

## Radical Futures

Isabela Escobedo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Chicana/o Studies Commons](#), [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Learning Commons](#), [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons](#), [Educational Sociology Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), [Reading and Language Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Escobedo, Isabela () "Radical Futures," *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*: Vol. 6, Article 59.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos/vol6/iss1/59>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](#)

© 2016 Department of Critical Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies (CRGS) at Humboldt State University.

This Counternarratives and Reflections is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. It has been accepted for inclusion in CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. For more information, please contact [kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu](mailto:kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu).

## Radical Futures

Isabela Escobedo

Over the course of the Radical Futures (CRGS 331) class, we have been exposed to numerous types of lifestyles, resistances, and artistic expressions that we would not normally have seen in generic education. This class enables us to learn about what various communities have in common and how they struggle in similar and different ways. This has helped to create a new perspective of connection within resistance and empowerment. The importance of and connection to land and water constantly comes into light, for it is what we all come from and something we all share.

Growing up in Seattle, Washington, water was always nearby. Driving 15 minutes East from my house was Lake Washington, where you could park your car one hundred feet away from the choppy water and watch boats go by. Then 15 minutes West from my parent's house is the Puget Sound, where the sunset behind the mountains makes the sky turn golden. I love that I grew up on the West Coast. I do not think I would want to live somewhere that does not have access to the ocean or some kind of body of water. The water in Seattle was always way too cold to actually go swimming in, but being on the beach with the sound of the waves is just as special. I did always love swimming in pools growing up. I still do, though I do not have the opportunity as often anymore. One of my all-time favorite things to do in the water was to let myself relax, float, and move *with* the water, and then watch the water catch light. A sense of calm but playful opportunity was just the right mix of rest and fun.

When I was in high school, I asked my Omi, my mom's mom, to write something for me to use in a school project. She wrote me a story about how she learned from her mom to swim in the Danube River. She has fond memories of her mother and sisters, "every bit like a mother duck, [we] would walk up the Danube, it seemed like miles, with [mother's] brood of five girls behind her, all of us in swimsuits, having left our towels and clothes and even shoes or sandals behind downstream..." (Hunt 2016). I have come to love this short and sweet story for many reasons, but one so especially because I have memories of swimming and water with her, similar to her with her own mother.

This semester at school, I participated in Danza Azteca. Among the many absolutely wonderful things about Danza Azteca, I think my top favorite part of the practice is that we usually dance with no shoes. The importance of all the elements in Danza Azteca creates a connection to the earth, and is an appreciation I hope to never lose. Danza helps me to feel connected, but I have not always felt so close to the earth around me, especially in my body. Photographer Suné Woods touches on nature and placement in relation to the natural body. Using her body and land together to disrupt dominant narratives of violence, Woods created the start of a much needed discussion for how space is seen. Kris Timken, author of "Suné Woods: Landscape and Memory," reminds us that belonging can come in any form we will it to. Much like Woods' counter narrative, photographer Laura Aguilar also utilizes the body and space in nature to disrupt internalized and embedded perceptions.

I was in awe when I first saw just a few of Aguilar's landscape photos. Specifically mentioned from the academic review by Sybil Venegas, titled "Take Me to the River," Laura Aguilar's work touches on land and belonging, as she places herself in scenes of nature with her body, mostly nude, as herself. She disrupts the dominant narratives that cloud the female, large, ethnic, and queer bodied individual. I have immense respect for women who choose to empower themselves by putting their bodies on platforms and into public media. I have had a long and not so healthy relationship with my body and everything it represents to me. I would say I am now at the healthiest I have been, and now within my own healing, but I hope one day I have healed enough to put my own body with nature as did Laura. Seeing Laura Aguilar's work helps me to heal further, for one, by being a representation I can connect to, and two, challenging me to continue my journey and respect my body and how I exist within it. My body is human and it is doing all it can for me to live my best life.

