia Mansour, DAM, PR, RFM), among others. Though hip-hop culture has been promoted, shipped, and sold throughout the US capitalist system, the art form has been used around the world as a medium to disrupt structures of power, as well as present the marginalized a voice to critique how various colonial projects worked and continue to work to keep third world subjects disenfranchised. These artists hold the tools and inform a “public pedagogy” that Giroux (2004) argues, “demands that educators, artists, workers, and other cultural workers connect the forces of market fundamentalism to the war at home and abroad” (p. 502). Further, the act of engaging in a “public pedagogy” informs what Harvey (2012) calls, “liberated” spaces that exist at the “heart of contemporary economy” (p. 214). The artists discussed below directly work to decolonize, to transform, to manipulate the structure. None of these groups are signed to a major label; yet they are able to tour and move past borderlines and social structures to create moments of disruption and social transformation.

Bocafloja: “Autonomo”

Bocafloja, poet, hip-hop and spoken word artist from Mexico City, began releasing music in the mid-1990’s with the groups “Lifestyle” and “Microphonk.” As a solo artist, Bocafloja has been a staple in the Mexican hip-hop scene and icon in Spanish-speaking hip-hop communities (Bocafloja bio, 2014). Lyrically, Bocafloja critically addresses topics such as institutionalized racism, social and political oppression, mental slavery, and colonialism. Bocafloja’s works transcend notions of a Mexico/U.S. border and reach generations of listeners throughout the Americas who identify with hip-hop culture. His performances within the United States continue to draw large crowds who align with his message; many are English dominant Chicana/o youth who memorize the lyrics of Bocafloja’s music and sing along with him. Bocafloja’s lyrics and music indicate a bridging of aesthetics that create routes that link Mexican, Chicana/o, Black, and Indigenous cultural identity and present opportunities to more fully address issues of colonization, immigration, and racism in both Mexico and the US.

At the beginning of his “Patologias del Invisible Incomodo” documentary/promotional video, Bocafloja situates his art as a practice in decolonization and explains how problems within the community “start from colonization” (Bocafloja, 2012). Throughout the CD project, Bocafloja centers on topics such as gender inequality, the oppression of subjects in the Global South, the disenfranchisement of agricultural workers in the age of free trade, and the
exploitation of people of color in the US, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. His music critiques cultural hegemonies in the U.S. and Mexico and functions as a mode of transnational and transcultural communication that expands awareness of critical issues around the world that can potentially strengthen moves towards greater social justice through decolonial practice.

The physical album cover of Bocafloja’s 4th studio album, El Manual de la Otredad, or The Manual of Otherness, situates the rapper reading from Franz Fanon’s (1961) Wretched of the Earth. Like Fanon’s text, Bocafloja’s album explores the physiological effects of imperialism on colonized subjects and critiques institutionalized racism, social and political oppression, and oppressive cultural hegemonies. The first single off of the album, “Autónomo,” or “Autonomous,” calls for social and mental autonomy from corporate and governmental control. Within the song he critiques corrupt politics within Mexico, U.S. romanticizing and exploitation of Mexico, and anti-Black racism within both the US and Mexico.

In the beat of “Autónomo,” the song’s producer Soul Man, borrows measures from the song “It Ain’t No Big Thing” by The Radiants, a U.S. African American soul band popular in the 1960s. The new version is noticeably chopped up to give it a swing feel. The original song refers to unrequited love and its hook reads, “Ain’t no big thing” (The Radiants). The song has become a classic in Chicana/o music compilations and exemplifies the bridging of Chicana/o and African American culture in the U.S. Bocafloja’s version transforms the song into one of social struggle. In the hip-hop version, the hook of the original plays, but rather than refer to the struggles of a love lost, Bocafloja refers to an autonomous existence, one that is free from the clutches of colonization and imperialism. During the chorus of Bocafloja’s version, the horn blares and the Radiants’ sample plays, “Aint no Big Thang,” to which Bocafloja repeats the lines: No hay como ser autónomo autónomo.” As the hook suggests, it “Ain’t No Big Thang” to leave the colonial project, when an autonomous future awaits. After the initial chorus of the song, Bocafloja lyrically establishes himself in a global context and informs the listener of the importance of awareness of injustice in the world outside of his hometown. He raps:

