

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2019

Through subtle shades of color, the cover design represents the layers of richness and diversity that flourish within minority communities.

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2019

A collection of scholarly research by fellows of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program

Preface

We are happy to share with you the 2019 edition of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal.

For more than 30 years, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program has endeavored to promote diversity in the faculty of higher education, specifically by supporting thousands of students from underrepresented minority groups in their goal of obtaining PhDs. With the MMUF Journal, for the past 25 years we have provided an additional opportunity for students to experience academia through exposure to the publishing process. In addition to providing an audience for student work, the journal offers an introduction to the publishing process, including peer review and editor-guided revision of scholarly work. For the majority of students, the MMUF Journal is their first experience in publishing a scholarly article.

The 2019 Journal features writing by 32 authors from 23 colleges and universities that are part of the program's member institutions. The scholarship represented in the journal ranges from research conducted under the MMUF program, introductions to senior theses, and papers written for university courses. The work presented here includes scholarship from a wide range of disciplines across the humanities and social sciences.

We hope that you are as inspired as we are by how these authors fearlessly tackle complex questions that cut to the heart of who we are and what we value. Through close reading, historical analysis, empirical study, and ethnographic exploration, the articles encourage the reader to think in new ways about difficult topics including gender and sexuality, religion, globalization, race, social justice, and the body. Many pieces give voice to themes and peoples who have historically been marginalized, and/or tackle current events ranging from Hurricane Maria to recent television and film. In short, the 2019 Journal beautifully demonstrates the way that scholarship can broaden our worldview.

It has been an honor to work with these young scholars as they prepared their work for publication. We are so proud to share their work with you.

Elissa Krakauer Jacobs
MMUF Journal Editor-in-Chief
University Writing Program
Brandeis University

Editorial Board

Gregory A. Llacer

MMUF Journal Editorial Board Chair
Director, Office of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships
Harvard University

Liza Cariaga-Lo

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
President and Founder
The LCLO Group (A Higher Education and Workforce Development Consulting Firm)

Norm Jones

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Amherst College

Cammi Valdez

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
Director, McNair Scholars Program
Wellesley College

Krishna Winston

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
Marcus L. Taft Professor of German Language and Literature, Emerita
Professor of Environmental Studies, Emerita
Wesleyan University

Journal Administration

Elizabeth Perten

Assistant Director, Research and Fellowships
Harvard University

MMUF Program / Mellon Foundation

Armando Bengochea

Senior Program Officer and Director of MMUF
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Lee Bynum

Senior Program Associate and Associate Director of MMUF
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Table of Contents

3	Kiran Baldeo, <i>City College of New York</i> The White Savior and the Emasculated Asian: Understanding the Continual Projection of the White Savior Complex, Emasculation of Asian Men, and Ideas of Normative Masculinity Using the Lens of <i>Gran Torino</i> Advisor/Mentor(s): Laurie Woodard	57	Gennifer K. Geer, <i>Rice University</i> Race, Dating, and Self-Discovery in Okinawa: A History of <i>Kokujo</i> Advisor/Mentor(s): Tani Barlow, Alexander X. Byrd
7	Aleya Banwari, <i>University of Cape Town</i> Unrelentlessly Gazing upon Numbers of the Body: The Case of Mokgadi Caster Semenya and Her Bodily Deviance Advisor/Mentor(s): Fiona Ross, Sean Sampson	61	Steven M. Gomez, <i>Princeton University</i> Walls that Talk: Conveying Histories through Graffiti Art in Colombia's Comuna 13 Advisor/Mentor(s): Robert Karl, Seth Perry
13	Jack Casey, <i>University of Southern California</i> Illusions of Justice: "Legal Lynching" in Scottsboro and <i>McCleskey v. Kemp</i> Advisor/Mentor(s): Edgardo Pérez Morales, Alisa Sánchez	65	Giovanni Martin Green, <i>Hunter College</i> The Black Panther Party and the Criminalization of Social Justice Advisor/Mentor(s): Susan Cardenas, D'Weston Haywood, David Julian Hodges
18	Sara Castro Font, <i>University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras</i> Nerds vs. <i>Cacos</i> and <i>Yales</i> : Language Ideologies in Puerto Rican Students' English Language Acquisition Advisor/Mentor(s): María Inés Castro	70	Katharyn L. Hernández, <i>Rice University</i> Teresita Fernández: An Exploration of Latin American Political Perspectives Through the Physical Space of Artwork Advisor/Mentor(s): Fabiola Lopez-Duran, Diane Wolfthal
23	Jess Chen, <i>Duke University</i> A Bedroom of One's Own: Martin Wong and <i>My Secret World</i> : 1978–1981 Advisor/Mentor(s): Kristine Stiles	76	Jacob M. Hood, <i>The University of Texas at Austin</i> The Televised Gaze: Politics of Respectability and Survival on <i>Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School</i> Advisor/Mentor(s): Marcelo Paixão
27	Clayton Covington, <i>Washington University in St. Louis</i> Buggery and "Battymen": A Brief History of the Jamaican Buggery Law Advisor/Mentor(s): Monique Bedasse	81	Mobey Irizarry Lambricht, <i>Oberlin College</i> Dreaming in Disaster: Hope and Resiliency in Puerto Rican Hip Hop after Hurricane María Advisor/Mentor(s): Gina Pérez
32	Fedora Cox, <i>Brooklyn College</i> The Underrepresentation of African Americans in 21st-Century Children's Literature Advisor/Mentor(s): Roni Natov	86	Janis Jin, <i>Yale University</i> Taking Flight: <i>Sula</i> and the Gift of Death Advisor/Mentor(s): Sunny Xiang
37	Koren Dalipe, <i>Whittier College</i> <i>Estamos Aquí y Somos Queer</i> : ACT UP/LA and Latino Involvement in Anti-AIDS Activism Advisor/Mentor(s): Laura McEnaney, Elizabeth Sage	90	Gabriella Lee, <i>Hunter College</i> The Ontology of Suppression: Apostasy, Disconnection, and the "Suppressive Person" Type Advisor/Mentor(s): Angela Reyes
41	Daniel Alejandro Delgado, <i>Amberst College</i> Multiculturalism and <i>Mestizaje</i> in Afro-Colombian Political Life Advisor/Mentor(s): Olufemi Vaughan	95	Sophia Lindner, <i>University of Pennsylvania</i> Washbuckets to Oceans: Understanding the Versatility of the Blues Mood through Water Imagery Advisor/Mentor(s): Margo Crawford
47	Jessikah Díaz, <i>University of California, Los Angeles</i> "We Die, My Friend": Material Death in Wordsworth's "The Ruined Cottage" Advisor/Mentor(s): Anahid Nersessian	99	Victor Chimaway Lopez, <i>Amberst College</i> The Colonial Aesthetics of Cattle: Alienation and Domestication in Edward Vischer's Views of Santa Barbara, CA Advisor/Mentor(s): Lisa Brooks
51	Ana Patricia Esqueda, <i>Princeton University</i> The Role of Language Transfer: Spanish-Speaking Children's Success in Artificial Language Production Advisor/Mentor(s): Adele Goldberg, Nicole Shelton	107	Anabel Mendoza, <i>Northwestern University</i> Contesting Public Discourse: How Latino/a/x Print Media Reframes Narratives of Immigration in the Age of IRCA Advisor/Mentor(s): Myrna Garcia

Table of Contents

113

Guadalupe Mota, *University of Southern California*
Grappling Contradictions: Visualizing Order and Chaos in Colonial Mexico City
Advisor/Mentor(s): Daniela Bleichmar, Edgardo Pérez Morales

118

Sam Nakahira, *Grimmell College*
Japanese American Food Pioneers of California Cuisine and Local Food Movements
Advisor/Mentor(s): Sarah Purcell

122

Selam Solomon Nicola, *Carleton College*
How Much Does Your Cup of Coffee Really Cost?
Ethiopia's Coffee Farmers in the Globalizing Coffee Industry
Advisor/Mentor(s): Annette Nierobisz

127

Lucas René Ramos, *Princeton University*
Playing with Fascism: The Case of Italian Mickey Mouse and His Fascist Doppelgänger (1938–1943)
Advisor/Mentor(s): Alessandro Giammei, Gyan Prakash

132

Colin Carter Sanborn, *Oberlin College*
Mediation and Meditation in the Torre de la Parada
Advisor/Mentor(s): Christina Neilson

138

Alexandra Sánchez Rolón, *Duke University*
Misrepresenting Santería: Cuba's Concerns with Modernity and Blackness
Advisor/Mentor(s): Patrice Douglass

142

Morinade Jayla Stevenson, *Wellesley College*
The Inauthentic Life: Racialization and Race Thinking in Sirk's *Imitation of Life*
Advisor/Mentor(s): Tracey Cameron, Corinne Gartner, Lindsey Stewart

147

Roberto Andrés Talavera Pagán, *University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras*
The Death of the Prophet in Three Aljamiado Manuscripts. A Comparative Analysis (ms. BRAH T-18, ms. BRAH T-12, and ms. BPR II/3226)
Advisor/Mentor(s): María Luisa Lugo Acevedo

154

Fatima Tariq, *Hunter College*
English as the New French: Nation-State Building and Language as Capital in Morocco
Advisor/Mentor(s): Alexander Elinson, Angela Reyes

159

Gasira Timir, *Haverford College*
Didion's Facsimile of Yeat's "Rough Beast." Infantile Citizenship in Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*
Advisor/Mentor(s): Stephen Finley, Lindsay Reckson

The White Savior and the Emasculated Asian: Understanding the Continual Projection of the White Savior Complex, Emasculation of Asian Men, and Ideas of Normative Masculinity Using the Lens of *Gran Torino*

Kiran Baldeo, *City College of New York*

Kiran Baldeo is a senior at the City College of New York, pursuing a BA/MA in History. Kiran's research interests are focused on the migration history and identity formation of the Indo-Guyanese diaspora. After graduation, Kiran plans to apply to a doctoral program in History.

Abstract

Using *Gran Torino* as a lens into the larger society, this essay discusses the white savior complex and the ways in which its presence is justified by the emasculation of Asian men and the projection that the white male is the holder and disseminator of normative masculinity; issues that may be seen as historical, however, their prevalence in films demonstrates not only their presence in today's society but also their continuation. A closer look at *Gran Torino* allows us to see that not only do these issues remain engrained in our world, but that they are actively depicted, projected and thus re-consumed generation after generation. Understanding issues such as these will allow us to unravel the complex underpinnings that continue to define American race relations.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Stanley Thangaraj for leading the class that inspired this project and for encouraging me to apply to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, to which without my ongoing research would not be possible. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my mentor Professor Laurie Woodard for her help with editing and support in all my research endeavors. Thank you to my mom and sisters for their instrumental love and support. Finally, thank you Jonathan for supporting my wildest dreams.

Centering upon auto theft, gangs, and guns, the 2008 film *Gran Torino* captures its audience with unexpected heartfelt friendships, heroism, and violence.¹ The film centers on the relations between Walt, an elderly, white, male, veteran, and his teenaged Hmong neighbor, Thao, who lives next door. Apart from the tension created by Walt's resentment of the disappearance of his once racially homogenous neighborhood, further conflict arises when a local Hmong gang attempts to initiate Thao. When Thao's initiation, stealing Walt's 1972 *Gran Torino*, ends with Walt's finger on the trigger of his M1 Garand rifle and Thao running for his life, he quickly decides he no longer wants to be a part of the gang. As a result, the gang seeks revenge and repeatedly attacks Thao and his family. Also steaming from Thao's attempted theft, his family insists he repay Walt with

two weeks of service. Walt reluctantly takes Thao under his wing, which ultimately costs him his life.

As it is commonly viewed, *Gran Torino* can be understood as a film in which a bitter, terminally ill veteran comes to terms with the changing dynamics of his once predominately white neighborhood, builds a close relationship with his neighbors, and selflessly takes on the cause of protecting those around him. However, if *Gran Torino* is viewed with a critical eye, one can see that the film's plot is not only centered around the white savior complex but justifies its presence through the emasculation of Asian men and projection of the idea that the white male is the holder and disseminator of normative masculinity. As films are reflective of our society, this essay uses *Gran Torino* as a lens to analyze issues that may be thought of as historic, however, their presence in film demonstrates not only their current existence, but also their perpetuation and the continuity of uninformed racial discourse.

White Savior Complex

The white savior complex manifested and burgeoned during the eras of rampant colonialism, in which the language of responsibility was employed, such that it was the duty of the white male to "save" all the "others" from their "backwards" way of life.² While the humanitarian strut of the white savior is not as ostentatious as it once was, it is undoubtedly a factor in current societal race relations, as demonstrated by its ubiquity in the film industry. We will now turn to its appearance in *Gran Torino*, as it is illustrative of the topics at hand.

Despite Walt seeing his Hmong neighbors as barbaric and forever foreign, his position as the redeemer and white savior is established early in the movie. In a scene that sets the violent tone of the film, the Hmong gang is angered by Thao's failed initiation and is trying to forcefully take him. A fight ensues as Thao's family tries to pull him from the grasp of the dangerous men. The punching, yelling, and chaos spills over onto Walt's lawn, which unsurprisingly angers him. Walt, with the rifle mounted on his shoulder, goes outside, points the gun directly at the gang and says, "I blow a hole in your face and then I go back in the house. And I sleep like a baby. You can count on that."³ Thanks to Walt's intervention the gang leaves and Thao and his family are safe. Despite Walt's reaction coming from a place of self-concern, this scene, which establishes the central conflict of the film (the gang's conflict with Thao), Walt, the only white person left in the neighborhood, is positioned as its reluctant protector: the white savior.

In a later scene, Sue, Thao's older sister, is walking in a dangerous part of town and is confronted by three men

of color. They prevent her from leaving, push her around, and make comments threatening rape. Walt, who happens to be driving by, sees the commotion, pulls over, and goes over to the men. He once again pulls out a gun, scares the trio, and *saves* Sue.⁴

The white savior complex is so engrained in the film's plot that the end of the movie is dedicated to it. In the scenes leading up to the conclusion, Thao continuously rejects the gang and with each rejection their violence intensifies. The violence reaches an all-time high when they shoot at Thao's house in a drive-by and then kidnap, beat, and rape Sue. As by the end of the film Walt has created a paternalist relationship with Thao and Sue and as stated by Louisa Schein and Thoj's Va-Megn in their article "Gran Torino's Boys and Men with Guns: Hmong Perspectives," because "Walt becomes more and more of a white savior striving to intervene to keep the boy [Thao] from the gang," he devises the ultimate plan of revenge.⁵ In response to the gang's latest unsparing act of violence, Walt goes to their house and calls them outside. The balcony and front porch of the house are quickly filled with gang members, all with their guns drawn and pointed at Walt, who is standing on the sidewalk. Walt places his hand in his jacket as if he was going to grab a gun, triggering the firing of a relentless number of bullets from the balcony. Walt's plan works, as he did not have a firearm on him and is killed, thus leading to the gang's arrest.⁶ In other words, in the final scene, Walt gives his life to get the gang members arrested and *save* the Hmong community.

The point of this analysis is not to critique the film's plot, but rather to bring attention to the prevalence of the white savior complex. We often view the idea of the white savior as historic, however, *Gran Torino* demonstrates that not only is it a part of our society, but it is actively employed.

It is important to note that *Gran Torino* is not unique for its plot construction around the white savior complex. The multiplicity of the white savior trope in film is demonstrated by Mathew Hughey in his book, *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics and Consumption*, in which he explores 50 white savior films released between 1987 and 2011.⁷ In addition to arguing for its persistence in film, Hughey argues that the frequent presence of the white savior speaks to the ways in which it continues to resonate with society. Thus, the idea of the white male being capable of saving the "others" ultimately shapes race relations both on and off screen. In regard to this Hughey writes:

Given the diverse locations in which the white savior resonates, the anxious allure of saviorism has saturated out contemporary logic. This trope is so widespread that varied intercultural and interracial relations are often guided by a logic that racializes

and separates people into those who are redeemers (whites) and those who are redeemed or in need of redemption (nonwhites).⁸

Gran Torino operates in this very way, casting Walt as the redeemer and Thao and the Hmong community as the ones in need of redemption.

In addition to being found in our day-to-day race relations, the white savior complex is also found institutionally, with widely seen and *potentially* (as some of them do result in help for some people) harmful projects, such as volunteer tourism and campaigns launched in the name of helping non-white nations.⁹ Just one of many examples, is the 2004 Band Aid 30 campaign. Band Aid 30 was a fundraising initiative created by a group of majority white celebrity artists. The initiative was created to aid with the Ebola crisis, however, the campaign spread their message by projecting Africa as a nation forever in a state of despair, struggle, and needing to be saved. In the *New African* publication, Cosmas Kase articulates the danger and damage done by the white savior complex disguised as "good." Kase writes, "They want to project an image of a continent (peoples) that is ever passing a begging bowl."¹⁰ As seen on screen in *Gran Torino* and in the real world with Band Aid 30, the continual promotion of the white savior complex contributes to the projection of "others," minority people of color, as peoples without agency and peoples without the ability to protect their own, thus, always requiring the intrusion of the white male. As we will see below, the intrusion of the white savior is often justified when the "others" are presented as incompetent and incapable; this is done through the feminization of Thao.

Emasculation of Asian Men

Gran Torino's employment of the white savior trope, while certainly dominating the film, should be viewed as a house on a foundation or a tree with its roots underground. In other words, the white savior complex is the part of the film that is most obvious; however, a closer look reveals that this discourse is catapulted from a slingshot made up of the emasculated Asian male trope and the white normative concept of masculinity. *Gran Torino* sheds light on our understanding of masculinity, more specifically the ways in which our normative representation of masculinity resides on the white male body and the ways in which this works to place non-normative ideas of masculinity onto the bodies of the men that are deemed "others." We often see these non-normative understandings of masculinity placed in two groups as either hyper-masculine or emasculated. This analysis will focus on the latter, more specifically the ways in which Asian men are emasculated in American society.

The historical roots of this emasculation can be traced back to the 1800's when Asians were migrating to the United

States to get labor jobs.¹¹ This was a difficult moment for Asians in the United States because Yellow Peril fear cast Asian men as dangerous and Asian women as promiscuous and immoral.¹² This fear led to the passing of the Page Law in 1875, which banned the immigration of all Asian women. This forced the laboring Asian men to live within all-male groups and required them to take on work that is typically deemed “for women,” such as cooking and laundry.¹³ While this historical moment is not the only reason Asian men are seen as feminized, it contributed a great deal. This racialized historical moment is often forgotten and the feminized Asian male trope quickly became associated with the phenotype of the Asian male body.

Using Thao’s character, *Gran Torino* demonstrates the continuing vision of Asian men as emasculated. In an early scene, Thao is crouched over gardening when a car pulls up in front of his home. Thao’s cousin and his gang emerge from the car. The gang proceeds to surround Thao and taunt him with the question of why is he doing “women’s work.” In another scene, Thao is standing at the sink washing dishes, as two elders of the household stand in the doorway talking. The elder woman makes a remark that she “wishes her daughter would remarry, so there would be a man in the house.” The elder man in the conversation then points to Thao, and says, “What about Thao? The man of the house is right there,” to which the older woman responds, “Look at him washing dishes. He does whatever his sister orders him to do.”¹⁴

In these scenes we see the emasculation of Thao in two ways. One is in the tasks he is doing, gardening and washing dishes, tasks often deemed “women’s work.” The other is in the elder woman’s remark, that Thao does “whatever his sister orders him to do.” This further emasculates Thao by taking away his sense of autonomy and authority, two things associated with “American masculinity.”

In addition to the comments made throughout the film about Thao’s feminized behavior and work, what Thao does not say is also of importance. During many of the confrontations throughout the film, Thao does not speak; rather he remains mute with his head down and eyes cast down. His older sister Sue is often the one that speaks for him and Walt is literally the one that fights for him. In an interview with actor Bee Vang who plays Thao in *Gran Torino*, Louisa Schein asks how he felt about his representation of masculinity in the movie. Vang responds, “Walt and the gangsters and the grandma—all of them have nothing but insults about Thao’s manliness—or lack thereof.”¹⁵ This comment from Vang allows us to see that the creators of the movie purposely formed Thao’s character around the misconception of the emasculated Asian man. It is important to note that director Clint Eastwood made the conscious

choice to have the emasculating remarks come not only the white characters in the film but also from members of Thao’s community. This maneuver works to have us question the presence of racism, as we often view racism as coming from people of other races. However, regardless of which character speaks the comments, the blatant use of racist ideology was a choice made by the film’s creators and directors.

Not only does the film perpetuate the trope of the emasculated Asian male, but it also uses it as the reason Thao and the Hmong neighborhood need saving, which is of course done by the white savior. In other words, because Thao and the other men in the Hmong community are too feminine and therefore cannot protect themselves from the gang, Walt’s presence and role as the protector are presented as rational and the only logical choice.

Holder of Normative Masculinity

As mentioned above, our understanding of non-normative masculinity is created in opposition to our understanding of normative masculinity. This dichotomy of non-normative and normative masculinity is discussed by Martin Manalansan in *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*.¹⁶ Manalansan’s argument, while largely focusing on the relationship between Filipino gay men and white gay men, undoubtedly can be applied on a grander scale, to encompass the relationship between men of color and white men. He argues that American notions of gayness, manliness, and masculinity are based off of the “American white man.”¹⁷ In other words, the white man represents the “normative” idea of masculinity and thus everything that is not the “white man” is automatically casted as abnormal and different. In the case of *Gran Torino*, Walt is the normative, “true American white man,” and Thao is clearly the “abnormal.” Thao’s Hmong origins automatically mark him as different and the additional stereotypes discussed in the last section explain his difference through his feminized characteristics and actions.

Through the construction of Walt and Thao’s relationship, the movie not only sends the message that Walt is the holder of true masculinity but also, pulling from his role as the white savior, that it is Walt’s job to “save” Thao from an emasculated life and teach him how to “be a man.” The notion of mentorship coupled with Walt being the only one with true masculinity creates a relationship that Hughey describes as the common “paternalist view of white/nonwhite relations.”¹⁸ It is through these relationships that Walt is positioned as the disseminator of masculinity. This dissemination takes place as Walt’s and Thao’s relationship develops, especially while Thao is repaying Walt for trying to steal his car. It is during this time that Thao is seen for

the first time doing “man’s” work, such as fixing a roof and painting a house. In addition to sharing this knowledge of the “physical” aspects of American masculinity, Walt also teaches Thao how to talk and walk like a man, how to ask girls out, and helps him get a job in construction.

A scene that takes place after Walt helps Thao get a construction job can be seen as a literal visualization of Manalansan’s and Hughey’s theory. The scene takes place in a hardware store in which Walt is buying Thao the ultimate representation of masculinity: tools. Walt is literally the holder, as he initially introduced Thao to the tools in his garage, and disseminator, as he purchased and hands the tools to Thao.¹⁹ *Gran Torino* makes it clear that it is only through interaction with Walt that Thao has access to true masculinity, unlike the non-normative feminized masculinity he was exposed to at home. In other words, it is only due to Walt’s salvation of Thao, that Thao begins his “journey” to becoming a “man.”

Conclusion

Through this analysis of *Gran Torino*, we can see that issues such as the white savior complex, the emasculation of Asian men, and the depiction of the white male as the holder of true masculinity are prevalent in our society. It is often believed these issues are historic and thrived during colonialism and early Asian immigration. However, *Gran Torino* and a myriad of other films illuminate the fact that the structure of white savior race relations remains engrained in our world, is actively projected and, thus, continues to be re-consumed generation after generation. Moreover, as Manalansan argues, racial discourse surrounding Asians, particularly Asian men, continues to find home in the strict binary of masculinity, in which the white male resides on one side and everyone else is on the other. Recognizing the ways in which the white savior complex is often justified by uninformed understanding of masculinity on screen, is merely a step towards recognizing its impact off screen. Further exploration will allow us to understand and ideally end the tyrannical control that the white savior and the masculinity binary have on our current race relations.

Endnotes

- 1 *Gran Torino*, directed by Clint, Eastwood, 2008.
- 2 The language of “other” is derived from: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
- 3 Eastwood, 2008.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Louisa Schein, and Thoj Va-Megn. “Gran Torino’s Boys and Men with Guns: Hmong Perspectives,” in *Hmong Studies Journal* 10, 1–52. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 21, 2018).
- 6 Eastwood, 2008.
- 7 Mathew W. Hughey, *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics and Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014).

- 8 Hughey, 2.
- 9 Rajan Bandyopadhyay, “Volunteer Tourism and ‘The White Man’s Burden’: Globalization of Suffering, White Savior Complex, Religion and Modernity,” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 27 (2019), accessed October 1, 2019, <https://doi-org.ccnny-proxy1.lib.ccnny.cuny.edu/10.1080/09669582.2019.1578361>.
- 10 Cosmas Kase, “The White Saviour Mentality,” *New African* no. 547, (February 2015): 8. <https://search-ebshost-com.ccnny-proxy1.lib.ccnny.cuny.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=101452909&site=ehost.live>.
- 11 Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), Chp. 2, “Immigration and Livelihood,” 1840s to 1930s, 25.
- 12 Ibid., 54.
- 13 Ibid., 33.
- 14 Eastwood, 2008.
- 15 Bee Vang and Louisa Schein, “*Gran Torino*’s Hmong Lead Bee Vang on Film, Race and Masculinity,” *Hmong Studies Journal* 11, (2010), 4.
- 16 Martin F. Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2007).
- 17 Ibid., 6, 22.
- 18 Hughey, 171.
- 19 Eastwood, 2008.

Works Cited

- Bandyopadhyay, Rajan. “Volunteer Tourism and ‘The White Man’s Burden’: Globalization of Suffering, White Savior Complex, Religion and Modernity.” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 27, 2019.
- Chan, Sucheng. “Immigration and Livelihood, 1840s to 1930s.” *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*. Boston: Twayne, 1991.
- Gran Torino*, directed by Clint, Eastwood, 2008.
- Hughey Mathew W. *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics and Consumption*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014.
- Kase, Cosmas. “The White Saviour Mentality.” *New African* no. 547. February 2015.
- Manalansan, Martin F. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2007.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Schein, Louisa, and Va-Megn Thoj. “Gran Torino’s Boys and Men with Guns: Hmong Perspectives.” *Hmong Studies Journal* 10, (January 2010): 1–52.
- Vang, Bee, and Louisa Schein. “Gran Torino’s Hmong Lead Bee Vang on Film, Race and Masculinity.” *Hmong Studies Journal* 11, (Spring, 2010): 1–11.

Unrelentingly Gazing upon Numbers of the Body: The Case of Mokgadi Caster Semenya and Her Bodily Deviance

Aleya Banwari, *University of Cape Town*

Aleya Banwari is a Social Anthropology Honours graduate (Senior) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She completed her Bachelor of Social Science in Political Science, Industrial Sociology, and Social Anthropology in 2018. She is an intern at the UCT Career Services, a centre aimed at helping students prepare themselves for the job market and find employment. She also recently started her own coffee shop called the African Way, in an effort to promote African Coffee and to connect people who want to come together for a better African future. In 2020, after she graduates, she plans to do her Masters in Public Health at UCT.

Abstract

Mokgadi Caster Semenya is an Olympian winning athlete whose gender and sex identity has been at the center of conflict since the beginning of her career due to concern that she had an unfair advantage over other women runners. This is based on her higher levels of testosterone, uncovered by sex testing she was forced to undertake by institutions like the International Association of Athletics Federations. The central question should not be whether she is a woman, a man, or intersex, but rather this paper poses the question of why and how do we scrutinize her body, and in what ways is her body constituted in different lenses such as biomedicine (which is dominant), medical anthropology, and popular understandings. Ultimately, Semenya's supposed bodily deviance from the norm cannot be understood through scientific testing alone—rather, alternative systems need to be created to ensure fairness in the sport rather than relying on problematic sex verification.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Fiona Ross and Dr. Sean Sampson, my MMUF Mentor and Writing Mentor for supporting me and guiding me through the writing process. I would also like to thank Kathy in her capacity as the MMUF Coordinator at UCT for encouraging me to apply.

I would also like to thank my partner for believing in my ability to write this paper even before I could, and for proof-reading every single draft.

And lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued love, patience, and support.

In May 2019, Mokgadi Caster Semenya lost her appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to set aside the 2018 ruling by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) that would force her and all other female athletes with hyperandrogenism¹ competing

in the 400m, 800m, or 1500m running events to either be ineligible to compete or to undergo medical interventions to lower their testosterone production (Sport24, 2019). This situation, preceded by a background of years of public debate on whether Semenya is a woman, a man, or intersex, exposes the friction between different understandings of how the body is constituted.² Biomedicine, Medical Anthropology, and public understandings of the body may all have different views on the same body. Ultimately, this brings up the question of how the body is constituted differently under different lenses. With a specific focus on Caster Semenya, whose body has been the subject of intense scrutiny because of her supposed deviance from the norm, this paper argues that there is no such thing as a “complete” male or female body (Yates-Doerr, 2017; Schepers-Hughes; Lock, 1987). Bodies are incomplete and malleable based on one's environment, genes, and time.

Understandings of the Body Rooted in Biomedicine and Medical Anthropology

Medicine has come a long way since the time of Cartesian Dualism, which originally saw the body and mind being separate entities (Low, 2003). The “biopsychosocial” approach is currently used to understand patients as holistically as possible by looking at their biomedical, psychological and social needs, and experiences (Katon and Kleinman, 1981). In the late 1980s, Nancy Schepers-Hughes' and Margaret Lock's theory of the “Mindful Body” would go on to shape the basis of this holistic approach. They would describe the body as being viewed through three different lenses: the phenomenological or individual, the social, and the political (Schepers-Hughes and Lock, 1987). This approach figures the body as culturally and naturally produced out of a particular historical moment (Schepers-Hughes and Lock, 1987). Yates-Doerr (2017) developed this approach further by arguing that, while the theory of the Mindful Body and the Biopsychosocial Model are both undoubtedly useful, they perhaps place too great an emphasis on the universal body (rooted in number and measurement systems) and ignore how bodies are understood with regards to health and well-being in localised contexts, assuming that all bodies can be measured in the same way.

Imagine the following scenario: you are entering a doctor's office and are expected to fill out a form with your biographical details such as your age, gender, next of kin, address, insurance details (if any), and medically related information such as allergies and other major health issues. Filling out such forms can be tedious and frustrating, especially having to do it each time you visit a medical practitioner. Jill E. Griffin (2016), a nurse and former intensive care physician, explains that these forms aim to give doctors and other medical practitioners an overview of your medical

history and underlying health conditions. It also offers a means to contact (as well as bill) you or your next of kin (Griffins, 2016). The form is structured in such a manner so the data you are providing is formatted in a particular fashion, following a particular socially imagined mode of thinking, such as having to tick the “male” or “female” box. In order to receive access to this service you are forced to identify with these categories. The way the body is socially imagined affects the treatment you will receive and the rights you are imagined to have (Lock and Farquhar, 2007).

Caster Semenya and Her Disruption of the Binary

Soon after winning gold at the World Championships in Berlin in 2009, Caster Semenya began to have her gender questioned by both the media and the IAAF due to her deep voice, speed, and musculature (Kessel, 2009). She was designated female at birth and thus, while she did have stereotypical masculine traits such as having a masculine build and was considered a “tomboy” while growing up, she was still female (Sloop, 2012: 82). However, when the rumours which remain unverified) surfaced that she had internal male testicles, it furthered the idea that Semenya was

actually male, and thus had an unfair advantage as she was a man racing against women. A similar line of thinking that still promotes the binary to an extent is that Semenya is an intersex individual and is neither male nor female fully but a mix of the two—despite the fact that she has repeatedly stated that she is a female (Sloop, 2012). Stating that Semenya is intersex assumes that that her body can only be understood through either being male or female or a composition of both—thus demonstrating that this particular social imaginary cannot comprehend someone existing without fitting in the categories of being “male” and/or “female.”

Figure 1, created by the Xkollektiv, is a modern rendition of a classic Saartje Baartman image where she is standing on a podium and being gawked at by European men and women (Olayinka Sule, 2019). This image paints the picture of how the general public, particularly South African media, feel about the regulations being imposed on Semenya. The general consensus is that the IAAF is imposing ethnocentric standards of what a “female” should be composed of onto an African woman, linking back to my previous point about how the body is constituted medically and anthropologically often through a universal lens (or a one size fits all model).



Figure 1. The Unrelenting Gaze, 1789–2019 (Xkollektiv, 2019).

This universal lens assumes that all women will have the same or very similar bodily measurements (such as their level of testosterone) and, thus, the same scale can be applied to all women. Therefore, if a woman like Semenya does not fit the norm, she could not be a woman because she does not fit in with the universal body. The reason Semenya's body particularly is a site of contestation is that her body does not fit the socially accepted norms of how a woman should present herself. Furthermore, the one socially acceptable category she would fit into, that would explain her bodily deviance, would be that of being "intersex," but Semenya herself has not taken that identity and thus is seen as being unacceptable because she is still challenging our cultural norms of what women look like.

These various logics aside, what we do know is that Semenya has a higher level of testosterone (a so-called "male" hormone) than most other women and thus is believed to have an unfair advantage over her competitors (Sports24, 2019). Most recently, Semenya lost her appeal to the CAS to set aside the 2018 ruling by the IAAF with regards to forcing her and other hyperandrogenous female athletes to undergo medical interventions to lower their testosterone production in order to compete athletically (Sport24, 2019). The Swiss Supreme Court then suspended the IAAF ruling while her appeal is pending, allowing her to compete without having to take testosterone suppressing medication. However, the IAAF responded by saying that were looking into finding a way to reverse their ruling. Ultimately, this means that Semenya's body continues to be at the forefront of this conflict (Mothowagae, 2019).

There has been a public outcry on social media both in South Africa and across the world critiquing the ruling. Many state that this ruling echoes a colonial sort of "othering" where a black body has been put on a platform to be gawked at from a European gaze.³ One could argue that Semenya's positionality as a black, lesbian, woman athlete simply adds to the manners in which her body is commodified (Olayinka Sule, 2019).⁴ The unrelentless scrutiny of Semenya's body has been likened to Saartjie Baartman, a South African woman who was taken to Europe and exhibited to crowds at a circus. Baartman was the subject of scientific experimentation by French scientists who were fascinated by parts of her body such as her buttocks and labia marking her "difference" from European standards (Olayinka Sule, 2019).

Gender Testing in Competitive Sports

The issue of gender or sex testing is not uncommon and Semenya would not be the first female athlete to undergo such testing. Historically, the ancient Olympic Games were performed in the nude and some historians

believe that this was a form of the first sex verification policy at the time (Buzuvis, 2010). Women were not allowed to compete and performing while nude ensured that both judges and spectators could perform a visual sex verification test to make sure that all contestants did display traditionally masculine traits. Another example would be that of Dora Ratjen, later known as Heinrich, who was a German high-jumper who won the gold medal at the European Athletics Championships in 1938. He was identified as male in 1939, which led to Germany returning the gold medal (Padawer, 2016). Today, we would most likely classify Ratjen as being an intersex individual.

The rationale behind sporting institution governing bodies like the IAAF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in utilising sex verification tests is to catch male athletes masquerading as women in order to promote a fair playing field for all athletes irrespective of their preferred form of athleticism. However, in all the history of such testing, there is yet to be an imposter found. In the example mentioned above, the athlete had intersex or hyperandrogenous features. Women athletes who are intersex or hyperandrogenous and who don't necessarily fit the binary have always been put under intense scrutiny (Padawer, 2016).

Men who have genetic differences, such as Michael Phelps (an Olympic swimmer), do not have their differences questioned in the same way. Phelps has very long arms compared to other Olympic swimmers and is double-jointed (in both his ankles and elbows) and is thus able to generate more power in the water than his competitors (Siebert, 2014). In addition to that, his body produces fifty percent less lactic acid (a substance which causes muscle fatigue) than his competitors—meaning he requires less recovery time as compared to other swimmers (Siebert, 2014). These differences give him a clear advantage over his competitors, but these differences are not deemed unfair, but rather considered his "natural advantage" (Siebert, 2014). It is believed that Phelps' positionality as a white cis-het man is partially why his differences are never questioned, but rather praised. This demonstrates that, despite the mathematical measurement units showing that he has a genetic advantage, the sporting governing bodies still play into existing internal prejudices by scrutinising women athletes of colour rather than men like him. This links back to my previous point about the European or colonial gaze. Had Phelps not been white and male, he would be gawked at, or seen as a "freak of nature" and would have been seen as having an unfair advantage over his competitors.

Is There Room for Inclusivity in Sport?

Professor Steven Cornelius, a South African law professor who sat on the IAAF disciplinary tribunal, resigned following the IAAF ruling on Semenya's ability to compete (Zama, 2019). He justified his resignation by writing that the IAAF "insists on ostracising certain individuals, all of them female, for no other reason than being what they were born to be" and that the athletics body retained "antiquated" views on gender, sex, and the body (Zama, 2019). In addition, people over various social media platforms came out in full support of Semenya with the hashtag "#handsoffcaster" and "#handsoffcastersemenya." To many, the IAAF ruling was that of an attack against a Black African woman who did not conform to Western notions of femininity (eNCA, 2019). The Western ideal of femininity is rooted in the universal body, but the female universal body was based on a European standard (specifically a European woman). Examples like Baartman and Semenya signal a long history of Black women alienated from this ideal because of their phenotypical differences.

Sporting institutions and medical professionals hold competing discourses on the body. The former believe that Semenya's body can be understood through measurement units, and thus can be categorised accordingly. Professionals in institutions like Professor Cornelius, on the other hand, believe do not believe that measurements are needed to place Semenya (Times Live, 2019). Yates-Doerr (2017) further elaborates on this, by arguing that numbers are a means to claim legitimacy and objectivity. Using scientific measurement allows for knowledge to be quantifiable meaning that the data can be reproduced irrespective of whether the observers and observed changed. And thus, the IAAF and IOC rely on sex verification tests because they are believed to be objective. However, such testing is not neutral by any means. International sporting governing institutions choose who they perform the testing on. In the case of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the organisers said that tests would be run on "suspicious looking women" (Buzuvis, 2010: 36). This implies that those who do not physically present as their assigned gender are more likely to be scrutinised.

Understanding Gender Beyond Numbers of the Body

So how does one attempt to conceptualise Semenya's body beyond numbers? Yates-Doerr (2017) might suggest a return to the concept of "local biologies" (146). Local biologies refer to the anthropological observation of how health and the bodies are socially and biologically understood and produced with regards to their situated socio-economic and cultural contexts (Maloni, 2014). The idea of local biologies does sound similar to the study of epigenetics—the study of how certain environments trigger certain genes

to be activated or not. Epigenetics makes an attempt at scientifically making accommodation for how a person's environment and what that person may have inherited biologically from their parents and grandparents in terms of what environments they lived in could affect the way their genes work (Meloni, 2014). However, it must be noted that local biologies predates the study of epigenetics.

While there has been an overarching turn towards epigenetic views, this is not what Yates-Doerr is calling for. Yates-Doerr (2017) is instead trying to move away from generalisations of what "the body" may be and how that discourse is placed onto people when they become patients in medical systems. Social historian Michael Katz also highlights the concern that by locating certain gene expressions in certain populations, which is what the study of epigenetics could suggest at times, there is a fear that there may be a return to biologically-based class discrimination. By this, he means that poor people have different epigenetic biomarkers because of their "locatedness" in an environment which may include pollution, a lack of access to good nutrition, and medical care. Katz acknowledges that politically this could lead to reinforcing stigmas associated with certain groups either based on race or class (Meloni, 2014).

Instead, what Yates-Doerr (2017) is advocating for is trying to move away from a prescriptive research model in which medical practitioners may ask you how you are feeling, but have preconceived and presumed notions about the way you have conceptualised your body and general health in terms of how you have embodied it or not. For example, if you have a family history of diabetes or cancer and your medical practitioners are aware of that, they may try to find ways or suggest lifestyle changes or medication to avoid you getting those illnesses. This means moving away from the idea that there are different lenses through which one can see and understand the body and rather moving towards a praxis where we constantly check in and reevaluate how the person (not the body) is doing. She advocates for descriptive research, which is an entirely different approach than prescriptive research, and one that does not count on stable, countable, and knowable units. (Yates-Doerr, 2017).

Returning to my own case study of the way in which Caster Semenya's body is medicalised and conceptualised, I do not think her gender or sex can necessarily be measured into countable units. By the IAAF proposing that she, should she not take treatment to lower her testosterone levels, would be able to run with other men exposes the fact that regardless of all their rhetoric that aims to make them seem reasonable and non-discriminatory, they ultimately believe that Semenya (due to her hyperandrogenism) should, in essence, be treated like a man—despite the fact that she is a woman.

Another illuminating fact is that the link between higher testosterone and higher performance in running events is far from definitively established. A study by Healy, Ginny, Pentecost, Wheeler, and Sonksen (2014) found that “16.5% of men had low testosterone levels, whereas 13.7% of women had high levels with complete overlap between the sexes” (294). It should also be noted that sex verification testing is not conducted on those competing in the male category and little data are available on their chromosomes or hormone profiles. This raises the question of why male athletes are not tested, is it perhaps because it is believed that male athletes cannot have a genetic advantage? The study also raises the question of if male athletes do have low levels of testosterone (the supposed male hormone), why are they not asked to compete against women (athletes who are supposedly supposed to have less testosterone)? The study also demonstrates that testosterone is not a “male” hormone and that the human body is ever changing and fluctuating in terms of hormones and genetic compositions, thus demonstrating that hyperandrogenous athletes are not aberrations, and ties into the idea of the mindful body being incomplete. The study does begin to bring into question the IAAF ruling that testosterone provides Semenya with an unfair advantage. So, to not “throw the baby out with the bathwater,”⁵ I think we should recognise that the theory of the mindful body is incomplete and so long as we do not try to presume that this theory is a complete and overarching (as in it covers all cases), then we should still be able to utilise this theory through the model of the “biopsychosocial” while also taking into account the points raised by Yates-Doerr (2017) and including descriptive research in our methodologies

Thus, we should recognise that there is no “complete” female or male body, but rather all human bodies are changing malleable vessels that change based on circumstances (environment, time, genes, etc.). Therefore, by recognising Semenya’s body as being malleable, she should be able to race with women because she is one and identifies as such. This, however, does not mean I believe we should throw out current understanding of the body such as the Biopsychosocial model or the Mindful Body like Yates-Doerr suggests. Instead, I believe that both are still useful, and some people may embody that discourse and that affects the way they understand their own bodies. Furthermore, the way in which the body is constituted does not simply derive from Biomedicine or Medical Anthropology’s understandings of it, but rather is a composition of all these things plus an individual’s own understandings of themselves that goes beyond their conditions and health-related issues in the future and in the present. Medical Anthropology can be used as a translator of sorts to help Biomedicine understand what individuals count as their health and how it matters to them. It is only when this happens that we can prevent

discrimination towards athletes like Semenya and people in general whose bodily measurements do not fit the norm.

Endnotes

- 1 Hyperandrogenism is defined as the presence of excessive “male” sex hormones—androgens—in the female body (Huffingtonpost, 2018).
- 2 I would like to employ Anna Tsing’s concept of friction to examine the opposing viewpoints to understand the way in which Semenya’s body is viewed by different authoritative bodies as well as from a public understanding and her own understanding of her own body.
- 3 The colonial gaze refers to the manner in which various colonial administrations sought to uphold and maintain power over the people and places which they colonised through dehumanisation. One such narrative can be seen through the idea of European people being civilised (due to their clothing, housing, food, laws, etc.) while African people were primitive or savage (because they did not have the same laws/habits/mannerisms as Europeans). By creating this distinction, it would go on to shape all further interactions which would ultimately lead to anyone non-European being seen as inferior (Fanon, 2004).
- 4 Commodified in the sense that her body is being put on show like Saartjie Baartman’s, because it is different and not like the universal body of a woman.
- 5 Borrowing from Professor Francis Nyamnjoh’s theory of “Incompleteness,” we cannot pretend that we will ever truly know “the body” and thus it is false to think that by adding to a body of knowledge, one has to discredit their predecessor completely (Nyamnjoh, 2015: 3).

Works Cited

- Buzuvis, Erin E. (2010) “Caster Semenya and the Myth of a Level Playing Field,” *The Modern American*. 6(2). pp. 36–42.
- eNCA. (2019). *#HandsoffCaster petition gains momentum*. [online] Available at: <https://www.enca.com/sport/handsoffcaster-petition-gains-momentum> [Accessed 16 May 2019].
- Fanon, F. (2004). *The Wretched of The Earth*. New York: Grove Press.
- Griffins, J. (2016). “Answered: Do doctors actually read the forms that patients are required to fill out (medical history, known allergies, etc.)?” [online] *Quora*. Available at: <https://www.quora.com/Do-doctors-actually-read-the-forms-that-patients-are-required-to-fill-out-medical-history-known-allergies-etc> [Accessed 29 May 2019].
- Healy, M.L., Gibney, J., Pentecost, C., Wheeler, M.J., and Sonksen, P.H. (2014). “Endocrine profiles in 693 athletes in the postcompetition setting.” *Clinical Endocrinology*. 81. pp. 294–305.
- Huffingtonpost. (2018). “What Is Hyperandrogenism And How Does It Affect Caster Semenya?” [online] Available at: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2018/04/26/what-is-hyperandrogenism-and-how-does-it-affect-caster-semenya_a_23420890/?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALMidfty7ngYba5OU1fty7ngYba5OU1Funb8wULc7zkeHZKvYQmQh2TqJJBsGoDzcERpTMh5MjHwaB3P5kLPzjiP0qI2-1m_SNfBOH7WH1TFXtuKL46EqBks5JCxK-V2SLKvFmQBHt4XfyckLi2UcJ8nhlgpecip0xYnJhLwy99F2G43nYBo5Y53x [Accessed 28 Oct. 2019].

- Katon, W. and Kleinman, A. (1981). "Doctor-Patient Negotiation and Other Social Science Strategies in Patient Care." In *The Relevance of Social Science for Medicine*. L. Eisenberg and A. Kleinman (Editors). Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company. pp. 253–283.
- Kessel, A. (2009). "Caster Semenya wins 800m gold but cannot escape gender controversy." [online] *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2009/aug/19/caster-semenya-800m-world-athletics-championships-gender> [Accessed 13 May 2019].
- Lock, M. And Farquhar, J. (2007). "*Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*." Durham: Duke University Press. pp. 1–18.
- Low, S. M. (2003). "Embodied space(s): Anthropological theories of body, space, and culture." *Space & Culture*, 6(1): 9–18.
- Meloni, M. (2014). "Remaking Local Biologies in an Epigenetic Time." *Somatosphere*. [online] Available at: <http://somatosphere.net/2014/remaking-local-biologies-in-an-epigenetic-time.html/> [Accessed 29 May 2019].
- Mothowagae, D. (2019). "Caster Semenya needs delayed IAAF ruling upheld." [online] *CityPress*. Available at: <https://citypress.news24.com/Sport/caster-semenya-needs-delayed-iaaf-ruling-upheld-20190610> [Accessed 16 Jun. 2019].
- Nyamnjoh, F.B. (2015). "Incompleteness: Frontier Africa and the Currency of Conviviality." *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 1. pp. 1–18.
- Olayinka Sule, A. (2019). "Caster treated like Saartjie Baartman." [online] *The M&G Online*. Available at: <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-05-08-00-caster-treated-like-saartjie-baartman> [Accessed 30 May 2019].
- Padawer, R. (2016). "The Humiliating Practice of Sex-Testing Female Athletes." [online] *New York Times*. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/03/magazine/the-humiliating-practice-of-sex-testing-female-athletes.html?ref=sports&_r=0 [Accessed 16 May 2019].
- Scheper-Hughes, N. And Lock, M.M. (1987). "The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 1(1). pp. 6–41.
- Siebert, V. (2019). "Michael Phelps: The man who was built to be a swimmer." [online] *The Telegraph UK*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/swimming/10768083/Michael-Phelps-The-man-who-was-built-to-be-a-swimmer.html> [Accessed 18 Oct. 2019].
- Sloop, J. M. (2012). "'This is Not Natural': Caster Semenya's Gender Threats." *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. 29(2). pp. 81–96.
- Sports24. (2019). "Caster Semenya loses IAAF testosterone legal case." [online] Available at: <https://www.sport24.co.za/OtherSport/Athletics/caster-semenya-loses-iaaf-testosterone-legal-case-20190501?fbclid=IwAR3-YUWpe6m36MV1G-umtNZ7T-1fKpFeys8tLloHQwtX7OEol8Rcsu5bB9E> [Accessed 15 May 2019].
- Times Live. (2019). "World Medical Association warns doctors not to enforce Caster Semenya rules." [online] Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sport/2019-05-05-world-medical-association-warns-doctors-not-to-enforce-caster-semenya-rules/> [Accessed 13 May 2019].
- Tsing, A. (2005). *Friction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 1–18.
- Yates-Doerr, E. (2017). "Counting bodies? On future engagements with science studies in medical anthropology," *Anthropology & Medicine*, 24(2). pp. 142–158.
- Zama, Z. (2019). "SA lawyer Steven Cornelius sends damning resignation letter to IAAF." [online] 702. Available at: <http://www.702.co.za/articles/301825/sa-lawyer-steven-cornelius-sends-damning-resignation-letter-to-iaaf> [Accessed 30 May 2019].
- _____ (2019). "The IAAF is forcing healthy athletes such as Caster Semenya into patients." [online] 702. Available at: <http://www.702.co.za/articles/349974/the-iaaf-is-forcing-healthy-athletes-such-as-caster-semenya-into-patients> [Accessed 30 May 2019].

Illusions of Justice: “Legal Lynching” in Scottsboro and *McCleskey v. Kemp*

Jack Casey, *University of Southern California*

Jack Casey is a sophomore at the University of Southern California, majoring in History and Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Media, and Politics and minoring in Native Studies. He writes about the history of race and its interaction with the law in the United States and Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After his undergraduate work, Jack plans to pursue both a JD and a PhD in History.

Abstract

The concept of “legal lynching” arose in the early twentieth century through infamous legal battles like Scottsboro, which denoted the idea of an “illusory trial,” inadequate justice, and the disproportionate use of the death penalty against Black defendants. The utter lack of equity in the criminal justice system and the discriminatory use of the death penalty against Black defendants in the late twentieth century still constitutes “legal lynching.” More specifically, the death penalty and its racialized nature in *McCleskey v. Kemp* demonstrates that a racialized system of control persists in the modern criminal justice system that invests in and protects whiteness through “legal lynching.” The lines of continuity between the early and late twentieth century and the disproportionate racialized use of the death penalty in the criminal justice system convey the persistence and entrenchment of “legal lynching” in the United States. Concomitant to “legal lynching,” constitutional colorblindness furthers the preclusion of racial justice by dismissing claims of racial bias in sentencing practices.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Alisa Sánchez for her patient help in guiding revisions. I am also grateful to Dr. Edgardo Pérez Morales for his mentorship in teaching me the historian’s craft.

When U.S. courts decide whether or not to explicitly recognize race or its social attributes, they often claim colorblindness in the law by citing Justice John Marshall Harlan’s dissent in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* [1896] decision. When Harlan wrote “our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens,”¹ U.S. courts took his claim of equality before the laws of the Constitution to be true and therefore that racial discrimination needed to be explicit to exist. Yet, overt racism in court opinions does not have to be present for there to be the preservation of racial caste. This claim of the nonrecognition of race remains prevalent today as justices of the court claim that we live in a “post-racial” era in which racism has ended and color is not seen or distinguished. As a result, U.S. courts rely on colorblindness to construct a facade of “objectivity.”

Colorblind interpretations of the law and the Constitution in the U.S. Supreme Court preserve antiquated historical race castes by deliberately ignoring race, which continues racial subordination that perpetuates the property interest in whiteness.

Supreme Court case *McCleskey v. Kemp*’s [1987] dismissal of systemic racial faults and discriminatory policies in sentencing practices upholds the guise of constitutionalism colorblindness that Harlan proclaimed in *Plessy*. In *McCleskey*, the court’s claims of immunity to racialized sentencing and the application of the death penalty perpetuates the farce of justice being meted out. This is primarily due to the continuity of the principle of state-condoned violence being disproportionately applied to Black people. Scottsboro’s wide familiarity serves as a tool to succinctly illustrate the subtle continuities with *McCleskey*. Although there is a litany of racial injustices in U.S. courts, these two cases prove to be integral in explicating the role of colorblindness in perpetrating racialized illusions of justice.

Underlying the rationale in U.S. Supreme Court jurisprudence like *McCleskey v. Kemp*, constitutional colorblindness gives free reign to the mentalities of caste that the nonrecognition of racial subordination fosters. They are power structures of thought that are imperceptive to race and the social meaning that it bears, which leaves constitutional colorblindness useless for ameliorating racial discrimination in contemporary society. For instance, courts’ use of formal-race or the meaning of race denoting “socially constructed formal categories” that are “neutral, apolitical descriptions” disconnects race from its hierarchical connotation.² This “unconnectedness” of formal-race to social attributes like wealth, education, language, or culture is the underlying ideology of colorblind constitutionalism.³ As a result, substantive meanings of race like historical-race that embody “past and continuing racial subordination” are discarded.⁴

Further complicating this is racial categories and attributes’ ability to evolve, which reinforces the idea that property and personhood are racially entrenched in whiteness and therefore capable of morphing and persisting throughout various societal forms. Michelle Alexander characterizes the essential nature of the metamorphosis of racialized systems of control as the “rules and reasons that a political system employs to enforce status relationships of any kind” that are “evolv[ing] and chang[ing] as they are challenged.”⁵ Thus, that the preclusion of justice based on race would continue from Scottsboro to *McCleskey v. Kemp* is not far-fetched.

Therefore, the question that I will address is whether the criminal justice system and the death penalty in the late

twentieth century, specifically *McCleskey v. Kemp*, constitutes “legal lynching.” Essentially, this is the processing of a case through the legal system in an unjust manner due to race, often characterized by a “hasty mockery of a trial” that results in an excessive sentence or the preclusion of justice.⁶ Jesse Jackson Sr. briefly and broadly defines “legal lynching” in the criminal justice system as the disproportionate sentencing to death⁷ based on the “skin color of the offender.”⁸ Historically American chattel slavery demanded that Black “slaves and their descendants were from the very [beginning] singled out for indiscriminate and large-scale execution to enforce the discipline of slavery.”⁹ Thus, “legal lynching” is a manipulation of the legal system to exact the same punishment of a lynch mob, but instead by applying the death penalty through a technically legal procedure¹⁰ that in effect is unjust.¹¹ Accordingly, “legal lynching” is an oxymoron, or a paradox of legality and an illusion of justice.

“Legal lynchings” were not identical, but complementary to, extralegal mob violence in the early twentieth century South¹² since lynchings were buttressed by hostile courtrooms that coincided in their aim to remove challenges to the racial caste and social order. For whites, lynching was purportedly a form of mob rule or justice that compensated for the inadequacies of the southern justice system.¹³ However, in reality, it was a territorial act aimed at intimidating and punishing Black people for challenging the status quo or the inherent white supremacy of the police, state militia, courts, and political system.¹⁴ While lynching was extralegal in that it violated the law and yet was effectively sanctioned, it differs from “legal lynching” in that it was outside of the legal apparatuses of the criminal justice system.

I argue that following the emancipation of slaves and the abolition of slavery in the late nineteenth century that the enforcement of a racial system of control emerged through the criminal justice system and its disproportionate treatment of Black people. In effect, the courts were used to perpetuate inequality and utilized the criminal justice system to inflict injustice upon Black people through insufficient trials and discriminatorily applying the death penalty. “All the presumptions of law and society [were] against the negro” so that they remained at the bottom of society’s racial caste.¹⁵ Moreover, I contend that this phenomenon of “legal lynching” is still in use in the late twentieth century despite claims of “colorblindness” in a “post-racial” society, but that it is administered in an alternative manner that still in essence constitutes “legal lynching.”

“Legal Lynching” in Scottsboro, Alabama

In the early twentieth century, flagrant applications of the death penalty and unfair judicial procedure in the criminal justice system exemplify “legal lynching.” Specifically,

the course of events in Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931 is a prime example of the illusion of justice in southern courts because Black defendants were deliberately targeted with unfair trials and disproportionate death sentences by the criminal justice system. When examining this case, the parallels to *McCleskey v. Kemp* in the late twentieth century become apparent. In Scottsboro, nine African American boys were “held without bail” because of the false allegation that they raped two white women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates.¹⁶ Local lawyers refused to defend them in the trial, “local newspapers whipped up a mob spirit,” and the “judge scheduled the first trial for horse-swapping day, ensuring a tremendous crowd: ten thousand people, most of them armed with rifles and revolvers.”¹⁷ The sheriffs assaulted the boys in an effort to extract confessions and despite maintaining their innocence, the boys were convicted of rape and sentenced to death by the court.¹⁸ These malicious practices evidence the intimidation of mob rule that the court then replicated in its mockery of a fair trial by peers. Accordingly, white mob rule and its legal manifestations, the court system, enforced a social hierarchy by enlisting terror and violence in order to defend whiteness’ privileged status.

In this court dominated by the white southern ruling class, the only prospect of justice was interference by a formidable legal force, the NAACP, to provide “the ‘legalistic illusion’ of a fair trial.”^{19, 20} It was well-known that there was “no such thing as a ‘fair trial’” for a Black man accused of rape due to the exploitation, persecution, disenfranchisement, and constant murder of Black people.²¹ “Legal lynching” reduced justice in southern courts to an illusion. Black people who subverted the racial order were promptly given a sham of a trial by whites that for the most part resulted in the death penalty. “Justice” in the southern court system meant discriminatory, capricious summary judgements and flippant prescriptions of the death penalty that protected whiteness as Cheryl Harris expounded.

It can be difficult to prove that such unjust activities were employed deliberately and maliciously by southern courts since there was the sanction of law behind their activities, but the construction of the legal and social system on and around whiteness proves otherwise. The law has played a dominant role in defining socially-constructed race as a physical reality that compounds racial phenotype and privilege and ascribes social standing and rights to whiteness.²² Thus, whites with elevated social standing were able to enforce their own status quo, one that originated in the racial caste of slavery.²³ This racial caste predicated on whiteness meant that white identity denoted a “source of privilege and protection” and that its absence signified being “the object of property,” or an “other” deprived of agency.²⁴

The racial distinction between personhood and property resulted in a stratified social and legal status that marked whites as persons and Black people as property.²⁵ As a result, the guise of law obfuscated the state-sanctioned murder of people of color as a form of institutionalized terror because racially-specific murder was achieved, but in a manner deemed “legal” by society’s systemic inequalities. Whiteness retains privilege and authority and consequently creates race-based discrepancies of justice. Twentieth century southern courts facetiously evaluated the guilt or innocence of Black people and exerted excessive punishments that inflicted gross and disproportionate racial violence through legal apparatuses that transgresses U.S. courts’ claims of constitutional colorblindness. Racial bias in the capital punishment practices of the southern criminal justice system elucidates this history of “legal lynching” in the early twentieth century. *McCleskey v. Kemp*, a comprehensive case on racially discriminatory death sentences and the preclusion of justice, demonstrates the persistence of “legal lynching” in the late twentieth century.

McCleskey v. Kemp and Racialized Systemic Faults

In 1987, Warren McCleskey, a Black man, was convicted of armed robbery and the murder of a white police officer and sentenced to death in Georgia. McCleskey petitioned the federal district court and claimed that the state capital sentencing process was administered in a racially discriminatory manner that violated the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments.²⁶ In preparation for the U.S. Supreme Court, the defense assembled the Baldus Report, a statistical study of over 2,000 murder cases throughout the 1970s in Georgia, that outlined data on the victim’s race, the defendant’s race, and the numerous combinations of such persons’ races. It closely examined and explicated the disproportionate application of the death penalty on the basis of race and is one of the most extensive studies conducted on the role of race in death penalty sentencing practices.²⁷

The report found that defendants “in white-victim cases were more likely to receive a death sentence than defendants in Black-victim cases”²⁸ which “validated racially oppressive conduct”²⁹ in the criminal justice system. Despite the groundbreaking findings in the Baldus Report, the court ruled in a 5–4 split decision that the report did not demonstrate that Georgia’s capital sentencing system violated the Eighth Amendment or that it “is arbitrary or capricious in application.”³⁰ Most importantly, the majority opinion stated that the racial discrepancy indicated by the Baldus Report “does not constitute a major systemic defect.”³¹ The court’s naive ruling dismissed a credible report that illustrated the systemic defects of the criminal justice system that capriciously applies the death penalty to defendants of white victims. Justice Lewis Powell opined that “the statistical

evidence of race discrimination in Georgia’s death penalty system did not prove unequal treatment under the law,” which I contend to be a protection of whiteness’ caste.³²

The statistics presented in the Baldus Report highlight the racialized nature of death penalty sentencing practices as defendants charged with killing white victims received the death penalty “eleven times more often than defendants charged with killing Black victims.”³³ Additionally, prosecutors held a role in this racialized practice since they “sought the death penalty in 70 percent of cases involving Black defendants and white victims, but only 19 percent of cases involving white defendants and Black victims.”³⁴ The Rehnquist court was not concerned with the racialized practices of the death penalty in *McCleskey*, but instead with purging the criminal justice system from claims of racial bias.³⁵ The majority opinion “justified” the obvious presence of discrimination in the criminal justice system by claiming that court discretion plays a necessary role in the criminal justice system and that discrimination is a byproduct of discretion that must be tolerated.³⁶ However, discriminatory practices that result from the discretion of the courts undermine impartiality and the provision of justice by not actively opposing the norm of privileged whiteness. Simply put, the discretion of judges and juries can be selectively applied, which feeds prejudices against those that are “poor and despised, and lacking political clout” or “a member of a suspect or unpopular minority” that shields those in a more protected position in society.³⁷ The court previously recognized this risk in 1972 in *Furman v. Georgia*, yet chose to deviate from this precedent.

The majority opinion deemed “the risk of racial bias in Georgia’s capital sentencing scheme [to be] ‘constitutionally acceptable.’”³⁸ As a result, *McCleskey* endorsed a form of capital sentencing tainted by racial inequity.³⁹ These discrepancies and illusions of justice in the U.S. criminal justice system are serious systemic defects that evidence the institutional protections ascribed to whiteness in the application of the death penalty. Because whiteness compounds race and advantage, the legal construction of whiteness inherently retains privilege and caste. Therefore, the court’s ruling in *McCleskey* corroborates the existence of a criminal justice system of “legal lynching.”

Yet, color-blind proponents may claim that Alabama’s virulent racism in 1931 is part and parcel of the segregation era that had been eradicated when *McCleskey* came before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1987. Ostensibly, notable progress in eradicating explicit racial discrimination had been made in the 56 years since Scottsboro, but the phenomenon of racially discriminatory capital sentencing or “legal lynching” has persisted in principle. Essentially, this principle is severely punishing those that commit a crime against a

white person, which seeks to preserve the racial order by subjugating those that challenge the racial caste. Consider the majority opinion in *McCleskey* denying systemic bias and how it contradicted their holding that court and jury discretion fosters discrimination. Although authors of the majority opinion held that there was no systemic fault in death sentencing practices, they did admit to lenient discretion fomenting discrimination. Therefore, this holding is a futile attempt by the court to deny the criminal justice system's implicit protection of white dominance in legal institutions.

The perpetrators of crimes against whites are punished disproportionately through swift convictions and an utter lack of justice in trials. Scottsboro and Baldus' findings in *McCleskey* exemplify these illusions of justice or "legal lynchings" in two different periods of the twentieth century. These similarities are not coincidental, but hallmarks of "legal lynching" that seeks to create "law and order" through capital punishment against Black people that continues the legacy of racial subjugation. *Capital Punishment in Texas*, a report by Rupert Koeninger on the inner workings of the death penalty from 1924 to 1968 in Huntsville, Texas, found that in instances of white and Black co-defendants that the white defendant was sentenced to life imprisonment or a term of years while the Black defendant was given the death penalty.⁴⁰

Koeninger's findings correspond to the information presented by Baldus, which suggests a continuous system of "legal lynching" that has instituted minor changes when challenges are made to its blatant injustice, but a persistence in its protection of white supremacy through legal apparatuses. In theory, "the law is . . . impartial, but the defendant with ample means is able to have his case presented with every favourable aspect"⁴¹ and that is how "legal lynching" presides as a racial caste of inequality that deprives the "poor and despised, and lacking political clout"⁴² of their rights, privileges, and opportunities to seek justice in the courts.

Condoned legal, racial violence in the criminal justice system perpetuates the preclusion of justice in the United States for Black people. Thus, in the wake of claims of racial prejudice and bias in the criminal justice system, there has been an expanding cloak of "colorblindness" and by morphing to the times, "legal lynching" has endured in its "legalistic illusion" of a trial. It has embedded itself in the criminal justice system to such an extent that the U.S. Supreme Court endorsed its existence in its unjust convictions and discriminatory application of the death penalty in *McCleskey*. Therefore, "legal lynching" has manifested itself in the criminal justice system in order to perpetuate inequality and white privilege by inflicting injustice upon Black people through unfair trials and the discriminatory use of the death penalty.

U.S. courts' protection of whiteness' privileged status enlists constitutional colorblindness to dismiss assertions of racial bias plaguing the criminal justice system. Scottsboro, a prominent example of virulent racism in a southern courtroom that loosely maintained a colorblind cloak, revolved around the racialized sexual dynamics of Black men and white women and the accusation of rape. Similarly, as the Baldus Report elucidates, racialized principles underpinned the systemic bias that determined the *McCleskey* decision. Thus, constitutional colorblindness operates as a defense of whiteness in U.S. courts when its concomitant practice of racialized sentencing practices is challenged. Obfuscating justice for Black people, constitutional colorblindness and "legal lynching" work in conjunction to preclude racial justice.

Endnotes

- 1 *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537, 559 (1896).
- 2 Neil Gotanda, "A Critique of 'Our Constitution Is Color-Blind,'" *Stanford Law Review* 44, No. 1 (1991): 4.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, (New York: The New Press, 2010), 21.
- 6 George C. Wright, "By the Book", In *Under the Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 251.
- 7 Jesse Jackson Sr. et al., *Legal Lynching*, (New York: Anchor, 2003), 7.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Wright, "By the Book," 251.
- 11 Arthur Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 19.
- 12 Historically, lynchings and "legal lynchings" are not limited to the South, but rather endemic of a principle of racial injustice that U.S. courts have upheld and inscribed in U.S. law.
- 13 Wright, "By the Book," 251.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 13.
- 16 James Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 26.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 In their legal defense of the young men in Scottsboro, the NAACP attempted to create a semblance of impartiality, or "legalistic illusion," in the trial by mitigating the most flagrant offenses to proper court procedure, but in reality all it did was deter the inevitable unjust prosecution and sentencing of the defendants.
- 20 Goodman, *Stories of Scottsboro*, 28.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review* 106, No. 8 (1993): 1737.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, 1721.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 1718.
- 26 *McCleskey v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 279, 279 (1987).
- 27 *Ibid.*

- 28 David Baldus et al., *Racial Discrimination and the Death Penalty in the Post-Furman Era: An Empirical and Legal Overview, with Recent Findings from Philadelphia*, (Ithaca: Cornell Law Review, 1983), 1654.
- 29 Randall L. Kennedy, “*McCleskey v. Kemp*: Race, Capital Punishment, and the Supreme Court,” *Harvard Law Review* 101, No. 7 (1988): 1389.
- 30 481 U.S. 279, 281 (1987).
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, (New York: The New Press, 2010), 82.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid., 83.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 *Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. 238, 255 (1972).
- 38 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, 83.
- 39 Kennedy, “*McCleskey v. Kemp*,” 1394.
- 40 408 U.S. 238, 250–251 (1972).
- 41 Ibid., 251.
- 42 Ibid., 255.

Works Cited

- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Era of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.
- Baldus, David C., George Woodworth, David Zuckerman, Neil Alan Weiner, and Barbara Brofitt. *Racial Discrimination and the Death Penalty in the Post-Furman Era: An Empirical and Legal Overview, with Recent Findings from Philadelphia*. Ithaca: Cornell Law Review, 1983.
- Furman v. Georgia*. 408 U.S. 238, 250 (1972).
- Goodman, James. *Stories of Scottsboro*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Gotanda, Neil. “A Critique of ‘Our Constitution is Color-Blind.’” *Stanford Law Review* 44, No. 1 (1991): 1–68. Accessed October 18, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1228940.pdf>.
- Harris, Cheryl. “Whiteness as Property.” *Harvard Law Review* 106, No. 8 (1993): 1707–1791. Accessed May 17, 2019. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1341787>.
- Jackson Sr., Jesse, Jesse Jackson Jr., and Bruce Shapiro. *Legal Lynching: The Death Penalty and America’s Future*. New York: Anchor, 2003.
- Kennedy, Randall L. “*McCleskey v. Kemp*: Race, Capital Punishment, and the Supreme Court.” *Harvard Law Review* 101, No. 7 (1988): 1388–1443. Accessed October 23, 2018. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1341399>.
- McCleskey v. Kemp*. 481 U.S. 279 (1987).
- Plessy v. Ferguson*. 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
- Raper, Arthur. *The Tragedy of Lynching*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933.

Wright, George C. “By the Book: The Legal Executions of Kentucky Black People.” In *Under the Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*, edited by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.

_____. *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and “Legal Lynchings.”* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990.

Nerds vs. *Cacos* and *Yales*: Language Ideologies in Puerto Rican Students' English Language Acquisition

Sara Isabel Castro Font, *University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras*

Sara Castro has a bachelor's degree in Foreign Languages (French and German) and Sociology from the University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras Campus. She is currently a PhD student at UCLA in Linguistic Anthropology. Her research explores ideological constructions of space, particularly of Calle Loíza, a popular urban street in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Specifically, she approaches her questions through a semiotic analysis of the street's linguistic landscape.

Abstract

Although English has been taught in public schools in Puerto Rico since 1902, only 21.1 percent of the Puerto Rican population considers themselves proficient English speakers. Numerous researchers have addressed the challenges of teaching English on the island, as English has been seen as a threat to Puerto Rican culture and been associated with U.S. imperialism. However, recent studies suggest that these language ideologies are currently evolving. I conducted an ethnographic study at a small school in Puerto Rico in order to explore 7th grade students' language ideologies in relation to their context. I found that although English is no longer seen as a threat to Puerto Rican culture, nor is it associated with U.S. imperialism, the study reveals that English is re-signified within the students' immediate social context. Linguistic styles index particular groups of students: those who speak English daily are “nerds” and “isolated,” while those who speak Spanish are “cacos” and “yales.” Language use thus intersects with elements of social behavior, social class, and consumption. Although the students first ascribe a positive value to English, I highlight how the students' language ideologies and language use reproduce social structures within their immediate social setting, thus interrupting some students' engagement with English.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mentor, professors, and my cohort for their support and constructive criticism throughout the process of realizing this project. Most importantly, I would like to thank my parents and sisters for their unconditional support, and for always encouraging me to go forward.

Introduction

Language is a social practice through which we unconsciously reveal our social background and political stances, create relations with others, and even redefine social hierarchies. Specific uses of language—choice of words, pronunciation, tone—are constantly re-signified. They

eventually become associated with groups of people and gain social, political, and cultural implications. These associations are also known as language ideologies: “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 57). Language ideologies are thus important for understanding how social relations derive from language use.

In Puerto Rico, although English has been taught in public schools since 1902, only 21.1 percent of the Puerto Rican population considers themselves proficient English speakers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). This raises concerns, as English is an essential tool for upward social mobility but is not equally accessible to students across social backgrounds. Researchers have addressed negative linguistic attitudes as a factor affecting students' English language acquisition. They have centered on how the political, cultural, and social implications of English lead students to resist or become ambivalent towards learning the language (Torruellas, 1991; Vélez, 2009; Mazak, 2012; Rosado, 2012). However, literature on this topic doesn't closely analyze the underlying set of language ideological processes within the students' immediate context, in which a complex set of different associations and values of English arise. English and Spanish have acquired distinct meanings across different social spectrums in Puerto Rico. Given the role that language plays in the unfolding of social dynamics, I conducted an ethnographic study to address how students' language ideologies affect their English acquisition. In this article I argue that a closer look into the students' language ideologies, specifically in relation to their context, is necessary to fully understand from where some students' ambivalence toward English stems.

Background Context and Theoretical Framework

After Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898, English was introduced to the island as part of the process of Americanization. It became a co-official language with Spanish in 1902 and has been taught in public schools ever since. Educational language policies suffered great instability between 1898 and 1949 as the language of instruction used in schools altered between Spanish and English. While U.S. authorities aimed to eventually remove Spanish and use English as the language of instruction in schools, Puerto Rican students and teachers resisted the teaching of English on the island (Muñiz-Argüelles, 1998). According to the current educational language policies, Spanish is the language of instruction in all subject classes except for the English class, which is taught as a subject in all public schools from elementary level throughout high school. However, contrary to public schools, the elite private schools in Puerto Rico have shifted their focus to using

English as the language of instruction for all subject courses (Maldonado Valentín, 2016). This difference has contributed to the growing gap between social classes on the island, transforming English as a significant marker of social class division. Eventually, English acquired various meanings throughout the history of the island. Although it has been recognized as a positive tool for social mobility, at the same time it has become closely associated with members of the upper class, with U.S. imperialism, and has been seen as a “threat” to Puerto Rican culture and to Spanish, its vernacular language (Mazak, 2012).

The study of language ideologies offers a compelling perspective from which to understand social relations between Puerto Rican adolescents in educational contexts. Woolard & Schieffelin (1994) view language ideology as “a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (p. 55). Linguistic forms go through a process in which they are eventually associated with particular groups of people and these links “are often revalorized—or misrecognized—not just as symbols of group identity, but as emblems of political allegiance or of social, intellectual, or moral worth” (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 61). Consequently, such associated meanings may affect patterns of language acquisition.

The concept of indexicality, as developed by C. S. Peirce, serves to understand how language use becomes associated with particular speakers. It is a process in which a sign acquires a dynamic relation with its referent through repeated connections (Hanks, 1999). In this way, people associate linguistic forms (words, accent, tone) with specific social referents (class, gender, ethnicity) or contexts of speaking (Woolard, 2008). Speakers then strategically use these associations—whether consciously or subconsciously—to assert their social position within a particular setting.

Recent work by linguistic anthropologists highlights how speaker’s perceptions of language forms and use contribute to the (re)shaping of social structures. Additionally, I draw from Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field, and symbolic capital as developed in his theory of practice. Social space is understood as “made up of entities positioned with respect to each other” (Grenfell, 2011, p. 29). Social agents within a particular space use language as a medium through which they assert social positions in relation to each other. Each person is disposed to act or think in a certain way, but will only do so when their social context triggers such predispositions. Bourdieu understands these sets of predispositions as the habitus (Grenfell, 2011). Equally important to the theory of practice is the concept of field: “A network, or a configuration, of objective relations between

positions” (cited in Grenfell, 2011, p. 30). Capital is the tool to negotiate a social position within the field. In this case, language is seen as a symbolic capital that social agents use to define their social positions in relation to others and the broader social hierarchy. As guided by this theoretical framework, language ideologies are analyzed as a medium through which students assert or define themselves within their microcosm by indexing social referents, or in other words, how they socially organize themselves within their immediate setting.

Methodology

In order to answer my research question, I conducted an ethnographic study at a seventh grade English class at a small school in Puerto Rico during March and April 2018. I chose this particular middle school as it has a diversity of students from different social, economic, and educational backgrounds. The school’s population included students who were native Spanish speakers with different English training backgrounds and also return-migrant students whose first language was English. Thus, this school provided a rich context for the study of language ideological processes. The school taught classes in Spanish, except for the English subject class. For the particular English class that I observed, the teacher would primarily teach in English and use Spanish for clarification when needed.

Out of the (approximately) twenty students who were in the English class, nine volunteered to participate in my study. I took field notes on the participant’s behaviors, social interactions, and utterances during the English class. I also held audio-recorded focus groups in order to gain more insight on their perceptions towards the use of English and Spanish in their context. As I observed the students’ interactions in the English class, I was quickly able to recognize the different peer groups as they all sat in groups and spent most of the time talking with each other during class. This allowed me to allocate them into two groups for our audio-recorded conversations in which they could feel comfortable with their peers.

The first set of questions I asked during focus groups were primarily about where they come from, their hobbies, and favorite classes. This provided space for them to feel comfortable and gain confidence in speaking. These questions also sparked up conversations between the participants that were revealing of their ideologies towards English and Spanish, so I mostly allowed the students to dictate the course of the conversation. Whenever I saw an opportunity to gain more insight on the students’ language ideologies, I asked specific questions following up with what they were conversing about. For instance, if they would talk about their music tastes, I would

ask, “Do you prefer music in English or in Spanish? Why?” However, whenever the students would divert from a topic of interest, I would then pick up the thread of the conversation with questions such as “How many languages do you speak? Do you have family members in the U.S.? Have you always lived in Puerto Rico? How would you define what is to be Puerto Rican?” and so on.

Findings and Discussion

In general, the students ascribed a positive value to English as they viewed it as a tool that allowed them international communication. The shift in the perception of English from being a tool for higher paying jobs to a tool for communication may be linked to the students’ access to globalized media. This positive value also supports the statement that the link between Spanish and Puerto Rican identity is not as strongly linked as before (Rosado, 2012). In my study, the students did not view Spanish as an essential element of Puerto Rican identity. They stated that for one to be considered a Puerto Rican, one doesn’t necessarily have to speak Spanish. This perspective is rooted in their own experience with returning diaspora students who speak English as their mother tongue and their contact with family relatives in the U.S. These findings support the anthropologist Duany’s statement that territorial and linguistic elements of Puerto Rican identity are becoming blurred, possibly due to circular migration (people who move to and from the United States and Puerto Rico) and constant contact with the growing diaspora (Duany, 2000; Duany, 2002). These are the students’ language ideologies at a level of awareness in which the students explicitly talk about how they perceive the use of English and Spanish in general.

