The University as a Site of Struggle, or Raging Against the Dying of the "Light"

Sheeva Sabati
California State University, Sacramento
Jason Wozniak
West Chester University

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

—Dylan Thomas

In her 2022 PES Kneller Lecture, *Pedagogies of Mourning and Morning: Zones of Contact and Elsewhere,* Sandy Grande theorizes how "the university is and always has been an arm of the settler state."[1] In the United States specifically, the university is a bedrock institution that is inseparable from Indigenous dispossession and chattel enslavement, one that reproduces distinct but connected forms of domination today.[2] This includes the creation of the student debt crisis and debt-financed universities through neoliberal policies that divested from public higher education, a backlash to the transformations envisioned by the anti-colonial, anti-imperial, and antiracist student movements of the 1960s and 1970s.[3] Universities in cities across the U.S. are also drivers of gentrification, contributing to housing and other inequities that disproportionately impact neighboring Black and Latinx communities.[4] And while elite universities have issued apologies for their participation in the economies of chattel slavery, or Indigenous land acknowledgements are now often recited at campus events, such practices have also been critiqued for lacking in making any meaningful material reparations and repair.[5] Among them is Harvard, who has refused to divest from international land holdings that are displacing Indigenous peoples

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in Brazil (among other troublesome investments), with its campus leadership claiming that the "endowment is not a tool for social or political change."[6]

Given that the contemporary university remains marked by these and many other formative violences, Grande argues that even (and especially) well-intentioned liberal reforms cannot fundamentally transform "the university."[7] What then are we, as educators and scholars who work within the university, to do if liberal reformism is unable to address the current neoliberal, (neo)colonial, and racial capitalist university, and in fact contributes to its expansion?[8] What theoretical frameworks and concepts should philosophers of education rely on to think about and act upon the university?

In her talk, Grande draws on Global South scholars, Indigenous critical theorists, abolitionists, as well as her own work on Indigenous elders and aging, refusal and the university, to respond to the classic question: "What is to be done?"[9] In Grande's view, we have to let the university (and other cherished modernist institutions) die if Indigenous Peoples in particular—and in fact, all of us as human and more-than-human beings—are to have a chance at surviving. Such a view is undoubtedly jarring for many, especially those who hold onto the promises of liberalism that emerge from modernity.[10]

In what follows, we highlight Grande's 2022 PES Kneller lecture and engage her invitation to listen to these interventions about the death of the university as we currently know it "to the tune of a promise." As we elaborate, Grande situates the death of this iteration of the university, but also gestures to horizons of possibility for collective knowledge making and sharing that already exist within Indigenous and anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, antiracist activist formations. We put Grande's interventions into conversation with our own experiences organizing within and beyond university spaces, offering reflections on how we might collectively envision, practice, and co-create relationships to learning and to one other that are not rooted in domination, but in life-affirmation. Sheeva emphasizes how abolitionist educators and scholar-activists model a rigorous praxis of liberation that is grounded in radical notions of love and care. She also reflects on why she continues to struggle within the university, a theme that likewise emerges in Jason's insights, which come from his work with

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various collectives engaged in struggles for educational justice. We conclude by returning to the critical questions that emerge for us from Grande's work, and that we believe we must collectively, seriously, joyfully, and urgently engage as we continue to struggle within the university, and in the words of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, *rage against the dying of the "light."*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "THE UNIVERSITY"?

To understand Grande's interventions, we clarify what we mean by "the university." As an extension of the settler state, Grande theorizes the university as "a site where the logics of elimination, capital accumulation, and dispossession are reconstituted," disrupting linear progress narratives that situate the harms of these powerful institutions as mere historical facts but ongoing presents.[11] Critical historiographies of U.S. higher education document this process. Scholars at elite universities like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and many others worked hand-in-hand with State leaders to epistemologically justify the elimination of Indigenous peoples and their nations, as well as the institution of chattel enslavement, in order to legitimize the violent political economies of the emergent settler-nation.[12] The development of new disciplinary formations, rooted in western enlightenment, aimed to "scientifically" and "objectively" prove a racial hierarchy that placed Eurocentrism and whiteness at "the apex" in order to legitimize racial-colonial projects of imperialism while simultaneously stealing Indigenous knowledges of plant medicine, claiming them as western discoveries.[13]