Siempre en la mira la visión global
que va forjando cada paso mi entorno local
son las historias de un poeta en el distrito federal
con odio a la derecha y al zócalo

[I always look at the global vision
which affects every step in my local environment
These are the stories from the poet from DF
with hatred towards the right and the zócalo]

Through these lines, Bocafloja mobilizes within and outside of Mexican and U.S. nation-states and demonstrates how both empires systematically marginalize poor, Black, and Indigenous groups. From Mexico’s capital, Mexico City, D.F., Bocafloja recalls the corruption surrounding
the 2006 Presidential election of Felipe Calderón, which sparked mass protest at the Zócalo. In his lyrics, Bocafloja maps how artists, along with protesters, have collective power to combat corrupt politics and shift cultural and political hegemonies.

Later in the song, Bocafloja critiques U.S. tourists, including seemingly progressive intellectuals, for romanticizing and feeding into the exploitation of Indigenous lands in Mexico. Bocafloja raps how coffee-shop revolutionaries contribute to the colonial project by not recognizing their own role in the othering of Mexico’s lower classes. He raps:

toman un par de fotos dos tequilas y regresan tan felices
creyendo estar graduados de la escuela zapatista

[they take a few photos two tequilas and return so happy
believed to be graduates of the Zapatista school]

These lyrics, aimed at tourists who falsely romanticize revolutionary movements, problematize outsiders who perpetuate the subalternity of Black and Indigenous communities in Mexico. Accordingly, these tourists take photos, drink tequila and fantasize about being Zapatistas. Here Boca calls for a decolonial movement that transcends intellectual discussion and pushes towards autonomy from the clutches of nation-state ideologies. Through these critical lines, Bocafloja calls for more engagement with the people rather than intellectual bourgeoisie debates. The song further references the Zapatista movement and calls for a release from the colonial stronghold of the nation-state by pushing towards reclaiming land rights and culture for AfroMexican and Indigenous communities.

In the last verse of “Autónomo,” Bocafloja expounds on racism and colorism within his country as he directs the verse to politicians and the upper classes that work to feed problematic hierarchies in Mexico.

y ya no traigas tu visión racial purista que da risa
que cuando sepas que la madre de Zapata era una negra no sabrás que es lo que hacer con tu camisa

[and do not bring your racial and purist vision that stirs laughter
when you find out that the mother of Zapata was black, you won’t know what to do with your t-shirt]

Bocafloja, an Afromexican himself, argues that Blackness is an important component of Mexican cultural identity, even though many in Mexico continue to exhibit anti-Black racist attitudes. By rapping that one of the nation’s most celebrated icons, Emiliano Zapata, had Black African roots, Bocafloja works to uncover the Black presence in Mexico. Through this description he highlights Blackness within Mexico’s past, a history obfuscated by racism and colonization (Banks, 2006). Through these lyrics Bocafloja indicates the importance of
discussions on anti-Black racism in Mexico when working towards an autonomous decolonial movement. The emphasis on anti-Black racism further aids in decolonizing the spaces that Bocafloja performs because anti-Black racism’s ties to conquest and colonization.

Through lyrics, stylization, music samples, and lyrical cadence, Bocafloja situates decolonial thought and practice and calls for liberation from US and Mexican modernist notions of class and society. Through Bocafloja’s positioning of self within the terrains of US/Mexico nation-state, he strives to dismantle colonial notions of citizenship and activism. And through his work with the collective Quilombo, Bocafloja has helped organize a network of artists who engage in decolonial performance. Siete Nueve, another member of the Quilombo collective, for instance, is based in Puerto Rico, another location of occupation and colonization.

