

Reimagining Instruction in Special Collections: The Special Case of Haiti

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ABSTRACT

A growing body of literature has developed around critical archival instruction and archivists as educators. This development demonstrates the pedagogical evolution beyond show-and-tell sessions to critical approaches in archival instruction and specific standards in archival literacy. This article provides a cross-disciplinary discussion of an approach to archival instruction. Also included is a reimagined instruction session using a fragmentary collection from the Saint-Domingue/Haiti colonial administration. Stories of the enslaved are usually marked by death and brutality. But Haiti's is a story of triumph; though fleeting, a victory nonetheless. When instructors decolonize archival instruction, they bring the past into the present and the future. The Haitian Revolution was a large-scale revolt by enslaved Africans, and it was also directly connected to the expansion of the United States. Archival instructors should encourage students to reimagine the stories told from the Saint-Domingue colonial administration collection and from any colonial collections that may be under their care.

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KEY WORDS

Culturally sustaining (revitalizing) pedagogy, Archival instruction, Decolonizing methodologies, Postcolonial studies, Coloniality of power, Caribbean studies, Creolization, Colonial archives, Saint-Domingue, Haiti

*we are a living dead example
of what happens to warriors who
in lieu of fighting for white men's countries
dare to fight
for their own lives*

—Lenelle Moïse¹

*We all need histories that no history book can tell, but they are not in the classroom—
not the history classrooms anyway. They are in the lessons we learn at home,
in poetry and childhood games, in what is left of history when we close
the history books with their verifiable facts.*

—Michel-Rolph Trouillot²

The need to decolonize instruction in special collections and archives has become critical as higher education continues to diversify. Marginalized students bring funds of knowledge to the university, but often experience silencing and devaluation.³ There is a need to gain a better understanding of how colonial collections are presently used in instruction and to explore ways that archival instruction can expand against and alongside the current way archives are read. The emergence of practices from critical library instruction⁴ as well as culturally sustaining pedagogy provides new opportunities for special collections and archival instructors to scaffold student knowledge and culture with the dominant curriculum of US higher education. Some argue that bridging student knowledge with the dominant culture is the status quo or, in this instance, not anticolonial. However, I contend that this approach is a way to disrupt what Tiffany Lethabo King calls “the normative flows of Western thought.”⁵ That is, Western epistemologies dominate the curriculum and the general approach to instruction at all levels of US education.⁶ In her work and research on pedagogy, and in teaching marginalized K–12 students, scholar and educator Lisa Delpit argues that alongside the inclusion of their home culture, students should be explicitly taught the *culture of power*.⁷ Number two of her five aspects of power is the most relevant to this meditation and also describes what the culture of power is:

There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a “culture of power.” The codes or rules I’m speaking of relate to linguistic forms, communicative strategies, and presentation of self; that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting.⁸

That the culture of power exists and is transmitted through US education cannot be ignored or denied. The purpose of introducing students to the tenets of the culture of power is to cultivate a critical consciousness, not to encourage students to compete for space within the dominant structure, but to imagine

a different way of being. More important, it is a way to make the hidden curriculum more visible. Thus, this article argues for the inclusion of different knowledge systems in archival instruction. By engaging with different knowledge systems and frameworks, such as critical race theory, and asset pedagogies, such as culturally sustaining pedagogy, instructors can better connect with an increasingly diverse student body.⁹

This article proposes a theoretical model of special collections instruction, drawing upon the coloniality of power and creolization theory, to operationalize culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) using Saint Domingue/Haitian colonial documents in archival instruction.¹⁰ Section 1 provides a cursory historical and cultural background of Haiti for context. Section 2 familiarizes readers with the theoretical and pedagogical frameworks of the coloniality of power, creolization theory, and culturally sustaining pedagogy; it also describes a version of culturally sustaining pedagogy—culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSR/P). The specific use of CSR/P addresses the decolonization of teacher education. Section 3 provides a brief review of other approaches to critical archival instruction. Finally, the last section offers a proposed instruction session to reimagine archival instruction.

Literature on decolonization often reflects a primarily anticolonial withdrawal mindset, which means complete land repatriation. For example, Eve Tuck and K. W. Yang, who disparage critical multicultural pedagogies, argue, “Until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism.”¹¹ Tuck and Yang assert that a critical consciousness is not synonymous with action. They also argue the incommensurability of the abolition of chattel slavery and land repatriation.¹² In the introduction to *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*,¹³ with Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Yang, Tuck reasserts the incommensurability argument. However, Tuck and Yang’s argument ignores the indigeneity of enslaved Africans who possessed their own knowledges and connections to land, creating an anti-Black sentiment. In many cases, enslaved Africans were trafficked to the Americas because of their land-based knowledge.¹⁴ In the current context of Black and Native relations, Jared Sexton asserts, “loss of indigeneity is a general condition of black and native peoples, not one that native people can restrict to black people in order to offer (or withhold) sympathies.”¹⁵ Though Black and Native experience of slavery and settler colonialism, respectively, are not wholly the same, points of convergence exist, and “we might understand Black and Indigenous struggles less as incommensurable, than as simply nonidentical, as having distinct kinds of orientation shaped by the effects of histories of enslavement and settler colonial occupation.”¹⁶ In pondering different approaches to instruction with colonial archives, archival instructors have an obligation to familiarize themselves with ongoing conversations between

disciplines of difference. I argue for space for a cosmos of knowledge in any archival teaching philosophy.¹⁷

Tuck and Yang's conception of decolonization does not allow for the critical consciousness articulated by culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) wherein archival instructors engage with the material, disrupting and transforming instruction. Without a critical or sociopolitical consciousness, one cannot be prompted to action.

An active decolonizing praxis challenges the conventional notion of empathy with confrontational empathy.¹⁸ In particular, Black special collections instructors and other instructors of color who use colonial documents in an instruction session should apply confrontational empathy with those from the dominant culture. Confrontational empathy is less likely to be co-opted by the dominant culture because it confronts the ways that everyone may participate in the oppression of others and eschews the notion of uniformity.¹⁹ Through confrontational empathy, underrepresented special collections librarians who offer instruction can locate solidarities. Confrontational empathy does not resolve larger problems with origins in the history of settler colonialism and chattel slavery, but it can open space for dialogue and affinities between marginalized groups who continue to experience the effects of these logics.

Students enter archival instruction sessions with knowledge, but often lack a critical sociopolitical awareness as beginning scholars. As they engage with colonial archives in particular, students could potentially detect parallels with suppressed subjects and past events. For instance, though not directly comparative, enslaved Africans' intellectual acuity kept plantations operating, and students could locate historical empathy by identifying the ways in which higher education requires their knowledge and labor to sustain itself.²⁰ Decolonizing archival instruction could begin by activating students' existing knowledge about records of general encounters with the state, for example, Social Security numbers, identification cards, driver's licenses, birth certificates, passports, and so on.²¹ The culturally sustaining pedagogical approach is not a checklist. It is an iterative process.

