"The Only True People"

Bethany J. bin Beyyette

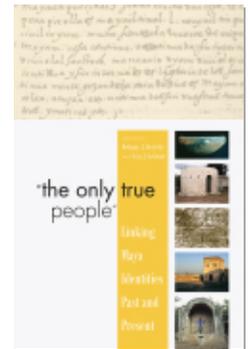Published by University Press of Colorado

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Ethnoexodus

Escaping Mayaland

Juan Castillo Cocom, Timoteo Rodriguez, and McCale Ashenbrener

Some commentators have deemed me either "too black" or "not black" enough.

Barack Obama, *A More Perfect Union* speech

Eager to establish a dialogue with Mayanist thinkers in a session on the ethnogenesis of the Maya, I accepted an invitation to engage on a panel with distinct uneasiness, perhaps because I cannot really conceive of a notion of "the birth of an ethnos" either as event or process per se (Anderson 1999; Fennell 2007; Hill 1996; Roosens 1989; Smoak 2006). Or perhaps I was unsettled by the arbitrariness by which academics split time into recognizable points of reference, as to where exactly forms of Maya Yucatec identity took place—such as the Spanish Conquest (and its subsequent imposition of the race concept), the Caste War of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of ethnic politics in the twentieth century (Restall 2004).

Ethnogenesis uses historical markers in a constructivist manner in which nonessentialist social "artifacts" are used to determine spatial and temporal "ethnotopographies." It is not a coincidence that these moments and places are signaled in economic, political, and military conflicts—contexts that conveniently lend themselves to constituted identifications. As such, ethnogenesis exercises epistemic control over "politically correct" discourses about inequality and justice or civil rights for humans and cultural practices, effectively creating a modern form of peonage by not allowing the people I belong to a way to exist apart from reductive and politically constructed identities.

JUAN AND TIMOTEO IN A TAXI FROM SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, JANUARY 2008, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM

The plane landed in the eye of a storm. A sense of terror was still present as other passengers and I stepped on the ground of the San Francisco Airport. Timo (Timoteo Rodriguez) picked me up at the terminal and asked, "So what is your Berkeley graduate seminar 'Ethnoexodus' about?" As I launched into the notion of ethnoexodus, a presence clear in my mind, I could notice from his expression that he had no idea what I was talking about. "The seminar, my friend, is a little experiment aimed at unraveling the limits of ethnogenesis." Timo told me he had invited some colleagues to participate in this little experiment, and on the first day of the seminar there were five of us: Linda Barrera, Diana Negrín, María Cruz, Timo, and me. The title posted on the website of Berkeley's anthropology department read "Anthropology 230–3: Special Topics in Archaeology: Ethnoexodus: Maya Yucatec Topographic Ruptures."

Up until that first day of the seminar, my soul was filled with pedagogical terror at the thought of teaching at UC Berkeley. I called my friend Quetzil Castañeda: "I don't know how to structure, systematize, and present the fundamental ideas of the course 'Ethnoexodus: Maya Yucatec Topographic Ruptures' to a public that is already expert on the topography of the imaginaries of Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Foucault, and Jameson."

He said, "Don't worry; simply share your experiences with them."

KROEBER HALL, ROOM 151, ANTHROPOLOGY 179, "HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MAYA," DECEMBER 2008, TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ

My lecture, titled "Technologies of History," required that the undergraduates bring questions from their reading of the Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers Special Edition, Mayab Bejlae: Yucatan Today (Reyes-Cortés and Rodriguez 2007). The students were initially very excited to read Dr. Juan Castillo Cocom's (2007) article for, after all, he is a Cocom. Earlier in the semester they had read the history of the Cocom lineage in Sharer's (1994) massive textbook.

They learned about the Cocoms' relationship to the fall of Chichén Itzá and the establishing of the great city of Mayapan (Màayapáan in Maya T'aan and Mayapán en español), where the Cocoms were massacred by the Xiu in the 1440s. Then in the 1530s, after the Xiu allied with the Spanish, they studied the infamous Cocom revenge massacre during a pilgrimage to the Sacred Cenote in the ruins of Chichén Itzá. And the students knew about the great Cocom warrior Nachi Cocom, Lord of Sotuta, who never surrendered to the invading Spanish forces (de Landa 1959).

There was mixed engagement with and understanding of Castillo Cocom's article. One student loved the disruptions in the text—that *his* writing was "in and out" of the normative of the anthropological canon. Another student wondered why Castillo Cocom's writing was so confusing and segmented. Why does he continually interrupt the flow of the paper with different dates, times, places, and narratives? The student wanted an introduction with three points and evidence of support throughout the chapter, topped off with a concise conclusion. The discussion was fruitful: it stirred debate among the seventy undergraduates.

I explained that Castillo Cocom (who at the time was both *there* and *not there*; unable to attend because the idea of him was, in light of people's responses, obviously *elsewhere*) had selected this writing style and structure carefully in writing this article. His pedagogical movement was more an epistemic rupture in the anthropological understanding. I pointed out that in practice, "understanding" was conceptual, political, ethical, and aesthetic (Rabinow 2003); Castillo Cocom did not necessarily prescribe to that particular anthropological understanding in his own writing.

IKNAL: ESCAPING FROM *STATUS* BUT NEVER FROM PRESENCE, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM

Speakers of Maya T'aan or Yucatec Mayan have a commonsense reference to this quality of "being present," known as one's *iknal*. In Maya T'aan, iknal is at the same time the *context* and *product* of relationships. It is both a shared and an individuated mobile field of sensory awareness or action (Hanks 1999:91). Iknal entails understanding one's bodily space in relation to one's perception, opinion, and attitude. Thus, epistemically, iknal is at the core of Maya thinking, the core of this chapter.

