Decolonization 101

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What are colonial educational institutions doing to recognize, honor, and educate about indigenous people whose land they are on?
Define:

- Colonization
- Imperialism
- Decolonization
- Genocide
- Benign Language
DECOLONIZATION, is the intelligent, calculated and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation.

Colonization

- the act of colonizing (comprised of two primary components, first physical then psychological)

**Physical:**
- the establishment of colonies
- physical occupation of land
- domination / control of the Indigenous people and environment

**Psychological:**
- Religious indoctrination
- Cultural, social and economic assimilation

The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom. [...] In my view language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation. ~Ngugi wa Thiong’o from Decolonizing the Mind (1986)
Colonization

“Colonization refers to both the formal and informal methods (behaviors, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, lands and resources.”

Colonization

“Colonization is violence and violation of the most extreme sort. Colonization is theft and rape and murder and cannibalism on the grandest scale. Colonization is genocide. We should understand that there are indeed people with a heart for decolonization in the churches, in businesses, even in the military as well as schools, colleges and seminaries, even if the systems themselves are malignant, delivered over to the enemy as tools or weapons of colonization. Even so, it is not for us to somehow share power with the colonizers. “

Colonization is predictable

- Foreign entity arrives in a new area and establishes itself on top of current area, the people, the environment, the eco system, all indigenous life in the area
- Colonial entity begins to impose its own system on indigenous people, indigenous life forms and the eco system
- Colonial entity demonizes indigenous people and their way of life: language, education, spirituality, relationship with each other, relationship with the land they were set on or brought to by the Creator, worldview etc
- Colonial power enforces its rule through military rule and police force. Indigenous people are indoctrinated into a colonial mindset. Their history is now taught to them through the perspective of the colonizer now rather than their own indigenous worldview.
  - How is this problematic?
Colonization is always destructive
Imperialism

- Policy of extending control over foreign entities through direct or indirect political or economic intervention
Genocide

- The systematic and planned extermination of an entire national, racial, political, or ethnic group

- In 1946 the United Nations General Assembly recognized that "genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principles and accomplices are punishable." Then two years later the General Assembly made this concrete. It passed the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This international treaty, eventually signed by well over a majority of states, affirms that genocide is a punishable crime under international law, and stipulates the meaning of genocide to be:
Genocide

**Article II:** In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

*The U.S. did not sign to this agreement until 1988, 40 years later*
Genocide (cont’d)

- There are other circumstances that are being looked at today that may meet the criteria under genocide or extend beyond the systematic destruction of human beings:
  - **Ethnocide**: The intentional and systematic destruction of an ethnic culture. This one may be entirely psychological in that it destroys the worldview of a people (and can be replaced by another)
  - **Ecocide**: the destruction of large areas of the natural environment by such activity as nuclear warfare, overexploitation of resources, or dumping of harmful chemicals
  - **Omnicide**: When ALL life is annihilated in an area. Human, animal, plant, bird, fish, water and land are contaminated beyond use
Mauthausen

The last concentration camp to be freed by the allied forces during WW II

Fort Snelling: Concentration camp for Dakota families in 1862-63
What is a concentration camp?
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Decolonization ultimately requires the overturning of the colonial structure. It is not about tweaking the colonial system to make it more indigenous-friendly or a little less oppressive. The existing system is fundamentally irreparably flawed.

Decolonization

- The opposite of colonization:
  - starts with the mental then moves to the physical
  - Aimed at reversing the destructive effects of colonization

- Raising the consciousness of the oppressive state that Indigenous people live in
  - exposure to a more realistic account of history
  - identifying a government or group that's creating and maintaining that oppression

- Going back to original way of life
  - Reclaiming identity through traditional ways
    - Language, original instructions given by The Creator etc.
Benign Language

- Settled
  - invaded

- U.S. citizens
  - invaders

- Reside
  - occupy

- Died
  - killed, murdered
Benign Language

- History
  - Euro-American propaganda

- Treaties
  - legalized theft of land and resources

- U.S. law
  - Rules made up to create and legitimize (rationalize) theft of land and resources