However, it is essential to highlight that there are multiple levels of information underlying the use of language. The students valued English and Spanish differently when it concerned the use of English and Spanish in their immediate social context. When I asked the first focus group about how their classmates were socially divided, they immediately described it based on the use of language: “*Most of the time we’re divided in two groups, the ones who speak English and the ones who speak Spanish; we socialize but the ones who speak English, who speak more English, enjoy different things like different video games and different things and like they isolate themselves.*” In this sense, this group constructs a symbolic barrier between them and the other students, whom they describe as “different” and “isolated” based on their interests and daily use of English. This stark idea of distinction was repeated throughout the conversation: “*almost always the ones who speak English are in a separate group; Like the ones who speak English but that are from here have their own group and the ones who speak Spanish have another group. It’s a little*

weird but . . . ; Yeah they’re perceived as a little bit much nerdier than us [chuckle].” It is worth noting how the students attach social behavior (isolated, nerdy) and social activities (they “enjoy different things” and different “video games”) to the use of language.

The students of this first group all speak Spanish as their first language, and they mentioned that they did not feel as comfortable with their proficiency in English. Only one of them, who had lived in the U.S. for some months, felt comfortable enough with his English proficiency. As for the second group, two students (who were siblings) had English as their first language (their family migrated back from the U.S.), another two felt comfortable enough to speak it on a daily basis, and one of them did not consider herself as an English speaker. Interestingly, the latter student also had stronger social ties with the students of the first group.

When I asked the second group how they were socially divided into peer groups, they straightforwardly answered that they were divided with “*the yales and cacos on the one side and then everyone on the other side.*” They overtly added that the students of my first focus group belonged to the *cacos* and *yales* peer group. In this case, they make a distinction between one group (*yales* and *cacos*) and the rest. When I asked for clarification, the students explained that the *cacos* and *yales* were the students who are noisy, vulgar, and who listen to reggaetón and trap. This deserves special attention, as the terms *cacos* (which refers to men) and *yales* (which refers to women) are racially and socioeconomically charged and the students’ descriptions depict stereotypical tropes of blackness in Puerto Rico.

In discussing racial hierarchies in Puerto Rico, Rivera-Rideau (2013) shows how the national Puerto Rican identity discourse privileges white Hispanic heritage over the Taíno and African heritages, thus promoting a “whitened” national identity. Consequently, this discourse has also constructed images of blackness, some of which are incompatible with this “whitened” national identity. Rivera-Rideau (2013) terms one of these images as “urban blackness,” which “refers to the stereotypical tropes of blackness, such as hypersexuality, violence and delinquency, associated with urban areas” and thus serves as a “the ‘black’ counterpoint to the rest of the ‘white(ned)’ Puerto Rican population” (p. 618). Thus, the way the students position the *cacos* and *yales* against “everyone” in the classroom and the way they describe them as “vulgar and “noisy” mirrors how the construction of urban blackness is marginalized and situated against a dominant cultural identity. In addition, just as the students clarified that the *cacos* and *yales* are the ones who listen to reggaetón and trap, Rivera-Rideau (2013) explains that “urban blackness encompasses the popular music reggaetón, a rap-reggae hybrid that has been subject to several

ensorship campaigns for promoting social ills associated with urban, predominantly black communities in Puerto Rico” (p. 619). Thus, these terms inherently create and maintain strong distinctions between social sectors within Puerto Rican society, which are evidently reproduced within the classroom.

Moreover, in Puerto Rico there is a Spanish variation commonly associated with uneducated people and lower social classes. This specific variation is also commonly heard in reggaetón songs and, as a result, is perceived as vulgar. One of the students of the second group disdainfully said that the *cacos* and *yales* speak “Spanish *Spanish*.” In this way, the student ascribed a negative connotation to one Puerto Rican Spanish variation. Hence, by disdainfully calling the Spanish speakers of the classroom as *cacos* and *yales*, they are also ascribing a negative value to the use of Spanish within their context.

The *cacos* and *yales* (who spoke predominantly Spanish) belonged to the first group, while the “nerdier” students belonged to the second group (who spoke predominantly English). While the “nerdier” group scorned reggaetón and trap music for its social implications, the first group, of *cacos* and *yales*, showed they were well aware of them. When I asked the “*cacos* and *yales*” group about their music preferences, they immediately chuckled. With hesitance, it took them some time before admitting that they listened mostly to reggaetón and trap music. This suggests that they are aware of the social implications of consuming such music, potentially as a result of the wider social structures that have historically scorned urban music and its listeners.

As Ochs (1992) states, “each social group has specific ways of organizing the distribution of stance and indexical action across social identities, relationships, and activities, with different values associated with each set of indexicals. Cultural competence entails developing knowledge of these more complex indexical systems” (p. 336). Indeed, the students had their own ways of creating notions of distinct groups based on linguistic elements, social behavior, and consumption. In the students’ immediate context, the use of English indexes (or signals to) not only a peer group, but also to a particular social behavior within the classroom (isolated, separate, “nerdy”) and to consumption (video games). Similarly, the use of Spanish indexes vulgar and inappropriate social behavior—as well as inherent ideas of race and social class—and music consumption (reggaetón and trap). These findings demonstrate how the students’ language ideologies are resignified within their immediate context, where linguistic styles are greatly intertwined with elements of social class, behavior, and consumption. Thus, to speak a specific language in this context is also to embody a type of persona (a “nerd” if you speak English, or a “*caco*” or “*yale*”

if you speak Spanish) with its own set of qualities (isolated, loud). This could have potential implications for students’ English acquisition process, because for some students, speaking English might convey a connotation or persona that perhaps they wouldn’t want to be associated with.

Conclusion

While this study suggests that English is not necessarily seen as a “threat” to Puerto Rican culture, as previous studies argue, it also shows the malleability and ambiguity of language and identity. Even though language is losing its indexical relation to Puerto Rican cultural identity, this study further demonstrates how the use of English and Spanish create symbolic barriers between social groups. Schieffelin and Ochs (2009) highlight that “the process of becoming social, including becoming a language user, is culturally constructed . . . every society has its own developmental stories that are rooted in social organization, beliefs, and values” (p. 271). This discussion could be extended to how preceding sociocultural knowledge and expectations influence children or adolescents’ second language acquisition process. This is especially fruitful to consider in the context of Puerto Rico, where even though Spanish is most commonly the first language acquired, English is still widely present (i.e., television, video games, music, commercial signs, etc.).

As children become socialized through language, Spanish and English may come to take varying sociocultural roles and acquire different meanings within their own social groups, where sometimes the use of English can be welcomed or rejected. As language acquisition and sociocultural knowledge are processes that cannot be separated, it could be argued that the Puerto Rican students’ sociocultural context affects their English acquisition. As a result of how students socially organize themselves and associate English and Spanish with specific social groups, some students may refrain from engaging with English to assert an identity as a member of a group that rejects English and its implications.

Although this study cannot be generalized, this critical approach to language ideologies provides a different understanding of the ambivalence that has marked the teaching of English in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, the study of their language ideologies sheds light on how underlying social structures are reproduced within the students’ immediate context and how they reflect the social stratification of the broader Puerto Rican society. It further evidences how internalized cultural ideas and concepts fluctuate and are perpetuated through the use of language across smaller contexts.

Works Cited

- Duany, J. (2002). "Mobile livelihoods: The sociocultural practices of circular migrants between Puerto Rico and the United States." *International Migration Review*, 36(2), 355–388.
- _____. (2000). "Nation on the move: The construction of cultural identities in Puerto Rico and the diaspora." *American Ethnologist*, 27(1), 5–30. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/647124>.
- Grenfell, M. (2011). *Bourdieu, language and linguistics*. London; New York, N.Y.: Continuum.
- Hanks, W. F. (1999). "Indexicality." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 9: 124–126. doi:10.1525/jlin.1999.9.1-2.124.
- Maldonado-Valentín, M. (2016). "An exploration of the effects of language policy in education in a contemporary Puerto Rican society." *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 24(85).
- Mazak, C. M. (2012). "My cousin talks bad like you: Relationships between language and identity in a rural Puerto Rican community." *Journal of language, identity & education*, 11(1), 35–51.
- Muñiz-Arguelles, L. (1989). "The status of languages in Puerto Rico." *Langue et Droit*, 457–472.
- Ochs, E. (1992). "Indexing gender." In A. Duranti & C. Goodwin (Eds.), *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon* (pp. 335–358). Cambridge University Press.
- Rivera-Rideau, P. (2013) "From Carolina to Loíza: race, place and Puerto Rican racial Democracy." *Identities*, 20(5), 616–632. DOI :10.1080/1070289X.2013.842476.
- Rosado, B. L. D. (2012). *Language and identity: The study of a possible ongoing change in attitudes towards American English and Puerto Rican Spanish in Puerto Rico*. University of Puerto Rico–Río Piedras
- Schieffelin, B. & Ochs, E. (Ed.). (2009). "Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications." In A. D. (Ed.) *Linguistic anthropology: A reader* (263–302). John Wiley & Sons.
- Torruellas, R. M. (1991). *Learning English in three private schools in Puerto Rico: Issues of class, identity and ideology*. (Doctoral Dissertation, New York University, New York). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Database. (Publication No. AAT 9025150).
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). *American fact finder*. Retrieved from: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>.
- Woolard, K. A. (2008). "Why dat now?: Linguistic anthropological contributions to the explanation of sociolinguistic icons and change." *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 12(4), 432–452.
- Woolard, K. A., & Schieffelin, B. B. (1994). "Language ideology." *Annual review of anthropology*, 23(1), 55–82.
- Vélez, J. (2009). "Understanding Spanish-language maintenance in Puerto Rico: Political will meets the demographic imperative." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 142(1), pp. 5–24.

A Bedroom of One's Own: Martin Wong and *My Secret World*: 1978–1981

Jess Chen, *Duke University*

Jess Chen is a senior at Duke University majoring in Art History and Public Policy. She is broadly interested in global contemporary art with a focus on related to memory, politics, feminism, and materiality. After graduating, she will embark on a gap year conducting to conduct arts research and apply to PhD programs in art history. Outside the classroom, Jess is a classically trained flutist and published poet.

Abstract

This article, a revised excerpt from a larger research project, focuses on the trajectory of Chinese-American artist Martin Wong during the 1980s. I seek to revise critical assumptions about his work as primarily documentary-based through my semiotic analysis of his painting *My Secret World* (1984). In my reading, I examine the rich codes and symbols that Wong used to construct his bedroom and simultaneously understand his identity at the crossroads of multiple groups. Wong incorporates eclectic expertise, ranging from sign language to airport codes and book titles, into a painting that at first glance simply depicts his old bedroom, but upon further inspection reveals a complex exploration of living at the border.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Mellon Mays mentor, Professor Stiles, for her detailed and insightful feedback on this paper, and her unwavering encouragement both professional and personal. I am also deeply grateful to Professor Jaskot for his support during the development of my research in his course.

Many thanks to Anneliis Beadnell and P.P.O.W. Gallery for their generosity and willingness to help a new scholar. Lastly, I want to acknowledge my Mellon community at Duke, without which this would not have been possible.

Five self-portraits line the childhood bedroom of the artist Martin Wong. In these three-quarter profiles, Wong emerges from moody washes of green and umber to gaze at the viewer searchingly. This series of enigmatic self-portraits dates from his teenage years in San Francisco before he moved to New York in 1978. There, Wong's subject matter was the Lower East Side: tenement buildings, colorful graffiti, and members of the Puerto Rican and African community. He never painted a self-portrait again.

Known as an artist of "visionary realism," Wong's multicultural work was a precursor to the identity politics of the 1990s. His painterly exploration of the diverse communities in the Lower East Side, where he lived, had a curious omission: himself. Upon first inspection, the fastidiously detailed tenement in *My Secret World: 1978–1981* (1984, Figure 1) appears representative of Wong's documentary oeuvre. A semiotic approach to reading *My Secret World*, however, reveals a portrait of a fiercely independent artist who spanned multiple worlds without belonging to any. Hand signals, eccentric sayings, and textual references pepper his bedroom and studio in the Meyer's Hotel, Wong's first residence in New York. The distinct visual vocabulary developed by Wong during those years grounds a skeptical exploration of identity that exposes its own distortions, cryptic disguises, and lack of stability. As a New York transplant, Chinese-American, and gay artist, Wong's identity was constructed from the borders surrounding a marginal, sometimes overlapping set of communities. *My Secret World* presents the psychological condition of existing at the border.

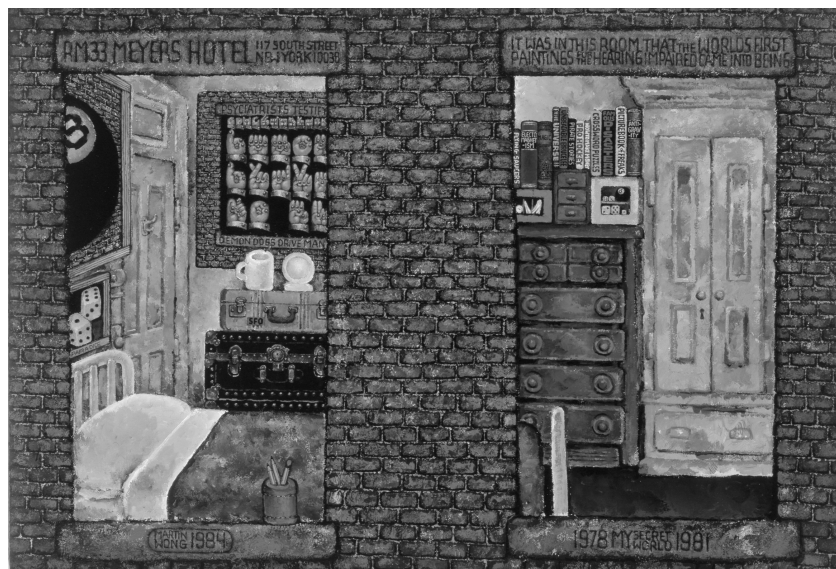


Figure 1. Martin Wong. *My Secret World*, 1978–81, 1984. Acrylic on canvas. 48 x 68 inches. Courtesy of the Estate of Martin Wong and P.P.O.W.

Though Wong was adept at translating between groups and adjusting to multilingual environments, his outsider status becomes clear in his paintings. Wong picked up snippets of Spanish while living on the Lower East Side and integrated the language into his work, but he remarked tellingly in an interview that he never felt like part of that community. In the same interview, Wong said that his interest in American Sign Language (ASL) was motivated by his experience taking the subway, where deaf passengers handed him ASL cards. On the back wall of *My Secret World*, there is a painting with four rows of ASL that say “Psychiatrists/Demon/Drive/to Mu,” a truncated version of an earlier painting in which Wong wrote “Psychiatrists Testify: Demon Dogs Drive Man to Murder,” a tabloid headline, in ASL. Wong spells out each letter of this phrase. While this one-letter, one-hand spelling adheres exactly to the English words above and below the hand signals, it fails to capture the dynamic qualities of ASL that are predicated on movement. Most words and phrases in ASL are actually a combination of signal and gesture; for instance, “drive” in ASL requires turning closed fists in a manner similar to controlling a steering wheel. In the painting, some of the hands—a thumbs up, a peace sign—resemble universal hand signals, further emphasizing the gaps in translating between ASL and English, a problem exacerbated by the fact that Wong did not engage substantively with ASL or the deaf community. He sampled the language and incorporated it, translation difficulties and all, into his personal imaginary, his own chronicles of the Lower East Side.

As a denizen of the Lower East Side, Wong was active in politically relevant causes, including anti-gentrification campaigns and AIDS awareness exhibitions, but he resisted characterization by any single identity or cause. *My Secret World* deliberately switches between languages and forces the viewer to confront a polyphony of voices and concerns. Which identities are privileged, and whose language is prioritized? The fleshy hands and stubby fingers of the ASL hands are unnaturally uniform in shape, such that they no longer resemble letters and are more difficult to decipher for readers of the English alphabet. The entire pictorial space of the painting-within-a-painting is dedicated to ASL, while the captions above and below are in English, as a visual aid to non-ASL-reading outsiders. Furthermore, the upper lintel on the right window reads, “It was in this room that the world’s first paintings for the hearing impaired came into being.” The contradiction in this statement is immediately apparent—those who are hearing impaired can see paintings—but the use of sign language gestures to a community whose disability cannot be seen and who is rarely depicted in painting. The twin crises of invisible disability and lack of artistic representation are not limited to the deaf. As such, Wong’s use of ASL may also subtly allude to the gay community, of which he was a part, and the AIDS crisis, which

struck with unrelenting brutality in the 1980s. The reversal of dominant and alternate languages in the ASL painting and on the lintel seem to indicate that Wong champions, or at least sympathizes with, the marginalized. Nonetheless, Wong complicates his desire to represent these constituencies by writing about his accomplishment in English. Who is the audience of his declaration, and who does he seek recognition from? Wong’s motives are unresolved and complex, the workings of an individual who does not pledge allegiance to any specific cause.

If Wong harbored individualistic tendencies and did not conform to the prevailing Neo-expressionist or Neo-conceptualist movements, the intertextuality in *My Secret World* makes it clear that he was by no means a hermit. Wong possessed a capacious curiosity and searched for ways to introduce existing frames of knowledge into his own worldview. Over his lifetime, Wong amassed reams of books and papers now held by New York University’s Fales Library. In *My Secret World*, twelve books bearing titles like *Picture Book of Freaks*, *Pirate Stories*, *Magic*, and *Flying Saucers* cover the surface of the dresser. The eclectic content of these books demonstrates Wong’s deep interest and acceptance of oddity at the corners of the universe, whether discredited (*Flying Saucers*, *Magic*) or not (*Electromagnetism*). The only specific title, *Unbeatable Bruce Lee*, is a collector’s edition manual about the martial artist and actor Bruce Lee that was published in 1978. Lee, an Asian-American also from San Francisco, starred in movies that piqued Western curiosity in Chinese culture and attained popularity on both sides of the Pacific. In him, Wong may have found a model for how to navigate between and into different cultures, or perhaps Wong was drawn to Lee’s unusual success as an Asian-American in Hollywood. The other titles in *My Secret World* are generic and do not have authors or publishers on the spine; they could be amalgamations of several different books, unusually rare publications, or general subject titles. In fact, there is no proof that these books exist outside of Wong’s imagination. They attest to both the singularity of Wong’s vision and the breadth of his intellectual relationships. The linchpin of the collection, though, is *Crossword Puzzles*. Wong slyly tips his hand to the viewer with this title, hinting that clues in *My Secret World* intersect and generate multiple layers of meaning.

Wong’s book collection indicates his absorption in solitary activities, while the textures and surfaces of his bedroom expose their alienating effects. Simply put, Wong did not transition easily to New York. As Antonio Sergio Bessa has written, Wong moved from California’s hippie counterculture, where he designed sets for a gay theater troupe named the Cockettes, to a grittier counterculture in New York that involved addiction to hard drugs. *My Secret World* places the viewer in the period between 1978 and 1981,

when Wong painted alone in his hotel room and rarely socialized. The tightly packed bricks, with no visible cracks or openings, seem to encroach on the space of the window. The room's airlessness is enhanced by the thin black border outlining each window, which further suffocates the space. Inside, the room is immaculate, almost clinical. There are no rumpled blankets, half-finished drawings, open drawers; the armoire is locked, and the suitcases are clasped shut. There is no trace of the human messiness of living or making art. Instead, Wong focuses the viewer's attention on surfaces, painting each window with little to no perspective. The closet, armoire, and bed frame are caked in layers of grime. Dirt is sedimented into the crevices of the door, while patches of pure white suggest started, and failed, cleaning attempts. The off-white dinginess and claustrophobia of the small room signal the occupant's economic status and mental state. Paradoxically, the brick façade and interior surfaces uncloak the depths of Wong's mental and physical isolation.

In this constricting environment, Wong constructs hierarchies of space and color that foreground his artistic pursuits and physical survival. An oversized mug and an upright plate rest casually against the ASL-tabloid painting, the text of which references the 1977 trial of New York serial killer David Berkowitz. The kitchenware lends the room a lived-in look, a reminder that regardless of the spectacle of Berkowitz' trial, the occupant needed to survive day-to-day. The same dishes are balanced on top of two suitcases, one bearing a red sticker with "SFO," San Francisco International Airport's three-letter code and a nod to Wong's hometown. Locked securely with metal clasps and rivets, the suitcases refuse viewers, or perhaps even Wong himself, access to memories of the past. Both the suitcases and the sign language painting are stacked against the wall and rendered in muted tones of beige, red-pink, and olive, while the white/off-white dishes gleam, suggesting that Wong prioritized self-sustenance over both his past and the distractions in New York. Directly across from the plate and cup, the pencils on the windowsill echo the "V" shape of several ASL signs in the painting. On the threshold between the street and the room, the pencils encapsulate the artistic means by which Wong left the confines of his room and invited viewers into his vibrant imagination of the Lower East Side. His bedroom, however, contains only austere basics: homely dishes for eating and plain yellow pencils for sketching, objects placed strategically in the room to highlight Wong's ambition to survive and create art in New York, and distinguishing him from "East Village" artists for whom fame and acceptance by "uptown" galleries was paramount.

Though an air of loneliness pervades *My Secret World*, Wong injects the painting with his offbeat humor and in doing so, challenges conventional interpretations of his work. Two paintings on the left wall subvert traditional

attachments to chance and luck. The Magic 8-Ball, typically used as a "divine" decision maker, faces down mutely, refusing to deliver guidance. Instead it stares obstinately, larger than life, at the viewer. Bricks in the background provide a similarly opaque surface upon which nothing can be inferred. Wong is even more explicit about the lack of meaning associated with the painting of dice, writing "Pair of Dice" in large capitals on the frame to underscore the obvious without signifying other meanings.

Indeed, meaning mattered in this period, as semiotics were widely adapted by artists and critics for the analysis of their signifying practices. In his book *The Return of the Real*, art historian Hal Foster described this shift as the "textual turn," a dialectic between the autonomy of the sign and the decentering of representation. Furthermore, Rosalind Krauss characterized art at this time as a trace or mark indicating a referent as evidence of the heightened importance of the index. As such, Wong's *My Secret World*, with its semiotic writings on the window frames, indexed how he staked his presence and identity, as well as that of the Meyer's Hotel, regardless of what each would become in the future. By the time Wong completed the painting, the Lower East Side had already undergone threats of demolition and proposals for gentrification, and in 1994, after his AIDS diagnosis, Wong himself moved back to San Francisco.

Although Wong is celebrated as a meticulous realist who documented the Lower East Side, these assertions are troublingly opaque. Wong defied easy definitions that neither account for his self-portraits of the 1960s nor his Chinatown paintings made after his move to San Francisco. As he noted, "I had wanted to do them [the Chinatown paintings] for about 20 years and then suddenly I just did them." Wong's work masks his process of working through the crossroads of different identities: Chinese-American and gay, San Franciscan and Lower East Side artist, clever humorist and fount of esoteric knowledge. *My Secret World* brews with deceptive realism, found texts, symbols, and surfaces, a panoply of playful and elusive meanings that generate a deeply nuanced portrait of an artist's borders of being.

Works Cited

- Bessa, Antonio. "Dropping Out: Martin Wong and the American Counterculture." In *Martin Wong: Human Instamatic*, edited by Antonio S. Bessa and Bronx Museum of the Arts, 11–24. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2015.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn, and Cara Mendel Ryan. "The Fine Art of Gentrification." *October* 31 (1984): 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.2307/778358>.
- Foster, Hal. "Passion as Sign." In *The Return of the Real*, 71–96. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America." *October* 3 (1977): 68–81.

Moore, Alan, and Jim Cornwell. "Local History: The Art of Battle for Bohemia in New York." In *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*, edited by Julie Ault, 321–366. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; New York: Drawing Center, 2002.

Ramirez, Yasmin. "Chino-Latino: The Loisaída Interview." In *Martin Wong: Human Instamatic*, edited by Antonio S. Bessa and Bronx Museum of the Arts, 109–124. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2015.

Schjeldahl, Peter. "A Bohemian's Triumphant Return." *New Yorker*, November 9, 2015. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/16/city-scenes>.

Smith, Roberta. "Martin Wong is Dead at 53; A Painter of Poetic Realism." *New York Times*, August 18, 1999. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/18/arts/martin-wong-is-dead-at-53-a-painter-of-poetic-realism.html>.

Buggery and “Battymen”: A Brief History of the Jamaican Buggery Law

Clayton C. Covington, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Clayton Covington is a recent graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, where he majored in International and Area Studies with a minor in Sociology. He is an interdisciplinary scholar with interests in race, class, gender, and sexuality in the African Diaspora. Currently, Clayton works as a Research Aide for the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at Cornell University. In the near future, Clayton plans to pursue a PhD in Sociology to expand upon his undergraduate research with Mellon Mays.

Abstract

Between 2009 and 2012 there were 231 recorded attacks against LGBTQ people in Jamaica. Committed by both police and fellow civilians, these incidents of violence have become commonplace and often go unreported. This article offers a historical treatment of Jamaican homophobia beyond common cultural explanations. Alternatively, it traces the evolution and application of Jamaica’s current anti-sodomy statute beginning in the British colonial period with a close reading of three sodomy cases adjudicated under colonial law in the 1850s. In drawing historical parallels with current anti-LGBTQ violence, the article argues that this anti-sodomy law remains a colonial legacy that integrated homophobia into early Jamaican statecraft.

Acknowledgements

With great thanks to my advisor Monique Bedasse, the archivists at the Jamaica Archives and Records Department in Spanish Town, and the wonderful MMUF community at Washington University.

A note on terminology: As to avoid historical anachronism, the term “homoeroticism” and variations of it will be used in the place “homosexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” and “queer” to describe the experiences of historical subjects. The reason behind this substitution is that it is highly unlikely that the historical figures discussed here would have used these terms as personal identifiers or general descriptors. Alternatively, “homoeroticism” is a more enduring term specific to particular acts and experiences that were criminalized, not identities. Moreover, this choice of language aligns with the work of contemporary Jamaican LGBTQ activists, who have emphasized that the Buggery Law does not criminalize homosexuality, but rather homoerotic relations. Exceptions include if subjects used the latter set of terms to describe themselves or if subjects are identified with these terms in previous scholarship.

In January 2013, Devon O., a gay Jamaican man traveling through the parish of St. Ann, was beaten by a crowd of approximately 30 people.¹ Shouting slurs regarding his sexual orientation, the crowd ravaged his body, beating him with knives, machetes, and sticks.² After 20 minutes elapsed, 2 police officers removed him from the crowd, handcuffed him, and then beat him in their van.³ Recalling his assault, Devon stated that one officer struck him with a baton three times and yelled, “Hey, you’re a fish, and you are a battyman.”⁴ After they arrived at the police station, one officer kicked Devon out of the van.⁵ As his paperwork was processed, Devon heard the other officer say, “Fish don’t last long in St. Ann. Everyone who comes in comes out dead.”⁶ Without formally charging him with a crime, the police left Devon in handcuffs and kept him overnight. Upon release, an officer scolded him and told him that he “should go to church.”⁷

Devon’s harrowing experience was hardly a unique one. In fact, prior to his assault, there were 231 attacks against LGBTQ people recorded by the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays (J-FLAG) between 2009 and 2012.⁸ These incidents collectively demonstrated a larger social phenomenon in Jamaica in which individual and state actors’ decision to commit violent acts against LGBTQ people became commonplace. This violence was made possible, in part, because Jamaica remains among a select number of decolonizing nations that have retained anti-sodomy laws that date back to its colonial past. Thus, this article offers a historical treatment of Jamaican homophobia by tracing the evolution of Jamaica’s current anti-sodomy statute commonly known as “The Buggery Law,” beginning in the 16th century. The article will move to explore the application of this law in the colonial period by providing a close reading of three legal cases involving men who were found in violation of the law and subsequently put before a jury. Ultimately, the article argues that the Buggery Law highlighted the interplay of colonial indoctrination and fundamentalist Christianization, working in tandem to integrate animus toward homoeroticism into the fabric of Jamaican statecraft.

Origins of the Buggery Law

The legal integration of homophobia into Jamaican statecraft began not in Jamaica, but in England prior to British colonization of the island. Clergymen throughout Europe led the charge to eradicate the alleged “disease” of homoeroticism since the early 14th century. Like other European nations, the English remained steadfast in the belief that homosexuality was a foreign infestation that was morally reprehensible, but they did not participate in the burnings and hangings that were common throughout the region.⁹ In fact, England trailed behind neighboring

countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France because it had no formal legislation pertaining to homoeroticism until 1533.¹⁰ Under the reign of King Henry VIII, the Buggery Act of 1533 came into effect.¹¹ Formally called *An act for the Punishment of the Vice of Buggerye. Cap. vi*, this act legislated buggery as an “abominable and detestable vice . . . committed with mankind or beast,” that was ultimately punishable by death.¹² Ironically, this “abominable” offense was never explicitly defined in the law for several hundred years. Instead, buggery became associated with homoeroticism between men due to judicial precedent with language that used the terms “buggery” and “sodomy” interchangeably to refer to homoerotic acts, particularly anal penetration between men.¹³ Later statutes eventually defined buggery as male-male sexual conduct, excluding female homoeroticism.¹⁴

The creation of this law was most significant because it shifted the jurisdiction of prosecuting sodomy from the ecclesiastical courts to the secular courts of England and Wales.¹⁵ While the explanation for this shift in power is contested among historians, one perspective argued that King Henry VIII grew concerned with some clergy members’ suspected sexual abuse of children in the church.¹⁶ Moreover, the king was greatly frustrated with the pope’s refusal to annul his marriage to Queen Catherine.¹⁷ Thus, he drafted this law to not only address these suspicions, but also to consolidate power to the throne.¹⁸ King Henry VIII’s decision to expand the authority of the crown with the Buggery Act outlived his reign as king and eventually spread to colonies throughout the British empire, including Jamaica.

Following the British capture of Jamaica from the Spanish in 1655, the Buggery Act became the law of Jamaica and remained unchanged until 1828 when it was repealed and replaced with the Offences Against the Person Act (OAPA).¹⁹ Originating in British parliament, the OAPA consolidated numerous laws involving interpersonal violence, including murder, assault, kidnapping, rape, and buggery.²⁰ Regardless of the charge, the OAPA created a narrative of buggery as an offence that, despite its private nature, implicated the masses. Working alongside British parliament, Jamaica’s local colonial government, the Assembly, also directed its attention to sexual crimes in the 19th century with increased scrutiny.

A Shift in Controlling the (Black) Masses

In 1850, the Assembly voted in favor of a whipping law that itemized an extensive list of almost exclusively sexual crimes.²¹ These crimes included sodomy, assault with the intent to commit sodomy, rape, assault with the intent to commit rape, pedophilia, attempted pedophilia, bestiality, and arson, warranting a maximum of 117 lashes depending

on the severity of the offense.²² Consequently, 1850 marked a shift in which authorities became increasingly concerned with the sexual proclivities of the masses, as evidenced by a sharp increase in the prosecution of sexual offences in subsequent years.²³ Though emancipation occurred a decade earlier in 1838, the Whipping Act of 1850 sanctioned public displays of punishment that were all too reminiscent of the slavery era.²⁴ Thus, this statute reinforced negative attitudes toward homoeroticism by commissioning the state to violently discipline offenders. While the exact cause of increased punishment in this period has yet to be explained, a potential explanation is that the OAPA underwent multiple revisions in British Parliament before and after the Whipping Act of 1850 until the most current version from 1864.²⁵ It is possible that the Assembly took after Parliament and paid increased attention to buggery through a legal lens. Nevertheless, the increase demonstrates that the colonial government doubled down on its efforts to monitor and control the sexual habits of Jamaican subjects, often resorting to punitive practices entrenched in historical trauma.

Perhaps the partial result of such trauma, these punishments were scarcely documented and many records remain restricted. Nevertheless, there are a few available buggery court cases that correspond with the timing of Whipping Act of 1850 and they provide evidence that buggery was not simply proscribed in legal texts, but actively criminalized in colonial Jamaica. In 1851, John Fowler, a laborer of Trelawny in Cornwall County, faced charges of buggery.²⁶ Accused of having acted with “force and arms . . . upon one Edward Malcom,” the court believed that Fowler “feloniously . . . had a venereal affair,” by “carnally [knowing] him the said Edward Malcom.”²⁷ Fowler denied these allegations on all accounts, but a jury of 12 men found him guilty of an assault, which resulted in Fowler’s sentence of 9 months of hard labor in the general penitentiary in Kingston.²⁸ In the same year, Peter Vernon, another laborer, failed to acquit himself of charges of an alleged “venereal affair” with a man named Henry Vaughn.²⁹ The court even subpoenaed Vernon’s wife to presumably testify on his behalf, but her exact role was unclear because Vernon’s case solely noted that she was called into court.³⁰ Another jury of 12 men then found Vernon guilty of a felony—a more severe charge than Fowler’s—and sentenced him to 2 years of hard labor.³¹ In 1853, Thomas Williams, a laborer from Saint James in Cornwall County, was also found guilty of the felony of buggery due to an affair with Henry Mochiler, but he received a less severe sentence of 12 months of hard labor in the general penitentiary.³² Though they were originally put on trial for the same crime, none of these three men received the same punishment. Regardless of the outcome, however, these cases provide key insights into the colonial state’s framing of homoeroticism.

The language of the court opinions in the cases reflected law enforcement's earnest desire to preserve Queen Victoria's reputation. For example, John Fowler's crime was not simply that he committed "the detestable and abominable crime of buggery," but also that he disrupted the peace of the "Queen her crown and dignity."³³ In this way the Queen became a direct actor herself. Vernon and Williams' cases contained language that similarly concerned the Queen's well-being.³⁴ More broadly, the entire collection of cases addressing a variety of offences was titled "Pleas of the Crown" and the Queen's honor was referenced in every violation of the law.³⁵ This explained legal actors' vested interest in preventing the embarrassment of the Queen, and, therefore, they legislated and enforced the moral convictions of her reign. By focusing on the Queen's dignity, this language reinforced her colonial domain legally, resulting in the cultural elevation of Victorian values.

'Buggery,' as it was used in the courts, had an expansive definition that encompassed both sodomy and bestiality. Thirteen of the seventeen buggery cases in Cornwall County between 1847 and 1854 were bestiality cases; only three were sodomy cases.³⁶ In all but three of the bestiality cases, the accused was found guilty; all of those accused of sodomy were likewise convicted.³⁷ These outcomes aligned with quantitative data from the period that showed exceptionally high rates of conviction for sexual offences throughout Jamaica with a rate of 69 percent for bestiality and 77 percent for buggery.³⁸ Pairing buggery with bestiality further stigmatized homoeroticism because it mapped societal disdain for bestiality onto homoeroticism. This close association and arguable conflation of sodomy with bestiality may partially explain the highly charged language in the sodomy cases and high rates of conviction for buggery cases. While there were some exceptions, to be accused of buggery nearly guaranteed a conviction of some offense. This certainty of conviction was an important factor when considering the consequences of this charge.

Among the most common consequences for violators of the Buggery Law was state-sanctioned physical violence. In addition to his 2 years of hard labor, the court required that Vernon "receive [39] lashes to his bare back and the same on the last day of his imprisonment."³⁹ Williams, who was also found guilty of the felony, received the same two sets of 39 lashes with his 12 month sentence.⁴⁰ A detail to not overlook was that each of these men was a 'laborer,'—an identifier for formerly enslaved people used by the courts for the sole purpose of denoting race.⁴¹ Thus, the punishment of Vernon and Williams, two black men, by whipping further complicated this punitive measure in the context of post-emancipation. Diana Paton, a historian and scholar of punishment, points toward a shift in motivations for administering punishment at this time.⁴² The faith that

had once existed in punitive measures as a path to spiritual and/or moral rehabilitation was waning. Instead, punishments like whipping and flogging served the purpose of making an example of those punished to discourage further 'unruly' behavior.⁴³ Paton highlights that this loss of faith worked in tandem with the increased stereotyping of black Jamaicans as primitive people who were believed to be incapable of controlling their sexual urges.⁴⁴ Thus, the creation and implementation of the Whipping Act of 1850 demonstrated an implicit association between blackness and sexual deviance that did not dissipate with emancipation in 1838. Instead the association intensified, and the Whipping Act of 1850 was one of the several efforts by the Jamaica Assembly to control the black masses.

The Sexual Politics of Historical Erasure

At the time of Thomas Williams' 1853 trial, the ecclesiastical courts had not adjudicated sodomy cases for over 300 years, but his case demonstrated that the secular courts never lost their ecclesiastical roots. In Williams' case, the court employed strong biblical imagery to convey the severity of his crime:

Thomas Williams . . . did wound and ill with intent [that] detestable and abominable crime (not to be named among Christians) called buggery with the said Henry Mochiler then and there feloniously wickedly diabolically and against the order of nature to commit and perpetrate to the great displeasure of Almighty God [and] to the great damage of the said Henry Mochiler.⁴⁵

The strong religious overtones present in this portion of Williams' case gestured toward the prominence of Christian values within the colonial legal system. For example, buggery was a crime so unspeakable that it required a parenthetical clarification in legal texts. This exact phrasing also appeared in both Fowler and Vernon's cases.⁴⁶ The use of words such as "wicked" and "diabolical" to describe buggery appealed to a moralistic Christian ethos by using biblical rhetoric that denounced homoerotic acts. Further, the description of the sexual encounter between Williams and Mochiler as a "venereal affair" may have negatively colored their relations as diseased and loathsome. By naming God as the ultimate sufferer, Williams case demonstrated that Christian sensibilities greatly influenced both the interpretation and adjudication of the OAPA. In all, this language demonstrated a subtle yet important distinction: whereas the older Buggery Act made buggery a crime against the law, the OAPA framed buggery as not simply criminal, but immoral because it was a crime against God and the Queen.

These cases further denigrated buggery by nominally eliminating the possibility of consensual sex between

men. In each of the cases, the accused fulfilled the role of the transgressor and his sexual partner was the victim. Thomas Fowler, for example, acted with “force and arms . . . upon . . . Edward Malcom.”⁴⁷ As opposed to the possibility that Fowler and Malcom had carnal knowledge of each other, the prosecutors assumed that Fowler “carnally knew” Malcom; that he acted upon Malcom.⁴⁸ This transgressor-victim dichotomy was also evident in Thomas Williams’ court statement, which asserted that Williams not only displeased God, but that he also “[wounded and damaged]” Henry Mochiler.⁴⁹ Caribbean historian and archeologist Jonathan Dalby suggested that consensual relations were termed, “venereal affairs,” in legal texts, and Williams’ case used this exact language.⁵⁰ However, the case did not entertain the possibility of mutually consenting actors. Instead, each case suggested that there was always a skewed abuse of power in which one aggressive actor had to convince or coerce the other person into performing sexual acts.

Beyond the heteronormative dichotomy of active and passive roles, the semantics of the cases not only eliminated the possibility of consent, but they also minimized imaginings of mutual homoerotic desire. One should note that none of the aforementioned sodomy cases included a matching case in which the other man involved in the affair was also put on trial. By assuming that there was one transgressor and one victim, sodomy was always an act of sexual violence. Moreover, the language of the cases did little to differentiate an act of buggery from an act of rape or sexual assault. Even Jamaica’s current statutes solely define rape in terms of a man and a woman.⁵¹ Thus, the legal language did not (nor does it currently) exist to describe rape or sexual assault outside of this heteronormative understanding.

Of course, it is possible that Fowler, Vernon, and Williams perpetrated sexual violence. The available sources do not offer insights into the intentions and desires of any of the men in these cases. Still, it would be a logical leap to not consider mutual desire in these sodomy cases, for the following reasons: First, Jamaican law did not classify non-consensual sexual conduct between men as rape or sexual assault. Instead, the law designated buggery—a crime that was synonymous with bestiality—as the appropriate label for unwanted sexual contact between men. Secondly, the OAPA would not differentiate consensual and nonconsensual sexual conduct; both would be worthy of a conviction. Thus, if consensual and nonconsensual sex between men yielded the same consequences, they carried similar societal attitudes despite their differences. Mutual desire is a crucial factor to consider in the historical stigmatization of homoeroticism within Jamaica because according to the law, it did not exist. If mutual homoerotic desire did not exist, it would render the people who experienced it invisible as well.

Conclusion

Much of the discourse surrounding Jamaican homophobia in popular media points to dancehall music and fundamentalist religious leaders, often suggesting that homophobia is simply ingrained into Jamaican culture.⁵² Underlying both of these, however, was the ratification and continued application of the Buggery Law. Therefore, an investigation of this law’s convoluted history is necessary to better understand its symbolic power. Historically, the Buggery Law’s true focus was not to promote social purity but to exercise social control. By elevating Victorian notions of civility, the Jamaican state sanctioned violence against offenders in manners that all too well mirror Devon’s experiences. Further, the scarce record and semantic erasure of homoeroticism help to make sense of this stigma in post-colonial Jamaica. Ultimately, contemporary understandings of LGBTQ struggle in Jamaica must recognize the colonial legacy of the Buggery Law without viewing the law in isolation. Rather, the discourse must also acknowledge the highly complex processes of acculturation that integrated homophobia into Jamaican statecraft through popularizing a strict, heteronormative model of the “proper” Jamaican.

Endnotes

- 1 Human Rights Watch, “Not Safe at Home: Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Jamaica,” October 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/10/21/not-safe-home/violence-and-discrimination-against-lgbt-people-jamaica>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid; “Fish” and “battyman” are pejorative terms for effeminate men who have sex with men.
- 5 Human Rights Watch, “Not Safe at Home,” 34.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Harvard University Press, 2009), 361–62.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 “The Buggery Act 1533,” The British Library, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-buggery-act-1533>.
- 13 Heather Little-White, “What Is Buggery?,” *The Gleaner*, November 27, 2011, <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20111127/out/out9.html>.
- 14 Ibid; Note that legal exclusion of female homoeroticism does not suggest less social stigma.
- 15 Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization*, 362.
- 16 Ibid., 362–363.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 “The Queen v Fowler.”
- 19 Lisa SurrIDGE, “On the Offenses Against the Person Act, 1828,” ed. Dino Franco Felluga, *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net, 2013, 1, http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=lisa-surrIDGE-on-the-offenses-against-the-person-act-1828.
- 20 Ibid., 1–2.

- 21 “An Act to Authorize the Several Courts of This Island to Corporal Punishment in Certain Cases,” Pub. L. No. 3847, 36 13 Vict. (1850).
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Johnathan Dalby, *Crime and Punishment in Jamaica: A Quantitative Analysis of the Assize Court Records, 1756–1856* (Mona, Jamaica: Social History Project, Dept. of History, University of the West Indies, 2000), 45.
- 24 “Whipping Act of 1850.”
- 25 “The Buggery Act 1533.”
- 26 “The Queen against John Fowler for Sodomy” (Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1851), 1A/7/1/6; p. 174, The Jamaica Archives.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 “The Queen against Peter Vernon for Sodomy” (Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1851), 1A/7/1/6; pp. 189–190, The Jamaica Archives.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 “Regina v Thomas Williams for Sodomy” (Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1853), 1A/7/1/6; pp. 303–304, The Jamaica Archives.
- 33 “The Queen v Fowler.”
- 34 “The Queen v Vernon”; “Regina v Williams.”
- 35 Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1A/7/1/6.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Dalby, *Crime and Punishment in Jamaica*, 46.
- 39 “The Queen v Vernon.”
- 40 “Regina v Williams.”
- 41 Dalby, *Crime and Punishment in Jamaica*, 3.
- 42 Diana Paton, *No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780–1870*, Next Wave: New Direction in Women’s Studies (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 142.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 “Regina v Williams.”
- 46 “The Queen v Fowler”; “The Queen v Vernon.”
- 47 “The Queen v Fowler.”
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 “Regina v Williams.”
- 50 Dalby, *Crime and Punishment in Jamaica*, 43.
- 51 Ministry of Justice—Government of Jamaica, “The Sexual Offences Act,” § 3–35 (2011), http://japarliament.gov.jm/attachments/339_The%20Sexual%20Offences%20Act.pdf.
- 52 See Tim Padgett, “The Most Homophobic Place on Earth?,” *Time*, April 12, 2006, <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1182991,00.html>; Wayne Besen, “Jamaica: A Killer Vacation For Gays,” *Huffington Post* (blog), May 12, 2009, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/wayne-besen/jamaica-a-killer-vacation_b_185792.html.

Works Cited

An Act to Authorize the Several Courts of This Island to Corporal Punishment in Certain Cases, Pub. L. No. 3847, 36 13 Vict. (1850).

Besen, Wayne. “Jamaica: A Killer Vacation For Gays.” *Huffington Post* (blog), May 12, 2009. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/wayne-besen/jamaica-a-killer-vacation_b_185792.html.

Chin, Timothy. “‘Bullers’ and ‘Battymen’: Contesting Homophobia in Black Popular Culture and Contemporary Caribbean Literature.” In *Our Caribbean: A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing from the Antilles*, edited by Thomas Glave, 78–96. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.

Crompton, Louis. *Homosexuality and Civilization*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

Dalby, Johnathan. *Crime and Punishment in Jamaica: A Quantitative Analysis of the Assize Court Records, 1756–1856*. Mona, Jamaica: Social History Project, Dept. of History, University of the West Indies, 2000.

Human Rights Watch. “Not Safe at Home: Violence and Discrimination against LGBT People in Jamaica,” October 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/10/21/not-safe-home/violence-and-discrimination-against-lgbt-people-jamaica>.

Lazarus, Latoya. “This Is a Christian Nation: Gender and Sexuality in Processes of Constitutional and Legal Reform in Jamaica.” *Social and Economic Studies* 61, no. 3 (2012): 117–43.

Little-White, Heather. “What Is Buggery?” *The Gleaner*, November 27, 2011. <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20111127/out/out9.html>.

Ministry of Justice—Government of Jamaica. The Sexual Offences Act, § 3–35 (2011). http://japarliament.gov.jm/attachments/339_The%20Sexual%20Offences%20Act.pdf.

Padgett, Tim. “The Most Homophobic Place on Earth?” *Time*, April 12, 2006. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1182991,00.html>.

Paton, Diana. *No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780–1870*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.

“Regina v Thomas Williams for Sodomy.” Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1853. 1A/7/1/6; pp. 303–304. The Jamaica Archives.

SurrIDGE, Lisa. “On the Offenses Against the Person Act, 1828.” Edited by Dino Franco Felluga. *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net, 2013. http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=lisa-surrIDGE-on-the-offenses-against-the-person-act-1828.

“The Buggery Act 1533.” The British Library. Accessed September 5, 2018. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-buggery-act-1533>.

“The Queen against John Fowler for Sodomy.” Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1851. 1A/7/1/6; p. 174. The Jamaica Archives.

“The Queen against Peter Vernon for Sodomy.” Pleas of the Crown 1847–1854, 1851. 1A/7/1/6; pp. 189–190. The Jamaica Archives.

The Underrepresentation of African Americans in 21st-Century Children's Literature

Fedora Cox, *Brooklyn College*

Fedora Cox is an English major and an African American Studies minor at Brooklyn College. She is passionate about teaching and she plans on gaining some more teaching and research experience before applying for doctoral programs in English. She is currently looking to expand her teaching experience in higher education.

Abstract

This research addresses the causes and effects of the underrepresentation of African Americans in 21st-century children's literature on the African American community and on society on a whole. It examines the problem through specific theoretical lenses and concepts and it analyzes and uses statistics to drive the argument that the issue at hand is problematic. Moreover, it seeks to raise awareness of this perpetual issue while also offering solutions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Roni Natov, Dr. Donovan Ramon, Dr. Elissa Jacobs, and Professor Tamara Mose for their assistance during this research process. Their insight, guidance and encouragement played an instrumental role in the successful fruition of this research.

Literature is, and has been, a very important element of society, but it is very easy to overlook its power—especially children's literature. However, history has proven how powerful it is and its ability to impact and influence individuals and society—both negatively and positively.

This research seeks to address the following questions: To what extent is there an underrepresentation of African Americans in children's literature; what percentage of children's books published in the U.S. in the last ten years feature African Americans; to what extent is there a dearth of African American authors, and why; and, more importantly, how can this issue of be addressed. This research will analyze certain theoretical approaches to unveil the dangers and disadvantages of this underrepresentation. Moreover, these theoretical approaches will be illustrated through two 21st-century children's books to emphasis the importance of the subject at hand. This paper seeks to raise awareness that the underrepresentation of African Americans in 21st-century children's literature is undoubtedly an important issue and if it is left unaddressed, it can have negative impacts on all children—regardless of their race—and on society.

Literature plays a very crucial role in society. One of the major roles of literature, which Diane Johnson mentions, is to “integrate the child into society” (7). As children read books, they understand their place and role in society and they mimic those examples presented to them. They also use books to understand how to act and how not to act. Johnson explains, “We utilize children's books as agents of socialization, politicization, and formal education” (1). If books are used to introduce and incorporate the child into society, it is, therefore, very important that close attention is paid to the messages that they present both directly and indirectly. Johnson declares, “Children's literature can be a powerful tool of transmission not just of harmless, innocent yarns, but of interpretations of histories and ideologies” (8). Another major function of literature that is identified by Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Ernie J. Cox is that literature “helps to develop children's self-concept and self-esteem” (214). Through literature, children are introduced both to what others think about them and to what they should think about themselves; they get an understanding or idea of value and worth which, consequently, this influences their beliefs, conduct, and attitudes. Another equally important function of literature according to Johnson is that it introduces children to their own race and culture as well as other races and cultures (214). These three major functions of literature, to name a few, highlight the significant roles that literature plays both in the lives of children and in society.

Since literature undoubtedly plays a very pivotal role in society, the issue of underrepresentation and its extent is very problematic. Regarding the extent of underrepresentation of African Americans in children's literature, the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) was used as the main source because it is the “go to” place for information about Children's Literature for most scholarly research—and especially information about minority books. Besides being a unique examination study and research library of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it is a statewide book examination center that receives majority of new U.S. trade books published for children and teens each year. Also, its noncirculating collections include current, retrospective, and historical books published for children and young adults. Table 1 represents extracted information from CCBC's website about the number of children's books written by and about African Americans in the United States from 2009–2018:

Year	Total Number of Books Received by the CCBC (approx.)	Total Number of Books by African Americans	Total Number of Books about African Americans
2018	3,617	5.5%	11.0%
2017	3,700	3.5%	9.5%
2016	3,400	2.7%	8.4%
2015	3,400	3.1%	7.9%
2014	3,500	2.4%	5.1%
2013	3,200	2.1%	2.9%
2012	3,600	1.9%	3.3%
2011	3,400	2.3%	3.6%
2010	3,400	3.0%	4.5%
2009	3,000	2.7%	5.2%

Table 1. The number of children’s books by and about African Americans from 2009–2018.

Source: The Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC).” *Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC)*, ccbc.education.wisc.edu/.

The data derived from the CCBC paints a very disturbing picture, as it clearly reveals a perpetual underrepresentation of African Americans in children’s literature over the last decade. As seen in Table 1, out of 3000—3700 books received by the CCBC over the past ten years (2009–2018), a very low number (less than 12%) are about African Americans. This information is truly telling, as it unearths the gravity of the issue at hand. According to the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau, of the estimated 41,393,491 African Americans, 18.4% (7,616,402) consist of children who are under the age of 18. This number shows that there is a great imbalance between the amount of literature that is readily available for this rapidly growing population.

The extent to which there is a dearth of African American authors is also projected in Table 1 and it reveals that there are less than 6% of the 3000—3700 books received by the CCBC that were by African Americans—this is undoubtedly a problem. African American children need to see themselves and their culture represented in literature and this needs to be done specifically by other African American authors because this presents a new problem of authenticity. When children are given books about African Americans from the point of view of an outsider, there are serious consequences that can occur including misrepresentation issues. Johnson emphasizes, “I cannot state forcefully enough my contention that any writer of literature for Black youth must have an intimate knowledge of and appreciation for the history and culture of African Americans peoples in the United States and in the diaspora. This heritage cannot always be understood by White authors” (9). As is accentuated by Johnson, African American authors offer a level of sensitivity and experience that cannot be as genuinely understood by Whites as they can be by African Americans.

These disturbingly low numbers inevitably lead one to question—why? Why does this dearth of African American authors exist or what contributes to it, especially seeing that these numbers have only improved very slightly, yet it is still very low, and these low numbers have persisted for decades? This is a very complex question to which there are multiple layers. One of the main reasons is that African Americans authors and illustrators do not get the support that White authors do. Johnson declares, “Many book-store buyers do not purchase Black children’s literature, contending that there is little audience for it” (8). However, this is clearly a fallacy that undermines the needs of the African American community, as African Americans, longing for the material, often have a hard time finding children’s books by authors from their race. They, therefore, must settle for the Black experience from the outsider’s point of view or they often must settle for other stories from other cultures. Johnson also highlights the fact that, “Even after ‘Black’ titles are published, they stay in print for shorter periods of time than does much mainstream literature” (9). These along with the struggles of “financing, distribution and access to publicity” that independent press experience (Johnson 9), all put a strain on African American authors, making the process very tedious and discouraging. And, this, in turn, contribute to the underrepresentation of African American authors and illustrators.

In my interview with Zetta Elliot, an African American author and illustrator of children’s literature, when asked about some of the setbacks she experiences as an African American author, she emphatically confirmed the same issues listed above. She also emphasizes that there is a lack of diversity in the industry and that books by African Americans are “accessed by Whites for cultural competence.” This, she stresses, creates a problem for these authors. She also explains that these publishers often market a “one size fits all” attitude towards African American children’s literature and sometimes books by African Americans get marketed in the wrong places. Moreover, Elliott discusses the inconveniences of self-publishing and self-marketing which, as mentioned previously, are issues with financing, distribution and access to publicity.

Moreover, Elliott asserts that this underrepresentation can lead to intolerance and biases as well as feelings of superiority towards certain races and cultures. It can also instill a lack of empathy towards other races and cultures. Children learn, through literature, to empathize with others whose journeys, cultures, and experiences might be different from their own. It can also lead to negative stereotypes or misconceptions and, consequently, misrepresentations of certain races and cultures. This can also negatively affect children’s self-concept and self-esteem, as they will be misled to believe that the only people who really matter or

are truly important will be represented in books. She also notes that the underrepresentation of African Americans in children's literature can be "damaging over generations," as they must struggle with issues of invisibility. She also emphasizes the fact that African American children need the "decolonization of their imagination." She further explains that this can cause children—Black and White—to develop dislikes and misinterpretations of other races and cultures, as this underrepresentation encourages racist and chauvinistic attitudes at a very tender age. Krista Maywalt Aronson, et al. confirms that:

The absence of people of color in children's books positions whiteness as normative and dominant, communicating through numerical force that these stories are more worthy of focus, perpetuating and promoting biases. Absence subtly supports the exclusion, devaluation, and marginalization of people of color and contributes to the ongoing normalization of racism within the United States (3).

Here, Aronson, et al. highlight the dangers of whiteness being represented more than other races and ethnicities, including blackness, in children's literature, and they explain that this dearth is not beneficial to ongoing issues of racism that already thrive so richly in the United States (3). They also contend that with the absence of Blackness in children's literature, children develop a sort of cast system in their minds in which Blacks are inferior to Whites (3). Furthermore, Johnson stresses that "our youth deserve the opportunity to experience a world of literature that embraces their own realities and visions" (13) and they explain that literature for and about them encourages them to, "look forward to the future, equipped with clearer self-identities and broader understandings of current events as well as the history and social dynamics of their communities and of the world" (36). Johnson emphasizes how Black literature instills a sense of pride, hope, motivation, and appreciation in the hearts and minds of African American children which also helps them to look forward to a more hopeful future.

There are several theories that that can be used to analyze this underrepresentation. Although some highlight the dangers of this issue while others illustrate its importance, all these theories, undoubtedly, showcase why this issue is very problematic. For example, the theory of Racial Identity highlights the dangers of underrepresentation. This theory was developed by psychologist William Cross and it focuses on the process by which African Americans come to understand their identity in a predominantly White world. It is explained in five stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Innovations.com). For purposes of this research, focus will be placed on the pre-encounter stage since it is in this stage that children are introduced to the concept

of race and culture. In this stage, the child is said to have "absorbed many beliefs and values of the dominant white culture, including the notion that "white is right" and "black is wrong"; de-emphasis on one's racial group membership; largely unaware of race or racial implications" (Innovations.com). This theory emphasizes the dangers of having children mostly exposed to books about Whites and their history and culture. It also suggests that this colonizing of their minds is hazardous to their mental, social, and psychological development because it leads them to believe that African Americans—identity, history, culture and all—are secondary or unimportant. It is, therefore, expedient for children to be exposed to a variety of different literature from their own culture at this stage because a lack of this exposure can lead to children's disconnection from their own race and culture while idolizing another's.

An example of another theory that illustrates the importance and benefits of African American literature to children is the Critical Race theory which was developed by legal scholars in the 1970's. This theory "decenters the prominent position of class and socioeconomic status found in critical legal studies and repositions race as the primary lens for exploring legislation and its political enactments" (qtd. in Hassell, et al. 214). This theory is explained in three stages: the permanence of race, counter-storytelling, and interest convergence theory. The element of this theory that this research will focus on is counter-storytelling which is "a method of telling a story that aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (217). It is important to have this element in literature for African American children because it counters many stereotypical notions about the race and its culture.

A great example of the counter-storytelling is demonstrated in Michael Tyler's book, *The Skin You Live In*. This story is creatively written in the form of a beautiful and energetic nursery rhyme and its overall message is that all shades of skin are beautiful. It describes all skin colors as being unique and special, and it lets all children, especially African Americans, know that they should feel lucky to be in the skin they live in. It describes all the different shades of their skin as being delicious and fun. It declares, "it's not dumb skin or smart skin, / or keep us apart skin, / or weak skin or strong skin, / I'm right and you're wrong skin . . . / its not any of this, / 'cause you're more than you see, / you are all that you think and you hope and you dream." This is an amazing rendition of how counter-storytelling can be used to help children build their self-esteem and their appreciation for themselves and others; it debunks the myth that only White skin is beautiful and it challenges those negative stereotypical views of African Americans, as it gives a voice to those who would otherwise have no voice. It also

evokes confidence, pride, and appreciation by children of all races.

Rudine Sims' Windows and Mirrors theory/concept also addresses the need for diversity in children's literature—especially in African American literature for children. Sims names “mirror books” as those books in which children can recognize characters like themselves, building their sense of self-esteem and self-image. And, she names “window books” as books that introduce young readers to characters whose lives are different from their own, fostering curiosity, understanding, and empathy. An illustration of this theory is found in Tony Medina's *Deshawn Days* which tells the story of a young boy named Deshawn who is growing up in the projects; he shares his experiences, dreams, hobbies, and long-term goals which are like most children his age. The great thing about this story is that it highlights the fact that although Deshawn is growing up in the projects and not the conventional home, he is still seen as a happy, healthy, and high-spirited child who is surrounded by love. His story opens the door for other children with nonconventional homes to relate to and in sharing his story, it also addresses some of the stereotypes of children who live in the projects. This book also provides the opportunity for children in similar households to see themselves in books and not feel isolated and unimportant. Equally important, is the fact that it also allows for children from conventional homes to see other kinds of households besides theirs giving them a view into the fact that happiness can exist in all kinds of households. As Sims emphasizes through her theory, stories showcase the fact that the African American experience consists of a variety of different experiences that benefit all children and is very essential in today's diverse world.

Regarding how this underrepresentation issue can be addressed, Elliot recommends a twofold approach. Firstly, through awareness and education. This means that one can support and possibly create foundations that demand more books by and about African Americans. Individuals can also demand that teachers include books about African Americans in the classroom. Secondly, through personal support, and this can be done in various ways. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals creating or joining discussions (blogs, social media, etc.) that help highlight this issue. They can also purchase books by African American authors and illustrators to help correct the *myth* that there is little audience for Black literature. Also, they can fund independent presses to help with the financing and distribution issue. They can start asking questions about why books by black authors do not remain in print for as long as mainstream literature and demand that Black books receive equal treatment. In my interview with Merri Lindgren, one of the CCBC's librarians, when asked about some of the

struggles or issues that African American authors encounter, Lindgren replied:

The current discussion in our field about a lack of diversity in children's books points to the predominance of white professionals in editorial and marketing positions at most publishing houses. Stories written from various cultural perspectives might not resonate as deeply with them, making it less likely these books will be selected for publishing or marketed as vigorously as those by and about White people.

This is also an issue that Elliot expresses. They are both fully persuaded that this is by far one of the greatest contributions to the issue at hand. It is, therefore, very important that this issue, as others, be addressed. One way that Elliot suggested doing this is by having individuals join the effort to help reform and diversify publishing industries (marches, meetings, etc.). These combined efforts can assist with bringing this issue to the surface, while addressing it at the same time.

The U.S. is a melting-pot that is overflowing with diversity and the diversity of children is predicted to grow even more over the next decade. As the demographics of this country continues to rapidly change, our mentality and that of our children need to evolve as well. We say that the children are our future and indeed they are; therefore, we need to be very mindful of the messages we send them—both above and below the surface—if we hope to propel them into a good and safe future. If we make them believe through literature, or any other form, that only certain stories matter or are important enough to be heard, we are planting seeds of indifference in them that will inevitably mature and lead to greater societal ills such as racism, intolerance, inequality, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia. And these are all issues that affect everyone in some way, shape or form, regardless of their race, ethnicity, or culture.

Works Cited

- Aronson, Krista Maywalt, Brenna D. Callahan, Anne Sibley O'Brien. "Messages Matter: Investigating the Thematic Content of Picture Books Portraying Underrepresented Racial and Social Groups." *Sociological Forum*, vol. 33, no. 1, Mar. 2018, pp. 165–185.
- Elliot, Zetta. Personal interview. 4 December 2018.
- Hughes-Hassell, Sandra, and Ernie J. Cox. "Inside Board Books: Representations of People of Color." *Library Quarterly*, vol. 80, no. 3, 2010, pp. 211–230.
- Johnson, Dianne. *Telling Tales: The Pedagogy and Promise of African American Literature for Youth*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990. Print.

Lindgren, Merri. Email interview. 28 March 2019.

Medina, Tony, and R G. Christie. *Deshaun Days*. New York: Lee & Low, 2004. Print.

“The Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC).” *Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC)*, ccbc.education.wisc.edu/.

Tyler, Michael, and David L. Csicsko. *The Skin You Live In*. 2005. Print.

U.S. Census Bureau. “American Community Survey (ACS).” *Census.gov*, 13 Mar. 2019, www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.

Estamos Aquí y Somos Queer: ACT UP/LA and Latino Involvement in Anti-AIDS Activism

Koren Dalipe, *Whittier College*

Koren Dalipe recently graduated magna cum laude from Whittier College after majoring in French and History. Throughout her undergraduate career, Koren completed multiple historical and sociological research projects which required translating primary documents from Spanish and French into English. Koren has taken a gap-year in order to gain more experience teaching and farming, while also applying to several PhD programs in History.

Abstract

ACT UP/LA, the Los Angeles chapter of the international anti-AIDS activist group ACT UP, was created in 1987. At the time of ACT UP/LA's creation, the U.S. was in the middle of the AIDS epidemic, yet little was being done on the federal or state-level to protect those who were most vulnerable to contracting HIV. Because of this, it was up to activists to push for change. But how many of these activists tried to help people who were suffering from HIV/AIDS because of social, economic or racial barriers? Although ACT UP/LA tried to reach out to people of color by creating, sponsoring and attending events and programs that catered to different groups, the organization failed in attracting Latinos who were suffering from HIV/AIDS.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my MMUF cohort, the Historical Methodists, Professor Sage, and Professor McEnaney who have seen me cry, kick, and scream throughout the process of writing this paper. This article and my existence would not have been possible without the tenacity and activism of my LGBTQ+ Latinx ancestors. I will forever be indebted to their sacrifices and I hope to shed light on their histories in order to help our communities now.

The ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives has the largest collection of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning) materials in the entire world and is the oldest LGBTQ organization in the United States, making it one of the most respected and esteemed LGBTQ institutions in the country.¹ I found its collections to be incredibly useful for my research on anti-AIDS activism in Los Angeles. However, what I did not expect to find was that I felt uncomfortable being within the archives because of my race. As a lesbian who is also a Latina, I was reminded of my own project on how Latinos felt excluded from ACT UP/LA because of their race. Both of these spaces, an archive that requires various forms of identification to enter and an organization that met in West Hollywood, are predominantly white spaces and the

people within them made us, as Latinos, feel unwelcome and uncomfortable. Our overlapping and interlocking oppressions compelled us as members of the LGBTQ community to advocate for that community, but as Latinos, we were shut out.

Latinos have had a long history of activism in Los Angeles that encompasses the East L.A. Blowouts, while the LGBTQ community in Los Angeles has had a long activist history as well, which includes protesting raids done by the Los Angeles Police Department in gay bars. Yet the urgency of the AIDS crisis made it so that these two groups, and the people within them that identified with both communities, were forced to take direct action together. But ACT UP/LA's reputation as a predominantly white gay organization made this action hard to initiate for both groups, leading to internal conflicts within the organization.

The first Aids Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP, chapter, ACT UP/NY was started in the March of 1987 in New York City by more than 300 or more "lesbians, gay men, and other sexual and gender outlaws."² ACT UP/NY has become one of the most famous, and infamous, anti-AIDS organizations, as it has been the subject of many studies and films because of its sex-radical politics and militancy.³ ACT UP/NY's form of activism attracted activists in Los Angeles in 1987 who created their own ACT UP chapter, as "members of LA's lesbian and gay community were enraged by authorities who alternately ignored them and reviled them."⁴ The year after ACT UP/LA was established, it was reported that although Latinos only made up about eight percent of the U.S. population, they accounted for fifteen percent of AIDS cases.⁵

AIDS, or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, was first being reported on in 1981 and it was wrongly assumed that the disease only affected gay or bisexual men, with some in the press dubbing it the "Gay Plague" because of its high prevalence amongst men who would have sex with other men.⁶ Because of its earliest associations with gay and bisexual men and President Ronald Reagan's ties to the New Right, which viewed homosexuality as immoral, the president at the onset of the AIDS crisis offered little support and solace to those affected by the disease, as Reagan did not sign a document dealing with AIDS until 1985.⁷

Two years before ACT UP/LA was created, it was estimated that 7,000 cases of AIDS had been diagnosed in the U.S. and the mortality rate for those who had the disease for more than two years was more than 80%.⁸ The country was in the middle of an epidemic, yet nothing was being done to protect those who were already vulnerable to the disease due to their sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or race. Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s,

the federal government did little to support AIDS research and education, so it was up to activists to push for change. My argument is that although ACT UP/LA tried to reach out to Latinos by creating, sponsoring and attending events and programs that catered to this group, the organization failed in attracting Latinos who were suffering from AIDS.

ACT UP/LA's meetings were where most of the organization's planning occurred but their location and lack of specific planning made it difficult for Latinos to attend these meetings. In an article included in ACT UP/LA's records is a clipping from a newspaper that says that ACT UP meetings are held at 7:30 at Plummer Park in West Hollywood twice monthly, while earlier within the article there is a quotation by an activist who said "we must reach out to all people, affected by AIDS—Latinos, blacks, mothers and fathers of PWAs [people with AIDS]—if we are to have a powerful and effective AIDS movement."⁹ West Hollywood at the time of the AIDS epidemic, and even now, has a large gay population and a proactive local government that supported AIDS health services which differed greatly to other communities of color throughout Los Angeles.¹⁰ In having ACT UP/LA meetings in West Hollywood, as opposed to areas where Latinos and African Americans were most prevalent, ACT UP/LA missed out on opportunities to reach out to communities who were incredibly vulnerable because these would be the populations who would become 40% of those affected by the disease by 1992.¹¹ Although the activist that was interviewed had stated that ACT UP/LA was interested in outreach, the Latino Outreach committee was created in 1989, more than a year after ACT UP/LA was created. Not only was the committee created a year after ACT UP/LA was created, implying outreach was advised but implemented as an afterthought, the Latino Outreach committee was soon swallowed up by a conglomerate of other committees ACT UP/LA had created. The first mention of the Latino Outreach committee in ACT UP/LA's records was in July 1989, but in August 1989, the Latino Outreach Committee became part of the Outreach/Networking Committee.¹² Now in order for Latinos to contact Latinos within ACT UP/LA, they would have to contact facilitators of the Outreach/Networking Committee who were not Latinos to reach the Latino Outreach committee. In other words, this bureaucratic and convoluted change made it difficult for Latinos to simply contact the organization that was supposed to be reaching out to them. This created more obstacles for Latinos who wanted to be a part of ACT UP/LA but did not see themselves reflected within the organization.

The People of Color Caucus was created in 1990 within ACT UP/LA and one of the organization's most famous programs, the Clean Needles Network, was developed around the same time to cater to communities that

ACT UP/LA had been neglecting. The People of Color Caucus was born out of the Latino Outreach committee because, according to one ACT UP/LA activist, the organization had a discriminatory past and ACT UP/LA had a reputation amongst many racial/ethnic communities for having racist attitudes and policy exclusions.¹³ However, in creating the People of Color Caucus, ACT UP/LA lost the opportunity to create committees that catered to specific racial groups. In creating committees for specific groups, ACT UP/LA would have had more successful outreach because people within those groups would have somewhere to go to within the organization to discuss specific problems that their community was struggling with. ACT UP/LA also made it so that the onus fell on people of color entirely in reaching out to their communities and to the organization. One flyer from ACT UP/LA reads, "we are extending to you, our invitation to participate in a roundtable discussion of how people of color communities can contribute significantly to our agenda."¹⁴ This flyer implies that people of color had to teach ACT UP/LA how to be more inclusive and also implies that people of color had not been helping the LGBTQ community or their racial communities during the AIDS epidemic. Under the guise of white people wanting to understand the struggles that AIDS inflicted upon people of color, ACT UP/LA's condescending tone blames and shames people of color for their alleged lack of involvement in anti-AIDS activism. People of color within ACT UP/LA would also often feel ostracized by the group such as those in the People of Color Caucus who would complain of not getting enough funding or support from ACT UP/LA. One activist detailed how he had to account for "every penny spent" when he was doing outreach work and that because of this lack of trust, the People of Color Caucus "never really got off the ground."¹⁵

But the People of Color Caucus was successful in creating the Clean Needles Network. In the early 1990s, it was becoming more and more prevalent that Latinos were contracting HIV through intravenous drug use. In a study conducted in 1990, 4,346 Latinos had AIDS by contracting the HIV virus through infected needles.¹⁶ People of color within ACT UP/LA saw this increase in AIDS cases in their community and created a program within the organization to stop the spread of the disease by allowing people to exchange their old and dirty needles for clean ones.

People of color saw a need to create a program that catered to their communities, but ACT UP/LA was still not cooperating. In one working document, the People of Color Caucus expressed that they felt their proposals were being marginalized.¹⁷ The document continues and says that the People of Color Caucus felt uncomfortable putting proposals on the floor concerning money.¹⁸ This document reflects what one activist was saying earlier, that ACT UP/LA did

not support the People of Color Caucus. Later on in the document, the People of Color Caucus detailed what was necessary for the Clean Needles Network to work, such as the inclusion of People of Color Caucus members at events that had to do with people of color and representation of people of color within buyer's clubs.¹⁹ The requests were reasonable for ACT UP/LA to implement because of the creation of the People of Color Caucus and the caucus's willingness to be accessible to all communities, yet a handwritten note takes up the last page reading, "what can I do so I don't have to listen to this?"²⁰ This deplorable note, written by someone within ACT UP/LA who listened to the People of Color Caucus's pleas, exemplifies how the caucus was not taken seriously within the organization since they were being automatically rejected without being fully heard. The People of Color Caucus created detailed documents requesting various forms of support from ACT UP/LA and yet they were met with constant refusal, and in this case, blatant disrespect.

The events and programs ACT UP/LA created were criticized by people who were not Latinos as well, but for a different reason, the supposed absence of people of color in anti-AIDS activism. According to a letter to the editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, "the 'brown and black' community leaders who were upset by the 'gay, white' activists had ample time to initiate their own needle exchange programs."²¹ The writer of this letter argued that brown and black people should have created the Clean Needles Now program sooner, yet these people did not have the resources needed to create the program because ACT UP/LA was not prioritizing it. This letter also implies that the entirety of ACT UP/LA came up with the idea of a needle exchange program, when it was the People of Color Caucus within the organization who made it to help their own communities of color. Another example of the criticism Latinos faced because of their alleged disinterest in anti-AIDS activism was in an *LA Weekly* article. In the article in *LA Weekly*, the author, Doug Sadownick, talks about his experience meeting Latino anti-AIDS activists and how he felt that Latinos did not do as much as they should have at a recent event ACT UP/LA had organized. Sadownick writes, "I had criticized 'minorities' for not showing up at what I considered to be a crucial event for gay people [. . .] I couldn't understand why they stayed home."²² What Sadownick did not know, however, was that Latinos were there, like the president of Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos, Lydia Otero. She later explained to him that she supported ACT UP/LA but was "annoyed by their insular whiteness."²³ In assuming that people like Lydia Otero were not there, Sadownick assumed that Latinos did not care about AIDS activism or that they were not helping the Latino community or the LGBTQ community. But both Sadownick and the writer of the letter to the editor, assumed wrong, as many Latino activist groups and foundations were

involved in anti-AIDS activism such as Gay and Lesbian Latinos Unidos and AIDS Project Los Angeles.

Through talking to Latino activists like Otero, Doug Sadownick came to the realization that ACT UP/LA was "as guilty for [their] reticence about race as the business-as-usual politicians [they] had criticized for not being outraged at AIDS genocide."²⁴ Sadownick realized that he had judged Latinos for not being involved within anti-AIDS activism without realizing the racial biases of ACT UP/LA and that Latinos were doing work within their own communities. Although Latinos did not seem to be involved in activism to those in ACT UP/LA and their supporters, Latinos played an active role in protecting their communities from AIDS.

In 2016, Latinos made up about 26% of the new 40,324 HIV diagnoses in the United States and one in six Latinos with HIV do not know they have the virus.²⁵ Latinos are still being disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS and there are many obstacles in preventing the spread of the virus within Latino communities such as poverty and language barriers.²⁶ Latinos often feel left out of LGBTQ spaces and activism and if this sense of exclusion continues, less Latinos will have access to the resources needed to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. Although ACT UP/LA failed in attracting Latinos in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the organization can be an example of what activists can do to be more inclusive. People of color need to see themselves reflected in LGBTQ history and activist organizations in order for change to happen. For example, changing the fact that Latinos are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Our overlapping and interlocking oppressions should not isolate us from social activism but should be seen as a way to make it more effective.

There is a sense of irony in my experience at the ONE National Archives, but also a sense of tragedy. The lack of belonging felt by Latinos in LGBTQ spaces is still prevalent amongst Latinos today, as evidenced by my own experiences at the ONE National Archives and the fact that Latinos are still heavily affected by HIV/AIDS due to the same problems they were struggling with when AIDS was first being publicized. My hope, as a lesbian and a Latina, is that LGBTQ people of color are welcomed and encouraged to enter into all LGBTQ spaces, whether they are archives or activist organizations.

Endnotes

- 1 "History," one.usc.edu, <https://one.usc.edu/about/history>.
- 2 Deborah B. Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and Act Up's Fight Against AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Publishers 2009), 3, 5.
- 3 Benita Roth, *The Life and Death of ACT UP/LA: Anti-AIDS Activism in Los Angeles from the 1980s to the 2000s*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 3.

- 4 Merrill Singer, et al., "SIDA: The Economic, Social, and Cultural Context of AIDS among Latinos," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1990): 72–73.
- 5 "Follow-up on Kaposi's Sarcoma and *Pneumocystis* Pneumonia," in *The AIDS Crisis: A Documentary History* ed. Douglas A. Feldman and Julia Wang Miller (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 17–18.
- 6 Jennifer Brier, *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2009), 79–80.
- 7 Thomas C. Quinn, "Editorial," in *The AIDS Crisis: A Documentary History* ed. Douglas A. Feldman and Julia Wang Miller (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 17–18.
- 8 Newspaper Clipping, [ca. 1988], Box 14, Folder 2, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.
- 9 Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.*, (Berkeley: University of California Press 2006), 317–318.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 318.
- 11 Working Meeting [ca. 1989], Box 14 Folder 4, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.
- 12 Roth, *The Life and Death of ACT UP/LA*, 101.
- 13 "People of Color Caucus" [ca. 1990] Box 14, Folder 5, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.
- 14 Brett C. Stockdill, *Activism Against AIDS: At the Intersection of Sexuality, Race, Gender, and Class* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers 2003), 75.
- 15 Singer et. al, "SIDA: The Economic, Social, and Cultural Context of AIDS among Latinos," 76.
- 16 "Working Document" [ca. 1991], Box 14, Folder 5, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 "Letters to the Times" [ca.1991], Box 14, Folder 7, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.
- 21 Doug Sadowick, "Family Among Strangers: Crossing Borders in Gay L.A." *LA Weekly*, June 1989, 17.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 "HIV and Hispanics/Latinos," cdc.gov, November 1, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/hispaniclatinos/index.html>.
- 25 *Ibid.*

Works Cited

- Brier, Jennifer. *Infectious Ideas: U.S. Political Responses to the AIDS Crisis*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Feldman, Douglas A., and Julia Wang. Miller, eds. *The Aids Crisis: A Documentary History*. Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998.
- History. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://one.usc.edu/about/history>.
- HIV/AIDS. (2018, November 01). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/raciaethnic/hispaniclatinos/index.html>.
- "Letters to the Times" [ca.1991], Box 14, Folder 7, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.

Newspaper Clipping, [ca. 1988], Box 14, Folder 2, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.

"People of Color Caucus" [ca. 1990] Box 14, Folder 5, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.

Roth, Benita. *The Life and Death of ACT UP/LA: Anti-AIDS Activism in Los Angeles from the 1980s to the 2000s*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Singer, Merrill, Cándida Flores, Lani Davison, Georgine Burke, Zaida Castillo, Kelley Scanlon, and Migdalia Rivera. "SIDA: The Economic, Social, and Cultural Context of AIDS among Latinos." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, 4, no. 1 (1990): 72–114. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/648524>.