In reimagining archival instruction, this article discusses a first-year, undergraduate honors course, Readings in Atlantic Slavery, and proposes a reimagined archival instruction session. In archival instruction sessions for this course, I usually use our Sierra Leone archive, which focuses on British colonial history. I selected the Saint-Domingue/Haitian²² colonial administration sources for this article and proposed session because, while participating in an Atlantic colonial map activity, students often overlook Haiti as a location where a population of the formerly enslaved were instrumental in their own freedom. Specific excerpts in French—not the Kreyòl language that evolved in Saint-Domingue—are included, along with English translations of the French

text; the proposed activity would expose students to the notion of monolingualism and linguistic dominance.²³

Historical and Cultural Background: Saint-Domingue to Haiti

We know far less about the experiences and the views of the masses of slaves who so dramatically changed the world in which they lived. Yet it was the culture of these masses, forged in bondage—the Kreyòl language, the Vodou religion; the focus on community, dignity, and self-sufficiency—that ultimately enabled them to destroy slavery and produce something new in its place.²⁴

Before there was Hispaniola, Santo-Domingo, Saint-Domingue, or Haiti, there was “Ayiti.” The Taino peoples populated the land that currently makes up Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This Indigenous population was composed of five kingdoms or tribes called *caciquats* led by male *caciques*. Cécil Accilien, Jessica Adams, and Elmide Méléance assert, “The Higuay and Ciguay were populated by Caraibes and Iguayos, and the Marien and Xaragua were populated by Tainos.”²⁵

Dominican Republic scholar Lynne Guitar challenges the notion that the wave of Spanish colonization completely annihilated the Taino inhabitants. There were indeed significant periods of genocide, but Guitar argues:

... most of the Tainos died of illnesses like measles and influenza because they had no immunities to them, and after 1519, of smallpox . . . between 80 and 90% of the Native Indians died of plagues that often preceded actual arrival of the Spaniards, for the germs and viruses were carried by the messengers bearing news from plague-ridden areas . . . 80–90% is a significant and horrifying loss. It is so horrifying that it obscures the fact that 10 to 20% of the Tainos survived.²⁶

Though their deaths can be interpreted as the result of germ warfare, a combination of factors significantly reduced the population of the Taino peoples.²⁷

Furthermore, Lynne Guitar, Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate, and Jorge Estevez state, “over the years, a poor but landed peasantry developed from the original groups of Taino, Africans, and Europeans, who blended both in genes and cultural traditions. Engaged in a struggle to live on the land, they used their repertoire of cultural knowledge to best survive. Naturally, they relied on their Taino heritage, which represented many generations of knowledge, tradition, and oral history about the land. They further incorporated African and Spanish culture into this root Taino heritage.”²⁸ Their scholarship reminds us that this ground was and is Taino land and that the Taino people are still very much alive.

From 1794 to 1801, “Saint-Domingue remained nominally a French colony.”²⁹ Its hybrid culture comprised French planters, overseers or a class of people who functioned as planter security, a population of free people of color

that included Taino people, and enslaved Africans.³⁰ This diverse society came to be known as *creole*—a word originating in the Spanish colonial caste system. Saint-Domingue was a great source of enrichment for mainland France and had been fought over by Spain, France, and Britain. The Haitian Revolution took place over a thirteen-year period—1791 to 1804—and terrified the white world.³¹ After the expulsion of most of the French fighters and some plantation managers, Toussaint Louverture, a military general and leader of the Haitian Revolution, was inspired by the Indigenous population to rename the Island of Saint-Domingue “Ayiti,” or Haiti—land of mountains.³² This act of naming recognized the relationship between the enslaved African and the Taino populations on the island.

Napoleon Bonaparte attempted to recapture Haiti between 1802 and 1804, but he soon realized that he did not have the means to wholly rebuild his maritime forces. “Napoleon knew that he would have to abandon his plans for a Caribbean empire centered on Saint-Domingue. His decision had momentous consequences for the United States: in early April 1803, having concluded that he had no chance of keeping the Louisiana territory, Napoleon directed his diplomats to offer to sell it to the young American republic.”³³ Even with funds from the Louisiana Purchase, Napoleon failed to recapture the island; the emperor did not realize that the enslaved population was made up of trained warriors who ultimately expelled all European powers from the island.³⁴ From this point, Haiti’s history is a bricolage of failure and success. Haitians had the opportunity to develop a country made up of small farms, where residents could sustain themselves by selling a portion of their crops.³⁵ However, Louverture—though a hero in his own right and a very important figure in Haitian history and liberation—maintained the plantation system. This system relied on mass agricultural production of limited crop types such as cotton, tobacco, and sugar harvested and reaped by forced free labor. Succeeding leaders maintained a form of the plantation system, which, combined with outside interference from European powers and the United States, resulted in the conditions of instability and unrest that exist even today.

The fragmented Haitian collection held within the University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections and University Archives department is composed of official records: books, published reports, and fragments of governmental proceedings produced by the Saint-Domingue colonial administration into the Haitian administration—from 1745 to 1897. The sources I examined for this reimagined instruction session were mainly about quotidian events on the island, but from 1791 to 1792, the sources include arguments for and against chattel slavery, published legal decrees from France, and, most important, documentation on the beginning of the enslaved people’s revolt, or the Haitian Revolution. The documents were published in French, not the Kreyòl language spoken on

the island, and were created to be disseminated widely. The purchase of this collection was first justified with the claim that it would initiate a collection for a center for abolition studies at the university and then, later, as explained by former library personnel, that it would augment African American studies.³⁶ The collection is currently part of what is called the Atlantic Slave Trade collection that also includes US antislavery governmental proceedings and a Sierra Leone archive.

The use of these colonial materials offers students the experience of exploring colonial thinking and arguments around the system of chattel slavery and of perhaps discovering the slippage in power that ultimately resulted in the Haitian Revolution. It exposes students to how the revolution was also important to the expansion of the United States and to world history.³⁷ Additionally, it allows students to connect the reproduction of colonial processes to current events, and, most important, to see how critical the Haitian Revolution was to the framework of African diasporic citizenship in a colonial/neocolonial context where Black citizenship is always contingent. In this instance, colonial processes can mean, for example, any disruption of democratic processes or interference with full rights of citizenship.

Coloniality of Power, Creolization, and Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy

The following section provides definitions for the theoretical frameworks and pedagogies discussed throughout the article.

COLONIALITY OF POWER

Colonial archives usually contain evidence of corporeal and epistemic violence perpetrated by the colonial power. Epistemic violence describes the way colonialism and white supremacy silence the voices and knowledge of the marginalized. Kristie Dotson states, “An epistemic side of colonialism is the devastating effect of the ‘disappearing’ of knowledge, where local or provincial knowledge is dismissed due to privileging alternative, often Western, epistemic practices.”³⁸ Although select examples exist of archives used to expose crimes in the pursuit of justice or reparations,³⁹ the juridical or evidential purpose of the archives is usually not in service to oppressed people. The coloniality of power explains why colonial archives are, in most instances, reactivated only in service to neocolonialism. On Netherlands Indies colonial archives, Ann Stoler states, “colonial archives were not dead matter once the moment of their making had passed. What was ‘left’ was not ‘left behind’ or obsolete . . . these colonial archives were an arsenal of sorts that were reactivated to suit new governing

strategies.”⁴⁰ Colonial archives serve as a blueprint for a specific episteme or way of thinking about the order of the world, and the dominant culture perpetuates this way of thinking.⁴¹ Colonial archives are in some ways living documents. Stoler further refined her description of colonial archives as “what was ‘unwritten’ because it could go without saying and ‘everyone knew it,’ what was unwritten because it could not yet be articulated, and what was written because it could not be said.”⁴²

In 2007, Aníbal Quijano created a theoretical framework to view structures, processes, and discourses through a Global South lens. The colonial creation of race is foundational to this framework, and, like the reactivation of colonial archives, coloniality can be reproduced by oppressed populations. Quijano argues that “colonizers . . . imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive; it gave access to power.”⁴³ Quijano’s coloniality of power provides an argument that frames colonial power as too seductive not to replicate. Eric Ketelaar’s concepts of functional memory and storage memory, and how they manifest in the archive, are similar to the notion of Stoler’s reactivation of the archive. Ketelaar argues that “the ever-expanding storage memory keeps more information and different information that may be taken out by functional memory and restructured and recomposed into stories, into meaning.”⁴⁴ Thus, storing colonial materials in an archives affords greater opportunity for the reactivation of functional memory due to the preservation of the materials. Across time, the official archives is often used to repurpose the grand narrative in service of the dominant culture.