As a text, this is our iknal for right here, right now; we take up a space in both your hands and your head, for we inhabit with these words. The argument we put forth is captured with this Maya notion of "perpetual presence" as both *context* and *product* in an "ethnoexodus," simultaneously a critique of the idea of ethnogenesis as a way of understanding "Maya" identity and of identity formation in general.

As a conceptual tool, ethnoexodus focuses on how a social actor may "exit" at a temporal "point" in an identity suture without having necessarily ever been "in" that particular construct of identity. Simultaneously, ethnoexodus conveys how a social agent "enters" the territories of fictional identities, multiplying his or her already numerous imagined identity formations in the name of the apparent "genesis of the ethnos." This fantastic *mobility between "identities"* constitutes what we

dare to term an "ethnoexodus," a more viable analytical alternative to ethnogenesis as identity politic in the Colonial matrix of power constructs (Mignolo 2001).

Iknal is roughly translated as an extension of social agency, of *perspective*, *presence*, *action*, and *attitude*. Both ethnoexodus and iknal should help situate Bourdieu's (1990) concept of "habitus" in geopolitical terms relating to identity formation, but though both iknal and habitus require a generative, habituated presence—that is, a disposition of where you can be both physically and habitually—iknal references a key quality that habitus cannot. It can be a spatial marker disembodied from the individual that indexes the presence of a specific person (Hanks 1990). Thus, one's iknal can be present in a location even when an individual is not physically in that locality. Our fundamental proposal is that ethnoexodus is associated with identity formation by escaping from *status*, from how one fits into social structures, but never from presence.

Intuitively, everybody may embody, possess, or acquire both a habitus and an iknal. Still, the two notions are not the same; neither are they in competition. Yet in the geopolitics of knowledge, habitus is considered a more "universal theory" of embodied action and a means to consider identity formation in *practice*. Furthermore, for Bourdieu, habitus is necessarily connected to social power relations as conceptualized within a "field" of symbolic capital and thus embedded in the interplay of *status* through the accumulation of social capital in a given field. As such, one may never escape one's habitus; one may just learn to turn it "off and on" within a field of relations or slowly develop new habituations or dispositions. Thus, identity formation as understood through habitus, field, and capital is the condition that never escapes the game of status. In other words, you are always in your body regardless of the symbolic capital you acquire. In this regard, social status through symbolic capital is never guaranteed, especially when the "body" one embodies counts as a symbolic deficit, such as one's accent, cultural bodily mannerisms and taste, stature or physique, and phenotypical features like skin, eye, or hair color. Thus, as Aihwa Ong (1999:92) puts it, "There is a mismatch, from the hegemonic standpoint, between the symbolic capital and its embodiment."

For Timoteo and me, ethnoexodus is a means to conceptualize identity formation by putting aside the necessity of status and understanding the role of iknal beyond Maya T'aan (Yucatec Maya language) speech acts, as well as subsuming its analysis into an academic framework that broadens social phenomena and human experience to realms that are necessarily in and out of Maya context (Castillo Cocom 2007). Certain questions arise here: How is it possible to consider power relations and identity formations *not* linked to status? And why is it important to not consider status in identity formation in the first place?

UNIVERSIDAD INTERCULTURAL MAYA DE QUINTANA ROO, ROOM 201, SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2014, MCCALE ASHENBRENER

I took Castillo Cocom's Derechos Humanos Indígenas y Organización Étnica (Indigenous Human Rights and Ethnic Organization) class in the fall of 2014 during my stay at the Universidad Intercultural Maya de Quintana Roo for my Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Program. As he entered the room the students, about fifteen men and five women, started dragging the chairs into a circle, already trained for the informality of his lectures. Castillo Cocom asked the class to define Maya. As we unsuccessfully attempted to use historical, cultural, and sociopolitical ideation to encapsulate Maya identity, he meticulously unraveled each conception, exposing it as separate, carefully constructed narratives created by anthropologists, the tourism industry, and colonizers.

It was fascinating to see him destroy and break down everything the students thought to be true in order to have them rebuild their ideas from the rubble. These were primarily Maya (in terms of the quincunx) students at an intercultural Maya university, and Castillo Cocom was telling them that "Maya" was a recently made-up construct. The term *Maya* was first designated to describe architectural remnants of the ancient civilization in the mid-1800s, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that Maya was used to refer also to the people who spoke Yucatec Maya or other Maya-related languages (Schackt 2001).

The students—including me—were struggling to keep up. It felt as if we had all boarded the same train to cross Mayaland, but Castillo Cocom was soon moving fluidly in and out of contexts, and we were forced out of our comfortable seats to observe the train from various perspectives in the field. Crouched in the corn, we watched ourselves pass by and questioned if what we saw was really a train after all. We were *there* not as discrete imagery but as people who were dialoguing *here* as subjects who see and are seen, who evade and probe back, echo, and reverberate with each other in the *everywhere*.

Castillo Cocom uses iknal in his classes, requiring his students to reflect on their own physical and intellectual perceptions, their attitudes toward and opinions of what they are told is Maya, to decipher a new, imagined identity less tethered by ideas of status and physical limitations of space.

SITTING AT AN OUTDOOR TABLE AT STRADA CAFÉ ACROSS THE STREET FROM KROEBER HALL, UC BERKELEY, FEBRUARY 2008, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM AND TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ

Timo and I talk about the idea of ethnogenesis and ethnoexodus. It is cold. Very cold. I miss the warmth of the Yucatán sun.

JCC.   So, ethnogenesis is about attempting to encapsulate what will always escape to the "encapsulators."

TR.   If escape is the mode for the exodus, how does this relate to doing research and producing knowledge? Is it like a diffusion of knowledge?

JCC.   Let me explain it like this . . . what courses did you take before starting your first ethnographic research in Yucatán?