As scholar Kim TallBear (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) underscores, scholarship that actively objectified and de-humanized Indigenous, Black, and racialized "others" cannot be judged on the merits of today as mere pseudoscience, as these were in fact considered to be the "cutting-edge research" of the time and continue to undergird global relations of domination.[14] The delegitimization, theft, and erasures of Indigenous knowledges coalesce as multi-level, layered violences to Indigenous peoples and nations, accumulated as material assets for the settler university. Grande reveals that, "assuming stable rates, Yale's endowment could fund *every single tribal* college and technical school for the next *318 years*."[15] Therefore, the inclusion of so-called difference into the university cannot alone "serve as a precondition of relations of equality,

freedom, and justice."[16] Liberatory aims demand deep transformations to the knowledge practices the university (re)produces, material redistributions of its resources and its arrangements of power.[17] The injustices that we are witnessing and living through today, that can now be spoken—albeit in still limited ways—as the actual truth, are the compounding accumulations of foundational injustices.

Indeed, what is often understood as a "neoliberal" crisis within higher education must be reframed as the history-present of an institution that has long depended on and expanded modes of racial-colonial-capital accumulation.[18] This trajectory includes the consolidation of Indigenous territories into public land "grab" universities, creating a "perpetual endowment" to fund public institutions.[19] These connections are significant, especially given the way in which public colleges and universities are narrated as sites of promise. We are told that higher education is a respectable vehicle for social mobility, further obscuring how the division of "higher" and "lower" education plays a role in (re)producing stratifications of social-economic difference.[20]

Aptly summed up by Grande, we cannot "include our way out of white supremacy."[21] In fact, to believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion in isolation are pathways to *liberation* is a fundamental misunderstanding of the entanglements of the university with the very structures of domination that it upholds. The university participates in and recrates broader systems that must fundamentally be re-imagined. This is underscored by Grande when she calls forth Glen Coulthard's analysis that for "indigenous peoples to live capitalism must die."[22]

Grande's articulation of the death of the university is one of nuance and complexity. She situates her theorization through *ch'eqchi*, a Quechua concept that expresses how the states of "tension and antagonism are contingent and ontological … there is no life without death, no joy without sadness, no love without indifference, and no creation without destruction."[23] Thinking ch'eqchi together with James Baldwin's ruminations on death in *The Fire Next Time*, Grande postulates that the death of the university should not be viewed as a tragedy.[24] Instead, we ought to ponder this as an inevitability, and maybe we owe it the honor of letting it die: "it has lived a full life, one worth mourning, grieving, and celebrating that will contribute to *a renewal that will come*," Grande tells us.[25]

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To be sure, Grande's and our discussion of "the university" is a placeholder for the colonial/modern university, which imagines itself to contribute to universal and *universalizing* knowledge.[26] It is important to recognize that not all universities are the same in the students they serve, the communities they are situated within, their staff and faculty, (purported) missions, knowledge formations, nor the resources they hold. Institutions are always made up of people and practices: including peoples interested in liberating, status-quo, or oppressive pedagogies. Still, if the modern/colonial university has been the template for the "ideal" university, and in the words of Grande, is "predisposed to replicate relationships of domination," then its potential death is rendered anew, as a possibility for something better.[27] It is in this way that Grande asks us to consider the death of the colonial/modern university, the university-as-we-know-it.[28]

THE MATERIALITIES THAT SHAPE THE PROMISE WE HEAR

Engaging Grande's invitation to listen to her interventions to the "tune of a promise," we are reminded of her insistence that the possibilities of renewal only emerge through collective struggle dedicated to tending to the process of the dying university with care and love. Rejecting any overly sentimental notions of love and care, Grande notes that the tending we must do will be marked by anti-capitalist and anti-colonial struggle and strife. We draw from our work in various collectives to uplift the questions that Grande's interventions raise for us, the lessons we learn from these collaborations, and how they might orient this praxis. These insights surface a collective praxis that is central to this promise, and guides how we might orient together as we navigate the wake.[29]