In 1793, as the revolution continued, French civil commissioners Léger-Félicité Sonthonax and Etienne Polverel wrote proclamations to stem economic losses and to regain control of social order on the island. “After their initial slavery-abolishing proclamations . . . Sonthonax and Polverel had hurriedly issued a series of decrees that sought to contain the economic and social impact of emancipation. According to these regulations, former slaves were obligated to remain on their plantations.”⁴⁵ Access to power and money may be one potential explanation for why Toussaint Louverture chose to maintain the plantation economy. That is, the legacy of colonialism, and one feature of the coloniality of power, is that oppressed groups tend to replicate the *matrix of domination*, or “domains of power,” in their own communities.⁴⁶ However, this point confirms that communities of the enslaved or formerly enslaved were producing knowledge in a plantation context.⁴⁷

Creolization

Créolité, or “creolization,” is a complex, contested concept used to describe how, in the Caribbean, a multiplicity of cultures came into relation.⁴⁸ The term *creolization* emerges from the writings of the Martinican philosopher and poet Édouard Glissant around 1981, and, while rooted in linguistics, Glissant explains that it is not simply a “complex mix—and not merely a linguistic result.” Glissant further points out that creolization resists the assimilationist agenda of the dominant culture. His argument is that in the plantation context, diversity of knowledges and cultures created something new.⁴⁹ As with the coloniality of power, “Within the frame of creolization . . . it is important to understand the anatomy of race as a political institution in terms of colonial lineage rather than biological ancestry.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, Barnor Hesse argues that colonists’ needed to categorize—to name—and created identities such as “Indian” and “Negro,” which initially translated into the conquered and the enslaved respectively to maintain the dominant colonial social order.⁵¹

Other scholars define creolization in the broadest of terms. According to Françoise Lionnet and Shumei Shih, “Creolization commonly refers to a historical process specific to particular colonial sites and moments of world history, especially in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. It is increasingly being used to describe many forms of cultural contact, including both reciprocal and asymmetrical exchanges across a wide range of cultural formations.”⁵² Theories in creolization are quintessentially Caribbean but can be used in a mainland US colonial context in reference to locations such as Louisiana, and they mark a clear connection between Haitian and US history—the Louisiana Purchase, for example. This article focuses specifically on the Caribbean concept of creolization. According to Dominique Chancé, Glissant broadened the concept of creolization from the facile concepts of *Antillanité* (Caribbeanness) and *métissage* (creoleness), which emphasized the desirability of a creole culture rooted in a European and African hybrid culture and language.⁵³ In most instances, the “African” part of the equation was the least desirable. Glissant eventually interogated the celebratory nature of *Antillanité* and *métissage*, which resulted in the development of the more critical framework of creolization.

Some scholars of creolization are critical of a culture and concept created out of coercive violence—a system in which European and American powers exerted violent social and legislative control over populations of enslaved Africans, Taíno, and free people of color. As an example of the ways in which assimilation was used in opposition to creolization, Jessica M. Alarcon describes a time when a publication was used to challenge “Negritude.” Inspired by the Harlem Renaissance in the United States, Negritude was a creative and political movement that included increased literary production from Black Caribbean

writers. Alarcon's article communicates to readers, "ni European, ni Africains, ni Asiatiques, nous nous proclamons Creoles."⁵⁴ This statement, though from a different time and in a different language, is analogous to the phrase "All Lives Matter"—a result of the dominant culture seeking to quell any signs of resistance by subsuming the marginalized/colonized under the banner of one national identity. As Black Caribbean writers began to find their voice in literary production, the dominant culture saw this new-found assertion of their identities as a threat to the status quo. In *The Libertine Colony*, Doris Garraway disapproves of those who view creolization as a process or concept to revere. "In contrast to theorists of creolization who celebrate the cultural and biological synthesis of different groups without examining the violent antagonisms across which such processes were negotiated, I seek to understand how the violence and desires enacted by the settler minority were instrumental in shaping Creole cultural forms, colonial racial ideologies, and the legal means by which the white elite established its hegemony in the Old Regime Caribbean."⁵⁵ Stuart Hall acknowledges the brutal context in which the process of creolization was produced, but views creolization as a theoretical lens through which to analyze colonial processes between the settler minority and the Indigenous and enslaved populations. Simply, Hall states that "Despite the humiliation and the suffering which slavery and colonization entailed, creolization remains the only basis in the present of creative practices and creative expression in the region."⁵⁶ Creolization represents a disruption and subjugation of African and Native systems of knowledge, but also a framework that reveals how both endured. In essence, many creolization scholars interrogate the power dynamic in the creation of a creolized society.

The coloniality of power, a twenty-first-century framework, aligns well with the framework of creolization. The process of creolization explains how colonialism created shifting categories of race and that marginalized forms of language and culture were generated from this uneasy blend, leaving a small space of agency for enslaved Africans and Black Caribbeans. Whereas the coloniality of power takes a broad view of colonialist power structures, creolization provides a more granular exploration of marginalized knowledge production. The broad definition of creolization also aligns with culturally sustaining pedagogy in that it calls for "... reciprocal and asymmetrical exchanges across a wide range of cultural formations" in instruction.⁵⁷ Carolyn Pedwell describes *affective translation* as "involving negotiation, resistance, restaging . . . the creation of newness."⁵⁸ I argue that this concept, created from the decolonization of empathy, also exists within the frame of creolization. In exploring culturally sustaining pedagogy, archival instructors should not seek full symmetry of knowledges, but points of negotiation. Django Paris terms this *cultural fluidity*, where "it is crucial that we look to sustain African American, Latina/o, Asian American,

Pacific Islander American, and Native American languages and cultures in our pedagogies, we must be open to sustaining them in both the traditional and evolving ways they are lived and used by contemporary young people.”⁵⁹

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Background

As a result of the social justice movements of the 1960s in the United States, K–12 teachers began to incorporate critical multicultural pedagogies into their instruction; universities began to make space for disciplines in Latin American and Latin studies, African American studies, Native and Indigenous studies, and more. In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings published a study on the pedagogical practices used by teachers of African American children. She wanted to know what concepts the teachers employed to establish some fundamental practices that foster the success of elementary African American students. She grounded her study in Black feminist thought as established by Patricia Hill Collins.⁶⁰ Through her observation of and interaction with these teachers, three principles of practice emerged: 1) academic success, 2) cultural competence, and 3) sociopolitical consciousness.⁶¹ Academic success translates into high expectations in the classroom and in school work; cultural competence is embracing one’s own culture and being given the space to use this tacit knowledge in the classroom while gaining insight and appreciation of at least one other culture; and sociopolitical consciousness is being able to take skills learned beyond the classroom—to be critical of structures and processes.

Gloria Ladson-Billings defines sociopolitical consciousness as “the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems.”⁶² And because, over the years, instructors have focused heavily on new activities (strategies), Ladson-Billings critiques the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy and any articulations of it being reduced to an activity. She states, “The idea that adding some books about people of color, having classroom Kwanzaa celebration, or posting ‘diverse’ images makes one ‘culturally relevant’ seem to be what the pedagogy has been reduced to.”⁶³ She invites instructors to go beyond what they consider to be acceptable, nonthreatening ways of inclusion in the classroom. But, in this request, she may be asking instructors to teach something they do not possess themselves—sociopolitical consciousness.