TR.   Well, in the spring of 2001 I took three UC Berkeley under-graduate courses on the Maya—Maya Cosmovisions, History and Ethnography of the Maya, and Mesoamerican Archeology. These classes equipped me with a solid knowledge base to conduct ethno-graphic fieldwork at ancient Maya archaeology sites.

JCC.   Was it the summer when we met in Merida?

TR.   Yes, and if you remember, my initial research question was simple: how do local Maya farmers in Chunchucmil and Kochol feel about foreign academics working on their communal farmland, hiring locals as laborers, and essentially telling locals how to work their land (Rodriguez 2001)? It was an ethnography of archaeologists. I worked as an archaeological apprentice for a graduate student; it was an ideal situation . . .

JCC.   Okay, but how did you understand the Maya from all your readings?

TR.   Well, the Maya I had in mind were the ones from ethnographies by Villa Rojas (1978), Redfield (1941, 1950), Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934), and Castañeda (1996). In terms of linguistics, the studies of Hanks (1990, 1999, 2003) of deixis (spatial referencing) and indexi-cality in Maya T'aan and the Chicago audio recordings of spoken Yucatec Maya (Blair and Vermont Salas 1967) helped me grasp the Yucatec Maya language. Historically, Sullivan (1989) painted a picture of the contradiction between Maya rebels and archaeolo-gists; from the archeological perspective, my images of the ancient Maya were shaped by the massive book *The Ancient Maya* by Morley, Brainerd, and Sharer (1983), *Mesoamerican Elites* by Chase and Chase (1994), and works on the site of Chunchucmil in Yucatán by Dahlin (2000), Ardren (2002), and Ardren, Hutson, and Magnoni (2000). My academic vision of Maya culture and the archaeological site of Chunchucmil was shaped by these discourses.

JCC.   These readings were your introduction to the ethnogenesis of the Maya.[1]

TR. I see what you mean. Already in my first field season I began to understand the dynamics, in practice, of how archaeologists produce knowledge on the ancient Maya. This reality became ethnographically transparent when the pueblo of Kochol did not allow the archaeological project to conduct research on its *ejido* for a few months (Rodriguez 2006).

Field Journal, May 2001, Timoteo Rodriguez

Lunch break at the archaeological dig site on the ejido of Kochol.

The five archaeologists sit together, and about fifteen Kocholeños (people of Kochol) sit in three groups. I climb the 10-meter mound adjacent to the household structure we are excavating; a few of the farmers join me.

One is the town's evangelical minister. He had been very kind to me as we worked together, so I thought I would make my first steps in ethnographic fieldwork with him. I ask, "Who do you think built these ancient pyramids?"

He pauses, then looks me directly in the eyes and says, "¡*Los Aztecas*!"

I had anticipated a different answer. It should have been "my glorious Maya ancestors. The archaeologists are helping us remember and discover our lost history." But that was not the case. My academic visions start to crumble with his answer.

ETHNOGENESIS IS A HUGE QUINCUNX, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM.

Ethnogenesis has great appeal. Some scholars are in love with the term. Others fall in and out of love with it. What we mean by love is *philos*, love of knowledge. It is this love of new information, new terms, that gives continuous birth and rebirth to the idea of ethnos or belonging. Those obsessed with ethnos think it it possible to build their philos through the concept of ethnogenesis.

Ethnogenesis explains the historical creation and recreation of identity through time and space. In particular, the "cultures" that are most inculcated to being "born" are in fact the peoples who survived conquest and colonialization. In the maintenance of Colonial social order, these obsessives can arrange and constitute their explanations still further by *structuring structures*, responding, as they see it, to the already established needs of a generative epistemic order. Lovers become pregnant with explanation, and what is born is not new life but a huge and unwieldy "ethnos quincunx."

In the Chilam Balam de Chumayel, the earth is described geometrically as a rectangular plane—an enormous *Ceiba* tree grows at its center (Bricker 1990; Roys 1933).[2] The tree supports the skies along with the other four mythical trees rooted at each corner of the plane (Montoliu Villar 1987). This is the quincunx (fig. 3.1).
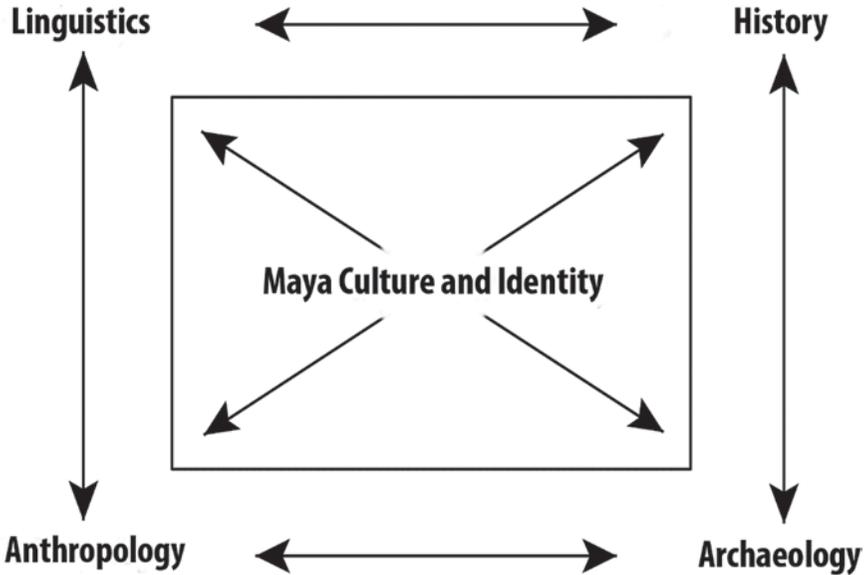
FIGURE 3.1. The quincunx

The Zinacantecos named it "Balamil." In their world, the center of the upper sur-face—the navel—is a low, rounded mound of earth located at the ceremonial center of Zinacantán. This place is a vortex from which the world extends from inside out and vice versa (Vogt 1990).