SHEEVA

When I think about why I remain within the university, I think of Leigh Patel, who reminds us that learning has always been bigger than those practices that have been relegated to and organized through white supremacist settler logics that are often practiced in U.S. universities.[30] Indeed, it has been within what Harney and Moten describe as "fugitive spaces" within universities that I have come into political consciousness.[31] This highlights the important point made by Liz Montegary at an abolitionist university studies convening where Sandy Grande and I first met in 2019, that universities can also be important

spaces of refuge, particularly for young people who are LGBTQIA+, to more freely be themselves outside of strict family-social impositions. They can be spaces that connect us to new ways of making sense of the world, to activism and to movements.

Although the global structure of racial-capitalism marks much of what happens in universities by its potential to translate into necessary economic returns (that is, credentialing), the praxis of *study* marks something else.[32] Study is developed in relation; it is meaningfully applied. Study asks, how does this help us expand liberation and justice? Our responsibilities and commitments to, our love for and joy with our communities, for each other, guide the purpose of our educational practice. This is precious.

I have considered leaving the university, disillusioned by the debt my first-generation BIPOC students have taken on to get a degree that will, in narrow but material terms, mean less and less for them as they enter the workforce. I considered leaving while I was an adjunct, teaching double the load of my tenure track colleagues for a fraction of the pay while publishing, applying for jobs, and holding my students at the center of my work. I am considered one of the lucky ones to be in a tenure track position in a workforce structured around precarious labor, and now have more proximate experiences of the ways in which whiteness is weaponized against our students, at myself and fellow critical colleagues. Par for the course.

And yet, I am hopeful. As abolitionist-feminist organizer Mariame Kaba explains, hope is not a mere optimism, but is the "potential for transformation and for change … *hope is a discipline* …. a discipline that we have to practice every single day."[33] The everydayness of practice is important; as I have learned from being in community with abolitionist-feminist educators like Chrissy A.Z. Hernandez, Farima Pour-Khorshid, Carla Shalaby, Erica R. Meiners, and many others, we can and must embody life-affirming values in our everyday pedagogies, in our classrooms, and in how we show up for each other.[34] There is radical possibility in centering the truth that no person is disposable in the content and pedagogy of our teaching.[35] Our classrooms can be sacred spaces, inspire us to feel what education—and our broader ways of being in relation in the world—could be;[36] we have the gift of utilizing teaching as spaces to study,

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imagine, and practice this becoming.[37] As Ruth Wilson Gilmore importantly explains,

> Abolition is not *absence*, it is *presence*. What the world will become already exists in fragments and pieces, experiments and possibilities. So those who feel in their gut deep anxiety that abolition means knock it all down, scorch the earth and start something new, let that go. Abolition is building the future from the present, in all of the ways we can.[38]

Understood this way, abolition is not a negative project but an imaginative and creative one; an affirmation of love and critical care, to rigorously commit to the challenging work of creating conditions where life possibilities can be expanded in both the mundane and at systems-scales.[39]

For many of us, we are living in someone else's imagination: one invested in rending the world through the image, impulses, and affective desires of global racial capitalism, imperialism, and coloniality, cloaked through the promises of democracy and liberal justice. Someone else's dream is a nightmare for so many more of us. And so, I commit to practicing hope as a discipline when I remember that the current moment that we are living has long been produced, and in this production, there is space for transformation. As Vanessa Machado de Oliveira writes,

> What if racism, colonialism, and all other forms of toxic, contagious divisions are preventable social diseases? What if the texts, education, and forms of organization we revere have carried and spread the disease, but also contain latent parts of the medicine that can heal it?[40]