Geneva Gay has been at the forefront of culturally responsive instruction since the late 1970s. Where Ladson-Billings sees culturally relevant pedagogy as a way of being in the classroom or praxis, Gay offers specific strategies to be used in P–12 classrooms. Gay defines culturally responsive instruction as “an equal educational opportunity initiative that accepts differences among ethnic groups, individuals, and cultures as normative to the human condition and

valuable to societal and personal development.”⁶⁴ Instructors who employ culturally responsive strategies aim to bring a level of equity to their classrooms, and Gay believes “education cannot progress smoothly unless it is based upon and proceeds from the cultural perspectives of the group of people for whom it is designed.”⁶⁵ The incongruity between a student’s culture and the school’s culture can cause turmoil for the student, which can result in myriad behavioral issues or what Ladson-Billings calls “academic death,” which means that students drop out of school.⁶⁶

In 2012, Django Paris’s culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) expanded on culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive instruction (see Table 1). He believes those pedagogies need to extend not only to African American students, but also to many other marginalized groups with myriad linguistic capabilities and cultural backgrounds. Paris views CSP as a global pedagogy, and a key concept of CSP is cultural fluidity.⁶⁷ As Ladson-Billings understands it, “rather than focus singularly on one racial or ethnic group, [CSP] pushes us to consider the global identities that are emerging in the arts, literature, music, athletics, and film. It also points to the shifts of identity that now move us toward a hybridity, fluidity, and complexity never before considered in schools and classrooms.”⁶⁸ Where CRP began with African American K–12 students, CSP expands to include “the languages and literacies and other cultural practices of students and communities to ensure the valuing and maintenance of our increasingly multiethnic and multilingual society.”⁶⁹

Table 1. The Evolution of Culturally Relevant Approaches to Instruction

Scholars	Pedagogy	Description	Education Level
Gloria Ladson-Billings “Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy” (1995)	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Introduces idea of CRP and explores the successful teachers of African American elementary school students	K–12 education
Geneva Gay “Preparing for culturally responsive teaching” (2002)	Culturally Responsive Teaching	Concomitantly responds and expands on Ladson-Billings, including preschool	P–12 education
Django Paris (H. Samy Alim) “Culturally sustaining pedagogy: a needed change in terminology, stance, and practice” (2012)	Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy	Shifts from African American to global and introduces the idea of cultural fluidity	9–12 high school
Michael Domínguez	Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy (2017)	Decolonizing approach to culturally sustaining pedagogy	All educational levels

Paris and H. Samy Alim explore cultural fluidity by incorporating, for example, hip-hop pedagogy into their instruction. Hip-hop is a global phenomenon and part of a multilayered and complex youth culture grounded in African American history. Hip-hop pedagogy is demonstrated through the notion that traditional undergraduate students can access its concepts through this shared culture. Paris and Alim explain that “CSP’s two most important tenets are a focus on the plural and evolving nature of youth identity and cultural practices and a commitment to embracing youth culture’s counterhegemonic potential while maintaining a clear-eyed critique of the way in which youth culture can also reproduce systemic inequalities.”⁷⁰ In other words, youth culture and popular culture are brought into the classroom as a bridge to the dominant curriculum and, at the same time, are viewed through a critical lens. For instance, the homophobia, misogynoir, and misogyny in hip-hop culture can be discussed and analyzed.⁷¹ In my proposed instruction session in the next section, dominant culture and youth culture coexist equally. Youth culture also has a borderless quality. An Afro-Latinx student can easily speak in Spanish, switch to African American Vernacular English (AAVE), and then move seamlessly to Standard American English in one conversation with a group of her peers. CSP continues to evolve and “encompasses the present and the future.”⁷² This description of CSP is the essence of creolization, but without the element of coercive violence.

In “Pedagogy, Demagogy,” Edouard Glissant confronts the notion of linguistic dominance in education. Glissant advocates for the use of the dominant language—in Martinique it is French—alongside Creole in instruction. He sees it as an opportunity for “a creative confrontation of two worldviews.”⁷³ Because dominant languages offer market advantages, he acknowledges the antipathy that Martinican parents may have felt about the proposed use of Creole in formal education:

Our prejudices reinforce those of the Martinican child. In class he is exposed to the world of the serious, of work, of hierarchical relationships, with which he naturally associates the French language. At play, he reverts to Creole, with which he associates the world of recreation, freedom, and lack of restraint.⁷⁴

Glissant essentially describes culturally responsive teaching where instructors “teach to and through” students’ cultures.⁷⁵ He implies that the dominant curriculum is not superior to Creole/Martinican ways of knowing. James Baldwin came to the same conclusion when writing about Black English: we cannot demand that marginalized students abandon who they are for someone they can never be—middle-class, white students.⁷⁶

Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy

US education was organized to reinforce the transfer of the cultural artifact of white, patriarchal, middle-class norms to students who already align with these norms and, eventually, to assimilate students who are culturally different. Roger L. Geiger makes the connection between culture and curriculum when he argues, “The liberal education that colleges offered was always a cultural artifact, from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Knowledge was only loosely connected with the cultural value of college. . . . Culture has thus played a critical role. In ways less tangible than the advancement of knowledge or education for careers, culture affected curricula, institutional mission, and student life.”⁷⁷ Culturally sustaining pedagogy challenged the issue of the dominant curriculum as cultural artifact by calling for instructors to embed themselves in the communities in which they teach and to integrate that cultural knowledge into instruction. The main distinction between CSP and culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy (CSRP), conceived by Michael Domínguez, is that CSRP includes the past. While CSP may be seen as decolonizing, the focus on the past is a feature of CSRP; therefore, CSRP is specifically defined as being a decolonizing pedagogy.⁷⁸

In approaching instruction through culturally sustaining/revitalizing pedagogy, Michael Domínguez (2017) explains:

Colonization as an explicit de jure system of political domination has ended, yes. Yet bans on ethnic studies, the proliferation of reductive curricula, disproportionate suspension/expulsion rates for youth of color, the prevalence of the school-to-prison pipeline, increasing levels of school segregation, legislation and policymaking that target and privatize schools in communities of color, police brutality in and out of schools, and so many other policies, concerns, indignities, and assaults on agency, culture, language and identity persist. . . . They are constant reminders to youth, families, and communities of color that while we may be allowed to participate in U.S. schooling, we are far from welcome; something oppressive, *colonial*, survives about how we are treated and how we are valued.⁷⁹

US education was introduced to Black, Native, and other communities of color as a project of assimilation—a place of coercive knowledge transfer from the dominant culture. Most often, the knowledge transfer is/was under oppressive conditions such as removing children from their homes to place them in boarding schools, causing trauma that continues to reverberate through these communities.⁸⁰ While there has been some success in the use of different critical pedagogical approaches in instruction at all levels, these gains have been chipped away over time or summarily dismantled.⁸¹ Critics of critical pedagogy saw these practices as appendages to the dominant curriculum, and many pedagogical practices of the 1960s well into the 1990s took a deficit approach, viewing

students as deficient simply because they practiced a different culture. Critical archival instructional approaches can disrupt this pattern, and it should be the goal of archival instructors to position all narratives of the archive in equilibrium—no narrative positioned higher than any other. Archival instructors who abandon the hierarchical nature of the grand narrative will make space for the marginalized. Asset or humanizing pedagogies such as culturally sustaining pedagogy can assist instructors with this.