Stockdill, Brett C. *Activism Against AIDS: At the Intersection of Sexuality, Race, Gender, and Class*. Boulder, Col: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003. <http://ezproxy.whittier.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1045633&site=eds-live>.

"Working Document" [ca. 1991], Box 14, Folder 5, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.

Working Meeting [ca. 1989], Box 14 Folder 4, ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, ONE Archives at USC Libraries, University of Southern, CA, Los Angeles, CA.

Multiculturalism and *Mestizaje* in Afro-Colombian Political Life

Daniel Alejandro Delgado, *Amherst College*

Daniel Delgado is a student at Amherst College where he is double majoring in Black Studies and Latinx & Latin American Studies. His research interests include immigration and labor history, race, transnationalism, Latin America & Caribbean studies, and the African Diaspora. He plans to pursue a PhD in History.

In this essay, I try to show how movement throughout Colombia's racialized geographies are complicit in the reproduction of racial tropes that have existed since the colonial period. By interrogating the relationship between *mestizaje*, multiculturalism, and movement I underscore how racialization operates throughout Colombia's regionalism. Focusing on three consequences of political violence I explain how the state's new 1991 Constitution responded to the claims for inclusion and resources made by the activists that built the Afro-Colombian social movement. Moreover, I conceptualize the state's embrace of multiculturalism as mutually-constitutive to *mestizaje*. This, I argue, helps us better understand racial inequality in Colombia as a systemic and day-to-day social practice.

Special thanks to Professor Olufemi Vaughan who gave me insightful feedback and encouraged me to pursue my ideas and work on this article. Thanks to Professor Mary Hicks, Professor Solsiree del Moral, Professor Corañez-Bolton, and Professor Cortes-Ruiz for their encouragement and feedback. Thanks to my friends and my family for always being a source of inspiration. And thank you to all the mentors, advisors, fellows, and coordinators that have been there for me throughout this process. I am very grateful.

"In ideological terms the public transcript will typically, by its accommodationist tone, provide convincing evidence for the hegemony of dominant values, for the hegemony of dominant discourse."

—John C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*

"This is a story within a story—so slippery at the edges that one wonders when and where it started and whether it will ever end."

—Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

Introduction

On Saturday, May 4, 2019, men with guns and grenades attempted against the lives of several defenders of indigenous and black territory who were in the rural area of the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, in Cauca. They were preparing for a meeting with the Government to establish dialogues between an indigenous labor cooperative

and the state. One of those defenders was Francia Márquez, one of the most visible Afro-Colombian leaders in defense of the land and territory of the region and winner of the Goldman Prize.¹ This event is part of a broad structural issue regarding the "urban-rural divide" which the new 1991 Constitution attempts to address as a significant issue. Colombia is indeed a country that can be seen as having two sides. On the one hand, it is known for its beautiful beaches located in both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, for its booming coffee industry, and for packed salsa halls that host enthralling musicians and dancers. On the other hand, the country has been a site of unhinged political and cultural violence generated by conflicts over land between a number of key socio-political entities—the state, narco-traffickers, paramilitary operations, and leftist guerrillas. The contemporary armed conflict dates back to a period that was named La Violencia—a period of partisan violence between the Liberal and Conservative parties that was catalyzed by the assassination of the Liberal politician Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948. The riot that ensued, named *el bogotazo*, has left an indelible inscription in the collective memory of Colombian society. As animosity intensified, the conflict went far beyond partisan violence, unravelling waves of violence that consumed public and private life. A Special Report published October 29, 2015 by *The Economist* cites that there is a third Colombia which, "made up of 3m people, lacks even basic services . . . this third Colombia is where the conflict has persisted."² In effect, civilians continue to be caught in the crosshairs of a conflict over land, power, and profit.³

This contemporary armed conflict, which some experts consider a civil war, produced internal displacement within Colombia. It has forced thousands of people to move from place to place—from established social contexts to new ones.⁴ These demographic shifts have been accompanied by an embrace of multicultural politics.⁵ This new development has often been described as a radical transition—a divergence, even—from the previous project of *mestizaje*: an emphasis on "the mixture of Europeans, native Americans, and Africans" and the calibrated inclusion of the latter two to suit the first's interests.⁶ To an extent, it is. Multiculturalism emphasizes and recognizes difference. Yet, there is an element of incompleteness. In fact, the ideologies of *mestizaje* and multiculturalism cannot be easily bifurcated into neat, distinct racial logics—despite the material and symbolic changes brought by the new constitution and its ethno-racial reforms. Interrogating the relationship between *mestizaje*, multiculturalism, and movement allows us to underscore how racialization operates throughout Colombia's regionalism. More importantly, doing so offers ways to better understand racial inequality in Colombia as a systemic and day-to-day social practice.

In this essay I will focus on three consequences of this kind of political/cultural violence: rural-to-urban migration by Afro-Colombian victims of the conflict, the emergence of “afro-desplazado” as a state category, and social mobility as a means of social whitening. I will explain how the state’s new 1991 constitution responded to claims for inclusion and resources made by the activists that built the Afro-Colombian social movement. Additionally, I will contribute a critique of the dominant racial ideologies that Afro-Colombians are up against. Multiculturalism and *mestizaje* are not diametrically opposed but rather mutually constituted through various social processes take place across overlapping political fields.

Historicizing Racism in Colombia:

From *Mestizaje* to Multiculturalism in Context

All across the Americas, European colonizers brought enslaved Africans to fulfill the labor demands created by the production of various staple export commodities such as sugar, tobacco, rice, and cotton. And yet, different social histories led to the configuration of specific social systems of hierarchy and domination.⁷ This is particularly true with regard to “status vis-à-vis the state.”⁸ At the root of this peculiar racist ideology lies the taxonomy invented by Iberians that, put plainly, was an imposition from above to regulate sexual relations and racial mixture among their colonial subjects. Peter Wade articulates this system as “a socially stratified pyramid” with “Europeans at the apex, black slaves and *indios* (indigenous people) at the bottom and an ambiguous and contestable set of intermediate categories in the middle.”⁹ The historiography of comparative slavery has to a great extent documented that in Latin America slaves had greater opportunities for “legal and administrative claims-making.”¹⁰ Widespread intermixture, manumission, self-purchase, and high-rates of marronage made way for *afrodescendientes* to find “spaces for social advancement within the extremely hierarchical social order established by Iberian colonists.”¹¹ The deep legacy of this *sociedad de castas* is what characterizes and distinguishes “race” in Latin America from other regions and it is what adds peculiarity to the kinds of racisms that remain embedded in this region of the Global South.¹² Most importantly, the impact of this history was, as Tianna Paschel notes, “the discursive erasure of racial critique.”¹³ This continues to be especially true in Colombia’s urban centers ongoing gentrification, namely, Cartagena.¹⁴

In contrast with the legally-codified and institutionalized history of racial segregation in the United States, which demarcated racial categories clearly and unambiguously, the Colombian state did not give the category *negro* institutional space. Ethnic difference among citizens were generally flattened, ignored, and/or remained ambivalent.¹⁵ In spite of this, “the category *negro* existed in everyday practice.”¹⁶

Because the term resisted definition it was characterized by ambiguity which made racial identification fluid and contestable. In fact, in 1960, according to census reports, 47.8 percent identified as *mestizo* and 24 percent identified as *mulato*—indication that Colombia appeared to fit with what Anthony Marx observed as an issue of “unfertile soil” for black mobilization and racial justice in Latin America’s so-called “racial democracies.”¹⁷ In effect, notions of mixture legitimized the pretense that race did not matter as an important factor in creating and sustaining inequality. Instead, political elites tended to promote ethno-nationalist mythologies of progress by comparing the region to the United States. Given this backdrop, Colombia as a whole is characterized by its simultaneous *denial* of differentiated classification (i.e., “we are all mixed”) and *affirmation* of racial difference in day-to-day interactions. For example, while the state eliminated racial or color categories in censuses, it constantly referred to—*reified*—the category “Negro” in school textbooks thus revealing the underlying contradiction of such nationalist pretensions. Yet, since the 1970s, there has been a surge in ethno-racial mobilization. At first from “urban, intellectual movements” and then by “rural, class-based movements that were implicitly black.”¹⁸ How may one begin to synthesize this complex puzzle?

This question is why the 1991 Constitution appeared to mark a watershed moment in the nation’s history. The state officially recognized Colombian society as a “pluri-ethnic and multicultural” and broke from discourses used to deny the existence of racism. This resulted in various changes to the country’s social fabric and created the conditions of possibility for the emergence of new political subjects. The politics of multiculturalism embedded in this new constitution and the Ley 70 of 1993, which recognized black people as an ethnic group and granted black communities collective land rights over ancestral territories, is part of a broader departure from the ideology of *mestizaje* throughout Latin America.¹⁹ This multicultural turn is characterized by underscoring “cultural difference” in large part due to the efforts of black and indigenous activists to gain state recognition and resources by claiming that they faced particular disadvantages in comparison to their mestizo-white counterparts.²⁰ This is reason enough to be optimistic about the potential of achieving greater racial equality in Colombia and Latin America, writ large. I am not convinced, however, that this new centralization of cultural policy (which includes things like territorial rights, political autonomy, and language rights)²¹ can be easily decoupled from the logics of *mestizaje*—which tends towards sameness and homogeneity. Instead, I conceptualize multiculturalism as a reconfiguration of the logics embedded in *mestizaje* and argue that the two interact in reinforcing ways. I think that the whole project of multiculturalism rests on key assumptions baked into Colombian society by the legacy of its

mestizaje project. In this sense, it is worth critiquing the overlaps between multiculturalism and *mestizaje* as mutually constituted racial ideologies that serve to increase state power, even as multiculturalism's promotion of the right to difference has significantly altered the socio-legal stage of the Black social movement in Colombia. As I demonstrate in the following section, it is when one pays attention to the movement of people across racialized regions that one can discern the work of race and racism in the reconfiguration of material inequalities.

Consequences of Conflict:

How Movement and Racialized Geographies Interact

Violent conflict for the resource-rich land found in Colombia's rural outskirts generated a humanitarian crisis that forced thousands to move from rural peripheries to major metropolitan centers: Bogota, Cali, Medellin, Cartagena. In doing so, Afro-Colombian communities were forced to enter social systems that deviated from what they were accustomed to in their rural territories in which they establish their own methods of governance, law, and justice. Black farmers and miners have experienced loss and have had to adjust to life in the city—which means changing the ways of life they have relied on for centuries. Even the National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation reports that in “Afro-Colombian towns and communities, the territory is the foundation of their existence as members of a collectivity. It is the expression of productive, spiritual, symbolic and cultural relationships that underlie their particular manner of entering into, understanding, being and existing in the world.” In the end, the new constitution mandated the adoption of the Law of Black Communities (1993) which recognized black communities as a distinct “ethnic group” with collective rights to their land.²² The point is that multiculturalism's new emphasis on difference facilitates enacting these kinds of laws and puts pressure on the state to address the concerns of Afro-Colombians. However, such a project has often been dependent on forms of cultural violence and displacement.

The Colombian state never achieved a full monopoly of violence within its boundaries and thus had weak a presence in the rural areas. For a long time, black communities lived in these rural areas by maintaining ancestral practices and ways of life that were for the most part self-sustaining. This seemingly neutral reality, however, generated a regionalism that gripped the metropolitan cores and erased “blackness within the national imaginary.”²³ While it is the case that Black communities have a positive relationship with the territories they reside in, the majority of Colombian society sees these parts of the country as in need of modernity and development. This maps onto the rural-urban divide that forms part of Colombian society, and is why rural-to-urban

migration has revealed many issues of inequality that remain entrenched in Colombia's regionalist geography.²⁴ Mainly, the operation of regionalism as a proxy of race (as per Tianna Paschel) in turn develops what Wade calls a “cultural topography of race” that becomes a way for people to talk in racialized manners about “progress” and “regional development” without explicitly mentioning the racial order they are describing.

Consequently, in Colombia, it has been the case that a common tactic of social ascension is a form of social whitening that is achieved through integration into nonblack social networks.²⁵ For black Colombians, this tactic of social ascent often “presupposes their departure from the places where they have been concentrated historically—such as the Pacific and the Caribbean coasts—and their migration to large interior cities such as Bogota or Medellin.”²⁶ Given Colombia's highly regionalized racial geographies, moving to Medellin or Bogota has meant that black people have been forced to interact with new social contexts that are associated with whiteness. Additionally, because these cities are sites of concentrated economic and political power, black people's migration to them has promoted familiarization with what anthropologist Mara Viveros Vigoya has referred to as “the codes of the white world” which serve to ostensibly “whiten” black people culturally, but more importantly reify and reproduce the hegemony of practices, customs, and systems that depend on a hierarchized racial order—one that values whiteness as it condemns blackness. Indeed, these so-called “white” practices are often about better access to resources such as good schooling, safe neighborhoods, better jobs. Hence, social mobility and “social whitening” are linked to processes of migration and racialized spaces and reveal what one may call the “materiality of race” through resources.

As *La Revista America Negra* has illustrated in past issues²⁷ the spatial imaginary—regionalism—within Colombia is the conceptual order that undergirds the society's racial structure and hierarchy. Black people's movement to the cities from rural areas in the new multicultural context, though, has created certain changes. Notably, the multicultural turn is responsible for the emergence of new political subjects. An example of this would be the category “afro-desplazado” which, as utilized by state and international humanitarian aid institutions, refers to those who have been pushed out of their territories and into the cities.²⁸ While the armed conflict has affected all, black people have been disproportionately affected and have suffered the most human rights violations. In fact, a representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported in a statement issued on April 27, 2006, that “The vast majority of the displaced—more than 90 percent—are members of the Afro-Colombian ethnic minority.”²⁹ Anthropologist

Roosbelinda Cárdenas argues that the combination of state multiculturalism and the politics of war victimization have created socio-discursive conditions that led to the emergence of the category “afro-desplazado.” This term has possibilities and limitations. A positive outcome is that, given the pressure placed by international human rights organizations along with black NGOs on states, pluralistic measures and reforms are gaining traction with the state. However, a negative unintended consequence of this new political subjectivity is that it has made visible and legitimate some forms of black suffering at the expense of other forms.³⁰

While the category “afro-desplazado” has helped strengthen black consciousness and political organizing, the term’s convergence of displacement and blackness has the negative side-effect of flattening the complexities of structural and historic racism by conveniently subsuming black suffering into armed conflict—making it easy to scapegoat leftist guerrillas, for example, instead of holding the state accountable. Moreover, it has established a link between blackness and *where it belongs* by implicitly recognizing black people’s territoriality vis-à-vis their movement within the nation’s racial geographies. Finally, it privileges rural black life and neglects urban struggle. In fact, one of the great paradoxes of the first multicultural reforms was that it focused on rural communities despite the efforts that urban-based activists had been making for decades.

Taken together, migration to cities as a form of social whitening and the notion of afro-desplazados as an institutional category reveal how race and space is being constructed, and how multiculturalism and *mestizaje* interact and enable each other. Both processes are taking place in a system that valorizes whiteness and condemns blackness; and locates these within specific landscapes of privilege and progress. For one, the relationship between social mobility and actual, physical mobility into “white” spaces gestures to how Colombia’s racialized geographic imaginaries are connected to material inequities. Additionally, it represents an expression of *mestizaje* whereby distance from blackness and proximity to whiteness brings people closer to modernity, power, property, and privilege. As for the afro-desplazados phenomenon, while it is linked to the politics of multiculturalism and has opened up space for black political participation, it is also based on a territorialized form of blackness that leaves out urban racial discrimination and gives legal credence to Colombia’s racialized geographies. As such, *mestizaje* and multiculturalism, rather than representing two distinct forms of racial ideologies, are operating simultaneously, coexisting, and reinforcing similar raced hierarchies of space.

Conclusion

It has been my intention in this article to highlight the particularities of how racism and racial inequality persist in the Latin American context generally and in Colombia specifically. By analyzing the interplay of three related consequences of the armed conflict in Colombia I try to show how movement throughout racialized geographies are complicit in the reproduction of racial tropes that have existed since the colonial period. I would, however, like to conclude by resisting insularity and placing these events and structure in a broader hemispheric context that include the U.S. and the contribution of Black civil rights and Black Power movements in the 1960s and 1970s to the formation of black politics in Colombia. It is the case that the urban-based Afro-Colombian social movement that began in the early 1970s took as a political reference point U.S.-based black activism. These transnational influences and solidarity networks, along with the circulation of political references, suggests that U.S. notions of race and anti-racism strike a chord with Latin American realities. Indeed this was the case with Colombia, as well as Brazil.³¹ This challenges the idea that black mobilization is a U.S. export and instead reflects the reality of racism and inequality in Latin America. Additionally, this can be seen as a prime example of the interplay between Americanization and Latin Americanization across the hemisphere and shows why African Diaspora frameworks provide necessary analytical clarity for understanding these dynamics.³² In the end, this article offers a case study of Colombia to uncover the power of notions of *mestizaje* and its impact on the multicultural turn. Less than a total disjuncture, the two form a part of a critical moment in the study of the Americas. It is the goal, however, that concepts explored in the above pages can be fruitful to the next generation of scholars that dive deep into these topics and issues.

Endnotes

- 1 *El Espectador*, “La defensa de Francia Marquez” <https://www.elespectador.com/opinion/la-defensa-de-francia-marquez-columna-859603>.
- 2 *The Economist*, “A tale of three countries,” <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2015/10/29/a-tale-of-three-countries>.
- 3 Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (Colombia), ed., *¡Basta ya! Colombia, memorias de guerra y dignidad: informe general*, Segunda edición corregida (Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013), 116–155.
- 4 Most recently, the National Committee of Reparation and Reconciliation reported a forced displacement of 43,630 Afro-Colombians for the year 2007 and 20,542 for 2010.
- 5 “Constitución política de Colombia.” (1991). In in the 1991 Constitution, Colombia declares itself a pluriethnic and multicultural society.
- 6 Peter Wade, “Mestizaje, multiculturalism, liberalism, and violence,” *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 11:3, (2016), 327.

- 7 *Mestizaje* in the Americas has a long history that cannot be treated fully within the constraints of this article, but it is necessary to highlight how it took hold of regions of the Americas that were colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese. Please see: Frank Bonilla et al., eds., *Borderless Borders: U.S. Latinos, Latin Americans, and the Paradox of Interdependence* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000); Petra R. Rivera-Rideau, Jennifer A. Jones, Tianna S. Paschel, eds. *Afro-Latin@s in Movement: Critical Approaches to Blackness and Transnationalism in the Americas*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Michel Gobat, "The Invention of Latin America: A Transnational History of Anti-Imperialism, Democracy, and Race," *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 1, 2013): 1345–75; Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and on the United States* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002); Solsiree del Moral, *Negotiating Empire: The Cultural Politics of Schools in Puerto Rico, 1898–1952* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013); Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Frank Guridy, *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2010); Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, *A Tale of Two Cities: Santo Domingo and New York After 1950*.
- 8 Tianna S. Paschel and Mark Q. Sawyer, "Contesting Politics as Usual: Black Social Movements, Globalization, and Race Policy in Latin America," in *New Social Movements in the African Diaspora: Challenging Global Apartheid*, The Critical Black Studies Series, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 14.
- 9 Peter Wade, "Race in Latin America," in *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2009), 179.
- 10 Alejandro de la Fuente, "Afterword: Afro-Latinos and Afro-Latin American Studies," in *Afro-Latin@s in Movement*, Afro-Latin@ Diasporas (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016), 296.
- 11 Paulina L. Alberto and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskoff, "Racial Democracy' and Racial Inclusion: Hemispheric Histories" in *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 268.
- 12 For further reading on how this has been the case for Colombia please see: Leith Mullings ed., *New Social Movements in the African Diaspora: Challenging Global Apartheid*, Critical Black Studies Series, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Klára Hellebrandová, "El proceso de la etno-racialización y resistencia en la era multicultural: ser negro en Bogotá," *universitas humanística* 77 enero-junio de 2014 pp: 145–16; Leith Mullings, "Interrogando el racismo. Hacia una Antropología antiracista." CS No. 12, 325–375, julio–diciembre 2013.
- 13 Tianna S. Paschel, *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Brazil and Colombia*, (Princeton University Press, 2016), 46.
- 14 Melissa M. Valle, "The discursive detachment of race from gentrification in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41:7, (2018), 1235–1254.
- 15 Ibid. Also see: Peter Wade, "Defining Blackness in Colombia," *Journal de La Société Des Américanistes* 95, no. 1 (2009).
- 16 Wade, "Defining Blackness in Colombia," *Journal de La Société Des Américanistes* 95, no. 1 (2009): 165.
- 17 Tianna S. Paschel, "The Right to Difference: Explaining Colombia's Shift from Color Blindness to the Law of Black Communities," *American Journal of Sociology* 116, no. 3 (2010): 734. For in depth discussion see: Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of South Africa, the United States and Brazil* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 18 Paschel and Sawyer, "Contesting Politics as Usual," 24–25.
- 19 Paschel, "The Right to Difference," 733.
- 20 Ibid., 735–738.
- 21 Paschel, *Becoming Black Political Subjects*, 21. See Table 1.3.
- 22 Ibid., 1–5.
- 23 Ibid., 41–44.
- 24 Paschel, "The Right to Difference," 736.
- 25 Mara Viveros Vigoya, "Social Mobility, Whiteness, and Whiteness in Colombia," *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2015): 497.
- 26 Ibid., 502.
- 27 *La Revista América Negra*, <https://www.javeriana.edu.co/ins-genetica/investigacion/publicaciones/libros/americana-negra>.
- 28 Roosbelinda Cárdenas, "'Thanks to My Forced Displacement': Blackness and the Politics of Colombia's War Victims," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 74.
- 29 Paschel and Sawyer, "Contesting Politics as Usual," 26.
- 30 Cárdenas, "'Thanks to My Forced Displacement,'" 74.
- 31 Amilcar Araujo Pereira, "The Transnational Circulation of Political References: The Black Brazilian Movement and Antiracist Struggles of the Early Twentieth Century," in *Afro-Latin@s in Movement*, Afro-Latin@ Diasporas (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016), 247–67.
- 32 de la Fuente, "Afterword," 292–295.

Works Cited

- Alberto, Paulina L. and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskoff, "'Racial Democracy' and Racial Inclusion: Hemispheric Histories" in *Afro-Latin American Studies: An Introduction*, (Cambridge University Press, 2018).
- Cárdenas, Roosbelinda, "'Thanks to My Forced Displacement': Blackness and the Politics of Colombia's War Victims," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 13, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 72–93.
- Comisión Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación (Colombia), ed., *¡Basta ya! Colombia, memorias de guerra y dignidad: informe general*, Segunda edición corregida (Bogotá: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013).
- de la Fuente, Alejandro, "Afterword: Afro-Latinos and Afro-Latin American Studies," in *Afro-Latin@s in Movement*, Afro-Latin@ Diasporas (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016), 289–303.
- Paschel, Tianna S. *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Brazil and Colombia*, (Princeton University Press), 2016.
- _____. "The Right to Difference: Explaining Colombia's Shift from Color Blindness to the Law of Black Communities," *American Journal of Sociology* 116, no. 3 (2010): 729–69.
- Paschel, Tianna S. and Mark Q. Sawyer, "Contesting Politics as Usual: Black Social Movements, Globalization, and Race Policy in Latin America," in *New Social Movements in the African Diaspora: Challenging Global Apartheid*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- Pereira, Amilcar Araujo, "The Transnational Circulation of Political References: The Black Brazilian Movement and Antiracist Struggles of the Early Twentieth Century," in *Afro-Latin@s in Movement*, Afro-Latin@ Diasporas (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016), 247–67.

- Valle, Melissa M., "The discursive detachment of race from gentrification in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41:7, (2018), 1235–1254.
- Viveros Vigoya, Mara, "Social Mobility, Whiteness, and Whiteness in Colombia," *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2015): 496–512.
- Wade, Peter, "Mestizaje, multiculturalism, liberalism, and violence," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*, 11:3, (2016), 323–343.
- _____, "Defining Blackness in Colombia," *Journal de La Société Des Américanistes* 95, no. 1 (2009): 165–84.
- _____, "Race in Latin America," in *A Companion to Latin American Anthropology* (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2009).

“We Die, My Friend”: Material Death in Wordsworth’s “The Ruined Cottage”

Jessikah Díaz, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Jessikah Díaz graduated from UCLA in Spring 2019, earning her Bachelors degree in English. Her work focuses on eighteenth-century British literature with a focus on Romanticism, gender, and the history of science and medicine. Jessikah is currently pursuing a PhD in English at Yale University.

Abstract

In pursuit of a recent scholarly interest in Romantic writers and their visions of embodied life, this paper offers a materialist reading of William Wordsworth’s eighteenth-century poem “The Ruined Cottage.” This project shows how Wordsworth’s poem illuminates the shared and everyday interactions between all material things, physical processes that microscopically grow and develop material reality. I argue that Wordsworth takes this pre-Aristotelian process of material reproduction and illuminates what I call *phusi-poetical bodies*. The literary representation of the phusi-poetical seeks to name the process by which all material bodies—human bodies, atmospheric bodies, and bodies of objects—collide and collaborate in order to develop the surrounding world. “The Ruined Cottage” shows a material process that physically connects figures across space and time, working beyond and despite concepts of disintegration, consequently recasting the concept of death as a lively process of renewal.

Acknowledgements

To my Mellon Mays cohort, mentors, and directors: thank you for keeping me inspired and accountable.

In his 1802 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth elevates the Poet as a figure “who has a greater knowledge of human nature,” a man who “rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him.”¹ It is the Poet, Wordsworth says, excited by “vivid sensations,” on whom we rely to communicate the passions of “common life.”² Claims like this expressed a broader Romantic commitment to the imagination and the repository of poetic genius. And yet, this paper argues that Romantic writers, even Wordsworth himself, leveraged other figures to explore a common life that advances a less anthropocentric view. These writers build on a pre-Aristotelian perspective of growth and change that not only de-centers the Poet, but de-centers human ways of thinking about life. Under this scientific and aesthetic pressure, life emerges from the confines of human consciousness to embody a process no longer exclusive to the Poet. That is, life becomes a material process shared between all bodies: the chance encounter between human bodies, atmospheric bodies, and objects more generally. One consequence of this turn is that the poet is made level with

all of humanity as well as all *things*. In what follows, I show how Wordsworth literalizes the notion of “common life” by drawing on figures that situate life as dependent upon shared interactions between all material bodies.

My interest here is in what I call phusi-poetical bodies. Etymologically, phusi-poetical refers to the link between *physis*, derived from the Greek root “to grow or to become,” and *poetics*, the Greek root “to create.” Together, the phusi-poetical exemplifies a figure of embodied life that interrogates the divide between the physical and the metaphysical by examining ways in which bodies develop and grow in nature. The concept of the phusi-poetical body is derived from ancient Greek philosophy, specifically from a pre-Aristotelian perspective on the natural universe, rejecting the idea that all natural things work toward some *telos* or specific end. This non-teleological perspective suggests, for instance, that an oak tree is not the “product” of the acorn; rather, that there can be no product for there is no desirable end. The acorn will sprout and develop into an oak tree just as the oak tree will shed and produce new acorns. With this in mind, I use the term “nature” or “natural” to characterize the processes by which bodies, writ-large, all physically participate in the material development of the world.

In my larger study of the phusi-poetical, I use several of Wordsworth’s poems in order to think about how consciousness and memory becomes its own material thing. However, for this paper, I will focus solely on the poem “The Ruined Cottage,” using it like a textual microscope to unravel the complex patterns and motions of the phusi-poetical. This poem is an unexpected representation of physical life for it is more commonly associated with a moral narrative, an exemplary picture of human suffering during the Industrial Revolution. In what follows, I will show how this poem thrusts the reader into the energetic outside world in order to illustrate a flurry of material interactions difficult to detect in a vast landscape and throughout an extended period of time.

These depictions of embodied life have been of interest for Romanticists. In a recent book, Amanda Jo Goldstein asks us to rethink embodiment as “transience,” a process of growth and development that occurs “into the outward and everyday.”³ For Goldstein, Romantic writers illuminate this material process from the microscopic level of atomic particles. By contrast, I’d like to capture this process through a broader scope of multi-material bodies that are interconnected across space and time. In keeping with Goldstein, I explore how physical things participate in life less from a position of autonomy and more from a position of susceptibility. This perspective resists vitalist notions of autonomy and power by showing how “Romantic thinkers cast life as dependent upon context, contact, and combination:

a contingent *susceptibility* rather than an autonomous *power*.⁴ If all figures are dependent upon physical “context, contact, and combination” then material reality relies upon “con-form[ity]” and “mutual atmosphere.”⁵ These terms imply an interconnectedness which, I argue, Romantic writers capture through the figure of the phusi-poetical. Moreover, I show that when Romantic writers deploy this figure, they inevitably reposition notions of mortality from the metaphysical to the physical world.

To provide some context, Wordsworth emerges from a broader tradition of Romantic writers who are invested in the ties between humans and their outside world. Up to this point, scholars have focused less on the material stakes of this relationship and instead are primarily interested in the ontological; namely, how one entity might influence or change another’s way of existing in the world. One poet who is exemplary for an ontological reading is the “peasant poet” John Clare who, unlike Wordsworth, lived and wrote from the rural laboring class. From this perspective, the author offers first-hand accounts of the natural world and how it transforms under acts of enclosure.⁶ In his reading of Clare, Joseph Albernaz locates an “implicit social ontology” throughout Clare’s works, an interconnectedness or “shared being-in-common” among all natural things. Importantly for Albernaz, this network of organisms organizes itself through notions of commonality rather than totality: “a conception of singularity that is based on relation, coexistence, interdependence, and sharing.”⁷

An intimate example of this social ontology is in Clare’s poem “The Last of March.” The poem tracks the coming of spring, zooming in on a natural world that is busy blossoming. This botanical community will not leave a flower to spring through the snow on its own, everything prepares for the new budding season with its local neighbors:

Though still so early, one may spy
And track her footsteps every hour;
The daisy with its golden eye,
And primrose bursting into flower;
And snugly where the thorny bower
Keeps off the nipping frost and wind,
Excluding all but sun and shower,
Their early violets children find.⁸

Here, the flowers do not simply grow alongside the thorns but dwell in its “bower.” The innate structure of the bristles filter those hazardous elements from the vital, shielding the violets in a “snugly” hospitable environment to ensure they will thrive. These two unlikely forms of vegetation share space intimately but not exhaustively, neither overpowering the other. Instead, joining in their common goal of prospering through the spring.

Poems like “The Last of March” offer themes of shared space and common goals, exemplifying social ontology through moments of generation. Nevertheless, Clare exhibits this same model through his “enclosure elegies” which center less on renewal and more on moments of dejection. In the poem “The Lament of Swordy Well,” the well narrates the condition of the landscape in the aftermath of enclosure, attending to an ecological imbalance:

The bees flye round in feeble rings
And find no blossom bye
Then thrum their almost weary wings
Upon the moss and die.⁹

In this moment, the hills have been plundered by the plows, leaving nothing for the bee to fertilize. In failing to fulfill its natural purpose, the bee lies vulnerable and open “upon the moss” without a blossom to give it life nor a tree to shade it in its death. Here, we find the consequences of the anti-social, the relationship between humans and the world they inhabit has departed from coexistence and sharing. Like this poem, many of Clare’s enclosure elegies are keenly aware that all organic things are tightly woven, stitching together an ecological fabric where one loose string may unravel the whole.

Unlike social ontology which thinks metaphysically and teleologically about common life, I am interested in how coexistence takes shape through the physical. In my reading, generation and dejection do not happen in different poems or scenes but occur simultaneously within the same body. The concept of sharing space manifests microscopically through material bodies that interact and trade particles of matter, making new organic things from the old. This vision of reproduction infers not only material interaction but processes of development and disintegration. Under these terms, our material reality must break-down in order for it to grow into something new. It is helpful to think of disintegration like Goldstein would: as microscopic acts of pressing, shedding, developing, and growing. Like Albernaz on Clare, I suggest that Wordsworth offers a universe that resists totality because it resists exhaustion. One body does not subsume the other but springs from it, illustrating life through the motive energy of phusi-poetical bodies.

Wordsworth’s poem “The Ruined Cottage” opens with a traveler looking for shade beneath a group of elm trees. As the traveler nears the shady spot, he uncovers various material bodies beneath and within one another. The traveler first sees “a group of trees / Which midway in that level stood alone,”¹⁰ but as he nears the shady spot he sees a ruined cottage “sprang from the same root”¹¹ as the elm trees, and beside the ruined house lie “an aged Man, / Alone, and stretched upon the cottage bench.”¹² In describing both

the peddler and the trees as “alone,” Wordsworth is questioning the solitude of all objects. That is, how can the trees and the peddler be alone if they are from “the same root”? Material bodies are folded into other bodies, whereby the trees, the cottage, and the peddler all come from and rest in the same place. The traveler slowly unearths a weaving of bodies, all interacting in and from “the same root,” and so, not the trees, nor the cottage, nor the peddler, are truly “alone,” but are intermesh.

The materiality of the human body is leveled to the materiality of nature to show that both are equally susceptible to one another. However, this susceptibility does not align itself with human-centric ideas about the finality of death. Rather, material susceptibility is a condition that enables death to collaborate with life, Wordsworth says:

I see around me here
 Things which you cannot see: we die, my Friend,
 Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
 And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
 Dies with him or is changed, and very soon
 Even of the good is no memorial left.¹³

In his remark about the inevitable outcome of natural life, the peddler makes morality in “the good” and attachment to the “loved” look inconsequential in comparison to the material. He argues that memorials erected for “the good” and material objects that “man loved” are bound to age and decay, for at their very core, they are still made of organic stuff. Thus, to say that “his peculiar nook of the earth / Dies with him or is changed” implies that an object is only unique or peculiar because the man has deemed it unique to *him*: when the man dies, so does the uniqueness of that object. Consequently, when the traveler dwells “we die, my friend, / Nor we alone,” the “we” in “we die,” becomes not exclusive to the peddler and the traveler but includes all things material, not just mortal. Mortality is not a death of the material, but a death of any anthropocentric investment in the material. So, what happens to the material in death?

Material bodies undergo a different process of death that emphasizes *change*, rather than disintegration. The poem shows that change occurs in different forms, but also reveals how change is material in its nature; Wordsworth continues:

I turned aside
 And stroll'd into her garden.—It was chang'd:
 The unprofitable bindweed spread his bells
 From side to side and with unwieldy wreaths
 Had dragg'd the rose from its sustaining wall
 And bent it down to earth,¹⁴

Although the peddler makes an important proclamation of change, the moment is also significant because of the way material objects are made lively. To say that the bindweed spread “his” bells is to give a humanizing principle to a material object of nature. Similarly, to animate these objects with action is to notice how the bindweed “dragg'd the rose from its sustaining wall / And bent it down to earth;” Wordsworth personifies the interaction between the bindweed and the rose in order to level the garden to the human as active and energetic organisms.

Those objects we conceive as inanimate or passive in the process of life, such as the garden or the cottage, are used to cue changing forms we see more familiarly. Immediately after facing the garden, the peddler approaches Margaret, the cottage resident, and realizes that the human body at its material level has also changed: “Her face was pale and thin, her figure too, / Was chang'd.”¹⁵ Like the garden, the material body shows physical signs of alteration. The peddler continues:

Her eye-lids droop'd, her eyes were downward
 cast;
 And when she at her table gave me food
 She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
 Her body was subdued . . .¹⁶

Like the honeysuckle that “hung down [the cottage walls] in heavier wreaths” and the bindweed that had “dragg'd the rose from its sustaining wall,” Margaret is reshaping. Her body, like the cottage and the garden, is metamorphosing through disintegration. That is, all three bodies are described the same as “low,” “subdued,” “droop'd,” and “downward” as if all three bodies are in a busy process of collapse. The emphasis on downward movement shows that the splintering of the material is an active process in itself.

However, returning to earth is not a moment of finality. When the peddler recalls on the story of Margaret and her cottage, he stresses that the material is not exhausted in death, but transforms into something new, he says:

She is dead,
 The worm is on her cheek, and this poor hut,
 Stripp'd of its outward garb of household flowers,
 Of rose and sweet-briar, offers to the wind.¹⁷

Material reproduction redefines “stripp'd” as neither fragmented nor destroyed, but as physically moved. A flower is stripped off the wall, but “offers” itself to be moved elsewhere by the wind. The breeze draws up the particles in its gusts and pollinates the same ground where the worm feeds off the earth. Thus, the material cannot ever die; instead, it sheds, germinates, and forms into new life.

From the bindweed to the briar, “The Ruined Cottage” literalizes the notion of “common life,” offering a material reality where bodies shed, share, and spring from matter. The phusi-poetical helps us imagine how material bodies are much more than passive surfaces chipped away at until death, instead, they are generative and transformative sites of reproduction. In focusing on the difference between degeneration and renewal, the poem explores life beyond a linear trajectory between birth and death. Consequently, life becomes a cyclical process that posits death as very much “alive.”

The phusi-poetical offers a large scope with which to focus on the changing, growing, and developing material world. And yet, this focus reveals an amorphousness to the material, an amorphousness that holds regardless and in excess of the particular forms taken by material life. Going forward, I’d like to consider the consequences of strictly imagining life as a material production. Specifically, I ask, how might Romantic writers complicate or challenge the way we view the human body when we think about the human as simply material? Such inquiries may require an interdisciplinary perspective on materiality that draws on physiology or natural science more broadly. Nevertheless, I begin with a philosophical approach to materialism in order to explore how the movement reshapes those broader metaphysical ideas that are fundamental to thinking about the relationship between Romantic writers and the teeming material world they inhabit.

Endnotes

- 1 William Wordsworth, “Preface to Lyrical Ballads,” 603.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 595–596.
- 3 Amanda Jo Goldstein, *Sweet Science*, 164.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 22.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 22, 162.
- 6 Enclosure, n; The action of surrounding or marking of land with a fence or boundary; the action of thus converting pieces of common land into private property, *OED*.
- 7 Joseph Albermaz, “John Clare’s World,” 190.
- 8 John Clare, “The Last of March, written at Lolham Brigs,” 17–24.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 81–82.
- 10 Wordsworth, “The Ruined Cottage,” 27–28.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 30.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 33–34.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 67–72.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 307–317.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 338–39.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 377–380.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 103–106.

Works Cited

Albermaz, Joseph. “John Clare’s World,” *European Romantic Review*, 27:2, (2016): 189–205, DOI: 10.1080/10509585.2016.1140049.

Clare, John. “The Lament of Swordy Well.” In *Major Works Including Selections from The Shepard’s Calendar*. 147–52. Edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell, 1984. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

_____. “The Last of March, written at Lolham Brigs.” In *Major Works Including Selections from The Shepard’s Calendar*. 93–96. Edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell, 1984. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Goldstein, Amanda Jo. *Sweet Science: Romantic Materialism and the New Logics of Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Wordsworth, William. “Preface to Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems.” In *The Major Works including the Prelude*. 595–604. Edited by Stephen Gill, 1984. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

_____. “The Ruined Cottage.” In *The Major Works including the Prelude*. 31–44. Edited by Stephen Gill, 1984. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

The Role of Language Transfer: Spanish-Speaking Children's Success in Artificial Language Production

Ana Patricia Esqueda, *Princeton University*

Ana Patricia Esqueda graduated from Princeton University with a major in Psychology and certificates in Linguistics and Latino Studies. She is now in her first year of a doctoral program at the University of Michigan studying developmental psychology.

Abstract

Six-year-old children have been found to be oblivious to a probabilistically represented gender based-distinction in an artificial language paradigm. In the impetus for this study, unaware of the conditioning factor that determined which of two determiners was appropriate, six-year-old English monolingual children showed a tendency to regularize their productions, over-relying on only one determiner or the other. In contrast to English monolinguals, Spanish speakers are accustomed to a language which uses gender to classify nouns into grammatically masculine and feminine categories. With this in mind, the current work aimed to determine whether younger native Spanish-speaking children would benefit from a possible transfer effect in learning the same artificial language that English-speaking children had had trouble acquiring. In two experiments reported here, Spanish-speaking four- to five-year-old children witnessed two novel classifiers, probabilistically conditioned by natural gender. The first experiment tested participant's ability to produce the correct classifier with familiar and novel puppets and the second experiment tested the same participant's ability to judge which determiner was more appropriate in a forced choice task. In support of the hypothesis, given their familiarity with gender-based determiners in their native language, these participants performed above chance in the artificial language production task and marginally better than the older native English-speaking cohort. These results provide a window through which we can understand the factors that encourage or hinder children's language learning. Importantly, the results demonstrate the importance of maintaining a child's native tongue when introducing them to a new language.

Acknowledgements

A mi Madre: Tus sueños son mis sueños y juntas seguiremos realizándolos.

Introduction

When acquiring a natural language, even children with rich linguistic environments deviate from what they hear. For example, young English speakers pass through a phase during which they use /ed/ to mark the past tense of both regular and irregular verbs (Blything, Ambridge, & Lieven, 2018). Likewise, young Italian speakers maintain

their use of /o/ and /a/ as noun endings when encountering ambiguously gendered nouns that should end in /e/ (Bates, Devescovi, Hernandez, & Pizzamiglio, 1996). However, in order to successfully communicate, these children do eventually master the ability to use words in ways that are novel, yet grammatically well-formed. They learn to generalize while simultaneously respecting the existence of irregularities within their language. Though this ability is grasped with time, showcased by adults' mastery of the probabilities associated with irregularities in their native tongue, research in artificial language learning paradigms shows that young children often regularize inconsistently produced forms—otherwise thought of as probabilistic inputs (Aslin & Newport, 2012). In other words, when children are exposed to input in which linguistic forms appear unpredictably—be it through the use of inconsistent word order or the attachment of an unknown determiner to a common noun for instance—they tend to simplify these by overproducing the most accessible form rather than matching their own production to the probabilities presented in the language. For example, adults who were taught a miniature artificial language that randomly included a classifier 60% of the time were likely to replicate the probabilities observed in the input; children, on the other hand, tended to “regularize” the pattern, over-relying on only one classifier or the other (Kam & Newport, 2005).

These artificial language learning tasks, in which participants are exposed to and tested on mini novel languages, provide a rich methodology for exploring the circumstances under which individuals generalize over different cues in their input. In a semi-artificial language learning paradigm, investigating the learning of the sociolinguistic cue of speaker identity in six-year-olds and adults, participants were trained and tested on an artificial language where nouns were obligatorily followed by one of two meaningless particles and were produced by one of two speakers, a male or a female (Samara, Smith, Brown, & Wonnacott, 2017). Particle usage was conditioned deterministically on speaker identity, probabilistically, or not at all, and participants underwent tests of production and comprehension. Though both children and adults successfully acquired the speaker identity cue, there was evidence of regularization in participants' productions with children boosting the frequency of one particle at the expense of the other, while adults regularized by conditioning particle usage on lexical items—thus reproducing the variability of the particles as they witnessed it.

On the other side of the spectrum, children have proven themselves capable of using abstract structural knowledge during language comprehension and production. One experiment taught five-year-old children a novel sentence form that corresponded to a novel meaning (Wonnacott, Boyd, Thomson, & Goldberg, 2012). Unlike anything they could encounter in English, the novel construction introduced participants to a verb-ing noun₁, noun₂, translatable

to an agent₂ approaches a goal₁, in the manner denoted by the verb. Subsequent to training, children were tested on comprehension and production of the novel construction, with a subset of the test trials involving new verbs not heard during training. Unlike the participants of the studies discussed previously, these children successfully generalized from the verbs heard during training to the verbs heard during testing, demonstrating the learning and use of verb-independent form-meaning mappings.

With these studies in mind, it is evident that, while children's artificial language productions vary widely and seemingly rely on the most regular or systematic aspects of their language input (Singleton & Newport, 2004), the vast amount of literature on adults shows that if there is no direct reason to diverge from the input adults will reproduce the variability as they have witnessed it. If the input varies by a probability, adults will attempt to reproduce the variation in roughly the same proportion (Kam & Newport, 2005). On the other hand, if the variation in the input is conditioned by discourse or semantic factors, adults will readily generalize on that basis, as long as they have not witnessed lexical factors conflicting with the discourse or semantic conditioning in the input (Thothathiri & Rattinger, 2016). However, much less research has been conducted on children's behavior in miniature artificial language paradigms that, in mirroring the structure of natural languages, include a combination of conditioning factors. These could include lexical processing, relating to vocabulary, phonological factors, as per the sounds of the language, semantic factors, relating to meaning, or sociolinguistic factors, which are impacted by the social aspects of any given community.

In addressing this lack of research, as the impetus for the current study, Schwab, Lew-Williams and Goldberg (2018) introduced English monolingual adults and six-year-old participants to two novel classifiers, each probabilistically conditioned by the salient semantic cue of natural gender. Participants witnessed one novel classifier applied to three stereotypically female puppets, another novel classifier applied to three stereotypically male puppets, and encountered two other inanimate puppets which were lexically conditioned and assigned to one of the classifiers arbitrarily. Importantly, for the sake of understanding its use in the current research, the natural gender associated with each noun, pronoun, or noun phrase was understood to be masculine or feminine, based on the relevant attributes of its referent (Tight, 2006). For example, in Spanish, *mujer* (woman) is feminine whereas *hombre* (man) is masculine; these attributions occur solely due to the semantically inherent gender character of each noun as per their use in the given language.

The adult participants of Schwab et al. (2018) displayed high accuracy in their productions—applying the learned semantic criteria to familiar gendered puppets and

novel gendered puppets—while children were oblivious to the semantic conditioning. Instead, children regularized their productions, over-relying on only one classifier or the other. Further, in a two-alternative forced-choice task (2AFC), children selected both classifiers equally, without bias toward one or the other, and displayed better accuracy on familiar items. In acknowledging that natural languages are conditioned by multiple factors that children successfully learn, Schwab et al. (2018) suggests that, whereas adults were able to reproduce the rules of the given language, children's tendency to simplify during production stemmed from retrieval difficulty given that the complex language system used during the study was not fully learned and was not present in the children's native tongue. Nonetheless, these results came as a surprise given the six-year-old participants' understanding of natural gender—showcased by their ability to identify the intended genders of the puppets used as stimuli and their ability to use the pronouns *he* and *she* accurately.

Current Research

Given English monolingual children's inability to successfully produce novel, semantically based classifiers with familiar or new gendered puppets after limited exposure to two determiners probabilistically conditioned by natural gender (Schwab et al., 2018), it is of special interest to investigate whether Spanish heritage speakers might be more successful at appropriately producing these novel classifiers. In contrast to English monolinguals, Spanish speakers are accustomed to a language which uses gender to classify nouns into grammatically masculine and feminine categories. With this in mind, the current work aimed to determine whether younger native Spanish-speaking children would benefit from a possible transfer effect in learning the same artificial language that English-speaking children had had trouble acquiring. Therefore, this paper investigates what children produce (Experiment One) and select in a judgment task (Experiment Two) when faced with a grammatical choice that is partially conditioned by natural gender but that nonetheless relies on children's generalization when learning an artificial language.

I hypothesized that given their use of gender classifiers in their native language, Spanish heritage speakers, whose Spanish ability matches their English, would make better use of the conditioning factor of natural gender. If so, the Spanish children would be expected to perform more like English speaking adults, rather than English monolingual children. This would provide evidence in a mini-artificial learning paradigm that would suggest transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2 and would broaden our understanding of the factors that lead children to, or keep them from, simplifying their language production.

Methods: Experiment One

Replicating the methods of Schwab et al. (2018), 16 Spanish-speaking four- to five-year-old participants witnessed one novel classifier, *dax*, applied to three stereotypically female puppets (a mother, a girl, and a female dancer), and another novel classifier, *po*, applied to three stereotypically male puppets (a father, boy, and a male doctor), while two other inanimate puppets (a book and a ball) were lexically conditioned and assigned to one of the classifiers (*dax/po*) arbitrarily. Simply, three out of four puppets paired with each classifier were predictable on the basis of natural gender, and two other puppets were lexically conditioned. During the test phase, participants' tendencies to regularize were assessed through their productions of an identifiable classifier that would pair with six familiar test items (mother, father, girl, boy, ball, book), two gender-swapped test items (male dancer and female doctor), and two novel test items that could be generalized based on gender (grandma and grandpa), for a total of ten items. Of special interest was whether participants would apply semantic or lexical conditioning when assigning classifiers to the gender swapped items, the male dancer and the female doctor, and what they would apply to the items which they were not previously introduced to, the grandmother and grandfather.

If participants had the ability to use the natural gender of Spanish as a conditioning factor, they were expected to generalize on the basis of the perceived natural gender of the puppets, assigning the "masculine" classifier to the male dancer and the grandpa puppet, and the "feminine" classifier to the female dancer and the grandma puppet. If they instead relied on lexical conditioning, they should refer to the male dancer with the "female" classifier, and the female doctor with the "male" classifier, since they had witnessed those classifiers with the terms doctor and dancer, respectively, in the input. In this case they would be at chance at assigning classifiers to the grandma and grandpa puppets since these were not witnessed during exposure. Finally, if children tended to regularize complex input, even when a salient conditioning factor is available, they could regularize the entire system by boosting the probability of one classifier so that it applies categorically to all nouns.

Results

As shown in Figure 1, children's accuracy on the familiar items ($M=.65$, $SE=.03$) was better than chance ($\beta=.73$, $SE=0.19$, $p<.0001$), as was their performance on novel puppets that required the semantic generalization (grandma, grandpa, female doctor, and male dancer) ($M=.57$, $SE=.02$) ($\beta=.78$, $SE=0.24$, $p=.000854$). The direct comparison between familiar and novel items was also significant ($\beta=.73$, $SE=0.18$, $p<.0001$). Thus, participants performed above chance for both familiar and generalizable items, with higher accuracy for the familiar.

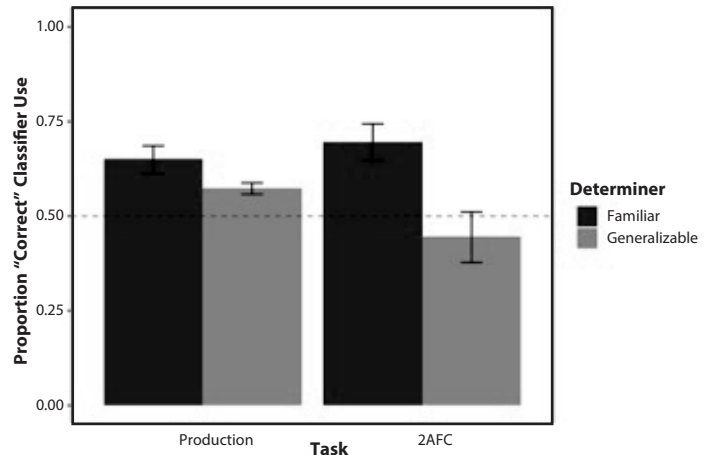


Figure 1. Proportion correct classifier use (i.e., accuracy) for participants in Exp. 1 (Production) and Exp. 2 (2AFC) for familiar classifier/noun pairs and generalizable classifier/noun pairs. Dashed line at 0.5 indicates chance performance. Error bars represent ± 1 SEM.

A closer look at individual behavior (Figure 2) shows that most children chose each of the two classifiers roughly 50% of the time, as is required for high accuracy. Participants needed to choose one of the classifiers on more than 69% or less than 31% of test trials in order to show behavior significantly different than chance (i.e., an underlying 50–50 distribution of classifier types) at a 95% confidence level. Following this, only two out of 16 participants produced the more frequent classifier less than 31% or more than 69% of the time, even though they had only witnessed it 33% of the time during exposure. The remaining participants regularly produced both classifiers.

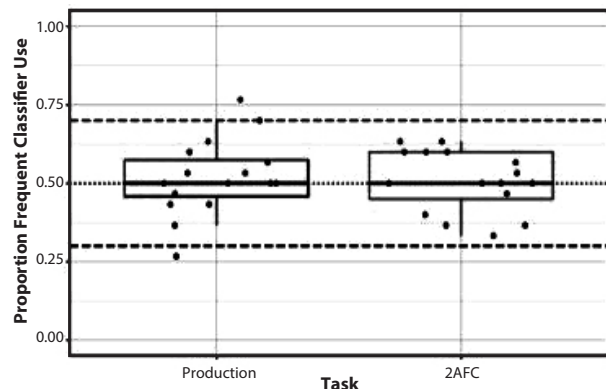


Figure 2. Box-and-whiskers plot showing proportion classifier use (based on input frequency in the exposure phase) for each participants' productions in Exp. 1 (Production) and for participants' choices in Exp. 2 (2AFC). Dotted line at 0.5 indicates equivalent frequent/infrequent classifier proportion use (in line with correctly learning the semantic generalization). Dashed lines at .31 and .69 indicate markers of probability maximizing for either the more frequent or less frequent classifier. Note only two participants fell outside this band in their productions (Exp. 1), while no children fell outside this band in the 2AFC task (Exp. 2).

Methods: Experiment Two

A second experiment probed the same group of children in a two-alternative forced-choice (2AFC) task in which both classifier options were provided. This was used as a different measure to assess whether children were aware of the gender-based semantic distinction, and if so, to determine whether they showed a preference for utterances containing one classifier over the other. This examined whether children prefer formulations that obey a generalization, and if so, whether children's preferences align with their productions. While the stimuli and design largely mirrored that of Experiment 1, the experimenter's script differed slightly in order to replace the production task with a judgement task in the test phase. Rather than measuring participants' tendencies to regularize through a classifier production task, the experimenter provided participants with both classifier options (*dax* and *po*) and allowed them to choose which classifier would pair best with the six familiar test items (mother, father, girl, boy, ball, book), two gender-swapped test items (male dancer and female doctor), and two novel test items that could be generalized based on gender (grandma and grandpa), for a total of ten items.

Results

Participants displayed item-specific learning of the combination of classifier and noun ($M=.69$, $SE=.04$), performing better than chance on familiar items ($\beta =0.76$, $SE=.34$, $p=.0239$). However, in terms of classifier preference for the novel generalizable instances, children failed to generalize according to natural gender when compared to chance ($M=.44$, $SE=.06$) ($\beta =.17$, $SE=.39$, $p=.69$), and they were also significantly worse on novel items compared to familiar items ($\beta=-0.67$, $SE=.27$, $p=.0122$). As in seen in Figure 1, children across experiments performed better on familiar compared to generalizable trials, and that children's performance on familiar combinations was

better in Experiment 2 (2AFC task) than in Experiment 1 (Production task). More specifically, there was an effect of trial type such that children performed worse on novel trials ($\beta =-.63$, $SE=.21$, $p < .001$); there was also a significant trial type by experimental group interaction, demonstrating that children's performance on familiar trials in the 2AFC task was better than in the production task ($\beta =.72$, $SE=0.28$, $p=.01$) (see Table 1).

Of particular interest was the individual behavior in Experiment 2 compared with the production task of Experiment 1 (Figure 2). Since participants needed to choose one of the classifiers on more than 69% or less than 31% of test trials in order to show behavior significantly different than chance, the data shows that children regularized less in the production task (Experiment 1) than in the 2AFC task (Experiment 2). Yet, not a single child in Experiment 2 showed a preference for either classifier, whereas in Experiment 1 2 out of 16 children produced classifiers in such a way that was outside of the confidence intervals of what would be expected by chance.

General Discussion

As the impetus for this study, Schwab et al. (2018) showcased the ways in which English monolingual children regularize their production, over-relying on one classifier rather than following the semantic conditioning of the tested artificial language. While these children's tendency to simplify their productions may have stemmed from retrieval difficulty, given that the complex language system of the study was not fully learned and was not present within the English language, the results were nonetheless surprising given participants' understanding of natural gender in other avenues, shown by their ability to identify the intended genders of the puppets and use the pronouns *he* and *she* accurately.

Child Production vs. Child 2AFC task				
M1and2.kids <- glmer (accuracy ~ Type*Experiment + (1 Subject) + (1 Item), data=Exp1and2.kids, family=binomial)				
	Estimate	SE	z	p(z)
Intercept	0.7179	0.1952	3.678	0.0002 ***
Trial type (Familiar)	-0.6329	0.2150	-2.943	0.0003 **
Group (2AFC)	-0.0103	0.2633	-0.039	0.9686
Trial type x Group1	0.7236	0.2837	-2.551	0.0107 *

Table 1. Coefficient estimates from generalized linear mixed model (with a logit link) predicting children's production or choice of "correct" classifiers. Effects (Trial, Experiment) were sum coded (i.e., levels of each factor were compared to the average). Maximal random effect structure was simplified until models converged. This model compares participants' accuracy in production from Exp. 1 with accuracy in 2AFC in Exp. 2, with fixed effects of Trial type, Experiment, and their interaction, along with random intercepts for subjects and items. Tests reaching statistical significance at the .05 criteria are marked in bold.

However, in focusing on the current study, the results show that children, even of a younger age, are indeed capable of reproducing semantic conditioning when they have already been introduced to it through their first language. By testing Spanish-English bilinguals, the implemented miniature artificial language learning experiments demonstrate that children are capable of recognizing natural gender as a key conditioning factor. Further, their ability to perform above chance, selecting each of the two classifiers roughly 50% of the time as is required for high accuracy, shows that they understand both the lexical conditioning of classifier noun-combinations and the importance of the semantic meaning.

In understanding the larger significance, it is important to highlight that, compared to the English monolinguals tested by Schwab et al. (2018), the Spanish-speaking children tested here performed at a marginally higher accuracy rate. A comparison of both groups confirms that the improved accuracy relied heavily on those items that required generalization on the basis of natural gender—where an appreciation of natural gender as a conditioning factor should have the strongest effect. It is remarkable and worth highlighting that, presumably because the current children’s native Spanish language includes gender assignment for nouns, these four- to five-year-old children from Trenton, New Jersey—an area with a median household income of \$34,412—performed above-chance on the production task, while the previous work on six-year-old native English speaking children from the Princeton area—a town with a median household income of \$116,875 (“Princeton, New Jersey Economy,” n.d.)—had failed to do so (Schwab et al. 2018). These differences challenge our perceptions of achievement between groups of different socioeconomic status (SES). While the individuals from the higher SES background could have been expected to perform with higher accuracy—due to their access to academic resources and a higher quality of child directed speech—the current research supports that it was the transfer of knowledge from their L1 to their L2, not the SES status of the Spanish-speaking participants or the presumed quality of their education system, that shaped their ability to generalize on the basis of natural gender.

The results highlight the linguistic abilities of young children whose knowledge of Spanish is a mere by-product of the language used at home. The cognitive abilities of these children, and the many bilingual speakers like them, will only continue to grow if they are placed in a school system that not only values their native tongue but also ensures their ability to acquire the majority language. Thus, educators should implement bilingual education interventions that will sustain students’ long-term academic progress rather than expecting a quick erasure of the child’s native

language to solve the academic underachievement seen in the early years of heritage speaker’s English acquisition. Simply, based on the comparison of the artificial language production of Spanish heritage speakers and English monolinguals presented here, it is evident that even at a young age the bilingual children’s native tongue is aiding them in a way that English could not. This is not a benefit educators should easily forgo. Thus, in order to ensure the continued linguistic growth of Spanish-speaking children, any adequate education program should strive to develop, to the extent possible, literacy in both a child’s minority and majority language in order to ensure maximal linguistic capacity both for the growing child and the ever-diversifying communities.

Works Cited

- Aslin, R. N., & Newport, E. L. (2012). “Statistical learning: From acquiring specific items to forming general rules.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21(3), 170–176. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721412436806>.
- Bates, E., Devescovi, A., Hernandez, A., & Pizzamiglio, L. (1996). “Gender priming in Italian.” *Perception & Psychophysics*, 58(7), 992–1004. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03206827>.
- Blything, R. P., Ambridge, B., & Lieven, E. V. M. (2018). “Children’s Acquisition of the English Past-Tense: Evidence for a Single-Route Account From Novel Verb Production Data.” *Cognitive Science*, 42(S2), 621–639. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12581>.
- Ferman, S., & Karni, A. (2010). “No Childhood Advantage in the Acquisition of Skill in Using an Artificial Language Rule.” *PLOS ONE*, 5(10), e13648. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0013648>.
- Kam, C. L. H., & Newport, E. L. (2005). “Regularizing Unpredictable Variation: The Roles of Adult and Child Learners in Language Formation and Change.” *Language Learning and Development*, 1(2), 151–195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15475441.2005.9684215>.
- Samara, A., Smith, K., Brown, H., & Wonnacott, E. (2017). “Acquiring variation in an artificial language: Children and adults are sensitive to socially conditioned linguistic variation.” *Cognitive Psychology*, 94, 85–114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogpsych.2017.02.004>.
- Schwab, J. F., Lew-Williams, C., & Goldberg, A. E. (2018). “When regularization gets it wrong: children over-simplify language input only in production.” *Journal of Child Language*, 45(5), 1054–1072. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305000918000041>.
- Singleton, J. L., & Newport, E. L. (2004). “When learners surpass their models: the acquisition of American Sign Language from inconsistent input.” *Cognitive Psychology*, 49(4), 370–407. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogpsych.2004.05.001>.

Thothathiri, M., & Rattinger, M. G. (2016). "Acquiring and Producing Sentences: Whether Learners Use Verb-Specific or Verb-General Information Depends on Cue Validity." *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00404>.

Tight, D. G. (2006). *The Relationship between Perceived Gender in L1 English and Grammatical Gender in L2 Spanish*. 13.

Wonnacott, E., Boyd, J. K., Thomson, J., & Goldberg, A. E. (2012). "Input effects on the acquisition of a novel phrasal construction in 5 year olds." *Journal of Memory and Language*, 66(3), 458–478. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2011.11.004>.

Race, Dating, and Self-Discovery in Okinawa: A History of *Kokujo*

Gennifer K. Geer, *Rice University*

Gennifer Geer is a senior at Rice University, majoring in History and Asian Studies. She currently serves as the editor-in-chief of the Rice Asian Studies Review, an Asia-focused interdisciplinary undergraduate journal. Her research focuses on transnational identity, intercultural communication, and solidarity movements in the context of U.S. militarism.

Abstract

As an island host to American military bases for seventy years, Okinawa's local dating culture came to integrate the steady population of young, foreign men. One subset of the women who dated American men, the *kokujo*, were proud to declare they exclusively dated black men. For Okinawan women, whose own racial identities were wrapped up in second-class citizenship status vis-a-vis the Japanese mainland, there was direct sympathy with African-Americans. In the midst of black liberation and antiwar movements, those African-Americans exposed a form of racial awareness to 1970s *kokujo*. This paper examines the racial dynamics among Okinawans and between *kokujo* and African-American servicemen in the 1970s, drawing primarily on the case study found in photographer Mao Ishikara's documentation of her youth. Contextualized by an understanding of the Third World Consciousness, this paper concludes that 1970s *kokujo* used black men as a looking-glass to orient their own identities as marginalized people.

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer sincere appreciation to Dr. Alexander X. Byrd for his supervision of this paper and Dr. Tani Barlow for her review and mentorship. Further thanks is owed to the MMUF coordinators, especially Gloria Bean for her enthusiasm for this project, and to the kind and insightful feedback from MMUF fellows during our regional conferences.

Introduction

Okinawan women pursuing American men are a scandal, breaking Japanese social rules against miscegenation and Americans. In the island of Okinawa, subject to explicit American military occupation from 1945 to 1972 and quasi-occupation to present day, mixed-race relationships manifest in a unique context.¹ While mixed-race relationships have and do occur in mainland Japan, those with a military context were less frequent after the end of the occupation of Japan by the United States in 1952. In Okinawa, however, mixed-race relationships became so common that derogatory words developed: *Amejo* for women who date

Americans generally, *bakujo* for women who date white men, and *kokujo* for women who date black men.²

Though less than one percent of Japan's total land area, Okinawa hosts about three quarters of U.S. military-controlled area in the country. Entire towns sprang up to cater to the new influx of U.S. servicemen stationed on the island and the Vietnam War brought more military development to Okinawa. On Okinawa, military servicemen and civilians remained in close contact unlike anywhere else in Japan. While the American occupation after World War II certainly led to mixed-race relationships in mainland Japan that are equally worthy of studying, it would be remiss to conflate the implications of those relationships with ones some Okinawan women experienced. Okinawans' marginalized ethnic position highlights the importance of studying separately Okinawan and Japanese people and culture in context of Okinawa's relationship to Japan, else scholars risk erasing what makes an Okinawan background distinct from mainland Japanese ones.³ Timeframe is also an important consideration. In the 1970s, the black men Okinawans were dating were likely well-versed in black liberation rhetoric. By a newspaper estimate, over half of black GIs stationed in Okinawa throughout the 1970s were Black Panther Party members.⁴

Okinawan women and their interactions with black Americans reveal relationships black Americans form abroad and interest in African-American culture from foreigners. Observations from them about African-American culture gives us an insight into a peculiar contradiction: while Okinawan women at times subscribed to the stereotypes about African-American men, they felt a distinct sense of solidarity with them, observing a sense of Third World Consciousness. Like in Okinawa, the U.S. military presence will remain a backdrop for the story of working Okinawan women, but the military serves as a mechanism to bring African-Americans and the American legal and cultural system to Okinawa. This paper views the *kokujo* experience through Ishikawa Mao's photo collection, taken during 1975–1977. As Ishikawa considers herself an artist, this paper will also leverage interviews she has given about these photos. Therefore, the conclusions of this paper are based both on how Ishikawa frames her work and my own analysis of what her work presents. In the 1970s these women used African-American culture as a looking-glass to orient their own identities as marginalized people. They navigated their own racialized realities and sexualities through these relationships, as well as engaged in cross-racial solidarity.

Development of Race Relations in Okinawa

In the wake of World War II, the U.S. military occupied Okinawa and Japan and military development overtook

rebuilding self-sustaining agriculture and industry.⁵ By the time Okinawa returned to Japanese jurisdiction in 1972, Okinawa hosted 37 U.S. military facilities, 75 percent of all U.S. bases in Japan. The bases take up about 20 percent of Okinawa's main island's land area.⁶ Because the U.S. military was able to develop in Okinawa without restriction, large bases like Kadena Airbase and the Marine Corps Air Station at Futenma are located in urban centers where locals conduct daily life. Economic development in the 1960s was centered around the military stations. Futenma, located near Ginowan City, is surrounded by schools, hospitals, and other forms of urban development. Yet, in areas directly surrounding Kadena Airbase, entertainment districts provided the primary economic industry for Okinawa City and the village of Koza, two municipalities that host the airbase.⁷

Entertainment districts that specifically catered to servicemen flourished, featuring America-themed bars, clubs, and restaurants. The area outside Kadena Airbase was aptly named the "American Village." Many of these districts developed during the Vietnam War, when the U.S. military used Okinawa as a key staging area to deploy troops. Deemed "amusement areas" by the military, these entertainment districts provided jobs for young women to work in restaurants and bars as waitresses.⁸

These areas mirrored the United States in another, more subtle way: the districts were de facto segregated. As the authors of the book *Rethinking Postwar Okinawa: Beyond American Occupation* note, "Okinawan businesses and service industries catering to the military also reproduced segregation (and racism) off-base. While racial segregation is no longer an active aspect of the military or of the service industries, the effects of institutionalized racism are still felt."⁹ A 1969 report by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers sent a field crew to Koza where they observed segregation in soldiers' living patterns: "black soldiers on one side of town, the whites on the other side."¹⁰

As African-American-influenced establishments in Okinawa grew, they brought a wider audience to American culture. The Okinawans fascinated by bebop, jazz, and hip-hop started to view the military bases as "cultural ambassadors of America."¹¹ As the clubs developed, Okinawans staffing them started to identify with Americans whose race matched their regular patrons'. Reports of bar fights breaking out between black and white soldiers described Okinawans joining in along racial lines; those who worked at black bars supported black soldiers.¹² It's not surprising dating fell along the similar racial lines.

Ishikawa Mao: Photographic Lens

Ishikawa Mao was all too familiar with the racial dynamics in Koza. At 20 years old, Ishikawa picked up a camera and, initially intending to photograph Americans, documented daily life with her girl friends who worked in segregated GI bars.¹³ The women were constantly surrounded by African-American men all around their age. Ishikawa in an English interview joked, "I was very popular. I had boyfriend after boyfriend."¹⁴ She began working in a black bar in 1975, reporting that, if in the same spots in town, black and white soldiers would frequently start fights. Ishikawa was aware of the Civil Rights Movement and she knew her girl friends' opinions on black soldiers were bordering on stereotypes. However, she explains that's what made her friends so interesting to photograph in the 1970s. "At the time when I was photographing, many Okinawans had the impression that black people are good at dancing, good at sex, and poor," Ishikawa said. "These women fell in love with black soldiers that they met at the bar without any concern for how the world saw them. 'What's wrong with loving black people?' they asked."¹⁵

Ishikawa saw her friends as "cool" and liberated. She captures this spirit in *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa*, a book of her photographs from the mid-1970s. Ishikawa wanted to push back against stereotypes about Okinawan women; she found early reception of her work described the women in her photos as "prostitutes." Though the attitude that Okinawan women were more sexually promiscuous and were paid sex workers for American servicemen was common in mainland Japan, Ishikawa believed people made the assumption more frequently because her friends were associated with black Americans. "It cannot be compartmentalized or represented in that way," she said at a career launch event at New York University. "What is wrong with loving African-Americans?"¹⁶ By repeatedly asking, defensively, "what is wrong," Ishikawa exhibits a knowledge of two stigmas: one surrounding sexually active women and another against dating African-Americans. Ishikawa rebuffed assumptions that the black bars weren't as nice or safe as the white ones, or that she and her friends dated inferior, more disrespectful men. Rather, she asserted her friends preferred black men and thought they were more respectful than white Americans.¹⁷

An Okinawan, Ishikawa was no stranger to racial hierarchies. From the time Japan annexed Okinawa, Okinawans were constantly compared to Taiwanese, Koreans, or others in the Japanese empire's periphery. Okinawan women in particular were characterized as unhygienic in comparison to mainland Japanese. Reports from mainland visitors at the turn of the 20th century frequently express disgust at Okinawan women rarely wearing shoes or underwear.¹⁸

Okinawan women's sexual habits were blamed for the spread of syphilis on the island and they were forced to compete with Japan's other racial minorities for status. Okinawan women, however, could never achieve the status of "pure Japanese."¹⁹ Therefore, Ishikawa knowingly observed, "The prejudice was mutual in a way."²⁰ She knew Okinawans perceived African-Americans as inferior to white Americans, who in turn were less desirable as dating partners than Japanese. However, Ishikawa also found some African-Americans "sometimes regarded the island's natives as unsophisticated compared to mainland Japanese."²¹ Despite these mutual prejudices, Ishikawa felt she related to black Americans in a way she couldn't with white Americans.²² The construction of race in Japan that framed Okinawans as inferior and forced Okinawans to support the Japanese empire informed her opinion. Ishikawa struggled with her own identity as a woman in a colonized place and as a second-class citizen in Japan.

"That history, the relations between Okinawans and the Japanese, the history of black people and their relations with white people, I think they are very similar," Ishikawa said. "I think that sympathy is a big reason I liked black people more and more."²³ Her photographs reveal the degree of intimacy women exhibited with their boyfriends. The women dressed like Americans and went out together. Ishikawa explained her friends didn't consciously choose to only date black men. Instead, Ishikawa said it was a social coincidence.²⁴ "The Okinawan women other than me said that they started to come to the bar because their friend worked there, and then fell in love with a black soldier that they met there, and eventually ended up working at the bar," she said.²⁵ Her social group recruited each other to employment in black entertainment districts and their continued exposure to African-American servicemen ensured they were constantly dating (and catering to) black Americans. In turn, Ishikawa and her friends picked up more cultural influences from black bars and African-Americans.

Notably, the Okinawan women in Ishikawa's photographs have not only dressed like Americans, in Western clothes as opposed to more traditional clothes, but they've also modified themselves to exhibit African-American trends. The women in these photos have afros, a symbol of "liberated" hair, and permed hair, a trend not seen in other parts of the island. Ishikawa attributed this trend to her friends appreciating African-American styles. Though she never implies she and her friends wanted to be black, she does embrace the personality of these styles. She said she saw them as fun-loving and liberated.²⁶ The women in Ishikawa's photos also have long, painted manicures and stacked jewelry. Ishikawa and her friends had to consume American media to pick up on such styles. They also had to figure out how to turn their hair into afros. This is evidence

that in the 1970s, Okinawan women in close proximity to Americans were fascinated with the entire African-American image, though it also shows how these women modified themselves to make their American companions comfortable. They may have found American culture to be free and fun, but at the same time, it pressured them to appear as American as possible.

They also only saw young, often single African-Americans, never in the context of a civilian community. Therefore, through off-base bars, clubs, and share houses, the women and black GIs created their own interracial community. Through immersing themselves in an integrated world, the women could experience international cultural byproducts and interact, somewhat as equals, with men who had inherent power.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the journeys and outlooks of the women presented in this paper reveal that Okinawan women were more concerned with daily lifestyles rather than the implications behind race. They saw African-Americans as sub-categories of Americans without a value statement attached. However, as they consumed African-American culture, subtle messages about colonization and imperialism permeated their personal dating lives. They no doubt witnessed the style byproducts of Black liberation like the afro and listened to their boyfriends complain about black-white tensions and discuss Black Power, but it's unclear how much direct participation women were allowed.²⁷

Okinawan women recognized their relation to the African-American subject position. Whether they credited it like Ishikawa or not, these women were drawn to African-American men because of the shared bond that came from being marginalized. Through the men they dated, women were exposed to ideas, art, and fashion produced by underclass, marginalized citizens like themselves. Blackness, and interaction with it, was a way to orient themselves in a society of subjugated peoples. As people colonized by mainland Japanese and white Americans, Okinawan women could explore their own racialized existences with people who understood. In this way, these Okinawan women's intimate relationships provided not only a cultural space for critical reckoning with marginalization, but perhaps an avenue for a political awakening as well.

Endnotes

- 1 “Okinawa” can also refer to the modern-day prefecture, which includes 113 separate islands. This paper is concerned only with the main Okinawa Island.
- 2 There has been a contemporary movement to reclaim the term, but it remains an insult. However, to avoid generalizing all Okinawan women and to provide specificity in a context where their names are obscured, I use *kokujo* in the title but not to refer to the women in this article.
- 3 Alan S. Christy, “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa,” in *Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan: Imagined and Imaginary Minorities*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 186.
- 4 Annmaria Shimabuku, *Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2019), 71.
- 5 Kozue Akibayashi and Suzuyo Takazato, *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2009), 244.
- 6 Okinawa Prefectural Government, “U.S. Military Base Issues in Okinawa” (Okinawa Prefectural Government: Washington D.C., 2016).
- 7 Okinawa Prefectural Government, “U.S. Military Base Issues.”
- 8 Steve Rabson. “Henoko and the U.S. Military: A History of Dependence and Resistance,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no. 2 (2012).
- 9 Pedro Iacobelli, et. al, *Rethinking Postwar Okinawa: Beyond American Occupation* (Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, 2015), 113.
- 10 Robert E. Treuhaft, *Report of the Investigation Committee sent to Okinawa by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers* (International Association of Democratic Lawyers, 1969), 7.
- 11 Roger House, “Time has stopped in Okinawa’s jazz clubs.”
- 12 Yuichiro Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism: Afro-Asian Solidarity in the 20th Century Black America, Japan, and Okinawa* (New York University: New York, NY, 2013), 167.
- 13 Ishikawa Mao, *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa* (Session Press: Belgium, 2017), 1.
- 14 Paige Silveria, “Mao Ishikawa’s stunning photographs of her friends in 70s Okinawa” (Vice: New York City, NY, 2017).
- 15 Silveria, “Mao Ishikawa’s stunning photographs of her friends in 70s Okinawa.”
- 16 Kyodo, “A tribute to the women of ‘70s Okinawa” (*Japan Times*: New York, 2017).
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Wendy Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC, 2015), 90.
- 19 Ibid., 101.
- 20 Silveria, “Mao Ishikawa.”
- 21 Kyodo, “A tribute.”
- 22 Silveria, “Mao Ishikawa.”
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 The most prominent Black Panther chapter in Okinawa, the Bush Masters, often rented space in bars and barbershops serviced by Okinawan women. Onishi, *Transpacific Antiracism*, 170.

Works Cited

- Akibayashi, Kozue, and Suzuyo Takazato. *The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle against U.S. Military Posts*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2009. 243–69.
- Christy, Alan S. “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa.” In *Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan: Imagined and Imaginary Minorities*, edited by Michael Weiner, 173–198. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.
- Iacobelli, Pedro, Hiroko Matsuda, Ariko Ikehara, and Laura Kina, *Rethinking Postwar Okinawa: Beyond American Occupation*. Lexington Books: Lanham, MD, 2015.
- Ishikawa, Mao. *Red Flower: The Women of Okinawa*. Session Press: Belgium, 2017.
- Kyodo. “A tribute to the women of ’70s Okinawa.” *Japan Times*: New York, 2017.
- Matsumura, Wendy. *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC, 2015.
- Okinawa Prefectural Government, “U.S. Military Base Issues in Okinawa.” Okinawa Prefectural Government: Washington D.C., 2016.
- Rabson, Steve. “Henoko and the U.S. Military: A History of Dependence and Resistance,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 10, no. 2 (2012).
- Shimabuku, Annmaria. *Alegal: Biopolitics and the Unintelligibility of Okinawan Life*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2019.
- Treuhaft, Robert E. *Report of the Investigation Committee sent to Okinawa by the International Association of Democratic Lawyers*. International Association of Democratic Lawyers, 1969.

Walls that Talk: Conveying Histories through Graffiti Art in Colombia's Comuna 13

Steven M. Gomez, *Princeton University*

Steven Gomez recently graduated from Princeton University, majoring in History with a certificate in Latin American Studies. His academic interests focus on the history of Colombia and the ways in which local communities commemorate the individuals whose lives were lost as a result of the armed conflict. Steven is currently taking a pause from his academic studies to work at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, where he is exploring his interests in crime and the legal field.