Touring the quincunx means traversing with the objectivist samples of knowing. According to what we have read of the Maya, the original quincunx explains how earth and humans were created, but for ethnogenisists the quincunx functions as more of a decoder that can disentangle and define the parameters of Maya identity. This model is composed of five dominions. The first four are history, linguistics, anthropology, and archaeology. The fifth emerges at the intersection of the other four: Maya culture and identity, the holy center, the *Ceiba*. Each dominion is a sacred tree of Westernizing knowledge.

SITTING IN A COLE'S COFFEEHOUSE ACROSS THE STREET FROM SAFEWAY, OAKLAND, CA. THE COFFEE HERE IS BETTER. MARCH 2008, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM AND TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ

TR.   What do you mean by ethnoexodus?

JCC.   My point is that ethnoexodus is about interpellating the socially consti-tuted status. You escape one frame by slipping into another.

TR.   Okay, and in Bourdieu's theory of practice, one's habitus operates in different fields of power relations with symbolic capital. Look here, in *The Logic of Practice* he defines *habitus* as follows:

The conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce[s] *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (Bourdieu 1990:181–90)

JCC.   I like how Bourdieu writes tautologically. But Timo, why do we have to explain everything with Bourdieu or Foucault? What these thinkers say is no doubt very important, but there are other ways of thinking. In anthropology, you are trained to think of things in a Westernized knowledge framework.

TR.   Of course, I agree that there are other ways of being that are distinct ways of knowing. In anthropology a baseline epistemic violence is done when Westernizing conceptual frames absorb indigenous ways of thinking into the "taboo effect"—that is, when an indigenous concept like "taboo" loses its meaning in translation and then comes to mean many things. The key here is that in modes of translation, it is important not to colonize meaning by attempting to create the conditions of possibility for what should be knowable and thinkable.

JCC.   Taboo effect . . . I'll have to think about that. Translation is about moving "in and out of context." It is about deepening the human experience. And Timo, you wrote in the KAS [Kroeber Anthropological Society] article (Rodriguez 2007) that habitus is useful for thinking through generative accumulative ways of being, right?

TR.   Yes, and Juan, you cannot pretend that you are not in the academy. You are always in a Western frame on a very fundamental level.

JCC.   That is exactly the problem! Anthropology always leaves little space to allow indigenous people, in fact all people, the opportunity to produce their own knowledge . . . That's "the Ishi effect," and thus we are forced to explain our notions in their Eurocentric framings. So, with ethnoexodus

it's about interpellating social status in epistemic framings. You escape one frame by slipping into another. And surprisingly, we end up in the same frame of ethnogenesis. Thus, escape is just an illusionary act.

TR.   Well, that is exactly why I say that ethnoexodus is still Eurocentric from an epistemic position.

JCC.   Uh huh, experts on us, *los Indios*, came to us, studied us, and explained how the act of becoming Maya is performed through ethno-topographies that are epochal events and historical processes. So, ethnogenesis is an act of faith because it is completely constructed, and for it to exist someone needs to believe in it; ethnoexodus is the act of living, NOT surviving.

TR.   This calls for the necessity to de-colonialize the act of living in an epistemic way. For example, Barack Obama's election to the White House may correctly be considered a de-colonializing political defeat of "Jim Crow."[3] But it is not necessarily a counter to epistemic racism (Grosfoguel 2007). Ethnogenesis, as an epistemic act of faith, is like Bourdieu's idea of the *doxa*, which is about "practical faith" as an inherent part of belonging to an academic "field" of knowledge production.

JCC.   And for Maya identity politics or identity formation in general, this kind of academic doxa is an assuming imposition of a disposition (a performing ethnos) in the "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" of identification. This is ethnogenesis.

TR.   Yes, and for Bourdieu, doxa is "the precondition and the product of function of the field . . . constituting the collective enterprise of creating symbolic capital" [Bourdieu 1990:68]. As such, doxa establishes the relationship between habitus and the field it engages. In the practice trichotomy (capital, field, and habitus), what is at stake, or rather the bare unit of analysis the entire theory rests on, is the notion of status.

JCC.   When considering status in relation to identity formation, there is a distinction between "identity" and "identification," where identification is about an assuming imposition of a position in a "generative field" embedded in power relations. Identity is something else.

TR.   So the question for me becomes: if capital, field, and habitus are about identity formation and what is at stake in practice is status, and given the "incorporated" and "objectified" historical power relations that constitute identification, how does one's durable, transposable

race expose the limits to the notion of acquired dispositions? In other words, identity formation is acquired in a field through gaining more symbolic value or capital. This is in fact not at all symbolic. Rather, it is a lived experience through your body. The trichotomy of practice is related to your culture, class, and embodiment of habitus. The materiality and features of a person's body exist prior to its habitus, which constitutes the schematic dispositions accumulated through symbolic capital in a social field of power relationships.

JCC.   Yeah, so this is simply about how you look. It is about your phenotypical features, your racial construction. Your habitus is always in your racialized body regardless of all the capital you gain and status you believe you have or the multiple fields you enter and exit.

TR.   And, of course, the salience of racialization will vary across context. It depends upon the gaze. How you "view" yourself and how you internalize "views" of yourself. In a phenomenological sense, a person is "looked at" more during a typical day than he or she looks at himself or herself.

JCC.   True . . . And have you seen the speech on *race* Obama just gave called "A More Perfect Union" (Obama 2008)?

TR.   It was fantastic!