Thinking with Machado de Oliveira, in this moment where we are witnessing a heightened systems collapse, what does it mean to hospice systems that are so pervasive, that they are almost akin to the air we breathe? She describes hospice as "acting with compassion to assist systems to die with grace, and to support people in the process of letting go — even when they are holding on for dear life to what is already gone."[41] This is not an easy process; indeed, hospicing is about "expanding our collective capacity to hold space for difficult and painful things."[42] This means that our work is less about resolving contradictions, but

paying attention to what they have to teach us. Following Alexis Shotwell, we might learn from experiments that unsettle our notions of and desires for purity, and instead stretch our capacity to stay with what is, to learn from it, and to use these teachings to create what could and must be.[43]

To struggle "within, against, and beyond the university as-we-know-it" is always intimately interconnected with broader struggles and movements.[44] If the university is a mirror to the society that has created it, then its fault lines are not exceptional but constitutive of global, economic, social-political racial-capitalist, heteropatriarchal, and imperial-colonial systems. As Gilmore elaborates, "abolition requires that we change one thing, which is everything."[45] This may make the work of struggling within the university seem daunting. But it is also a place I find promise: our struggles are connected, we are connected, and the university is one important space where we are coming together to learn, where we might put our values into practice now.

Over our many years of being in conversation, Jason has insisted that those of us in the university have been well-trained in critique, at diagnosing problems, but we have work to do in offering alternatives. This comes up in my work with my current doctoral students who are eager to discuss "solutions." While the framing of "solutions" doesn't—for me—capture the breadth and scope of what we must trouble when thinking about (educational) injustices, their frustration is valid and important. They are saying, we—as *Indigenous, Black, and folks of color—have worked in education for decades and experience white supremacy on the daily. We are tired of focusing on the problem. We are ready for what can be done, what we can do.*

This is a point to take seriously. I return to Grande's talk, when she elaborated the second half of Glen Couthard's quote, which states that, "… and for capitalism to die, you must actively participate in the construction of indigenous alternatives to it."[46] Put differently, "decolonization and abolition are not calls to destroy, rather their demands are to *care*," Grande explains.[47] Grande cites projects like Black and Indigenous Freedom Schools, the Milwaukee Philadelphia and Chicago's Freedom University, the Indigenous-led land-based learning school Dechinta, The Red Nation, as well as Critical Resistance and the Debt Collective. There are lessons here; these, "radical modes of study

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and struggle demonstrate how to engage knowledge and knowledge-making beyond the scope of imperial productive projects and to cultivate modes of practice that defend and support well-being."[48] There is promise in these forms of collective praxis.

JASON

Clearly the current version of the U.S. University has not yet died, but it may indeed be dying from incurable sicknesses that have amassed and ossified like a tumor over time. At the very least it is fair to state, as so many often do, that it is in an existential "crisis." In the original Greek, *krisis* denotes a "turning point in a disease," a "change which indicates recovery or death." It signals a "vitally important or decisive state of things, a point at which change must come."[49] Corrupted at its formation, the U.S. university never had a clean bill of moral nor political health. Marked by simultaneous neoliberalization and neoconservative missions to reproduce racial capitalist ideologies and materialities, today it suffers from moral vacuousness and is slowly being hollowed out to the point of teetering on collapse, only to be propped up by students and the universities themselves taking on massive debts. In this decisive moment of "crisis," the current iteration of the university may be dying, but that's ok, argues Grande. For educational possibilities are inherent; where the education crisis is, so lies the saving power.

Grande insists that the point shouldn't be to save the university, but rather hospice it through the death of this iteration so that something new can take its place. Thought of this way, the questions of *who* will see the university through this crisis and *how*, are of great importance. These questions mark sites of both ideological struggle and praxis. If we cede ground to right-wing conservative fanatics, the recent history of military dictatorships and fascism give us a preview of what to expect. If we allow the totalizing process of neoliberalization to play out, then there is little reason to expect anything but a university comprised of corporate logics and practices, run by corporate people, for corporations. In a sense, the right wing would be *overjoyed* to see the current rendition of the university come to an end. They have sought its demise for years, and have already prepared the ideologies, administrative practices, and pedagogies to swoop into the vacuum left by the demise of the university. Ron DeSantis'

recent attempts to eliminate any form of Critical Race Theory, intersectional study, and research from state universities in Florida might preview the fate of higher education that awaits us if the radical right wing gets to decide the terms of death of the current (neo)liberal version of the university.[50] Neoliberals for their part, have done as Milton Freidman suggested and have plenty of ideas of how to manage education lying around waiting to be actualized in the advent of the passing of the university.[51]