Abstract

Comuna 13 is a municipality in the city of Medellín, Colombia that has been shaped by forced displacements, disappearances, and homicides brought about by the actions of the Colombian government and illegal armed actors involved in the Colombian armed conflict. Originally perceived as one of Medellín's most dangerous sectors, Comuna 13 has experienced a revitalization brought about through the community's embrace of hip-hop culture, specifically graffiti art. In this paper, I analyze how the graffiti art in Comuna 13 functions as a form of historical writing that has enabled the community to reclaim a degree of autonomy over how it is perceived by their fellow Colombians, as well as people across the world. I argue that the act of spraying graffiti art onto the physical spaces of the municipality alters the ways in which an observer would perceive the area. This thus enables the community to propagate a historical narrative of the community marked by acts of resistance and projects geared towards peace, rather than perpetual violence and conflict.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Robert Karl and Dr. Seth Perry, who have served as my mentors and supported me during my time at Princeton and beyond. I would like to thank Dr. Khristina Gonzalez and all of professors and staff members that manage and support the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship at Princeton. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Ivan and Isabel, and my brothers, Sebastian and Santiago, for the emotional support they provided me throughout my entire undergraduate career.

How can we produce a history that is representative of and useful to the communities who most directly suffered from violence in countries like Colombia? In response to this question, I turn to the graffiti artists affiliated with the cultural center known as Casa Kolacho, whose works permeate through the streets of Comuna 13, a municipality located in the central west region of Medellín, the capital of the Department of Antioquia and the second largest city in Colombia. Since 2009, Casa Kolacho has helped transform

Comuna 13 from one of Medellín's most dangerous areas to one of its biggest tourist attractions. Comuna 13 is now known for its "Graffitour," a sightseeing tour where local guides use the area's vibrant graffiti art as a medium through which they relate the community's history to the world. This practice of using physical spaces to compose historical narratives is akin to the "memory walks" analyzed by Yarimar Bonilla in her book, *Non-Sovereign Futures*, where labor activists in Guadeloupe used particular sites across the island to reflect on its history of slavery, colonialism, and resistance. Although scholars have examined the development of this phenomenon, there has been no discussion regarding how graffiti art may complicate the use of physical spaces to construct historical narratives. I argue that the graffiti art produced by the local artists functions as a form of historical writing that has allowed the community of Comuna 13 to engage in conversations around how to make sense of its violent past. Indeed, the graffiti art in Comuna 13 influences the way individuals perceive and interact with the municipality, depicting its history in terms of perseverance and resistance in the face of extrajudicial and state-sponsored violence. This form of historical writing has allowed the community of Comuna 13 to reshape its identity and physically convert previous spaces of violence in the municipality into sites of memory and commemoration.

Comuna 13's reputation as one of Medellín's most dangerous areas arose from the history of its development. The formation of Comuna 13 is documented through tracking the displaced populations that entered into the area over the 20th century. According to the 2011 report on Comuna 13 written by Colombia's former commission on violence, the Grupo de Memoria Historica (GMH; Historical Memory Group), Comuna 13 underwent urbanization in the beginning of the 20th century, as displaced people from different sectors of the Department of Antioquia began to illegally settle in the area and build their own homes.¹ This incoming settlement of displaced populations continued in the 1950s, as political violence from the period of La Violencia prompted displaced people from the Urabá region of Antioquia and the Department of Chocó to resettle in the Comuna.² Lack of government presence within the area led to a largely unregulated urban infrastructure in tandem with high population density and limited public space.³ The steep slopes that characterize the topography of the area made it difficult for cars and other vehicles to access the territory, particularly in the more populated sectors, where stairs and alleyways are the only viable means of navigating the space.⁴ As such, Comuna 13 became a difficult environment for police officials to establish an effective presence and surveillance.⁵

Illegal armed actors benefited greatly from the layout of the region, as the narrow alleyways allowed them

to conceal their illegal activities and easily escape from authorities.⁶ The Comuna's close proximity to the San Juan highway also made it an ideal location for armed actors to transport weapons, drugs, and other contraband into the city.⁷ Thus, groups like Comandos Armados del Pueblo (CAP; Armed Commanders of the People), Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN; National Liberation Army), and Bloque Cacique Nutibara (BCN; Cacique Nutibara Bloc), inserted themselves into Comuna 13 as policing authorities. Meanwhile, these groups carved out segments of the municipality among themselves, using their claimed areas to conduct their illegal activities.⁸

After decades of conflict between the different militias, guerrillas, and paramilitaries, the Colombian government became more active within Comuna 13. At the turn of the century the Colombian government conducted 11 military operations within the area between February and October of 2002 to drive out militia and guerrilla groups.⁹ Dozens of civilians were injured and killed as a result of these operations and hundreds more were detained and disappeared. The most infamous of these operations was Operación Orión, a joint operation coordinated between the Colombian military and the BCN that officially occurred over the course of four days; however, residents of Comuna 13 claim that the operation carried over into the beginning of 2003.¹⁰ During this operation, over 1,200 soldiers entered the neighborhood with a Blackhawk helicopter providing aerial support. Soldiers were also accompanied by members of the BCN, who provided intelligence on the locations of the guerrillas and militias.¹¹ Over the course of this operation, one civilian was killed, 38 were injured, and 355 were arrested, according to a 2003 Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP) and Justicia y Paz report.¹² In addition to these deaths and detentions, at least 300 people whom the military and BCN accused of being guerrilla members were removed from their homes and taken to La Escombrera, a dumping site located near the limits of Comuna 13, where they were killed and buried.¹³ While Álvaro Uribe Vélez's administration largely glossed over these deaths and disappearances and hailed the operation as a success, Orión left a traumatic imprint in the memories of the community.¹⁴ Furthermore, while many guerrilla and militia members were driven out of the region, conflicts between the Colombian government and illegal armed groups persisted for more than a decade after the operation.

Residents of Comuna 13 continue to experience violence surrounding their homes, but they have not abandoned efforts to improve their community. In the midst of the conflict between the military, guerrilla, paramilitary, and drug traffickers, community members have formulated

strategies to protest against violence, particularly through the medium of hip-hop culture. Graffiti art, specifically, has become one of the most effective mechanisms through which residents of the Comuna express their values, convey their experiences, and ultimately construct a new identity for themselves that rejects violence and calls for peace. "Graffitour" uses the graffiti art sprayed onto the physical spaces of the municipality as a narrative resource to reflect on the region's experiences with violence. The tour creates an opportunity for the community to produce and communicate new histories of Comuna 13 to visitors. These narratives challenge "official" histories of the area and reflect the identity and values of the community.

Through the act of inscribing images onto walls, graffiti art converts the physical surfaces of Comuna 13 into sites for historical reflection and memory, forcing observers to acknowledge the Comuna's past and reckon with its legacies. For example, a body of work in Comuna 13 commemorates the events of Operación Mariscal in a collaborative project created by the artists Seta Fuerte, Shay Akowa, Bicho, and Jomag in 2015.¹⁵ The military operation preceded Operación Orión, and 9 civilians were killed, including 3 minors, 37 were injured, and 55 were unjustly detained.¹⁶ The mural depicts an eagle, an owl, a family of elephants, a stuffed panda bear, and an elderly woman, all of whom are holding white flags, in reference to the collective act of resistance that took place on the day of the operation, where the community placed white towels and sheets outside their windows in order to ask the military to end the operation. According to one tour guide for "Graffitour," the mural represents the conflicts in the Comuna leading up to Operación Orión, which became the community's most infamous violent incident.¹⁷ As the guide states, "la ciudad y el mundo nos conoció por eso, Operación Orión, pero nosotros no somos solamente Operación Orión, tuvimos conflicto mucho antes de Orión, y lo seguimos teniendo mucho después de Orión."¹⁸ The guide references the mural to demonstrate the impact of Operation Mariscal on the members of Comuna 13, bringing attention to the stuffed panda toy and elderly woman on the far right side of the mural. These figures honor the children whose lives were lost during the operation, as well as the mothers who lost their children.¹⁹ Similarly, the family of elephants symbolizes the families who lost their loved ones as a result of Mariscal, as the family is shown weeping over the skeleton of an elephant with a halo over it.²⁰ While the owl and eagle do not make any particular reference to Operation Mariscal, they are included as a tribute to the values and characteristics that are significant to the community, with the owl symbolizing knowledge, and the eagle symbolizing liberty.²¹ The placement of the owl and eagle in close proximity to symbols referencing Operation Mariscal can be interpreted as a statement affirming that the people of the Comuna embody

characteristics beyond their violent past. As such, this mural demonstrates how the graffiti within the Comuna can bring public attention to historical moments that are not typically recognized by media outlets, while changing public perceptions of the community's identity.

The historical content of Comuna 13's graffiti not only covers the devastation of military operations, but also extends to the community's transformation in the midst of such violence. One of Comuna 13's prominent artists John Alexander Serna, also known as "Chota," highlights both of these histories within his various murals. One of Chota's murals reflects on the events of the Operation Orión, depicting the face of the Pachamama, the goddess of the earth worshipped by the indigenous people of the Andes.²² This depiction is next to the image of the Comuna's houses appearing disorganized and falling apart, followed by the images of a hand throwing two dice: one with sides that read "COM 13" and the other that reads "16 10 2002," the date when Orión began. According to the interpretation of one guide, the hand throwing the dice symbolizes the role of the government in authorizing Operación Orión, carelessly playing with the lives of the Comuna's residents.²³ The face of the Pachamama is split into two sections: one section represents the past, which shows her crying to mourn the violence of Operación Orión and the other section represents the present, which shows her skin as a dry leaf to represent the start of a transformation, as a new leaf will eventually emerge.²⁴ Next to the side representing the present, there is a musical note, symbolizing the power of music and art as an outlet for creativity and rebirth.²⁵

While it is uncertain whether Chota's murals are intended to engage in dialogue with one another, one of his murals located just a few paces away from the work commemorating Operation Orión appears to continue this narrative of transformation. The mural, titled *Superación 13*, once again depicts the Pachamama, but rather than showing the majority of her face greyed and in tears, her face is a vibrant blue.²⁶ On one side of her face, there is a bird whose breast depicts the houses of Comuna 13 as neatly arranged and colorful, in contrast to the dilapidated image of the homes in the prior mural. On the other side, the image of the electric stairs symbolizes development in the area in the time since it was besieged by the Colombian military. The placement of the bird, the houses, and the electric stairs over the Pachamama's face indicates that the face itself is meant to act as a representation of Comuna 13. When comparing this face to the one presented in the mural dedicated to the events of Operation Orión, an observer can see, as the title of the mural suggests, the ways in which Comuna 13 has overcome its violent past and converted itself into an area teeming with life and vibrant colors.

Histories of violence are incomplete without the recognition, inclusion, and analysis of the historical narratives produced by marginalized groups, in all of the forms that these narratives take. Just as Yarimar Bonilla noted the unique way in which labor activists in Guadalupe used the physical spaces surrounding them to formulate their histories, so too must other scholars highlight non-traditional forms of historical writing that exists outside the walls of academic institutions. This is particularly crucial during a time when these forms of writing are at risk of erasure. Take, for instance, the murals created by Chicano artists in Los Angeles, works of art that have conveyed a history of Chicano political activism and culture within the city since the 1960s.²⁷ In recent years, these murals have been covered up or destroyed by the city and private entities, inhibiting the possibilities of analyzing the academic and cultural significance of these touchstones.²⁸ Through preserving and including these non-traditional forms of writing in academic discussions, we can not only expand our understanding of historical events, but also democratize the way that histories are produced.

By analyzing the murals found in Comuna 13, we see how graffiti art functions as a form of historical writing through which artists and interpreters alike can articulate their interpretations of the past, using symbols and images placed on walls to draw connections between historical moments, values, and concepts. The graffiti artists insert themselves into broader conversations of how Comuna 13's history should be written. This art form not only gives the community of Comuna 13 a greater degree of autonomy over how they should be discussed in historical narratives, but also empowers them to convert spaces that were originally battlegrounds of conflict into sites of memory and reflection. This case study of Comuna 13 demonstrates how the area can use its collective history of violence to advance projects of peace and resistance. Additionally, this case offers compelling rationale for scholars to reassess the significance of graffiti art within marginalized sectors and to incorporate non-traditional forms of historical writing into the lexicon of intellectual discourse and publication.

Endnotes

- 1 Grupo de Memoria Histórica, *La huella invisible de la guerra: desplazamiento forzado en la Comuna 13* (Bogotá: Editorial Taurus, 2011), 54.
- 2 Ibid., 100; See also "LOS GOLPES DE LA 13- CASA KOLACHO," INDEPENDIENTES PENDIENTES, May 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHlzlhr4yw&list=FLV-OOg4wkkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=9>.
- 3 Ibid., 55.
- 4 Ibid., 56.
- 5 Ibid., 56.
- 6 Ibid., 55–56.

- 7 Ibid., 50–51; see also Jeihhco, “TedxMedellín- Jeihhco- Revolución sin Muertos,” Tedx Talks, April 3, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjOFGklu5so&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=1>.
- 8 Ibid., 55–56.
- 9 Ibid., 76.
- 10 “Operación Orión: 14 años sin verdad, justicia ni reparación,” *El Tiempo*, October 16, 2016, <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/operacion-orion-14-anos-sin-verdad-justicia-ni-reparacion-28614>.
- 11 *La buella invisible de la guerra*, 80.
- 12 CINEP y Justicia y Paz, *Comuna 13, la otra versión*, (Bogotá: Banco de Datos de Violencia Política; CINEP y Justicia y Paz, 2003), 21.
- 13 Alberto G. Palomo, “La Escombrera: una fosa común en Medellín clave para el futuro de Colombia,” *El Confidencial*, May 23, 2018, https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2018-05-23/escombrera-fosa-comun-medellin-colombia_1566616/.
- 14 *La buella invisible de la guerra*, 82–83.
- 15 Bicho, Jomag, Seta Fuerte, and Shay Akowa, *Untitled*, Aerosol paint, 2015. Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.
- 16 *La buella invisible de la guerra*, 77–78.
- 17 “Graffiti Tour Medellín Comuna 13,” Jorge Hernana Acila, July 7, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K-iyRch34s&index=12&t=482s&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg>.
- 18 Ibid., Translation: “The city and the world were introduced to us because of that, Operation Orion, but we are not just Operation Orion, we had conflict much before Orion, and continue to have it much after Orion.”
- 19 “Un graffiti: una historia en Comuna 13,” Jóvenes Investigadores Comuna 13, December 7, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaDALjhY9ug&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=3&t=213s>.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Chota 13, *Untitled*. Aerosol paint, 2017, Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.
- 23 “Graffiti Tour Medellín Comuna 13,” Jorge Hernana Acila, July 7, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K-iyRch34s&index=12&t=482s&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg>.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Chota 13, *Superación 13*. Aerosol Paint, n.d., Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.
- 27 Ari Shapiro, et al., “¡Murales Rebeldes!: These Disappearing LA Murals Mirror Their Community,” *NPR*, August 24, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/545776814/-murales-rebeldes-these-disappearing-la-murals-mirror-their-community>.
- 28 Ibid.

Works Cited

- Bicho, Jomag, Seta Fuerte, and Shay Akowa, *Untitled*, Aerosol paint, 2015. Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.
- Bonilla, Yarimar. *Non-Sovereign Futures: French Caribbean Politics in the Wake of Disenchantment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Chota 13, *Untitled*. Aerosol paint, 2017, Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.
- _____, *Superación 13*. Aerosol Paint, n.d., Comuna 13, Medellín, Antioquia.

CINEP y Justicia y Paz, *Comuna 13, la otra versión*. Bogotá: Banco de Datos de Violencia Política; CINEP y Justicia y Paz, 2003.

“Graffiti Tour Medellín Comuna 13,” Jorge Hernana Acila, July 7, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K-iyRch34s&index=12&t=482s&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg>.

Grupo de Memoria Histórica, *La buella invisible de la guerra: desplazamiento forzado en la Comuna 13*. Bogotá: Editorial Taurus, 2011.

Jeihhco, “TedxMedellín- Jeihhco- Revolución sin Muertos,” Tedx Talks, April 3, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjOFGklu5so&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=1>.

“LOS GOLPES DE LA 13- CASA KOLACHO,” INDEPENDIENTES PENDIENTES, May 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHlzhzr4yw&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=9>.

Medellín Graffiti Tour, Toucan Café & Tours, accessed March 20, 2019, <https://www.medellingraffitiour.com/medellin-graffiti-tour-info/>.

“Operación Orión: 14 años sin verdad, justicia ni reparación,” *El Tiempo*, October 16, 2016, <https://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/operacion-orion-14-anos-sin-verdad-justicia-ni-reparacion-28614>.

Palomo, Alberto G. “La Escombrera: una fosa común en Medellín clave para el futuro de Colombia,” *El Confidencial*, May 23, 2018, https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2018-05-23/escombrera-fosa-comun-medellin-colombia_1566616/.

Shapiro, Ari, et al., “¡Murales Rebeldes!: These Disappearing LA Murals Mirror Their Community.” *NPR*, August 24, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/2017/08/24/545776814/-murales-rebeldes-these-disappearing-la-murals-mirror-their-community>.

“Un graffiti: una historia en Comuna 13,” Jóvenes Investigadores Comuna 13, December 7, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaDALjhY9ug&list=FLV-OOg4wkx6DGBDnl86igg&index=3&t=213s>.

The Black Panther Party and the Criminalization of Social Justice

Giovanni Martin Green, *Hunter College*

Giovanni Martin Green is a recent graduate from the CUNY Baccalaureate for Unique and Interdisciplinary Studies Program at Hunter College. His created area of concentration was Food, Nutrition, and Social Justice, where he combined aspects of community health, activism, and public policy to comprehend how populations can develop tactics and interventions to empower themselves to achieve equity within the social spheres they inhabit. Giovanni has years of experience educating the youth on Food Literacy with Break Bread not Hearts and also in music and the arts. He is now pursuing a Master of Public Health degree and a Master of Arts in Youth Studies degree to work towards creating a better world for future generations from all walks of life.

Abstract

The Black Panther Party represents the necessity of social welfare programs to be directed and implemented by communities who have their wellbeing at stake. Organizing around the premise of self defense, the primary focus of the Black Panther Party was to establish a Free Breakfast Program and health clinics in the communities where their chapters operated within. These campaigns of conscious occurred as a preemptive measure to construct a nutritional foundation, which correlates with the cognitive development of the children who were being raised in environments which lacked access to adequate food. If a child is unable to eat, they will be unable to learn, and therefore unable to develop the ability to control their destiny and achieve self-determination. This premise was the linchpin of the moral compass which guided the Black Panther Party's social justice work regarding public health. In defiance to the strengthening of African American communities, the government galvanized a campaign of propaganda to discredit, demonize, and criminalize the work of the Black Panther Party. However, despite the dismantling of the Black Panther Party, power to the people was and always will be by the people, and the legacy of the Black Panther Party should not be one of villainy, but one of valor, in which inspiration can be sourced from to empower communities to work towards and achieve social justice.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the dedication of our ancestors, guided by our collective Creator in whatever form that manifests, who were activists and sought for self-determination because that was their only choice. Thus, freedom, justice, establishing equity, and building community is what inspires the lifelong scholarship and activism of this work.

“How do you spell resistance? B~L~A~C~K . . . In speech, song, dance, dress, naming, religion, and even in cuisine, we continue to find the resonance of resistance, the frisson of Black identity that reveals the resilience of Africanity in Black life in America.”

—Mumia Abu-Jamal

Consciousness Called Criminal

The Black Panther Party were agents of change who empowered communities not through the tactics of urban guerilla warfare, but through the framework of social justice and community activism. However, in contrast to the services the Black Panther Party provided, the American social and political system deemed the Black Panther Party was a terrorist organization. Through the People's Survival Programs put into place in various communities, the Black Panther Party addressed the adverse socioeconomic conditions that African Americans faced. These include poor housing conditions, a lack of infrastructure and investment in their communities, non-existent job opportunities, inadequate or unavailable access to medical care, food insecurity, and neglected schools. Thus, the Black Panther Party promoted wellbeing through the access to food and the growth of the nutritional capabilities of a community, the expansion of an inclusive culturally competent medical system, and a social paradigm shift to source the responsibility of wellness from the assets community members inherently have, rather than from an external source or “savior.” Therefore, the largest threat to the status quo of America by the Black Panther Party was not that they addressed the physical needs of people's bodies, but it was the promotion of self-determination and empowerment which caused African Americans to seek socioeconomic mobility, expand their consciousness, and strive for the freedom and equity that has been denied to them in America since 1619. Through the People's Survival Programs, such as the People's Free Health Clinics or the People's Free Breakfast Programs, the Black Panther Party empowered communities through their focus on public health and as a result became the targets of the Federal Bureau of Investigations' Counter Intelligence Program named COINTELPRO, which criminalized the social justice efforts of the Black Panther Party.

Community Organizing to Public Health

If members within grass-roots organizations are empowered they can create lasting solutions that address the social welfare issues of communities of color. In order to create empowerment, communities must be aware of the factors that impede the process of building capacity and self-determination. Understanding the centuries of slavery and the manifestations of white supremacist praxis, that

physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and culturally illegitimately controlled and/or destroyed the Black body, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense in October 1966. Newton and Seale placed self-health at the core of the Black Panther's mission. The Black Panther Party understood how social circumstances, environmental conditions, behavioral choices, medical care, and gestational endowments intersected as determinants of our health (McKenzie, Pinger, and Seabert, 2017). With this foundation, Black Panthers were able to be effective community organizers through performing a needs assessment of the communities their branches operated in. Once the specific needs of each community were understood, such as the need to protect the elderly from predation or for children to receive sickle cell anemia testing, goals and objectives were created to address those needs using resources from within the community.

As this process of building power was conducted, Black citizens could come to understand their identity through their own lens, rather than through the social constructs of the white supremacist system which has oppressed them throughout the African Diaspora. By promoting a political education and a power analysis in a historical context, there was an increase in the consciousness of Black citizens. Communities the Black Panthers interacted with were then able to be effective in their interventions and could implement the tactics necessary to achieve their objectives. Ultimately, the efforts of the Black Panthers and their community development would allow Black citizens to be able to challenge and change the status quo (Jeffries, 2018). Newton and Seale focused on the objective of placing a People's Free Health Clinic and a People's Free Breakfast Program at the center of operations for each branch of the BPP in order to make self-health a reality (Nelson, 2011).

However, being paralyzed by the inertia of poverty, the potential for health promotion and behavior change within Black communities may have been a farfetched ideal without the work of the Black Panthers. In a response to stifling social conditions, the Black Panthers were able to tap into the social capital inherent in communities and created solutions which empowered residents, increased community capacity, and improved public health when the government's social welfare programs and healthcare institutions were unable or unwilling to do so. Therefore, social justice can be defined as the capacity of the individual in alignment with the community to exercise power over one's identity while obtaining the basic survival needs of food, clothing, and shelter, and all related externalities. Through the People's Survival Programs, the Black Panther Party was able to work towards social justice and give power to the people through addressing their health concerns.

Survival for the People by the People

The Black Panther Party chose to address the social conditions that affected the public health of the Black community in myriad ways. The People's Free Health Clinics provided access to screening and treatment services for Black communities who were intentionally neglected by the American Medical Association and its institutions and professionals. The People's Free Breakfast for Children Program provided a nutritional foundation for Black children to strengthen their cognitive, social, and emotional abilities during the school day. Even though President Lyndon B. Johnson had declared a war on poverty and had passed the Civil Rights Act, the Economic Opportunity Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Social Security Act, the plight of the nation's poor communities would continue to exist. Charles Hamilton Houston, one of the architects of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case states, "No one has to explain to a Negro the difference between the law in the books and the law in action" (Williams, 1987, p. 35). The Black Panther Party realized the government's inability to build equity amongst all citizens and worked to create their own social welfare programs and community-based solutions. "The Party valorized the experiential knowledge of 'the people' by transmitting technical skills from medical professionals to laypersons and, in doing so, sought to empower communities" (Nelson, 2011, p. 99). Through the work of the Black Panthers, Black citizens developed the capacity to create and operate their own social institutions, because "when a group is excluded from the normative games of the larger society it develops substitute games for itself" (Rose, 1971, p. 10).

In an interview conducted with a Black Panther Party member conducted in the Spring of 2019, a narrative was compiled that highlighted how the Black Panther Party built relationships in communities for the ultimate goal of serving the people. I will refer to this Black Panther as Member A. Member A expressed the desire of the Party was to empower Black children from kindergarten through college. Within this ideology, Black children were expected to enter any prestigious institute of higher education such as Yale or Colgate, not only Black colleges. As a premise to this goal, the conditions in which children entered educational settings had to be addressed. Food insecurity is a plague to the physical and cognitive development of Black people and poor people and many children faced the reality of not having any nourishment to start their day. The result would be poor academic performance, an inability to focus, and potential disciplinary action from an unfocused child's behaviors.

To tackle food insecurity and other interrelated social determinants of our health, "successful food interventions use processes that enable people to effect systemic change

while dealing with power relations across relevant scales” (Cadieux and Slocum, 2015, p. 29). The Black Panther Party placed political education and the knowledge of one’s past at the fore of their social programs. Knowing this history, it would be a disservice to descendants within the African Diaspora to have children be malnourished, when the agricultural and technical expertise of our ancestors fed and built America and other civilizations. The People’s Free Breakfast Programs were an effective intervention to address the issue of food justice.

As Black communities did not have land to produce their own food, the Black Panther Party created ways to improve the health of Black children. Volunteers would prepare hot breakfasts for children and the Board of Education within a certain community would be approached to provide a space for the breakfasts to be served. “The Board of Education did not care what we did in our own communities, but they were not going to give us any money, resources, or personnel to accomplish our goals” (Black Panther Member A interview, 2019). Other community settings such as churches also provided spaces for the breakfast programs to operate. For example, in Boston at the Tremont Street Methodist Church, between 35 and 50 children were fed each weekday to offset the inadequate lunches they would receive in school (Jeffries, 2018). Currently, students receive half of their required caloric intake from the meals provided in school (USDA, 2007). However, the content and quality of the meals provided can be questionable. As mentioned by Black Panther Member A, schools were serving cold bologna sandwiches, and the Black Panthers were not going to tolerate that.

Free Breakfast and the Fight Against Food for Thought

While the National School Lunch Program began in 1946 and the School Breakfast Program began in 1975, several years after the dissipation of the Black Panther Party, the motives behind the government enacting these policies are questionable. Congress addressed childhood nutrition in response to the number of young men rejected from the World War II draft (Schwartz and Wootan, 2019). In contrast, the Boston Panthers implemented their breakfast programs in order for children to actualize their full potential physically, spiritually, and intellectually (Jeffries, 2018). It is clear the U.S. government and the Black Panther Party had different underlying motives in addressing the nutritional needs of the children. The motives of the U.S. government sought to support the military and by extension, the role of law enforcement that has subjugated the Black body from the inception of the U.S. The Black Panther Party, on the other hand, wanted to create an environment where little brothers and sisters could become revolutionaries through the liberation classes that were offered with free breakfasts.

These liberation classes served the purpose of modeling a society controlled by community members, who cared for each other and sought to ameliorate suffering while collectively striving for land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace (Jeffries, 2018). The survival programs of the Panthers extended beyond the role of addressing community health concerns and was a valuable organizing tool (Bassett, 2016). The ability to organize the Black community is what threatened the status quo the most and influenced the dismantling of the Black Panther Party.

The FBI’s COINTELPRO claimed that the Black Panther Party’s façade of providing humanitarian aid through the People’s Free Breakfast Program was meant to cover up the motive of brainwashing children to develop an anti-white sentiment and to gain control of the ghetto community (Newman, 2018). While any education is meant to instill ideas that individuals can assimilate into their worldview, it is clear that the Black Panthers were able to influence the communities they were a part of because the Panthers built power with them, rather than power over them. “Power-with emphasizes inter-dependence and collective action among community members, constituencies, and workers, as a way of shifting and expanding power for the good of the whole, rather than the benefit of the few” (Grassroots Policy Project, 2013). The Black Panther Party pointed out that in their view the government served two roles: to neglect the Black community or to oppress the Black community (Pope and Flanigan, 2013). The objective of COINTELPRO was to discredit the community-based work and social services the Black Panther Party put into place, to end any social or financial support that Panther’s may have received by those sympathetic to the plight of the poor, and to take away power from the Black community who were investing in their self-determination. If the image of the Black Panthers could be disparaged and their base of support destroyed, the organization could be dismantled.

COINTELPRO used a variety of tactics in their fight against the Black Panther Party. Violence being one of them as we can see with the murder of Fred Hampton, the deputy chairman of the Illinois state chapter of the Black Panther Party and Mark Clark at 4:30am on December 4, 1969 by members of the Chicago Police Department. However, more subversive methods were employed as well. For example, in San Francisco, CA, 1969, the Black Panther Party aligned themselves with Reverend Eugene Boyle of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church to carry out the People’s Free Breakfast Program for Children in the basement of the church. Despite fierce criticism from a variety of sources, Boyle supported the breakfast program as a place where white and black children would sit and break bread together while gaining a sense of self-worth and social support to remain focused on their education (Burns, 1995). However,

the San Francisco police department did not find this microcosm display of utopia endearing. A Black Panther Coloring Book was planted by the FBI in the basement of the church where the breakfasts were served (Burns, 1995). The book depicted images of police officers as pigs and also portrayed violence against police officers. Boyle and the Panthers were accused in front of the McClellan Senate Investigating Committee of using the coloring books to incite racism and violence against police. Boyle affirmed that the coloring book did not align with the Panther's platform. He also stated that the coloring book, regardless of its actual source, reflected the white supremacist narrative of hatred the U.S. and its social institutions were built upon. For example, Burns (1995) highlights the coloring book stating, "The only good pig is a dead pig" (p. 151). This is a reformulation of the slogan, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," which was familiar with settlers who participated in the westward expansion of the U.S. It has also been used by law enforcement in referencing the Black community as well (Burns, 1995). The denial of non-white identities has been commonplace in American society and any challenge to the doctrine of the U.S. and its oppressive power structure was deemed criminal. Despite Sacred Heart feeding breakfast to the Irish for 75 years prior, food, nutrition, and social justice only became an issue once it involved the Black community. While Boyle did not have to resign, community and economic support of the church dwindled and the FBI accomplished its goal of weakening the support and organization of the Panthers in the San Francisco area.

Across the nation, the FBI worked to isolate the Black Panther Party from other organizations and institutions. The Boston Party of the Black Panthers worked to unite and develop the community and had support, both white and black for their People's Free Breakfast Program and their People's Free Health Clinic. This support temporarily allayed the condemnation and persecution of the Panther's social services by Boston officials and the FBI (Jeffries, 2018). However, evidence shows the FBI worked to disengage contact between the Panthers and the locations where they held their breakfast programs. There were also reported instances of the FBI destroying foodstuffs that would have served community participants. J. Edgar Hoover saw the breakfast programs as a means to indoctrinate children to be revolutionaries. This belief by Hoover does hold validity as the political education classes conducted by the Boston branch of the Panthers was "focused on helping people understand their culture, their history, and recognize the marginalization of black folk and what we needed to do about it" (Jeffries, 2018, p. 105). This education would liberate the Black body and build confidence to escape the void in which their identities occupied. The survival needs of food, clothing, and shelter and the community organizing that was developed through a social justice lens was scrutinized

and criminalized by powers of the government. The ability of the Boston branch of the Black Panther Party to provide breakfast to approximately 700 children a week portrayed the Party as a protective force of the community in contrast to the police department which harassed and brutalized citizens. Ironically, law enforcement that was carrying out hostile acts against communities of color and poor communities were the ones who needed to be criminalized.

Social Justice is a Must

We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace. This was the final point of the Black Panther Party's Ten Point Platform. While community organizing was not novel to the Panthers, the national pressure to halt the social welfare programs of each branch was unprecedented and somewhat contradictory to the government's declared war on poverty. For if a community-based organization were to take on the role of the government without the use of government funds or resources, is that not to the benefit of society overall, as those allocated resources could be directed towards another empowering cause?

Social justice is embodied by the ability to achieve self-determination of one's identity by conducting a power analysis of the hierarchies that exists in our institutions. The institutions we create must provide equitable access to the resources that provide health, education, a dignified means to economic development, and equal representation in matters that concern our collective livelihoods. If the institutions in place are unable to provide the resources for survival, it is the duty of the disadvantaged to organize, disrupt the power structure, and create their own systems. The Black Panther Party rooted their ability to organize through education, which countered the centuries of denied literacy to all identities who were not white cisgender males. Even when Black children are provided the opportunity to obtain an education, poverty and the resulting effects of food insecurity can adversely predetermine a child's cognitive ability and level of achievement. The People's Free Breakfast Program for Children by the Black Panther Party was not the first nutrition program to exist, but it was effective because it was based on a needs assessment of the communities that the Panthers chose to provide their survival programs to.

Paw Prints and Pathways for Progress in the Present

By examining the activism of the Black Panther Party's breakfast programs and health clinics, it provides an analysis on how public health can exist beyond the perimeters of policy making and how the paradigm of "progress" can shift to the needs and control of the proletariat. Where community centered social welfare programs can be wielded

as a weapon to combat the oppression of the status quo. The survival programs of the Black Panther Party were an incendiary tool towards social mobility for African American communities and had the potential to thwart the disparities of morbidity and mortality faced by Black citizens. The Boston branch of the Panthers was not known for the gun wielding image that the Oakland branch of the Party was known for. Boston focused on free breakfast programs, free health clinics, and political education classes. Community involvement through these initiatives were perceived by certain members of society as having an ulterior motive of indoctrinating those who participated in the programs to accept Black Panther ideology. To the degree of which this is true can be analyzed on a case by case basis per each specific branch of the Black Panther Party and the time periods and social context of their activities.

However, what is undeniable is the social impact upon the milieu of marginalized communities to empower themselves to become educated and to improve their health outcomes. These social justice initiatives do not exist in a vacuum as tactics in a strategy for survival that only the Black Panther Party could carry out. Empowerment has been demonstrated by the organizing and activism of marginalized and oppressed groups globally. Therefore, as demonstrated by the Black Panther Party, self-determination can be sowed and harvested by communities in the form of health activism and survival programs that decentralize the authority and control of the status quo. Even with resistance, the result is improved conditions of public health, increased social capital, the building of community capacity, the attribute of knowing one's worth, and power to the people, derived from the people.

References

- Bassett, M.T. (2016). "Beyond berets: The Black Panthers as health activists." *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(10), 1741–1743.
- Burns, J.M. (1995). "Eugene Boyle, the Black Panther Party and the New Clerical Activism." *U.S. Catholic Historian, Social Activism*, 13(3), 137–158.
- Black Panther Member A Interview. (2019).
- Cadieux, K.V., & Slocum, R. (2015). "What does it mean to do food justice?" *Journal of Political Ecology*, 22(1), 1–26.
- Grassroots Policy Project (2013). "Power and Social Change."
- Jeffries, J.L. (2018). *The Black Panther Party in a city near you*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- McKenzie, J.F., Pinger, R.R., & Seabert, D.M. (2017). *An introduction to community & public health*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Nelson, A. (2011). *Body and soul: The Black Panther Party and the fight against medical discrimination*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Newman, K. (2018, February 14). "Black Panthers connected nutrition to education long before serving breakfast in schools became popular." *Citizen*, p. 2.
- Pope, R.J., & Flanigan, S.T. (2013). "Revolution for Breakfast: Intersections of activism, service, and violence in the Black Panther Party's community service programs." *Social Justice Research*, 26, 445–470.
- Rose, H.M. (1971). *The black ghetto: A spatial behavioral perspective*. McGraw-Hill.
- Schwartz, C., & Wootan, M.G. (2019). "How a public health goal became a national law: The healthy, hunger-free kids act of 2010." *Nutrition Today*, 54(2), 67–77.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2007). School nutrition dietary assessment study-III. Washington, DC: USDA.
- Williams, J. (1987). *Eyes on the prize: America's civil rights years, 1954–1966*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Teresita Fernández: An Exploration of Latin American Political Perspectives Through the Physical Space of Artwork

Katharyn L. Hernández, *Rice University*

Katharyn Hernández is a senior at Rice University majoring in Art History and Chemistry. Since sophomore year of high school she has known that she wants to pursue a career in art conservation and intends to go to graduate school for that purpose. She is a published co-author for two papers involving research on nanomaterials done at Rice. Katharyn loves traveling and is a passionate student of the Italian language. She finds that her research often leads her to one of two places: the intersection of science and art and the interaction of individuals with different cultures and art objects.

Abstract

Latin American art differs greatly from art created by artists from the United States of America, because its values were formed by different political conditions. Latin American artists work to question the dominant Western culture borne of colonization. They do this by creating revolutionary works which require the active participation of the audience, thereby forcing the viewer to question their own worldview. Teresita Fernández is one such contemporary artist who utilizes space and imitation of natural phenomena to question one's understanding of perspective. This essay explores predecessors who paved the way for Fernández's unique form of art making, and subsequently analyzes several of Fernández's own works to unpack how they cause the viewer to rethink their acceptance of the dominant Western narrative.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mentor, Diane Wolfthal, for introducing me to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate program and for always encouraging my research interests. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Fabiola López-Durán for opening my eyes to the rich tradition of Latin-American art and for helping me understand the importance of contemporary art practices, which is something I have struggled to appreciate in the past.

From the point of view of many Latin American artists, the "traditional" conceptions and presentation of art have no place in their artistic practices. Latin American art does not cater to the elite, nor does it present the dominant view of the world, as Western art so often tends to do. Following the Mexican Revolution, artists like David Siqueiros accused certain forms of art of being favored by and catered to the elite, insisting that easel painting was not of the Mexican people.¹ Diego Rivera further argued this by insisting that much of European painting could "be appreciated only by a very limited number of superior persons."² Indigenous Latin American art before colonization

was often functional, including items such as baskets or textiles. Once colonization took place, Latin American art began to reflect European practices, as is found in pieces such as Antonio Smith's *Cordillera and Lake*. This can easily be compared to European romantic landscape paintings of the time, like J.M.W. Turner's *The Dark Rigi: The Lake of Lucerne*. While landscape painting can have nationalistic tendencies, this message was too subtle for many of the artists of the 20th century. During the period, revolution was occurring across Latin America and artists felt the need to break from the academic art imposed by their colonial history to produce art which expressed the culture and experiences of the Latin American people.³ Artists moved away from the traditional European easel painting style to create an art of the public, a politically minded art, as Cildo Meireles did when he created zero dollar bills with his piece *Zero Cruzeiro* which clearly deals with problems surrounding Brazilian inflation at the time, a struggle the Brazilian people would have identified with strongly.⁴ The history of political upheaval in this area of the world shaped the art of its time and all subsequent forms of art in the area.

Western art utilizes its hegemonic control over culture, which was developed during its history of colonization, to create a dominant form of artistic expression. Latin American artists like Regina Silveira continue the legacy of the revolutionary artists from the early 20th century in questioning this dominant form of art. Where works like *Monumento as Bandeiras* made by Victor Brecheret in Brazil seem to support the history of colonization by celebrating the men who came to conquer the new world, her opposing work, *Monudentro*, asserts a more ambiguous understanding of the situation.⁵ She uses distortion and a variety of views to create a work which seems to "arrest [*Monumento as Bandeiras*] forward thrust, in fact reversing its movement" to question the idea of progress and civilization that is often associated with European colonialism.⁶ Latin American artists often question traditional European forms of art and of thought through truly revolutionary works which don't allow for passive viewing, but which inherently activate the audience. Teresita Fernández comes from a long line of such artists and continues this tradition through her monumental works. Fernández's art invites the audience to contemplate the question of the globalization and democratization of public space through analysis of the landscape and perspectival shifts which the audience encounters in her works.

The tactics of Latin American artists differ greatly from those of North American and European practices due to the political upheavals that took place in these areas which created a disconnect from the capitalist culture of the Western civilization. Thus, many of these artists engaged in a practice of inversion of Western models, appealing to the audience by utilizing space as a way to create an argument

activating the thought process of the viewer.⁷ Artists like Luis Camnitzer have sought to overwhelm the viewer in the space through the creation of a dialogue with works that necessitate decoding, as *Memorial* does. The litany of names filling the space in the otherwise barren room serves to question the way we quietly overlook what is extremely important and disturbing news that often goes unremembered, such as the disappearance of hundreds of Uruguayans during the military dictatorship.⁸ The crisp black and white framed directory is in sharp opposition to the events it references, which necessitates a contemplation of the work from multiple perspectives: as a passive viewer, as a perpetrator, and as a victim of the crimes.

This tactic of proposing a new viewpoint to the viewer as a way of challenging how our understanding of an event or place is framed by the dominant narrative or culture is something that other artists have taken advantage of. We can see the endeavors of Latin America to escape the shadow of the dominant culture in works like Alfredo Jaar's *A Logo for America*, which seeks to present the American landscape within the plurality of the "Americas" rather than the singular "America" by showing a picture of America as including both North and South America. Both of these artists created a politically minded art which functions as a call to action, and questions the authority of the center as the originator of artistic forms, especially in the face of differing political and cultural values in comparison to the so-called peripheral nations.

Teresita Fernández similarly questions traditional artistic forms through her use of space, creating an art which does not necessarily need to be decoded, but posits several points of view, arguing against the narrow Eurocentric worldview in favor of a global perspective. Upon arrival in Latin America, artists began sending back their depictions of the landscape and peoples. Albert Eckhout, a Dutch portrait and still life painter, depicted the Brazilian landscape and indigenous people, creating images such as his Tapuyan cannibal women in 1641. This work incorrectly depicts the practices of the Tapuyan people to a European audience, effectively shaping the narrative of these people, who have no way to deny the legitimacy of the claims being made in paintings such as this. Latin Americans are painfully aware of this history that excludes the indigenous viewpoint. As discussed briefly in the previous paragraph, artists like Alfredo Jaar have worked to reinsert this perspective into the artistic and political conversation.

Fernández takes a more subtle approach than some of these artists in her argument against the Eurocentric worldview, and thus requires more active participation from her audience. For example, in her work *Black Sun*, Fernández creates an aerial skyscape reminiscent of clouds. From one

side of the gallery space, the piece appears to be flat. When walking under the work, "it literally expands like an accordion before your very eyes."⁹ Through this experience of discovering the three dimensionality of the work, the viewer comes to terms with the idea that what appears one way at first glance may, from an alternate viewpoint, be completely different. In this way, "the viewer becomes the image generator," with the mind involved in the cinematic experience of piecing together a variety of images through time and space.¹⁰ This ephemeral experience, having to piece it together, lingers in the mind, activating the participant to contemplate the importance of perspectival reimagining of a situation, which extends beyond the artistic sphere to the political field. The perspectival shifts that occur in this and many other of her works cause the viewer to question the dominant worldview and to wonder about the global attitudes not represented by the hegemonic Western culture.

The monumentality of Fernández's works which require the audience to view a work from many different angles carries through to her use of empty space. The endless nothingness within the work causes it to have movement activated by the movement of a viewer. Monumentality is not only created by the sheer size of her works, but also by the interplay of light and dark which suggests a landscape, something monumental in and of itself. The depth of the negative space adds to the grandiosity of her works. For example, in *Fire*, a work made of colored threads composed in a cylindrical fashion, the gaps between the threads "are what activate the piece, and make it seem to flicker and move."¹¹ The gaps are important to create a sense of fire, which has a living, dynamic component to it that must be relayed regardless of the inorganic nature of the materials used to portray this phenomenon. This use of emptiness comes from her time in Japan, where she learned how to use darkness to create dynamic works, understanding that light and dark "exist in tandem with one another, they define one another."¹² In this way, we can understand such works as an interplay not only of light and dark but of the dominant and peripheral cultures which likewise interact with and define each other, even if one is more inherently visible than the other. Not only does monumentality play a role in her assessment of perspectival shifts as integral to a complete understanding of a globalizing world, but the movement of the viewer causes shifts between light and dark and helps an audience ponder the importance of both light and dark, both sides of the story, in creating a complete view.

Her use of light and dark, in addition to creating depth in the work, also explores the conception of the "landscape defined by containment."¹³ The use of emptiness and negative space, especially in the interaction with the participant, suggests the continuation of the work, of the landscape, beyond its edges.¹⁴ Her objects like *Black Sun* often

have no distinct edge for this exact purpose. The shadows that such enormous works place on the area around them and the sheer amount of space that they take up removes any idea that they are self-contained works. The use of light and dark and the interplay of the shadows creates a sense of narrative, especially in the cinematic construction of such works that denies the ability of having a singular, all-encompassing view. The lack of containment in her works is contrary to traditional understandings of the landscape, whose depictions of landscape are most often restricted to the four sides of the canvas. Fernández's "affection for tropical culture softens the hard distinctions that pass as hard currency in the intellectual casinos of the North."¹⁵ This rejection of Western thinking is a way Fernández challenges her viewers to look at her works and indeed the world from a different point of view. Changing the expectations of how an individual should be seeing something, something they have no doubt seen before in the natural world such as fire or the sky, is the way that Fernández posits that marginalized cultures have differing and equally valid viewpoints as Western cultures. The dominant European view, which has for many people seemed to be the only view, is questioned and must be rethought.

Contemplation of different viewpoints is also encouraged by the ephemerality of her works, whose depictions of natural phenomena demand an organic component to do them justice. Fernández often paradoxically depicts formless elements, like clouds, using physical materials like steel.¹⁶ In *Seattle Cloud Cover*, the view of the sky through the colored glass allows the audience to ponder the ever-changing nature of the sky in contrast with the static images produced on the panes of glass. Indeed, the transitory sky visible through the holes in the glass structure and encompassing the work by nature of its location transforms the stationary images on the glass panes, altering the way the clouds depicted on the glass are observed. This effectively renders the images of the clouds as part of the sky themselves, imbuing the sculpture with an ephemeral quality and creating an illusion of motion in an unarguably stationary piece. This can also be viewed in the way the colors on the glass panes change with the light of the sky, deepening and lightening depending on the angle of the sun in the sky and the movement of the viewer. Different views are compiled by the viewer in a cinematic experience of the work and everchanging view provided by the natural landscape; consequently, the changeability of such a seemingly concrete work adds to an understanding of Fernández's works as critical of the hegemonic European understanding of the world.¹⁷ The exploration of the apparent transience of the work which affects the experience of the viewer is present in many of her works and raises questions related to contemporary social interactions.¹⁸ This puts into perspective the seeming clarity of European and Western thought in comparison with the

often clashing viewpoints of more Afro and mixed traditions. Something that seems enduring and permanent, on further questioning and analysis, is in reality a fleeting experience, underscoring the importance of a nuanced understanding of culturally differing viewpoints.

This analysis is impacted not only by the ephemeral nature of her works, but also by her choice of space. Fernández reevaluates the exhibition space, the space of the museum, in her works as a way of questioning the traditional presentation of art. This tends to "actively dissociate the space of art from the outer world."¹⁹ The space of the museum is wholly responsible for forming the dialogue that takes place inside, as context decides the meaning of a work. Whereas the stark walls traditional in a gallery space and combination of works in a particular room often separates the object from its message, creating a passive view that can be boiled down to a single visual image, Fernández's works more often give a sense of "unbounded chaos," which is more representative of the outside world.²⁰ The two-dimensional depictions of traditional canvas paintings are a singular snapshot, whose nuances can be ignored in favor of a bigger picture.²¹ Fernández's works are completely opposite in that they constitute an immersive experience which cannot be viewed in its entirety from the exterior, necessitating the interaction of the audience with the work. In works such as *Bamboo Cinema*, she forgoes the institution of the museum altogether in favor of a naturalistic setting connecting the art to the global sphere. The intimate moment created by entering the work, which completely surrounds the viewer, enables a different type of observation which entails not only coming to terms with the visual aspects of a work, but questioning its construction and the impact it has on the landscape of which it is a part. In effect, the non-traditional setting and non-traditional view "open new dimensional possibilities and ways of occupying such a space."²² This causes the viewer to question the importance of the museum as an institution in presenting art to the public, perhaps developing an understanding of the elite nature of such an institution which is in no way connected to the masses going about their daily lives. The Marxist concept of the rise of the proletariat which gained a foothold in many Latin American countries speaks to the necessity of creating a politically minded public.²³ Teresita Fernández aims to do this through such thought provoking works which she makes available to the masses.

Not only is her use of setting an important component in her critique of European traditions, but her various depictions of natural phenomena, especially in such physical and technological ways, can also be viewed as an attack on capitalist culture. The attention that works such as *Seattle Cloud Cover* and *Bamboo Cinema* draw to the elements of the natural world through interaction with the setting and

the visibility of the world through the empty spaces in the works is perhaps critical of the way the contemporary individual experiences the landscape, often viewing the world with the ever-present distraction of the technology. In the case of *Seattle Cloud Cover*, Fernández reproduces the intermediary of the screen through the use of enormous glass panes, through which a viewer on the bridge must view the landscape. Technology is also referenced in many of her works through her use of materials like steel and polycarbonate tubes through which the viewer can understand the unnatural juxtaposition of nature and artifice. The impermanence of the image viewed by the audience, constantly changing due to its setting and perspectival shifts of the viewer, is paradoxical to the permanence of the large and imposing structures of her works. The use of materials gives the image a certain rigidity one would not expect when representing something as amorphous and intangible as air. It brings to mind questions of technological and capitalistic tendencies of the modern world, perhaps drawing attention to the incongruous nature of using such rigid materials to construct the urban landscape. She seems to “impel ornament out of the aesthetic sphere into the living, growing world,”²⁴ questioning the human tendency to disregard the natural world in favor of a wholly constructed capitalist culture and market economy wholeheartedly adopted by the West while being heavily examined by Latin America. Latin American artists often do not see human and nature as separate, but “emerging from and entwined within” each other, as Cuban artist Wilfredo Lam did in his piece *The Jungle* and as Fernández emulates in her own *Fata Morgana*.²⁵ The narrative of this work examines the separation of human and nature and ultimately comes to the conclusion that it is an unnecessary occurrence perpetuated by European traditions. In this work, the human and nature interact to create a singular image, a common assertion of native cultural values; thus challenging the dominance of the European worldview as related to political structures and economic structures.

The idea of the entwinement of nature and artifice, of the work with the individual, not only serves to question the tradition of the separation of human lives from nature, but also serves to assert the inability of people to separate themselves from the political sphere. As Fernández notes about artworks, “we still often behave as though we are inspecting something . . . if something is an extension of your physical body, then you can’t really be removed from it.”²⁶ Her works seek to create a self-reflective environment for the audience to evaluate their place in the political landscape.²⁷ The political being is formed once it is understood that there is no other way to exist in the world than as an extension of this political landscape found in the immersive quality of Fernández’s works like *Fata Morgana*. Of course, this conclusion cannot be drawn without the consent of the viewer. The viewer must actively engage with the piece of

their own accord and agree to participate in the thought processes which Fernández’s works subtly coax a viewer to contemplate. The subtlety is encountered in works requiring activation by the movement and attention of the audience; otherwise the work is as useless as a book sitting unread on a shelf. Until a viewer sees a work and contemplates its implications, Fernández’s arguments remain unnoticed. This is typical of the immersive works done by many conceptual artists in Latin America.²⁸ The work requires the active consent and participation of the public and will hopefully plant the seeds of political mobilization in the minds of willing participants.

As a Cuban-American artist, Fernández no doubt understands the essential role that art played in fomenting revolution in Latin American countries. During times of repression by authoritarian governments, the only place that people had leeway to make political arguments against the regimes was in art. The active participation of the viewer and self-reflective nature of such works allowed for more nuanced arguments to be made by artists and for participants to get a greater sense of the importance of actively participating in political lives. It is certainly less necessary to create subtle works which do not seem to outwardly criticize governmental institutions and traditional thought in the United States, where her works are displayed, as opposed to in Latin America. However, it is perhaps more important because the traditional ways of thinking are more ingrained and do not appear to need questioning. Through introspection, individuals can come to the conclusion that the dominant political thought has marginalized non-Western peoples and begin to accept a global worldview. Political change only occurs with a change in culture unavoidably preceded by changes in internal thought processes. Fernández explores the ways contemporary culture is dependent on a global understanding of the way the people and cultures interact by creating works that deal with monumentality, shifting perspectives of the viewer, ephemerality, and rejection of the traditional. The more an individual examines her works, the more nuanced they become, until one can see how their clean lines and simplistic structures contemplate several problems facing contemporary society, inducing politically motivated responses to her works by a conscientious public.

Endnotes

- 1 Harrison, Charles, and Wood, Paul. *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: an Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. New edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003, 387.
- 2 Shapiro, David. *Social Realism: Art as a Weapon*. Edited and Introduced by David Shapiro. New York: Ungar, 1973, 56.
- 3 Barnitz, Jacqueline, and Frank, Patrick. *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Revised & expanded edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015, 14.
- 4 Shtromberg, Elena. *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s*. First edition, 2016. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016, 17–19.

- 5 Leval, Susana Torruella. "Recapturing History: The (Un)Official Story in Contemporary Latin American Art." *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (1992), 72–73.
- 6 Ibid., 73.
- 7 Ramírez, Mari Carmen. "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America" in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Wald Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht, Elizabeth Ferrer, 156–167. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 163.
- 8 Neil, Jonathan T.D., "Luis Camnitzer: Memorial at Alexander Gray Associates," *Art Review*, March 31, 2010 <http://artreview.com/>.
- 9 Roffino, Sara. 2014. "Teresita Fernández." *Brooklyn Rail* 57–61. Humanities Source, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2018), 59.
- 10 Markonish, Denise, Eliot Weinberger. *Teresita Fernández: As above so below*. North Adams, MA: MASS MoCA, 2014, 68.
- 11 Miller, Margaret, Anne Stringfield, Dave Hickey, David Louis Norr, Gregory Volk, and Annette DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*. Tampa, FL: Contemporary Art Museum: Institute for Research in Art University of South Florida, 2009, 121.
- 12 Roffino, *Brooklyn Rail*, 57.
- 13 Markonish and Weinberger. *Teresita Fernández*, 83.
- 14 Miller, Stringfield, Hickey, Norr, Volk, and DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*, 118.
- 15 Hickey, Dave. "Teresita Fernández: Tropical Scholarship." In *25 Women: Essays on Their Art*, 167–73. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016, 169.
- 16 Alfond, Barbara, Abigail Ross Goodman, Ena Giurescu Heller, Malcolm Rogers, and Amy Galpin. *Art for Rollins: the Alfond collection of contemporary art*. Winter Park, FL: Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, 2013.
- 17 Adelman, Jeremy. 2004. "Latin American and World Histories: Old and New Approaches to the Pluribus and the Unum." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 3: 399–409. Historical Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed February 20, 2018), 402.
- 18 Roffino, *Brooklyn Rail*, 57.
- 19 Miller, Stringfield, Hickey, Norr, Volk, and DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*, 139.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Jay, Martin, Jonathan Crary, Rosalind Krauss, Norman Bryson, and Jacqueline Rose. *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster. Vol. 2. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1988, 7.
- 22 Miller, Stringfield, Hickey, Norr, Volk, and DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*, 138.
- 23 Chinchilla, Norma S. "Marxism, Feminism, and the Struggle for Democracy in Latin America." *Gender And Society* no. 3 (1991): 291. JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed February 21, 2018), 300.
- 24 Stafford, Barbara M. *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1769–1840*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984, 18.
- 25 Markonish, Denise, Teresita Fernández, Isolde Brielmaier, Ana Dopico, David Hinton, and Elizabeth King. *Teresita Fernández: Wayfinding*. Munich: DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017, 11.
- 26 Miller, Stringfield, Hickey, Norr, Volk, and DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*, 125.
- 27 Markonish, Fernández, Brielmaier, Dopico, Hinton, and King. *Teresita Fernández: Wayfinding*, 198.
- 28 Ramírez, Mari Carmen. "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America" in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Wald Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht, Elizabeth Ferrer, 156–167. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 156.

Works Cited

- Adelman, Jeremy. 2004. "Latin American and World Histories: Old and New Approaches to the Pluribus and the Unum." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 3: 399–409. Historical Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed February 20, 2018).
- Alfond, Barbara, Abigail Ross Goodman, Ena Giurescu Heller, Malcolm Rogers, and Amy Galpin. *Art for Rollins: the Alfond collection of contemporary art*. Winter Park, FL: Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, 2013.
- Barnitz, Jacqueline, and Frank, Patrick. *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Revised & expanded edition. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015.
- Chinchilla, Norma S. "Marxism, Feminism, and the Struggle for Democracy in Latin America." *Gender and Society* no. 3 (1991): 291. JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed February 21, 2018).
- Harrison, Charles, and Wood, Paul. *Art in Theory, 1900–2000: an Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. New edition. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003.
- Hickey, Dave. "Teresita Fernández: Tropical Scholarship." In *25 Women: Essays on Their Art*, 167–73. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Jay, Martin, Jonathan Crary, Rosalind Krauss, Norman Bryson, and Jacqueline Rose. *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster. Vol. 2. Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1988.
- Leval, Susana Torruella. "Recapturing History: The (Un)Official Story in Contemporary Latin American Art." *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (1992).
- Markonish, Denise, Eliot Weinberger. *Teresita Fernández: As above so below*. North Adams, MA: MASS MoCA, 2014.
- Markonish, Denise, Teresita Fernández, Isolde Brielmaier, Ana Dopico, David Hinton, and Elizabeth King. *Teresita Fernández: Wayfinding*. Munich: DelMonico Books/Prestel, 2017.
- Miller, Margaret, Anne Stringfield, Dave Hickey, David Louis Norr, Gregory Volk, and Annette DiMeo Carlozzi. *Teresita Fernández: Blind Landscape*. Tampa, FL: Contemporary Art Museum: Institute for Research in Art University of South Florida, 2009.
- Neil, Jonathan T.D., "Luis Camnitzer: Memorial at Alexander Gray Associates," *Art Review*, March 31, 2010 <http://artreview.com/>.
- Ramirez, Mari Carmen. "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America" in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Wald Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht, Elizabeth Ferrer, 156–167. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1993).
- Roffino, Sara. 2014. "Teresita Fernández." *Brooklyn Rail* 57–61. Humanities Source, EBSCOhost (accessed February 15, 2018).

Shapiro, David. *Social Realism: Art as a Weapon*. Edited and Introduced by David Shapiro. New York: Ungar, 1973.

Shtromberg, Elena. *Art Systems: Brazil and the 1970s*. First edition, 2016. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016.

Stafford, Barbara M. *Voyage into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1769–1840*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984.

The Televised Gaze: Politics of Respectability and Survival on *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*

Jacob M. Hood, *The University of Texas at Austin*

Jacob Hood is an English, Sociology, and African and African Diaspora Studies triple major with a certificate in Public Policy at The University of Texas at Austin. He is currently completing his thesis on how black residents of Austin, Texas perceive the use of police body-worn cameras and how associated policies can be altered to better serve marginalized populations. He is planning to begin a PhD program in Sociology in Fall 2020 to further explore the intersections of policing, technology, media, and critical race studies.

Abstract

This paper explores reality television as a site for national identity-making and the normalization of surveillance technologies in the aftermath of 9/11. Through an analysis of the reality TV show *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*, a spinoff of the reality dating show *Flavor of Love*, I explore how performances of respectability are encouraged as a means for survival and social mobility under the white patriarchal gaze. In addition, I situate *Charm School* within a history of U.S. charm schools advocating for Black women to engage in a politics of respectability in order to succeed, specifically with the Ophelia DeVore School of Modeling and Charm. Through an analysis of the race, gender, and class politics depicted in *Charm School*, I argue that the brand of respectability espoused by the show maintains a complex operational politics that restricts notions of womanhood while also imparting lessons for survival under surveillance. This paper blends insights from surveillance studies, media studies, and Black women's history in order to examine the interplay between mass media entertainment, national securitization, and negotiations of Black womanhood.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Ashley Farmer for providing the original inspiration for this paper and for guiding me along the path of turning it into a reality. I would also like to thank Dr. Almeida Jacqueline Toribio and Dr. Marcelo Paixão for their generous feedback on earlier drafts of this article.

Introduction

The way we watch is not fully our own. From visual methods of assigning race to our television viewing preferences, the ways we visually interact with those marked as different reflect broader sociocultural conditions. Understandings of race and gender, for instance, are controlled by the power-laden “gaze” of white supremacist heteropatriarchy, as bell hooks terms it.¹ For Black women and girls, surveillance is nothing new. However, the specifics of its normalization—such as through mass media

entertainment—require an additional layer of criticism. This paper will focus on reality television as a public site for the national negotiation of identity, security, and population management in moments of national insecurity. In the context of the United States, reality TV emerged as a method of normalizing surveillance and reflecting national tensions regarding the racialized “other,” believed to pose a threat to the national polity. *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School* (April 15–July 8, 2007)—a spinoff of the more popular reality dating show, *Flavor of Love*—aired as one such example of reality TV programming blending social instruction, surveillance, and controversial critiques of racial and gender performance with the goal of “reforming” corrupted women.

The very premise of the original *Flavor of Love* (2006) portends a particularly messy negotiation of race, gender, and politics: 20 women of various races and backgrounds compete for the love of Public Enemy rapper, Flavor Flav. Women were judged and eliminated not only on the basis of their relationship with Flav but also on their ability to appeal to hegemonic, public notions of likability. In *Charm School*, women from past seasons of *Flavor of Love* whose behavior was deemed reprehensible reentered the spotlight for the opportunity to “redeem” their public image. In its unequivocally classist and colorist approach, *Charm School* represents how charm schools throughout U.S. history have encouraged a performance of respectability in order to survive under the white patriarchal gaze. Further, the show encourages its women to perform respectability as a method of advancement and survival in a post-9/11 era of increased scrutiny toward Black women.

Charm Schools in Postwar America

Charm School maintains a rich historical precedent of similar institutions seeking to “reform” Black women for success in a white supremacist heteropatriarchal society. These schools encouraged engagement in a politics of respectability as a mode of potential racial uplift. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham identifies politics of respectability as a disavowal of “much of the expressive culture of the ‘folk,’ for example, sexual behavior, dress style, leisure activity, music, speech patterns, and religious worship patterns.”² For Black women, the individual success experienced through engagement with dominant, middle-class values fostered a believed connection between these politics of respectability and advancement of the Black race.³ References to charm schools date back to early-20th-century U.S., with the majority of these institutions appearing post-WWII with similar focuses on teaching manners and poise to young women. For example, a 1953 newspaper clipping from the St. Petersburg Times in Florida advertises the “vivacious” Kathleen Galvin’s new charm school that “makes a point of teaching charm and beauty as assets that should become so

natural they seem innate.”⁴ In addition, a 1935 report on a charm school in Detroit, Michigan discusses how students “learn to enter and leave a room as every lady should.”⁵ While the majority of charm schools were concentrated in the South, these institutions appeared across the country, often targeted at women entering the acting or modeling professions and always with an emphasis on embodying the “true” or “innate” qualities of womanhood. Understanding how *Charm School* continues this tradition requires an examination of the racial and gender politics at play within these schools, particularly with the Ophelia DeVore School of Modeling and Charm, one of the first institutions for training Black models.

Ophelia DeVore opened her School of Modeling and Charm in order to challenge dominant tropes of Black women and to present Black women to mainstream society as “attractive, poised, and professional.”⁶ Like DeVore herself, most of the Black students enrolled in the school were light-skinned/white-passing and adhered to hegemonic aesthetic values of beauty and presentability. Regardless, DeVore argued against predominant ideas of Black women’s ability to succeed in professions of visibility. These challenges require critique in addition to acknowledgement of the groundbreaking nature of her contributions to African-American women’s history. DeVore encouraged a politics of respectability as a means for survival in postwar America, of adopting “middle-class-based codes of proper social behavior” in order to “refine” ordinary (i.e., poor) Black women so that the “economically disenfranchised Blacks could secure a better future for themselves.”⁷

An emphasis on racial uplift underpins DeVore’s politics and approach to imparting her rules for womanly charm and accomplishment. In an undated poster advertisement for DeVore’s school, the stress on future success is evident: captions of “Now is the time” and “Be ready for your new opportunities” frame three poised, elegantly coiffed, and light-skinned Black women who embody DeVore’s promise of success through respectability.⁸ While classist in its approach to “social uplift” and its pathologizing of poor Black women, the focus on Black women’s futurity and hope for an alternative existence is critical for understanding the political implications of respectability as advocated for by DeVore. Given the pervasive historical reality of surveillance against Black women’s bodies, behaviors, and beliefs, engaging in a politics of respectability can function as a means of survival and capturing success in a society based in the simultaneous exploitation and denigration of one’s social identities. African-American women’s history is not a black-and-white meditation on morality; Black women must continuously confront systems of denigration in ways that may privilege the necessities of day-to-day survival over the privileged perspective of contemporary criticism.

By recognizing that charm schools throughout history encourage a politics of respectability as a means of social advancement in the face of hyper-scrutiny and discrimination, a more nuanced understanding can be constructed of the ways in which similar strategies are deployed in *Charm School*. Survival for Black women in the public eye, under the unrelenting surveillance of the white patriarchal gaze, requires a contortion of performance and politics not subject to a supposed “universal” ethical understanding.⁹ The same politics of respectability found in postwar institutions of social reformation are reproduced on the silver screen of *Charm School*, adapted for a digital age of massified state surveillance.

Performance, Visuality, and Black Womanhood

The “reality” depicted on reality TV shows such as *Charm School* blurs the constructed boundaries between fictitious, narrative-driven entertainment and depictions of “real life” and so-called “ordinary people.” While often relying on these ordinary people as cast members to create the illusion of reality, these programs employ scripted plots, lighting and musical techniques, and other narrative strategies found in fictionalized television to develop certain character arcs and propel the dramatic momentum of the plot.¹⁰ In this manner, reality TV relies on performativity, on being able to enact reality and humanness in a way that creates a cohesive, believable narrative. In the quest to appear authentic under the white patriarchal gaze of surveillance, Black reality show participants are often positioned to “confess” the truth about their racial group, “generating a subject who confesses racial knowledge of ‘otherness’ (to Whiteness).”¹¹ In this sense, the surveilling gaze of reality TV projects dominant stereotypes and controlling images of Blackness onto its Black subjects, requiring these subjects to alter their performance of racial authenticity in accordance with or defiance of these images.¹²

Charm School puts thirteen former (mostly Black) Flavor of Love contestants through a series of challenges representing tenets of womanhood, led by the show’s guiding matriarch and symbol of successful Black womanhood, Mo’Nique. By successfully performing commandments such as “Thou Shalt Show Some Class” and “Thou Shalt Be Fully Fabulous,” the women compete in hopes of “redeeming” themselves from their less-than-favorable Flavor of Love depictions and winning \$50,000. *Charm School* traffics in a number of stereotypes of Black womanhood in typecasting its eight contestants, such as the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire, in order to articulate its sexual, racial, and gender politics. This paper centers on depictions of one Black woman: Saaphyri, largely framed as the uneducated “welfare queen” only after financial gain.¹³

While *Charm School* attempts to typecast Saaphyri, she contorts the politics of performance in such a way that ultimately leads to her winning the competition. Saaphyri understands that embodying respectable womanhood critically rests on performativity—on being able to present a visual narrative of reformation that convinces both judges and audience of her “worthiness” to claim womanhood and the \$50,000. In her initial conversations with the judges in “No Mo’Nicknames,” Saaphyri stresses her need for a redemption arc on the show because “[she] wants something more than what [she has]” and desires to absorb the lessons of *Charm School*. However, in the confessionals only viewable to the audience, Saaphyri underscores that her reason for involvement in the competition is to win the \$50,000 and lift herself out of poverty, a goal she carries throughout the series.¹⁴ Even as the show attempts to construct Saaphyri as a welfare queen, she consciously contorts the visibility of reality TV to maintain an outward appearance of “charm” and redemption without necessarily internalizing these politics.

As the series progresses, arguably less problematic lessons are imparted, such as fostering healthy relationships with men, recovering from past trauma, and defending oneself in arguments. In addition to the restrictive concepts of Black womanhood that the show espouses, its complexity deepens in its lessons of survival designed to “reacclimate the contestants to life outside of celebrity.”¹⁵ As with other charm schools in U.S. history, *Charm School* maintains a complicated operational politics: one that centers an exclusionary, Eurocentric concept of womanhood while also teaching women to perform for survival and acceptance in a society based on their denigration.

In the show’s final episode, the remaining two contestants enter the last elimination as a montage of their respective redemption journeys plays over triumphant music. The finale not only cements the integral nature of performance for reality TV but in many ways reinforces Saaphyri as the prime charm school candidate to be “reformed.” Dressed in an exquisite white gown that symbolizes her supposed vindication and “purity” post-*Charm School*, Saaphyri remarks, “if someone would’ve told me that I could walk away from a fight [before *Charm School*], I would probably laugh, probably punch them in the face.”¹⁶ Here, Saaphyri outlines her transformation from her original typecast to a woman of charm deemed worthy of (re)claiming womanhood. After Saaphyri’s reformation is complete and Mo’Nique declares her the winner of *Charm School*, Saaphyri exclaims that when she first arrived, she “was a diamond in the rough” but having completed *Charm School*, she now “feels like a polished up diamond . . . a new and improved Saaphyri,” hearkening back to the goal of DeVore’s own charm school in positioning Black women for successful futures

in mainstream society. Much like Ophelia DeVore operated her school to “gain greater respect and opportunity for African-Americans,”¹⁷ Saaphyri “stopped people from being judgmental” by “[using] her power to change people’s minds.”¹⁸ In this manner, Saaphyri’s performance of respectability appeals to the racial uplift goal of early U.S. charm schools—shifting public perceptions of low-income Black women to support the overall advancement of the race.

Public reactions to *Charm School* ran the gamut of utter outrage to outright celebration, encapsulating the show’s complex politics. A *New York Times* article published days after the series’ conclusion praises the show for transforming these “gorgeous feline thugs” into “gentlefolk.” In addition to the racist language used throughout the article, the author heralds the brand of respectability performed on the show for its nuanced examination of the women’s “arguments, ideologies, strategies, [and] politics.”¹⁹ In contrast, a *Boston Globe* review published during the show’s run bashes the program for not doing “women any favors—especially not African-American women” and only paying “mocking lip service . . . to the idea of redemption.”²⁰ Indeed, *Charm School*’s concept of redemption follows a palatable narrative that maximizes viewership and prioritizes its producers’ politics. Yet, in her performance of reformation, Saaphyri emerges as the sort of prototypical charm school candidate sought after by Ophelia DeVore and others: ordinary, “rough around the edges,”²¹ and willing to outwardly perform a politics of respectability for future social success.

The Many and the Few: Connecting 9/11 and Reality Television

In many ways, the narrative constructed through Saaphyri reflects the emerging surveillance context of the new millennium. Proliferated through new technological mediums as appeals to a growing culture of fear, voyeurism, and paranoia,²² reality television programs serve as time capsules of a dynamic period of national securitization and technological development.

Looking more specifically at the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and their aftermath, we find a salient influence for this sociocultural moment. I aim to call specific attention here to how national crises can spur reactive security measures that bear certain racial and gendered contours, leading to the adoption of performances of respectability by those targeted. The early 2000s in the United States were partly defined by these efforts to (re)organize the national consciousness around the resilience of the nation-state. In addition to the September 11th attacks in 2001, this decade witnessed the Iraq War, the PATRIOT Act, Apple’s rise to technological dominance, Hurricane Katrina (and the disproportionate impact on Black citizens),

and the presidential election of Barack Obama. As such, this historical period ushered in a revitalized/reconfigured interest in targeting, tracking, isolating, and incapacitating the racialized “other” through emerging technologies.²³

The linking of mass media entertainment with social control projects is nothing revolutionary, as surveillance scholar David Lyon notes that “television has proved to be one of the biggest allies of [closed circuit television].”²⁴ Reality TV—specifically reality TV centering Blackness such as *Flavor of Love* and *Charm School*—emerged to depict the “reality” of marginalized subjecthood in a manner that could be controlled and consumed in the private sphere of the home, consequently redefining attitudes toward these subjects in the public sphere. Indeed, at the time of *Charm School*’s airing, VH1 executive Michael Hirschorn remarked that reality TV “presents some of the most vital political debate in America, particularly about class and race.”²⁵ Reality TV not only blurs the line between what is considered public and private life but also serves as a prime site for satiating the voyeuristic urge spurred by 9/11.²⁶ What are supposedly private moments of self-discovery and redemption are reconfigured through a public medium of consumption, redefining which aspects of social life are subject to observation and critique from broader society. Television must not be viewed as isolated from broader national tensions, as in this historical moment, expanding national security measures mirrored shifting practices in entertainment. This hybrid genre Mark Andrejevic terms “securitainment” blends social instruction and risk management strategies with passive entertainment against the backdrop of the war on terror, including popular programs that emerged both prior to and following 9/11, such as *Cops*, *Big Brother*, and *Charm School*.²⁷

Charm School’s premiere in 2007 was situated within a post-9/11 escalation of surveillance capabilities that guided popular media practices. Lyon argues how mass media functions as a public practice of risk mitigation, of identifying and targeting the “other.”²⁸ In this manner, post-9/11 media facilitated the “unprecedented watching of the few by the many—mainly through television” in order to stave off future threats to the national polity.²⁹ While law enforcement increased their use of surveillance technologies in the public sphere, reality TV producers reflected these increased surveillance capacities in their programming.

Conclusion

As both a cultural and political project, *Charm School* represents a critical negotiation of racialized womanhood on a national, televised scale. Understanding how *Charm School* constructs Black women in a post-9/11 context is necessary for understanding how mass media and entertainment

normalize intrusive surveillance practices and delineate whom can lay claim to personhood. Television is not produced in an apolitical, ahistorical vacuum: the race, gender, and class politics of the 2000s directly inform the narratives constructed on *Charm School*. Within its foundations of classism, colorism, and misogynoir, the show recognizes the hyper-scrutiny to which Black women are subjected and attempts to encourage a politics of respectability as an avenue of surviving this gaze, of performing a womanhood that will permit survival. Within the neoliberal order of the United States, *Charm School* embodies a developing societal emphasis on the individual/individuality as a means of achieving social and economic mobility. These logics undergird performances of respectability in a post-9/11 context: by manipulating one’s societal behavior to conform with hegemonic standards, they can supposedly succeed no matter the surrounding systemic forces.

Politics of respectability are not a zero-sum game of morality or “selling out” one’s race: for Black women throughout history, performing respectable womanhood often meant the difference between poverty and mobility, or between life and death. The history of charm schools, as with all of Black women’s history, is deeply nuanced in a manner that requires a balance of critique and sympathetic understanding for the impact of structural and cultural oppressions, as well as individual agency. Beyond the individual program, nuanced analyses of Black women on television can illuminate the ways in which mass media participates in the ideological constructions of personhood and how these constructions manifest in material reality for Black women off screen.

Endnotes

- 1 hooks, bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992: 116.
- 2 Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, “African-American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 272, <https://doi.org/10.1086/494730>.
- 3 Ibid., 271.
- 4 “Vivacious Kathleen Green Teaches Charm School Girls to Observe the Rules of Poise and Beauty,” *St. Petersburg Times*, August 16, 1953, [https://www.newspapers.com/image/314929175/?terms=charm school](https://www.newspapers.com/image/314929175/?terms=charm%20school).
- 5 Grandville, Grace, “Six Charming Students at Paramount’s ‘Charm School,’” *Detroit Free Press*, May 19, 1935, [https://www.newspapers.com/image/97754134/?terms=charm school](https://www.newspapers.com/image/97754134/?terms=charm%20school).
- 6 McAndrew, Malia, “Selling Black Beauty: African American Modeling Agencies and Charm Schools in Postwar America,” *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 1 (2010): 29, <https://doi.org/10.1093/maghis/24.1.29>.
- 7 Ibid., 29–30.
- 8 Ophelia DeVore School of Charm, “Step Into Success,” n.d.
- 9 Lyon, David, “9/11, Synopticon, and Scopophilia: Watching and Being Watched,” in *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, ed. Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson (University of Toronto Press, 2006), 48.

- 10 Holbrook, Alice, and Amy E. Singer, "When Bad Girls Go Good: Models of the Self and Reality on VH1's Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 37, no. 1 (2009): 38, <https://doi.org/10.3200/jpft.37.1.34-43>.
- 11 Dubrofsky, Rachel E. & Antoine Hardy, "Performing Race in Flavor of Love and The Bachelor," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25, no. 4 (2008): 379, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295030802327774>.
- 12 Ibid., 381.
- 13 "No Mo'Nicknames," in *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*, VH1, April 15, 2007.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Holbrook and Singer, "When Bad Girls Go Good," 36.
- 16 "Ghettin' Phabulous," in *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*. VH1, July 1, 2007.
- 17 McAndrew, "Selling Black Beauty," 29.
- 18 "Ghettin' Phabulous."
- 19 Heffernan, Virginia, "A Charm School Teaching a Lot More Than Manners," *The New York Times*, May 12, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/12/arts/television/12heff.html>.
- 20 Weiss, Joanna, "'Charm School' Sells Redemption but It's All Show," *Boston.com*, April 14, 2007, http://archive.boston.com/ae/tv/articles/2007/04/14/charm_school_sells_redemption_but_its_all_show/.
- 21 "Ghettin' Phabulous."
- 22 Barnicoat, Becky, "Decade Timeline," *The Guardian*, October 19, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/17/decade-timeline-what-happened-when>.
- 23 Lyon, "9/11, Synopticon, and Scopophilia," 46.
- 24 Heffernan, Virginia, "A Charm School Teaching a Lot More Than Manners."
- 25 Lyon, David, "9/11, Synopticon, and Scopophilia," 37.
- 26 Andrejevic, Mark, "'Securitainment' in the Post-9/11 Era," *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 25, no. 2 (2011): 167, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2011.553938>.
- 27 Lyon, David, "9/11, Synopticon, and Scopophilia," 41.
- 28 Ibid., 42.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (1992): 251-74.
- Holbrook, Alice, and Amy E. Singer. "When Bad Girls Go Good: Models of the Self and Reality on VH1's Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School." *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 37, no. 1 (2009): 34-43.
- Lyon, David. "9/11, Synopticon, and Scopophilia: Watching and Being Watched." In *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, edited by Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson. University of Toronto Press (2006): 35-54.
- McAndrew, Malia. "Selling Black Beauty: African American Modeling Agencies and Charm Schools in Postwar America." *OAH Magazine of History* 24, no. 1 (2010): 29-32.
- "No Mo'Nicknames." Episode. *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*. VH1, April 15, 2007. Ophelia DeVore School of Charm. "Step Into Success," n.d.
- "Vivacious Kathleen Green Teaches Charm School Girls to Observe the Rules of Poise and Beauty." *St. Petersburg Times*, August 16, 1953. [https://www.newspapers.com/image/314929175/?terms=charm school](https://www.newspapers.com/image/314929175/?terms=charm%20school).
- Weiss, Joanna. "'Charm School' Sells Redemption but It's All Show." *Boston.com*, April 14, 2007. http://archive.boston.com/ae/tv/articles/2007/04/14/charm_school_sells_redemption_but_its_all_show/.