CSP and creolization both originated in the world of linguistics—Paris and Alim are linguists, and creolization began as a concept defined by language.⁸² Over time, scholars have broadened the framework of creolization to include different epistemologies and ways of being in different cultures. CSP and CSRP are pedagogies that operationalize creolization and the colonality of power in the classroom. Chancé argues that Glissant expanded creolization, but that Glissant also positions it in contrast to creoleness, explaining that “creolization encompasses and exceeds the concepts of *métissage* or acculturation, and it responds to the phenomenon of globalization, which should be combated as a forced ‘mise en relation’ or encounter, a mode of standardization and domination that produces standardized dilution.”⁸³ Simply, *métissage* is being in a relationship with someone of a different race (see *miscegenation*), and acculturation is the process of assimilation into the dominant culture. By extension, “creolization is not a fusion, it requires that each component persist, even if it is already changing.”⁸⁴ The fluid components that persist are those asymmetrical points of contact between different peoples; the components are peoples’ ways of being in contact with one another. Both CSRP, as a way of teaching, and creolization, as a way of thinking, resist forms of domination and standardization, and they reject liberal economic articulations of globalization through cultural fluidity. Recall that one of the main concepts in CSP is that of cultural fluidity, where young students tend to view surrounding cultures as permeable and easily cross cultural boundaries with appreciation, and dulling any potential harms of misappropriation. Student culture is not static; it is always shifting. Both CSRP and creolization are about processes that can be implemented through instruction practices.

These instructional approaches are, of course, limited. The main concerns are student resistance and the reproduction of oppressive systems, so it is important to keep any course texts, projects, and archival materials central to any discussion. Some archival instructors may have difficulty connecting with the students in their sessions; that is, they may hold biases or not see a need for critical pedagogies in archival instruction.⁸⁵ Due to the nature of the dominant language and culture that has been imposed on students, a culturally sustaining/revitalizing grassroots pedagogical ontology must be developed to embrace

the concepts of coloniality of power and creolization to make education more relevant and inclusive and less damaging and violent.

Decolonizing critical pedagogy is further demonstrated through what Michalinos Zembylas calls “alternative empathies.”⁸⁶ Alternative empathies can lead to confrontational empathy, as discussed earlier in this article. Zembylas argues for an empathy that interrogates power relations and empathies generated by neoliberalism and by feminist and antiracist critical theories.⁸⁷ Zembylas critiques liberal and neoliberal critical pedagogies that are steeped in the Freirean concept of empathy. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator who was part of the vanguard of critical theorists, created subject categories of “the oppressor” and “the oppressed.”⁸⁸ Many critical theorists who were educators—Freire among them—interrogated the power relations in the student-teacher relationship. Specifically, Zembylas critiques Freire’s concept of empathy, noting that it can ultimately “(re)produce dominant hierarchies and exclusions.”⁸⁹ He further redefines Freire’s subjects of the oppressor and the oppressed into subjects of the empathizer and the empathized; the empathizer being in a position of privilege to offer empathy.

In some cases, confrontational empathy can bring shame. Confrontational empathy is described as “not premised on care, concern and sympathy towards” the privileged, but “is sharp, incisive and uncompromising.”⁹⁰ Archival instructors can view shame as facilitating vulnerability to different temporalities, languages, and relationships to land (space). By drawing upon one of the principles of Ladson-Billings’s culturally relevant pedagogy, instructors should have high expectations of their students.⁹¹ Confrontational empathy is not employed to shame students but to induce cognitive dissonance, which is a mandate of critical information literacy.⁹² Zembylas concludes that “critical pedagogies function as decolonizing pedagogies, then, when they involve a reframing of pedagogical practices and theoretical frameworks so that they are forced to explicitly confront coloniality with the aim of dismantling colonial practices.”⁹³ To advance the objectives of critical pedagogy, an archival session that includes colonial documents should center the voices of the enslaved, the colonized, and the students.

Reimagining Archival Instruction

In 2010, a collection of essays on critical library instruction was published.⁹⁴ According to editors Maria Accardi, Emily Drabinski, and Alana Kumbier, the intent of the volume “[seeks] to disrupt the boundary between theory and practice that we name in order to limn, and invites thinkers to talk about what they do, do-ers to talk about what they think, and all of us to continue to develop a critical praxis of critical library instruction.”⁹⁵ They acknowledged that they

were not the first to think and write about the practice of critical approaches in library instruction, but that their publication connected them to others who had been doing this type of interdisciplinary work.

Lisa Hooper offers a detailed argument for the implementation of critical pedagogy in three areas of archival education: instruction, exhibitions, and digital archives.⁹⁶ Hooper provides a brief history of archival practice and theory beginning with the positivist approach—collection development, organization, and instruction through hegemonic frames—to the postmodern approach: instruction, exhibition, and digital archives that center underrepresented groups that have often been rendered invisible by the archive. In instruction, she asks archivists to be mindful when selecting documents and that “these selections authenticate specific ‘historical phenomenon’ [sic] which often represent the events, conventions, and social contexts of the dominant power and remain inaccessible within the socio-cultural frame of the Other.”⁹⁷ This is a challenge when working with materials generated by colonial administrations; however, through a critical praxis in instruction, archivists can generate questions and create activities to spark a critical consciousness in students. Hooper also cautions that employing critical pedagogy in archival instruction can often lead to “falsely naming a cultural group; unconsciously imposing a proscribed world view on a group; of ‘liberating’ a subaltern of Other that does not perceive a need for ‘being saved.’”⁹⁸ Hooper agrees with Zembylas that archival instructors should be careful not to reproduce oppressive processes when employing critical pedagogy in instruction. An instruction session on the Haitian Revolution could focus on how enslaved Africans were instrumental in their own liberation and that colonial documents—read against and along the archival grain—hold evidence of their resistance.

In 2013, Maria Accardi introduced librarians to *Feminist Pedagogy for Library Instruction*. Accardi’s feminist pedagogy resists instructional practices that reduce critical pedagogy to strategies, but offers a landscape of the literature that focuses on “envisioning the classroom as a collaborative, democratic, transformative site; consciousness raising about sexism and oppression; and the value of personal testimony and lived experience as valid ways of knowing.”⁹⁹ Accardi highlights five areas of feminist pedagogical practice that can be implemented in library instruction: “1) gender justice, 2) student-centered practices, 3) community, 4) teacher-student relations; and, 5) ethics of care.”¹⁰⁰ She asserts that attention needs to be brought to patriarchal approaches in instruction and more student-centered practices need to be implemented.¹⁰¹ Patriarchal approaches to instruction tend to view the instructor as the all-knowing authority and students as deficient upon entering the classroom, or student culture as too different and incongruent with academic culture. In an archival instruction session that incorporates colonial sources, instructors

should find ways not only to center the silenced in the documents, but also to center student knowledge and needs.

When it comes to archival research, archival instructors should not make assumptions about the existing knowledge of undergraduate or graduate students; they should remember to include concepts from primary source literacy along with some beginning- and intermediate-level archival literacy concepts. This is so any primary source literacy introduced at the K–12 levels of education can be reinforced, and students unfamiliar with the concepts will learn about them.¹⁰² That said, students have existing knowledge on which to scaffold. Two of the most important concepts to include are 1) primary sources are the “subjective” firsthand accounts of an individual or organization¹⁰³ and 2) “students should be aware of the extent of archival holdings in historical societies, businesses, government, and churches and be aware of the cultural, social, and economic circumstances and even biases that bring some collections together and not others in these repositories.”¹⁰⁴ Critical archival instruction involving colonial administrative documents can focus on the notion of biases and the partiality of the archive. Some important questions would be: What do we know about colonial administrative reports and governmental proceedings in general? Who wrote and then reproduced them? What were the authors discussing, and from what perspective were they written?