Significantly, the segment of the Left that concerns itself with the university is not unified in its diagnosis of the crisis, nor what to do about it. Despite the lessons that scholars and activists of the past tried to teach us, like those we find in the Combahee River Collective statement on intersectional anti-capitalist struggle, or from feminists Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Toni Cade Bambara and others who made up the SEEK program at CUNY and fought tenaciously to keep CUNY free and universally open-access, the Left divides itself too often along identitarian and class lines.[52] Thus, during this moment of university crisis, the Left that should decide its fate towards more liberatory possibilities, is itself in crisis. How we resolve this moment of double-crisis, of the university/of the Left, will determine the future, or lack thereof, of the university.

Rather than prescribing the contours and content of a university to come, Sandy asks what happens between now and the time of death of the current iteration of the university in the United States? Put differently, she provokes us to seriously consider what we do in an interim that is marked by the signs of liberal democracy, and its institutions, crumbling to pieces all around us. And in our reading, given the circumstances, it seems that in addition to practicing a hospicing marked by love and care, she is suggesting that if there is any hope for the future, we will have to rage and rage against the dying of the light.

Yes, this university must die, but no, we cannot afford to let the university go gently into the good night. Returning to ch'eqchi, maintaining love during this process of dying will only be possible if we fight, only in the passing of the old can the new take root and grow. Our moment of crisis calls for a paradoxical careful and loving-raging against the dying of the light, accepting that we cannot hold onto that which must pass, and refusing to allow that which

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comes to be worse than what was.

Much of my ruminations are shaped by transformative educational experiences tied to social justice struggles. In what follows, I share abbreviated interpretations of two specific experiences: a collective attempt to create an autonomous university in New York City during Occupy Wall Street, as well as a Critical University Studies seminar in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I highlight the valuable lessons learned about political struggle, as well as thoughts on what a university could look like, which have been passed down from my years of collaboration with cherished Debt Collective companions.

For more than two years, I participated in what came to be known as Occupy University. Arising out of the Education and Empowerment working group, "Occu U" as we came to call it, was a short experiment in radically trying to re-think what popular and public higher education could look like. This is not the space for a complete recounting of the history of this university experiment; suffice to say, a small group of people (never more than 20 active members) tried to create a roving and free source of diverse educational experiences for anyone and everyone in public squares, bookstores, subway cars, and even the ground floor of Trump Tower.[53] Democratically run, benefiting from, and sometimes hampered by, a consensus model that decided curriculum programming and pedagogical practices, together we decided to create a university for the movement, of the movement, and always in, movement. Rather than reproduce the neoliberal-racial-patriarchal-colonial/imperialist society in which we lived (and which the social relations of our education institutions correspond to), we sought to cultivate alternative education relations that would prefigure the types of social relations we wanted a new society to be built upon.

The successes and so-called "failures" of OccU left a lasting impression on me. Regarding the former, we opened up a variety of liberatory ways of thinking and practicing education for movement activists and people that participated in our events. To wit, some of the pedagogies currently employed by Debt Collective are offshoots of pedagogical practices developed in OccU. Noting some of the failures, our efforts were significantly hampered by material conditions. We were never able to separate our livelihood from the very system we were critiquing and hence relied on the liberal capitalist state for our survival,

nor were we able to carve out time and space conditions that were inclusive to the poor and oppressed on a regular basis. Those people that couldn't gather to study with us regularly because they were forced to work excessive hours for unjust wages.