Works Cited

- Andrejevic, Mark. "'Securitainment' in the Post-9/11 Era." *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 25, no. 2 (2011): 165-75.
- Barnicoat, Becky. "Decade Timeline." *The Guardian*, October 19, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/17/decade-timeline-what-happened-when>.
- Dubrofsky, Rachel E. & Antoine Hardy. "Performing Race in Flavor of Love and The Bachelor," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25, no. 4 (2008) 373-392.
- "Ghettin' Phabulous." Episode. *Flavor of Love Girls: Charm School*. VH1, July 1, 2007. Grandville, Grace. "Six Charming Students at Paramount's 'Charm School.'" *Detroit Free Press*, May 19, 1935. [https://www.newspapers.com/image/97754134/?terms=charm school](https://www.newspapers.com/image/97754134/?terms=charm%20school).
- Heffernan, Virginia. "A Charm School Teaching a Lot More Than Manners." *The New York Times*, May 12, 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/12/arts/television/12heff.html>.

Dreaming in Disaster: Hope and Resiliency in Puerto Rican Hip Hop after Hurricane María

Mobey Irizarry Lambright, *Oberlin College*

Mobey Irizarry Lambright (they/elle/ellx) is a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research Fellow graduating from Oberlin College and Conservatory. They pursued Oberlin's Double Degree program, fulfilling degrees in Technology in Music and Related Arts (TIMARA) and Comparative American Studies. Their research focuses on the role of Hip Hop in anti-colonial movements in Puerto Rico. They are also a composer, filmmaker, installation artist, and musician and have recorded and published several albums under the stage name "Bebé Machete."

Abstract

The purpose of this research project is to analyze the role of Puerto Rican Hip Hop in the wake of Hurricane María. This project focuses on how the rapper Vladi portrays the structural, personal, and emotional realities of the hurricane and the subsequent disaster on both a lyrical and sonic level. Following the scholarship of Antonio Vázquez-Arroyo on catastrophization, Naomi Klein on the Shock Doctrine and disaster capitalism, and recent calls for understanding contemporary Puerto Rican literature through the lens of "Literature of Disaster," this project poses a new way of understanding Hip Hop post-María—as a "Hip Hop of Disaster." Through lyrical and production analysis, I will focus on Vladi's most recent EP *Rápfagas* analyzing his lyricism and production. I argue that Vladi makes his political claims not only through lyricism, but also through musical and aesthetic choices like sampling and production techniques.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my immense gratitude to Dr. Gina Pérez, my mentor, and Dr. Afia Ofori-Mensa, the former Dean of Undergraduate Research at Oberlin College. Through their mentorship I have grown as an intellectual, activist, artist, and person. It has been a privilege to learn from them.

*Árboles sin hojas parece que están secos
pero están activos en el underground.*

We joked that driving down the street was like driving on the moon. My abuela's 1996 Jeep Cherokee, with a machete rusted into the back window, danced through craters, sidestepping cable lines still split and powerless, strewn across the pavement. Nearly a year after Hurricane María (which landed in September of 2017), I found myself deep in a disaster zone. In mid-August 2018, many parts of the Island were still out of power. The last neighborhoods regained power 328 days after María hit and that power was inconsistent at best (Fernández Campbell 2018). One estimate has the death count from the hurricane at 4,645

lives lost (New England Journal of Medicine 2018). During my visit, the Island and its people were still in grief and mourning.

Paired with that grief, I witnessed an unending and unwavering current of resistance, resilience, and joy. Despite the calamity, we danced, every night, Salsa, Bomba, Plena, and Perreo. On those worn-down streets, craters became club floors, with rhythms passed down over centuries still beating a pulse of liberation. On walls across the Island, alongside highways, over billboards, by shopping centers, gigantic black and white lettering proclaimed "*las únicas cenizas que queremos son las de la Junta*,"¹ "¡mi gente! ¿y nuestra independencia pa' cuando?"² and "¡descolonízate!"³ This graffiti and muralism movement shared artistic and textual relationships with a concurrent wave of anti-colonial music—Bomba, Plena, Hip Hop, and Reggaetón, played in protests and published across the internet, music that discussed the fall out of Hurricane María as well as Puerto Rico's larger colonial reality.

In this paper, I will focus on the extended play record (EP) *Rápfagas* by the San Juan-based rapper and activist Vladi. The EP released in April 2018, eight months after the Hurricane. I will first present the politics of disaster within Vladi's EP and then point to the ways in which Vladi brings in and centers hope and the possibility for imagining better futures, beyond the bleak exterior of a Hip Hop of Disaster. More broadly, I will comment on the aesthetic potential of music in movements of resistance, contributing to bodies of work surrounding the role of music and art in struggles against capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy.

Background

In moments like the post-María arts movement, when art blooms during periods of intense trauma and violence, we are reminded of a human necessity for art in processes of healing and survival. This legacy of Puerto Rican music and art in the face of disaster is one that extends genres and generations, from the Bomba music of enslaved African peoples resisting slavery and colonialism on the island in the 16th century, to Salsa music (which is considered the soundtrack of Puerto Rican anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle in the diaspora in the 1960s and 70s) (Flores 2016). Hip Hop, which initially emerged in Black American and Caribbean communities living the War on Drugs in New York City (Williams 2011), is also a dominant influence in the development of Puerto Rican Reggaetón, Urbano, and Latin Trap.⁴ In these moments art is not just protest, it is a source of sustenance. In the face of intense systemic violence, music is the pulse of survival, providing healing, catharsis, and hope. In a time of so much anger and pain, hope, catharsis, and resilience are what sustain movements and communities.

While the human capacity to be resilient, through art and otherwise, is incredible and worth investigating, we must be critical of why certain populations are perpetually asked to be resilient. The continuous demand for Black and brown people to be resilient ignores an integral critique of the ongoing systems and structures of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy that necessitate resiliency (Bonilla 2019). In order to fully understand the disaster surrounding Hurricane María we must first identify that the disaster was not “natural,” but rather mediated by the political and economic realities embedded in the colonial and capitalist relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico (Vázquez-Arroyo 2013).

While Hurricane María was a disastrous event, Puerto Ricans have lived disaster and resilience as a condition through centuries. In the last century alone, Puerto Ricans have had to be “resilient” through rampant poverty, through birth control experimentations and sterilization campaigns, through U.S. army chemical weapons testing, more recently through massive island-wide austerity measures, and now a hurricane that left thousands dead due to a failure of the local state and rampant neglect by part of the federal state. Leading up to the 20th century, Black Puerto Ricans were “resilient” throughout Spanish slavery, and the indigenous Taino and Arawak peoples were either “resilient” throughout processes of genocide or they were murdered. For that reason, I am calling for a modified understanding of resiliency, one that is deeply intertwined with knowledge of the contemporary and intergenerational trauma of colonialism and capitalism, and is devoted to imagining new and decolonized futures for Puerto Ricans. This modified resilience stands in opposition to liberal notions of resilience, which praise poor Black and brown people for being resilient but ignore the systemic colonial and capitalist circuits and relationships that force them to be resilient.

On April 20, 2018, San Juan-based rapper Vladi presented one such work of modified resilience through music—his *Rápfugas* EP. This EP reflects on the disaster that surrounds Hurricane María. In this paper I seek to interrogate how Vladi negotiates with catharsis and hope amidst a Puerto Rico post- María. I have chosen his work because he is heavily involved in the feminist anti-colonial organization Bemba PR, was previously an organizer in the University of Puerto Rico Student Movement, and is more broadly linked to the island-wide anti-colonial movement known as *Se Acabaron Las Promesas*, or *Promises are Over*.

In order to establish my framework for understanding Hip Hop after María, I would like to pose the term “Hip Hop of Disaster.” Hip Hop of Disaster refers to the ways in which aesthetic and lyrical shifts in recent Puerto Rican Hip Hop post-María reflect at once political and

economic realities, and the emotional and personal effects of Hurricane María. This term references calls for understanding Puerto Rican speculative and science fiction about apocalypse that was published after Hurricane María under the framework of “Literatura del Desastre (Literature of Disaster)” (Pérez Ortiz and Vilches 2018).

While the lyrical content is certainly important, critical Hip Hop lyrics are not something new. Since the birth of Hip Hop in the 1970’s in Black American and Caribbean Diasporic communities in New York City, the genre has criticized racism, police violence, poverty, and broadly white supremacy and colonialism writ large. I am interested in the aesthetic qualities of Puerto Rican Hip Hop in the aftermath of Hurricane María. By aesthetic qualities, I am referring to production, the samples that are used, the beat, and the way the voice sounds. In a time when Hip Hop percussion is dominated by pristine, Trap or Trap-influenced percussion, the grittiness of Vladi’s production is poignant. Where most Hip Hop, Reggaetón, and Trap music employ a much cleaner sound, Vladi’s production since María has grown fuzzy and distorted. Given advances in music technology, this grittiness reflects artistic choices more than material realities. Vladi has access to much of the software that mainstream artists and studios use, and while Vladi may have less expensive recording studio capabilities, due to the widespread availability of music production software, artists are largely able to achieve a similar sound to high quality corporate recording studios cheaply and with little musical equipment.

While I do pay close attention to lyrics, as well as political and historical context, I center sonic and production based analysis in order to understand a more subliminal, sonic landscape for communicating the realities of this disaster. This framework, however, does not simply limit itself to a purely negative space. Building on scholarly work about the role of music for joy and healing in social movements, I will center an analysis that foregrounds hope, dreaming, and building better futures.

In his essay “a Jazz Funeral for “A City That Care Forgot”: The New Orleans Diaspora after Hurricane Katrina,” Richard Brent Turner (2016) wrote:

the musical and spiritual energy of jazz funerals, which are profoundly influenced by the synthesis of the healing and social justice values of Haitian and New Orleanian Vodou and African American Christianity, continues to provide solace and insight into the mysteries of life, death, and their ancestry for some black New Orleanians both at home and in the diaspora (139).

These jazz funerals, processions that drew from second line musical traditions as well as the spiritual traditions mentioned above, are “healing ceremonies” whose purpose is to “honor those who passed on [and to] fight for the right to return for those who are still displaced” (Turner 2016: 139). These practices of both healing and resistance are grounded in traditions and legacies of healing and resistance. What music wields when it attempts to heal and resist is hope and resilience.

The communal aspect of jazz funerals recalls of Nyle Fort’s (2018) assertions at his talk “Freedom Dreaming: Black-Palestinian Solidarity in an Age of Repression.” He said that music is not just the tracks, it is “the noise we make together.” He went on to assert that while resistance is important, imagination is key because “it tells us what we’re fighting for.” What music provides is a space for imagination, an imagination that is often communal and that wields emotion—love, pain, joy, etc.—as its basis of communication.

The power music has, and art in general, over state apparatuses of repression is that it holds something beyond the material. The power of imagination, of healing, of emotion, of hope, all accumulates to form resilience. In this research project, I hope to foreground that which allows us to “dream freedom,” as Nyle Fort says.

In this research project I understand freedom dreaming as the most important role music and art can play in any movement working to build futures outside of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy. In foregrounding the generative and imaginative aspects of this music, I hope to express, beyond the case of Puerto Rico, and beyond the case of Hip Hop, the role aesthetic and non-lyrical musical expression can play in advancing struggles of liberation.

Isla Apta by Vladi

“Isla Apta,” the opening track from Vladi’s *Rápfugas* EP, starts with a fuzzy, distorted piano loop under a sample from a Che Guevara speech—“que no se puede confiar en el imperialismo, ni un tantito, ¡nada!”⁵ Once that sample cuts out, the drums come in. The sample is a classic hip hop beat, the kick hitting the 1 with an irregular backbeat, and the snare hitting the 3. The groove is sloppy, every hit isn’t exactly in the same place, sometimes coming in a little early, sometimes a little late. The drums are complemented by the piano loop, solidly looping every 2 bars but consistently nearly falling apart within that 2-bar loop.

The irregularity inside each loop is paired with the regularity of a larger looping form, conveying a sensation of bursting at the seams, of perpetually falling apart and coming back together. This is complemented by Vladi’s

lyrics—“resolviendo como invente entre escombros remanentes.”⁶ Vladi is discussing, lyrically and in terms of arrangement, a post-disaster reality in which Puerto Ricans are trying their best to keep things together, working within material realities that are not in their favor.

The sense of unwieldiness the drums convey is complemented by the sound of each piece of the kit—the hi-hat cymbal sounds tinny, almost like the drummer is hitting a rusty can, not a hi-hat cymbal. The kick drum feels hollow and boomy and alongside the snare they are both colored by an intense reverberance that is present throughout the entire track. This sonic landscape contrasts from the pristine, polished, and contained nature of much of contemporary pop Puerto Rican Latin Trap and Reggaetón music. As such, it conveys an unwieldy and uncontainable landscape, hard to consume and impossible to commodify under U.S.-based music industry structures that are colonial and exploitative in their relationship to Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican musicians. Vladi creates a sonic landscape that intentionally imagines a sort of Urbano Puerto Rican sound that can only exist outside of Puerto Rico’s musical industrial relationship with exploitative U.S. music markets.

On the first verse of “Isla Apta,” Vladi spits:

Expiró la isla. La playa está sucia.
Soy la misma isla. No hay escapatoria.
Hay una familia comiéndose las uñas
Pensando en el aire en la tripa de la niña.

*(The island expired. The beach is dirty.
I’m the same island. There is no escape.
There is a family biting their nails,
Thinking about the air, about their daughter’s
intestines.)*

In stating “expiró la isla (*the island expired*),” Vladi plays lyrically with a nostalgia that is reminiscent of earlier Puerto Rican music, diasporic music by Puerto Rican immigrants in the U.S. missing their homeland. This type of music—largely boleros written and recorded in the early- to mid-20th century⁷—came out of Puerto Rican diasporic communities in cities like New York and Chicago. Nostalgia is embedded in much of the fabric of 20th-century Puerto Rican music (which would later be sampled in early Hip Hop alongside Black American genres of music like Funk, Jazz, and Rhythm and Blues.) Sonically, Vladi even imitates the sound quality of those older recordings by wielding the fuzzy and distorted aesthetic.

What is particularly striking, though, about Vladi’s use of this nostalgia, is that Vladi is still on the island; he never left. He employs narratives of nostalgia from the perspective of someone who is still literally on that land but has witnessed Puerto Rico be turned into something almost unrecognizable.

In her text “Las Propias: Apuntes Para Una Pedagogía de las Endeudadas,” Godreau Aubert (2018) conveys a piece of insight that serves to understand much of the art made post-María, “no hay metáforas que aguanten el peso de estos tiempos”⁸ (65). This is precisely the dilemma that Vladi is facing—how can one attempt to make sense of an expired island? Of families forgotten, uncared for, and struggling to survive? How could one possibly communicate this disaster?

The beat resigns itself to imperfection, and in doing so, addresses this problem. The beat will never fit perfectly, it will never be an easily consumable groove. This is where my Hip Hop of Disaster framework comes in, since the production forms the aesthetic base of the track. It communicates a broken down, imperfect, and unexplainable emotional reality. As the first track Vladi released post-María, Vladi communicates that art post-María does not have the time to worry about commercial pop conventions. On all levels, beyond just lyrics, hip hop post-María must communicate the realities and emotions of this disaster.

Throughout this track, Vladi communicates infra-structural critiques that correspond to the political and economic effects of the hurricane. But, as we see in this first verse, he communicates, through beats and lyrical nostalgia, emotional and personal realities of Puerto Rico post-Hurricane. Such a multifaceted musical approach is what defines my Hip Hop of Disaster framework, because it addresses the hurricane and aftermath through lyrics and production. Given that so much of this is deeply grounded in the emotional, Vladi communicates, beyond facts and figures, an inherently human crisis that defines the catastrophe that was Hurricane María.

In an interview with Vladi, he emphasized that through his music he also expresses and offers catharsis. He said, “que la catarsis sea hacia una solución.”⁹ This is key to understanding the power and place of Vladi’s music within a contemporary decolonial Puerto Rican struggle. In “Prendo Pa’ Los Secos,” the last track off of *Rápfagas*, he raps:

Árboles sin hojas parece que están secos
pero están activos en el underground.
(*Trees without leaves seem like they’re dried up
but they’re active underground.*)

He presents a familiar post-hurricane image, a leafless tree. This image often evokes disaster, decay, and death. But Vladi contradicts this notion—there is still life in a leafless tree. They’re active underground, they’re anchored, grounded, and building towards healing and growth. This metaphor for Puerto Rico post-María, which has been painted with narratives of apocalypse, disaster, and hopelessness, serves to highlight hope and a future filled with life and beauty. The beat matches the hopeful turn in *Rápfagas*, with a faster

and cleaner beat paired with a vibraphone sample in a major key (rather than the distorted, minor piano sample in “Isla Apta”). In doing so, Vladi centers resiliency—one that is grounded in the violent realities of colonialism but is nonetheless able to imagine a future outside of that reality.

The lessons we can gather from *Rápfagas* are of the aesthetic potential of art in struggles of liberation. The site of Vladi’s “freedom dreaming” is as much in his lyrics as it is in the sonic landscapes Vladi creates. This connection opens up the possibilities for other artists to utilize production- and arrangement-based techniques as musical tools within a social movement context, and underlines the ways in which non-lyrical musical elements can convey and further political messages. As Vladi and other artists continue to produce work around and towards the decolonization of Puerto Rico, as listeners, we must actively imagine and work towards that decolonized future.

Endnotes

- 1 “The only ashes we want are those of the Junta.” This statement was made after it was revealed that the company AES was dumping mountains of toxic ash by towns in the southwestern part of the Island (CT Puerto Rican Agenda 2016).
- 2 “My people! And our independence when?” This mural went up the night before July 4, 2018.
- 3 “Decolonize yourself!”
- 4 Trap music is a Black American subgenre of Hip Hop that started in the 1990’s in Atlanta, GA, and was popularized by artists such as the group Migos and the rapper Future. Bad Bunny and other Puerto Rican artists blended Trap with Reggaetón to form Latin Trap. Trap music and its extensions are characterized by their percussion, featuring heavy and resonant synth bass drums and an highly active hi-hat cymbals.
- 5 “You cannot trust imperialism, not even a little bit, at all!”
- 6 “Figuring out how to invent life within remaining ruins.”
- 7 Songs like “Lamento Borincano (*Puerto Rican Nostalgia*)” (1929) or “En Mi Viejo San Juan (*In My Old San Juan*)” (1943) are iconic of this time period.
- 8 “There is not a metaphor that can hold the weight of these times.”
- 9 “The catharsis must be towards a solution.”

Works Cited

- Bonilla, Y. (2019). “The Coloniality of Disaster: Race, Empire, and Emergency in Puerto Rico,” USA. Political Geography Specialty Group, Cultural and Political Ecology Specialty Group, Specialty Group Highlighted Session, Washington 1, Marriott, April 5, 2019.
- Estrada, N. (1943). *En mi Viejo San Juan*. New York, NY: RCA Victor.
- Fernández Campbell, A. (2018). “It took 11 months to restore power to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. A similar crisis could happen again.” *Vox*.
- Fort, N. (2018). “Freedom Dreaming: Black-Palestinian Solidarity in an Age of Repression,” Oberlin College, November 6, 2018.

- Godreau Aubert, A. (2018). *Las Propias: Apuntes Para Una Pedagogía de las Endeudadas*. Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico: Editora Educación Emergente.
- Hernández Marín, R. (1929). *Lamento Borincano*, Sony Discos.
- Kishore, N., Marqués, D., Mahmud, A., Kiang, M., Rodriguez, I., Fuller, A., Ebner, P., Sorensen, C., Racy, F., Lemery, J., Maas, L., Leaning, J., Irizarry, R., Balsari, S., & Buckee, C. (2018). "Mortality in Puerto Rico After Hurricane Maria." *New England Journal of Medicine*, 379:162–170, DOI: 10.1056/NEJMsa1803972.
- Ortiz, J. (2017). "No Dumping Coal Ash in Peñuelas!," *CT Puerto Rican Agenda*.
- Turner, R. B. (2016). "A Jazz Funeral for 'A City That Care Forgot': The New Orleans Diaspora after Hurricane Katrina." In *Jazz Religion, the Second Line, and Black New Orleans, New Edition: After Hurricane Katrina*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Vladi (2018). *Rápfagas*. San Juan, PR: Barricada Records.
- Vázquez-Arroyo, A. Y. (2013). "How Not to Learn From Catastrophe: Habermas, Critical Theory and the 'Catastrophization' of Political Life," *Political Theory*.
- Williams, J. (2011). "Historicizing the Breakbeat: Hip-Hop's Origins and Authenticity," *Zentrum für Populäre Kultur und Musik*.

Taking Flight: *Sula* and the Gift of Death

Janis Jin, *Yale University*

Janis Jin is a senior at Yale University, where she is a double major in English and Ethnicity, Race, & Migration. She writes about race, war, empire, and literature and cultural politics. She plans to pursue an interdisciplinary PhD program in cultural studies.

Abstract

This paper takes Derrida's writing on the gift as a jumping off point for considering relationships between death, freedom, love, and violence in Toni Morrison's novels, particularly *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Sula*. In the context and afterlife of racial slavery, death has emerged as a compelling paradigm for theorizing freedom, and indeed, within the world of Toni Morrison's fiction, suicide and sacrifice seem to offer not the foreclosure of Black ontological possibility but perhaps the very beginning of its recapitulation. By performing a close reading of Eva's sacrifice of her war-torn son Plum in *Sula*, this paper aims to explore the ethical paradoxes at play in what it means to align *the gift of death* with *the gift of freedom* and what happens when one attempts to give such a gift to another.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Lisa Lowe and Daphne Brooks, whose seminars provided me with the space to think through these questions and whose feedback shaped this paper from beginning to end. Thanks also to my advisor of now four years, Sunny Xiang, whose critical eye and warmth of spirit have given me a model for the kind of mentor I hope to one day become. Finally, thanks to the Mellon Foundation, for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship has provided key support for my academic pursuits thus far.

Is? My baby? Burning?

—Toni Morrison, *Sula*

On the opening of her 1977 novel *Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison has urged readers to consider that the agent's suicide "not be understood as a simple desperate act, the end of a fruitless life, a life without gesture, without examination, but as obedience to a deeper contact with his people . . . toward change, an alternative way, a cessation of things-as-they-are."¹ In these terms, suicide offers not the foreclosure of Black ontological possibility but perhaps the very beginning of its recapitulation. Such a provocation holds particular historical resonance in the political era in which *Song of Solomon* was written; in 1965, Toni Morrison herself edited a collection of essays by Black Panther co-founder Huey Newton, entitled *To Die for the People*. Newton, like Morrison, posits suicide as the demand for another kind of

Black life: "Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible."²

Revolutionary suicide has become a compelling framework in the context and aftermath of racial slavery precisely because enslavement in fact required the management and maintenance of Black life. As historian Stephanie Smallwood has written, saltwater slavery's enduring project was not *depleting* the lives of the enslaved, but rather, the opposite: "probing the limits up to which it [was] possible to discipline the body *without* extinguishing the life within."³ Slave traders and slave owners went to great lengths to probe these limits, turning enslavement into a scientific enterprise in which the sustenance required for slaves' survival was calculated and perfected via arithmetic equations.⁴ If the livability of slaves was in fact essential to the project of racial slavery, I'd wager that "survival" actually offers limited possibilities for imagining freedom. That is to say, under a system of control and domination in which life itself is coercive and ambivalent in nature, perhaps "revolutionary suicide" might actually offer something like the most extreme form of freedom enacted through a politics of refusal.⁵ As the life insurance agent takes flight from the roof of Mercy Hospital in *Song of Solomon*, Morrison certainly suggests that freedom in this form might be a gift we can give to ourselves. Taking the insurance agent's suicide as a point of departure, however, I feel compelled also to ask: Is freedom a gift we can give to those we love? What happens when we try to get *each other* free? If you can give the "gift of death" to yourself, can you give it to another?

Such a provocation echoes strongly, of course, Morrison's *Beloved*. As infanticide is rendered an act of maternal love under the unbearable conditions of enslavement, the ethical problem of how Sethe could ever kill her own infant daughter becomes reconfigured to ask: given the violence of life under slavery, how could she not? In what follows, I turn instead to Morrison's 1973 *Sula* in order to consider the ways in which Eva attempts to give the "gift of death" to her war-torn son Plum, within a novel that takes place not during slavery but in its long afterlife. I explore the ethical paradoxes at play in what it means to align *the gift of death* with *the gift of freedom* and what happens when one attempts to give such a gift to another, shifting the frame from revolutionary *suicide* to revolutionary *sacrifice*.⁶ I want to suggest also that this line of inquiry becomes even more compelling in *Sula* relation to the Black veteran, a figure already "sacrificed" in the service of state power and the U.S. military's efforts to seize global hegemony throughout the twentieth century—that concoction of liberalism, nationalism, and imperialism often euphemized as "freedom." Sacrifice is a deeply performative term and Eva's

sacrifice of Plum is a deeply performative scene. Drawing from Derrida's writing on the sacrificial gift of death, I try to extrapolate the relationship between death, freedom, and love, suggesting that a close reading of Eva's sacrifice of Plum opens up space for a different *kind* of sacrifice, one which might repair or at least revisit the Black veteran's sacrifice for the racist and imperialist state, and imagine instead a sacrifice made in service of collective Black freedom.

In *Sula*, Plum has returned from World War I ravaged by violence and a heroin addiction. Plum is clearly Eva's favorite child, having "floated in a constant swaddle of love and affection" before he left for World War I.⁷ Late one night in 1921, two years after his return from the war, Eva sits beside his bed, rocking Plum's head and remembering scenes of him as a child. Eva reaches for a glass of strawberry crush only to discover that it is blood-tainted water, throwing it to the floor. Morrison is subtle with this discovery, giving it one sentence and not lingering any longer. But its ramifications are made clear. Eva then goes to the kitchen, and when she returns to Plum's room, she commits the unspeakable sacrifice:

Plum on the rim of a warm light sleep was still chuckling. Mamma. She sure was somethin'. He felt twilight. Now there seemed to be some kind of wet light traveling over his legs and stomach with a deeply attractive smell. It wound itself—this wet light—all about him, splashing and running into his skin. He opened his eyes and saw what he imagined was the great wing of an eagle pouring a wet lightness over him. Some kind of baptism, some kind of blessing, he thought. Everything is going to be all right, it said. Knowing that it was so he closed his eyes and sank back into the bright hole of sleep.⁸

The genuineness of Eva's gift-as-gift in a Derridean sense hinges on the fact that Plum does not realize he is being given the gift (of death) at all. In *Given Time*, Derrida argues that "at the limit, the gift as gift ought not appear as gift: either to the donee or to the donor."⁹ The giver cannot recognize their giving of the gift, for to do so would be to expect something in return, and the receiver cannot recognize their receiving of the gift, for to do so would be to indeed return a kind of affirmation to the giver; in short, any recognition of giving fundamentally annuls the gift. In *Sula*, these conditions are met by virtue of *both* Plum's unknowing *and* the impossibility of Eva receiving anything in return from Plum for the kind of gift she gives him—death. Indeed, Eva's last glimpse of Plum, as she lights him on fire, is not a man who realizes he is dying but a "kerosene-soaked Plum [lying] in snug delight."¹⁰ Plum's understanding of his own body being engulfed in flames as "some kind of baptism, some kind of blessing"¹¹ at once confirms Eva's gift of death as a genuine gift—a gift gone unrecognized—and structures the unbearable sorrow of the scene.

The baptismal image of Eva standing over her son engulfed in flames recalls also the biblical scene of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, the subject of Derrida's later work in *The Gift of Death*. Derrida argues that God asks for a gift in the form of sacrifice in order to confirm Abraham's unconditional love for and duty to God. He writes, in one long and winding sentence:

The command requests, like a prayer from God, a declaration of love that implores: tell me that you love me, tell me that you turn towards, towards the unique one, towards the other as unique and, above all, over everything else, unconditionally, and in order to that, make a gift of death, give death to your only son and give me the death I ask for, that I give to you by asking you for it.¹²

For Derrida, love is framed also as responsibility, a willingness to give the gift of death to one beloved in order to prove one's love for another beloved through this performative act. In the Derridean sense of "the gift of death," *God* is the receiver of the sacrifice; Abraham sacrifices Isaac for God specifically. In the context of *Sula*, I have tried to make the case that Eva sacrifices Plum *for* freedom, in a general sense. But *whom* is the receiver of this sacrifice? *For whom* does Eva offer Plum up?

I want to argue that the original formulation wherein Abraham must sacrifice his child for God is re-mapped onto Plum, the Black veteran, as a kind of *split subject* who has been torn apart by the war. In other words, we might imagine that there exists a pre-war and a post-war Plum, and Eva must sacrifice the Plum in front of her (the post-war Plum) in order to manifest her unconditional love and impossible longing for the Plum that *has not already been sacrificed in the service of the state* (the pre-war Plum). A convoluted and temporally complicated argument, surely, but textual evidence for this pre-war versus post-war Plum occurs immediately before the sacrificial scene. Prior to setting Plum on fire, Eva lets her memory "spin, loop and fall"¹³ of memories of Plum as a child. She recalls: "Plum in the tub that time as she leaned over him. He reached up and dripped water into her bosom and laughed."¹⁴ Eva feels so stirred by *this memory* (of a pre-war Plum) that she "lifts her tongue to the edge of her lip to stop the tears from running into her mouth,"¹⁵ and then makes the decision to light post-war Plum on fire. Moreover, Morrison returns to this figure of the Black veteran in her later novel *Home*, wherein a post-war Frank Money returns from the Korean War and his post-war life is deeply *unfree*, haunted by *both* wartime trauma *and* state-sanctioned domestic racism. What I am suggesting, then, is that Eva sacrifices war-torn Plum in order to try and prevent his life from becoming Frank Money's. Eva sacrifices post-war Plum as an attempt to revive the Plum

who has not already been sacrificed to war; in other words, she sacrifices Plum *for* Plum. Plum is doubly sacrificed, first for the state's war and then for his own freedom. Eva enacts the latter sacrifice in an attempt to redress the first, giving him the *gift of death* in order to give him the *gift of freedom*.

As Eva gives Plum the gift of death, however, what remains unknowable to her as its giver is whether Plum has received the gift of freedom. When Hannah comes running up the stairs to tell Eva that Plum is on fire, Eva looks at her and asks: "Is? My baby? Burning?"¹⁶ Though Eva looks at Hannah while she utters this question—or set of three questions—I would argue that she is not *really* asking Hannah, for Hannah has just told her that her baby is indeed burning, and moreover, Eva knows Plum is burning because she has lit him on fire herself. I want to linger on this question, and propose a reading which assumes instead that Eva *already knows* not only that Plum is burning, but also that Plum is in fact dead. If Eva knows that Plum is dead, we might reformulate the question to read more correctly, and in truth more devastatingly: *Is? My baby? [Still?] Burning?* By virtue of her "gift of death" being a genuine gift in the Derridean sense, *this* is the real question whose answer Eva does *not* know and *can never know*.

Eva will never know whether Plum has received her true gift—freedom. Is Plum *still* burning, even after death? Has he finally found peace? Has he made it to freedom? Eva forgoes the answer when she bestows the gift of death upon her son, but she remains haunted by its unknowability. And so she asks aloud, looking at Hannah but speaking to nobody in particular—or perhaps simply speaking to a Plum who can no longer respond: *Is? My baby? [Still?] Burning?*

Eva's gift to Plum demonstrates the way in which an act of unconditional love can also enact an unethical relation. In writing on Eva and Plum, I cannot help but think of what Morrison has said of Sethe's killing of her infant daughter in *Beloved*: "It was absolutely the right thing to do, but she had no right to do it."¹⁷ The key word in this assessment is "right." The first right is the "right" within a moral economy. By affirming Sethe's moral "right," Morrison reconfigures the anticipated question of how Sethe could ever kill her own infant daughter to argue instead: given the violence of life under slavery, how could she not? The second "right," however, which is really "no right," invokes the normative space of the law, which establishes that enslaved mothers are fundamentally excluded from making rights-based claims to their own children.

Sula, of course, does not happen during the moment of slavery. But, to borrow from Saidiya Hartman, it certainly inhabits its long "afterlife"¹⁸ in which Black subjectivity remains embedded in the history of racial slavery. Morrison's

assertion that "it was absolutely the right thing to do, but she had no right to do it" places each "right" at odds with each other, and in doing so begs also the question: How does one do what is "right" from a position of utter rightlessness?

I contend that this vexed but possible alignment between *the gift of death* and *the gift of freedom* enacts a Morrisonian ethics that does not require *innocence* as a prerequisite for a rigorous moral imagination. Eva's love for Plum drives her to give precisely that gift which *Song of Solomon's* life insurance agent has given to himself. Eva, however, will never know whether Plum has received her gift. She is left to ask forever, or at least until someone, perhaps herself, bestows the gift of death/freedom upon her: *Is? My baby? [Still?] Burning?*

Endnotes

- 1 Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken," 3.
- 2 Huey Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, 3.
- 3 Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 36. Emphasis my own.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 43.
- 5 Audra Simpson has written about a "politics of refusal" in contrast to a politics of cultural recognition, in the context of indigenous struggles to maintain political sovereignty against settler governance. Simpson uses the term in order to describe the strategies of Kahnawake Mohawks who have refused American or Canadian citizenship. See Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptions*.
- 6 I want to emphasize that I am less committed to the idea of revolutionary suicide as a political prescription and more interested in what happens when we reckon with the limits and possibilities of the concept within the fluid and imaginative site of literature. That is, neither suicide nor sacrifice are to be romanticized through my line of inquiry. Instead, I'm interested in how scholars in Black studies have turned to death as a theoretical trope for social negation and/or freedom, and how Toni Morrison's fiction might engage these questions.
- 7 Toni Morrison, *Sula*, 46.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 47.
- 9 Jacques Derrida, *Given Time*, I, 14.
- 10 *Sula*, 48.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 72.
- 13 *Sula*, 47.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 *Ibid.*, 48.
- 17 Toni Morrison, quoted in Mervyn Rothstein, "Toni Morrison, in Her New Novel, Defends Women," *New York Times*, August 26, 1987.
- 18 On the afterlife of slavery, see Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*.

Works Cited

- Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- _____. *Given Time, I: Counterfeit Money*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Vintage, 1987.
- _____. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- _____. *Sula*. New York: Vintage, 1973.
- _____. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28, no. 1 (1989): 1-34.
- Newton, Huey. *Revolutionary Suicide*. New York: Ballantine, 1973.
- Rothstein, Mervyn. "Toni Morrison, in Her New Novel, Defends Women." *New York Times*, August 26, 1987.
- Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. Smallwood, Stephanie E. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

The Ontology of Suppression: Apostasy, Disconnection, and the “Suppressive Person” Type

Gabriella Lee, *Hunter College*

Gabriella Lee recently graduated from Hunter College with a Bachelor's degree in English and Anthropology. She is interested in analyzing how language is used in the construction of individual and group identities and as a tool for social control in religious domains. She is currently applying to PhD programs in Anthropology to continue her research.

Abstract

Previous research into religions, New Religious Movements, and cults detail the structural elements that lead to the social phenomenon known as apostasy, the abandonment of one's religious beliefs. Apostasy is not simply the act of disassociating oneself from a religious organization but requires a person to completely renounce their former beliefs and actions while affiliated with the organization. Apostasy from an organization like the Church of Scientology does not come without a price. Persons who publicly renounce Scientology are deemed “Suppressive,” a speech act that within the social domain (Agha 2007) of the Church leads to the social action of disconnection (the shunning of that person by other Scientologists). This paper examines discourse data from the Church of Scientology to analyze how the Church constructs and voices (Wortham and Reyes 2015; Bucholtz and Hall 2005) the social type of the Suppressive Person. My data comes from statements intended for a general public audience outside of Scientology: the “Frequently Asked Questions” section of the Church's official website. I argue that through the description and profile of the Suppressive Person in the FAQ section, the Church attempts to create the reality of the Suppressive Person in order to align itself with mainstream organizations and the interests of the general public. Using Bromley's classifications of organizations, I show through a critical discourse analysis how the Church, in a vulnerable state of illegitimacy in mainstream culture, uses the discourse outlining the “Suppressive Person” as a social control mechanism to control both current members and apostates. By trying to control the apostate narrative through the ontology of the Suppressive Person, the Church shows its vulnerability to criticism and to apostates who threaten its credibility.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mentor, Professor Angela Reyes, for her invaluable guidance, encouragement, and support. I would like to thank our Mellon Coordinator at Hunter, Professor Kelvin Black, as well as Ms. Susana Vargas and Ms. Cassandra Smith. Thank you to my inspiring Mellon cohort at Hunter and thanks also to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship and Hunter College for supporting my research.

The word “apostate” carries with it a heavy weight in certain religious communities. Apostasy is a public declaration of leaving one's faith and a renouncement of his or her former beliefs and actions while part of the organization. The gravity of this word and its meanings are manifested differently in various religious communities, depending on the figured world constructed by each group. We all build “figured worlds” from which we base our identities and interactions; this is often unspoken and implicit (Gee 2014). Gee (2014) puts forth the notion of the figured world to contextualize how discourse functions in interactions. A figured world is a “simplified, often unconscious and taken-for-granted theor[y] or stor[y] about how the world works that we use to get on efficiently with our daily lives” (Gee 2014, 95). In this paper, I will be examining the explicit creation of a reality, a figured world, for the purpose of justifying actions and controlling narratives, particularly actions concerning apostasy. I ask, how does the creation of a social type serve as a justification for actions taken against those who are deemed the type? How is a type created and reified in the world?

Through a critical analysis of the genre of the Frequently Asked Question from the Church of Scientology's official website, I show how a reality is constructed in which a social type is reified for the purpose of rejecting a person from a community. An apostate to the Church of Scientology is labeled and known as a “Suppressive Person.” This is an official title that a person can have within the Church's domain. In attempting to manipulate into reality the social type of the Suppressive Person not only within the domain of the Church, but as a type that exists in non-Scientologist contexts, the institution reveals the insecurity and vulnerability of an organization whose credibility and legitimacy is being challenged in mainstream society.

There has been much sociological research into the social phenomena of apostasy, New Religious Movements, and Scientology specifically (Bromley & Hammond 1987; Bromley 1998; Lewis 2009). Specific research into the structure of these organizations has led to theories about their classifications and the types of leave-takers those structures produce. Bromley (1998) offers a typology for organizations that classifies institutions based on their levels of “tension” within their sociocultural environments as well as their degrees of autonomy and legitimacy in society in comparison with other legitimate organizations that fall within their “environmental category” (21). Scientology's level of tension in its environment is “variable” (Bainbridge 1987, 59), due largely to its level of strict enforcement of its “explicit system of ethics” (Lewis 2009, 135). It maintains this tension in society, and for that reason I would classify the Church of Scientology as an organization that lies between Bromley's (1998) categories of Contestant and Subversive, which carry

moderate to high levels of tension, respectively. The Church is currently recognized in the United States as an official religion and has numerous high-profile members that lend it legitimacy. However, recent negative publicity and opposition from former members has thrust Scientology into the spotlight as a questionable organization.

Bromley's typology is important in establishing the basis for the social phenomena of apostasy that I will take up in this paper. He theorizes that the organizational structure of a Subversive organization facilitates and leads to apostasy. In sociological concepts of apostasy, the act comes about because of an organization that is seen as being illegitimate and on the fringes of mainstream culture (Bromley 1998). It is useful to study how, through language, the role of an apostate is produced within the domain of a religious institution and how discourse surrounding apostasy affects and produces certain social consequences. Discourse surrounding apostasy in certain religious domains directly affects how former members are viewed and treated. Within the social domain of the Church of Scientology, apostasy is an act that warrants the label of "Suppressive Person" (usually abbreviated 'SP') (Agha 2007). Through its construction of the Suppressive Person type, the Church redefines the role of an apostate in order to achieve its own ends. It is not unusual for religions to have the role of "apostate," as the word has generally meant "general religious leavetaking" (Bromley 1998, 35). However, Scientology posits that anyone who publicly renounces the faith is "Suppressive." In doing this, it attributes characteristics and personality traits to a person who leaves the religion that extend beyond the typical apostate role. I will analyze how the SP is reified by drawing on concepts from Wortham and Reyes's (2015) methods of discourse analysis, Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) principles of identity in interaction, and van Dijk's (2006) notions of manipulation in discourse. Through the "Frequently Asked Question," the institution invites the public to share in its constructed ontology in order to disbelieve apostates. Kockelman (2013) defines ontology as the "relatively portable set of assumptions regarding the recursive and reflexive, as well as fragile and fraught, entangling of indices, agents, kinds, individuals, and worlds" (34). The focus of this essay is on analyzing how the Church of Scientology attempts to create the ontology of the Suppressive Person to discredit critics.

The Frequently Asked Question

In the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of the Church of Scientology's (n.d.-c) official website, one question is explicitly "What does a 'Suppressive Person' mean?" Using Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986) theories of speech genre, I suggest that the Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) is a genre in direct dialogue with the public that attempts to

share an ontology. The utterance (the FAQ answer) has "dialogic overtones" that indicate an awareness of previous discourse surrounding the initiated topic (Bakhtin 1986, 92). An utterance, in addition to being related to previous utterances, is also related to "subsequent links in the chain of speech communion," meaning that the utterer will expect a response from listeners (Bakhtin 1986, 94). Bakhtin (1986) states that an "entire utterance is constructed . . . in anticipation of encountering this response" which may be in the form of what he calls "active responsive understanding" (94). The FAQ presupposes public discourse about the "question" and demonstrates an awareness of the kinds of discourses being circulated in the public sphere. I submit that using the FAQ is a discursive strategy to share the ontology of the Suppressive Person with a public audience and invite it to share in the reality being constructed. It is a genre that presupposes public opinion and discourse and is a strategy for establishing credibility against apostate claims. Successful creation of this ontology would come from an "active responsive understanding" and an acceptance of the Suppressive Person as a social type outside the domain of the Church.

The Suppressive Person

In the first half of the answer to the FAQ "What does 'Suppressive Person' Mean?" the language used by the Church to construct the role of the "Suppressive Person" indicates an ontology in which the social type of the Suppressive Person exists in the world outside of the social domain of the Church. Determining the figured world from which the definition of a Suppressive Person stems is important in analyzing how the Church of Scientology seeks to create the social type as a reified position outside of the domain of the Church rather than just as a role and title that exists within their institution. Below is an excerpt from the first half of the FAQ answer:

A Suppressive Person (SP) is a person who seeks to suppress other people in their vicinity. A Suppressive Person will goof up or vilify any effort to help anybody and particularly knife with violence anything calculated to make human beings more powerful or more intelligent Because of this, the Suppressive Person seeks to upset, continuously undermine, spread bad news about and denigrate betterment activities and groups. Thus the Anti-Social Personality is also against what Scientology is about—helping people become more able and improving conditions in society. As anyone can think of many examples of a Suppressive Person, this concept is not limited to Scientology (Church of Scientology International n.d.-a, para. 1, 4).

In the excerpt, there are many instances of the Church voicing the Suppressive Person. Voicing is “the characterization of a narrative person as occupying a recognizable social position” (Wortham & Reyes 2015, 6). The social position is already recognizable to Scientologists, but the Church attempts to make it recognizable to non-Scientologists through voicing. The Church voices the SP through reference and predication (Wortham and Reyes 2015, 51). The repeated reference of “The Suppressive Person” followed by an active metapragmatic verb remains consistent in order to solidify the Church’s term for the characteristics and intentions they proceed to describe and attribute to the social type. The choices of words to describe the actions of an SP are predicated on what it means to be suppressive according to the referential definition of the word (Hill 2008). Verbs such as “seeks,” “vilify,” “continuously undermine,” “denigrate,” and “knife with violence” are what Wortham and Reyes (2015) call metapragmatic verbs that characterize and position individuals within an interaction (or “narrated event”) (50). They are predications that lend themselves to a broader profile of what it means to be generally suppressive without specifying actions directly related to religion. These verbs characterize an SP as intentionally malicious and violent.

The Anti-Social Personality

Deviating from the reference of “Suppressive Person,” the Church also asserts that the SP is also known as the “Anti-Social Personality”:

The Suppressive Person is also known as the Anti-Social Personality. Within this category one finds Napoleon, Hitler, the unrepentant killer and the drug lord. But if such are easily spotted, if only from the bodies they leave in their wake, Anti-Social Personalities also commonly exist in current life and often go undetected (Church of Scientology International n.d.-a, para. 2).

By referencing Hitler and Napoleon, the Church invokes notoriously “suppressive” individuals from history in order to reify both the ideas of the Anti-Social Personality and the Suppressive Person. Hitler and Napoleon can be agreed upon by both the Church and the general public as being people who have been “violent” and have left “bodies in their wake.” Bucholtz and Hall (2005) provide a framework for identity analysis that includes the principles of adequation and distinction. They discuss this type of social positioning as “for groups or individuals to be positioned as alike, they need no . . . be identical but must merely be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes” (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 599). The label of Suppressive Person (or Anti-Social Personality) in this

text is conferred upon Napoleon and Hitler, two notorious figures of which there is a shared cultural knowledge. Doing this then allows for anyone who is subsequently labeled an SP to be adequated with Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler. Persons labeled SPs will then be understood not to be identical to Hitler, Napoleon, or an unrepentant murderer, but they can be “understood as sufficiently similar” to these figures for the purposes of Disconnection, which will be discussed later (Bucholtz and Hall 2005, 599). Teun van Dijk (2006) notes that overall interaction strategies that include “positive self-representation” and “negative other-representation” are typical features of biased discourse that is used to manipulate recipients to “accept as knowledge” whatever is being said (pp. 373, 376). Together, adequation and negative other-representation through references to Napoleon and Hitler accomplish exactly what is explicitly suggested by the Church: “anyone can think of many examples of a Suppressive Person, this concept is not limited to Scientology” (Church of Scientology Int. n.d.-a). While a Suppressive Person may be identifiable in mainstream society according to the first half of the FAQ, it is within the social domain of the Church of Scientology that the label of the SP is reified as an official role and title that a person can occupy.

Disconnection

Presupposing the social type of the Suppressive Person establishes a common ground between the Church of Scientology and the general public of non-Scientologists who may read this FAQ answer. The way that Scientology has defined an SP in the first half of the answer seems reasonable. It is a person who wants to suppress good activities and stop others from improving society. The Church establishes this as a type that could be agreed upon without believing in other principles or doctrines of Scientology. The text then transitions to discussing apostasy (although it does not use this word) and how it relates to the Suppressive Person:

1. However, when such a person is connected to Scientology, for the good of the Church and the individuals in it, such a person is officially labeled a Suppressive Person so that others will know not to associate with them. To be declared a Suppressive Person is extremely rare and results in expulsion from the Scientology religion. This occurs in instances of serious offenses against the Scientology faith and can also occur when
10. an individual is found to be actively working to suppress the well-being of others. This can be done through criminal acts already recognized by society as unlawful or through the commitment of acts deemed Suppressive Acts in the Scientology Justice Codes—which includes

the Suppressive Act of publicly renouncing the faith, an act which in Scientology, as well as almost every religion, is grounds for automatic expulsion. When someone has been expelled from the religion, that person loses both his or her fellowship

20. with the Church as well as with other Scientologists.

The condition lasts until they have been restored to good standing. Once the person has been restored to good standing, the prohibition against fellowship with other Scientologists is lifted. Similar practices have been part of religious communities for thousands of years and have been recognized by courts of law as a fundamental right (Church of Scientology International n.d.-a, para. 3–5).

The text qualifies, “when such a person is connected with Scientology, for the good of the Church and the individuals in it” he or she is labeled an SP and cut off from the Church and all current members (lines 1–5). This is an attempt to establish intersubjectivity with the public. People would not readily associate with Hitler or Napoleon-like persons, and they would not want to be around others who wish to “denigrate” and “suppress” positive actions. Furthermore, the label of ‘SP’ is thus conditionalized: “when such a person is connected with Scientology” (lines 1–2). This statement makes it clear that the assumption is that the SP exists in the world: there is “such a person” that can exist, and only “when” he or she happens to be “connected to Scientology” would they then officially be labeled an SP.

The answer then states that those who are labeled as Suppressive by the Church include those who “publicly renounce” Scientology (lines 14–16). This leads to a connection between apostasy and being an SP. The ontology being conveyed here is that apostates have intentions similar to dictators and murderers; they are not merely disinterested in bettering society, but they actively intend to prohibit the positive actions of others. The Church assigns this intention through evaluation of the out-group (of SPs) by their “past injustices” (Donohue 2012, 15). They look at the past injustices of so-called Suppressive People in the world like Hitler and Napoleon, who are notorious historical figures associated with horrific atrocities. This creates an out-group that is villainized by everyone who shares the common interest of bettering society. Once this has been established, and an ontology in which the SP exists in the real world, the second half of the FAQ answer becomes specific to what it means to be an SP within the domain of Scientology.

To the in-group (Scientologists), the out-group of SPs includes those who have renounced their faith in and affiliation with the organization. This is evidently indicated in their Scientology “Justice Codes.” The act of publicly renouncing one’s faith, or apostasy, is considered a

“Suppressive Act” in Scientology. A person who does this is then labeled the official title of “Suppressive Person.” Apostasy thus becomes an indexical of an SP. Although the first paragraphs of the FAQ answer attempt to convince non-Scientologists of the reality of the SP, the last ones show that the actual title of “SP” is bestowed only within the social domain of the Church by Scientologists who are in charge of “discerning” who fits the type (Reyes 2017). That person is then “declared” a Suppressive Person to current Scientologists. “Declaring” is an “explicit performative locution” in the domain of Scientology that creates “social fact” (Agha 2007, 55). The “social fact” being created is the fact of the Suppressive Person’s existence and everything that the title indexes. The subsequent action taken because of this declaration is called “Disconnection.” The concept of Disconnection is discussed in its own FAQ and is generally defined as the “self-determined” ceasing of communication with another person (Church of Scientology Int. n.d.-b). Scientology disclaims that there is no official Disconnection policy and that individuals make their own personal decisions to stop associating with someone because of their antagonistic nature (Church of Scientology Int. n.d.-b). Based on the definition of Disconnection (the ceasing of association with people who are “antagonistic”), it is clear that the “expulsion” talked about in the “Suppressive Person” FAQ is Disconnection. This is further evidenced by the fact that a declared SP “loses both his or her fellowship with the Church as well as with other Scientologists.” Why does this happen? Precisely because of the ontology created in which a Suppressive Person “lives in terror of others” and seeks only to destroy things. The logic follows that people would not want to associate with a person who is characterized the way that an SP has been characterized by the Church of Scientology.

As mentioned above, the Church says that apostasy is a Suppressive Act against its Justice Codes. This terminology applies only to the social domain of Scientology. However, it is immediately qualified by the statement that public renouncement, “as in any other religion, is grounds for automatic expulsion” (lines 15–17). The connection between apostasy and Suppression is paramount to justifying the action of Disconnection and thus responding to claims about the Church’s abuses of current and former members. In this FAQ thus far, it has been established that an SP is a person who seeks to prohibit any actions taken for the betterment of society. It is also distinguished that the Church of Scientology works towards the goal of bettering individuals and society. Expulsion is said to happen when a person commits “Suppressive Acts,” one of which is apostasy. The connection here is that those who would publicly renounce Scientology would be standing against everything that Scientology stood for. However, the Church extends this to mean that a person who does not want to be a Scientologist

any longer is denouncing *all* attempts at improvement and human progress even outside of the social domain of the Church with its altruistic programs and missions.

Conclusions

Being an apostate to Scientology comes with serious consequences. Disconnection extends beyond the social domain of the Church and means that one cannot communicate with family and friends in any circumstances. Scientologists operate from an ontology or figured world in which an apostate, who is a Suppressive Person according to the Church, has evil intentions and wants to halt progress and improvement. Suppressive People are equated with Hitler, Napoleon, and murderers, and this adequation convinces a Scientologist to disconnect from such people, even if they are family members.

The FAQ genre provides a way for the Church to justify its actions against the people it declares as Suppressive by creating or attempting to create a shared reality with a public audience in which the title and role of Suppressive Person is one that exists and can be taken up. In this ontology, the Church's declaring someone a Suppressive Person would not only mean Disconnection from current Scientologists but would indicate that that person should not be associated with in any domain because of the characteristics he or she possesses. Looking at the larger cultural context, reifying the position of SP as part of a non-Scientologist society would virtually discredit anyone who tried to criticize the Church. Although the Church goes to great lengths to personally attack SPs who are publicly critical of the institution, the establishment of the ontology of SP enables them to do so. For the Church of Scientology, addressing the meaning of Suppressive Person in an FAQ meant for a public audience is a way of preemptively discrediting any criticism of its actions from former members. They posit that persons who publicly renounce Scientology are Suppressive, that Suppressive people are less than human for their lack of morals and malicious natures, and that they should not be believed.

Works Cited

- Agha, Asif. 2007. *Language and Social Relations*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bainbridge, William Sims. 1987. "Science and Religion: The Case of Scientology." In *The Future of New Religious Movements*, edited by David G. Bromley and Phillip E. Hammond, 59–79. Macon: Mercer University Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. 1986. "The Problem of Speech Genres." In *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 60–102. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bromley, David G. 1998. *The politics of religious apostasy: the role of apostates in the transformation of religious movements*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Bucholtz, Mary, and Kira Hall. 2005. "Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach." *Discourse Studies* 7 no. 4–5: 585–614. <https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1177%2F1461445605054407>.
- Church of Scientology International. n.d.-a. "What does 'Suppressive Person' mean?" Frequently Asked Questions. Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://www.scientology.org/faq/scientology-attitudes-and-practices/what-is-a-suppressive-person.html>.
- _____. n.d.-b. "What is disconnection?" Frequently Asked Questions. Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://www.scientology.org/faq/scientology-attitudes-and-practices/what-is-disconnection.html>.
- _____. n.d.c. "Frequently Asked Questions." Accessed April 17, 2019. <https://www.scientology.org/faq/>.
- Donohue, William A. 2012. "The Identity Trap: The Language of Genocide." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 31, no.1: 13–29. <https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1177%2F0261927X11425033>.
- Gee, James Paul. 2014. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis Theory and Method*. New York: Routledge.
- Hill, Jane H. 2008. *The Everyday Language of White Racism*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Kockelman, Paul. 2013. "The Anthropology of an Equation. Sieves, Spam Filters, Agentive Algorithms, and Ontologies of Transformation." *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3, no. 3: 33–61. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.14318/hau3.3.002>.
- Lewis, James R. 2009. "The Growth of Scientology and the Growth of Religious 'Success'." In *Scientology*, edited by James R. Lewis, 117–40. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reyes, Angela. 2017. "Ontology of Fake: Discerning the Philippine Elite." *Signs and Society* 5, no. S1: S100–S126.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 2006. "Discourse and manipulation." *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 3: 359–83. <https://doi-org.proxy.wexler.hunter.cuny.edu/10.1177%2F0957926506060250>.
- Wortham, Stanton and Angela Reyes. 2015. *Discourse Analysis Beyond the Speech Event*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Washbuckets to Oceans: Understanding Versatility of the Blues Mood through Water Imagery

Sophia Lindner, *University of Pennsylvania*

Sophia is a senior at the University of Pennsylvania majoring in Sociology and Africana Studies. Her current research centers on the racial navigation of modern entrepreneurial tourism in Cuba with a focus on Afro-Cubans. Her most recent project uses in-depth interviews to explore the impact of race on access to and success within Cuba's casa particular economy. She is a 2019–2020 Undergraduate Grant Recipient of the Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy. Her other research interests include race in art, race in the digital age, and ethnomusicology. She plans to continue and expand her studies in either a Sociology or African-American Studies PhD program.

Abstract

I propose in this paper that the blues mood contains a universal capacity to manifest itself as a tool that can position someone in relation to his or her oppression, but that it is also an entity that does so in ways to which different meanings can be ascribed by the experiencer. Through an analysis of water imagery in three poems collected in Kevin Young's *Jazz Poems*, I pull together the authors' understandings of the different manifestations of the blues mood with the versatility of these manifestations as they work with or against these authors and characters' experience of oppression. I examine how the blues mood is metaphorized in the forms of different bodies of water—lakes and buckets, rivers, and ocean currents—and how these different forms complete different functions.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Dr. Crawford for her kindness and energy in class and for providing the inspiration for this paper. I'd also like to thank Dr. Guthrie Ramsey for introducing me to jazz through the academic lens. Finally, I thank my Mellon Mays cohort and advisors for encouraging me to push my boundaries and publish a paper outside of my specialized field of study.

The blues mood has occupied a markedly ambiguous position within Black poetics since the early 20th century. This time frame, the origins of the mood, and even the need for pursuit of these origins remain contested due to the co-development of (and blurred boundaries between) blues musical lyrics and poetry. However, within this somewhat fragile structure, the blues mood has been generally considered along a spectrum from melancholy lamentation to optimistic manifestation, or a series of combinations of the two (Ford 95). Such a paradoxical and often invertible presence consequently allowed for powerful yet quite varied usage within black literary spheres, especially as the influence of the blues increased across periods in Black art and history.

Because of this, the relationships that Black literary characters and authors established with the blues mood during the 20th century fall on a wide and nuanced range.

To define these relationships completely collectively would be as grave a mistake as to ignore their ties to each other by emphasizing their individualities—as such, I begin my argument in this paper under the assumption that the blues mood cannot be objectively defined. I suggest, in line with Karen Ford's assertion of blues' intrinsic embodiment of "black experience," that it does contain a universal capacity to manifest itself as a tool that can position someone in relation to his or her oppression (95). However, it is an entity that does so in ways to which different meanings can be ascribed by the experiencer. In order to understand this, I focus on a metaphor of blues that appears across a variety of poetic texts—water. I analyze the use of water imagery in three poems collected in Kevin Young's *Jazz Poems*—Tony Hoagland's "In which I make the mistake of comparing Billie Holiday to a Cosmic washerwoman," Quincy Troupe's "Snake-Back Solo," and Lawson Inada's "The Journey"—to synthesize the authors' understandings of the different manifestations of the blues mood with the versatility of these manifestations as they work with or against the experience of oppression. I examine how the blues mood is metaphorized in the forms of different bodies of water—lakes and buckets, rivers, and ocean currents—and how these different forms complete different functions. I use this analysis to piece together a portrait of the blues mood as having the capacity to be suffocatingly dense and stagnant, optimistically transparent, or even emotionally vehicular.

The water forms of a lake and bucket-enclosed still-water in Hoagland's "In which I make the mistake of comparing Billie Holiday to a Cosmic washerwoman" illustrate the blues mood as oppressively heavy, inescapable, and stagnant. In the poem, Hoagland considers the opinion of Holiday as "a symbol for the black soul," as his friend Terrance argues against this (Young 231). As Holiday was most renowned and symbolized for her blues singing and her heart-wrenching lyrical content about black oppression, we can understand the opening of the poem with this consideration as a tool to set up the concept of Holiday's forthcoming music as likely illustrative of the black soul and the oppression it faces. As the author listens to an unspecified Holiday song in the car, he describes it as "dark and slow," and as though she is "moving her voice like water moving along the shore of a lake, / reaching gently into the crevices, touching the pebbles / and sand" (231). Here we may understand the stillness and slowness of the contained water and her voice as stagnancy of the containment of the aforementioned oppression that does not provide an environment suitable for any type of mobility. The water does not flow like a river, nor fall like a raindrop; rather, the verbs ascribed to it are reaching and

touching, gentle movements that do not require full movement of the body of a human or water. We see the author begin to doubt Terrance's claims as he further considers the song as "so dark and slow," so "very heavy," that "it seems bigger than her" (232). In the physical consideration of the word "bigger," the song can be imagined to outsize and overpower her; in the abstract consideration, it can be seen as so heavily oppressive that there would be no chance of escaping the emotional darkness it brings her.

In both ways, however, the song is clearly overwhelming and evokes a sense of helplessness on Holiday's part. The author observes Holiday's relationship to the song as that of a washerwoman (hence the title) to a "stain soaked into the sheets . . . so deep that nothing will ever get it out, but she keeps trying" (Young 233). Thus he perceives Holiday as being permanently tainted by this song, attempting to overcome and escape the permanent darkness it brings but failing to do so. Continuing with this metaphor, he observes: "she keeps pushing the dark syllables under the water / then pulling them up to see if they are clean / but they never are" (233). And upon further listening, he decides that such a frustrating task "makes her sad / and we are too" (233). Keeping in mind the song and Holiday as representative of the black soul, and her symbolic link to oppression, the water metaphors used to describe it are relatively straightforward. The water under which Holiday is pushing her syllables acts as an immobilizer and a prohibitor to the goal of cleansing, embodying an oppression under which ambitions are difficult or impossible to achieve. As he reacts to the continual pushing of the words under the water before being checked for cleanliness we gain a sense of the sadness and frustration that comes with trying to repeatedly resist the adversity that comes with this oppression. Further, as we surmise the water of a washerwoman to be contained in some sort of bucket we can further understand it as still, stagnant, and now even inescapable. Having analyzed this representation of water together with the lake metaphor and placed it into conversation with the author's understanding of the song as dark and overwhelming, we may understand Holiday's blues mood as one that encompasses all the adversity, sadness, and darkness of a permanently suffocative oppression. We can also understand Holiday and the author as powerless against it.

While Holiday and Hoagland share an adverse relationship to the oppression represented by confined water, Troupe's river description represents him as more at peace within his oppression in "Snake-Back Solo." Troupe's articulation of the blues in his poem is as straightforward as he can make it, summarily announcing in the second stanza of the poem that "my metaphor is a blues" (Young 128). He goes on to describe this blues as "hot pain dealin," a "dagger stuck off in the heart," and "moanin like bessie smith," a

prominent blues singer known for her solemnity (128). Here Troupe's blues mood initially seems to mirror Hoagland's in that it seems to evoke pain and darkness; a further description of it as that of a "broken niggah" allows us to relate it to racial oppression (128). His first use of water to describe this oppression is in the form of rain—his blues riffs are "full of rain," and as he's "riffin on in full of rain and pain" he feels his "blues filling up the wings of darkness" (128). In these lines he evokes the complicated nature of rain which possesses a huge force by way of a multitude of smaller forces. Small raindrops appear harmless, but when multiplied in the context of hurricanes and storms that contribute to collections of water they can be dangerous and even deadly—the use of rain as something that fills up and that causes its surroundings to be full speaks heavily to the smaller forces of oppression that can grow overwhelming once collectivized into an overall life experience. Thus, we can further understand his oppression as something that surrounds him with a power that is difficult to resist. However, his development of the water metaphor from raindrops into a rain-catching river allows us to see that a mere lack of resistance to his oppression does not, for him, equate to allowing himself to be overtaken by it.

Troupe then introduces his concept of a possessing a dream underneath his oppressive blues—a dream that would have been intensely, quickly, and permanently overpowered if approached with Hoagland's blues mood. Instead, he believes his dream "can become a raindrop window to see through / can become a window to see through this moment" (Young 129). Here, rather than viewing his blues as an antagonist aiding in his oppression he chooses to use the raindrop of his blues to create a space for him to "see through" it. Considering the physical implication of seeing through, this could indicate that he has utilized the transparency of the water to see what's on the other side of it—that is, to open up a window to outside possibilities that were previously unknown. Considering one idiomatic implication of seeing something through as a sort of fulfillment, seeing through a moment and fulfilling it with this window could illustrate how Troupe has successfully created a new visibility for himself out of the shadows of his oppression, allowing himself to be seen and to see others in ways that he was previously unable. Considering another idiomatic implication of seeing through a person, this statement could describe coming to an understanding that this oppressive moment is truly not what it presents itself to be—and often once someone's false appearances have been "seen through," they appear less threatening. However, regardless of the interpretation, there is an understanding of a certain type of enlightenment hidden within this pre-window environment that is not felt until it is made.

Lastly, Troupe believes his blues is capable of further developing and that it “can become a river catching rain” (Young 129). The addition of a flowing body of water is crucial to the raindrop image because it contains elements of movement; Troupe is not paralyzed by his oppression the way Hoagland is. However, this does not mean he does not still experience it—the river still catches the raindrops, and all the pain and darkness that comes with them—but it adapts to them, accepting them into its own flow and continuing to move rather than letting them, for example, fill it up sedentarily. This is not to say that Troupe’s blues mood represents defeated acceptance of one’s oppression. Rather, it represents a form of existence in the face of oppression that does not resist against that oppression as much as it has found the ability to rest within it, and subsequently finds peace in this ability. Thus a new agency within the oppression has been created not by eliminating it but by finding a way to exist in a form that is not paralyzed by it. This agency is the core of Troupe’s blues mood.

Hoagland’s stillwater blues embodied a helplessness under his oppression; Troupe’s river blues were able to find less immobilized modes of existence under his oppression. However, the metaphors of large, autonomous moving currents into oceans in Lawson Inada’s poem embody his blues as one that is able to transport him into a freer state of mind seemingly unburdened by his oppression, even if only temporarily. In “The Journey,” Inada describes himself, Miles Davis, and Billie “Lady [Day]” Holiday departing from a city in a boat. As they take off from the dock, Inada describes rowing through the water as “hard going,” “stagnant” and “meandering”—situating it in the same arenas with which we are now familiar regarding oppressive water experiences (Young 240). Inada concretely reveals the metaphorical understanding of oppression as he describes the city they’re attempting to leave behind—it “moaned and smoldered,” and the “tin cans” sat “on the banks like shackles” (240). This shackle imagery draws clearly upon slavery; when placed in conjunction with a toxic city that moans after them, and a difficult journey getting away from it on the water, we can understand both the city and the surrounding water as the familiar oppressive forces that seem to be making efforts to keep them from escaping. And it might have stopped them—“but,” Inada relays, “Miles took out his horn / and played. / Lady sang. / A slow traditional blues” (240). All of a sudden everything changes—“the current caught us - / horn, voice, oar stroking water . . . / I don’t know how long we floated” (241). The introduction and playing of the blues begin to carry them physically away from the city and metaphorically away from their oppression. It is important to note here as well the change in agency over the rowing; while initially Inada admits that “I had started to row,” at this point it is the “oar” given the agency of “stroking the water” (241). He is being carried not only out of the space

his oppression lies, but also into a space where he is no longer forced to work against it. After riding the current, he tells us, “we were entering an ocean, / sun low on water / warm as a throat, / gold as a trumpet”—and, after weeping in his freedom, “then soared into a spiritual. / Never have I been so happy” (241).

Here, even though he is in a large body of water that presumably surrounds them, he does not feel constrained—in fact, he feels free enough to use the word “soar” to describe his movement in this new body of water, and uses the instruments that have been used to create this blues—Holiday’s warm throat and Miles’ gold trumpet—as positive descriptors of the surrounding sun that sets on them out in the open. In this way the blues act as a vehicle or a propeller—driving them out of reach from an oppressive space and into a place where they can indulge in such praise-filled songs as spirituals. We may observe that the water is still physically there—the oppressive forces they signified that were initially difficult to overcome are still somewhat present (though the city is gone). However, they float on top of it rather than drown under it, and Inada does not feel burdened by it in any sense; thus the blues has also become a therapeutic, mind-clearing resource for him. In this way, Inada’s blues mood is not one that envelops him in his oppression, nor it is a setting in which he merely survives underneath or within it. Rather, Inada’s blues mood is fully transportational—capable of bearing him from a suffocated mental arena into a free mental arena where, though his existence may still *be* affected by his oppression, he does not have to *feel* its presence at all.

By understanding the blues mood as a tool used to position oneself in relation to one’s oppression, we can understand how it functions differently for different people through various forms of water. The still, contained forms of water described by Hoagland point to his blues mood as one that plays almost an antagonistic role for an experiencer feeling overwhelmed by oppression. The river and raindrop forms of water metaphorized by Troupe paint a slightly more hopeful blues mood that, while not becoming completely mobile underneath his oppression, has found ways to create moments in which it is not consumed by it. Finally, the ocean currents depicted by Inada embody a blues mood that has transportative abilities—serving an escapist function by completely lifting its experiencer out of a mental state confined by oppression and into a mental freedom, even when still physically in the presence of this oppression. In these ways water imagery expresses the capacity of the blues mood to possess universal qualities while simultaneously encompassing an ability to be defined by the experiencer. This type of metaphorical analysis works to expand our pursuits regarding blues mood to include more in-depth interpretation of the ways it operates for its architects *in addition to*

theoretically defined (though flexible) traits. Such an angle therefore has potential to prove valuable in approaching the ambiguity of the blues mood as whole.

Works Cited

Ford, Karen J. "These Old Writing Paper Blues: The Blues Stanza and Literary Poetry." *College Literature*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1997, pp. 84–103.

Young, Kevin, editor. *Jazz Poems*. 5th ed., Everyman's Library, 2006.

The Colonial Aesthetics of Cattle: Alienation and Domestication in Edward Vischer's Views of Santa Barbara, CA

Victor Chimaway Lopez, *Amherst College*

Chimaway Lopez is a senior at Amherst College, majoring in Environmental Studies and American Studies with a certificate in Indigenous Studies. He hopes that his writing on environmental history and Indigenous politics can have a positive benefit in his community.

Abstract

Santa Barbara, CA is a city heavily invested in parallel aesthetic projects: the idealization of Southern California's Mediterranean climate and the nostalgia for the Spanish range-cattle industry and its surrounding colonial infrastructure. Both tourists and settlers "fall in love" with the Santa Barbara landscape and incorporate the allure of a romanticized pastoral lifestyle into their own identity as residents of the city. This passion for the Santa Barbara landscape also has the potential to alienate residents and tourists from the very ecology they are celebrating, while simultaneously perpetuating a politics of domination that reproduces settler colonialism. Far from natural or inevitable, these specific aesthetic choices have their roots in the 19th century, where the confluence of historical and ecological aesthetic depictions of Santa Barbara can be seen in the work of merchant, adventurer, and artist Edward Vischer.

Acknowledgements

First, I am grateful to my family and community that has always supported me and continues to inspire me to this day. Second, I want to extend my utmost gratitude to my new family on the east coast which has welcomed me while I am so far away from home. This research has received important and critical feedback in its many stages from professors Lisa Brooks, Kiara Vigil, Ted Melillo, and Caterina Scaramelli, to name only a few of the many people who have influenced me in my time here in the Kwinitekw valley. I would also like to express my gratitude to Rosemary Effiom and my MMUF cohort. Lastly, I must say that none of this would be possible without the lessons I have gained from Santa Barbara, my home.

Walking through the Santa Barbara airport, the traveler is presented with memorabilia, the most provocative being t-shirts with slogans such as "Original Santa Barbara, Since 1850," and "Santa Barbara, California: Beach More, Work Less, Since 1782," emblazoned around black and white pictures of palm trees and vintage cars (Figure 1).¹ Marketed towards tourists, these shirts effectively capture two central elements of the pastoral aesthetic that forms the dominant identity of Santa Barbara: the idealization of

Southern California's Mediterranean climate and the nostalgia for the California's range-cattle industry as a symbol of Spanish and Mexican heritage. Both tourists and Settlers "fall in love" with the beauty of the Santa Barbara landscape and climate, incorporating the allure of a romanticized pastoral lifestyle into their own identity as residents of the city. Although these tropes may seem natural to many today, both are constructed in what I will argue is part of the ongoing historical process of settler-colonialism.² The goal of this paper is to contribute to the historicization of this aesthetic of Santa Barbara, and, by tracing it back to the 19th century, to denaturalize its existence.

The incentive for reproducing this aesthetic is on one level economic. The official reports of the city remind us that tourism remains Santa Barbara's number one industry, making it an important revenue generator for both public and private institutions.³ Here, Santa Barbara is depicted as a marketable place of luxury where its endless summers and romantic history welcome those able to spend time and money. I hope to illustrate that these performances of natural and cultural aesthetics are not merely a facade or economic ploy. As Margaret Warry has observed, the imaginaries, myths, and histories that are curated towards tourists can also act as the guiding principles of being that allow settlers to "shape, picture, perceive, and feel (or feel a part of)" Santa Barbara as a place.⁴ The production of place as welcoming, healthy, and comfortable to tourists and settlers is part of what I will refer to as the aesthetic of domestication, by which I mean the pattern of choices and judgments that works to make the tourist/settler feel at home in Santa Barbara.⁵ Towards demonstrating this conclusion, I will look at the landscape views of Bavarian-born merchant, artist, and adventurer Edward Vischer as "potent ideological spaces" that work to "naturalize California's valorized settler colonial narratives," where reproductions of the Santa Barbara landscape are entangled with the production of Santa Barbara as settler-domestic space.⁶

Beginning in earnest in 1860 and working until his death in 1879, Vischer published collections of his prodigious drawings, sketches, and watercolor views of the California landscape in the form of portfolios.⁷ Vischer's portfolios pair sketches and watercolor with textual frames, offering the possibility for close analysis between ecology, history, and aesthetics. The dual historical-environmental subject captured in his landscape reproductions present a unique opportunity to historicize the aesthetic project that is embedded within existence in Santa Barbara today. Vischer's views represent a "work of love," capturing his own vision of California on paper, including multiple images of Santa Barbara mission and the surrounding area.⁸ Following Rochelle Johnson, I

see Vischer's "passion" for the natural beauty of California as part of an alienating aesthetic, where nature is consumed as a metaphor for history, politics, and culture, to the effect of obfuscating the ecological conditions of Santa Barbara and its surrounding area.⁹ However, Johnson's analysis does not fully connect the production of these aesthetic evaluations of nature to the logics of settler-colonialism. My aesthetic of domestication, then, is a complementary lens that highlights settler-colonialism as the underlying link between performances of history and celebrations of landscape that define the "pastoral" in Santa Barbara.

Alienation and the Anti-Ecological Passion for Nature

Stock raising, too, is much more profitable [in the south] than elsewhere in California, for fodder grows abundantly in this region, where there is plenty of water.

—Edward Vischer, Pueblo de los Angeles,
November 1842.¹⁰

When Edward Vischer first visited California in 1842, he witnessed the Mexican range-cattle industry during its ascendancy. Cattle numbered 448,796 by 1852 and by 1859 there were over one million cattle foraging in California. Yet by 1870, when Vischer was especially prolific in his artistic endeavors, the range-cattle industry was in decline.¹¹ The decline of the cattle-based economy was also associated with a shift of power away from the elite Californio families that had owned the ranches. Vischer understood this historical transition as a sign of the superiority of the "Anglo-Saxon element," with his role as an artist to "preserve from oblivion some few momentos of the missionary and pastoral era of California" before they would inevitably fade into history.¹²

Both the cause of the political dissolution of the Californio elite and the validity of the romantic notion of the California Ranchos have been points of contention for historians, with scholars pushing back against the notion of the cultural "backwardness" of Californios and the elitist nature of the imagery of pastoral leisure.¹³ However as Andrew Isenberg notes, this debate largely neglects the role of environmental agency in the collapse of the range-cattle industry during the second half of the 19th century. Isenberg's work documents how the extreme hydrological cycle of Mediterranean climates, coupled with the destabilization of grasslands ecosystems by the introduction of domesticated ungulates, played a major role in the industry's decline.¹⁴ Vischer's inability to see the centrality of ecological factors in the decline of the rancho points to an anti-ecological tendency within his work, where his celebration of Santa Barbara's natural beauty actually alienates him from the landscape's ecological conditions.¹⁵ This is not to say that

Vischer was not dedicated to accurately reproducing the natural landscape of California. In his own words, his "main object is to represent the leading characteristics of the *natural conditions of the country*," a task that led him to seek the approval of scientists and naturalists in his commitment to reproducing the geological and botanical physiognomy of California.¹⁶ Despite this commitment to a "true" representation of the California landscape, Vischer favored the depiction of mountains, foothills, and giant sequoias, failing to capture the agricultural fields, rolling prairies, and swamps which he equated to monotonous wastes, deserving to be left out simply because they were "devoid of pictorial interest."¹⁷ Clearly there are significant representational choices present in Vischer's work, judgments that form an outline of Vischer's aesthetic system. Vischer's numerous representations of colonial infrastructure, for example, clash with the sublime and timeless wilderness of the mountain range or the magisterial trees, yet, unlike the reject landscapes, they remain centered in Vischer's paintings. What is it about the pastoral landscape of the "rudely built but all the more picturesque" missions and ranchos that captured Vischer's imagination?¹⁸

Vischer's choices to include his pastoral views in complement to California's more wild scenery can be better understood when we consider its place as a metaphor for progress and civilization, a subliminal historical position that justifies Anglo-Saxon settlement of Santa Barbara. In her analysis of the paintings of Thomas Cole, another 19th-century painter famous for his picturesque nature scenes, Johnson argues that his work subsumes the landscapes he paints within a metaphor for human history, in which he centers the inevitability of civilization.¹⁹ Wilderness scenes and medieval ruins were symbols of progress in that they embodied their potential as historical stages, already moving forward towards the triumph of civilization. For Cole's elite New England audience, the site of a crumbling ruin was not a signal for anxiety over the possibility of decline, but a monument to the human ability to conquer the natural world.²⁰ Considering this, it is significant Vischer's use of mission and ranch imagery matches onto a linear historical narrative, where the "beacons of transition" (i.e., the ranches and missions) will pave the way for more civilized colonizers.²⁰ The pastoral, just like the wilderness, is beautiful *because* it represents a stage of human history, part of Vischer's narrative that posits settlement as inevitable and natural.²¹

Considering Johnson's argument, we can see how the defunct Mission infrastructure gave Vischer a set of ruins from which to conjure an image of historical progress. Unlike Cole, who added fictional ruins to the American landscape, Vischer only needed to turn to the missions and ranchos as a civilizing metaphor. Just as he celebrated the missions as a

site of a unique pastoral aesthetic, Vischer also felt that the time of the missions had come to pass, stating that for “all the charm of primitive and patriarchal conditions . . . we must yet acknowledge that they belong to institutions which have outlived their usefulness.”²² This aesthetics of progress can be seen in Vischer’s “Mission-Ruins: The dilapidated guardhouse at the Sta. Barbara Mission” (Figure 2), where the crumbling walls and rotting thatch of the shanty seem to make room for the new wave of Anglo-Saxon settlers to which Vischer presents his work. By emphasizing the collapse of the missions and rancho’s as the natural course of history, Vischer not only captures a landscape ready to be settled by enterprising Americans, he also ignores the ecological contradictions that might complicate this narrative of human dominance over the wild natural world.