**Siete Nueve: “Fuego”**

Like Bocafloja, fellow Quilombo member Siete Nueve exposes the social damages of colonial projects in Latin America. Born in the Dominican Republic and now living and working in Puerto Rico, Siete Nueve comments on layers of occupation and the relationship that both spaces have with U.S. imperialism. Further, Siete Nueve combats anti-Dominican and anti-Black biases in Puerto Rico. His lyrics present a disruption of US occupation on the island and a lament for lives lost globally due to US imperialism. As such, Siete Nueve’s music provides perspectives in which to use music in the classroom as a decolonial tool towards social justice. Both inside and outside of the classroom, students/audiences move towards a decolonial turn or a change in the way of thinking about Puerto Rico’s status as a Commonwealth and the exploitation of Indigenous lands on the island.

With profound lyrical punches over a sharp DJ Premier-esque piano sample and scratchy drumbeat, “Fuego” offers moments to explore, reflect, and recount historical memories that can work towards empowerment. The boom bap aesthetic assists in building bridges between Puerto Ricans on the island and those in New York, as New York Puerto Rican artists such as Fat Joe, Big Pun, and Kurious informed the boom-bap east coast hip-hop style in the late 1990s. Though the spread of music is rooted in capitalistic notions of globalization, Siete Nueve has shown how communities rooted in Black and Indigenous histories have taken corporate forms and established tools of resistance towards the colonial systemic power structures.

In Siete Nueve’s song, “Fuego,” he challenges U.S. imperialist interventions in Puerto Rico; the song calls for a “fire” to be set to Puerto Rico’s colonial state. The lyrics begin,

\[ \text{No me engañan las noticias porque nunca las escucho,} \\
\text{la tele te idiotiza tienen el bolsillo sucio,} \]

[The news doesn’t fool me because I never listen to it 
the television deceives you, they have dirty pockets]
In these lines, Siete Nueve details a distrust of media outlets in Puerto Rico. He charges corporate television programming for adding to the continued suppression of Puerto Rican political struggles, as well as for whitewashing Puerto Rican identity through silencing and obscuring darker skinned oppressed subjects. He calls for the public to collectively “dale espalda,” or “turn its back,” on the imperialistic system that keeps subaltern colonized subjects in a state of poverty. These power systems include religious institutions that, Siete Nueve raps, continue to feed the colonial project while relying on the faith of exploited subjects. The song also signals a rejection of the current government in Puerto Rico controlled by US monetary interests.

As the song continues, Siete Nueve lists the injustices inflicted by the Puerto Rican government and authorities in the United States. He raps:

\[
\text{jodieron a Albizu y también a Filiberto,} \\
\text{matan niños iraquíes con una guerra de invento,}
\]

[they killed Albizu as well as Filiberto  
killed Iraqi kids with a war they invented]

Siete Nueve’s reference to both Pedro Albizu Campos and Filiberto Ojeda Ríos exposes how government authorities shut down and extinguished figures that challenged land theft and exploitation on the island. Albizu, leader of Puerto Rico’s Nationalist Movement, was killed in 1919 by radiation treatment administered by Puerto Rican officials while imprisoned. In 2005, Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, commander-in-chief of the independista group Los Macheteros, was murdered by members of the FBI during a supposed house search warrant in Puerto Rico. In our courses we discuss why these figures presented such a threat to the colonial project and how they have come to symbolize Puerto Rican struggles for independence from the United States. Siete Nueve compares the fate of these leaders to the death of children during the US occupation of Iraq. Against the colonial project, Siete Nueve calls out for “Fuego” to imperialist authorities and ideologies. He points to the suffering of the people as fruits for the soul of a revolution, one with a focus on land rights. He raps:

\[
\text{la tierra pasa hambre y ustedes se suben los sueldos,} \\
\text{nos siembran el terror siguen sembrándonos miedo,} \\
\text{el hambre y la miseria son los frutos de este suelo,} \\
\text{y en mi generación estamos cosechando fuego}
\]

[the people are hungry and you keep raising your salaries  
They plant terror in us and continue planting fear in us  
hunger and misery are the fruits of this soil  
And my generation, we are harvesting fire]
In these lines, Siete Nueve describes how the government imposes fear or “miedo” in the people through economic and social domination. Yet, the hunger and misery that result from this fear and oppression fuels the uprising. In the chorus of the song, Siete Nueve shouts “fuego,” or a call for rebellion from the colonized who are infuriated with land occupation and oppression. Siete Nueve situates the harvest against the systematic hegemony where “El hambre” and “La miseria” are products of colonization. Like Juan Gonzales’s (2011) text, Harvest of Empire, a text we employ in our course, the “harvest” symbolizes the people subjected to U.S. intervention, imperialism, and conquest (p. xx).