Nevertheless, my time at OccU reaffirmed that where and when we gather, who can gather, and under what conditions, matter greatly in education. We need reliable and safe places to meet, free time to study, and pedagogical relations that promote liberation and equality. Such gatherings must be open-access, radical in the sense of going to the roots of issues, and reparative of past and present traumas and harms. They need to negate the reproduction of capitalist, racist, patriarchal, and imperialist relations, and promote egalitarian relations in their place. That universities have never fully provided any of the above is obvious to anyone that has a modicum of knowledge about the university and refuses to romanticize it. That they have occasionally been places of refuge, freedom dreaming, and sites to learn how to live together is also important to note, however.

More recently, I was invited by Núcleo de Estudos de Filosofias e Infâncias of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (NEFI/UERJ) in 2019 to give a seminar on Critical University Studies. By many accounts, UERJ is considered one of the more radical public universities in the country. Its history is marked by struggle against the dictatorship, it has vigorously resisted neoliberal reform, and offers a vast array of pedagogical opportunities for students and faculty to cultivate anti-capitalist/racist/imperialist/patriarchal learning experiences within its walls. The university also has many "extension" projects, of which NEFI is included, that extend the university to local community members. Additionally, UERJ is an important hub of the national Brazilian student movement. Students study free of charge, and through years of organizing the faculty union has won a dignified salary.

To be sure, UERJ is not a utopian site. Years of underfunding has taken its toll on buildings and classrooms. Despite efforts by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to promote greater inclusion of poor Brazilian students in higher education, especially Afro-Brazilians, UERJ—like other public universities in the country—is still marked by exclusion because to enter the university students

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must pass certain exams and show certain proficiencies, all of which are hard to come by for students who study in extremely precarious K-12 public schools. UERJ, like most institutions in the Americas rests on stolen ground, a history that is made more complicated by the fact that the campus was constructed on top of an area of the city once known as Favela do Esqueleto. Residents of Esqueleto, mostly poor, many of mixed-race descent, were evicted from their homes so that UERJ could be built.

Within this backdrop, my seminar, which was open to all university students, faculty, and the general public, ended up attracting over 40 participants who were predominantly women-identifying, non-white, and first-generation. Together we sought to engage in dialogue (in Portuguese) about a central question: "In the neoliberal era of racial capitalism, to whom or what does/should the university respond?" The seminar problematized the numerous ways that universities today are either forced to, or by their own volition, respond first and foremost to the needs of the global racial capitalist and neoliberal political economy.

Undergirding most of our dialogues and debates were three concurrent themes: How can higher education challenge neoliberal logics, forces of subjectivation, and education policy? In our efforts to integrate historically marginalized students into the university system are we integrating them into a burning house? And how could the university be a site of struggle, as well as a site of producing political actors, willing and able to combat right-wing fascist populists like Bolsonaro and Donald Trump? To be sure, all of these questions were influenced by my reading of Grande's *Refusing the University*, as well as work by Robin DG Kelly, Wendy Brown, Sueli Carneiro, Lélia Gonzalez and others.

Students of the seminar were adamant in their responses. Their own experiences taught them that the university conceived of as a site of struggle is one of the few places in society in which the world can be formed and re-imagined otherwise. I left Brazil believing that if the forces of neoliberalism are ardently struggled against, if the struggle to open the university to all members of society is tirelessly waged, and efforts to cultivate pedagogies essential for the formation of what Freire called "critical consciousness" are supported, then the public university can indeed, provide a place of respite from the trials of racial

capital, a site on which to cultivate alternative social relations, and develop the knowledge and capabilities to make a world otherwise, despite being located within a colonial-racial capitalist-patriarchal political economy.

I knew the students I encountered would tirelessly work to guarantee open access to the university for all Brazilians, resist at all costs the imposition of any fees or tuition to study, and promote radical and horizontal forms of pedagogy that openly reject the reduction of education to the process of producing human capital. Their conceptualization of the university as but one site amongst others in and for the public, where people can gather to transform the society in which it is located, is that of a place that must be preserved and strove for in the delay towards the creation of the reparative liberatory university we need. It is a notion of the university that education philosophers would do well to continuously flesh out in dialogue with one another, with students, and within social movements. It is a dialogue that Sandy has shaped beautifully, and has generously invited us to take part in.