Archival instruction can concretize colonial archives by revealing the behind-the-scenes operations of empire. Archivists, historians, and scholars from other disciplines have been interrogating the archive-as-subject for some time now, and archival instruction offers the opportunity to deconstruct relationships between historian and archivist, the colonial archive and the subaltern (colonized peoples), and teacher and student. In other words, archival instructors and students together can challenge the authority often emanating from the colonial archive. According to postmodern frameworks, colonial archives represent a partial narrative and can also reveal the lack of absolute control of European imperialist projects. Ann Stoler suggests a more radical way of viewing archives “as epistemological experiments rather than as sources.”¹⁰⁵ Stoler’s approach would take archival instruction beyond the frame of the Association of College and Research Libraries/Rare Books and Manuscripts (ACRL-RBMS), Society of American Archivists Task Force learning objectives in section 4 of the “Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy,” which focus on a student’s ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate primary sources, to critical archival literacy.¹⁰⁶ In this instance, critical archival instruction would lie more precisely in the core ideas of the guidelines. Colonial archival materials represent a hegemonic way of being and thinking. Stoler calls for a rethinking of colonial archives, not merely as firsthand accounts, but as “contested knowledge”¹⁰⁷ that conveys a

one-dimensional view or a specific episteme. This then requires reimagining the learning outcomes of archival instruction.

Trouillot's work on the power of the archive to silence¹⁰⁸ agrees with Stoler's view of colonial archives as contested knowledge.¹⁰⁹ Identity formation and stereotypes of the marginalized stem from the colonial archive. Trouillot's scholarship functions as counternarrative to how Black Caribbeans are represented or unrepresented in the archive. In "Culture on the Edges: Creolization in the Plantation Context," Trouillot centers enslaved Black Caribbeans when he describes the ways in which they were able to locate moments of autonomy. He explains that planters did not want to feed the enslaved, so the enslaved often had to cultivate their own crops. Trouillot describes this time as "slave-controlled time" and "time indeed to develop modes of thought and codes of behavior that were to survive plantation slavery itself." Locating moments of resistance and agency of the enslaved centers the often silenced in the colonial archive.

Considerations in the Classroom

Archival instructors are required to meet institutional and professional benchmarks for student learning. However, working with the official record, and in this case colonial sources, adds the responsibility to disrupt traditional approaches to archival instruction. In this instance, archival instructors can introduce students to the concept of critical fabulation when it comes to the silenced in the archive.¹¹⁰ Critical fabulation is a method of storytelling or myth-making; it takes knowledge learned about the colonial archive and then employs that knowledge in a critical way to give voice to the silenced. One must learn about the marginalized to offer any fictional accounts, and that is where relevant secondary sources in a semester-long course can address gaps. This provides an opportunity to spark students' imaginations and to assist them in engaging with complex historical materials and thinking.

An additional consideration is my position as a Black American woman who provides archival instruction at a public institution where the flagship campus is a land-grant institution. My engagement with decolonizing frameworks is complex. Sarah Stein states, "while it remains important not to collapse racialization and colonization, (re)imaging relations between Indigenous people and Black people will necessarily look different than those between Indigenous people and non-Black racialized people who were colonized in their own lands."¹¹¹ There is a responsibility not only to Haitian Black people and the Indigenous population of the island, but also to the Native peoples who populated the area on which the university sits. In the words of Quijano, "In spite of the fact that political colonialism has been eliminated, the relationship between the European—also called 'Western'—culture, and the others, continues to be

one of colonial domination. . . . This relationship consists, in the first place, of a colonization of the imagination of the dominated; that is it acts in the interior of that imagination, in a sense, it is part of it.”¹¹² Living under the oppressive structures of colonialism and then white supremacy disrupted/disrupts the imagination of the oppressed. I am a member of an oppressed group in the United States and can experience what W. E. B. Du Bois conceived as double consciousness or internal tension and trauma when working with colonial materials. To design an instruction session that incorporates the Haitian collection, as someone who is part of the Black diaspora and contemplates Black and Native relations, I have a responsibility to excavate; to reclaim dream space impeded by the violence of (settler) colonialism and chattel slavery, and to then center the voices of enslaved Haitians while at the same time meeting learning outcomes for archival literacy—a difficult task.

An Example of Decolonial Archival Instruction

Student exploration of the Haitian archival materials held in a public institution of higher education adds a layer of complexity to this proposed session: special collections librarians and archivists usually expose public school students, who may or may not have a scholarly interest, to local collections. Often these instruction sessions are planned with teaching faculty, and visits are not driven by individual curiosity but by a targeted class requirement or a single assignment, which limits their ability to engage the material as would, for example, a student who is majoring in history.

So, why is Haiti important? Why is this collection from the Saint-Domingue/Haiti colonial administration important? Why are these documents important? The specific reports selected for this session reveal French colonists’ power slipping and represent the role that Haitians played in their own freedom. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, they reveal tension between European powers and how important Haiti was to the expansion of the United States—the Louisiana Purchase changed the course of US history. It is the ideal collection of materials to demonstrate Jeannette Allis Bastian’s notion of a full record. I found that Bastian’s way of recovering the silenced in colonial archives is most effective around the documentation of a major event. Bastian employs the Society of American Archivists (SAA) definition of a record and finds that “Within this definition of ‘record’ are an infinite range of possibilities.”¹¹³ Her three-part definition describes a record as being composed of content, structure, and context. This fragmentary Saint-Domingue/Haiti collection captures a moment in time when the content (the rebellion of enslaved Africans), structure (the diverse population of the island: enslaved Africans, people of color, and

French), and context (French officers and the setting/terrain of the island) can be explored and discussed during an archival instruction session.

To provide a foundation for the proposed session, it is first necessary to describe current archival instruction integration using a first-year honors course, Readings in Atlantic Slavery, which draws on the University of Illinois at Chicago Atlantic Slave Trade collection, the Sierra Leone archive, and the H. D. Carberry rare book collection. One of the course objectives is to “discuss what one can be wrong about—a fact, for instance—but emphasize that there are many questions that have no right answers. This also leads to what could be many discussions about critical thinking, especially in relation to the discussion of [assigned] texts.”¹¹⁴ The professor has communicated that further development of critical thinking processes are essential to the Readings in Atlantic Slavery course. It is up to archival instructors to employ their expertise in selecting or designing appropriate learning objectives for instructional sessions. Some of the questions posed during the archival instruction session emphasize two of the ACRL Framework concepts (information literacy): Information Creation as a Process and Information Has Value.¹¹⁵ Referring to the first framework concept selected, Information Creation as a Process, some questions about colonial administrative documents could be: What do we know about colonial administrative reports and governmental proceedings in general? Who wrote and then reproduced them? What were the creators discussing, and from what perspective were they written? We could also discuss publishing, and how these documents were disseminated. The second framework concept, Information Has Value, focuses on the academic conventions of information creation such as citation practices and plagiarism. This could also be an opportunity to discuss different cultural traditions of copying.¹¹⁶ Students first are provided with an orientation to Special Collections and University Archives.¹¹⁷ The teaching faculty then takes the students through a timeline of events using the archival documents arranged by archives instructors in an exhibit layout—from “The Assiento,”¹¹⁸ a document composed by the Spanish to license the Spanish Indies trade in enslaved people to the British, all the way to a royal warrant signed by King George IV.¹¹⁹

The exhibit includes images of enslavers’ ships, harbor manifests (numbers of enslavers’ ships), the diary of English abolitionist John Clarkson,¹²⁰ and documents that represent the repatriation of free Black people to Sierra Leone.¹²¹ A brainstorming session with teaching faculty and a senior Special Collections colleague resulted in the idea of a walking timeline exhibit. The timeline exhibit idea then led to a historical map activity for students; after the professor walks the students through the exhibit timeline, they are provided color-coded dots to identify 1) where people were captured and enslaved, 2) where enslaved people lived, 3) where formerly enslaved people lived, and 4) place of publication of

reports, proceedings, and other colonial documents on the historical map. The most interesting formative assessment is that previous students have never identified Haiti as a place where free Black people lived and where publishing occurred, which may be a function of the course’s primary focus on the Sierra Leone collection or the students’ lack of knowledge of the complexities of slavery in different locations (see Figure 1).