**Krudas Cubensi: “No Me Dejaron”**

Another Quilomobo member, the group Krudas Cubensi, challenges imperialist colonial ideologies with a focus on combating oppressive patriarchal colonial paradigms. Krudas were born in Cuba and grew up in an environment where hip-hop was burgeoning, but harsh patriarchy and homophobia greatly affected their participation in the scene. In resistance to a straight, male dominated hip-hop climate, the group founded the first vegan and queer activist art group in Havana called “Cubensi,” and in 1999 they formed Krudas Cubensi (Krudas Cubensi bio, 2011). After building an extensive career as hip-hop pioneers in Cuba, Las Krudas moved to Austin, Texas to expand their sound through live music channels and community and university workshops.

Through their music, Krudas pronounce their Black identity and exemplify a third space feminist consciousness, speaking out against patriarchy in Cuban and US society. Their subject positions as AfroCuban lesbianas situates their music within what Chela Sandoval (2000) describes as a third world feminist movement” (p. 42). As Ana M. Lara writes of her own AfroLatina lesbian identity, Krudas “break moral codes” and “implicate [the] porous nature of borders” (p. 300). The Krudas’ song, “No Me Dejaron,” opens with dialogue from a citizenship and immigration officer telling them that ‘their type’ of immigrant is unacceptable. As they reveal the injustices placed on them because of their subject positions, they uncover what Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (2014) describes as “Intra-Colonial migrations” or movements from “Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Martinique, Puerto Rico, or the Dominican Republic” to countries such as “Great Britain, France, the United States, or Spain” (p. 1). In the classroom, examining the work of Krudas through an Afrodiasporic lens allows for discussions on how such artists reflect these intra-colonial migrations and the implications of racism and patriarchy within the movements throughout the Caribbean. Further Krudas’ music pronounces what Agustin Laó-Montes (2007) calls “AfroLatinidad,” or the examination of the ways “the African Diaspora can be conceived as a project of decolonization embedded in cultural practices, intellectual currents, social movements, and political actions of Afro-diasporic subjects” (p. 118). Both in lyrical content and musical expression, the Krudas promote and call for an AfroLatinidad situated on decolonial epistemologies and liberation from nation-state ideologies, anti-Black racism, gender inequity, and homophobia.
The music of “No Me Dejaron,” like many of their other songs, features components of Cuban son and reggae, fused with hip-hop. Their hooks generally feature their singing voices, in a Cuban son-style. The musical expression reflects African diasporic movement across the Caribbean into the US, different from the boom bap soulful samples of Siete Nueve and Bocafloja’s music. As the kick and snare punctuate the track, the Krudas sing the chorus of the song and recount racist and discriminatory views that Western nations have towards Black Cubans. They sing:

*No me dejaron entrar en España, dicen que Cuba tiene mala maña.*

[They didn't let me into Spain, sayin' that Cuba has a bad habit.

In the first verse, rapper Olivia Prendes describes the othering of Black bodies within Western nations that enforce racist ideologies:

*Ey, no me dejaron entrar en España porque como soy negra pa esa gente soy extraña,*

*y con este pelo así dijeron tiene la cabeza en las musaraña'*

[Hey, they didn't let me into Spain because since I am black, I'm strange to those folks,
and with that hair, they said she's got her head in limbo]

When Olivia tries to enter Spain, her appearance and identity are put on trial. Within the narrative the colonized and enslaved subject returns to the colonized space where they are denied entrance. As in the US, Spanish authorities within the nation-state continue to enforce racist policies that influence the denial of citizenship to many. Thus, Krudas’ lyrics expose systematic racism applied towards gaining citizenship in the Global North and Western notions of claims to land and territory.