Johnson’s conclusion suggests that these extreme assertions of metaphor found in the artwork of Cole and Vischer are deeply imbedded within our contemporary imagination, a root cause of our ongoing environmental issues. Retrospectively viewing Vischer’s desire to reproduce a triumphalist narrative that presents California as settler-domestic space, his observation of the abundance of range-fodder and water in southern California takes on an apocryphal tone. The fact that Vischer could not see the destruction that drought and ecological fragmentation had caused the 19th-century range-cattle industry is significant, especially considering the lasting significance of this same mission and rancho imagery today.²³ We should be concerned at the possibility that Santa Barbara continues to inherit these anti-ecological tendencies today.

Domestication and Settler Anxiety

In any case, [the missions are] a transition from the completely barbaric condition of the heathen savage to the benefits of human society. They lose their freedom, but their subsistence is assured . . .
—Edward Vischer, Monterey end of October 1842.²⁴

In addition to critiquing the 19th-century aesthetics of alienation, Rochelle Johnson posits an alternative framework based on “a detailed knowledge of [nature’s] particulars,” where direct observation can be used to alleviate our alienation from nature and replace it with an “aesthetics of humility.”²⁵ However compelling, this conclusion fails to provide a complete answer to Vischer’s narrative project. After all, Vischer took great pains to truthfully represent California’s scenery, detailing the “outlines of ranges and stratifications” and the “characteristics of vegetable growth.”²⁶ As such, I will argue that the metaphors of progress, improvement, and reason that Johnson examines are not just culturally important but politically expedient, tied

to justifying settler-colonialism as a system of domination.²⁷ A further examination of Vischer’s aesthetics through the metaphor of domestication allows for a more fundamental critique of how these aesthetic choices reproduce settler domesticity in Santa Barbara.

The importance of the metaphor of domestication is in its ability to link the multiple levels of colonial domination that are present in Santa Barbara history: mapping and improving wilderness, civilizing and educating “wild” Indigenous populations, and securing a national domestic space. Domestication, in this sense, is representative of a hierarchical power relationship of human over animal or civilization over wilderness.²⁸ John Fischer notes that introduction of cattle was an important means of collapsing Indigenous people and geographies into Spanish dominion, stating that both “land and people would be ‘civilized’ through the care of livestock.”²⁹ Cattle as domesticated animals were seen as a means to improve (i.e., domesticate) the wild landscape and its inhabitants, making it safe for the reproduction of settler existence.

The landscape Vischer creates in “Cattle-drove (northward-bound for a market) passing the valley of Santa Barbara” (Figure 3) illustrates this multifaceted nature of the aesthetics of domestication, where the cattle are disciplined by California Native peoples, who served as the primary labor force for the California ranches.³⁰ In turn, Chumash people are civilized by missionaries who’s institution holds a dominant position in the landscape, overlooking both “herds” as they pass.³¹ Considering that Vischer saw California’s Native peoples as “below the level of an animal,” his imagery of the missionaries tending to the “spiritual welfare of their flock” seems more significant than a simple rhetorical turn of phrase.³² In this way Vischer’s pastoral mission scene is triply domestic. As the disciplines of religion and stock-raising are endured side by side, we see the process by which the landscape itself is incorporated into the settler-nation, changing from wilderness to domesticated space.

This aesthetic of domestication suggests that Vischer’s anti-ecological tendencies are not due to his lack of interest in representing ecological particularities, but in how he relates to these particularities as a whole. Even as Vischer comprehended Santa Barbara’s material reality, he saw the landscape as agentless and under settler dominion. Yet, the settlement of the California was in fact a dangerous project that often seemed anything but inevitable.³³ Settlers were highly concerned about the relative salubrity of these new landscapes and their ability to reproduce settler-domestic space in new climates and ecologies. Perhaps the importance of this aesthetic of domestication, then, is to alleviate

this ecological anxiety, providing settlers with a triumphant narrative that is both emotionally potent and politically appealing. Even though many settlers could not escape the material realities of the California ecology, those of relative wealth such as Vischer could ignore these unsettling agencies, creating a legacy that avoided memories of colonial precarity, instead favoring the comfort and luxury of domesticated pastoral imagery.

Conclusion

I have attempted to show how the appeal of the pastoral landscape of Santa Barbara corresponds with a desire to see settler-colonialism as natural, inevitable, and therefore justified. Such representations of the Santa Barbara continue to be culturally resonant because they alleviate anxieties over the precariousness of the settler status quo, especially as its “ontological security” is increasingly challenged by the realities of the Anthropocene.³⁴ What this argument suggests is that the dominant place of the pastoral in Santa Barbara’s self-image and its corresponding colonial subjectivity may guide residents and visitors towards a view of nature and history that is concerning because of its tendency to ignore ecological disaster. Until we confront this aesthetics of domestication, these foundational understandings of Santa Barbara as comforting and welcoming to tourist/settlers, we may not be able to act in a way that avoids repeating the ecological collapse of 19th-century cattle ranching. In orienting ourselves towards this disaster as a site of anxiety, this paper calls for further research that looks towards articulating an alternative aesthetic in the hopes to generate judgements and choices about Santa Barbara that will allow for a clearer path towards a sustainable future.



Figure 1: T-shirts in a tourist shop at the Santa Barbara airport, photograph taken by author (2019).



Figure 2: Edward Vischer, "Mission-Ruins: The Dilapidated Guardhouse at the Sta. Barbara Mission" (1865).

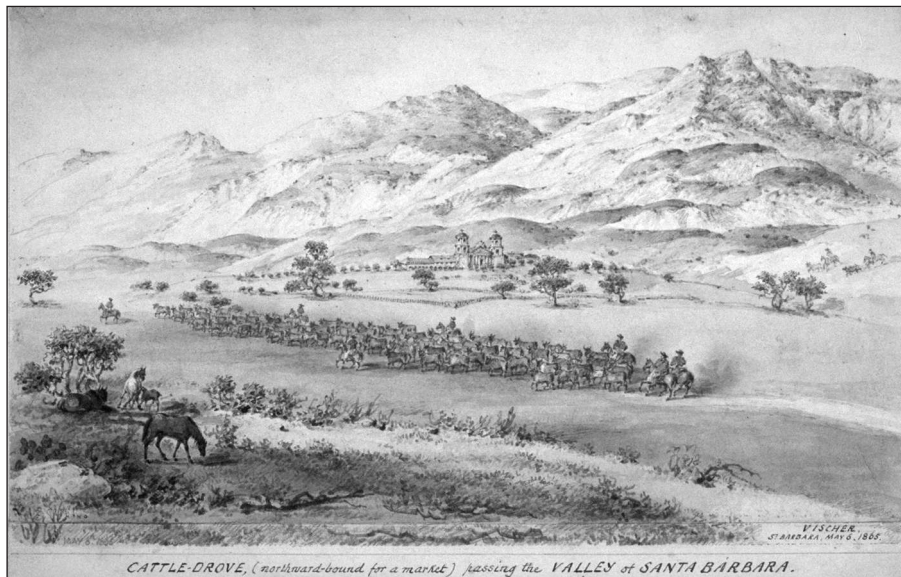


Figure 3: Edward Vischer, "Cattle-Drove (Northward-Bound for a Market) Passing the Valley of Santa Barbara" (1865).

Endnotes

On archives and primary sources: A significant portion of Vischer's work, including the portfolios, is readily available from the Claremont Colleges Digital Library under the collection "Edward Vischer Drawings, Photographs, and Other Material." <http://ccdlib.claremont.edu/col/vdp>. Importantly, Vischer's *The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico, and Reminiscences* is actually two separate books, one with his landscape views, and the other a companion text. For clarity I have chosen to designate them volume 1 and 2 respectively. Important digitizations of his original watercolors can be accessed by the Online Archives of California, contributed by the Bancroft Library, in the collection "The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico and Reminiscences, ca. 1850–1878" <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf809nb6x4/>. Figure 2 and Figure 3 are from these digitized Bancroft originals. Hubert Vischer's biographical reflection on his father, titled *Edward Vischer & his "Pictorials of California"* is also at the Bancroft Library.

- 1782 and 1850 are both well-known turning points in Santa Barbara's history: 1782 being when the Spanish finished construction on the Presidio of Santa Barbara, the first permanent Spanish presence in the region; and 1850 being the year when Santa Barbara city and county were incorporated as part of the State of California.
- The concept of settler-colonialism importantly rejects the "blue water" or "salt water" definitions of colonialism that argue that colonization requires a spatial separation; see Audrey Jane Roy, "Sovereignty and Decolonization," and Robert Nelson, "Introduction." The concept of settler-colonialism emphasizes the uniqueness of Indigenous people in relation to settler logics of disposition and elimination; see Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" and Kēhaulani Kauanui, "A Structure, Not an Event." Understanding colonialism as a historical process is drawn from Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- Samaro, Robert. "Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: City of Santa Barbara, CA," 2018.
- Margaret Werry, *The Tourist State*, xvi.
- While the concept of aesthetics has many important and nuanced implications within philosophy of aesthetics and aesthetic theory, I am attempting to evoke a general understanding of aesthetics as the underlying structures or patterns of logic that produce value judgments and choices about representation. For an overview of applying aesthetics to political and cultural contexts see Ole Hylland and Erling Bjurström, *Aesthetics and Politics*. The importance of the concept of aesthetics in this case is its ability to link every day actions, feelings, and policy decisions with political structures and concepts of power, such as colonialism or ideology. For a similar project see Crispin Sartwell, *Political Aesthetics*. See Adria Imada, *Aloha America*, for important analysis of the settler production of "welcoming" places.
- Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, *California Mission Landscapes*, 4. Recent scholarship on Santa Barbara has begun to build a complex understanding of the production of natural and cultural value within the city. Andrew McCumber, Patricia Anne Hardwick, and Elizabeth Kryder-Reid have argued that the dominant narratives of Santa Barbara act as an aesthetic scaffolding that guide understandings of place, identity, and nature, highlighting the importance of narrative and performance in shaping memory, heritage, and everyday social and ecological relationships. This research builds off their work, exemplifying how this aesthetic tradition is rooted in 19th-century narratives that justify settler presence through representations of Santa Barbara's history and environment. See Andrew McCumber, "Building 'Natural' Beauty"; Andrew McCumber and Patrick Neil Dryden, "#Nature"; Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, "Perennially New," Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, "Crafting the Past," Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, *California Mission Landscapes*; Patricia Hardwick, "The Spirit of Fiesta," Patricia Hardwick, "The Old Spanish Days Fiesta in Santa Barbara, California." I am adapting the terminology of settler-domestic from the concept of the "settler-national domestic" in Beth Piatote, *Domestic Subjects*, 4.
- Edward Vischer was born in 1809 in Regensburg, Bavaria. At 19 he traveled to Mexico to work for an important merchant firm, traveling all over the Pacific as a supercargo before settling in San Francisco. See Hubert Vischer, *Edward Vischer & His "Pictorials of California,"* for the most comprehensive source of biographical information. Vischer's main audience was probably a American intellectual elite growing among wealthy settlers in the urban centers of California, such as the Society of California Pioneers, to whom his 1872 publication of *The Mission Era* is dedicated.
- Edward Vischer, *The Mission Era* vol. 2, 1.
- Rochelle Johnson, *Passions for Nature*.
- Erwin Gudde, "Edward Vischer's First Visit to California," 203.
- These demographic figures and their subsequent decline are presented in Andrew Isenberg, *Mining California*, 103. Also see R. Lois Gentilcore, "Missions and Mission Lands of Alta California" and R. H. Allen, "The Spanish Land Grant System as an Influence in the Agricultural Development of California."
- Edward Vischer, *Vischer's Pictorial of California*, 2.
- Raymond Padilla, "A Critique of Pittian History," is a pointed example of this critical position. See George Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros*, and Andrew Isenberg, *Mining California*, for overviews of the historiography.
- Andrew Isenberg, *Mining California*. See Ingrid Hendy, Tiffany Napier, and Arndt Schimmelmann, "From Extreme Rainfall to Drought," for an analysis of the Santa Barbara climate and hydrological cycle. Significant exceptions to Isenberg's historiographical argument are Hazel Pulling, "Range Forage and California's RangeCattle Industry" (although Pulling fails to come to the same conclusion about these observations and their nostalgia for a lost landscape is perhaps more in line with Vischer upon a close reading) and R.H. Allen, "The Spanish Land Grant System as an Influence in the Agricultural Development of California," who is more critical of romantic notions of California.
- Rochelle Johnson, *Passions for Nature*. The concept of the anti-ecological aesthetic of Santa Barbara comes from Andrew McCumber and Patrick Dryden, "#Nature."
- Edward Vischer, *Vischer's Pictorial of California*, 3 (emphasis in original).
- Ibid.
- Edward Vischer, *The Mission Era*, vol. 1, 1.
- Rochelle Johnson, *Passions for Nature*.
- Vischer, *The Mission Era*, vol. 1, 1.
- For a discussion of the significance of "wilderness" in the American imagination see William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness."
- Edward Vischer, *The Mission Era*, vol. 2, 1.
- Andrew Isenberg, *Mining California*.
- Erwin Gudde, "Edward Vischer's First Visit to California," 199.
- Rochelle Johnson, *Passions for Nature*, 236.
- Edward Vischer, *Vischer's Pictorial of California*, 4.
- For examples of colonialism linked to concepts of domination see Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, Steven Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land*, and Ronald Horvath, "A Definition of Colonialism."
- See Billy-Ray Belcourt, "Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects," and James Scott, *Against the Grain*.
- John Fischer, *Cattle Colonialism*, 15.
- See Seven Hackel, "Land, Labor, and Production," and George Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros*, for Native labor in California.
- For descriptions of the missionaries disciplinary project, the use of herding imagery, and their anxiety over indigenous self-sufficiency, see Glenn Farris, "Depriving God and the King of the Means of Charity."
- Erwin Gudde, "Edward Vischer's First Visit to California," 199. Edward Vischer, *Vischer's Pictorial of California*, 9.
- Linda Nash, "Finishing Nature."
- Kari Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 37. Following Heather Davis and Zoe Todd, "On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene," I am using Anthropocene as a self-critical term that betrays itself as a universalizing project of colonialism.

Works Cited

- Allen, R. H. "The Spanish Land Grant System as an Influence in the Agricultural Development of California." *Agricultural History* 9, no. 3 (1935): 127–42.
- Belcourt, Billy-Ray. "Animal Bodies, Colonial Subjects: (Re) Locating Animality in Decolonial Thought." *Societies* 5, no. 1 (24 December 2014): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc5010001>.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Indigenous Americas. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.
- Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (January 1996): 7. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3985059>.
- Davis, Heather, and Zoe Todd. "On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16, no. 4 (2017): 20.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Farris, Glenn J. "Depriving God and the King of the Means of Charity: Early Nineteenth-Century Missionaries' Views of Cattle Ranchers near Mission La Purisima, California." In *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions: New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Lee Panich and Tsim D. Schneider, 135–53. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2014.
- Fischer, John Ryan. *Cattle Colonialism: An Environmental History of the Conquest of California and Hawai'i (Flows, Migrations, and Exchanges)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Gentilcore, R. Louis. "Missions and Mission Lands of Alta California." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51, no. 1 (March 1961): 46–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1961.tb00368.x>.
- Gudde, Erwin Gustav. "Edward Vischer's First Visit to California." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 19, no. 3 (1940): 193–216. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25160885>.
- Hackel, Steven W. "Land, Labor, and Production: The Colonial Economy of Spanish and Mexican California." *California History* 76, no. 2/3 (1997): 111–46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25161664>.
- Hardwick, Patricia Ann. "The Old Spanish Days Fiesta in Santa Barbara, California: Cultural Hybridity, Colonial Mythologies and the Romanticization of a Latino Heritage." *Humanities Diliman* 7, no. 2 (2010): 60–94.
- _____. "The Spirit of Fiesta: Costume and the Performance of History, Community, and Identity during Santa Barbara's Old Spanish Days." *Midwestern Folklore* 32, no. 1 (2006): 67–81.
- Hendy, Ingrid L., Tiffany J. Napier, and Arndt Schimmelmann. "From Extreme Rainfall to Drought: 250 Years of Annually Resolved Sediment Deposition in Santa Barbara Basin, California." *Quaternary International*, Proceedings of the 26th Pacific Climate Workshop, 387 (2015): 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2015.01.026>.
- Horvath, Ronald J. "A Definition of Colonialism." *Current Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (1972): 45–57.
- Hylland, Ole Marius, and Erling Bjurström. *Aesthetics and Politics: A Nordic Perspective on How Cultural Policy Negotiates the Agency of Music and Arts*. New Directions in Cultural Policy Research. Springer International Publishing, 2018.
- Imada, Adria L. *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Isenberg, Andrew C. *Mining California: An Ecological History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2005.
- Johnson, Rochelle. *Passions for Nature: Nineteenth-Century America's Aesthetics of Alienation*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009.
- Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. "'A Structure, Not an Event': Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity." *Lateral*, 1 June 2016. <http://csalateral.org/issue/5-1/forum-alt-humanities-settler-colonialism-enduring-indigeneity-kauanui/>.
- Kryder-Reid, Elizabeth. *California Mission Landscapes: Race, Memory, and the Politics of Heritage. Architecture, Landscape, and American Culture*. University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- _____. "Crafting the Past: Mission Models and the Curation of California Heritage." *Heritage & Society* 8, no. 1 (May 2015): 60–83.
- _____. "'Perennially New': Santa Barbara and the Origins of the California Mission Garden." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, no. 3 (2010): 378. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2010.69.3.378>.
- McCumber, Andrew. "Building 'Natural' Beauty: Drought and the Shifting Aesthetics of Nature in Santa Barbara, California." *Nature and Culture* 12, no. 3 (1 January 2017). <https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2017.120303>.
- McCumber, Andrew, and Patrick Neil Dryden. "#Nature: Postmodern Narrative, Place, and Nature in Santa Barbara, CA." *Environmental Sociology* 3, no. 3 (2017): 286–96.
- Nash, Linda. "Finishing Nature: Harmonizing Bodies and Environments in Late-Nineteenth-Century California." *Environmental History* 8, no. 1 (January 2003): 25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3985971>.
- Nelson, Robert L. "Introduction: Colonialism in Europe? The Case against Salt Water." In *Germans, Poland, and Colonial Expansion to the East: 1850 Through the Present*, 1–9. Studies in European Culture and History, 2015.

- Newcomb, Steven T. *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Books, 2008.
- Norgaard, Kari Marie. *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011.
- Padilla, Raymond V. "A Critique of Pittian History." *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican American Thought* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1972): 3–44.
- Phillips, George Harwood. *Vineyards and Vaqueros: Indian Labor and the Economic Expansion of Southern California, 1771–1877*. Before Gold: California under Spain and Mexico: V. 1. Norman, Oklahoma: Arthur H Clark, 2010.
- Piatote, Beth H. *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*. The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Pulling, Hazel Adele. "Range Forage and California's Range Cattle Industry." *The Historian* 7, no. 2 (1945): 113–29.
- Roy, Audrey Jane. "Sovereignty and Decolonization: Realizing Indigenous Self-Determination at the United Nations and in Canada." M.A., Cornell, 1998.
- Samario, Robert. "Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: City of Santa Barbara, CA," 2018. Sartwell, Crispin. *Political Aesthetics*. Cornell University Press, 2010.
- Scott, James C. *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*. Yale Agrarian Studies. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.
- Vischer, Edward. *Cattle-Drove (Northward-Bound for a Market) Passing the Valley of Santa Barbara*. (Cf. *Vischer Pictorial* p. 115). 1865. Watercolor. The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico and Reminiscences. Online Archive of California. <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf25800609/?layout=metadata&brand=oac4>.
- _____. *Mission-Ruins: The Dilapidated Guardhouse at the Sta. Barbara Mission. View towards the Bay. Supplementary Drawings of 1873*. 1873. Watercolor. The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico and Reminiscences. Online Archive of California. <https://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/tf6k4009gv/?brand=oac4>.
- _____. *The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico, and Reminiscences*. Vol. 1. Edward Vischer Drawings, Photographs and Other Material, 1872. <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/vdp/id/1002>.
- _____. *The Mission Era: California Under Spain and Mexico, and Reminiscences*. Vol. 2. Edward Vischer Drawings, Photographs and Other Material. Claremont College Digital Archives, 1872. <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/vdp/id/1066>.
- _____. *Vischer's Pictorial of California*. Edward Vischer Drawings, Photographs and Other Material. Claremont College Digital Archives, 1870. <http://ccdlib.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/vdp/id/1332>.
- Vischer, Hubert. *Edward Vischer & His "Pictorials of California:" A Biographical Sketch as Told by Hubert Vischer to Francis P. Farquhar in November 1930, & January 1931*. Edited by Francis p. Farquhar. San Francisco, 1932.
- Werry, Margaret. *The Tourist State: Performing Leisure, Liberalism, and Race in New Zealand*. A Quadrant Book. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 387–409.

Contesting Public Discourse: How Latino/a/x Print Media Reframes Narratives of Immigration in the Age of IRCA

Anabel Mendoza, *Northwestern University*

Anabel Mendoza is a fourth-year student at Northwestern University. As an undergraduate she double majored in Journalism and Latino/a/x Studies and has since enrolled in Medill's Accelerated Master's Program where she is pursuing her master's in social justice and investigative journalism. As an undergraduate, she conducted research on Latino/a/x immigration activism, the Chicano Movement, and the political and social framing of Latino/a/x immigration in both mainstream media and Latino/a/x press during the late 20th century. She has had the honor of presenting her research at the Latino/a Studies Association conference in Washington, D.C. in 2018 and has also served as a research assistant within Northwestern's Latino/a Studies Program. Anabel recently completed her senior thesis entitled "Humanizing América: A Framework for Ethical Media Reporting on Latino/a/x Immigration." In the future, Anabel hopes to pursue a PhD in Latino/a Studies.

Abstract

Mass media coverage of immigration plays a powerful role in shaping public thought and cultivating dominant narratives of immigrant populations in the U.S. Through its subtle but nevertheless complex strategies used to discuss Latino/a/x immigration, mainstream media, in particular, often produces and legitimizes a misrepresentative discourse that can have detrimental implications on minoritized immigrant communities. Leading scholars of Latino/a/x Media Studies such as Dolores Ines Casillas, Otto Santa Ana, and Leo Chavez, examine mainstream media coverage of contemporary Latino/a/x immigration, particularly studying how various mediums disseminate problematic tropes of Latino/a/x migrant communities as a disease of, or threat to, the United States. However, few scholars have examined the role of alternative (non-mainstream) print media coverage of Latino/a/x migration. As such, this paper serves as a case study of how one non-mainstream, bilingual newspaper based in Chicago, *El Chicago Latino*, worked to articulate the inhumane and discriminatory practices Latino/a/x migrants faced during the 1980s—a period of significant growth in the population of Latino/a/x migrants within the U.S.—while simultaneously attempting to combat the ramifications mainstream media's dominant discourse has on this population. I argue that, by combatting the oppressive, anti-immigrant constructions of mainstream media through its humanization of migrant experiences, including labor exploitation, violence and even death, *El Chicago Latino* serves as a form of counter-storying and Latino/a/x resistance.

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude goes to Professor Myrna García for her loyal support, guidance, and mentorship throughout my undergraduate career and research endeavors. Prof G, you have never failed to encourage me to aim high in my academic goals and to take risks exploring new projects and opportunities, and I feel incredibly grateful and blessed to have you as my mentor. This article is dedicated to you.

Introduction

"Language creates the very action it describes."

—Schmidt-Camacho, 169

Within the context of the United States, media outlets—whether that be print, online, broadcast or film—hold an unprecedented power to influence public thought and motivate policy changes that have historically proved detrimental to the wellbeing of the nation's racialized and minoritized communities.

Often the most salient finds of Latino/a/x¹ media scholarship demonstrate how, in particular, mainstream newspapers disseminate harmful metaphorical language that works to shape a dominant narrative of Latino/a/x migrants as subhuman. Still, there exists little literature investigating how racialized and minoritized communities discuss Latino/a/x immigration, especially in moments of Latino/a/x migrants' heightened visibility in political debates, such as during the 1980s, when the increasing population of Latinos/as/xs in the United States "was widely viewed as a national political, economic, and cultural force," dubbing the time period the "Decade of the Hispanic" (Falcón).

To contextualize, between 1980 and 2000, the population of Latinos/as/xs in the U.S. began to increase dramatically from 14.6 million Latinos/as/xs at the start of the '80s to slightly over 35 million by the beginning of the 21st century (Schmidt-Camacho, 200). Several scholars such as Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, Bill Ong Hing, and Alicia Schmidt Camacho, attribute this rapid population growth, in large part, to U.S. supported political and economic pressures that led Latinos/as/xs to immigrate from their respective Latin American countries to the States. More pointedly, Bill Ong Hing's analysis of globalization and Mexican migration in his text *Ethical Borders* reveals "that many of the economic challenges Mexico faces are directly linked to policies that have been supported by the United States, U.S. corporations, or institutions supported by United States" (5). It has been a historical pattern of the United States' political relations and interests in Latin

America that have often spurred financial and legislative strains that have bolstered Latino/a/x immigration at large (Ong Hing, 61–62). Nonetheless, this increase in Latino/a/x migrants was met with grave public concern regarding the well-being of the nation and its citizens, ultimately contributing to then-President Ronald Reagan's passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986.

Critically, IRCA increased militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border and provided a conditional amnesty provision to nearly three million undocumented migrants that was intended to provide the U.S. with a supply of cheap labor. Scholars such as Mae Ngai and Alicia Schmidt Camacho have studied the ways in which the United States attempts to demarcate the labor from the individual by only desiring the *work* migrant workers provide but not necessarily the migrants themselves. Similarly, IRCA sought to profit off of migrant workers' labor in the guise of providing them with amnesty. However, the law's amnesty clause was not only conditional but continued to gloss over the ways the policy continued to dehumanize Latino/a/x migrants. Specifically, as Martha Escobar emphasizes in her text, *Captivity Beyond Prisons*, IRCA established three main provisions: employer sanctions, amnesty for a limited number of undocumented migrants and increased border militarization, each of which perpetuated the criminalization of Latino/a/x migrants (57–58).

By analyzing early 1980s coverage from *El Chicago Latino* leading up to IRCA's passage, I propose that the article I examine serves as an example of how the newspaper disseminated "counter stories" or "counter narratives," as the story works to center migrants' lived experiences of abuse and neglect in order to humanize their everyday realities, further calling attention to how their mistreatment paralleled the misrepresentative, dehumanizing language of mainstream press. For this paper, I rely on the definition of "counter-storying" and "counter-narratives" provided by Suzanne McKenzie-Mohr and Michelle LaFrance in their text, *Narrative Resistance in Social Work Research and Practice: Counter-storying in the Pursuit of Social Justice*. McKenzie-Mohr and LaFrance write, "when narratives are oppressive in their consequences, they warrant contestation, and in such circumstances counter narratives support people in telling new and more helpful stories for their lives . . . They provide another account which is rooted in the material consequences of persons' lives and attends to [how] power is exercised" (189–205). As Latino/a/x media scholars have demonstrated the ways in which mainstream media's inhumane and unjust language shapes public consciousness, also referred to as discursivity,² I seek to consider the perspectives and voices that do not exist through mainstream networks in order to understand what other discourses about Latino/a/x immigration are being shaped during this time period.

The Violence of Language

It goes without saying that our words hold power: power to inspire, to ignite fear, to change minds or solidify beliefs. What we say, and *how* we say it, matters. In his text, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, Otto Santa Ana examines hundreds of *Los Angeles Times* articles published during the 1990s, specifically surrounding three California referendums: Proposition 187, 209, and 227 (54, 67). Particular to the framework of my research, Santa Ana's findings with regard to Proposition 187 articulate the *LA Times*' repeated publication of several negative metaphors referring to Latino/a/x migrants most popularly as floods of dangerous water, as threatening animals, diseases, and/or as alarmist invaders (69). Santa Ana argues that the use of such metaphors reflects and shapes the public's ideologies and subsequent actions used to stop immigration. For instance, the ways in which one would traditionally try to prevent/stop a flood, such as building a dam, could also be translated to material responses to immigration in the form of aggressive and violent Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents beating migrants or government actions to build a wall, preventing migrants from entering the U.S., the same way one would stop a flood from entering their home. Within the realm of print media, Leo R. Chavez adds a critical analysis of images within media, focusing largely on Latino immigration and its representation across 76 magazine covers from 10 different U.S. magazine publications from 1965 to 1999 in his text *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*. His findings reveal a shift in the media's representation of the U.S. as once a proud "nation of immigrants" to its increasingly anti-immigrant sentiments and anxieties which mirror rhetoric found in nationwide policies intended to repudiate immigration (Escobar, 176).

In order to critically understand the ways in which *El Chicago Latino* attempts to recuperate the humanity of Latino/a/x migrants, one must first and foremost contextualize its coverage along the backdrop of one of mainstream media's most prevailing metaphors, which characterized immigrants as animalistic. Otto Santa Ana expands upon the narrative of "IMMIGRANTS AS ANIMALS" in his investigation of the *Los Angeles Times* throughout the 1990s, whereupon he acknowledges the two-fold power of mainstream media to not only control *what* news gets disseminated to the larger public but also, *how* that news can be manipulated and shaped to portray a specific message (51). With regards to popular media coverage of immigration, Santa Ana's findings articulate how mainstream media's consistent use of dehumanizing language and rhetoric that describes "hunting," "curbing," and "devouring" immigrants, akin to what one might do to livestock, begins to legitimize the

discourse of “IMMIGRANTS AS ANIMALS” as truth (84). As this dehumanizing language used to describe migrants is repeated, recycled, and republished, it promotes a seemingly natural way of thinking about migrants and immigration in its entirety. In fact, Professor of Cognitive Psychology David Rapp discusses the long-term effects the dissemination of misinformation and misrepresenting discourse has on a person’s judgment and reasoning, and more specifically, how false statements have the power to become so ingrained and familiar within public consciousness, that they become nearly impossible to correct (17–19). He writes, “the fact that people receive much of their information from potentially unreliable sources such as celebrities, popular ‘infotainment’ TV shows, and non-expert websites poses a problem in particular because it is known that misinformation continues to exert an influence on people’s opinions even after it has been retracted” (14). We become accustomed to these false, harmful dialects, taking them as fact and often repeating the falsehoods within our everyday speech or writing, all without taking into account the real-world implications of our language.

With regards to my research, Santa Ana and Chavez provide an essential foundation for which to understand popular public and media discourse regarding Latino/a/x immigration. However, given both scholars’ primary focus on mainstream print outlets, there remains little knowledge production on non-mainstream, print outlets that is specific to the growing concerns over Latino/a/x immigration in the 1980s, which is precisely the gap in Latino/a/x media scholarship this paper contributes to.

Methodology

In order to critically examine how Chicago’s non-mainstream Latino/a/x newspapers articulated and responded to mainstream media’s harmful rhetoric and framing of Latino/a/x immigration, I rooted my methodology in a discourse and media analysis approach to investigate how power structures and social groups are expressed through written language and dominant metaphors. Additionally, I conducted archival research at the Chicago History Museum to locate remaining records of Chicago’s Latino/a/x newspapers, which, unfortunately, do not exist in complete databases or collections. Due to the sparsity of the city’s Latino/a/x non-mainstream newspaper collections, I selected *El Chicago Latino*, a free, weekly, bilingual newspaper serving Chicago’s Latino community due to the timeframe of its circulation and the newspaper’s relevance in discussing Latino/a/x immigration concerns. I have continued to conduct archival research on other Latino/a/x newspapers in Chicago during the 1980s, of which *El Chicago Latino* serves a snapshot of my larger research endeavors.

El Chicago Latino

On August 28, 1981, *El Chicago Latino* published a feature story on the unsettling level of pesticide poisoning affecting Latino/a/x migrant farm workers in several Texan cotton, grain, and vegetable fields. Headlined “Life expectancy shorter for migrant workers,” the article begins:

Andrea Gonzales was working in an onion field under the summer sun when the noise of an approaching airplane caught her attention. As the pregnant 33-year-old woman and 14 other Mexican-American farm workers looked up, a yellow biplane flew low over the field and began spraying. She and many others of the workers were covered with a mist of yellowish-green pesticide. Then she began vomiting blood. Within two hours she lost her eyesight . . .

Upon this brief introduction, *El Chicago Latino* urgently depicts the life-threatening environments the U.S. migrant labor force is all too often subjected to, noting that on average, migrant workers live 21 years less than a typical U.S. citizen because “their bodies are subjected to ‘persistent’ insults.” Moving from one migrant narrative to the next, readers are exposed to the horrifying, state-inflicted physical and emotional trauma Latino/a/x migrants have endured as a result of pesticide poisoning—everything from blindness, chronic skin rashes, and kidney abnormalities to the increase in migrant miscarriages. It is *El Chicago Latino*’s emphasis on these migrant abuses that works to draw our attention back to mainstream media’s defining rhetoric of Latino/a/x migrants as less than human, both within the context of the 1980s and 1990s, as well as within present-day media coverage, as evident by the family separation crisis and detainment of Latino/a/x migrants in “las perreras” and “las hieleras” under the Trump Administration (Kates). Ultimately, *El Chicago Latino* calls attention to the mistreatment of Latino/a/x migrants and subsequently attempts to provide a counter-narrative to the anti-immigrant discourse of mainstream media by restoring and privileging the humanity of our nation’s Latino/a/x migrant populations.

Specifically, the newspaper details the horrifying assaults of Jose San Roman Jr. who was hired to apply pesticides to cotton plants in Hidalgo County. Without any sort of protective clothing or layering, 23-year-old San Roman Jr. was sent out to the fields applying pesticides that would later result in his temporary blindness, extensive vomiting, and eventually, injections of Atropine every 15 minutes to prevent him from dying. *El Chicago Latino* quotes the young migrant worker who states that, “the only instructions [he] was given was to wash [his] hands if [he] got any pesticides on them,” because, as his employer told him before sending him out to the fields, “Pesticides kill bugs, not humans.” Despite

several reported cases of pesticide poisoning, including the death of a 21-year-old Mexican farm worker, Jose Cunas, as well as a myriad of other recorded incidents regarding the poisoning of pre-school children found working alongside their migrant parents in the fields, it becomes clear that San Roman's employer was aware of the mutilation and impairment pesticides would cause to an exposed body. In addition to the number of previous pesticide poisoning cases that were reported, by law, San Roman's employer was required to undergo special training to receive a pesticide applicator license. It is through this training that individuals learn the importance of proper, protective garments and the fatal risks of applying pesticides without them, thus calling attention to the malicious intentionality behind the employer's decision to allow San Roman to work without the proper attire.

As *El Chicago Latino* further reports, "it is common practice in the Rio Grande Valley for farmers, who are licensed applicators, to employ unlicensed and untrained people to apply pesticides," thus confirming not only the illegal hiring and inhumane treatment of migrant workers as a customary workplace practice but also alluding to an understanding that these practices stemmed from a belief of Latino/a/x migrants as less than human. By first recognizing a connection between San Roman's abuse and a dominant, public ideology of Latino/a/x migrants as subhuman, readers are encouraged to read *El Chicago Latino*'s account of San Roman's very real, bodily attacks as an attempt to reinstitute his humanity. Primarily, San Roman's employer was willing to subject him to the same horrors many migrants before him had already died from. Yet despite this awareness, San Roman was sent to the field anyways because, as his employer stated, "pesticides kill bugs, not humans," and to him, San Roman was nothing but a mite or insect, which corresponds to Santa Ana's summation of the "IMMIGRANT AS ANIMAL" narrative, and more specifically, the implications of this popular discourse. As Santa Ana states,

on the hierarchy of living things, immigrants are animals. Citizens, in contrast, are humans. Human beings are vested with birthright privileges, such as "human rights" and "dignity." Animals have no such privileges and are not equal to humans in the estimation of social institutions. Animals cannot become humans by legislation or fiat. Their inferiority is inherent. They can be domesticated, owned and hunted (Santa Ana, 88).

Thus, as evident by San Roman's egregious sufferings, the mistreatment of Latino/a/x migrant workers described in *El Chicago Latino* remains in accordance to a deeply embedded public discourse of "IMMIGRANTS AS ANIMAL" that existed not only in the 1990s, as Santa Ana's findings demonstrate, but evidently throughout the 1980s and arguably centuries before. That is, the dehumanization of Latinos/as/xs

and people of color at large, finds its roots in an extensive history of misinformation and sometimes outright racist constructions regarding their innate, biological inferiority. It is through this connection that we can read *El Chicago Latino*'s focus on the material, corporeal abuses against San Roman as positing an alternative, counter-narrative that attempts to recover a sense of the migrant worker's humanity. The temporary blindness, extensive vomiting, and injections of Atropine were consequences of the assaults perpetrated against a human being; not an insect, not an animal.

In fact, despite *El Chicago Latino*'s local urban context, the newspaper's expansive national coverage on immigration concerns, state-sanctioned oppressions, and more particularly, the dehumanization of Latino/a/x immigrants suggests that these issues did not exist in a vacuum. In her text *Captivity Beyond Prisons: Criminalization Experiences of Latina (Im)migrants*, Martha Escobar articulates the institutional strategy of "attrition through enforcement" in the United States, which works to produce environments so harmful that undocumented migrants face no other choice but to leave (Escobar, 58). For example, at the federal level, the debilitating strategies might take the form of increased border patrol and heightened instances of abuse by INS agents, as evident through the passage of IRCA in 1986. However, the policies of "attrition through enforcement," while often federal in the case of anti-immigrant legislation, also occur at the state and local level, such as the instances of pesticide poisoning described in *El Chicago Latino*, and affect more than just undocumented Latinos/as/xs (Escobar, 58). Within their respective works, Alicia Schmidt Camacho and Tanya Maria Golash-Boza demonstrate how instances of local, state, and federal violence against Latinos/as/xs operated beyond citizenship and non-citizenship boundaries.

In addition to the racial profiling tactics impacting both Latino/a/x citizens and non-citizens, Tanya Maria Golash-Boza demonstrates in her text *Immigration Nation* how the grievous acts of local, state, and federal violence against undocumented Latino/a/x migrants almost always effect citizen counterparts. As Golash-Boza writes:

People who are not U.S. citizens and are thus subject to regulation often have family members who are U.S. citizens. They also often live in communities with U.S. citizens. Some may have been in the country for a few days, but others have settled here and have been in the United States for decades. Their detention and deportation can cause tragic effects for those left behind. For this reason, the immigration policy debate cannot take a narrow view and focus simply on migrants; it also must consider the significant impact on citizens and recognize that immigrants and citizens are not mutually exclusive categories, but often stages in a person's migrant career (10).

In thinking more specifically about *El Chicago Latino*, the article articulates how migrant workers who were unable to cover the expenses of childcare would often resort to taking their children with them to work the fields. In fact, teachers from Progreso-Relampago, a daycare center in the Rio Grande Valley, reported that more than half of their preschoolers worked in the fields alongside their parents and were also exposed to toxic chemicals. According to the Pew Research Center's findings, the number of U.S. births to "unauthorized immigrants" increased from 30,000 in 1980 to 95,000 by 1990 (Pew Research Center). In accordance to United States law, therefore, the 65,000 children born between 1980 and 1990 are legally considered U.S. citizens, despite having a parent, or parents, who were undocumented.

Following the implementation of IRCA in 1986, the pre-school children referred to in *El Chicago Latino* came from varying immigration statuses, some of whom were very likely children with U.S. citizenship (Escobar, 57–58, Golash-Boza, 39, and Ong Hing, 175). However, there is something to be said as to why *El Chicago Latino* does not include this information, perhaps because it should not matter whether these individuals—children, parents, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters—were U.S. citizens. Rather, what matters is that we, as a public, see these individuals not as the nation's dispensable workforce, but as people, as human beings worthy of respect, dignity, and compassion.

That is, it should not matter whether these individuals did or did not have legal citizenship. While readers of *El Chicago Latino* likely empathized with the mistreatment of the Texan migrant workers and their children, as evident by the widespread local, state, and federal injustices operating across the country and implicating more than just non-citizen folks, the article also serves as a counter-narrative that largely disavows the citizen/non-citizen binary and encourages readers to see these workers first and foremost, as human beings. *El Chicago Latino* notes that after the pregnant Andrea Gonzales had been sprayed with pesticides, she would come to give birth to a partially blind infant. Her long-term exposure to the toxic chemicals would leave the same result on her next child as well, and in addition to her trauma, the newspaper notes that many pregnant migrant workers would never carry to term; their miscarriage rate being seven times the national average. Readers would later find out that 800 migrant workers died as a result of pesticide poisoning in 1981 alone, while 80,000 had suffered serious, lifelong illnesses and impairments. Yet, these stories and statistics relay nothing about citizenry. What they demonstrate, rather, is that human rights should never be a privilege of citizenship; Andrea Gonzales, Jose San Roman, Jr., Jose Cunas, the 800 migrant workers who perished that year,

the 80,000 whose health had been compromised long term, the women who have miscarried as a result of over-exposure to chemicals, and the toddlers infected by pesticides, should never have had to endure the trauma they were subjected to regardless of whether they were U.S. citizens or not.

Conclusion

Despite the public's growing discontent regarding Latino/a/x immigration and, particularly, the rise in the Latino/a/x population in the States, *El Chicago Latino* by no means attempts to alleviate the public's concerns in its reportage. Instead, the 1981 article serves as an example of how the newspaper centered the migrant narratives that have historically been absent from mainstream coverage. These narratives not only call our attention to the material realities of Latino/a/x migrant abuse but by extent, emphasize these horrors as assaults against *human* bodies; *human* beings. As Toni Morrison once said in her 1993 Nobel Prize speech, "language can never live up to life once and for all. Nor should it. Language can never pin down slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn for the arrogance to be able to do so. Its force, its felicity, is in its reach toward the ineffable." *El Chicago Latino* could never truly capture the trauma and horror those migrants endured. Language can only bring us so close to their trauma. But while we cannot transport ourselves to that moment nor feel the pain they felt, it is our responsibility to create a space in which the language of their stories can be told, heard, and to the best of our abilities, understood. When this space is created, a sense of agency and humanity is returned to those individuals who have been articulated time and time again as less than human.

Endnotes

- 1 As a brief aside, I want to note that I intentionally use "Latino/a/x" throughout my essay, as opposed to simply "Latino/a," because although the "x" has not been used formally until very recently, it does not exclude the fact there were still individuals who did not identify within the Latino/a gender binary during the time period I am investigating. Thus, I use "Latino/a/x" to remain inclusive of all who did and did not identify within these gender constructions.
- 2 Coined by French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault during the mid-1900s, discursivity or Foucauldian discourse analysis is a process through which one examines the way our social world is shaped and constructed by language. Foucault's discourse analysis studies how certain statements are created and become conditioned into public consciousness, all while reflecting society's social hierarchies and power relationships. For more information on the application of discourse analysis, please see Otto Santa Ana's methodologies in *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, beginning on pp. 16.

Works Cited

- Chavez, Leo R. *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*. University of California Press, 2001.
- Escobar, Martha D. *Captivity Beyond Prisons: Criminalization Experiences of Latina (Im)migrants*. University of Texas Press, 2016.
- Falcón, Angelo. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. Oxford University Press, 2005. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195156003.001.0001/acref-9780195156003-e-224>.
- Golash-Boza, Tanya Maria. *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America*. Paradigm Publishers, 2012.
- Gutiérrez, David G. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americas, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. University of California Press, 2007.
- Hing, Bill Ong. *Ethical Borders: NAFTA, Globalization, and Mexican Migration*. Temple University Press, 2010.
- Kates, Graham. "Migrants Describe Frigid, Hungry Days in 'Ice Boxes' and 'Dog Pounds.'" *CBS News*, CBS Interactive, 24 July 2018. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/in-court-filing-migrants-describe-frigid-hungry-days-in-ice-boxes-dog-pounds/>.
- "Life expectancy shorter for migrant workers." *El Chicago Latino*. 28 August 1981. pp. 3.
- McKenzie-Mohr, Suzanne, and Michelle N. LaFrance. "Narrative Resistance in Social Work Research and Practice: Counter-Storying in the Pursuit of Social Justice." *Qualitative Social Work*, vol. 16, no. 2, Mar. 2017, pp. 189–205.
- Morrison, Toni. (1993, January). *Nobel Lecture*. Speech presented after awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.
- Ngai, Mai M. *Impossible Subjects*. Princeton University Press, 2014.
- "Number and Share of U.S. Births to Unauthorized Immigrants, 1980–2013." *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/09/11/number-of-babies-born-in-u-s-to-unauthorized-immigrants-declines/ft_15-09-10_birthstounauthorizedimmigrants_table200px/.
- Patiño, Jimmy. *Raza Sí, Migra No*. University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Rapp, David & Jason L.G. Braasch. *Processing Inaccurate Information: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives from Cognitive Science and the Educational Sciences*. MIT Press. 2014. pp. 17–19.
- Santa Ana, Otto. *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*. University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Schmidt Camacho, Alicia. "Bordered Civil Rights: Migrants, Feminism, and the Radical Imagination in El Movimiento Chicano." *Migrant Imaginaries—Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands*. New York University Press. 2008.

Grappling Contradictions: Visualizing Order and Chaos in Colonial Mexico City

Guadalupe Mota, *University of Southern California*

Originally from the south side of Chicago, Guadalupe Mota studies History with a concentration in Latin America and Visual Studies at the University of Southern California. She is currently a senior at USC writing her senior thesis exploring the visual culture of order and rebellion in colonial Mexico. Guadalupe feels accountable studying history and tries to show up for the voices of people erased and silenced from colonial archives. She is constantly inspired by the humility and resilience of her parents who immigrated from Mexico.

Abstract

Artistic depictions of colonial Mexico City created in Europe and in Mexico have for centuries portrayed the ordered city—a space where Spanish society could ideally prosper. This article examines three images created in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries crafted to represent this ideal image of Mexico City. These images are part of a repertoire of visual culture that aids in visualizing an aspect of the colonial imaginary. Rather than using these images and analyzing them for their aesthetic qualities, this approach uses images as pieces of historical evidence to contextualize a contradictory colonial past.

Acknowledgements

This paper and all of its process would not have been possible without the following people who inspire me to push the boundaries of possibility. *Gracias a mi familia*, my dearest friends, my faculty mentors Daniela Bleichmar, Edgardo Pérez Morales, Alisa Sanchez, and my MMUF cohort.

Introduction

This article explores the concept of a “visual history”—the telling of a historical narrative as framed by the use of images to tell its story. Rather than using images and analyzing them for their aesthetic qualities, this history uses images as evidence. This historical methodology does not limit itself to textual sources to frame a story of the past. Instead, it challenges the ways in which histories of Spanish America have traditionally been written to find ways in which the subaltern does speak. The following works were created shortly after the fall of Tenochtitlan (1521) and into the end of the seventeenth century. These images confront us with a colonial imaginary preoccupied with the notion of *orden*, or order, through the formation of new urbanized space. The Spanish conquest of the Americas was characterized by the creation of new and orderly cities. Spanish conquistadors established an “empire of towns” on indigenous lands, and Mexico City was one of these cities, built on top of the Aztec Empire’s ruins—an “ordered city”

emerging from chaos. Artists produced images that depicted this “ordered city.” In Mexico City, and in hundreds of other towns and cities, Spanish city planners had *orden* in mind—an ideal that crystallized in the creation of wide, straight streets intersecting at right angles, a *plaza* or public square at the center of the checkerboard plan of the *traza*.¹

However, these images also portray an unsettled contradiction inherent to this colonial imaginary. Each of these images depict *orden* but also an element of *desorden*, or disorder visualized through specters of barbarity, violence, and chaos. How do the following visual works depict an ordered image of colonial Mexico City while at the same time producing an image full of tension, that underscores violence and disorder? This article argues that order and disorder were inseparable realities and both were bound up within visual representations of Mexico City, the cosmopolitan capital of New Spain.

Transformation of the City and the Map of Tenochtitlan

When Hernán Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlan and in the subsequent years, he sent back letters to the king Charles V which described his experiences in Mexico. Printers soon published these letters in Europe, both in Spanish (Seville, 1522) as well as in Latin (Nuremberg, 1524). These published letters announced Spanish exploits and Iberian growing power in the Americas throughout Europe. Several printed editions of the Latin text were accompanied by a woodcut map (Figure 1) depicting a European vision of the great city of Tenochtitlan as described in Cortés’s letters.² By 1524, Tenochtitlan had been razed, burned, and severely damaged. The Mexica empire had fallen, and the new city of Mexico was being built. But was this woodcut an accurate representation of the reality on the ground?

The map shows the city in both its built and natural environment, emphasizing the urban center and the lake on which it stood. Tenochtitlan sat above Lake Texcoco, connected to the rest of the land by various causeways leading to white stone fortresses. It is difficult to tell whether the Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan (1524) completely depicted the city pre- or post-conflict, or where the artist retrieved the information to create this depiction of the city. The art historian Barbara Mundy suggests that it could not have simply been based on the description of Cortés’s letters to the king of Spain. She speculates that the artist could not have included certain details without having seen the Aztec city, or without at least having looked at a non-geometric projection of the city in an indigenous map. Although there is no concrete evidence documenting that the artist had access to an indigenous map, Mundy argues that the presence of indigenous elements is unequivocal.³ The orientation of the city on an east-west axis is indicative of indigenous mapping techniques unfamiliar to the European

eye.⁴ This map of Tenochtitlan was the first published depiction of the city and remained the only for over a century.⁵

Already in this image, however, the inherent tension between order and disorder can be seen. The woodcut artist only left remnants of the city's Aztec present in the center of the city's *plaza*—a marker of order within urban space. But on this site of order are found several messages of chaos from the artist. First, the artist tells the European viewer that this is the city of “TEMIXTITAN,” but this is a bastardized version of the city's name.⁶ Second, the map gave its audience a simplistic and overly-generalized version of Aztec temples and other sacred spaces of worship and governance. The space presented in the map illustrates a contradiction present in Spaniards' understanding of Aztec society: the presence of civility and barbarity, of a city with a name now destroyed whose original name and temples are now in shambles.

In his letters to Emperor Charles V, Cortés began to make the necessary regulations for the rebuilding of the great and celebrated city of Mexico. Cortés received permission and royal privileges to continue plans of developing the city from the ashes of conquest and war.⁷ In 1525, only a year after his letters were published alongside the Nuremberg map, Cortés wrote to Emperor Charles V of his own plans to transform the former Aztec capital. He chose to lay out the city with “*orden*” (order), to create public squares and straight streets. Whether or not the conquistador was influenced to write such a description by the way in which Tenochtitlan was being rebuilt, there existed a connection in the early sixteenth century with the concept of order, the construction of cities, and the ways in which the body politic were to be ordered within these cities.

Specter of the Conquest *Biombo* of Mexico City (1690–92)

A century and a half later, the *Biombo de la Conquista de México y vista de la Ciudad de México* (1690–92) presents us with a similar juxtaposition between the chaotic and the orderly. This image was painted on a *biombo*, the Hispanicized word for the Japanese folding screen where both sides feature two distinct paintings. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *criollo* artists appropriated this traditional Japanese art-making technique as their own by painting on them Spanish American elements to cater to their European or colonial audiences. These objects displayed two images, often in relation to creole or peninsular lifestyles. This particular *biombo* depicts two very different scenarios of Mexico City. Yet the imagery and its logic, physically inseparable in the *biombo*, were also historically bound up to one another.

On the *biombo*'s front facing panels, the ordered city is on display. This side is a map of the city from an orthogonal perspective, allowing its audience to gaze into the city's grid plan, wide, ordered streets and several plazas. It brings its

viewers into the city streets by also displaying the industrious European architecture, including the Roman aqueduct in the foreground. In fact, this side presents us with a city empty of people. It exists as a space that functioned as a *civita* and not a *polis*—an urban space devoid of its social community.⁸ The *civita* functioned as the abstraction of the city—a placeholder for civilization. However, the *polis* referred to the lived experience of the city. Spaniards, then followed the Greek tradition of “the *polis* that created polities, or civilized individuals.”⁹ This depiction of the city represents ideal space for lived experiences to orderly unfold. But this ideal space came with a haunting past. occur, however, it came with a haunting past. On the other side of the *biombo*, the artist depicted the conquest of Tenochtitlan. Also an idealized image, the panels of the conquest do not only depict this story temporally but also spatially.¹⁰ The conquest scenes are not in temporal order but rather organized through a spatial setting where certain battles occurred—easily allowing its viewer to place the organization of the city during the conquest and afterward. The entire *biombo* emphasizes space over temporality.

This almost cinematic view of the *biombo* helps place us into the creole imaginary at the end of the seventeenth century. How did creoles imagine the origins of their contemporary and idealized lived spaces? On these panels, violence prevails. Instead of imagining the city in its idealized and perfect form, this view of the city is a spectacle that its inhabitants knew too well. The *biombo*'s seventeenth-century viewers understood quite well the history of the conquest. They even lived this history through many festival days including August 13, the feast day of Saint Hipólito. On August 13, 1521, the Mexica of the Aztec Empire surrendered Tenochtitlan.¹¹ In the following liturgical year, on August 13, the city's residents (belonging to various *castas*) marched alongside the viceroy from the city's *zócalo* or plaza to the Salto de Alvarado, where a shrine of San Hipólito was located.¹² These processions took place on conquered space, reinforcing the reality of domination. Remembering that the history of the conquest was not foreign to the viewers of the *biombo*, this piece reflects the city's violent past. But it also visualizes, for its audience mostly of Spanish descent, their contemporary ordered city. This juxtaposition of order and violence within the *biombo* reflected the colonial imaginary. The ideal, perfect and ordered city rested on chaotic violence to justify Spanish claim over indigenous lands.

View of the Plaza Mayor (1695) and Riot

The Spanish ordered imaginary never separated urban space from the colonial notion of civility. To justify the violence that the Spanish urban project facilitated, colonial officials needed to equate civility with urbanity.¹³ Besides the utopic “ordered city,” Spaniards imposed notions of civility through the processes of forced evangelization to control and dominate indigenous lands, bodies, and minds.

In addition to the creation of the *traza*, the Spanish Crown established two segregated urban spaces, each one hosting, in theory, two different “republics.” These two “republics,” the *República de Indios* and *República de Españoles*, existed as physically separate communities, one for the original inhabitants and one for Spanish settlers.¹⁴ Furthermore, in 1546, the Second Mexican Ecclesiastical Meeting declared that “in order that the Indians should be true Christians and *políticos*, as rational men that they are, they must be nucleated in towns (*es necesario estar congregados y reunidos en pueblos*) and they should not live dispersed in the mountain ridges and hills.”¹⁵ This conclusion led to several policies to nucleate indigenous communities on the outskirts of cities, congregating them into newly found cities modeled after the Spanish *traza*. The violent process of creating these *congregaciones* severely fractured social and political orders within these communities. Moreover, the line separating both republics was porous at best, constantly crisscrossed by indigenous people and Spaniards alike.

Moreover, indigenous people resisted and, despite centuries of Spanish imperial impositions of power, continue to resist colonial domination. Mexico City, the Spanish crown’s most influential and powerful city in the Americas, experienced a riot that left the city’s government fragile. On June 8, 1692, during the Catholic celebrations of Corpus Christi, hundreds of indigenous people and other *castas* stormed the *zocalo* or *plaza mayor*, the heart of the city. Many of these people lived within the *traza*, the space legally designated for the Spanish elite. Many also travelled from several indigenous communities located right outside of the *traza*—including the *barrios* of San Juan Tlatelolco (seen in the *biombo* on the far-left panel). The spirit of Mexico City’s *plaza mayor* is deeply represented in Cristóbal de Villalpando’s painting. The *criollo* artist, Cristóbal de Villalpando’s *View of Mexico City’s Plaza Mayor* (1695) depicts the bustling public square, in a scene where indigenous workers and traders coexist in the same space as the viceroy (pictured at the bottom left corner). While the painting is framed by the Cathedral and the viceregal palace, it emphasizes the marketplace and the over one thousand people that line the ground of the *zocalo*. Yet it also incorporates the remains of Mexico City’s most violent riot.

On the evening of June 8, 1692, rioters stormed the *plaza* shouting, “Long live the king, and death to bad government!”¹⁶ The association with “bad government” was strongly affiliated with the “local” government running Mexico City. Over the months leading to the riot, the region had experienced long periods of rain that flooded maize and wheat crops leading to the increase in food prices. The plebian classes could no longer afford these staples of the Spanish American diet and indigenous communities felt the devastating consequences, including starvation. It was understood that it was the viceroy’s responsibility to maintain the well-being of the body politic, including the

indigenous populations of the city. These indigenous communities gathered from the maize warehouse near the *zocalo* and took to the *plaza*. The 1692 rioters looted and burned the marketplace. In the *zocalo*’s market, artisanal goods from all over the Spanish territories were sold. Finally, the rioters destroyed and burned half the viceregal palace, not only the viceroy’s place of residence but a place where important administrative, legal, and historical documents were housed.¹⁷

A specter of the riot and its material and political consequences was left for posterity in *View of Mexico City’s Plaza Mayor* (1695). The painting signaled to its viewers several elements that stand out as symbols of the prosperity of the Spanish Crown, including the Cathedral and the marketplace. However, the background of the image depicts the ruins of the viceregal palace, partially destroyed by rioters during the chaotic events of 1692. A structure of order altered by colonial political upheaval.

Scholars typically understand the events of 1692 as an uprising of the plebeian classes due to a shortage of grain and maize and further exacerbated by creole political conflict.¹⁸ While this interpretation is completely valid, it is also important to consider political decisions that directly affected the groups who incited this riot. Notably, a letter from the Viceroy Gaspar de la Cerda Silva Sandoval y Mendoza, or also known as, Conde de Galve, written in 1692 highlighted the political sentiments felt by the political elite in Mexico.¹⁹ Conde de Galve blamed the indigenous people who lived in Mexico City’s *traza* for the riot. He claimed that because they lived in the *traza*, mixed with people of other *castas*, they undermined the Spanish’s ability to regulate and govern over them.²⁰ The viceroy’s letter called to convene parish priests to also referenced the *Recopilación de leyes de los reinos de las Indias* (1681) recalls the original ordinance by Carlos V in 1538 that put into legislation the removal and relocation of indigenous peoples into “*policía* . . . so that they may benefit from Christianity and civilized order . . .”²¹ This same year, 1692, colonial officials pushed ordinances that further displaced indigenous peoples living within the city into *barrios de indios*, or neighborhoods.²² These ordinances, later enacted by Sigüenza, moved not to protect indigenous people through processes of evangelization but rather as a way to further segregate and purify the *traza*.²³

The riot was a reclamation and occupation of colonized space, unforeseen by the colonial ordered imaginary. The rioters’ declared their political intentions when they cried out “death to bad government (*mal gobierno*)”; for the rioters, *mal gobierno* was synonymous with tyranny and corruption. The colonial elite recognized this threat, particularly to the well-being of white *criollo* and peninsular residents of the city. Sigüenza y Góngora, among these elites, feared that the city center, originally reserved for Spaniards, was being infiltrated by indigenous peoples and

people of other racial *castas*. Yet years later, we see the specter of the riot and its remains in the painting by the *criollo* artist Cristóbal de Villalpando. His prominence in colonial Mexico's art world begs speculation of why such a significant *criollo* figure would insert the remains of such a violent moment in the city's history in a painting that would later end up in Europe. It now stands on display in the Methuen Collection Corsham Court in Corsham, England. The *View of Mexico City's Plaza Mayor* (1695) records the city in one of its most vulnerable states while other *criollo* elites paint the rioters as angry, drunk, and irrational involved in an insurrection that brought chaos to the "ordered city."

We must surpass the colonial elite's perception of the rioters as passive and unable to understand the circumstances of their worlds beyond the scope of the emotional or anger-driven reaction. This particular moment signaled a fragility in the urban order that the Spanish Crown had attempted to fortify for over a century and a half. The resulting destruction left the city and the viceregal government in a vulnerable state. It was a moment, I argue, in which this sacred, colonial space was compromised, weakened, and reclaimed by indigenous bodies with radical, political motivations to challenge both the ideal as well as the practical colonial orders.

Conclusion

The images analyzed in the previous pages allow us to better envision how and why the body politic of colonial Mexico City existed in and navigated through much more liminal spaces than the simplified, unrealistic ideal of the "ordered city." These images throw into relief that the ideal order, and its expression in the segregated urban spaces of the two republics, existed only as a tension in with the reality of colonial history and politics. Artists articulated this tension as they juxtaposed urban space, particularly Tenochtitlan and Mexico City, with the underlying signals of barbarity, violence, and chaos. Whether these signals were meant to prove to a European audience the spoils (and justification) of conquest, or to manage the specter of a violent but supposedly settled (the conquest) and the reality of a violent, yet radical vision of the present (the riot), they show a society (in the settling) grappling with deep contradictions. Often, in these portrayals of the city, these contradictions are overlooked by the effect of the grandiose beauty of colonial architecture. But (settling) with these contradictions also means recognizing the violence and destruction inherent to these structures and the space where they stand.

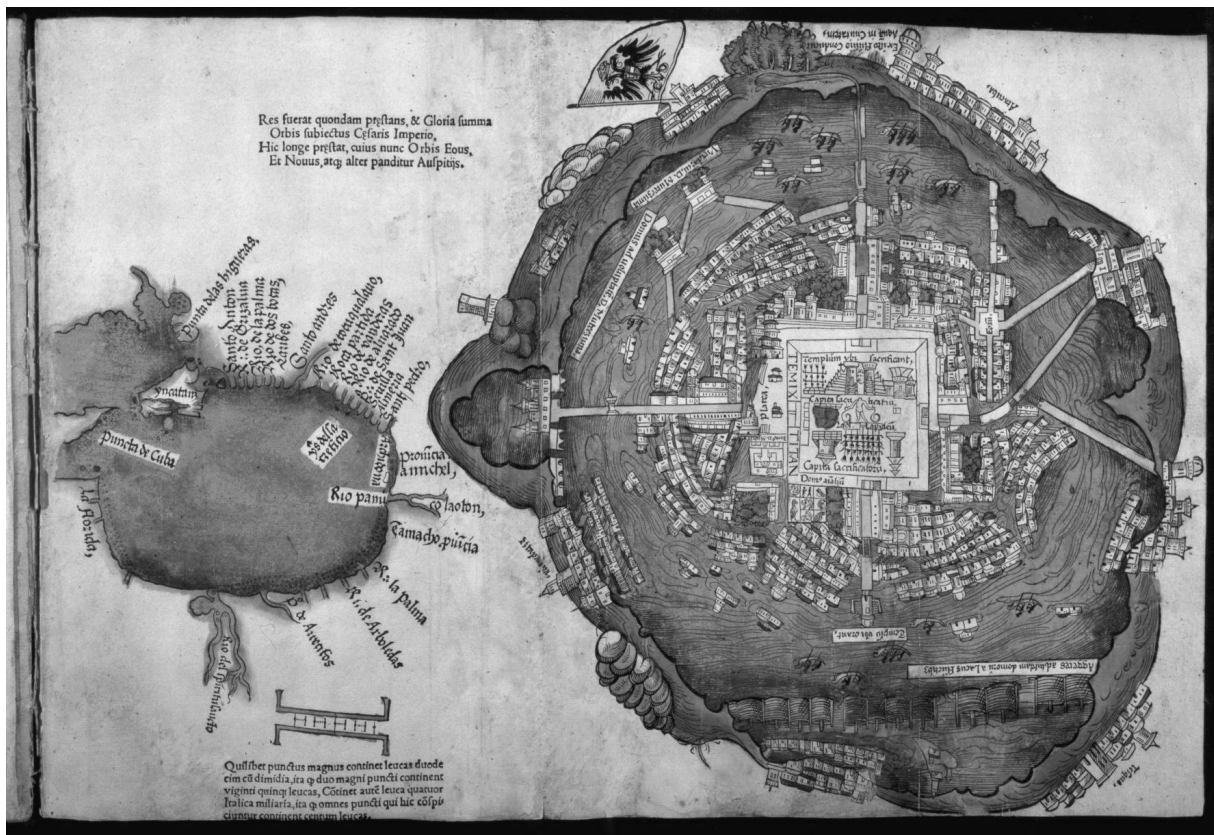


Figure 1. Woodcut. From *Praeclara Fernandi de Nova Maris Oceani Hispania Narratio* (Nuremberg, 1524). The Newberry Library, Chicago.

Endnotes

- 1 María Elena Martínez, "Space, Order and Group Identities in a Spanish Colonial Town: Puebla de los Angeles" in *Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order* (Brighton, UK and Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2000), 16.
- 2 Barbara Mundy, *Mapping Latin America: A Cartographic Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 43.
- 3 Barbara Mundy, "Mapping the Aztec Capital: The 1524 Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan, Its Sources and Meanings" in *Imago Mundi* 50, no. 1 (1998).
- 4 Elizabeth Hill Boone, "The new world now revealed: Hernán Cortés and the presentation of Mexico to Europe" in *Word & Image* 27, no. 1 (2011): 33.
- 5 Richard Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1492–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 89.
- 6 Mundy, *Mapping Latin America*, 43.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 10 Barbara Mundy, "Moteuczoma Reborn: Biombo Paintings and Collective Memory in Colonial Mexico City" in *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 2/3 (2011): 167.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Martínez, "Space, Order, and Group Identities," 17.
- 14 Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 92.
- 15 Quoted and translation from Maria Elena Martínez, "Space, Order, and Group Identities," 16.
- 16 Anna More, *Baroque Sovereignty: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and the Creole Archive of Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 159.
- 17 Douglass Cope, "The Riot of 1692" in *The limits of racial domination: plebeian society in colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 132.
- 18 Cope, "The Riot of 1692," 160.
- 19 This letter and other responses are reproduced in Edmundo O'Gorman, "Sobre los inconvenientes de vivir los indios en el centro de la ciudad," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 9, no. 1–34 (1938).
- 20 Quote cited in Cope, "Riot of 1692," 169.
- 21 See *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias, book 6, tit.I, law 19*.
- 22 O'Gorman, "Sobre los inconvenientes de vivir los indios en el centro de la ciudad."
- 23 Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos de. Colonial ordinance for the formation of *reducciones de indios*, GD58 INDIOS. Vol. 32, exp. 48, fs. 52v–54r, México City, México, 1692.

Works Cited

- Boone, Elizabeth Hill. "This New World Now Revealed: Hernán Cortés and the Presentation of Mexico to Europe." *Word & Image* 27, no. 1 (2011): 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02666281003771190>.
- Cope, Douglas R. "The Riot of 1692." In *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720*, 125–60. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
- Kagan, Richard. *Urban Images of the Hispanic World 1492–1800*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Martínez, María Elena. "Space, Order and Group Identities in a Spanish Colonial Town: Puebla de los Angeles" in *The Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order*, Brighton, UK and Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2000.

More, Anna. *Baroque Sovereignty: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora and the Creole Archive of Colonial Mexico*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Mundy, Barbara. "Indigenous Civilizations" in *Mapping Latin America: a Cartographic Reader*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

_____. "Mapping the Aztec Capital: The 1524 Nuremberg Map of Tenochtitlan, Its Sources and Meanings." *Imago Mundi* 50 (1998): 11–33.

_____. "Moteuczoma Reborn: Biombo Paintings and Collective Memory in Colonial Mexico City." *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, no. 2/3 (June 2011): 161–76. <https://doi.org/10.1086/661559>.

Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos de., GD58 INDIOS. Vol. 32, exp. 48, fs. 52v–54r, México City, Mexico, 1692.

Japanese American Food Pioneers of California Cuisine and Local Food Movements

Sam Nakahira, *Grinnell College*

Sam Nakahira graduated from Grinnell College in 2019 where she studied History and American Studies. Her historical and nonfiction comics have been published in Asian American Writers' Workshop, the Rumpus, and Spiralbound. After she completes her MFA at the Center for Cartoon Studies, she plans to apply for PhD programs in American Studies or History. She hopes to eventually become a college professor of Asian American Studies and create historical comics based on her research.

Abstract

Because Japanese American small farmers and food retailers in California viewed farming through an artisanal mindset, these people led the way to the revolutionary California cuisine and compelled Americans towards local farm-to-table movements during the 1970 to the present day. This paper focuses on two case studies: Berkeley food retailer Bill Fujimoto and the Chino family of farmers in San Diego. Bill Fujimoto and the Chinos all cared about the seasonality, locality, taste, and health quotient of unconventional produce. Their artisanal care for their produce's quality and taste increased the diversity and strength of California agriculture. Significantly, Fujimoto and the Chinos have supported and inspired many influential California cuisine chefs such as Alice Waters and Jeremiah Towers. They provided California cuisine chefs with the best local, fresh ingredients to cook the tasteful, revolutionary cuisine that impressed and ultimately changed the perspectives of so many Americans.

Acknowledgements

I could not have written this paper without the help and guidance of my advisors and mentors at Grinnell College: Professor Sarah Purcell, Karla Erickson, and Shanna Benjamin. I owe a big thank you to Bill Fujimoto and Tom Chino who kindly shared their stories with me through oral history interviews.

Since the 1890s, Japanese American farmers in California have played a pivotal role in U.S. agriculture. Prior to WWII, Japanese Americans controlled California's strawberry industry and held virtual monopolies over the production of lettuce, tomatoes, celery, spinach, peas, onions, garlic, snap beans, and more.¹ Most white farmers grew less laborious crops such as wheat and potatoes.² Japanese immigrants helped shift California agriculture from raising corn and grain crops to more "intensive agricultural crops," such as vegetables and citrus fruits.³ They improved the American diet, building up the foundation of California agriculture with specialized, diverse produce before World War II. Regardless, Japanese American farmers were never widely

recognized for their achievements in America. Furthermore, in the period after WWII, a scarcity of academic studies on Japanese American farming exists, which discounts important trends led by these agricultural entrepreneurs.⁴ Japanese Americans who were able to return to farming and food retail after WWII internment continued to have great impact on U.S. food and agriculture.

Indeed, because post-WWII Japanese American small farmers and food retailers viewed farming through an artisanal Japanese mindset, these people led the way to the revolutionary California cuisine and compelled Americans towards local farm-to-table movements. In my paper, I will focus on two case studies who have made U.S. food healthier and more tasteful: food retailer Bill Fujimoto from Berkeley and the Chino farming family from San Diego. I have conducted thorough oral history interviews with both Bill Fujimoto and Tom Chino. My paper argues that the Chinos and Bill Fujimoto's Japanese backgrounds have positively impacted U.S. agriculture and the development of California cuisine.

Case Study: Bill Fujimoto

Berkeley food retailer Bill Fujimoto provided one of the catalysts for California cuisine during the 1970s because he cared about the seasonality, locality, taste, and health quotient of unconventional produce. From the early 1980s until 2009, Bill took charge of his father's all produce market, Monterey Market, selling a large variety of heirloom produce. He chose unusual, unconventional produce varieties not sold in supermarkets based on their unique tastes. His philosophy, inspired by his Japan-born father, Tom, required "know[ing] how everything tastes raw."⁵ Some examples of the precise, high taste sensitivity lessons Tom taught Bill was how to distinguish between an Italian and Japanese eggplant and when a crop was in season, immature, or overripe: since they trained their taste buds to this degree of sensitivity for every vegetable and fruit they could find, the Fujimotos clearly had high standards and an artisanal mindset for their work as food retailers. They took a craftsman's pride in finding produce that was of extremely high quality and taste.

Furthermore, Bill sourced from local farmers who grew crops organically, which he attributes to creating better taste of produce. Back in the 1970s, organic farming was not widely known or recognized. Most supermarkets sold only a few varieties of conventional produce that was grown with chemicals for long shelf lives but without regards to taste. When he could have taken the easy route and conformed to chain supermarket standards, Bill instead took on extra work to find, taste, and sell a large variety of unconventional produce from small, local organic farmers.⁶ Fujimoto's store

was a rare existence, but it was a boon for California cuisine chefs because they had access to a large variety of quality, tasteful produce. Currently, discourses like eating local, organic, and seasonally grown produce are extremely well-known, but when California cuisine was just emerging in the Bay Area during the late 1900s, these ideologies were mostly nonexistent.⁷ In the 1970s, Alice Waters and other influential chefs advocated for a movement that became California cuisine, which is loosely defined as eating fresh, local produce, and farm-to-table food.

Bill Fujimoto's advice and produce inspired many chefs crucial to developing California cuisine. When Fujimoto was in charge of the market, Monterey Market was "the first stop" for many Bay Area chefs, such as Alice Waters and Jeremiah Towers.⁸ Fujimoto set up a large back room containing stacks of diverse varieties of produce for California cuisine chefs to browse through and taste. Fujimoto states that his back room was "never the same two days in a row," which implies the back room's produce was kept extremely fresh.⁹ When reflecting on the chefs' hard work in navigating through his backroom's many produce boxes, Fujimoto recalls a statement from Waters: "Whatever's really good, find what's really good, and find a way to cook it."¹⁰ Here, Waters suggests that finding quality produce is a crucial, necessary step to cooking good food. Her statement shows that Fujimoto's role in providing a diverse range of tasteful unconventional produce was essential for developing California cuisine chefs' success in cooking. Fujimoto provided California cuisine chefs with the best ingredients to cook the tasteful, revolutionary cuisine that impressed and ultimately changed the perspectives of so many Americans. These chefs' ideologies eventually spread throughout America and changed how Americans eat and think about food: the movement has compelled people to place more value to their produce's source, production process, locality, and seasonality.¹¹

Bill Fujimoto and Monterey Market succeeded in tying the process of produce consumption to relationships between consumers, growers, and chefs. Reflecting his family's Japanese heritage, Fujimoto never considered his job as selling a commodity, but rather as involving human relationships and respect for all the people his market impacted. Fujimoto helped foster closer relationships between the farmers, chefs, and consumers, not just through professional relationships but through personal connections to support one another in growing and cooking fresh, healthy, tasteful food.¹² Fujimoto encouraged Bay Area farmers, chefs, and consumers to come together.¹³ This community symbiotically kept Monterey Market a viable community asset for the California cuisine movement.

Case Study: Chino Farms

San Diego's Chino Farms, run by the Chino family, is considered to be the greatest vegetable and fruits farm in America and has been recognized for "raising the bar" of American agriculture.¹⁴ The Chino family's artisanal principles of maintaining the quality and taste of produce are the main reason for their success. Unlike most farmers, the Chinos are not concerned with producing large quantities of one crop that can travel long distances to wholesale marketers. Far before farmers' markets were an accepted establishment, the Chinos broke away from wholesalers and supermarkets to directly sell to consumers with their roadside Vegetable Stand during the mid 1900s. There were other roadside stands at the time, but Junzo Chino, the founder of Chino Farms, saw that other farmers during the 1930s usually sold their "seconds" at their stands.¹⁵ Breaking away from what other farmers practiced, Junzo realized he could attract customers by offering high quality produce. He also took advantage of his roadside stand's close location to his farm to sell the freshest produce, picked and sold in a timely period. Tom Chino, Junzo's youngest son and the current head of the Chino farm, explained, "A tomato that's ripened on the vine tastes better than a tomato that was picked at a hard green stage and then ripened in the process of transportation to a store. So we grew vegetables that were picked that day and sold that day."¹⁶ Significantly, the Chinos have never shipped their produce to any customers because they see that the long distance travel and packing degrades their produce's taste and freshness. Furthermore, since the Chinos only sell their produce to local consumers and chefs who come directly to their roadside stand, the Chinos have helped farm-to-table movements develop in San Diego far before farmers' markets and farm-to-table restaurants became recognized more broadly in America. The Chinos' dedicated commitment to maintain the quality and therefore, the taste of their produce has helped set the stage for today's local food discourses. Moreover, the Chino family's valuing of produce quality and taste reflects their artisanal, craftsmen pride in their work; they believe in doing everything they can to bring out the taste of their produce, even if it means going completely against all other established farming practices.