Reimagining special collections instruction for this session requires a brief definition of the term “reimagine.” In this context, “reimagining” comes out of postcolonial studies where it is often used to mean recovering silenced voices.

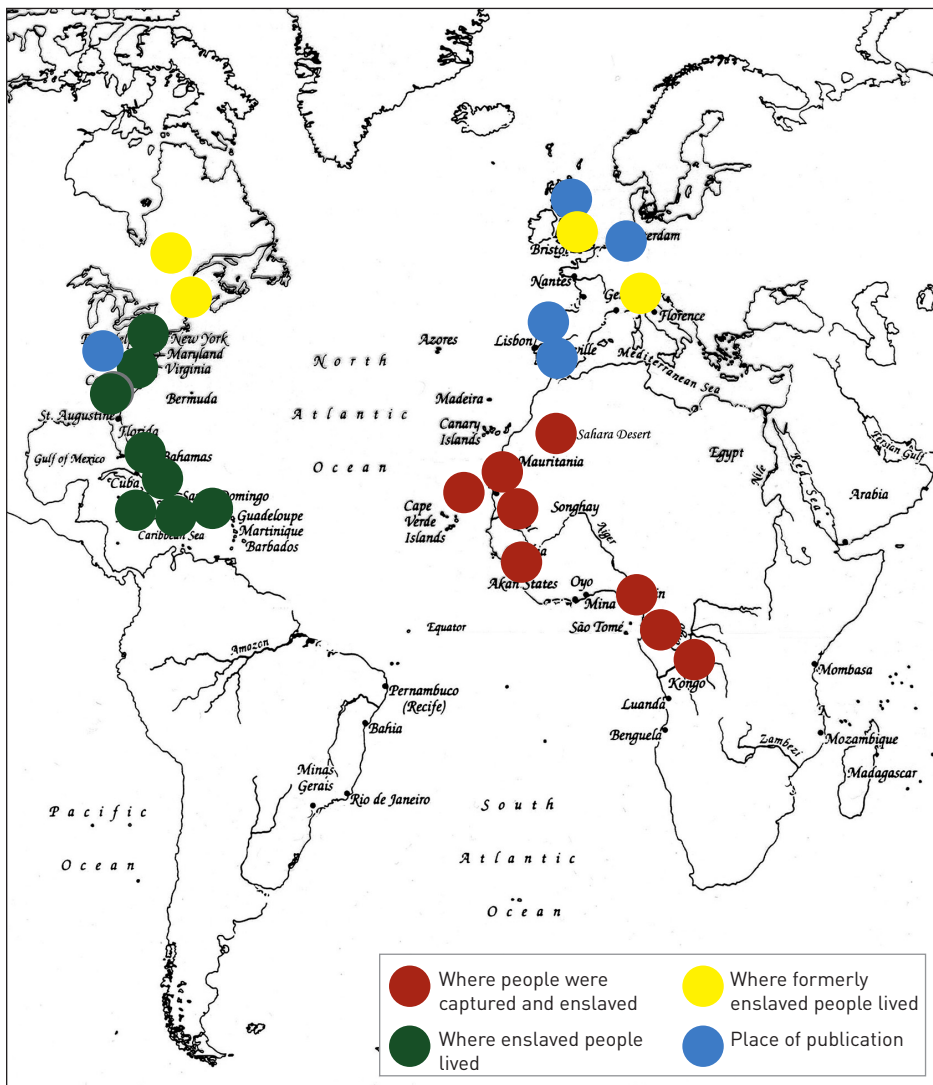


FIGURE 1. Colonial map with key used for historical map activity [Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2018]

In brief, it is a frame through which the subaltern or marginalized can reimagine their sociopolitical and economic worlds.¹²² Though body counts exist in colonial archives because slave owners often kept meticulous records of their property—the voices and therefore the stories of the enslaved and indigenous are missing. How best can we give voice to the marginalized through a classroom activity?

In consultation with the teaching faculty member, instruction with the Haitian collection would be planned similarly to the session already described, but with the addition of a brief introduction to Haitian history and its connection to US history, with some focus on the Louisiana Purchase. Recall from the background section on the Haitian Revolution that the Louisiana Purchase connects Haitian history to the expansion of the United States. And, close to six decades later, arguments about the expansion of chattel slavery in the United States would invoke the Louisiana Purchase.

Because excavating enslaved African voices in archival materials is nearly impossible, course readings in Haitian historiography and nineteenth- and twentieth-century Haitian literature should provide contextual background. Once students are in the Special Collections classroom, they will analyze an excerpt from a colonial report and then compare it to two brief excerpts from Haitian and Taino historical fiction. A suggested alternative activity is producing a class 'zine. This 'zine activity will center the voices of the students and expose them to the power of self-publishing.

Even if students cannot read in a particular language, it is an opportunity to open a brief discussion about language and power.¹²³ In this reimagined session, the notion that the study of English language history is the only history worthy of study should be challenged. Though both English and French are languages of dominant cultures, this session will include both. A different session could include an excerpt from Kreyòl and Taino literature. This session would include a selected excerpt of a colonial report in the French language, with an English translation. To center the silenced subjects of these documents, English translations of excerpts from Haitian and Taino novels would be included. Because of the organization of Haitian society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, selection of texts by Haitian writers of the time can be contentious—tension about color privilege clearly existed between the literate population of free people of color (*gens de couleur*) and Black Haitians—but selections would be made for the sake of time.¹²⁴ More important, the French texts were most likely inaccessible to Black Haitians because they did not speak or read French. These text selections would be historical fiction, as there are no firsthand Haitian or Taino accounts available to the instructor.

It would be ideal to hold two sessions for a course such as this (HON 124, Readings in Atlantic Slavery), but an archival instructor could also eliminate

parts of the lesson plan and manage the proposed activities in one seventy-five-to ninety-minute session. Two sample lesson plan outlines for Honors College Course 124: Readings in Atlantic Slavery follow:

- Introduction (3 minutes)
 - Orientation to Special Collections and University Archives (5–7 minutes)
 - Walking timeline (30 minutes)
 - Archival sample and historical fiction text analysis (20 minutes)
 - Reflection 'zine (30 minutes; each student is responsible for one page; copies of completed 'zine will be given to teaching faculty to distribute later.)
-
- Introduction (3 minutes)
 - Orientation to Special Collections and University Archives (5–7 minutes)
 - Walking timeline (30 minutes)
 - Archival sample and historical fiction text analysis (20 minutes)
 - Reflection minute paper (1–3 minutes)

To focus on the enslaved population, the selected colonial reports for this instruction section are dated at the beginning of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. The Saint-Domingue materials represent arguments about chattel slavery, the enslaved, and, specific to Saint-Domingue, the population of free people of color. Some documents in the collection highlight the voices of colonists speaking for the enslaved, for example, “The Negroes are happy here and would rather be here with us as their masters than under their former African masters.”¹²⁵ And some tell of when the enslaved started to set the island ablaze. For a student-centered session that highlights the voices of the enslaved Haitian population, it is important to help the students engage with the questions of whose voices are missing? Where in the document(s) do you notice the power of the colonists decreasing or slipping? Where in the documents can we discover the voices of the enslaved?