JCC.   The movement in Obama's speech exemplifies what I mean by ethnoexodus. He conveyed an entry into territories of identities that multiply his already numerous identity formations. He said something like "[mine is] a story that has seared into my genetic makeup the idea that this nation is more than the sum of its parts—that out of many, we are truly one." Then he said, "Some commentators have deemed me either 'too black' or 'not black enough.'" His perpetual exiting and entering of identity is completely embedded in an "incorporated" and "objectified" historical power relation of identification. With ease, he slips in and out through his own identity politics.

TR.   So going beyond the imaginary and the symbolic by connecting one's presences to an epistemic form, that is a decolonizing epistemology and thus doesn't necessarily rely on Westernizing frameworks of status, when status translates to more hierarchies.

JCC.   Yes, and what I am doing with ethnoexodus is what I like to call the "Indian Casino Effect." I am conceptually cashing in on the reservation of notions the gringos imposed. I am flipping *La Tiendas de Raya*.

LINDA, A FORMER STUDENT, AND TIMOTEO HAVING CAPPUCCINOS AND CONVERSATION ABOUT MAYA PEOPLE IN CALIFORNIA AT AN ITALIAN RESTAURANT IN SAN FRANCISCO'S NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD, FEBRUARY 2008, TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ AND LINDA BARRERA

TR.   Well, critically understanding the usage of the term *Maya* as a concept requires grappling with the ways different people speak *about* the Maya, *to* the Maya, *for* the Maya, and *as* the Maya.

LB.   Oh, like how Juan Castillo Cocom decides to be Maya depending on the situation. (Laughs.)

TR.   By critically rethinking *who* is Maya, *how,* and *when* is his point. Thus, to be Maya today has different meanings for a Yucateco maize farmer, a North American anthropologist, an activist involved in the pan-Maya movement, or for Juan Castillo Cocom.

LB.   Or the dishwasher in this restaurant.

TR.   Yes.

LB.   That busboy from Merida thinks differently about being Maya than the dishwasher who is from a *pueblito*.

TR.   Yeah, so there is an ethnoracial signifier that associates as part of the ethnos category: for instances, dress or attire and certainly pheno-types as biological features categorize as racial markers.

LB.   But race is a social construct.

TR.   Yes, and as a social construct, ethnoracial categories affect social attitudes, emotional dispositions, and political-economic rationales in a legacy of colonial power relations, also called the colonial matrix of power.

KROEBER HALL, ROOM 151, ANTHROPOLOGY 179, HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MAYA, *"TECHNOLOGIES OF HISTORY*," DECEMBER 2008, TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ

If we consider the proposition *what could be more important than the truth* or, put another way, who has the capacity, force, and access to certain kinds of power relations that facilitate or inculcate individuals with a practical sense, belief, or faith in prescribed parameters of what can be thought of as truth and falsehood, then the question becomes: how are status and identity politics related to the claims of truth in history?

As such, through an "event" in history and the "process" of re-collecting the *socio-genic* (Fanon 1967) historical fragments of past contexts in a "continuous contextualizing" present, we find that human conditions rotate through a series of embedded power struggles. To tell history is to interpret the present, and William Hanks (1996:269) writes: "The telling of history is filtered through the genres in which it occurs." So, an understanding of this human condition is considered one and the same, a bodily human object of existence in symbiotic relation to a human epistemic subject of knowledge.

Given this, the question becomes: how are status and identity related to a biological hierarchy?

In Yucatán, Mexico, the ethnos of the Maya is in many ways a consequence of what Walter Mignolo (2001) schematized as the modern/Colonial world system. During the initial conquest, native people were legally referred to and racially categorized as Indio, Indians. In this early Colonial period, other racial-legal configurations such as Mestizo, Mulatto, and Negro were developed and invented. In the Spanish colony, the people who embodied these categories operated in a social order of apartheid. The most segregated were the Indios, who lived in their own physical and social sphere—La República de Indios.

The colonizing European "man"—Peninsular or Criollo—positioned himself at the top of this racial hierarchy. These were self-identified *gente de razón* (rational people) (Lockhart and Schwartz 1999). This position linked an epistemic configuration to biological structures.

As the Bourbon reforms and then hacienda plantations gained more prominence, Yucatec native identification moved away from Maya T'aan terms such as Almehen or Chembal Uinic through the Franciscan missionary notion of Indio reducido and into lunero, a native who worked on a Hispanic estate on Mondays. These luneros then became full-fledge debt peonage peasants, *campesinos*, or *henequeneros*. My point with this Yucatec genealogy of identity politics is that each historical form of identification perpetuated a racial-legal and socioeconomic norm of the colonialized subject.

In the early 1800s, as Spanish American colonies declared independence, New Spain and La República de Indios collapsed, yet the emergences of Criollo nationalist identity maintained internal Colonial structures and identity markers (Bonfil Batalla 1994; Lockhart and Schwartz 1999). Even though Colonial administrations had been dismantled, Colonial relations with identification continued, as exemplified by terms from the social categories of the Colonial period for Maya people, such as *Indio*, *Lunero*, *Hidalgo*, *J-Wiit*, *Masewal*, *Almehen*, *Mehen*, and *Uinic* (Hervik 2003; Restall 2004).

In Yucatán today, identifiers and social categories are terms like Indio, Mestizo, *X-éek' pik* (*justán sucio*), *Wiro*, *Naco*, Totonaco, Indígena, and Maya. As Güemez Pineda writes:

> The urban discrimination toward Maya Yucateco speakers and/or "mestizos" is manifested in the use of pejorative terms and expressions like *wiro*, "*mestiza*" (or "*wirito*" or "*mesticita*" ...). "*Gente ignorante*" (ignorant people); "*Gente pobre*" (poor people); "*indio*" (Indian), even "*Naco*." These terms are usually used to refer to the Maya-campesino population. Thus, one can hear in the popular jargon expressions like: "*Pareces mestiza de pueblo*" (You seem racially a mestiza of a pueblo); "*es un wiro*" (he is wiro'); "*es más naco*" (he is very naco). Even "*ser de pueblo*" (to come from a pueblo) still constitutes a social stigma. (Güémez Pineda n.d.)