CONCLUSION

An important thread in Grande's work is that "grief and hope are co-constitutive."[54] That is, to mourn the death of an institution leaves space for the creation of something new. This may raise the question, what is the newness that can be created in the wake of the modern/colonial university? Importantly, this is a question that can be answered in many ways and in collective. *What is to come* should be context-specific, attend to the materialities of people and place, to the history-presents that produce current injustices, and to creating ways of redistributing resources, liberation, love, and dignity for all.

Following Marx, we think of philosophy as the practice of problematizing current realities, as well as the process of creating concepts that sharpen our interpretations and inspire transformative interventions in history.[55] In this piece, we've built on Sandy Grande's 2022 PES Kneller Lecture with the intention of opening space for philosophers of education to further problematize the current formation of "the university." Further, the creation of concepts, as well as the study of existing ones that emerge from anti-colonial, anti-capitalist and antiracist organizing, will help us collectively envision alternative versions of the university and guide practices to bring these visions into being. In this

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spirit of thinking critically about "the university" in order to make space for something new, we close with a series of questions that we find crucial to this ongoing praxis.

What might be the role of education broadly, and for our specific communities and contexts? How should educational institutions operate, governed by whom, funded by whom, serving whom, with what knowledges, and towards what ends? What might the 'failures' of the current university teach us about the material structures that must be dismantled and created in their place? And what wisdoms and tools exist in the movements already creating alternatives practices and spaces and that aim to seed educational justice?

Because Sandy's work draws from Global South critical theory, among other genealogies, it also provokes meta-reflections on the role of theory itself. What is education theory, and can it play a transformative role in education? Who is the education theorist, and how is their theoretical work related to pedagogical practice? What is the role of the academic, the scholar, the educator, in this moment, in relationship to the places and communities within which our institutions are situated? How do we develop liberatory and transformative pedagogies, ones that disentangle education from a corrupted and crumbling political economy and into creative experiments of collective flourishing? What role do we each have to play in this work? What tools can we use? The questions we pose call for collective and contextual responses. Our willingness and capacities to engage these questions will determine how we live the last moments of the current university, and whether we can co-create something better in its place.

We end our essay by gesturing back to hope and rage amidst and against, "the dying of the light." Paulo Freire once wrote, "As long as I fight, I am moved by hope; and if I fight with hope, then I can wait."[56] The translation into English loses the double-entendre present in the "esperar" of Portuguese and diminishes Freire's beautiful poetic play on words in the phrase. "Esperar" means both "to hope" and "to wait," and in Freire's native language, it captures how hoping and waiting are intimately tied to one another. To hope is to wait in the present for a future to come, we might say. But the relation between hoping and waiting takes on a particular tone the moment we add "to struggle," or

"to fight" as Freire does, into the dynamic. When there is at once a need for hoping, waiting, and fighting, hoping imposes an obligation on waiting, *how* we wait. If there is hope, we have a responsibility to move, to take action. Hope doesn't give us any other ethical option; it demands that we take up struggle.

But struggle for what exactly? And where? Turns out that "hope" is not just an intransitive verb, it's also a noun. The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that in Old Norse, *hóp* is "a small land-locked bay or inlet" and more recently, inlets, small bays, and havens that provided anchorage for ships at sea came to be called "hopes." Hope then, is a place. Forged over many years by the sea, wind, rain, the elements at patient, constant work *carve out hopes*.

We have argued that the idea of a place to study with others, to "freedom dream,"[57] or experiment living beautifully while practicing the social otherwise,[58] is not just something to hope for. We end hoping that you will join us in raging to carve out hope with patient, constant work; a liberatory university—and world—worth fighting for. It might take a while, but if we fight with hope, together in the space of hope, we can wait.

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1 We appreciate the feedback provided by two anonymous reviewers who supported our refinement of this essay. Given the length constraints and scope of this piece, we suggest that readers engage our citations for elaboration on any of the histories and arguments we present here in summary form.

2 Craig Steven Wilder, *Ebony & Ivy: Race, Slavery, and the Troubled History of America's Universities* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013).

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