*Dicen que toda nuestra gente se quiere quedar allí caso olvidan cuanto colonizaron aquí,*

*Desde antes de mi abuela la gente quiere emigrar de España misma llegaron pa mi familia fundar,*

*que la tierra entera es nuestra y el derecho de viajar*

[They say that all our people want to stay there, but they forget how much they colonized here, Since before my grandmother, people want to emigrate from Spain]
they came for my family to establish
That all the land is ours and the right to move freely]

Through these lyrics, the Krudas expose the irony of a nation like Spain, built on histories of conquest and colonization of territories outside the nation, rejecting migrants. In the classroom, these lyrics present the opportunity to discuss Spanish colonization of Cuba and the exploitation of African slave labor in the sugar plantation industry.

In response to this policing of national borders, Krudas respond with proclamations that the earth is for everyone to travel. This announcement is not lost on Mexican and Chicana/o audiences, where calls to “Viva La Raza” and “Viva La Causa” have been shouted at San Antonio, Austin, and Houston performances. At the end of the song Krudas chant: “Africa tiene derecho a emigrar/Africa has the right to migrate.” As African diasporic subjects, the Krudas announce their rights as global citizens to travel where they want: across Cuba, to Spain, to Africa, to the Caribbean to Asia and the rest of the world. Using these lyrics within course discussions opens up topics on Indigenous land theft due to conquest, immigration in the US, Mexican worker rights to citizenship in the US, the link between racism and criminalization.

When they further chant: “nuevo matriarcado, nueva inspiración tierra madre super revolución” (new matriarchy, new inspiration Mother Earth super revolution), they call for a critical third world feminist movement that empowers women globally and presents ways to discuss problematic patriarchal constructions in Cuba, the US, and abroad (Sandoval, 2000). Using the work of Krudas Cubensi allows for discussions on U.S. intervention in Latina/o America, ideas of citizenship and nationalism within the US and Europe, African Diasporic roots of Latina/o cultures, and Third Space Feminism in the US and Latin America. Their music also adds value in the classroom by presenting students with methods of understanding coloniality and calls to action and confrontation against current oppressive colonial systems.

The work of Bocafloja, Siete Nueve, and Krudas Cubensi continues to provide epistemologies that allow for the exploration of cultural, historical, and political landscapes in ways that transcend traditional classroom formats. The relationship between audience and performer allows for decolonial readings of history, society, language and more as performance involves audience and performer transcending what can be learned from a textbook or academic lecture. Patricia Leavy (2009) expands on this notion of performance as a unique pedagogy that can “bring research findings to life, adding dimensionality, and exposing that which is otherwise impossible to authentically represent” (p. 135). Thus, the performances of these hip-hop groups tap into levels of consciousness that move beyond student/instructor dichotomies. In all of their music, these artists confront colonial hegemonic structures within their communities and inform a potential epistemological shift situated on decolonization.
Decolonizing pedagogies: Evaluating modernity and the Global South

As Chicana and Chicano Studies professors and critical pedagogues, we work towards the creation of decolonial options in the classroom, pulling from various decolonial traditions including, but not limited to, Indigenous, anti-racist, and feminist approaches. We draw from musical expressions like hip-hop and *nueva canción*, expressions that offer epistemic breaks and challenge the discourse of modernity, while unveiling the legacies of coloniality that exist throughout the Global South and the Global North. This braiding of theoretical lenses provides a space for epistemological diversity where many decolonial options co-exist in the classroom (Santos, 2014).