In addition to improving the taste of produce, the Chinos have focused on diversifying the marketplace rather than just increasing the quantity of one crop. Tom Chino says that during the early 1900s, his immigrant parents farmed but could not "hold land for more than two years [due to the Alien Land Law.] So, they had to go from place to place, and because of that, they would grow various different crops also."¹⁷ The 1913 Alien Land Law made it illegal for Japanese immigrants, defined as "aliens ineligible to citizenship" to own land for more than three years.¹⁸

Reinforcing the 1913 law, the 1920 Alien Land Law prohibited the Japanese to purchase or lease agricultural land, the right to buy and sell stock in land companies that owned or leased agricultural land, and disqualified them from being appointed guardians of minors born in America who may take over the land.¹⁹ It also prohibited the transfer or sale of agricultural land between aliens. Despite the discriminatory legislation, Junzo Chino and his wife adapted to their circumstances and made growing a variety of crops on different soils their strength. Tom Chino and his siblings built on their Japan-born parents' skills by coming up with the revolutionary idea to import seeds from outside America. They studied culinary magazines and ordered seed catalogues from Japan, France, Holland, Israel, etc. Tom, who has a background in biology and cancer research, figured out how "to grow unusual varieties from around the world by figuring out what will succeed, given the conditions at his farm."²⁰ Tom and his siblings now grow on rotation more than 120 varieties of produce; they are the only U.S. farmers to grow such a large diversity of produce from around the world. The seed catalog practice is a creative, innovative idea, which shows that the Chinos are not just doing the same as other farmers. They thought carefully about what they could do to improve their produce's quality and were willing to put in an enormous amount of effort to do so. Regional customers and even people outside of San Diego take the time and effort to travel to the Chinos' roadside stand because they are so impressed by their unique, artisanal philosophies and tasteful produce.²¹

The Chino family's artisanal commitment to taste and local distribution allows chefs and consumers to carry out California cuisine's philosophies. The Chino family delivers produce long distance only to Alice Waters out of respect for her vision of cooking and eating. Waters explains, "We have such admiration for the way [the Chinos] work with their interns, the way they stay small at their stands, the artisanal way they make mochi every New Year. It's an inspiration too to me to see them doing their thing against the tide of industrial farming."²² Waters sees the Chino family's Japanese heritage and their artisanal farming as inspirational to her own work as a California cuisine leader. Their Japanese farming traditions and artisanal practices have become "an essential part of the fabric of our country," especially considering their influence on culinary leaders like Alice Waters, Wolfgang Puck, Julia Child, David Tanis, and many more.²³ Furthermore, the Chino family have played a huge role in shaping and improving how people eat not only in San Diego, but all of the nationwide eaters who receive meals from the influential chefs inspired by the Chino family: they have opened up the perspectives of Americans to the possibilities of what U.S. agriculture can entail: a diverse, array of tasteful, specialty crops, not just the few types of conventional produce sold in supermarkets.

Conclusion

Even though the Chinos and Bill Fujimoto have been integral to the success of California cuisine chefs, no researcher has written a study focused solely on these Japanese American food pioneers who influenced the development of California cuisine. Furthermore, Bill Fujimoto and the Chinos are rarely acknowledged in studies on the history of California cuisine, with the exception of Goldstein's *Inside the California Food Revolution*.²⁴ In Freedman's *Ten Restaurants that Changed America*, he writes extensively on Alice Waters but does not mention Bill Fujimoto's influence on her restaurant.²⁵ Additionally, academic books on the history of California agriculture and food retail tend to erase Japanese American farming history.²⁶ Books focused on the history of Japanese agriculture in California only cover the period before World War II, detailing the struggles that Japanese farmers faced.²⁷ These books do not acknowledge the Japanese farmers who rose above discrimination, WWII internment, and oppressive land laws to continue farming after WWII, influencing U.S. food movements like California cuisine.²⁸

Most Americans credit Alice Waters for being the catalyst for California cuisine and driving Americans' focus onto ingredients, yet she did not grow the ingredients she used.²⁹ Although they are not thought of as revolutionaries, the Chinos and Fujimoto quietly led Waters and other chefs to an upturning of U.S. food. Bill Fujimoto and the Chinos are Japanese artisans who possess family traditions of maintaining quality, and many of their actions led to something larger than just tasteful produce. They were not purposefully trying to spark a movement around

U.S. food, but due to their hard work and continual effort to work smarter, they were ahead of their time. These Japanese Americans' innovation and foresight in agriculture and food retail shows how deeply they care for improving the quality, health, and tastefulness of their produce. Increasingly more people in America today are becoming concerned with the future of our food. Japanese Americans like the Chinos and Bill Fujimoto have and continue to set inspiring examples of how to strengthen American food, eating, and produce for the benefit of all.

Endnotes

- 1 Nina F. Ichikawa, "Giving Credit Where it is Due: Asian American Farmers and Retailers as Food System Pioneers," in *Eating Asia America*. (NYU Press, 2013): 274–287.
- 2 Sarah D. Weld, "Japanese American Agrarianism in *Rafu Shimpo*, *Kasbu Maimichi*, and *Treadmill*" in *The Nature of California: Race, Citizenship, and Farming since the Dust Bowl*. (University of Washington Press, 2016).
- 3 Keith Aoki, "No Right to Own: The Early Twentieth Century "Alien Land Laws" as a Prelude to Internment." *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 19 (1998): 37–72.

- 4 Ichikawa, "Giving Credit Where it is Due."
- 5 Fujimoto, Bill. Interview with Sam Nakahira. 05/26/2018. Digital Grinnell.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Bertram M. Gordon, "Shifting Tastes and Terms: The Rise of California Cuisine," *Revue Francaise D'etudes Americaines* 27/28 (1986): 109–126.
- 8 Joyce Goldstein, *Inside the California Food Revolution: Thirty Years that Changed our Culinary Consciousness*. (University of California Press, 2013).
- 9 "Eat at Bill's: Life in the Monterey Market," directed by Lisa Brenneis (Tangerine Man Films, 2009), DVD.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Paul Freedman, *Ten Restaurants that Changed America*. (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016).
- 12 Goldstein, *Inside the California Food Revolution*.
- 13 "Eat at Bill's: Life in the Monterey Market."
- 14 Reuters, "Celebrated Japanese American California Farms Sows Seeds for Next Generation," *Japan Times*, Nov 26, 2014, accessed June 3, 2017.
- 15 Chino, Tom. Interview with Sam Nakahira, July 10th, 2018. Digital Grinnell.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Masao Suzuki, "Important or Impotent? Taking Another Look at the 1920 California Alien Land Law." *The Journal of Economic History* 64 (2004): 125–143.
- 19 Suzuki, "Important or Impotent?"
- 20 Linda McIntosh, "Harvest of Local Grower Reaps National Acclaim," *San Diego Union Tribune*, November 24, 2011, accessed June 3, 2017.
- 21 Marian, Burros, "De Gustibus," *New York Times*, May 18, 1988, accessed June 2, 2017.
- 22 Goldstein, *Inside the California Food Revolution*.
- 23 Wisdom, Ibid.
- 24 Ichikawa, "Giving Credit Where it is Due."
- 25 Freedman, *Ten Restaurants that Changed America*. (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016).
- 26 David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875–1920*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
- 27 Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California agriculture to 1941," *Journal of Economic History* 38 (1978): 205–225.
- 28 Chino, Tom. Interview with Sam Nakahira, July 10th, 2018. Digital Grinnell.
- 29 Mai-Due, Christine and Parvini, Sarah. "California Cuisine Queen Alice Waters to be Awarded National Humanities Medal." *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 2015. Accessed May 29, 2017.
- Fujimoto, Bill (food retailer), oral history interview with Sam Nakahira. 05/26/2018. Digital Grinnell.
- Goldstein, Joyce, *Inside the California Food Revolution: Thirty Years that Changed our Culinary Consciousness*. University of California Press, 2013.
- Gordon, Bertram M., "Shifting Tastes and Terms: The Rise of California Cuisine," *Revue Francaise D'etudes Americaines* 27/28 (1986): 109–126.
- Higgs, Robert, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California agriculture to 1941," *Journal of Economic History* 38 (1978): 205–225.
- Hosokawa, Bill, *Colorado's Japanese Americans: From 1886 to the Present* (University Press of Colorado, 2005).
- Ichikawa, Nina F., "Giving Credit Where it is Due: Asian American Farmers and Retailers as Food System Pioneers," in *Eating Asia America*. NYU Press, 2013: 274–287.
- Kubota, Ryuko, "Critical Teaching of Japanese Culture." *Japanese Language and Literature* 37 no.1 (2003): 67–87.
- Mai-Due, Christine and Parvini, Sarah. "California Cuisine Queen Alice Waters to be Awarded National Humanities Medal." *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 2015. Accessed May 29, 2017.
- McIntosh, Linda, "Harvest of Local Grower Reaps National Acclaim," *San Diego Union Tribune*, November 24, 2011, accessed June 3, 2017.
- Reuters, "Celebrated Japanese American California Farms Sows Seeds for Next Generation," *Japan Times*, Nov 26, 2014, accessed June 3, 2017.
- Solt, George, *The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze*. University of California Press, 2014.
- Suzuki, Masao, "Important or Impotent? Taking Another Look at the 1920 California Alien Land Law." *The Journal of Economic History* 64 (2004): 125–143.
- Vaught, David, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875–1920*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Weld, Sarah D., "Japanese American Agrarianism in *Rafu Shimpō*, *Kashu Mainichi*, and *Treadmill*" in *The Nature of California: Race, Citizenship, and Farming since the Dust Bowl*. University of Washington Press, 2016.
- Yamashiro, Jane H., "Japanese as a Global Ancestral Group: Japaneseness on the US Continent, Hawai'i and Japan," in *Redefining Japaneseness*. Rutgers University Press, 2017.

Works Cited

- Abe, David, *Rural Isolation and Dual Cultural Existence: The Japanese American Kona Coffee Community*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Aoki, Keith, "No Right to Own: The Early Twentieth Century "Alien Land Laws" as a Prelude to Internment." *Boston College Third World Law Journal* 19 (1998): 37–72.
- Chino, Tom (farmer and owner of Chino Farms), oral history interview with Sam Nakahira, 07/10/2018. Digital Grinnell.
- Eat at Bill's: Life in the Monterey Market*, directed by Lisa Brenneis. Tangerine Man Films, 2009, DVD.
- Freedman, Paul, *Ten Restaurants that Changed America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016.

How Much Does Your Cup of Coffee Really Cost? Ethiopia's Coffee Farmers in the Globalizing Coffee Industry

Selam Solomon Nicola, *Carleton College*

Selam Nicola is an Ethiopian native raised in Houston, TX. She recently graduated from Carleton College with a BA in Economics. Her academic interests include international trade theories and practices and sustainable economic development. Having lived in both Ethiopia and the United States, her passions are deeply inspired by and rooted in her personal experiences with the different realities of the world. Selam currently works in finance conducting Emerging Market Macroeconomic analysis. In the long term, Selam hopes to pursue further education and is interested in reconfiguring the discourse and approach around sustainable economic development.

Abstract

Trade volume throughout the world has nearly doubled since the 1980s. Everything we consume, wear and use on our daily lives is rarely ever locally sourced. Trade theories conclude that trade allows for an efficient allocation of resources and will effectively increase economic growth. Contrary to these theories, however, recent studies have shown that trade has become a mechanism through which industrialized nations utilize the ecological and economic carrying capacity of poorer countries to sustain growing consumption. To explore this paradox, I visited Yirgacheffe and Dilla, Ethiopia to study the world's second most traded commodity after oil—coffee. I ask, what are the costs and risks of being a producer within this global regime? Are farmers truly benefitting from the increasing global popularity of their agricultural commodity? My findings reveal that Yirgacheffe and Dilla coffee farmers are among the most economically and environmentally vulnerable in the coffee value chain. While the industry continues to grow and liberalize, roasting and retail companies continue to take the lion's share of the profit while marginalized producers disproportionately bear the environmental and economic risks and costs of coffee farming.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I am very grateful for the Ethiopian farmers who took time from their busy and valuable days to talk to me. I hope this research brings awareness to the lives coffee farmers whose struggles seem so distant to the western consumer. I would like to thank William North, who is committed to strengthening and deepening his students' academic and intellectual pursuit. Thank you, Marynel Ryan Van Zee, for making opportunities like this more accessible. A special and big shout out to Annette Nierobisz for your guidance throughout the research and writing process, I appreciate you a lot. Finally, thank you to my immigrant parents and community for crossing an ocean so I could

live a life they only dreamt of; thank you for instilling in me determination, tenacity, resilience and a strong sense of justice.

Introduction

Trade volume throughout the world has nearly doubled since the 1980s (Chemingui and Bchir, 2010). Everything we consume, wear, and use in our daily lives is rarely ever locally sourced. Most of the integration is due to international bilateral and multilateral institutions that continue to push for neo-liberal policies as poverty reducing mechanisms for developing countries. Considerable research that explores the impact of trade liberalization on African economies has concluded that trade liberalization has a positive impact on the poverty or economic growth. Emerging studies, however, show that trade has become a mechanism through which developed countries exploit the economic and ecological carrying capacity of developing countries (Heidhues and Gideon 2011; Milanovic and Squire 2007; Topalova 2005). These studies are more macro level and do not include the voices and experiences of those at local levels of production.

In this paper, I explore the impact of globalization on coffee farmers in Ethiopia. I attempt to understand, what are the costs of being a producer within this global regime? How do producers understand their place and possibilities? By focusing on Ethiopia's central commodity—coffee—in two particular localities (Yirgacheffe and Dilla, Ethiopia) and pursuing qualitative data, rather than conventional quantitative data, this project seeks to understand, through the eyes of producers themselves, the impacts of international trade mechanisms on Ethiopian Coffee farmers.

Background

Ethiopian coffee is the quintessential example of a commodity that has complex environmental, economic, and societal impacts. With thousand-year roots in the region, coffee is Ethiopia's most economically and culturally significant commodity. It accounts for about 5% of Ethiopia's GDP and generates Ethiopia's largest—about 30%—export revenue (Petit 2007). Similarly, approximately 15 million Ethiopians derive their income and livelihood from the coffee industry (Petit 2007). Ethiopia is also the largest exporter of coffee in Africa and produces one of the finest and most consumed types of coffee in the world (Dicum 1997).

Like most commodities in the global market, coffee has a multifaceted supply chain that involves the cooperation of various parties. Elements of the process of production, supply, marketing, and distribution, such as collection,

roasting, packaging, maintenance, storage, import costs, and shipping, make up the overall cost of coffee. In his 2014 book *Constructing Private Governance*, Graeme Auld, a scholar of the politics, economics, and ethics of the global economy, examines the specific characteristics and processes through which the general coffee supply chain operates and where economic value is concentrated. Coffee is planted, farmed, and cultivated by small and local farmers mostly in developing equatorial countries such as Brazil, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Vietnam. Most of the time, coffee grading, cleaning, and processing happens in the producing countries, while the more mechanized and costly processes such as roasting and packaging take place in developed and consuming countries such as the United States and Canada (Auld 2014). Auld (2014) describes the unequal distribution and construction of the coffee industry as having “hourglass” characteristics (pg. 8). Like the top of an hourglass, the pool of coffee producers and farmers is large. Over 70 countries and 20–25 million families participate in coffee farming and exporting activities (Auld 2014). Similarly, at the opposite end of the hourglass, there are millions of retailers that distribute and billions of people that consume coffee throughout the world. The middle of the hourglass—that section comprising traders and roasters—is very narrow, however.

In 2005, only five roasters purchased and distributed 50% of the world’s coffee (Auld 2014). That is, approximately half of 90% of the revenue generated in the coffee industry was earned by only five of the roasters and distributors. In effect, a few corporations have come to hold an oligopoly on the roasting and trading/transporting process of coffee. Large corporations’ position in this “hourglass economy” and their ability to “make the market” has enabled them to purchase coffee beans at extremely low prices from the Global South, roast the beans, and re-distribute beans to the Global North at a relatively high price and retain the difference as revenue.

To provide some form of coffee price regulation and economic security for coffee farmers, the International Coffee Association (ICA) was established in 1963 (Fridell 2014). In early 1980s, however, the ICA collapsed after major economic powerhouses like the United States of America pulled out of the agreement, insisting that the free market should regulate prices (Fridell 2014). Since then, various multilateral and bilateral trade agreements have incentivized market liberalization and trade deregulation as a poverty-reducing and growth-inducing mechanism; in this trajectory, coffee has followed the path of African economies more broadly.

As described by Heidhues and Gideon (2011), during the 19th and first half of the 20th century, many of the present-day African coffee producing countries had been

extractive colonies with open economies, meaning that they freely exported raw materials and primary goods to colonizers on the colonizers’ specific terms and conditions of trade. After gaining independence over the course of the 1950s–1970s, most African countries were abruptly pushed into the global economy. Immediately following independence, in late 1970s and early 1980s, African countries closed off their borders in favor of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). In other words, African economies increased tariffs and decreased their dependence on foreign imported goods to foster domestic industries.

To sustain these domestic industries, however, African economies had to incur large external debts. As a result, they began to sustain large fiscal and external deficits. Economies were on the brink of disaster and in response, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) developed the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) that was intended to make a large set of loans to African countries (Heidhues and Gideon 2011). However, these loans came with a set of conditions and financial agreements that brought about the continent’s largest wave of liberalization in the late 1980s. Under these conditions, countries were required to eliminate trade barriers, lower tariffs, reduce agricultural subsidies, and devalue their currencies (Heidhues and Gideon 2011). In Ethiopia, for example, the government has reduced tariffs and subsidies significantly since the late 1980s, resulting in the devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr (currency) by 90% since 1990. The country’s lower trade barriers and devalued currency, in turn, have allowed foreign buyers to access Ethiopian goods and services for low prices. Yet, the domestic economic growth promised by the IMF and WB as a consequence of market-liberalization-led poverty reduction has yet to be realized in many African countries, including Ethiopia. Despite the multiple waves of liberalization, poverty remains one of the continent’s biggest challenges. Whether or not the trade-led growth has trickled down to the poor, most of whom reside in rural areas and work in the agricultural sector, remains controversial.

Despite the push by the Global North for Sub-Saharan African countries to liberalize, developed countries’ agricultural tariffs are 4–7 times higher than manufacturing tariffs; indeed, the United States and European countries have the most protected sectors and industries (Chemingui and Bchir, 2010). High subsidies in developed countries result in overproduction and agricultural dumping and depress prices of agricultural commodities, creating unfavorable market conditions for African farmers who do not have such protections and exist in countries often structurally disincentivized to create them.

According to several economic empirical studies that use disaggregated household data, the liberalization advanced by the IMF and WB are harmful to the livelihoods of farmers and rural populations (Topalova 2000). Because farmers from developing countries often do not have the productive capacity, technology, and subsidy protection to compete with farmers in developed nations, the global market exposes them to economically unsustainable competition that is detrimental to their livelihood. For instance, in the coffee industry, wealthier exporters of coffee and large roasting corporation use trade liberalization as a mechanism to pit countries against one another in a “race to the bottom,” the practice in which producers lower prices of goods to remain competitive (Fridell 2014). Lower prices compel producers to seek high yields in order to make ends meet, and to do so, farmers and governments search for the cheapest ways to produce high yields. Consequently, farmers are incentivized to excessively use pesticides, external fertilizer inputs, and unsustainable and intensive farming techniques that contribute to climate change, the loss of biodiversity, deforestation, over-cultivation of land, and loss of cultures—effectively leading to further vectors of dependency (since many of the agricultural intensification technologies come from the developed world) (Fridell 2014). In case after case, corporate needs and profits are favored over marginalized labor and the environment.

Although considerable research has explored the impact of liberalization regimes on African economies and the Ethiopian economy at large, there has been little attention paid to the impact of liberalization schemes on the environmental and economic livelihoods of producers. By focusing on Ethiopia’s central and the world’s second most traded commodity—coffee—in two localities (Yirgacheffe and Dilla, Ethiopia), this project seeks to understand, through the eyes of producers themselves, the impacts of trade and market liberalization mechanisms on Ethiopian Coffee farmers. This research aims to include local voices in discourse about the coffee industry and trade liberalization by not only unraveling the nuances of their experiences, but also by exploring the risks and challenges they face and the coping mechanisms they deploy to maintain not just their economic livelihoods through coffee production, but also their cultures and traditions.

Methods

After receiving an IRB approval, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 coffee farmers in Yirgacheffe and Dilla, Ethiopia using a snowball sampling method. Each interview lasted 20–40 minutes and was conducted at the local government office in Yirgacheffe, at a local agricultural development center in Dilla, or at farmers’ plots. I asked farmers questions about their annual income

from coffee, the nature of the coffee industry as they understand it, the income and price fluctuation of coffee, and about the challenges and difficulties of coffee farming as well as their coping mechanisms. All quotes reported in the following section use pseudonyms. My sample is small, and so it is difficult to make conclusive claims about my results. More research about the environmental and economic impact of market liberalization in the coffee industry needs to be conducted across the world with to corroborate my findings.

Results and Discussion

Throughout my interviews, three clear themes emerged. First, farmers face severe environmental challenges. Second, farmers highlighted issues of income depletion and unstable economic conditions that expose them to food insecurity. Third, despite these economic and environmental difficulties, farmers continue to farm coffee because of the sense of resilience that comes from the traditional and intergenerational significance of coffee in the Yirgacheffe and Dilla region.

As corporations and consuming countries drive coffee prices to the bottom, farmers have been forced to find cheaper farming techniques that produce higher yields. This drive for short-term efficiencies results in intensive farming and excessive use of external inputs, which consequently produce deforestation, a decline in biodiversity, and degradation of soil quality. As farmer Alem noted,

Everyone is cutting down trees and cutting land dedicated to sustenance crops to plant more coffee. But it has gotten harder to farm coffee now because now the land is less fertile and rich and giving, so we have to cultivate more often and put more labor into managing the land.

Here, coffee farmer Alem touches on two important issues. First, she points farmers are cutting down the trees on their lands and dedicating less land to sustenance crops to plant more coffee beans. Yet, sustenance crops in Ethiopian rural households normally account for 58% of the household diet (Sibhatu and Qaim 2017). If households are cutting down on land dedicated to sustenance crop for more cash crops such as coffee trees, they are compromising household food resources, which in turn leads to food insecurity. Second, because native trees often provide canopy and environmental protection for coffee trees, the elimination of these trees to plant more coffee, in a tragic irony, threatens to compromise the quality and quantity of the coffee harvest overall (Dicum 1997). As Alebachew recalled:

In 2015, the hail destroyed our coffee trees. 2016 followed with coffee frosts. We have no income now. We drink chaff for coffee because we have had no income the last couple years and we had to sell every bit of the beans we have. I have planted trees now, but it will take three years to start bearing beans. The frost burned out all our coffee. Our income depends on the environment, and the environment has become less and less predictable and more unreliable. It must be God's anger. We are getting assistance from the government, but it is not enough.

Because coffee is the primary source of income for all the farmers interviewed, damage caused by environmental events intensified by deforestation can haunt farmers like Alebachew for years. Coffee farmers also spoke about ongoing economic insecurity.

The income depletes around the rainy season. We must sometimes wait six months to harvest again and earn more income. We have to buy food for our kids, educate and clothe them. The income is not enough, and it does not sustain us throughout the year. Especially when we have emergencies. I took my wife to the doctor in Dilla [city that's an hour away] last year and it cost me \$59; that is a big portion of my annual income [\$345]. We do not have income for almost six months. We sleep with an empty stomach. We try to farm our crops for our own consumption, but it is not enough. I do not know what the solution is to this problem. I am getting older now, so it is even harder.

In the quote above, Ayalew, a 45-year-old farmer with 9 kids, shares the difficulties of maintaining a household with an unsustainable income. As noted above, roasting and retail corporations receive approximately 90% of the revenue generated in the coffee industry. The remaining 10% of income is distributed among millions of producers across the globe. Moreover, because coffee is a commodity whose price fluctuates with global demand and supply conditions, the income farmers anticipate is unpredictable. For coffee farmers like Ayalew, this means that their average yearly income is as low as \$321, an amount that they receive in one lump sum once a year when they sell their harvested beans. This income, however, cannot sustain farmers' entire annual needs and most farmers do not have the social and financial capital to mitigate the emergency and unpredictable costs that deplete income halfway through the year, leading to cycles of food insecurity.

To counter these adverse market conditions, some farmers reported developing strategies to ameliorate the unpredictability of the industry: One farmer named Bizunesh noted, "We know the patterns. When the prices are high, and harvesting is good, we buy animals and livestock because

we know the coffee trends. So, when the harvest is low, or prices are low, we sell the livestock, or we eat it." On a similar note, Ayalew reported that in addition to planting more crops for home consumption, he goes to the nearest city as a migrant worker:

That [income depletion and unpredictability] is a big problem, but we invest in livestock during good times, so we can save through that for bad times. We plant quick plants like green collards and we also plant enset [a staple food for people in the Yirgacheffe region] for home consumption and to sell locally in the city. We sometimes also go into the city to do laborious work during the day.

These farmers cope with the uncertainty of their occupation by diversifying their capital and labor through livestock and employment in the city.

Despite economic and environmental challenges faced by Yirgacheffe farmers, they continue to farm coffee and emphasize their resilience as well as important traditional and generational ties to coffee farming. One farmer, Mebrat, remarked: "I will not abandon coffee farming . . . the income might be small, but it is what keeps me alive. If I had more money and land, I would rather cultivate my land than work in the cities or anything. It is irreplaceable." Ayalew expresses a similar but a more elaborate sentiment:

Buna denbachin new ["Coffee is our traditional and civic duty"]. It is all that we know, and coffee is all our land knows. It is our black gold passed down from our great grandfathers. We will not abandon it regardless of how unprofitable it is. We do not know anything else . . . our land doesn't know anything else. Coffee is what sustains us, it is what sustains our country. If we leave, we'll just become migrant workers and the struggle wouldn't stop. I would rather struggle farming than as a migrant worker.

Mebrat and Alebachew show that coffee is worth farming even if it does not always generate an economically net positive outcome. Most farmers expressed that if they had the land and ability to farm more coffee, they'd much rather do that to farm any other crops or move to the cities as migrant workers. The farmers expressed the deep generational and traditional responsibility that grounds their resilience in the face of adversity.

Conclusion

The rapid economic global integration, especially of developing economies, calls for a careful examination of trade's implications for the livelihood of marginalized agricultural commodity producers. Undoubtedly, the impact of trade liberalization on economic growth and poverty,

especially in the Economics field, is a well-studied area, but little research has included local voices. Although, since the 1980s, African countries have increased trade volume at an average rate of 3.4% every year and multilateral and bilateral agreements have incentivized trade as a poverty reducing and growth-inducing mechanism, my investigation of the condition of Ethiopian coffee farmers in Yirgacheffe and Dilla reveals that farmers are not reaping the benefits of market liberalization and increased global integration.

Although more research involving a larger sample of farmers should be conducted for a more conclusive result, my findings reveal that Yirgacheffe and Dilla coffee farmers are among the most economically and environmentally vulnerable in the coffee value chain. While the industry continues to grow, and roasting and retail companies continue to take the lion's share of the profit, the marginalized producers around the world disproportionately bear the environmental and economic risks and costs of coffee farming. Despite the economic and environmental uncertainties of the occupation, however, Yirgacheffe and Dilla coffee farmers continue to farm because of the deep traditional and generation ties they have to coffee and to their land. For the farmers I interviewed, coffee is more than just economic capital. Coffee is a generational responsibility and an integral part of their identity.

Endnote

- 1 Yirgacheffe and Dilla are two of the eight major coffee producing region in Ethiopia. Ethiopian coffee is globally known for its Arabica beans that are grown on high altitudes.

Works Cited

- Auld, Graeme. (2014). *Constructing Private Governance: The Rise and Evolution of Forest, Coffee, and Fisheries Certification*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Chemingui, Mohamed & Bchir, Mohamed. (2010). "The Future of African Trade with China under Alternative Trade Liberalization Schemes." *African Development Review*, 22.1, 562–576.
- Dicum, Gregory and Nina. Luttinger. (1999). *The Coffee Book: Anatomy of an Industry from Crop to the Last Drop*. New York, NY: New Press.
- Dollar, David, and Aart Kraay. (2004). "Trade, Growth, and Poverty." *The Economic Journal*, 114 (493), 22–49.
- Fridall, Gavin. (2014). *Coffee*. Cambridge, England; Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Heidhues, Franz, and Gideon Obare. (2011). "Lessons from Structural Adjustment Programmes and Their Effects in Africa." *Quarterly Journal of International Agriculture*, 50.1, 55–64.
- Milanovic, Branko, and Lyn Squire. (2007). "Does Tariff Liberalization Increase Wage Inequality? Some Empirical Evidence." *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 11046, 183–240.
- Petit, Nicolas. (2007). "Ethiopia's Coffee Sector: A Bitter or Better Future?" *Journal of Agrarian Change*, .2, 225–263.
- Shimeles, Abebe. (2014). "Growth and Poverty in Africa: Shifting Fortunes and New Perspectives." *African Development Bank and IZA*, No. 8751.
- Sibhatu, Kibrom, and Qaim, Matin. (2017). "Rural Food Security, Subsistence agriculture, and seasonality." *PLoS ONE* 12(10).
- Topalova, Petia. (2005). "Trade Liberalization, Poverty, and Inequality: Evidence from Indian Districts." *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 11614, 291–335.

Playing with Fascism: The Case of Italian Mickey Mouse and His Fascist Doppelgänger (1938–1943)

Lucas René Ramos, *Princeton University*

Lucas René Ramos is a first-year PhD student in Columbia University's history department. He broadly focuses on Modern European intellectual and social histories, with interests in historic/neo-fascism, Italian queer lives, and "gender ideology." In his undergraduate time at Princeton University, Lucas completed research on Rome's urban city planning of slaughterhouses and a 1990s LGBT nightclub that decided to use ex-slaughterhouses as its venue choice. His thesis focused on the methods by which the Ministry of Popular Culture regulated subversively "American" comic strips in the 1930s. Lucas plans to write his Master's thesis on 1970s Freudo-Marxism in the gay liberation fronts of Italy, France, and Britain.

Abstract

Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse translated into an unlikely enemy for Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini's fascist regime (1922–1945). *Topolino*, the Italianized Mickey Mouse comic strip, represented a subversion to fascist nation-building which the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture ultimately banned, viewing this innocent, big-eared American patriot as a political affront. U.S. Mickey fought the Nazis on secret missions, but Italian Mickey transformed into a human, called Tuffolino, whose brief legacy (1942–1943) provides insight into fascist ideology itself. This excerpted chapter from a larger thesis argues that Tuffolino was an icon purified of his Italian/American, animal-human "doubleness" and made into an Italian male human. Mickey's re-stylizing in the 1940s as Tuffolino was a forced enterprise between the regime and publishing house, demonstrating that, despite Mickey's "subversive" nature, there still existed a desire to both Italianize and *fascisize* the beloved mouse. At the borderland between propaganda and satire, Tuffolino disrupts the fascist mechanisms that bring him to life.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my Mellon Mays mentor Alessandro Giammei and thesis adviser Gyan Prakash. Both advisers provided the logistical support and constructive criticism I needed to finish this project. This thesis put me in contact with a number of scholars and archivists from API-Mondadori, including Mariarosa Bricchi, Gioia Guerzoni, and Elena Maria Grossi. Truly instrumental to my research was archivist Tiziano Chiesa from the Mondadori Foundation in Milan. Additionally, his assistant Arianna Gorletta helped me navigate the formalities of the archive. I also would like to thank my closest friends Julia, Josiah, Vayne, Ana, Jessica, and Maegan, who all patiently dealt with my ramblings about Disney and Mickey Mouse.

Introduction: Walt Disney and the Italian Fascist Regime

Walt Disney could not have foreseen how the Second World War (WWII) propelled his animation company into the international limelight. The birth of his empire, accelerated by the invention of the beloved Mickey Mouse in the cartoon *Steamboat Willie* (1928), was the symbolic starting point towards a new form of power: Disney as a creator of popular bourgeois culture.¹ Disney's mysterious aura as controller of popular culture finds a parallel with Italy, a country under the rule of an authoritarian regime led by dictator Benito Mussolini (1922–1943). Over the course of the 1930s, Disney became a subversive entity that could potentially dethrone the progress made on the Italian state's cultural vision.

Likewise, Mickey Mouse gained scrutiny and eventual censorship under the regime's "official publishing house,"² The Mondadori Publishing Group. The regime emphasized cultural unity and nationalism through governmental surveillance, birthing the Ministry of Popular Culture (Min. Cul.Pop) as a way to regulate forms of entertainment inside and entering Italy in the post-WWI era. If Disney desired to control popular culture as a means for profit, how would the regime respond to Disney products when it was attempting to create its own cultural products, *prodotti italiani*,³ as its means of "symbolic reconstruction"?⁴

This article focuses on Italy and how its fascist regime absorbed and reformatted the image of Mickey Mouse through the comic strip, known as *Topolino*. This process resulted in the creation of an Italian boy called Tuffolino, an icon who has received little scholarship despite its intriguing position as the object of fascist experimentation from a massive Italian publishing house. I argue that Tuffolino is a satirical tool of its publisher, Mondadori, representing a moment in which the "official publishing house" of the regime absorbed and deflected fascist prerogatives. By focusing on such a little-known figure, I seek to complicate how one reads political propaganda as more than a weapon of political control.

Instead, this material may contain its own history at odds with the state's prerogative. My analysis additionally allows for a new way to deconstruct the relationship between youth and fascist regimes through the lens of satire, an intersection between historical political realities and literary imaginaries.

Situating Mickey: The Arrival of the American Comic Book

Intersecting Disney and the fascist regime emphasizes the role children played in this project to renew Italy. Simply put, the Italian state indoctrinated a new generation of children to carry out a message of cultural superiority, for

children represented the “young, energetic” patriotism that the regime desired to reestablish.⁵ Studying fascism in the context of a massive children’s entertainment corporation offers new understandings for how fascism absorbs and responds to foreign material, especially as its youngest assets to nation-building are threatened.

When analyzing the relationship between Disney and the fascist regime’s cultural visions, comic books situate themselves at the center of the debate. Of the variant mediums Disney used to export material to a European market, one of the most viral forms was the comic book, catalyzing the Italian *comics craze* of the 1930s.⁶ This coincided with the amassing of foreign material by Italian publishing houses in a wave of cultural internationalization that conflicted with the fascist regime’s more insular, nationalistic directives. Unlike other mediums, comic books have an “open visual and verbal form” with a “complex word-image relationship” that give it innovative, flexible qualities.⁷ In short, these qualities make the comic book a significant tool for registering cultural shifts. Mickey Mouse in particular, born in 1928, roughly parallels the fascist regime’s birth (1922). Mickey Mouse saw its quiet Italian debut in the *L'Illustrazione del Popolo* and continued to be represented by various publishing houses until its eventual acquisition by the Mondadori Publishing Group, one of the largest global publishing houses in Italy, in 1935.⁸ Not until 1938 did Min.Cul.Pop concretely formalize and begin a process of cultural censorship,⁹ one that included this “official publishing house” and non-Italian content. The anxieties to retain a Disney monopoly that was nearing its end gave Mondadori one possible caveat to the powers at hand: to continue publishing *Topolino* without any strips of Topolino himself, creating a doppelgänger called Tuffolino.

Anxieties over Mondadori’s creative hold on *Topolino* resulted in a letter that founder Arnaldo Mondadori himself wrote to Min.Cul.Pop in March 1941, a letter that can be revisited as both satirical and tongue-in-cheek as it focuses on the contradictory nature of Min.Cul.Pop’s cultural objectives. In this letter, Mondadori makes the startling claim that Disney was rooted in Italy, having the ability to establish itself within the fascist mission, despite fascism’s resistance to non-Italian products.¹⁰ Among the several points of Mondadori’s defense, one that stands out is the claim that Disney’s products (including *Topolino*) were not American but *universal*. In an exaggerated way, Mondadori claims that these products belonged to the borderless world of art and creativity.

It does not seem to us that Walt Disney can be considered in the same way other American designers are who, in these last years, have invaded the Italian pages of our youth. Still alive and full of creativity, Walt Disney has shared his works that

have ethical, aesthetic, and artistic importance, so that we might even consider him to be an authentic classical author already, worthy of acceptance without a passport in all countries of the world. He is an authentic fabulist, a delicate poet, and a painter with great taste, who can create humor with satire, and whose works appear all over the world for children . . . [He is] of serene optimism. Walt Disney, just like . . . La Fontaine, Gozzi, Collodi, De Amicis, has been translated into all languages: He is not “an American” but a great artist worthy of being known and admired everywhere.¹¹

Mondadori hoped that this letter could persuade Min.Cul.Pop, using the rhetoric of the regime itself, comparing Disney’s ideological framework with the regime’s conception of a mythic past. Mondadori registered Disney’s American roots, but he argued that Disney was a figure whose occupation differed from other lesser Americans who had “invaded” the Italian literary canon. Disney held the power to control youth as a whole, a powerful element that had ethical, aesthetic, and artistic implications for the regime. Once Mondadori qualified Disney’s global reputation and mythic necessity, Disney gained the brand of both classical and authentic authors to the likes of Collodi. In a sense, Mondadori’s letter suggested that Disney could become an emblem of fascism, an ideal example of how to build a nation, despite the fact that the Disney Company had become a propagandist machine for the U.S. war effort.

Deconstructing Tuffolino: *Italianità*, Fascism, and Satire

If the satirical origin to Mondadori’s use of Disney content is evident in this letter to Min.Cul.Pop in 1941, then the fascist recreation of Mickey Mouse took place in 1942 when Min.Cul.Pop pressured the birth of the lesser known figure called Tuffolino. The *Tuffolino* comic strip, a single page at the end of the comic book, featured a young, vulnerable boy who would go on Italian-specific adventures. These stories are nearly miscellaneous. Tuffolino’s adventures include aesthetically peaceful, non-city settings (a room, a yellow background, a forest, or a lake) and are brightly colored. Little to no scholarship mentions *Tuffolino*, and there may be a reason. Likely, it was a poorly-received comic strip, which had only come to exist as a result of the “collaborations” between Mondadori and Min.Cul.Pop. Ultimately, *Tuffolino* was a ploy to keep Mickey alive for the sake of Mondadori’s *Topolino* (1935–1949), the comic strip issues that Mondadori had famously published with Topolino’s face inside the second “O” of the banner.¹² The protagonist’s name, Tuffolino, had shifted from “cute little mouse” [*Topo-lino*] to “cute little tuft” [*Tuffo-lino*], an adorable though reductive revision of Mickey’s personality. The first issue of *Tuffolino* differentiated from the rest of the series, as it was a remake of an upcoming *Topolino* issue

called “Topolino Agente di Pubblicità,”¹³ which was doubly a remake of a U.S. strip called *Supersalesman* published the year before (1941). After the remake, which masked U.S. creative content with a new aesthetic, the *Tuffolino* series departed from U.S. storylines.

In order to better engage with the nature of the *Tuffolino* comic strips, I present two plots from two issues. In *Tuffolino Va in Vacanza* [Tuffolino Goes on Vacation], from the first series of *Tuffolino* published in 1942, Tuffolino and his friend Pippo (a play on Goofy) want to catch a strange creature by a lake. After speaking with an old man, it appears that the creature is actually a hydrophobic dog.¹⁴ In the second issue of *Tuffolino*, titled *Tuffolino e l'archeologo* [Tuffolino and the Archeologist] published in 1943, Tuffolino is bandaged after being kidnapped and attacked by Cillo and Rollo, two enemies who worry that Tuffolino might die. Eventually, with no one in the room and the door locked, Tuffolino “regains his senses” and realizes his doomed position locked in the room (“I might be wrong, but it seems to me that I’m a prisoner here”).¹⁵ Perhaps Tuffolino’s placement in a prison is a coincidentally perfect position at this point in time, for the comic strip ended the same year. The circulation of the *Tuffolino* strip extended from a place of uncertainty over how the war would affect Mondadori’s business. After the issue *Tuffolino e il pepe esplosivo* [Tuffolino and the explosive pepper], the series ended in December 1943, five months after Mussolini was voted out by his Grand Council.¹⁶

Certainly, the creators of *Tuffolino* desired to take the story devices popular in Mickey Mouse and its subsidiary, *Topolino*, in order to make their own “true original.” However, *Tuffolino* is more disjointed than the Mickey Mouse comics. *Tuffolino* has poorly structured continuity and expansion inevitable as the strip’s designers tried to complicate and enhance its stories from the initial episodes within a short two-year time span. Mickey Mouse and *Topolino* comics additionally tended to be longer than a page, even during the war years when Mickey became less popular. Most notably, the style of the comic strip changed from balloon-type dialogue to vignette captions that were used in Italy. Such stylization, while seemingly small, represents a form of “domestication” by publishers with respect to the regime’s mission of cultural unity.¹⁷ It was not simply Italianization, but *fascistizzazione*.

At the center of Mickey’s *fascistizzazione* was Tuffolino’s anatomy. He was, in the vision of his designer Pierlorenzo de Vita and writer Federico Pedrocchi, “a true boy in flesh and bone.”¹⁸ But unlike Collodi’s *Pinocchio*, whose transformation into a real boy signified an emotional growth through his adventures, *Tuffolino* was a contrasting regression. Tuffolino’s physical qualities include tan skin and

the cartoonish, exaggerated facial complexion of a young boy. What parallels him to Topolino initially are his white gloves and exaggerated hands and feet. One can attribute the boy’s vulnerable, oval-shaped eyes with pupils located at the bottom to that of Mickey Mouse’s eyes, retaining a sense of mouse-like curiosity. Important to note is that Tuffolino’s aesthetic transformation maintained the same style as the *Topolino* issues preceding it, as Tuffolino does not become blocky in form, which was typical of fascist cartoons such as characters in the *Balilla* magazine and *Marmittone* strips.¹⁹ In addition to *Tuffolino*, all of the Disney characters’ names were Italianized: Minnie turned into Mimma, Gambadilegno (Peg Leg Pete) became Bimbo, and Clarabella turned into Claretta.²⁰

Tuffolino’s body was the “technique” by which the fascist regime erroneously came to understand itself.²¹ It was no longer about censoring Mickey but about forcing Mickey to become Italian and human. This also occurred with characters other than Tuffolino, such as Claretta, whose name was an allusive strategy of historical rooting, as it references Claretta Petacci who was the alleged mistress of the Italian dictator.²² Claretta’s fictional creation suggests that Mondadori still had conflicting interests with the regime, since the use of Petacci indicates a potential form of satire that Mondadori incorporated when pressured to create a vision of Fascist Italy. Subtly satirical forms of antifascism would not be new to Mondadori’s legacy, a company which from 1936 to 1939 had Cesare Zavattini as its editorial director, a man who was also a “covertly antifascist” figure.²³ The satire of Clarabella gives *Tuffolino* a multi-faceted context, since its tongue-in-cheek nature implies the tense relationship between Min.Cul.Pop and Mondadori over regulation. As a result, the comic strip retained its name, *Topolino*—not Tuffolino—on its cover. Only the content inside the comic book was censored by Min.Cul.Pop, not its banner. This strategy is nearly mocking, as it only loosely adhered to the regime’s demands for the erasure of Mickey Mouse comic strips. Instead, the comic book continued to print with the Mickey Mouse logo and a Mickey’s letter-to-the-editor section, titled “La Posta,” since these were technically not Mickey Mouse stories.²⁴

Conclusion

Scholars have only circled the strangeness of *Tuffolino*’s anatomy. In Umberto Eco’s brief commentary on the hybrid creature, Eco brings attention to while leaving ambiguity over Tuffolino’s meaning as a fascist construction. In a 2001 article, Eco spoke on Tuffolino when he said: “In 1942, the [Italian] government prohibited balloon-type lettering [in comic strips] and, a few months later, suppressed [American] cartoon characters; Topolino was substituted by Tuffolino, a human who was no longer an animal, in order

to preserve the purity of the [Italian] race.”²⁵ It is therefore unsurprising that Tuffolino’s designer and co-creator, Pierlorenzo de Vita, has his signature appear on the list of *The Manifesto of Racial Scientists [Il Manifesto Degli Scienziati Razzisti]* (1938), published in *Il Giornale d’Italia*: “The census of Italian racialists—the list of members.”²⁶ The manifesto sought to designate Italians (and their German neighbors) as the superior race and, like *Tuffolino*, was supported by Min.Cul.Pop on initiatives concerning “the problems of race.”²⁷ Tuffolino represents not just purity of fascist nationalism, but also purity of anatomical form and race theory emerging in the late 1930s.

On one hand, Tuffolino was a form of satire; on the other hand, the comic absorbed the fascist ideology that Min.Cul.Pop demanded, placing Tuffolino into a gray space of ideological chaos. Mondadori’s *Tuffolino* represents the enveloping of anti-system rhetoric within propagandist media, creating a conflict of interest within the body of its cartoon character. To say that Tuffolino is significant for his “purifying” transformation belies the satirical undertones that emerge from Tuffolino’s comical existence as a *fascist anti-fascist*, for the origin of *Tuffolino* was to continue the U.S. Mickey plots and aesthetically hint at the taboos of the fascist regime. At the borderland between propaganda and satire, Tuffolino disrupts the fascist mechanisms that bring him to life.

Endnotes

- 1 Ariel Dorfman, *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic* (New York: International General, 1975).
- 2 Fabio Gadducci, ed., *Eccetto Topolino: lo scontro culturale tra fascismo e fumetti*, L’arte delle nuvole; 3 (Battipaglia, Italy: NPE, 2011), 10.
- 3 Giancarlo Ottaviani, *Il Controllo di MinCulPop Sulla Pubblicità, il Cinema La Moda, La Cucina, La Salute E La Stampa* (Milano: Todariana Editrice, 2007), 7.
- 4 Caterina Sinibaldi, “Dangerous Children and Children in Danger: Reading American Comics under the Italian Fascist Regime,” in *The Nation in Children’s Literature: Nations of Childhood*, ed. Christopher (Kit) Kelen and Björn Sundmark, *Subversive Tales—Critiquing the Nation* (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2013), 54.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid., 16.
- 7 Maaheen Ahmed, *Openness of Comics: Generating Meaning within Flexible Structures* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 11.
- 8 Gadducci, *Eccetto Topolino*, 31.
- 9 Tracy H. Koon, *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy 1922–1943* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill and London, 1985), 159.
- 10 Ottaviani, *Il Controllo di MinCulPop Sulla Pubblicità*.
- 11 La Fondazione Mondadori: *Cartella Al Ministero della Cultura Popolare–18.3.1941.XIX (Rome)*. Original: la soppressione delle favole di Walt Disney.
- 12 Il Museo del Fumetto: *Topolino*, 1942.
- 13 Il Museo del Fumetto: *Topolino*, No. 499, July 7, 1942.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Il Museo del Fumetto: *Topolino*, No. 524, December 29, 1942.

- 16 History.com Editors, “Mussolini Falls from Power,” HISTORY, November 16, 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/mussolini-falls-from-power>.
- 17 Caterina Sinibaldi, “Dangerous Children and Children in Danger,” 58.
- 18 Annalisa Stancanelli, *Vittorini, Pavese e Topolino: Topolino negli anni Trenta e Quaranta e in appendice una nota sui war insignia* (Tricase (LE)—Italy: Youcanprint self-publishing, 2015), 45.
- 19 Il Museo del Fumetto: Corriere dei Piccoli Exhibit, 2018; The Cotsen Children’s Library: Box 3 16782.
- 20 Cinzia Goggi, *Arnoldo Mondadori Editore di Walt Disney* (Universita degli studi di Milano, 2002), 81.
- 21 Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, “Fascism and Aesthetics,” *Constellations* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 352, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.2008.00496.x>.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Gadducci, *Eccetto Topolino*, 9.
- 24 La Fondazione Mondadori: *Topolino*, No. 423, 6.
- 25 Stancanelli, *Vittorini, Pavese e Topolino*, 47.
- 26 *Il Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti* (SERVIZIO STUDI, DOCUMENTAZIONE E BIBLIOTECA, 1938), no page, <https://www.lastampa.it/rw/Pub/Prod/PDF/2018/07/manifestodellarazza.pdf>; Original: Il censimento dei razzisti italiani—l’elenco degli aderenti.
- 27 Ibid.

Works Cited

Archives

Cotsen Children’s Library: Walt Disney Comics: Miscellaneous Issues [Princeton University]

Il Museo del Fumetto [Milan] (2000–Present)

La Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori [Milan] (1979–Present)

Primary Source

Il Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti. SERVIZIO STUDI, DOCUMENTAZIONE E BIBLIOTECA, 1938. <https://www.lastampa.it/rw/Pub/Prod/PDF/2018/07/manifestodellarazza.pdf>.

Secondary Sources

Ahmed, Maaheen, *Openness of Comics: Generating Meaning Within Flexible Structures*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 11.

Dorfman, Ariel. *How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*. New York: International General, 1975.

Falasca-Zamponi, Simonetta. “Fascism and Aesthetics.” *Constellations* 15, no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 351–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.2008.00496.x>.

Gadducci, Fabio, ed. *Eccetto Topolino: lo scontro culturale tra fascismo e fumetti*. L’arte delle nuvole; 3. Battipaglia, Italy: NPE, 2011.

History.com editors. “Mussolini Falls from Power.” HISTORY, November 16, 2009. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/mussolini-falls-from-power>.

Koon, Tracy H. *Believe, Obey, Fight: Political Socialization of Youth in Fascist Italy 1922–1943*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill and London, 1985.

Ottaviani, Giancarlo. *Il Controllo di MinCulPop Sulla Pubblicità, il Cinema La Moda, La Cucina, La Salute E La Stampa*. Milano: Todariana Editrice, 2007.

Sinibaldi, Caterina. “Dangerous Children and Children in Danger: Reading American Comics under the Italian Fascist Regime.” In *The Nation in Children’s Literature: Nations of Childhood*, edited by Christopher (Kit) Kelen and Björn Sundmark, 53–68. *Subversive Tales—Critiquing the Nation*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2013.

Stancanelli, Annalisa. *Vittorini, Pavese e Topolino: Topolino negli anni Trenta e Quaranta e in appendice una nota sui war insignia*. Tricase (LE)—Italy: Youcanprint self-publishing, 2015.

Unpublished Sources

Goggi, Cinzia. *Arnoldo Mondadori Editore di Walt Disney*. Università degli studi di Milano, 2002.

Mediation and Meditation in the Torre de la Parada

Colin Carter Sanborn, *Oberlin College*

Colin Sanborn recently graduated Oberlin College with High Honors in Art History. His scholarship concentrated on representations of disability in 17th-century Spanish court portraiture. He hopes to continue studying the art of the early modern and baroque Hispanic world in graduate school.

Abstract

This paper, excerpted from a lengthier thesis, examines Diego Velázquez's portrait of the "court dwarf" Diego de Acedo through the lens of disability theory. Although Velázquez's body of work has been extensively studied, few scholars have investigated what it implies about 17th-century Spaniards' conception of human divergence, and fewer still have done so without falling back on outdated models of disability. I thus hope to demonstrate here both disability's continued cultural importance and the utility of an analysis grounded in contemporary disability theory. An analysis of *The Buffoon Don Diego de Acedo* through this lens ultimately suggests that the representation of the subject's disabled body uniquely enabled Velázquez and the king to communicate ideas about the court, the monarchy, and the inner-workings of their own bodies and minds that could not otherwise be expressed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the entire Oberlin Art History department for their unending support, and would especially like to thank Professor Christina Neilson for advising and supporting me over the course of two years, and for always encouraging me to take my scholarship one step further. Thank you as well to the other members of my Honors committee, Professor James Hansen and Professor Catherine Scallen (Case Western Reserve University), for your excellent insights and advice. Last but not least, I would like to thank the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Research Fellowship, and Dr. Afia Ofori-Mensa.

In her autobiographical *Arboleda de los enfermos* (*Grove of the Infirm*), the nun Teresa de Cartagena presents readers with the following reflection on her experience of being deaf and thus visibly disabled¹ in 15th-century Spain: "this mortification is like the source or stamp of our suffering, for just as the seal placed over wax leaves its own impression, so afflictions with the stamp of mortification impress on the body and face of the sufferer the seal of its own coat of arms."² Throughout this text, Cartagena seems to inject the word "mortification" (literally *mortificación*) with a double meaning. It signifies both disability's physical mark on her God-given body, which has isolated her from her hearing

peers, and the mortification of fleshly desires required of her by God. For Cartagena and others like her, then, disability did not pertain only to an individual experience of illness or impairment, but to an individual's relationship with God, themselves, and society at large. It was unavoidably interpersonal, and, as Cartagena suggests through the metaphor of armory, had broader social implications for disabled and abled Spaniards alike. Disability had its own heraldry and history and throughout the canon of Golden Age Spanish portraiture, one can observe the myriad ways in which that heraldry was "stamped" onto representations of the disabled body.

Unlike Cartagena's autobiography, however, these paintings do not reflect their sitters' personal experiences with disability: instead, they reflect an outsider's reading of their "stamp of mortification," and thus offer us a distinctly abled construction of disability. There are at least 27 extant paintings and drawings of this kind by Spanish artists produced between 1560 and 1680, many of which were portraits, and collection inventories reveal more that have since been lost or destroyed.³ The fact of these works' existence in combination with their treatment of their subjects suggests a marked interest among artists and patrons in determining where and how disabled bodies fit into late 16th and 17th century Iberian social structures—in the case of portraiture, which necessarily involves identifiable disabled sitters, this interest merits closer examination. I would thus argue that the disabled body uniquely enabled Spanish artists and patrons to communicate ideas about the court, the monarchy, and the inner-workings of their own bodies and minds that they could not otherwise express. In a period of sociopolitical turmoil, in a court that was concerned with questions of reputation, in/exclusion, and intellectual development, the disabled subject proved to be a powerful means of exploration.

Sharon Snyder and David Mitchell have posited that, in a discursive phenomenon they refer to as "narrative prosthesis," a text "borrows the potency of [disability's] lure of difference," positioning it "as an 'alien' terrain that promises the revelation of a previously uncomprehended experience."⁴ When Snyder and Mitchell refer to "narrative," they primarily have literature in mind; nevertheless, these concepts remain pertinent here, as the act of commissioning a portrait is very much an attempt to construct a narrative. More precisely, I propose that when we turn to Velázquez's single portraits of dwarfs and jesters, we can see him using these sitters' disabled bodies as a prosthesis of sorts—one meant to flesh out understandings of court structure, Philip IV's royal identity, and art-making as a generative process. Whereas similar portraits that juxtapose disabled and royal bodies were used primarily to reinforce courtly hierarchies and characterize their disabled sitters as ornaments, these works seek to express with more nuance ideas about understanding, imagination, and any number of

“uncomprehended experiences” that for Velázquez and his audience were uniquely encapsulated in the disabled body. In images as in texts, there is a potency afforded to divergent forms, which is why a baroque construction of disability relies upon the striking visualization of that potency.

The most relevant portrait here is Velázquez’s *The Buffoon Don Diego de Acedo* (Figure 1), which was displayed in the Torre de la Parada, one of Phillip IV’s personal hunting lodges located just outside Madrid. It depicts Acedo, a mustachioed, middle-aged man with a receding hairline, seated outdoors on the ground; a distant, mountainous landscape is roughly rendered in dull greens, grays, and browns in the background, identifiable as a part of the Guardarrama range that would have actually been visible from the windows of the hunting lodge.⁵ Neatly groomed, dressed all in black with his hat jauntily tilted to the side and balancing a folio the size of his torso on his lap, Acedo takes up most of the frame and gazes neutrally out at the viewer as he uses one hand to turn to a different section in his book. He is surrounded by other, smaller volumes; two are piled in the bottom left corner of the frame and one lies open in the center of the foreground, its soft front cover bent into a ‘D’-shape. Wedged into this frontmost book are a few blank sheets of paper, weighed down by an ink-pot, that serve to hold Acedo’s place.

The catalyst for the way this painting makes its meaning is explicitly its subject’s disabled body—in particular, its subject’s dwarfism. In other words, given the fact that Acedo is centered in a composition whose key element is scale, the most immediately striking detail of the piece is its rendering of Acedo’s mis-fit in this environment. The book on Acedo’s lap is the size of his entire torso, but his position relative to the landscape in the background, unmediated by walls or windows, creates an additional comparison between his body and the vast mountain range behind him, which would have been visible from where the portrait was displayed. The small size of Acedo’s body—the visible sign, the *mortificación* of his disability—is what allows Velázquez to deal with scale in this way, as well as what allows him to use this piece to further explore ideas about intelligence and the acquisition of knowledge, delving more deeply into what he has read into his subject’s body.

To achieve this formally, Velázquez relies most heavily on pose and the use of accessories—the latter meaning not just the books surrounding Acedo, but his clothing, since both stand in for more complex ideas about knowledge and status. Touching first on pose, though, we should note that while Acedo’s seated position may seem inconsequential, it is actually rather peculiar; aside from the three companion pieces that hung alongside this one in the Torre de la Parada, there are next to no Spanish portraits from this period that show their subject seated on the floor or ground. Portraits from this period with seated subjects certainly exist, but all

of those subjects are shown sitting in chairs and tend to be Church officials. In Bartolomé Murillo’s *Portrait of Don Justino de Neve* (1665), for example, Neve is also seated, dressed all in black, looking out at the viewer, and holding his place in a book with his fingers, with another book nearby and a mountain range behind him. But unlike Acedo, Neve is surrounded by clear markers of his social status; his coat of arms is displayed on a column behind him and on the table beside him, we see a small silver hand bell referencing his work in the Church and an ornate golden clock. At his feet sits a well-groomed lap dog with a red bow around its neck—a status symbol as well as one of fidelity. Neve was a wealthy, influential ecclesiastic and patron of the arts and Murillo has evidently included these details in order to convey this to his audience. While Acedo is also surrounded by objects, they do not seem to pertain to his position at court, in the *secretaría de la cámara* where he stamped documents and correspondence with a facsimile of the king’s signature.⁶ His entire job, it seems, was to use one stamp, which itself had to be locked in a special coffer that one could not handle or transport without oversight and that could only be unlocked by the Secretary of the *secretaría*.⁷

Yet it seems that Velázquez has presented him quite differently. This is not a representation of repetitive office work, but a representation of intellectual motion. Acedo is not only turning a page, but turning to a specific page; he is actively cross-referencing and demonstrating his knowledge of the book’s contents and the presence of the ink-pot and blank pages beside him indicates that he is in the process of noting down and synthesizing that knowledge with the information gleaned from the other three books in the frame. Additionally, though the mere fact of his being shown seated with a book echoes contemporary portraits of learned men. Manuela Mena Marqués has proposed that the volume’s enormous size, as well as Velázquez’s rough suggestions of illustrations, indicates that it is both a high-quality folio and “a great book of consultation, of sciences, of philosophy, of botany, which gathers dense and complex knowledge or a compendium of knowledge.”⁸ Considering that those same concepts of combined knowledge and active learning are essential to understanding this portrait, this is a compelling suggestion. The figure being presented to us here is Acedo as intellectual—Acedo as humanist, even, studying the liberal arts. He is additionally dressed in line with the somber fashions of the nobility in Philip IV’s court, which reflected Philip’s general “turn towards conservatism” in politics as in portraiture, moving away from his father’s perceived frivolity and restoring the solemnity of his grandfather’s reign.⁹ As Julie V. Hansen suggests, in this context a stiff, monochromatic costume like Acedo’s comes across as “a physical manifestation of the wearer’s inner moral convictions and control.”¹⁰ For Acedo to be dressed in this way may then signal to viewers, who would themselves be

familiar with the connotations of these fashions, that his outfit is meant to convey a similar degree of sobriety and poise.

There is, however, an additional aspect of this piece that proves quite meaningful in an analysis of the broader ideas Velázquez is trying to explore: the site of its display. As Svetlana Alpers is careful to point out, the Torre de la Parada was not Philip IV's only hunting lodge, nor was it necessarily one that saw frequent use; notably, between La Zarzuela and Valsain, it is the only hunting lodge that was not also used as a performance space.¹¹ Rather, as suggested by its name derived from the verb *parar*, "to stop," it served as more of a rest stop. Located in a secluded area between the Pardo palace and La Zarzuela, it was a junction of sorts for Philip and his entourage, as well as any visiting diplomats or nobles who may have been accompanying them on the hunt.¹² Additionally, although it was one of Philip IV's original architectural projects,¹³ it seems that the lodge was built cheaply around an earlier watchtower erected by Philip II and was "of very modest size," particularly in comparison to the much more lavish project that was the Buen Retiro pleasure palace.¹⁴ Due to its small size, transitional function, and relative seclusion, as well as the fact that very few visiting diplomats ever mentioned seeing it, the Torre is often characterized as a private space for Philip, again in contrast to the highly public nature of the Buen Retiro.¹⁵

Yet as Alpers has noted, the Torre de la Parada also stands out in this trio due to the fact that it is the only space Philip IV had decorated with site-specific commissions, primarily executed by Rubens and Velázquez.¹⁶ Among these commissions was *The Buffoon Don Diego de Acedo*, as was one of Velázquez's other "jester portraits" depicting the dwarf Francisco Lezcano (c. 1645). *The Buffoon Calabacillas* (c. 1636–1637) was displayed alongside them as well, although it is unclear if the latter was painted for the specific purpose of being displayed in the Torre de la Parada or if it was an earlier work brought in to supplement the newly commissioned portraits.¹⁷ In any case, the decision to place portraits of these figures in this space is a curious one and one that implies a great deal about the representational utility of the disabled body for Velázquez and Philip as artist and king, respectively. I posit that Acedo's portrait in particular speaks to the Torre de la Parada's function as a site of introspection.

In the bureaucratic hierarchy of the court, the *secretaría* where Acedo worked was very close to the king himself, ranking only below the intimate position of Sumiller de Corps, which was at this point held by the Count-Duke of Olivares. This closeness was due in part to the fact that they handled the royal signature, but under the Sumiller's authority the *secretaría* also oversaw all audiences with the king, reviewed petitions and briefings sent to him by individual citizens, and acted as an intermediary during the royal pardoning process.¹⁸ In other words, it is possible to

visualize Acedo as being positioned at multiple junctions: in reality, between the king and the court, and within his portrait, between the king's more permanent residences and his other, more public lodges. Additionally, in a culture where the disabled figure in and of themselves is positioned between the abled world and the divine Word (or simply the unknown), we can read them as embodying a less earthly intermediary space. This, too, may be part of Velázquez's compositional scheme; Acedo's hat is arranged such that his forehead, further exposed by his receding hairline, is brightly illuminated by an unseen source that can easily be interpreted as divine light, the light of inspiration, or any number of related metaphors. In other words, his mind lies directly between this beam and the blank pages waiting to receive its exclusive knowledge. Furthermore, since we have established that Acedo is shown in the process of not just copying, but *synthesizing* knowledge, he is in no way a passive intermediary. Velázquez is not offering up a flimsy construction of the disabled body. Rather, he has crafted a multivalent iteration thereof that speaks to what I believe is a genuine desire on his part to explore its unique symbolic weight.

It must be said, however, that Mena Marqués has argued that because their links with actual figures in the court are relatively tenuous, the four "jester portraits" in the Torre de la Parada were not meant to be portraits at all.¹⁹ Rather, she claims, they are allegorical pieces, born of Velázquez's *invención*, that were part of a decorative program intended to educate the young Prince Baltasar Carlos by combining classical philosophical imagery with the familiar iconography of the court dwarf and/or natural fool. Although it has frequently been suggested that the Torre de la Parada had no coherent decorative scheme,²⁰ Mena Marqués posits instead that we may at least read Velázquez's contributions as revolving around his paintings of Aesop and Menippus—in other words, around the idea of wisdom couched in fable and satire.

Ultimately, given the lack/loss of documents, the inconsistent inventories of the Torre, and an ongoing confusion over the identities of multiple *gente de placer* named in court records,²¹ it seems difficult to claim concretely that the Torre de la Parada portraits have no connection to real figures in Philip IV's court—or vice versa. Regardless of how we identify these subjects, however, the crux of Mena Marqués' argument remains relevant to the Acedo portrait's concern with the acquisition of knowledge and would seem to align with our present understanding of Philip IV's relationship to the Torre de la Parada as a space. For one, the structure around which the Torre was constructed was itself built in the context of a king mentoring his son: supposedly, while accompanying Charles V on the hunt, a young Philip II was dissatisfied with the overnight accommodations in the Pardo and proposed that a tower be constructed that

would both be more comfortable and visible throughout the forest.²² Bouza has additionally noted that under Olivares, Philip and Baltasar Carlos “were surrounded by literate culture, with the idea that it would be a means of helping perfect them for the exercise of power.”²³ While he is hesitant to suggest that the decorative program of the Torre was explicitly constructed by Olivares to promote a “Neostoic education,” Bouza still emphasizes that figures like Aesop, Menippus, and Democritus (who was also painted by Velázquez for the Torre) “had become highly familiar in the court of Philip IV around the same time that the paintings were produced.”²⁴ A thought-provoking, if not explicitly *educational* program based around the familiarity of these figures and their work would necessarily include artworks that deal with the question of understanding; a distinction must be made through this imagery between true and false, deep and shallow comprehension. Velázquez, certainly aware of associations between disability and unique forms of, thus took the opportunity to expand this program into an exploration of not just knowledge writ large, but as it pertained to the structure of the court, the intellectual life of Philip and his son, and the “uncomprehended experiences” that perhaps felt out of their reach.

Let us return again to Teresa de Cartagena and her autobiography. She describes in detail how the social and emotional repercussions of her deafness left her completely isolated from her fellow nuns. As Encarnación Juárez-Almendros puts it, “though the convent separates [Cartagena] spatially from society, her impairment places her in a more difficult situation of abjection and human rejection,” in that dismal exile (*tenebroso destierro*) “where she feels ‘more in a sepulcher than a dwelling’ and severed from human pleasures.”²⁵ At the same time, however, Cartagena felt that her disability, which cuts her off from earthly auditory experiences, granted her both “experience that [made] her wiser and [lead] her to a realm unexplored”²⁶ by her abled peers and “a new capacity to hear spiritual voices.”²⁷ In other words, she argues that it is the disabled subject’s externally-imposed isolation from normative society that offers them a deeper understanding of the world around them. Unique insight is predicated on being at a remove from normal thought and perspective, and one’s access to this insight is indicated by their being visibly disabled—the “mortification” which itself has led to their isolation.

This ought to remind us of an important fact: despite the complex layers of meaning the disabled body is used to produce, that body is not analogous to the one that exists in reality. We frequently speak of “social constructs” in the context of the present day; disability in the 17th century was not a social construct in that modern sense, but it was nevertheless *socially constructed*. To quote Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, these so-called defective bodies “[gained]

definition only through their unstable disjunctive encounter with an environment”²⁸—an environment that consisted not only of monarchic hierarchy and courtly structure, but of a fascination with processes of thought and understanding that disabled figures frequently interrupted. The disabled body that is represented here is an amalgamation of the beliefs, fascinations, and fears that surrounded the baroque understanding of markedly divergent bodies and minds.

I emphasize this not to detract from its representational power, but to advocate for a study of art that takes that representational power seriously. We do not need to limit ourselves temporally to analyze the ways in which disability functions as an essential means of understanding artistic practice, nor should we stop examining the ways in which it continues to shape new artistic directions today. In turn, an analysis of the disabled body in Golden Age Spanish art stands to strengthen emerging research on how real disabled populations in this period were being treated and understood. Much can be gleaned about a society’s attitudes toward a given group of people and its conception of their state of being from the ways they represent that group artistically, which must be considered in disability studies’ turn toward pre- industrial understandings of disability. In short, if we are to grasp these constructive processes across time periods and cultural contexts, we cannot let the baroque disability that emerged during Spain’s Golden Age of artistic production remain in its dismal exile.

Endnotes

- 1 I define disability as the state of being limited in one’s abilities to function in an environment, social or physical, due to that environment’s incongruence with the shape and function of an impaired body. “Impairment” in turn refers to the physical reality of something like blindness, lack of mobility, psychiatric illness, a developmental disorder, etc.
- 2 Teresa de Cartagena, *The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena*, trans. Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 64.
- 3 See for instance Svetlana Alpers, *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada* (New York: Phaidon, 1971), Appendix II, for descriptions of portraits of dwarfs lost in the 1710 Austrian sack of the Torre de la Parada.
- 4 David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 55.
- 5 Javier Portús, *Guía de la colección Velázquez* (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2012), 63.
- 6 José Moreno Villa, *Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos: gente de placer que turvieron los Austrias en la corte Española desde 1563 a 1700* (La Casa de España en México, 1939), 55–56 and 58; Pablo Pérez D’Ors, Richard Johnson, and Don Johnson, “Velázquez in Fraga: A New Hypothesis About the Portraits of El Primo and Philip IV,” *The Burlington Magazine* 154, no. 1314 (2012), 624.
- 7 Margarita Gómez Gómez, “La secretaría de la Cámara y de la Real Estampilla: Su relevancia en la Diplomática de Documentos Reales (ss. XVII–XVIII),” *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* no. 15 (1988), 175.

- 8 “Es evidentemente un gran libro de consulta, de ciencias, de filosofía, de botánica, en que se reúne un saber complejo y denso o un compendio de saberes.” Manuela B. Mena Marqués, “Velázquez en la Torre de la Parada,” in *Velázquez y Calderón: Dos genios de Europa*, ed. José Alcalá-Zamora and Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2000), 108.
- 9 John F. Moffitt, “The Theoretical Basis of Velázquez’s Court Portraiture,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53, no. 2 (1990), 222.
- 10 Julie Vinsonhaler Hansen, *The Philosophers of Laughter: Velázquez’s Portraits of Jesters at the Court of Philip IV* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1999), 90.
- 11 José Luis Sancho, *La arquitectura de los Sitios Reales: catálogo histórico de los palacios, jardines y patronatos reales del Patrimonio Nacional* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 1996), 206–207.
- 12 Ibid.; Alpers, *Decoration of the Torre*, 105.
- 13 That is, in comparison to the major royal sites that were already well-established by the time Philip came into power, such as the Pardo, the Alcazár, Valsain, etc.
- 14 Alpers, *Decoration of the Torre*, 105.
- 15 Ibid.; Dawson Carr, “Velázquez and the Hunt,” in *Velázquez*, ed. Dawson Carr and Xavier Bray (London: National Gallery, 2006), 193.
- 16 Alpers, *Decoration of the Torre*, 105.
- 17 Another one of Velázquez’s portraits of court dwarfs, *The Buffoon Sebastián de Morra* or, more recently, *The Buffoon El Primo* (see D’Ors, Johnson, and Johnson, “Velázquez in Fraga,” 620–625) is frequently grouped with these three, but the Prado’s provenance records and the extant inventories of the Torre indicate that this portrait was likely never displayed there (see also Alpers, *The Decoration of the Torre*, 129). All four portraits mentioned here were hung in the same room in the Palacio Nuevo Real in Madrid by 1772, but this is the earliest date we can confirm that they were all displayed together.
- 18 Gómez Gómez, “La secretaria de la Cámara,” 176–177.
- 19 Mena Marqués, “Velázquez en la Torre,” 101–155.
- 20 See Alpers, *Decoration of the Torre*, and Fernando Bouza, “Modern Rogues and Ancient Philosophers in Philip IV’s Court: Three Laughs, Two Imitations and a Funny Face,” in *Velázquez’s Fables: Mythology and Sacred History in the Golden Age*, ed. Javier Portús (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007).
- 21 For a more recent discussion of disagreements over the identity of the dwarf “El Primo,” frequently identified as Don Diego de Acedo, see D’Ors, Johnson, and Johnson, “Velázquez in Fraga,” 620–625.
- 22 Araceli Martínez Martínez, “Un edificio singular en el monte del Pardo: la Torre de la Parada,” *Archivo Español de Arte* 65, no. 258 (1992), 201.
- 23 Bouza, “Modern Rogues and Ancient Philosophers,” 224.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Encarnación Juárez-Almendros, “The Autobiography of the Aching Body in Teresa de Cartagena’s *Arboleda de los enfermos*,” in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002), 136.
- 26 Ibid., 137.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept,” *Hypatia* 26, no. 3 (2011), 595.
- Carr, Dawson W. “Velázquez and the Hunt.” In *Velázquez*, edited by Dawson Carr and Xavier Bray. London: National Gallery, 2006.
- Cartagena, Teresa de. *The Writings of Teresa de Cartagena*. Translated by Dayle Seidenspinner- Núñez. Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1998.
- D’Ors, Pablo Pérez, Richard Johnson, and Don Johnson. “Velázquez in Fraga: A New Hypothesis About the Portraits of El Primo and Philip IV.” *The Burlington Magazine* 154, no. 1314 (2012): 620–625.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. “Misfits: A Feminist Materialist Disability Concept.” *Hypatia* 26, no. 3 (2011): 591–609.
- Gómez Gómez, Margarita. “La secretaria de la Cámara y de la Real Estampilla: Su relevancia en la Diplomática de Documentos Reales (ss. XVII–XVIII).” *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* no. 15 (1988): 167–180.
- Hansen, Julie Vinsonhaler. *The Philosophers of Laughter: Velázquez’s Portraits of Jesters at the Court of Philip IV*. Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Services, 1999.
- Juárez-Almendros, Encarnación. “The Autobiography of the Aching Body in Teresa de Cartagena’s *Arboleda de los enfermos*.” In *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, edited by Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002.
- Martínez Martínez, Araceli. “Un edificio singular en el monte del Pardo: la Torre de la Parada.” *Archivo Español de Arte* 65, no. 258 (1992): 199–212.
- Mena Marqués, Manuela B. “Velázquez en la Torre de la Parada.” In *Velázquez y Calderón: Dos genios de Europa*, edited by José Alcalá-Zamora and Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2000.
- Mitchell, David T. and Sharon L. Snyder. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.
- Moffitt, John F. “The Theoretical Basis of Velázquez’s Court Portraiture.” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53, no. 2 (1990): 216–225.
- Moreno Villa, José. *Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos: gente de placer que tuvieron los Austrias en la corte Española desde 1563 a 1700*. La Casa de España en México, 1939.
- Portús, Javier. *Guía de la colección Velázquez*. Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2012. Sancho, José Luis. *La arquitectura de los Sitios Reales: catálogo histórico de los palacios, jardines y patronatos reales del Patrimonio Nacional*. Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 1996.

Works Cited

- Alpers, Svetlana. *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*. New York: Phaidon, 1971.
- Bouza, Fernando. “Modern Rogues and Ancient Philosophers in Philip IV’s Court: Three Laughs, Two Imitations and a Funny Face.” In *Velázquez’s Fables: Mythology and Sacred History in the Golden Age*, edited by Javier Portús. Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007.



Figure 1. Diego Velázquez, *The Buffoon Don Diego de Acedo* (c. 1640) © Museo Nacional del Prado

Misrepresenting Santería: Cuba's Concerns with Modernity and Blackness

Alexandra Sánchez Rolón, *Duke University*

Alexandra Sánchez Rolón is a recent graduate from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts in Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies and Psychology. She is a first-generation college student hailing from Bayamón, Puerto Rico and centers her research interests in Afro-Latinx women in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Alexandra is currently in the process of applying to PhD programs while serving as an advisor through the Duke College Advising Corps program.

Abstract

This article examines depictions of Santería in Cuban media in an effort to uncover Cuba's relationship with religion and identity politics, in this case, Santería and Black identity. This piece traces the origins of said relationship by analyzing the contents of a communist women's magazine from circa 1970s, titled *Mujeres*. A close examination of *Mujeres* magazine finds that Santería is associated with the past and with social, cultural, and political limitation. Within the eyes of the Cuban, Revolutionary government, Santería is antithetical to modernity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Patrice Douglass for her unconditional support, mentorship, and patience throughout the progression of my research. To the Duke Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship program, thank you for believing in and nurturing my development as an aspiring scholar.

Aisha Beliso De Jesus' *Electric Santeria* begins with a beautiful statement, "It's a blessing for black folks to know themselves in this way and know where we came from and who we are. When we are made Lukumí [initiated as priests] we are united with our past and present . . . he egún [spirits of the dead] and orisha"¹ (2). Santería, also known as Regla de Ocha or Lukumí, is a syncretic religion comprised of Yoruban mythology and Roman Catholicism, born from Cuban slave resistance during Spanish colonization (Allatson, 220). From the year 1492 until its emancipation from Spain in 1898, Cuba imported approximately 520,000 enslaved people onto the island, generating an immense Black population and culture (Ocasio, 160). By the late 19th century, enslaved people from countries with the Yoruban tribe, such as Nigeria, Benin, and Togo, formed the majority of the enslaved population, leading to a grand exchange between Yoruban mythology and Spanish culture and customs (Fernandez, 33). One of the most important tenets of Spanish imperialism, however, was religious dominance. Via

Catholicism, the Spanish crown justified both their colonial and slave-trading practices, using religious oppression to impose psychological control over Cuba's enslaved, African people.

Given that Cuban, colonialist society relied upon the subordination of Black bodies for its survival, "Catholicism [was] a useful tool for imposing and maintaining hierarchy and social order" (Franklin, 21). In hopes of conserving their cultural heritage and religious practices, Yoruban enslaved people challenged Spanish religious oppression by creating Santería. Through this, they masked their mythology and deities using Catholic saints and meshed practices from both sources. For this very reason, Spanish colonizers dismissed Santería as being "superstitious and devil worship[ing]" practice, aiming to delegitimize and ultimately, end the spiritual belief (Vidal-Ortiz, 53). Given Santería's anti-colonial, subversive origins, the religion has and continues to be associated with Black resistance to Western ideals, serving as a site for racial and gender empowerment and community.

This paper aims to uncover Cuba's relationship with religion and identity politics, particularly, Santería and Black identity. Using an article titled, "a propósito de un museo," published in a circa 1970s women's magazine titled *Mujeres*, I trace the political origins of this magazine to better understand the Cuban, Revolutionary government's ideologies on race and religion. I then analyze and deconstruct the contents of this article, centering on its discussion of a newly constructed wing in the Museo Histórico de Guanabacoa. Through this, I find that post-Revolution, Santería is rebranded and associated with the past and with social, cultural, and political limitation. Within the eyes of the Cuban, Revolutionary government, Santería is antithetical to modernity.

The Origins of *Mujeres* Magazine

Mujeres is a women's magazine published by the Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (FMC). The FMC was established post-Cuban Revolution in 1961 by Fidel Castro and his sister-in-law, Vilma Espín. The production of this magazine serves to create a space where Cuban women could articulate their needs in Cuban society (Chomsky, 142). In particular, the FMC centered on women's participation and equal status within the workplace and encouraged women to explore higher education, as these were deemed necessary for Cuban women's growth (Leiner, 62–64). As a result, most of the articles within the *Mujeres* magazine issue portray professional, Cuban women and discuss their strides in the workforce.