The next paragraph is an example of the use of these offensive terms. Conrado Roche Reyes (2007), a journalist and respected writer who confesses that he is a racist and who in the quincunx is a *Catrín, Ts'ul*, or *Blanco*, was struck in his knee by a bus of the urban transport service of Mérida, Yucatán. In telling his story he writes:

> I felt a great pain. First thing that came to my mind was to tell to him: "*chinga tu madre indio de mierda*." Like *hunouaye* [*sic*],[4] he step[ped] down from his bus and came on me to hit me ... Forgive me *indigenistas* for my enormous racism, but I have noticed that nothing is more offensive to an Indio than to be called Indio. I affirm it. (Roche Reyes 2007:4)

> Lo primero que se me ocurrió fue decirle: "chinga tu madre indio de mierda." Como *hunouaye* [*sic*], se bajó de su "unidad" y se me fue encima. Y es que, perdónenme los indigenistas, en mi enorme racismo, me he dado cuenta que nada ofende más a un indio, que le llamen indio. Yo ... lo afirmo. (Roche Reyes 2007:4)

Since colonialism is imbricated in the formation of the modern nation-state, many Colonial forms of domination and normative hierarchies of labor, spirituality, aesthetics, gender, sexuality, epistemology, and ethno-racial identity persist. Anibal Quijano (2000) refers to these relations as *coloniality*. Thus, enlightened nationalism brought civil liberties for some and subjugation to the "coloniality of power" for others. Ramón Grosfoguel (2003:4) concisely defines coloniality of power as referring to "a crucial structuring process in the modern/Colonial capitalist world-system that articulates peripheral locations in the international division of labor, subaltern group political strategies, and Third World migrant's [*sic*] inscription in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities."

How the coloniality of power takes shape in identity formation through the second nationalist movement after the 1910 Mexican Revolution is particularly

important to contemporary epistemic framings. The post-revolutionary nationalism, Mexican archaeology, and ethnography provided the state with fresh pre-Columbian *cultural capital* to affirm nationalist roots (Rus 2004; Watanabe and Fischer 2004) yet simultaneously relegated indigenous people to an idyllic past, as such quintessentially pre-modern.

Robert Redfield's "urban-folk continuum" (1941) operates in this coloniality matrix, and Mel Gibson's (2006) *Apocalypto* film further exemplifies its legacy. Hence, the notion of the Maya in the framework of coloniality emerged in the twentieth century as an *anthropos* in the ethnos—as a non-European "man" in the colonialized identification subject position (subjectivity)—to be investigated from the nationalist side of the coloniality of power (as opposed to the side of de-colonializing epistemic difference).

In broadening the scope to Guatemala, Chiapas, and the pan-Maya Movement, the challenges posed by Maya intellectuals not only emphasize coloniality in anthropological inquiry but also stress its configuration of research agendas toward identity formation (Cojtí Cuxil 1991; Montejo 1999; Zapeta 1997). Epistemically, what takes shape is an anastrophe-like effect on the ethnos. This movement is an affect practice that traverses the topography of reasoned anthropological discourse toward a trans-ethnos attitude (Rodriguez 2007). The "traditional" normalized social order of the anthropos (the third-person ontological unit) in the ethnos (the exotic bounded unit of analysis) is epistemically transfigured, or rather de-colonialized, by subsuming and turning back to the rationale of Westernizing constructs that positioned the colonizing European man as gente de razón. Further, this trans-ethnos attitude is a contemporary body politics of knowledge that escapes the game of status by not falling into anticipation of historically produced conditions of possibility that tell you and me "who we are" and "how we should be." As such, the legacy of the Colonial matrix of power, which linked an epistemic configuration to phenotype and biological structures, is thus inverted but not as an essentialist or reductionist form of identity politics—rather, as a contemporary inquiry that critically pushes beyond the limits imposed through the normalized technologies of history.

ETHNOS: A GENESIS OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION IMAGINARY, TIMOTEO RODRIGUEZ

The term *ethnos* (ἔθνος) is rooted in ancient Greece, the birthplace of the Western civilization imaginary. The concept of ethnos had the connotation of an oppositional category of identification for ancient Greeks. Originally meaning "a number of people living together, host of men, of a particular tribe or caste," ethnos further referred to "non-Athenian athletes during the Olympics." Later, in the Roman

period, the term signified a "province" or colony of the empire. In general, ethnos meant "nation or people." But it also came to mean "foreign, barbarous nation or people" (Liddell and Scott 1948). As such, ethnos indexes more than a convenience for early anthropologists in their study of the "savage" (ethnology) and the writing of colonized people (ethnography). An anthropology without an ethnos is unthinkable. Thus, the thinkable or politically correct anthropologist activates a technology of history in a specific locus and within a framing of a particular epistemic position. A trichotomy of time, space, and an episteme are the elements that constitute an ethnogenesis.

Whereas the ancient Greeks are the genesis of democracy, civility, morality, and philosophy in a macro-narrative of Western civilization, the ethnos is the diametric identity marker for this Westernizing imaginary. As such, this macro-narrative is tied to a celebratory historiography that first occurred during the Renaissance. Iberian colonialism of the Americas and Africa is the "darker side of the Renaissance" (Mignolo 1999). This darker side in the sixteenth century is the coloniality embedded in the modernity of the twenty-first century. Further, for Quijano (2000), coloniality of power is a principle and strategy of control and domination that can be conceived of as a configuration of modernity.