One component within healing that I find myself experiencing a lot is recognition, as part of healing is also acknowledging where you are now. I have done a lot of therapy in my life, and I could take up hours complaining about things I still struggle with or new issues that come along, but I have learned that it is also crucial to make time to stop and recognize (and maybe even celebrate) where you are in that moment. Even if I am not where I want to be, I am still in a different place than I

was a year ago, in the same and different ways than 5 weeks ago, and even yesterday. Getting to learn about rocks in class, especially glacial erratics, has become a reminder of the importance of recognition, as every rock has a story, and none can lie about it.

Artist Beatriz Cortez and her work looks at human migration, and being in a place that is different from you. When I picture a glacial erratic I think about the surface of the rock, and the stories it tells of how it got there. The form of the glacial erratic, both naturally created and made by Cortez, show in texture their story of movement. Some parts of the surface may be smooth, but there are also bumps, cracks, broken bits, and even sometimes moss on an erratic glacier. Like laugh lines, tattoos, and scars, every body and vessel has a way of showing its physical journey through time.

Though glacial erratics are no longer migrating, they remind me of movement, rather than stagnance. They remind me that even though a process may be happening slowly, you are still moving, even if you can't really feel or see it happening. The earth is constantly spinning, and time is moving forwards, but it's happening so slowly and in such a way that we don't recognize it until after it has happened. Part of being a CRGS major includes considering and recognizing where I come from and how I got here. This has gotten me to think about the possibilities of location and how that plays a huge role for everyone. My mom's mother is from Germany, though my mom was born in Alaska. My dad was born in Coahuila, Mexico, but lived most of his school life in Texas, where he met my mom in college. They got married young and moved to Seattle, where I spent my whole life. Now, I have a Humboldt education that can help take me anywhere. In all the possible locations between countries, states, cities, and schools in my history and lineage, the universe aligned so that I would be here, now.

As a graduating senior, I have had to think a lot about my future, while simultaneously working at my present. When I think about where I want to be, I have no idea. When I think about where I am going, I think about Seattle, because that is my home, and where I will be living again. I love my home, but Seattle is not for me anymore. Seattle is big, busy, and future-oriented. I like to have slow mornings, quiet walks, and be present-minded. Even though Seattle is where I was born, I

have never felt a huge connection to the physical land. Being a CRGS major makes me have more consideration for where I am, and has also given me better resources to understand the history of where I live.

When I took a geology class in high school, my teacher did a small unit on glacial erratics. I do not remember a lot, but I do recall the opportunity to get extra credit to go take a selfie with the local glacial erratic rock, located right in the middle of a Seattle neighborhood. That rock is a landmark for people in the local area. I remember growing up and kids would spend time climbing and playing on it. I believe I was twelve when I first climbed the erratic. Having that memory, combined with what I have been learning about and discussing recently, connects several years in my life, from 2016 to now. I recall having printed out the picture of my selfie with the erratic, and my teacher promptly stuck it on the whiteboard for all the class to see. I am unable to find that image again, but maybe I will take the opportunity to remake it.

In Seattle, I will be in Duwamish region and in a county originally named for a slave-owning white man. Though now it is widely advertised that King County realigned its brand under the namesake of Martin Luther King Jr., these histories are not yet talked about enough, if even at all in Seattle, and that does make me a little nervous. But, like an erratic glacial rock, I will be in a place a bit different from what I have been used to, but my presence is the first of many steps to have CRGS celebrated and respected the way we do erratic glaciers. Who knows? My future is as radical as I make it.

**Works Cited:**

Anonymous. "Background about the Logo- King County." *Background about the Logo- King County*, Dec. 2016.

LaCava, Stephanie, et al. "Beatriz Cortez: 'Drawing Lines in the Air with Metal'." *Frieze*, 24 Sept. 2020,

Hunt, I. "Learning to Swim, Dangerously." 2016, Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Timken, Kris. "Suné Woods: Landscape and Memory." *The New Explorers*, Sept. 2015.

Venegas, Sybil. "Take Me to the River: The Photography of Laura Aguilar" in Epstein, Rebecca (ed.), *Laura Aguilar: Show and Tell* (2017). UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press.

Venegas, Sybil. "Connected to the Land: The Work of Laura Aguilar." KCET, 11 April 2018.