To facilitate identifying unique voices and being mindful of class time, the archival instructor selects two or three French pamphlets and translates small sections into English, including the French portion on the same page. The instructor plans for students to spend some time with excerpts of the colonial reports along with the translations. The instructor would then request that the students reflect on their readings from the Readings in Atlantic Slavery course, along with these colonial sources as a type of comparative document analysis. Some examples of activities are writing a brief response paper or a minute journal, or responding to some questions and reflecting. The questions could begin with basic document analysis and then progress to those that are more challenging. This way of questioning or prompting deeper reflection addresses the learning objectives of critical thinking, student-centered learning, and centering

the enslaved: 1) what type of document is this?, 2) who wrote it?, 3) what is the main idea that the document communicates?, and 4) from your course readings and review of archival documents, what do you think the enslaved population was doing at this time?

Here is a sample of archival text from a Saint-Domingue colonial administrative report:

Il est vrai qu'ils font agir les bras de cinq cents mille noirs, sans propriétés auxquels ils donnent abondamment tous les besoins de la vie, avec la perspective d'une fortune assurée, pour tous ceux qui veulent coopérer, avec quelque distinction, à la prospérité générale. Ces NOIRS viennent de divers continents; ils étoient TOUS, ou criminels, ou prisonniers, ou, bien certainement au moins, les esclaves d'un DESPOTE AFRICAÏN qui, au lieu de les mettre à mort, les a livrés en échange de quelques marchandises à un Capitaine; celui-ci les a transportés sur une terre docile, dans un climat tempéré pour eux, où, placés dans la condition d'un journalier ordinaire, on exige de chacun d'eux, contre tous les besoins de la vie, un travail que l'humanité modère, et que l'égoïsme même a tant d'intérêt à ne pas rendre excessif.¹²⁶

It is true that they have the arms of five hundred thousand blacks, without property, to which they give abundantly all the necessities of life, with the prospect of a secure fortune, for all those who wish to cooperate, with any distinction, have general prosperity. These blacks come from various continents; they all were or are criminals, or prisoners, or, certainly, at least, the slaves of an African despot who, instead of putting them to death, gave them in exchange for some goods to a captain; the latter has transported them to a docile land, in a temperate climate for them, where, placed in the condition of an ordinary laborer, one demands from each of them, against all the needs of life, a work which the moderate humanity, and that egoism itself has so much interest in not rendering it excessive.

Stella: A Novel of the Haitian Revolution was published in the mid-nineteenth century and has been translated into English. A sample text follows:

Here the vegetation, astonishing in its vigor and precocity, eternally luxurious, is one thousand times more prodigious after a hurricane—that grand and terrible phenomenon of the tropics—has broken the trees, uprooted the rocks, and turned nature entirely on its head. Here, Autumn hangs her garlands on the ruins, perfumes the woods, sews [*sic*] flowers everywhere, and doubles the magnificence of the cane fields by lending them white plumes that ripple in the wind. Here, Winter, the eldest sister of the seasons—who, in another hemisphere, shivers, weak and sad under her mantle of snow—is the youngest, the gayest, the most opulent of the daughters of the year: nothing equals the abundance of treasures she draws forth.¹²⁷

Táino: A Novel is historical fiction that reconstructs the sixteenth-century manuscripts of Diego Colón, or “Guaikán,”¹²⁸ who is described in the novel as Christopher Columbus’s adopted son; the name is an interesting choice for the

Taino character, as Columbus's son's name was Diego Columbus. An excerpt follows:

The great world of my ancestors, the people of the islands that the Castilians call Antilles but which to the eye of my mind I see as our long Cuban lizard (Caymán-Cubanacán), the land of great mountains (Haití-Bohío), the center of dancing (Borikén) and the little Carib turtles, *hico teas*¹²⁹ in our language, arching south to the great forest.¹³⁰

I selected these excerpts to emphasize the difference between how colonists, Haitians, and Tainos may have viewed their world and how they described it through text. The students should have already completed some of the assigned course readings, so the sample excerpts would scaffold some of the knowledge that they have gained. The alternative 'zine activity would strengthen the community of practice the students have already established, be an opportunity to utilize their own voices including other languages, and also be used as time to reflect on and synthesize what they have learned in the course and session.

The class/group 'zine activity would be discussed with the teaching faculty prior to the session. It can be difficult for students to reflect in the brief period of an instruction session. It can also be a challenge for them to work in a medium that might be new, such as a 'zine. It is therefore important to communicate that their reflection should center on their interpretation of the concepts introduced during the course so far and concepts from the archival instruction session.¹³¹ One or two students creating a single page for a class-produced 'zine is a low-stakes introduction to reflection in a different format. It is also a way for both teaching faculty and the instruction archivist to assess what the students have learned.

Because one of the teaching faculty's learning objectives for the course is critical thinking, learning outcomes for an instruction session can be based on sample learning objectives from the ACRL/RMBS, SAA Joint Task Force "Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy."¹³² Archival instructors would also have the flexibility to articulate these to suit the needs of their students. In addition to some of the novice student learning objectives such as learning about Special Collections policies and hours of operation, the learning objectives proposed by the archival instructor are expanded from conceptual to more empirical outcomes. Student learning outcomes include the following:

1. Students will be able to analyze colonial administrative reports to understand how historical documentation created by the state functions in their current context.
2. Students will be made more aware of knowledge production and how publishing functioned in a settler colonial and chattel slavery economy, which will prompt critical thinking on current media.
3. Students will view themselves as historical subjects.

4. Students will be introduced to the concept of linguistic dominance and that documents can be published in languages other than English, French, etc.
5. Students will learn to think more critically about the disciplines of geography and cartography, learning that economic and geopolitical lines are never static.

Conclusion

Any attempt at implementation of critical pedagogies in archival instruction demands a guiding teaching philosophy and a self-reflexive practice.¹³³ John Warren established three areas of focus for self-reflexivity in instruction: 1) autoethnography via one's pedagogical histories, 2) critical ethnographies of our own and others' classrooms, including assessment, and 3) public pedagogies.¹³⁴ Because of limited instruction time, many library or archival instructors seek quick strategies or a "one-size-fits-all" approach.¹³⁵ This search for quick but effective activities is understandable, as instructors often teach fifty-minute, one-shot sessions. However, this further entrenches colonial processes and discourses, and marginalizes the increasingly diverse student population on campuses and in instruction sessions.

In higher education—particularly at universities that hold colonial materials and provide archival instruction to undergraduate and graduate students—the power of the colonial archive can always be reactivated. With the Haitian collection in particular, students have an opportunity to learn more about the complexities of chattel slavery and settler colonialism in different locations. Sharon Stein notes, "While it is impossible to know [sic] in advance what a decolonized higher education might look like, in order to possibly arrive there someday, after much struggle and many missteps, we might nonetheless work toward decolonial horizons."¹³⁶ Archival instructors have an opportunity to give voice to historical subjects who were often rendered invisible by the colonial archive. Creolization and the coloniality of power are concepts through which archival instructors can begin to understand the imperative of the culturally sustaining/revitalizing approach to instruction; CSRP holds the promise of a decolonizing instruction praxis. In essence, if faculty are there to introduce students to the discipline-specific approaches of research, archival instructors can make space for student culture while fostering a critical consciousness with archival sources. Granted, faculty spend more time with students, but archival instructors can make sessions more valuable and memorable for students if they begin to reimagine instruction by incorporating liberatory practices.

NOTES

- ¹ Lenelle Moïse, "Mud Mothers," *Haiti Glass* (San Francisco: City Lights Sister Spit, 2014), 8.
- ² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, ACLS Humanities E-book, 2015), 71.
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