It follows that European imperialist arrangements of materials, events, processes, and people took a hierarchical order, distinguishing primary sources of thought in the pristine development of a birthplace for Western civilization in its land of origin: Greece (Mignolo 2001). The consolidation of a Western civilization imaginary occurs with northwestern European imperialist ambitions, the French Enlightenment, German Romantic philosophy, and the British Industrial Revolution (all nations and ideas that are part of Mexico's convoluted history). The emergence and epistemic framing of the social sciences in the nineteenth century are inseparable from this Westernizing macro-narrative (Mignolo 2000, 2001). The principles of Western epistemology developed out of an invented set of values that started in Greece.

The European imperial difference draws out a time/space matrix that creates a Western civilization imaginary, which first flourished with the Spanish Conquest of the indigenous people and places of the Americas. The conquest marked the distinction between imperial and Colonial difference at one level and simultaneously produced clear hierarchies that were ethnoracialized categories, a specific set of sexual/gender relations, a Christo-spiritual qualification, forced labor, and a Eurocentric episteme.

Those hierarchies were not static and did not produce strict lines of brown and white or a clear mestizaje. Hence, there is no real contemporary dichotomy between the Maya and non-Maya. For example, *h meen* (roughly translated as "shaman")

epitomize something that is/is not Spanish, is/is not Maya, and certainly is/is not Mestizo or any "mathematical" combination of those identity tags. In diasporic times and places of the 40,000 Mayas living in California, a *h meen* in this context might be a Chicano, a Cholo, a Mara Salvatrucha, a Latino, a cook, a busser, a day laborer, a heroin user, an *evangélico*, and so on. This is *Nepantla* (Anzaldúa 1999), which references living at the *crossroads*, in the *borderlands* of identity formation. Its analytical traction is a way to think through embodied in-betweenness and multiplicity through identity. As such, Nepantla is the movement in and out of ethnogenesis boxes.

The writers of the Books of Chilam Balam, or contemporary *h meen*, interpellated the Colonial framing of knowledge production. They subsumed the epistemology and the spiritualization of knowledge from the locus of the so-called ethnos. The Franciscan missionaries in their "peaceful conquest" and with the project of *reducción* attempted to produce *indios reducidos* through *policía cristiana* by coordinating space, conduct, and language (Hanks 2010), with the hope of "structurating" the conditions of possibility for predictable anticipations of identification. Centuries later, a consequence of imposed identification from reducción is the epistemic emergence of anthropologists (like Morley, Redfield, and Villa Rojas) believed to have unearthed an ethnos at Chichén Itzá or in Chan Kom and X-cacal, respectively. This ethnogenesis identification, rooted in the Western civilization imaginary, maintains a pristine narrative that sustains a prosperous academic paradigm and Yucatán's tourist industries but leaves Mayas like Castillo Cocom trapped in a quincunx of air conditioning and stuffed, painted iguanas.

ESCAPING THE QUINCUNX: THE INDIVIDUAL INTERPLAY OF IKNAL AND THE CURRENT OF SELF-GENERATED IDENTIFICATIONS, JUAN CASTILLO COCOM

Ethnoexodus moves in and out of imposed limits of epistemic frameworks in a Westernizing legacy. It migrates, uses, and draws upon one's disposition in a given social environment, corporal field, or neglect situation. Perhaps we could think of this movement as one's habitus because at one level, habitus is exactly that: a disposition in a field of power that brings out one's capacities to act in a particular social setting. That is also what ethnoexodus does because it is "who you are" and "how you are" identified that creates an embodied cultural, social, or academic capital.

As habitus is transposable, it goes with you wherever you are; in one context you will act one way, and in another you draw upon a different disposition. This depends on what is at stake in a particular social field of power relations; thus, the social actor will access dispositions that are bodily. Ethnoexodus could be described

in this way, too. The problem with habitus, if we are thinking from the perspective of a Colonial difference, and the problem with ethnoexodus, if we are thinking of the epistemic rupture of the Colonial difference, is that like genesis, "habitus," "ethnos," and "exodus" all draw upon a lexicon and a conceptualization that do not necessarily break with an epistemic narrative of the Western civilization imaginary.

Ethnoexodus disrupts the idea of ethnogenesis by interpellating it; it still hangs on to the Westernizing epistemic framing, though, as does habitus. Nevertheless, there are crucial distinctions between habitus and ethnoexodus. Habitus has a universal or neutral connotation of identity formation that falls on either side of the dichotomy that is the Colonial or imperial epistemic difference. Ethnoexodus or ethnogenesis, in contrast, seems to always fall on the side of the Colonial difference because ethnos cannot be neutral or universal. It always refers to non-dominant people through discourses and practices. This is why epistemically there is history and then there is ethnohistory; there is botany and ethnobotany, musicology and ethnomusicology, anthropology and ethnic studies. What is needed is a notion that does not necessarily draw its conceptual tradition from a Westernizing imaginary but rather subsumes it. This would be something like a trans-ethnos movement (Rodriguez 2007), but it would not actually need to move in and then beyond a Eurocentricizing knowledge base. It does not need to be a *trans* or an *ethnos*. We propose the concept of iknal.

Iknal is not necessarily related to status as its most basic unit of analysis in the way habitus necessitates status. Iknal has most of the characteristics of habitus but also conceptualizes other situations, frames of reference, and indexical fields that are not possible to conceptualize with habitus. One's habitus is always with that individual, whereas one's iknal can reside in a locality without the person's physical presence and yet still index that person's *place*. Iknal has been defined as "in front of, with, before, *presence*" (Bricker, Po'ot Yah, and Dzul de Po'ot 1998:11, emphasis added). So one could say in Maya T'aan *ko'oten t'inwiknal* San Francisco, which translates as "come to my place in San Francisco." According to the Cordemex Maya Dictionary, iknal is defined as "con/with, en compañía/in the company of, *en poder/in charge of or in control of*, en casa/at home, o donde alguno está/ or where someone is" (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980, emphasis added). With a focus on *presence* and *en poder*, one's iknal is the embodied *context* and *product* of social relations. Thus, iknal has to do with where a person is physically and habitually present but is not caught in the power game of status.