The role of our Latino Cultural Expressions course is to prepare students to critically examine and analyze the role of Latina/o cultural expressions within the context of the U.S. and Latin America. Within the course, students are asked to effectively interpret, develop, and express ideas through written assignments and oral presentations. We also create pedagogical opportunities for students to work together to achieve goals, as well as spaces where students can display the ability to consider different perspectives through group work and personal reflection. Students also attend community-based cultural events to analyze their social meaning, gain a deeper understanding of the value of creative expressions, not only as aesthetic forms, but political forms of social change, and articulate their understanding of diverse peoples outside of dominant perspectives.

Working towards engaging students to critically examine connections between music and colonization has not always been a clean process, as many students themselves come from a range of social backgrounds and are products of overlapping forms of colonialism. As Chicana and Chicano professors, it can be disconcerting when some students continue to embrace the colonial presence around them. Some, for example, remain resistant to questioning or acknowledging racism in the US and citizenship practices. This is reflective of San Antonio’s colonial history of Spanish colonization, as well as U.S. military and Anglo occupation, with the Alamo remaining a master symbol of Anglo domination. To this day, San Antonio continues to be known as the “Alamo City” and cultural and political myths of heroism and nationalism, at times, play out in the classroom. Even when we engage in discussions of Indigenous and Mexican displacement, some students continue to use celebratory language around such institutionalized traditions as Fiesta, a 10-day city-wide event that reinforces white supremacy through commemoration of White settler conquest of Texas. Such moments provide learning opportunities for both instructor and students. As professors, we actively ask students: Where are you coming from? What types of cultural expressions have impacted your perspective? How might these influence how you view *nueva canción* and hip-hop?

However, many of our students actively seek linkages between their own histories and the songs covered in class. For example, through music, they are able to locate how Latina/o migration patterns to the U.S. are reflected in the type of music created by Latina/os both in the U.S. and around the world. By reflecting on songs linked to occupation and colonization we push
our students to think critically about where artists come from, their subject positions, and how students relate to these messages. For example, when breaking students into groups we ask students to consider U.S./Mexico border politics when to listening to corridos; U.S. corporatization of Puerto Rico when listening to salsa; U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic when listening to bachata, among many more.

_Nueva canción_ also presents opportunities for students to learn about Latin American history, the role of imperial powers and their institutions in shaping race, class, and other social relations, and the impact of U.S. economic and military intervention in the hemisphere. The work of Inti-Illimani (“Samba Lando”), for instance, speaks about the colonial legacy of racism towards Blacks, a history that resonates with students of color in the Global North. Still, other _nueva canción_ songwriters like Victor Jara, who wrote songs like “Yo no canto por cantar” (“I don’t sing just to sing”) speaks about music as a revolutionary expression for changing the world. Hip-hop artists across the Global South continue with this decolonial project, aligning the lyrics and musical arrangements to social justice movements.

By engaging in the work of rappers in the classroom such as Bocafloja (Mexico), Siete Nueve (Puerto Rico), Krudas Cubensi (Cuba), and Ana Tijoux (Chile), we employ hip-hop as a pedagogical tool of decolonization from Spanish, Latin American, and US notions of nationality and citizenship. The artists use of Spanish and Indigenous language lyrics, fused with soulful beats as well as their critique of capitalism, free trade, and racism in the U.S. and Mexico, manifests in what Gloria Anzaldúa (1991) calls the “borderlands,” or a space that allows for the negotiation of contradictions as well as the development of an empowering consciousness within alternating cultures and identities (p. 216). In a transnational sense, hip-hop can help push movements centered on combatting oppressive forces that continue to marginalize Black and Brown bodies around the world.

Decolonial musical expressions like _nueva canción_ also serve as sites of critical consciousness as students gain a global understanding of the ways in which Black and Brown peoples across the Global South continue to resist U.S. economic and political hegemony. Most importantly, hip-hop and _nueva canción_ as decolonial pedagogies provide students with an emancipatory possibilities to engage in collective struggles towards social justice and human dignity in the U.S., where Black and Brown peoples have always led struggles against European and U.S. colonialism. It is our hope that by analyzing decolonial artists’ expressions with our students we can step outside of the classroom with more of a sense of the colonial processes working around us.
References


The Radiants. (1965). “It Ain’t No Big Thing.” Chess Records