Another distinction is expressed by the phrase *tinwiknal*, which means "*at* (or *to*) my place" in association with space transformed by labor or inhabitance (Hanks 1990:436–40). It becomes a kind of *place*holder as long as that person habitually frequents that locality through his or her presence. A person's iknal could reside at

the side of the kitchen in the fine restaurant at which he or she works or on the step a person sits on in front of his or her apartment in San Francisco's Mission District, on a bicycle ride, or at the place I stand in a crowded metro train (Rodriguez 2007).

Epistemically, iknal is at the core of Maya thinking. In Maya T'aan one's iknal is the embodied and disembodied quality of "being present" as the *context* and *product* of relationships. It is both a shared and an individuated transposable field of sensory awareness and action. It is "presence" and "en poder." The iknal is an understanding of one's bodily space and one's perceptive opinion and attitude. Iknal is the potential of omnipresence: the state of being present in all places at all times. Wherever you are at any moment, your iknal is there with you. Iknal is a human experience, experienced by experiencing Maya philosophy. Ethnoexodus is the movement in and out of the context of power relations through identity formations without status. Although what is familiar is not the same, iknal is an example of a universal human performance that exceeds status. Iknal through ethnoexodus is the complexity of human experience—always existing in the dynamism of past, present, and imagined spaces informed by the fluidity of multiple identifications and experiences.

On another level, ethnoexodus embodies and breaks the limits of "epistemic double-consciousness." It subsumes what is believed to be generative to knowledge that produces tradition—the genesis of the ethnos—and then perverts ethnogenesis by forcing it into the box it pretends to never be a part of, which is "essentialism." Ethnoexodus does not mean there is no Maya; rather, it means that what is Maya is the individual interplay of iknal and the current self-generated identifications, removed from the quincunx.

In the same way colonialism is constitutive of modernity, the concept of ethnogenesis emphasizes the study of the ethnos. As such, the ethnos is not necessarily the most productive unit of analysis of the construction of a Maya identity (or identity formation in general). Thus, the ethnos simply maintains the status of Westernizing science and the identity structures that hold that science to be true.

ANOTHER FANCY RESTAURANT IN JOSÉ MARÍA MORELOS, QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO, DRINKING UNFILTERED AGUA DE CHAYA CON PIÑA, SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2014, MCCALE ASHENBRENER

Castillo Cocom's course Derechos Humanos Indígenas y Organización Étnica (Human Rights and Ethnic Indigenous Organization) was enlightening, fascinating, and frustrating. I was intrigued by ethnoexodus but often confused by his segmented and ruptured delivery. Over the course of many long lunches, I was able to tease out my understanding of ethnoexodus. This concept focuses on the movement

between and among identities, reflecting on the situational variables that cause one to highlight or hide indigeneities to escape from discriminatory processes of sociocultural marginalization. Essentially, Castillo Cocom is tired of having to define himself within a Western imaginary paradigm, which uses static ideas of time, space, and "objective" knowledge. He proposes iknal as a new lens with which to view identity construction that is more fluid and dynamic and that can encompass the almost ineffable complexity of interplay between competing identifications. Just as all of what we are cannot exist in a box of unidentifiable remains, our presence is not constricted purely to our physical location or status; therefore, it is worth exploring another perspective on what it means to be.

In the end, I believe Castillo Cocom wants to transcend ethnogenesis, which uses the quincunx as a decoder of sorts where you plug in certain variables and out pops a formulaic and fictitious identification of "Maya." Perhaps through ethnoexodus, Castillo Cocom would like to focus less on what Maya *is* than on what it is *not*; instead, exploring the temporal sutures in which we choose to escape the identity social constructs inevitably provide to us and which we find inadequate. Castillo Cocom has a unique perspective in that he has traversed the gleaming halls of academia at Florida International University, the University of Maryland, and the University of California, Berkeley, but he exists primarily in the haunted ground of his ancestors (whoever they were). He feels the enormous weight of the quincunx, like Ishi, trapped in a museum of words in which the ethnogenesist delineation of "Maya" is rooted in a fictitious and constructed past. In a very real way, for him as Maya it is imperative to escape the concrete galoshes of the quincunx to re-conceptualize the long fetishized Maya identity through the ubiquity of iknal and the mobility of ethnoexodus that interpellates the inherent rules to the network of discursive and non-discursive relations that has been defining who, what, when, where, and why is Maya since the late nineteenth century.

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NOTES

1. My studies at Berkeley covered what Castillo Cocom refers to as the "quincunx." But finally I was going to take my first stab at producing knowledge about not just the Maya but the producers of the production of the Maya.

2. *Ceiba pentandra*, or Ya'axché in Yucatec Maya.

3. The Jim Crow laws created segregated public facilities, which designated "separate but equal" status for black Americans and other non-white racial groups between 1876 and 1965 in the United States.

4. Roche Reyes (2007) uses this term as a combination of two quincunxs (Hun and Uaye') to imply that an Indio is a savage, brute, beast, wild man/woman, ruffian, vandal, troglodyte. Huns: Savage and barbaric people who invaded Europe in the fourth century. Uaye' (*waye'*): in Maya T'aan that means "here" (aquí, acá). *Tene' uayileen* (*tene' wayile'en*) [yo soy de aquí o acá].

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