Race and Religion in *Mujeres Magazine*

One article, however, stood out from the rest. Titled, “a propósito de un museo” this piece centers on the creation of a Santería exhibit in the Museo Histórico de Guanabacoa, a history museum in the city of La Habana. The piece is two pages long and filled, primarily, with photographs of the exhibit. The inclusion of this piece is curious given that, not only does it omit explicit discussions of women’s issues, it explores spiritual practices. Post-Revolution in 1976, the Cuban government declared itself an atheist state, deeming religious practice as anti-Revolutionary. Organized religion was thought to employ hierarchies, as religions like Catholicism and Protestantism catered to their elites; an act antithetical to the policies of communism (Chomsky, 151). Yoruban spiritual practices, like Santería, were especially prohibited, as the Cuban government felt that “estos grupos eran incapaces de producir un pensamiento científico que sirviera a los fundamentos del estado”² (Morúa, 153). The “groups” mentioned are synonymous with Black culture and identity, as Santería’s history and practice is rooted in it, making the government’s denial of the practice a denial of race. While Catholicism and Protestantism were censured for their creation of individual difference, Santería and its relationship to Blackness was censured for its perceived limitation of the Cuban government’s social and cultural progress.

Given the Cuban state’s position on religion, the article’s focus on Santería appears misplaced, as it not only acknowledges religious practice but spotlights Afro-Cuban practitioners. During the first year of the Revolution, Fidel Castro made clear that discrimination based on race would no longer be tolerated within the regime. Accordingly, Castro passed desegregation laws that permitted Black Cubans access to previously barred spaces, such as private beaches and clubs and certain schools (Clealand, 75–76). Once Cuba was legally desegregated, Castro proclaimed that racism was officially resolved and no longer needed addressing.

Though no formal laws were set to ensure racial equality in Cuba, Fidel Castro often condemned discrimination and social difference, stating in 1961 that, “primero eran los españoles los que oprimían a los indios, después oprimían también a los indios y a los negros, después oprimían a los hijos de los indios y de los negros con los españoles,”³ separating the Cuban Revolution of the present from its Spanish imperialist and racist origins (“Discurso Pronunciado Por El Comandante” [1961]). When reading his speech, it becomes notable how Castro separates each race and makes it appear foreign to Cuba’s people. Rather than being Black, Spanish, and Indian, Cubans are no longer related to or identifiable by their racial heritage, and are instead, unified by national

identity: Cubanidad.⁴ The negation of racial categories, in an effort to challenge colonial origins, moors race as a symbol of the past, as this, alongside class status and religious beliefs, are seen to hold the country back from progress. In reaffirming these notions, Castro makes communism’s goal of ultimate equality an attractive step in social, cultural, and political advancement. Time, then, becomes a symbol for Cuba, where the future is synonymous with progress and the past reflects restriction and limitation.

Following claims of religious equality, formal writings, organizing, and discussions around race were prohibited and deemed racist, employing what Danielle Clealand refers to as an “institutionalized silence” regarding race (78). “a propósito de un museo” follows this historical framing, as it does not formally or explicitly discuss race. It must be noted, however, how the article references Santería within the context of race and culture. Despite the Revolution’s concerns with national identity, Santería is seen as a religion of the “pueblos africanos”⁵ rather than one of the Cuban people (Mujeres, 42). It could be argued that the use of the term “African” aims to highlight Santería’s Yoruban origins, though Santería is not only drastically different from that of Yoruban mythology but was solely developed using an equal combination of Catholic and European influences. As such, it should be identified more as Cuban than African. This designation highlights the government’s discomfort with and separation from Santería. In mentioning Santería at all, however, the article insinuates an effort to bypass the restrictions on race and religion and alludes to the possibility that the article’s target audience may be female practitioners connected to their African roots.

The overall tone of the article is neutral, signaling a potential shift in the gaze surrounding Santería. The majority of the text in the piece, approximately one and a half pages out of its total two, quotes scholarly work and opinions by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, a leader in research regarding Afro-Cuban spiritual traditions prior to the Cuban Revolution. *Mujeres’* exclusion of its own perceptions on the religion and the museum suggests that *Mujeres* simply showcases Santería to a seemingly uninformed audience, while sharing the development of a new wing in the museum. The article confirms this notion, stating that the museum hopes to demystify judgements and educate those who are curious (42). The article follows with discussions by Ortiz, who states that in order for the Cuban people to progress and be free from prejudice (this prejudice can be read as relating to kinds of social and cultural difference, including race, religion, and class), they must learn from “las realidades, sin pasiones ni recelos; basados en la investigación científica” (Mujeres, 41).⁶

Both the article and Ortiz's attempt to liberate its readers from preconceived notions and biases is a positive step, considering colonial Cuba's contentious past relationship with African people and culture. In some instances, the article makes an effort to clarify, in bolded text, that Santería cannot be reduced to witchcraft or Black magic (41). The purposeful emphasis of this statement suggests that *Mujeres* wants readers to reframe their possible stereotypes regarding Santería by acknowledging the nuances of the religion, greatly contrasting Cuba's prior Spanish-colonial gaze on Afro-Cuban spiritual traditions. Despite the article's seemingly progressive attempts, using scientific analysis to understand and deconstruct a cultural phenomenon like Santería is alienating to both the religion and its people. The scientific method, which has relied on objectivity, detaches Santería from its rich Black historic and cultural origins and makes the religion figuratively foreign to the Cuban people.

The Museum Space

It must be noted, however, that the article's primary purpose is to celebrate where Santería is being physically and figuratively situated: a history museum. The arrangement of a museum's wings or expositions impacts how the artifacts being displayed are subsequently read. Museum spaces physically separate objects into specific categories and deconstruct their qualities, in an effort to make their meaning more digestible for visitors, given that these items have been removed from their original context and subsequently made static. For example, pieces may be separated by time period, tribe, purpose, or materials used for its production, despite that the combination of these qualities serve to inform the reader of the fullness of the object's creation and purpose. A visitor's movement throughout these separated spaces dictates how each piece is read, demonstrating that historical museum displays are not neutral in their presentation of said pieces and instead "operate as power plays in which plays for power circulate with the movement of viewers through their curated spaces" (Smith, 3). Additionally, the way in which museums prop the objects within their respective spaces alters how patrons relate to said objects. Objects situated behind physical barriers, such as glass cases, prevent the physical intimacy necessary to fully understand the object's purpose, ultimately making the object become both physically and figuratively foreign. The combination of the objects' fragmentation throughout the museum alongside their physical separation from the viewer, prevents visitors from recognizing and engaging with the richness behind these objects, turning them into superficial, misunderstood pieces (Smith, 219).

Museum exhibitions also shape visitors' education by presenting them with an object and a placard of information nearby. Since objects are often foreign to the visitor's

knowledge, museum exhibitions work to become what Smith calls, "culture-writing formations" as they use pieces of artifacts, placards, and information cards to produce a conventional understanding for the visitor (Smith, 3). Museum exhibitions, then, hold their own agenda on how and what to educate their visitors on. Behind this agenda lies the question of who should have and who does have the ability to present and tell the stories of these cultural objects. In the case of the Museo Histórico de Guanabacoa, we can assume that the museum is government-funded, given its construction during communist Cuba. While we do not explicitly know the perspective with which these objects are being portrayed, the Santero artifacts in this museum become the product of the government, subject to their bias. Given this, these objects no longer serve their original, intended purpose and become exoticized by the nature of their separation. Once these objects become placed in a museum, an edifice preserving historical articles, those cultural and spiritual objects automatically become fixated within a finite, geopolitical timeframe—the past. Although Santería was and continues to be practiced in Cuba, practices and traditions become relics, as the museum turns them into artifacts of the government-constructed past.

Conclusion

An examination of *Mujeres* magazine reveals Cuba's relationship with Blackness and Santería to be highly complex. During the height of communist Cuba during the mid-1970's, the Cuban government rejected all markers of individual difference, like race and religion, in hopes of establishing social, political, and economic equality. Even within this erasure, Santería, in particular, was treated unfairly. While religion overall was lost within the public imaginary and received no formal discussion or analysis, Santería was instead deconstructed, alienated, and rebranded. Most notably, Santería was considered harmful by the Cuban government, not for its ability to create hierarchies (the claim used to denounce European religions) but for its inability to contribute to modern, scientific progress, a claim that highlights racist undertones in censorship. Additionally, *Mujeres'* focus on Santería via the article "a propósito de un museo" serves to enhance these differences. The article's descriptions of Santería, which avoid making connections to Cuban culture and identity, center the importance of objectivity through scientific examination and relegate the religion and its customs to a history museum, portrays Santería as an artifact, reaffirming its association with the past. Santería, for the post-Revolutionary government, is more than a source of difference: it is a site of limitation that is antithetical to Cuban modernity.

Endnotes

- 1 Orishas are the gods and goddesses of the religion, all visualized as Black people.
- 2 “these groups were incapable of producing a scientific thought that could serve the needs of the state.”
- 3 “First it was the Spanish who oppressed the Indians, then additionally oppressed the Indians and the blacks, then they oppressed the children of the Indians and the blacks with the Spanish.”
- 4 Cubanness.
- 5 “African people”
- 6 “the truths, without emotion or suspicion; based in scientific research.”

Works Cited

Allatson, Paul. *Key Terms in Latino/a Cultural and Literary Studies*. Blackwell, 2007. Beliso De Jesús, Aisha. *Electric Santería: Racial and Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religion*, Columbia University Press, 2015. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/duke/detail.action?docID=2147399>.

Chomsky, Aviva. *History of the Cuban Revolution*, Wiley, 2010. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/duke/detail.action?docID=589156>. Created from Duke on 2019-03-28 19:37:57.

Clark, Mary Ann. *Where Men Are, Wives and Mothers Rule Santería Ritual Practices and Their Gender Implications*. University Press of Florida, 2005.

Clealand, Danielle Pilar. *The Power of Race in Cuba: Racial Ideology and Black Consciousness during the Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

“Discurso Pronunciado Por El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruiz, Primer Ministro del Gobierno Revolucionario y Secretario del PURSC, Como Conclusion de las Reuniones con los Intelectuales Cubanos, Efectuadas en la Biblioteca Nacional el 16, 23 Y 30 de junio de 1961.” Portal Cuba, Empresa De Tecnologías De La Información y Servicios Telemáticos Avanzados (CITMATEL), www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos/1959/esp/fl150159e.html.

Fernandez, Olmos, Margarite, et al. *Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo*, Second Edition, New York University Press, 2011. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/duke/detail.action?docID=865441>.

Franklin, Sarah L. *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba*. University of Rochester Press, 2012.

Morúa, M. C., & Alfonso, H. D. *Ensayos progresistas desde Cuba: los escritos que el régimen consideraba un atentado contra la paz internacional*. Buenos Aires: Cadal. 2014.

“Mujeres.” [Habana, s.n.] Note: These magazines were found at the Duke University David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library. No publication information is available, however, the Duke University LCCN is: 79648702.

Ocasio, Rafael. *Afro-Cuban Costumbrismo: From Plantations to the Shums*. University Press of Florida, 2015.

Smith, Cynthia Duquette. “Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition (Review).” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, vol. 6, no. 4, 2003, pp. 797–799, doi:10.1353/rap.2004.0015.

Vidal-Ortiz, Salvador. Terry, Jennifer, and Jacqueline Urla. *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. NetLibrary, Inc., 1999.

The Inauthentic Life: Racialization and Race Thinking in Sirk's *Imitation of Life*

Morinade Jayla Stevenson, *Wellesley College*

Morinade Jayla Stevenson is currently interested in Black Feminism and philosophies of race, with a specific interest in black literature and film. Jayla is in her first year at Emory University pursuing a PhD in Philosophy.

Abstract

The film *Imitation of Life* (1959) by Douglas Sirk, an adaptation of the book by Fannie Hurst, follows the perils of two mothers, Lora Meredith (Lana Turner) a white woman, and Annie Johnson (Juanita Moore) a black woman, as they navigate motherhood and the narrative of passing in America. I argue that the film illuminates important philosophical questions about the concept of race in America and the concept of “double consciousness.” I connect Sirk’s stylistic choices to the concept of race and racialization and reveal the ways in which Sarah Jane’s predicament, the daughter of Annie Johnson who can pass for white, offers insight into the experience of double-consciousness. For example, Sirk’s stylistic choices, such as the construction of scenes, perpetuates a natural hierarchization of race that elide the social forces that leave Annie Johnson working for someone like Lora Meredith. Sarah Jane attempts to pass for white but is rejected by others including the Meredith family. Instead, she is told to accept her position in the world including the treatment that her identity incurs. I hope my audience will gain a better understanding of the different facets of the American experience, particularly those concerned with race and the meaning of blackness.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my Mellon coordinators Dr. Tracey Cameron and Professor Irene Mata for your constant uplift and encouragement. Many thanks to my Mellon mentor Corinne Gartner for your support and dedication throughout this project and to my mentor Dr. Lindsey Stewart for inspiring me and showing me another philosophical worldview. The support and encouragement from you all, family, and friends is deeply appreciated and inspires me to continue this work. Thank you.

Philosophy of film is a subfield of contemporary philosophy of art that involves much debate about the nature of the medium itself and its ability to *do* philosophy. Stanley Cavell strongly advocates that film, like philosophy, is inherently concerned with skepticism and as such can offer insight into such philosophical concepts.¹ Similarly, Thomas E. Wartenberg suggests that films can act as thought experiments.² The arguments and debates within the sub-field are extensive from the nature of film to philosophy of film’s relation to the more established field film theory; however,

there is no doubt that film can pose philosophical questions. I argue that the film *Imitation of Life* (1959) by Douglas Sirk, a 1959 adaptation of the book by Fannie Hurst and subsequent 1934 movie by John Stahl, illuminates important philosophical questions about the concept of race in America and the concept of “double consciousness.”³

Many scholars have focused on the way *Imitation of Life* (1959) raises and confronts questions about the role of authenticity in living a happy life. Mike Prokosh describes the techniques Sirk uses, such as camera angle and the space and depth within frames, as a means to dramatic ends.⁴ Fred Camper draws a similar conclusion in “A Time to Love and a Time to Die,” focusing more on the fatalism present in Sirk’s frames.⁵ I seek to add to the discussion by connecting Sirk’s stylistic choices to the concept of race and racialization. The events that take place, construction of frames, and the use of mirrors each explore the relationship between reality and illusion in the context of the film and invite exploration about the film’s relation to America in the mid-20th century. Moreover, these techniques reveal the dynamics of race and racialization in the real world, as opposed to the film world. I explore the performance of race and modern racialization through Sirk’s stylistic techniques. I also show how the concept of double-consciousness, first articulated by W.E.B. Du Bois, further illuminates the experience of racialization.

To begin, the film examines the relationship between a white woman and black woman during the 1940s. While enjoying a day on the beach, Lora Meredith meets Annie Johnson who is looking for work and a place to live for her and her daughter Sarah Jane who is able to racially pass. Annie Johnson agrees to come work for the Meredith family for little to no money. Lora goes on to become a successful Broadway actress with someone to now take care of the home. Meanwhile Annie is seen taking care of Lora’s daughter Susie Meredith while neglecting Sarah Jane in the midst of her new household duties. The relationship between Lora and Annie established at the beach foreshadows the mother-daughter problems to come in the film. There is a tension between Annie, a black maid, who is subject to the social forces that leaves her working for the Meredith family, unseen, as Lora, a white woman, chases her Broadway American dream. The film elides the array of social forces that produce Annie Johnson’s social condition. Rather, this tension is conflated in the maternal issues that arise—Sarah Jane hates Annie for being black and continuously runs away from home, while Susie can’t stand her mother for chasing her dreams (the ones that can only happen through the labor of Annie Johnson).

Race and Racialization

There are a variety of conceptions of race. For my argument, I will focus on racial essentialism and racial constructivism. Modern essentialism in this case refers to the belief that there is something natural, unchanging, universal and biologically determined about being black.⁶ Racial Constructionists hold that races are socially created identities leaving race to the realm of discourse and discourse only.⁷ Paul C. Taylor argues that there are different usages of the term “race” across decades and seeks to offer an in-depth historical and analytical definition that relies on what he calls race-thinking. According to Taylor, race-thinking is the practice of assigning meaning to human bodies and ancestry.⁸ For example, if one concludes that someone is smart because his facial features reveal him to be a member of a certain type of group, then one is exhibiting a kind of race-thinking and this is how one becomes racialized.⁹ Taylor concludes with his position radical constructionism which realizes and confronts that there are social practices that create populations and breeding groups by connecting certain bodies and bloodlines to certain social locations and modes of treatments.¹⁰ In other words, social goods are distributed along a set of practices that produce distinct racial groups through racialization.¹¹ It follows that one can locate certain groups as having better or worse access to institutions, jobs, and so forth. This is only part of the picture, but is useful to think through for the foregoing conversation.

Furthermore, not only is racialization limited to the assignment of meaning to human bodies, but this process is intertwined with aesthetic phenomena, what Monique Roelofs calls, “aesthetic racialization.”¹² According to Roelofs (qtd. in Taylor), “racial formations are aesthetic phenomena and aesthetic practices are racialized structures.”¹³ Taylor draws a connection between the practice of assigning meaning to human bodies and aesthetic racialization and argues that we directly perceive racial phenomena, and this immediate perception is underwritten by aesthetic perceptions.¹⁴ By examining specific scenes, we can see these concepts at work, and get a basic—or Sirkian—reading of the film. Taylor would perhaps comment on such a style as aesthetic racialization. Therefore, the most thematic reading is the narrative of passing. Boiling underneath is the aesthetic formation of race that is inauthentic in that it purports to an essentialist understanding of race and an understanding of race that elides the social and historical dimensions that create races and continue to create and reinforce them.

Race Constructed through Aesthetic Technique

In the opening scene, the relationship between Lora and Annie Johnson is established as a natural order of life; yet, this is de-problematized when mother-daughter conflicts

threaten to tear the families apart. In the beginning, the film fades into four long shots of four different parts of a buzzing beach with people and movement that fill the screen. In the last of these shots, the boardwalk serves as the background and what seems to be a parade lingers as two beach umbrellas appear painted with the American flag. Next, we are introduced to the legs of Lora Meredith (Lana Turner) in medium-shot that expands into long-shot as she runs across and reaches over the rail of an advertisement: “Coming: The 1947 Coney Island Mardi-gras Sept. 8th THRU 14th.” It is clear she has lost her child; she yells frantically for Susie. Soon, with the help of a local policeman and Steve Archer, who is caught snapping photos of Lora and later falls in love with her, Susie is later found with Annie Johnson (Juanita Moore), a black woman, and Sarah Jane (Susan Kohner). Sarah Jane, who looks white, is Annie Johnson’s child, much to Lora’s and everyone else’s surprise. In this scene, we find out that Annie Johnson is looking for work and Lora does not have much to pay nor offer. Annie eerily smiles at Lora, “A maid to live in? Someone to take care of your little girl? A strong, healthy, settled down woman, who eats like a bird and doesn’t care if she gets no time off and will work real cheap?”

In the next scene, we are introduced to what it means to be racialized. As they leave the beach and head home together, the musical score begins again with a daydream and wonderland-like tone that stands in contrast to the tiny and partly inoperative apartment of Lora Meredith. Soon thereafter, we find Sarah Jane and Susie playing with two dolls. Susie offers Sarah Jane the black doll to which Sarah Jane protests and snatches away the white doll. Annie reprimands Sarah Jane for her behavior. Frustrated, Sarah Jane throws the doll on the ground as Annie pulls her back to their room in the back of the house. Sarah Jane asks, “Why do we always have to live in the back? I don’t want to live in the back.” As Sarah Jane and Annie head to their room, the camera pans to the doll as it falls from Sarah Jane’s hands and onto the floor. Here, the film reveals gender, race, and class intertwined, telling us that black ultimately means to live in the back, unseen. Sirk himself comments, “The imitation of life is not the real life. Lana Turner’s life is a very cheap imitation. The girl (Susan Kohner) is choosing the imitation of life instead of being a Negro. The picture is a piece of social criticism—of both white and black. You can’t escape what you are.”¹⁵ Sirk’s comments on the film reveal an essentialist understanding of race. You *cannot*, and should not try to, escape being a Negro, according to Sirk.

The film also constructs whiteness as “normal,” exhibiting a kind of race-thinking. In two subsequent scenes, Sarah Jane runs away from school after she gets caught passing. When Sarah Jane asks why she has to tell others that she is black, Annie replies, “Because that’s what you are

and it's nothing to be ashamed of." Sarah Jane detests Annie for being her mother and immediately after the heated exchange between Annie and Sarah Jane, we see Susie lying in bed while Lora takes her temperature; Lora says, "You're practically normal!" This sequence of scenes highlights the contrast between the disparate beliefs in the binary construction of whiteness and blackness. Blackness is the problem for Sarah Jane while Susie is "practically normal."

To further illustrate this construction, Lora Meredith wears magnificent costumes throughout the film, and many of them are white, both reinforcing whiteness as pure and exemplifying the social and economic status attached to it. Sarah Jane and Annie act as the antithesis to Lora, although Sarah Jane's identity is more fluid because she is able to pass. Lora is blind to the social reality that makes her career possible, while Sarah Jane continuously defies what her mother (and the audience) see as her genuine, essential racial designation.

Annie, on the other hand, is represented as a stereotypical mammy. Sociologist K. Sue Jewell concludes, "The mammy image is a cultural image, based on myth, that was developed in the South by the privileged class during slavery, in which the physical and emotional makeup of enslaved women was used to justify the institution of slavery." Directly contrasted against Lora, Annie becomes the antithesis of American beauty standards with her dark skin, plain and dull uniform, larger size, and perpetual grin. However, the fact that she is a mother subverts the notion of black female hypersexuality. Through Sirk's camera techniques, whiteness is constructed in opposition to blackness in what Toni Morrison calls Africanism:

Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of desire.

Thus, whiteness only exists as having autonomy, absolute power, and authority only in opposition to what is different, and this is constructed in the metaphor of blackness. The film suggests that there is nothing wrong with Annie and Lora's relationship—that's just the way it is.

Furthermore, the film continues to elide the social forces that produce and contribute to Annie Johnson's racialized position in the Meredith household. Rather, this tension is conflated with their mother-daughter issues. Susie Johnson wants to spend more time with her mother who is away acting while Sarah Jane is constantly running away from Annie Johnson. Annie Johnson's labor allows for the Meredith household to prosper, but the film presents their

positions as part of a natural order. The audience watches as two mothers live a troublesome life amidst a host of mother-daughter problems. Due to her acting career, Lora has little time to spend with Susie, who perversely falls in love with Lora's lover, Steve Archer. Sarah Jane runs away from home, and her mother's health begins to deteriorate. In the end, we attend Annie's grand funeral as Sarah Jane finally embraces Annie as her mother, a little too late. In fact, it is only when Annie Johnson is no longer around to confirm Sarah Jane's blackness can Steve Archer return as the head of a nuclear family.

Double-Consciousness: Insights into the Experience of Racialization

Given the basic reading of the film in which a sort of racial essentialism is at work, I argue that there are philosophical dimensions that encourage the reader to interrogate the performance of race, identity, and what the film deems an authentic life. Specifically, we can examine the concept of "double consciousness" through Sarah Jane's character. "Double consciousness," as defined by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), is a "sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity."¹⁹ Du Bois describes double-consciousness as a peculiar feeling of being both Negro, American and looking at oneself through the eyes of others and only "through the revelation of the other world."²⁰ Ernest Allen Jr. connects the concept to German idealist philosophical traditions, including Hegel's phenomenology. He explains, "For what Du Bois strictly meant by the phrase was the *absence* of true self-consciousness on the part of Black Americans, the inability to recognize one's black self only through the veil of the unacknowledging white gaze."²¹ Theresa Martinez describes it as a splitting of self; a tension between two selves from which growth emerges.²² Examining the actions of Sarah Jane, one can see an internal duality at work in which Sarah Jane vacillates between "two visions or conceptions of who he or she is."²³

In another scene when the family has moved into a bigger home, Sarah Jane helps her mother serve Lora's guests by taking a tray of food to them on top of her head, over-acting the part of the black house slave. As Sarah Jane is serving food, she tells Lora that she learned the trick from her mammy, who learned it from her master before belonging to Lora.²⁴ The image of the mammy is explicitly evoked as Lora rushes into the kitchen, Annie standing by speechless, while Lora disciplines Sarah Jane. Sarah Jane is acting out a racial script, claiming that she wanted to show them she could be colored. Directly after this incident, she cries in her mother's arms, apologizing for any harm she may have caused, and she begs her mother to try to

understand her predicament. This sequence of scenes is an externalization of the internal duality which constitutes double-consciousness. Sarah Jane is torn between her own ideals and the social scripts of her black identity. This further illuminates the limits of being racialized in which there are social conventions that one cannot escape regardless of how one chooses to identify. Given that the Meredith family knows her mother is black, and she is too although she passes, the racial-thinking exhibited limits her own claims to her identity.²⁵

In one event between Sarah Jane and Susie, Susie has accidentally discovered that Sarah Jane has a boyfriend after Sarah Jane has snuck back into the house. Susie's immediate response is, "Is he colored?" Black continues to be a constant mark of racialization for Sarah Jane. This is how Susie and others see Sarah Jane and Sarah Jane's answer indicates her awareness of what Susie and Lora are implying. This knowledge corresponds to "looking at one's self through the eyes of others."²⁶ Susie pretends that she does not know why she asked the question when Sarah Jane interrogates her, claiming "it just slipped out," but the truth lies in the fact that Susie has relegated Sarah Jane to the inferior realm of black. Susie goes on to exclaim that Lora would not stand for Sarah Jane's sneaking around with a white man to which Sarah Jane replies, "Your mother doesn't own me." Taylor states, "Identity is always a relational affair: my sense of myself is something that I come to while interacting with other people."²⁷ Sarah Jane's awareness of how others see her throughout these scenes highlights double-consciousness and the ways in which it invites us to interrogate what produces her social position.

Conclusion

Imitation of Life (1959) explores both authenticity and inauthenticity through the prism of race and racialization. Lora Meredith and her daughter Susie act out a façade that demonstrates and upholds their privilege of whiteness. At the most basic level of the film, Sirk portrays an essentialist reading of race in which Sarah Jane cannot escape being a Negro. Through camera techniques such as panning and mise-en-scène,²⁸ Sirk upholds whiteness as desirable and the aim of aesthetic goals. In presenting the film in this manner, Sarah Jane is deemed to be living inauthentically. Annie continuously explains her blackness as well as Sarah Jane's in terms of the "Lord's doings" in which there is a reason for everything including their inferior position in society.

Further, Sarah Jane exemplifies a sense of "double consciousness." Sarah Jane seeks to pass so that she can receive the social, material, and aesthetic benefits of being white. Yet through the process of racialization, Sarah Jane is denied these benefits by others and is expected to accept

certain features of her socially given position. Her knowledge of her position in the world and negative valuation of that position stands in utter contradiction to her own self-image, producing wavering ideals and a "peculiar sensation."²⁹ Sirk's stylistic techniques amplify the portrayal of race throughout the film and suggest a sense of inauthenticity in its performance. However, he fails to recognize that he is falling into the trap of inauthenticity himself: he ascribes to an essentialist view of race that is false. We can also conclude that film is a medium that allows us to further theorize about the operations of race and hints at what one might mean when they say races are socially constructed. The film itself perpetuates a natural hierarchization of race, but double-consciousness provides insight into an experience of being racialized and demands that we interrogate race critically.

Endnotes

- 1 Wartenberg, Thomas. "Philosophy of Film," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/film/>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Du Bois, W. E. B., Robert Gooding-Williams, and David W. Blight. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1997, 38.
- 4 In one scene, the Meredith family has just moved into their new home, mansion size, and the physical depth of space in each frame further illuminates the personal distance between the characters such as Lora and Susie. See Prokosh for further discussion of Sirk's unique style.
- 5 Camper, Fred. "A Time to Love and a Time to Die." *Douglas Sirk*, Mulvey, Laura, and Jon Halliday. Douglas Sirk. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Festival '72 in association with the National Film Theatre and John Player and Sons, 1972, pp. 79–88.
- 6 DeLamater, John D., and Janet Shibley Hyde. "Essentialism vs. Social Constructionism in the Study of Human Sexuality." *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1998, pp. 10–18 JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3813161, 10.
- 7 Taylor, Paul C. *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*. Cambridge [u.a.: Polity Press, 2007, 13.
- 8 Ibid., 124.
- 9 Ibid., 17.
- 10 Ibid., 117.
- 11 Ibid., 86.
- 12 Monique Roelofs offers an in-depth discussion of aesthetic racialization in "White on white/black on Black," by George Yancy, tracing back to Hume's and Kant's aesthetics.
- 13 Taylor, Paul C. *Black Is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2016 ProQuest Ebook Central, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/well/detail.action?docID=4461558.
- 14 Taylor, 18.
- 15 Sirk, Douglas, 1897–1987, and Jon Halliday. *Sirk on Sirk: Conversations with Jon Halliday*. Faber and Faber, London; New York; 1997, 148.
- 16 Jewell, K. Sue, and Charles Reagan Wilson. "Mammy." *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 13: Gender*, edited by Nancy Bercau and Ted Ownby, University of North Carolina Press, 2009, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469616728_bercau.48.
- 17 Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. vol. 1990., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992; 1993; 52.
- 18 Ibid., 82.
- 19 Du Bois, 38.

- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Allen, Ernest, Jr. (Lewis Ricardo). *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy*, edited by Lewis R. Gordon, Routledge, New York, 1997, 52.
- 22 Martinez, Theresa A. "The Double-Consciousness of Du Bois & The 'Mestiza Consciousness' of Anzaldúa." *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2002, pp. 158–176.
- 23 Taylor, *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*, 134.
- 24 Sirk, Douglas, director. *Imitation of Life*. Amazon, Amazon Digital Services LLC.
- 25 Taylor, 128.
- 26 Du Bois, 38.
- 27 Taylor, 135.
- 28 Mise-en-scène refers to the setting, lighting, costumes and acting within a given frame or scenes.
- 29 Du Bois, 38.

Works Cited

- Allen, Ernest, Jr. *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy* edited by Lewis R. Gordon, Routledge, New York, 1997, pp. 49–68.
- Bourget, Jean-Loup. "Sirk's Apocalypse," *Douglas Sirk*, Mulvey, Laura, and Jon Halliday.
- Camper, Fred. "A Time to Love and a Time to Die." *Douglas Sirk*, Mulvey, Laura, and Jon Halliday. Douglas Sirk. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Festival '72 in association with the National Film Theatre and John Player and Sons, 1972, pp. 79–88.
- DeLamater, John D., and Janet Shibley Hyde. "Essentialism vs. Social Constructionism in the Study of Human Sexuality." *The Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1998, pp. 10–18.
- Du Bois, W. E. B., Robert Gooding-Williams, and David W. Blight. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1997, 38.
- Jewell, K. Sue, and Charles Reagan Wilson. "Mammy." *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 13: Gender*, edited by Nancy Bercau and Ted Ownby, University of North Carolina Press, 2009, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469616728_bercau.48.
- Martinez, Theresa A. "The Double-Consciousness of Du Bois & The 'Mestiza Consciousness' of Anzaldúa." *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 9, no. 4, 2002, pp. 158–176. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41675281.
- Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. vol. 1990., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1992; 1993; 52.
- Prokosh, Mike. "Imitation of Life." *Douglas Sirk*, Mulvey and Halliday, pp. 89–93.
- Sirk, Douglas. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Festival '72 in association with the National Film Theatre and John Player and Sons, 1972, pp. 89–93.

_____. *Imitation of Life*. Amazon, Amazon Digital Services LLC. Sirk, Douglas, 1897–1987, and Jon Halliday. *Sirk on Sirk: Conversations with Jon Halliday*. Faber and Faber, London; New York; 1997.

Taylor, Paul C. *Black Is Beautiful: A Philosophy of Black Aesthetics*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2016 ProQuest Ebook Central, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/well/detail.action?docID=4461558.

_____. *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2007, Print.

Wartenberg, Thomas. "Philosophy of Film," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/film/.

The Death of the Prophet in Three Aljamiado Manuscripts. A Comparative Analysis (ms. BRAH T-18, ms. BRAH T-12, and ms. RB II/3226)

Roberto Andrés Talavera Pagán, *University of Puerto Rico—Río Piedras*

Roberto Andrés Talavera Pagán graduated from the University of Puerto Rico—Río Piedras Campus in 2019, where he majored in Hispanic Studies. His research interests revolve around Morisco and Aljamiado literatures, Medieval and Early Modern Iberia, and Hispanic literatures in general. Roberto is currently a PhD student of Spanish and Latin American Literatures at Harvard University.

Abstract

This essay examines the Aljamiado testimonies of the tale of the Prophet's death, i.e., the clandestine accounts of Muhammad's death that have endured the harshness of time and Inquisitorial persecution. By examining three renditions of the narrative (ms. BRAH T-18, ms. BRAH T-12, and ms. PR II/3226), I want to identify three distinct versions or groups, thus tracing a map for future scholars working with this text. Moreover, by comparing a specific scene from the three versions, the depiction of the seal of prophethood, I demonstrate that even though these diverge in the details they include, they all share a literary project: to privilege the figure of the Prophet and his pious death. Because for the Islamic minority of 16th-century Iberia, the veneration of the Prophet went hand in hand with a project of cultural and religious affirmation. This explains why Morisco copyists preserved this narrative so profusely right in the moment when the Spanish nation-building project intended to eradicate their cultural self from the national arena. Ultimately, delving into these manuscript testimonies will permit us to hear alternate *stories* of Spain and its constitution as a modern state, that stand sharply at odds with the dominant national discourses of the past and the present.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. María Luisa Lugo Acevedo, for guiding me through this research adventure. Her help and attention have been crucial in this process. I would also like to acknowledge the MMUF coordinators at the UPR for their support during these two years.

Introduction

In a 16th-century Spanish codex written in Aljamiado (Castilian transliterated with the Arabic characters), the mysterious crypto-Muslim author known as the Mancebo de Arévalo writes:

. . . ke fwwe la muwerte de Muḥammad más dolida ke no fuwwe de ningún jaleqado en ŷamáš. Hazen los naḥueš de un kapítulo de šuw mmuwerte una ešortazziyyón de tanta balíya para el-almma . . . de garande koňšolazziyyón para loš fičoš de Ádam . . . algunoš la kopilaron en lenwwa kaštellana (364).

[. . . the death of Muḥammad was more heartfelt than any other. Koranic scholars make a valuable lesson of the chapter [narration] of his death . . . of great consolation for the sons of Adam . . . some have compiled it in the Castilian language].¹

This eyewitness account underscores the significance of manuscript traditional narratives about the Prophet of Islam in the inner life of the Morisco community (Spanish Muslims forced to convert to Christianity). More specifically, it sheds light on how the versions about Muhammad's death that circulated surreptitiously were used by crypto-Muslims as an instrument of solace and a way to give sense to their plight in Inquisitorial Spain.

This essay examines the Aljamiado testimonies of the tale of the Prophet's death, i.e., the clandestine accounts of Muhammad's death that have endured the harshness of time and Inquisitorial persecution. The manuscript codexes that serve as my analytical focus are: Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia,² ms. T-18 (now known as 11/9414); Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, ms. T-12 (now known as 11/9409); and Madrid, Real Biblioteca,³ ms. II/3226 [Figure 1].

By examining three renditions of the narrative, I want to identify three distinct versions or groups, thus tracing a map for future scholars working with this text. Moreover, by comparing a specific scene from the three versions, the depiction of the seal of prophethood, I demonstrate that even though these diverge in the details they include, they all share a literary project: to privilege the figure of the Prophet and his pious death. Because for the Islamic minority of 16th-century Iberia, the veneration of the Prophet went hand in hand with a project of cultural and religious affirmation. This explains why Morisco copyists preserved this narrative so profusely right in the moment when the Spanish nation-building project intended to eradicate their cultural self from the national arena. What was at stake was their "very being," as Anwar Chejne has so sharply suggested (46).

Early Modern Spain, the Moriscos, and Aljamiado Literature

Imagine that suddenly we are forced to abandon the clothes we dress, the food we eat, the music we hear, even the way we bathe. We can no longer practice our religion, we cannot speak our language, in sum, we cannot be ourselves.

This is precisely what happened to the Morisco community in Early Modern Spain.

The cultural diversity that developed in the Iberian Peninsula after its conquest by Muslim forces compels us to examine Medieval and Early Modern Iberia as a locus of paradox, exchange, and interaction. Américo Castro's groundbreaking concept of medieval *convivencia* (or the relatively peaceful coexistence between the three *castes*: Christians, Jews, and Muslims) pinpoints the interplay between Western and Semitic ingredients in peninsular territory as the constituting factor of Spanish culture. Even though more recent scholarly has brought pressure to bear on Castro's ideas, what still remains is "the notion of the Iberian Middle Ages as a complex matrix of societies and cultures in an ongoing process of definition and redefinition, one template of historical and social order soon replaced by another" (Blackmore and Hutcheson 2–3). However, as the Early Modern period approached, this balance of power started to deteriorate and, as Castro has stated, "the ternary system of the castes stops to be apparent in daily life and literature, and becomes a latent and anguished restlessness, a concern for the "castizo" ("or pureness") of a person and the 'cleanliness' of his blood" (54, my translation).⁴

The Moriscos were the last Muslims of Spain, forced to convert to Christianity in 16th-century Spain and to abandon the Arabic Alphabet, their clothes, their ceremonies, among other cultural elements. A look at the numerous prohibitions pronounced between 1502 and 1526 confirms that the Spanish authorities not only intended to eradicate Islamic religious vestiges, but also any signifier that indicated Morisco cultural identity.

The Moriscos were the descendants of the Andalusí culture, that prospered during the Middle Ages. After the Fall of Granada, many of them remained attached to their Islamic identity as crypto-Muslims, making use of the *taqyyia* or policy of dissimulation. The ethnic category "Morisco," however, should be understood in plural terms. As López-Baralt has pointed out, "the figure of the Morisco has been refracted in the most diverse ways" (*La literatura secreta* 18, my translation), ranging from the inassimilable Morisco to the hybrid Morisco in process of assimilation, among other variations (18–19).⁵ Moreover, these underground Muslim's historical reality produced culturally hybrid and complex individuals. "They were torn," as López-Baralt puts it, "between two antagonistic ways of perceiving themselves as human beings: they were Muslims, but at the same time they were Spaniards. And these two aspects of their legitimate heritage had become simply incompatible in Renaissance Spain" ("The Secret Literature" 24). Between 1609 and 1614, they were expelled

from peninsular soil, many of them migrating to the North of Africa, France, among other places.

As a form of cultural and political resistance, the Moriscos employed a clandestine and hybrid literary corpus known modernly as Aljamiado literature. Aljamiado literature—which uses Arabic characters to transcribe the Spanish language—constitutes a textual articulation of the Moriscos' intent to defend their cultural identity in a hostile environment. We find in these fascinating manuscripts the modest remnants of culturally brilliant Al-Andalus (or Muslim Spain): writings that preserve Islamic beliefs and practices, translations of Arabic narratives, testimonial accounts that reflect the Moriscos' own analysis of the decline of Spanish Islam, tales dealing with the lives of important Islamic figures, and even manuals about magic and medicine. As Anwar Chejne has stated, the Moriscos "used this literature not only as an outlet and means of self-edification, but as an instrument of self-defense against the Christian threat to his beliefs, dignity, property, and very being" (47).

These codexes were discovered in the late 18th century, hidden in false floors, behind walls, among other places. Even though many scholars of the last decades have taken upon themselves the edition and rigorous examination of this clandestine literary corpus, there are still many Aljamiado manuscripts that await to be brought to light.

Three Codexes, Three Versions

The traditional narrative of Muhammad's death had a significant position within Morisco literary culture, for it is contained in at least eight Aljamiado manuscripts: namely, the ms. BRAH T-18 (edited by Francisco Guillén Robles and Abdel Monem Mahmoud Sayed), the ms. BRAH T-12 and ms. BRAH T-19 (edited by Consuelo López-Morillas, Nuria Martínez, and Medardo G. Rosario), the ms. J-13 (edited by Tarek Kherd and Miguel Ángel Vázquez), the ms. J-53 (edited by Carmelo Morán Arias), the ms. of Urrea de Jalón (edited by Federico Corriente Córdoba), the ms. RB II/3226, and the ms. BNP⁶ 774 (edited by Mercedes Sánchez Álvarez).

I have prepared original editions of fragments contained in the ms. BRAH T-18 (ff. 4v- 19v)⁷, the ms. BRAH T-12 (ff. 29v-34v) and the ms. RB II/3226 (ff. 101v-118v), the latter two of which have remained unedited up to now. After transliterating the segments from the above-mentioned codexes and reading all the previously edited testimonies, we can affirm that there were at least three versions of this Morisco tale: two long versions, and a shorter one.

Long version I is represented by the ms. BRAH T-18 and the ms. BNP 774. These two testimonies follow each other very closely, being almost identical not only in the events they present but also in the phrasing they use. It is worth mentioning, however, that the ms. BRAH T-18 is the most complete one of the two, because the ms. BNP 774 is acephalous. Long version II is only found in the ms. RB II/3226. As we will see, this testimony does not follow closely any of the other Aljamiado testimonies that have survived and hence I would describe it as *sui generis*. Finally, the ms. BRAH T-19, the ms. of Urrea de Jalón, the ms. J-13, the ms. J-52,⁸ and the ms. BRAH T-12 belong to the group that I call “the short version.” The manuscript testimonies that belong to this group narrate basically the same events in similar phrasing, with few divergences.

The three versions that I have identified—the two long ones and the shorter one—highlight similar aspects of Muhammad’s death: the affective relationships between the Prophet and his community, the grief shared by Muhammad and his followers, the stoic attitude the Prophet assumes, his moral excellence, among other elements. They all agree on Muhammad’s role as the holder of the seal of prophethood, the physical mark that identifies him as the last and chief Prophet of Islam. As can be seen in Table 1, even though the versions diverge in some details, they narrate the same significant events. It could be argued, however, that the ms. BRAH T-18 and the ms. RB II/3226 present more detailed, elaborated, and comprehensive accounts of Muhammad’s death. In this regard, the tale as narrated by the ms. BRAH T-12 functions as a sort of summary, recounting only the most remarkable events. To illustrate this, I would like to observe side by side how the different manuscripts depict one particular scene from the tale: the description of the seal of prophethood.

When the Prophet undresses to let Ukasha hit him with a rod as a way to repay a past offense, Muhammad reveals the seal of prophethood that he has on his back. In the ms. BRAH T-18, we read:

... I luego lansó a ‘Ukāša el berdugo [látigo] de šu mano i allegoše a rreferegar šuš kanaš en laš ešpaldaš d-ell-Annabī [Profeta] Muḥammad . . . i-y-en el šillo d-ell-anubbūa k-eštaba entere šuš ešpaldaš, *ke le rrelunbaraba komo el luzero d-ell-alba en la noche eškura* (f. 10v, my emphasis).

[. . . And then Ukasha drop the rod and rubbed his white hairs against the Prophet’s back and against the seal of prophethood that was between his shoulders that *shined as the morning star in the dark night*].

The story in the RB II/3226, on the other hand, is interrupted precisely in this instance.

We do get to hear, however, the description of the seal of prophethood:

... [brillaba] komo la luna entere laš ešterellaš kuw[a]ndo eštá pelena i komo kuwando šalle el šol kon šuš rrayoš. I teniya doš asataraš [línea, sucesión de palabras] eškiribtaš. En la primera: “lā ilāḥaillā Allāh.” I-y-en la segunda: “Muḥammad da Rrasulu Allāh. I-y- entere laš asat[a]raš, doš peloš ke le pelegan fašta la illada” (f. 108 r, my emphasis).

[*It shined*] like the moon between the stars when is full, and like the sun when it rises with its rays. It had two lines written. The first said: ‘There is no God but Allah; and the second one said: And Muhammad is his Messenger.’ And between them there were two long hairs that stretched down to his lower back.]

Finally, the ms. BRAH T-12 states the following: “E lawora ke bino [vio] Ukā(bi)ša el siyelo [sic. sello] del-annubūa entere laš ešpaldaš del-annabī . . . lansó el berdugo de šu mano” (f. 32v) [When Ukasha saw the seal of prophethood in the Prophet’s back, he threw away the rod].

As we can see, the three testimonies give diverse depictions of the seal of prophethood that Muhammad has in his back. The ms. BRAH T-18 introduces a light image: it compares the seal with a star. In turn, the ms. RB II/3226 gives an even more detailed description. It expands the symbolic link between the seal and light, by saying that the seal shines like the moon and the sun. This testimony also provides additional information: it tells us that Muhammad has the Islamic profession of faith written to both sides of his seal, and that there are two long hairs emanating from it. On the other hand, the BRAH T-12 does not even describe the seal. It only briefly mentions Ukasha’s reaction. We can affirm, therefore, that of the three, the descriptions of the seal that we see in the ms. BRAH T-18 and in the ms. RB II/3226 are more poetically elaborated than the one we find in the ms. BRAH T-12. This instance exemplifies how the three testimonies relate to each other: the ms BRAH T-18 and the RB II/3226 are accounts that go into more details, in comparison to the ms. BRAH T-12, which serves as a compendium.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the documentary evidence suggests that at least three different versions of Muhammad’s death coexisted in the literary culture of the last Muslims of Spain. There are two long versions and a shorter one. As evidenced by comparing the descriptions of the seal of prophethood, the manuscript testimonies that I have edited exemplify these three groups.

But this assessment also shows that, regardless of the information they offer or fail to offer, these versions share a coherent image of Muhammad's death and a discursive aim: to praise the Prophet of Islam in the hour of his demise. Although the tale was recast in diverse ways, all the renderings that have survived up to our days establish a symbolic connection between the body of the Prophet and the light of prophethood that comes directly from Allah. Therefore, for all the Aljamiado versions, Muhammad is the bearer of the seal of prophethood, the *sharif* (the most noble One), and “the light that illuminates the darkness of this world in which the listeners are gathered, the radiant candle around which human hearts throng like spellbound moths” (Schimmel 123–124). This indicates that the Moriscos of the Early Modern Period did not have a *standard* account of Muhammad's death, but rather a series of testimonies that, although elaborated differently, served a common cultural purpose within the Iberian communities of crypto-Muslims. This goal was ultimately related to the exaltation of the Prophet of Islam and his death as a way to convey solace and affirm Islamic identity in a time when Christianity was

pronounced as the one and only religion of the Spanish Empire.

The archives in Spain, the Middle East and elsewhere are still full of unexplored Aljamiado manuscripts that have the potential of opening windows to the inner life of the Islamic minority of 16th-century Spain. These ancient folios not only could offer us more information about how Spanish crypto-Muslims conceived their Prophet, but also other materials (narratives about Islamic prophets, Koranic commentaries, jurisprudence treatises) that would further inform our understandings on how minority communities use manuscript texts to shape their cultural experiences. Even more, continuing this archival venture would permit us to hear alternate *stories* of Spain and its constitution as a modern state, that stand sharply at odds with the dominant national discourses of the past and the present. By doing so, we might come to terms with an image of Early Modern Iberia that embraces differences, perhaps giving us more tools to delve into our own world.

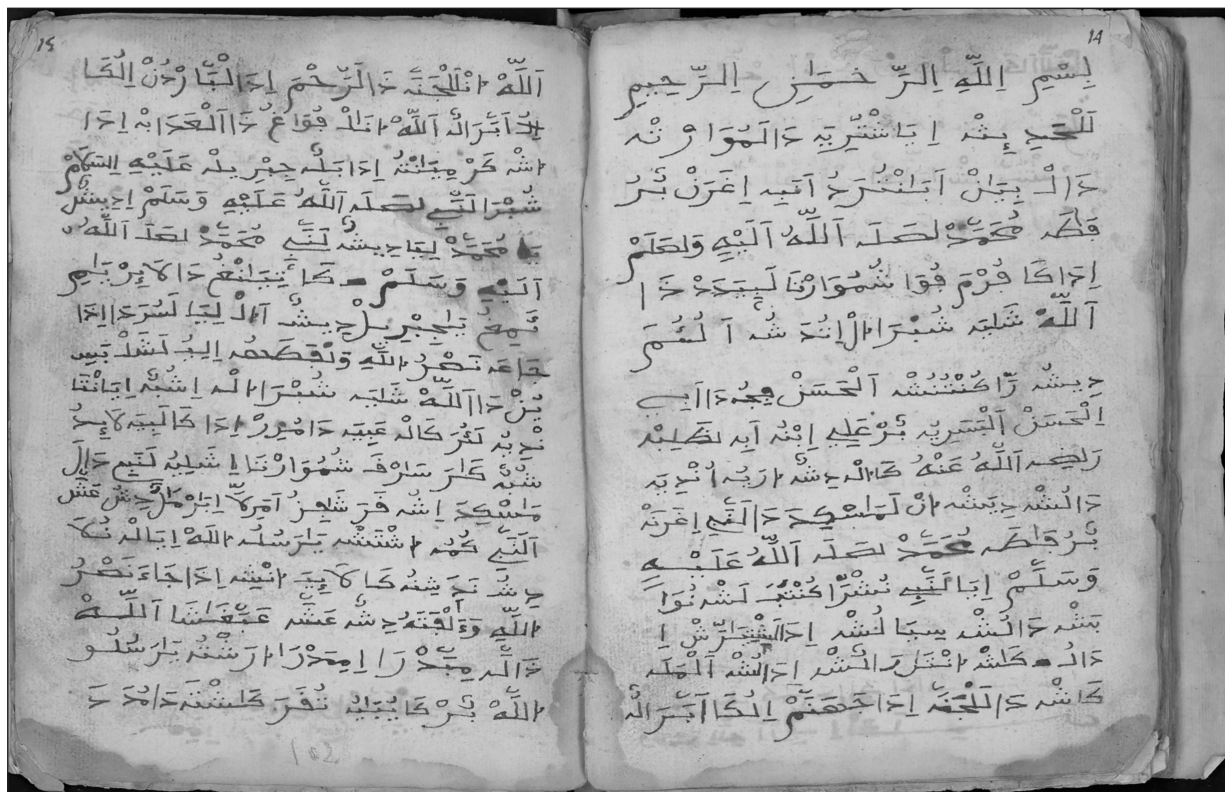


Figure 1. ms. RB (Madrid) II/3226, ff. 101v–102r. Copyright © Patrimonio Nacional.

ms BRAH T-18	ms BRAH T-12	ms BNP II/3226
Narrated under the authority of Ibn Abbas.	Narrated under the authority of Ibn Abbas.	Narrated under the authority of Ali.
In Minas, M. preaches to his people.	In the mosque, M. preaches to his people about Heaven and Hell.	In the mosque, M. preaches to his people about Heaven and Hell.
The Sura 110 descends upon him and he states that he has been given two options: this world or what Allah possesses.	The Angel Gabriel descends upon him and tells him to read the Sura 110. When he reads it, he realizes he is going to die and is pleased.	The Angel Gabriel descends upon him and tells him to read the Sura 110. When he reads it, he realizes he is going to die and his face changes color.
M. sends Usama to war against the infidels.	M. tells Fatima that he is going to die, and she cries until her tears fall in his cheeks.	Aisha, his most beloved wife, asks why his face has changed color, and he ignores her to protect her from knowing that his death is near.
M. tells Fatima that he is going to die, and she cries until her tears fall in his cheeks.	M. consoles Fatima by saying she will be the first one to enter Paradise after his arrival.	M. asks Bilal to call the people to prayer.
M. consoles Fatima by saying she will be the first one to enter Paradise after his arrival.	When the time for prayer comes, Bilal looks for M.	The text alludes to the testament of the Prophet, where he preaches to his people in the mosque.
The wives of M. reprimand Fatima for showing grief and happiness, and M. defends her.	In his house, M. hears his people lamenting in the mosque and asks God to give him strength to go to the mosque one more time.	The Muslims cry desperately when they realize M. is going to die.
M. asks his wives if he can endure his illness in Aisha's house.	M. intends to repay any past offenses before dying, and Ukasha tells him that he hit him with a rod once when returning from battle.	M. tells Silman that those who will come after him and believe in him will be his brothers and sisters.
M. tells Bilal and Abdullah that anyone can direct prayer.	The Prophet's people, including his grandsons, ask Ukasha to take vengeance over their bodies, instead of harming M.	Bilal asks M. who should direct prayer, and he appoints Abu Bakr.
When M. hears Umar directing prayer, he says that Abu Bakr should be the one directing prayer instead (Aisha disagrees) and appoints him as his successor.	After seeing the seal of prophethood in his back (which is not described), Ukasha forgives M.	In his house, M. hears his people lamenting in the mosque and asks God to give him strength to go to the mosque one more time.
One day, M. is feeling better and goes to the mosque.	M.'s grandsons ask him who will care for them after he dies.	Both M. and Abu Bakr direct prayer at the same time.
He directs prayer alongside Abu Bakr.	He responds by asking God to be the caliph of his community.	M. intends to repay any past offenses before dying, and Ukasha tells him that he hit him with a rod once when returning from battle.
M. intends to repay any past offenses before dying, and Ukasha tells him that he hit him with a rod once when returning from battle.	M. describes the Angel of Death.	M. sends Silman to look for the rod, and he is received with cries by Aisha and Fatima.
M. sends Bilal to look for the rod in Fatima's house.	The Angel of Death gives M. two options: he can let the Angel take his spirit away or the Angel can go away.	Fatima takes his sons, Hasan and Husein, to the mosque where they worry about the future of the most fragile sectors of society and ask the people to repay M.'s offenses in their own bodies.
The Angel Gabriel descends from heaven and tells M. to ask for Ukasha's forgiveness.	M. asks him to wait until the arrival of Gabriel.	[The story is interrupted]
When M. removes his clothes, the seal of prophethood is revealed, which is described as the star of sunrise in the dark night.	When Gabriel arrives, M. rebukes Gabriel for not being for him in times of troubles.	The seal of prophethood in M.'s back is described as the moon when is full and as the sun when it rises. The profession of faith is written to both sides of the seal.
Ukasha forgives M.	M. asks Gabriel about the future of his community, and when he tells him that his community will enter Paradise before every other community, he is finally pleased and permits the Angel of Death to take his spirit away.	Ukasha forgives M.
M. condemns those who take prophet's tombs as mosques.	M. says who is going to perform the rituals of his death.	M. dies in Aisha's house.
M. asks for a paper to write a text that will guide his community, and a dispute arises regarding the preeminence of the Quran.		God sends the Angel of Death in the form of a Bedouin to receive M.'s spirit.
M. consoles different family members, such as Fatima, Aisha, Jafsa and his grandsons, Hasan and Husein.		After a monologue in which the Angel introduces himself, M. tells him that he is happy to die, but that he wants to wait for the Angel Gabriel.

ms BRAH T-18	ms BRAH T-12	ms BNP II/3226
M. asks God to be the caliph [leader] of his community.		The Angel gives two options: to continue in this world or to die immediately.
The Angel of Death calls to the door transfigured as a Bedouin, and Fatima tells him that M. is busy.		Gabriel descends with the angels Michael, Rafael, and the Angel of Death.
The Angel of Death and Gabriel meet each other midair and talk.		M. asks Gabriel about the future of his community, and when he tells him that his people will enter Paradise before every other community, he is finally pleased and permits the Angel of Death to take his spirit.
M. expresses to Gabriel his desire to be with God.		Gabriel defends M. from the Angel of Death.
M. gives Gabriel the details regarding who is going to perform the rituals of death.		M. was accompanied by Fatima, Ali and his grandsons.
M. tells Fatima that they will meet again in the pond and bridge of Paradise.		Fatima cries until her tears fall unto M.'s cheeks.
When M. dies, there is a dispute between Abu Bakr and Umar: the first says that M. is dead, whereas the latter states that he is not.		M. consoles Fatima by saying she will be the first one to enter Paradise after his arrival.
After a speech on the universality of death, Abu Bakr wins the argument.		His grandsons cry standing to both sides of M.'s deathbed.
The followers of M. perform the rituals of death.		M. says who is going to perform the rituals of his death.

Table 1. Plot Comparison.

Endnotes

- 1 All translations from the original Aljamiado texts are mine.
- 2 BRAH in Spanish is the acronym for what in English is the Royal Academy of History of Madrid, and ms. is the abbreviation for the word "manuscript." In libraries, all manuscripts are catalogued by numbers and letters.
- 3 RB in Spanish is the acronym for what in English is the Royal Library of Madrid. This library is sometimes known as Biblioteca de Palacio Real (BPR).
- 4 ". . . el sistema ternario de las castas deja de hacerse visible en la vida diaria y en la literatura, para convertirse en latente y angustiosa inquietud, en preocupación por lo castizo de la persona y la 'limpieza' de su sangre" (54).
- 5 "la figura del morisco se ha ido refractando de las maneras más diversas. . ." (18–19).
- 6 The acronym BNP stands for "Biblioteca Nacional de París" (National Library of Paris).
- 7 I respect the foliations exactly as they appear in the codexes.
- 8 I want to thank Dr. Carmelo Morán Arias for emailing his edition of the J-53's folios that contain the tale. See the Works Cited for this dissertation.
- 9 "M" stands for the name "Muhammad."

Works Cited

Manuscript Sources

- Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia ms. T-18 [11/9414] (Madrid) Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia ms. T-12 [11/9409] (Madrid) Madrid, Real Biblioteca ms. II/3226 (Madrid).

Secondary Sources

- Blackmore, Josiah, and Gregory S. Hutcheson. *Queer Iberia: Sexualities, Cultures, and Crossings from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*. Duke University Press, 1999.
- Castro, Américo. *La realidad histórica de España*. 1948. 9th ed., Porrúa, 1987.
- Chejne, Anwar G. *Islam and the West: The Moriscos. A Cultural and Social History*. State University of New York Press, 1983.
- Corriente Córdoba, Federico, editor. *Relatos píos y profanos del ms. Aljamiado de Urrea de Jalón*, prologue of María Jesús Viqueira. Institución Fernando el Católico, 1990.
- Guillén Robles, Francisco, editor. *Leyendas moriscas*, preliminary study by María Paz Torres. 1886, Tomo II. Universidad de Granada, 1994.
- Khedr, Tarek, editor. *Códice aljamiado de varias materias (Manuscrito No. XIII de la antigua Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios)*. Instituto Universitario Seminario Menéndez Pidal (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)/ Universidad de Oviedo, 2004.

López-Baralt, Luce. *La literatura secreta de los últimos musulmanes de España*. Editorial Trotta, 2014.

_____. “The Secret Literature of the Last Muslims of Spain.” *Islamic Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, 1997, pp. 21–38.

López-Morillas, Consuelo, editor. *Textos aljamiados sobre la vida de Mahoma: El profeta de los moriscos*. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas–Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 1994.

Mahmoud Sayed, Abdel Monem. “Estudio del manuscrito T18, Libro de las luces de la Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia” [PhD dissertation]. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2001.

Martínez de Castilla Muñoz, Nuria. “Edición, estudio y glosario del manuscrito aljamiado T19 de la Real Academia de la Historia” [PhD dissertation]. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2004, <http://biblioteca.ucm.es/tesis/fil/ucm-t27811.pdf>.

Morán Arias, Carmelo. “Edición, estudio y glosario del manuscrito aljamiado no. LIII de la Junta de Ampliación de Estudios” [doctoral dissertation]. Universidad de Oviedo, 1992.

Narváez Córdova, María Teresa. *Tratado [Tafsira] del Mancebo de Arévalo*. Trotta, 2003.

Rosario, Medardo G. “El *ars moriendi* morisco: de los relatos hórridos de ultratumba a la muerte ejemplar de Mahoma.” *Dimensiones ideológicas y culturales de los moriscos y las políticas de la inquisición*. Fondation Temimi pour la Recherche Scientifique et l’Information, 2009, pp. 211–218.

Sánchez Álvarez, Mercedes. *El manuscrito misceláneo 774 de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*. Gredos, 1982.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

Vázquez, Miguel Ángel. *Desde la penumbra de la fosa. La concepción de la muerte en la literatura aljamiado morisca*. Trotta, 2007.

English as the New French: Nation-State Building and Language as Capital in Morocco

Fatima Tariq, *CUNY Hunter College*

Fatima Tariq is a first-year master's student in Near Eastern Studies at New York University. She graduated from CUNY Hunter College with a BA in Arabic as well as in English Literature, with a concentration in Linguistics and Rhetoric. She is an aspiring Arabic-English literary translator and professor of Arabic. Her research background is in linguistic anthropology, specifically critical discourse analysis. She is currently interested in researching the place of English in central Morocco and more generally, neoliberalism's effects on nation-state language policy and planning in education.

Abstract

This research is a discourse analysis of YouTube street interviews in central Morocco in which passerby respond with their opinion on English as the next “lingua franca” in the nation. The news channel implies that the current lingua franca is French. Language ideologies are never just about language; they reveal cultural logics. Using Duchene and Heller's (2012) framework, I argue that language can be theorized using two metaphors: pride and profit. A language in a nation-state is either conducive to the construction of the nation-state or as a utilitarian means of acquiring wealth. In this paper, four transcriptions of interviews are examined using this theoretical framework; I argue that in central Morocco, English is being added alongside French as a “profit” language and that French is becoming a “pride” language alongside standard Arabic and Tamaghizt (Berber).

Acknowledgements

I am truly grateful for MMUF, Hunter College's Arabic program, English Department, and the Linguistics Club. The extent to which my personal relationships shape me and therefore my work often goes unrecognized and so, I would like to thank my partner, friends, and family members who love and support me unconditionally. I would especially like to acknowledge my research advisors Angela Reyes, Alex Elinson, and Chris Stone for seeing my light from the beginning.

Introduction

Morocco has been a multilingual country for millennia. Currently, three main dialects of Amazigh (Berber), Modern Standard Arabic, Moroccan Arabic, French, and Spanish are all spoken nationally or regionally (Buckner 2012). Standard Arabic had been used as a unifying force in French colonial Morocco (1912–1956) and especially during the decolonization policies and Arabization period that followed Moroccan independence (Ouakrime 2003). In the 1960s, the secular Moroccan university structure was

modeled after the French system, specifically the French Bordeaux University (Sbai 2016). Thus, it is surprising that Lahcen Daoudi, one of the country's former ministers of Higher Education, declared English to be the “solution” to Morocco's education system, which has been suffering from the country's unstable language policy since its independence (Rohan 2018). In recent years, several steps have been taken toward nationalizing English and it has been made a requirement for obtaining doctoral degrees at some institutions. French is often perceived as markedly elite with colonial overtones; English does not carry this same imperial baggage and consequently, some believe this may bolster its potential to replace French in the future. Language ideologies are never just about language; they reveal cultural logics. A central theoretical engagement for many linguistic anthropologists is that culture is situated through local meanings which are achieved in discourse through socially recognizable signs, the most important of which are recurring patterns in the discourse (Gal & Irvine 1995).

This research is a critical discourse analysis of interviews by *Chouf TV*, a Moroccan online news channel, in which central Moroccans speak to the salience of English as the next lingua franca in Morocco. This study seeks to find the discursive patterns that reveal certain cultural logics. It investigates how speakers talk about the presence of English in their society and culture in relation to themselves and their nation, what languages maintain privileged socioeconomic positions within the state, and what systems maintain them.

Theoretical Framework

A language is full of emotional attachments and is more than just a communicative system. Group ideologies are often formed by these sentiments and as such, can affect the language policy of a country. Language ideology is defined by Michael Silverstein (1979) as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p. 193). Linguistic practices can be defined as the exercise of a set of actions and interventions that have to do with the use of language as a social practice. The reality of constant social, political, economic, and ideological change means that linguistic practices are also always changing both at the micro and macro level (Moustaoui, 2017). Language must also be examined as a resource in that speakers build for themselves several “areas of reality” such as identities, significance, power, and relationships. These can be analyzed through situated meanings, discourses, and context (Gee, 2010, p. 32).

Political conditions have a commodifying effect on language and language ideologies, specifically on contemporary tensions between ideologies and practices of language in the shift from modernity to late modernity. Sociologist

Alexandre Duchene and Anthropologist Monica Heller (2012) describe the modern era as “late capitalism.” They coined this term after noticing the emergence of “the economic” in metalinguistics in the mid-1990s; this is in reference to the way media and organizations increasingly talked of “added value” and “economic development” when discussing language (Duchene & Heller 2012, p. 2). “For the first time, we were hearing something new; the discourse of rights, identity, cultural and linguistic preservation, and pride was no longer completely hegemonic” (Duchene & Heller 2012, p. 1).

They argue that we can framework contemporary linguistic meta-discourse by thinking about languages in terms of “pride” and “profit.” “Pride” refers to language as a producer and sustainer of the nation-state and profit denotes language as capital. The notion of “pride” calls people into being as citizens; it is also connected to specific interests in the construction of national and global markets. Duchene & Heller (2012) historicize language discourse in terms of the pride framework, then go on to discuss the discursive shift into the period of late modernity or late capitalism of today. They discuss how “pride” gets taken up and configured under late capitalist conditions to treat language as a practical skill and how bilingual individuals are viewed as more “profitable.” Thus, regarding nation-state legitimization, “pride” is no longer the sole factor that must be considered. Rather, a thoughtful engagement with “profit” must also occur, especially in sociolinguistic and ethnographic work, to better understand how the way we think about language is deeply influenced by capitalism and neoliberal ideals. As language policy and planning in regard to English continues, the kingdom of Morocco as well as Moroccans themselves are forced to engage with English, identify what their relationship to it is, and decide what place it occupies in the future of their nation.

Methods

For this paper, I examined four interviews that were part of an edited, seven-minute news clip from a Moroccan online news channel, *Chouf TV*. The poly-vocalic text, titled “Moroccans on English as a second language instead of French,” is part of a series of episodes by *Chouf TV* on YouTube that include “man-on-the-street” interviews in which Moroccans (in what appears to be either Rabat or Casablanca, two central Moroccan cities) are asked various questions on “hot topics” in Morocco. In this particular episode, all participants were asked: “What do you think of English as the first foreign language in Morocco?” It features a total of twelve interviewees: nine men and three women. A linguistic examination which draws from semiotics and discourse analysis was conducted on transcripts from four of the interviews.

Analysis

We Must Think Out of the Box

The following transcripts are from two different segments of the aforementioned video in which Speaker 1, a man carrying a child, is being interviewed. He speaks very passionately.

Transcript 1, 0:37–0:56, Speaker 1

- 01 keema kiyagul almatal alinjliizii
as the English proverb goes,
- 02 we must think out of the box [in English]
- 03 fa-fa
so-so
- 04 nakharjuu min haza almuqowqa’ illi kebernaa fih
u-kibiruu fih alajyaal illi qabal minna
*we must pull ourselves out of this shell that those before us
grew up in*
- 05 ‘arba’aat ajyaal min allugha alfaransiyya
four generations of French
- 06 shufnaa alnataa`ij diyalhaa ‘alaa al-mustawaa aliqtisaadii
alwatanii
we’ve seen the result of this on our national economy
- 07 ma daar shii haaja katiira
it hasn’t done much
- 08 fa- alhaal alawwal ’alaa annahu nughayaru albidla
firstly, we’ll change our suit
- 09 wa ntuujhuu ilaa -ilaa aljaanib alfran-al-al-anglophone
we’ll orient ourselves toward the franc-anglophone

2:38–2:51—Transcript 2, Speaker 1

- 01 allugha alfaransiyya maa baqaash katawaq’a bil’asar
French is no longer relevant to the times
- 02 allugha alinjliiziya
English
- 03 uhh-katsmahleena nit’aamalu ma’a alhindi ghad an
t’amalu
ubb - it would allow us to work with the Indian
- 04 ma’a atturki ghad an t’amalo ma’a asseeni
work with the Turk, the Chinese
- 05 bil lugha-heeya allugha almuhaada
it is a unifying language
- 06 haadi mshi ’ansuriyya
this isn’t racism
- 07 wa inama tamaashi ama al-mutatalabaat al’asar
these are the requirements of the times

From a (post)colonial perspective, the issue of language policy and planning takes on even stronger sentiments.

Speaker 1 says (in English) that Moroccans must “think out of the box,” “must pull ourselves out of this shell,” and “change our suit” (line 08). The words “box,” “shell,” and “suit” are deemed relevant through a shared theme of layering and thus, become construed as indexicals in the speech event. French is cast as the profit language of the colonial past (“we’ve seen the result of this on our national economy”) (line 06) and as the “profit” framework would suggest, the “suit” of English is able to replace the French as easily as it would be to learn another technical skill. It is notable that the speaker switches to French in line 09 even as he says, “French is no longer relevant to the times,” (line 01, Transcript 2) and speaks more to the utilitarian value of English.

Berber Roots

This next transcript is another response to the same question: “What do you think of English as the first foreign language in Morocco?” Speaker 2, a young man who seems to be in his teens, is being interviewed. While speaking, he often shrugs his shoulders and looks off to the side.

3:00–3:15—Transcript 3, Speaker 2

- 01 ana min alnadhhar diyali annahu khaasa aqrau alarabiyaa
wa
in my opinion, we must study Arabic and
- 02 Alamazighiya
Tamazight (Berber)
- 03 heeya diyaal asl—asl diyaalna ka-ihnaa kamaghaariba
it’s true—true to us as Moroccans
- 04 ’asl diyaaln:::a mini ’amazigh wa—wa
cause we’re originally Berber
- 05 fi nadhari ana naqrau al’arabiyya wa al’amazaigihyya
in my opinion, I read Arabic and Tamazight

One of the key sites of language tensions in Morocco, and in any nation, plays out in education. By mentioning the languages Moroccans study in order to respond to the question of English as the “first foreign language” in Morocco, Speaker 2 embodies the meta-discourse that pride must be considered by Moroccans when deciding the next “first foreign language” of the nation. Although neither Arabic nor Tamazight (Berber) are mentioned by the interviewer, they are made relevant as pride languages by Speaker 2; “it’s true—true to us as Moroccans” (line 03). There is a pronoun shift from the plural “we” to the singular between lines 01 to line 05, as Speaker 2 talks more generally about what Moroccans must study. Even though the question being asked is about profit languages, Speaker 2 only responds within the pride framework, reinforcing that it is necessary

to keep both tropes in mind when examining languages meta-discourses.

There is a considerable amount of stammering (lines 03 and 04) and multiple instances of shrugging throughout the interview. This, along with the fact this featured clip does not speak at all to the question of English, all indicates that this speaker may not be acquainted with the current language debates in Morocco, therefore he does not feel the need to speak to them as much as the other speakers. It may also be for this reason that there are no instances of clear code-switching; Moroccan Arabic is used throughout the interview, without the incorporation of more “powerful” registers like Standard Arabic, or languages like French and English.

Roots are Roots

The following transcript features Speaker 4, a young professional, speaking to the issue of English as the next foreign language in Morocco. His brows are furrowed as he answers and gestures slightly with his hands.

3:15–3:31—Transcript 4, Speaker 3

- 01 bilnisba liyya al’asal kayabqaa asal
I think roots will remain roots
- 02 y’ani min assighaar diyyalnaa hunaa kanaqraa
alfaransiyya wa
like ever since we were little, we studied French and
- 03 min alahsan an takun faransiyya w::a fi nafs alwaqt
takun injliziyya
it is best for there to be French and English too, at the same time
- 04 lianna daba kuluhum y’ani deus langues - deus
langues—international
because right now they are both like two languages—the two international languages
- 05 taqreeban fayn maa mashiti anaka katahtaaj alfaransiyya
wa alinjliziyya
almost anywhere you go, you will need French and English

A venerable history is created for languages, whether colonial or “native,” and these become part of the narrative as part of one’s culture, or roots. The word “asal,” or origin, is used by Speaker 3 to discuss this idea of “roots,” just as Speaker 2 had used it to speak to what is “true” to Moroccans and what languages will remain in the nation (line 03). In Speaker 3’s case, however, it is not Arabic or Tamazight, but rather French that is considered the “pride” language that should remain in Morocco (line 01). Speaker 3 does this by building up a venerable history for French in Morocco (line 02), then goes on to discuss that although French will remain, English should be added as well (line 03). This shows us the way in which the terms “pride” and

“profit” can sometimes lay in “uneasy coexistence” with one another (Duchene & Heller, 2012, p. 16). The two terms aid in connecting the roles of language in late capitalism and grant us greater access to understanding, as, “the dynamic, and often contradictory, cultural assemblages of our time” (ibid, p. 4). Speaker 3 also codeswitches to Standard Arabic (“it is best”) and French (“deux langues”) (line 03) in order to use the more official language registers to discuss issues of language planning; this may reflect the use of Standard Arabic and French as a more powerful discourse to discuss this issue, as both of these languages are markedly elite. French and English are both denoted as profit languages through their utilitarian value as needed skills “wherever you go” (line 05).

Les trois langues

The following transcript features a woman speaking to this question of English in Morocco. She speaks confidently and uses her hands.

4:33–4:50—Transcript 5, Speaker 4

- 01 alfaransiyya tabqaa wa alinjiziya htaa hiya yaziduhaa
French will remain, but English will be added as well
- 02 lianna annaas laqdaam maa qrawsh l’alanglais
because the older people, they didn’t learn English
- 03 wa’ illa mshaw alidara wala shihaja tyafhamu shwiyya
bilfaransiyya
and if they went to the administrative office or somewhere else, they would know at least a little French
- 04 walakin ilaa daru htta alanglais—*min* alahsan
but if they add English as well – that would be the best
- 05 mais ibqaa *les trois langues*
but keep the three languages
- 06 faransiyya, alinjiziya wa fi alra’as diyaalhum al’arabiyya
French, English, and Arabic should be at the top of the list

Speaker 4 mentions both pride and profit frameworks as well and hierarchizes the languages in line 06: “French, English and Arabic should be at the top of the list.” Arabic is prioritized in regard to its role as a pride language, yet it is not mentioned alongside French and English in a discussion of which languages would be best for older people to hypothetically learn “if they went to the administrative office” (03). Interestingly, even though Speaker 4 recognizes French and English as practical languages, especially English which she believes should be added to the language systems in Morocco (line 04), she still places Arabic, the pride language, “at the top of the list” (05). This demonstrates the complex ways that the two tropes of pride and profit are intertwined and configured in conversation. Also, Speaker 4’s code-switching closely resemble that of Speaker 3; they both code-switch to French while speaking about

languages (line 04 and line 05) and also speak in Standard Arabic when taking an advisory tone to discuss the best languages for the nation (line 03 and line 04).

Conclusion

Duchene & Heller (2012) argue that the intensification of global markets questions modernist ways of looking at language and identity and insists on a more serious engagement with capitalism and how it constitutes symbolic markets, in addition to material markets. This framework proves useful in examining this data, as Tamazight, Arabic and French emerge as possible “pride” languages. French complicates the paradigm as both a “pride” and “profit” language whereas, English is viewed primarily as a “profit” language. Similar to the way Heller and Duchene notice a discursive shift in the way we talk about language through the addition of the “profit” trope, Morocco is in a transitional period in the way it regulates language with the addition of English, another “profit” language. “[S]omething new is happening here, something that shifts the terms on which social difference is made and on which relations of power are constructed” (Duchene & Heller, 2012, p. 10). Currently, there are ongoing economic changes in Moroccan society in the form of the expansion of local, regional, and transnational economic initiatives and societal development. The way in which people discuss these changes is affected by the changes themselves. This is evident in the languages used while code-switching, use of the English, and the recurrence of certain words in relation to greater themes i.e. suits/profit and pride/roots. Morocco’s social and economic changes during this (post)colonial era have introduced new linguistic practices and new power relations between languages, and thus, a more engaged framework is required for ethnographic and sociographic work that seeks to identify these phenomena.

Works Cited

- Duchêne, A., and Heller, M. (2012). “Language in late capitalism: pride and profit,” *Applied Linguistics*, 35(5) pp. 617–621.
- Buckner, E. (2011). “Culture, class and status competition: The growth of English language learning in Morocco.” In Al-Issa, A., & Dahan, L. S. (Eds.), *Global English and Arabic: Issues of language, culture, and identity in the Arab world*, pp. 213–252, New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Gal, S., & Irvine, J. (1995). “The boundaries of languages and disciplines: how ideologies construct difference.” *Social Research*, 62(4) pp. 967–1001.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Taylor & Francis.

- Moustaoui, A. (2018). "Language policy and planning in Morocco: a critical approach." In E. Benmamoun, & R. Bassiouney (Eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*, pp. 531–545, London: Taylor & Francis.
- Ouakrime, M. (2003). "Morocco." In Teferra, D. and Altbach, P.G. (Eds.), *African Higher Education: An International Reference Handbook*, pp. 449–461, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rohan, J. (2018, February 01). "Lahcen Daoudi: French is No Longer Valid, English is the Solution." Retrieved from <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2014/03/126856/morocco-education-french-english/>.
- Sbai, M. A. (2016). "Issues in higher education in Morocco." Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco.
- Silverstein, M. (1979). "Language structure and linguistic ideology." In P. R. Clyne, W. F. Hanks, & C. L. Hofbauer (Eds.), *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*, Chicago Linguistic Society 15, pp. 193–247, Chicago: Chicago Linguistics Society.

Didion's Facsimile of Yeats' "Rough Beast:" Infantile Citizenship in Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*

Gasira Timir, *Haverford College*

Gasira Timir is a recent graduate of Haverford College, where she majored in English and concentrated in Africana Studies. Her scholarly interests cluster around theories of affect, the built environment, archives, and desire. She is enthusiastic to pursue a doctorate in English literature.

Abstract

In the pages that follow, I endeavor to read Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* against the grain of Yeats' "The Second Coming." My reading is inflected by my understanding of Lauren Berlant's theoretical formulation of the figure of the "infantile citizen," a critical apparatus centering the experiences of children whose innocence and sentimental illiteracy "disrupt the norms of the national locale" (Berlant 28). Ultimately, my essay turns its critical gaze towards "Marrying Absurd," an essay in the collection on children marrying in Las Vegas, arguing that Didion's configuration of the infantile citizen refracts the spirit of Spiritus Mundi's vision; anticipating the arrival of some dark, supersensible figure in the sands of the desert whose presence precipitates hostility, and whose emergence invites the interpretation that it might either lead its followers out of their culture of anarchy or doom them to perennial devastation.

Acknowledgements

First, I am incredibly indebted to the support of my wonderful thesis advisor, Dr. Stephen Finley, who was tremendously insightful throughout the process of developing this project and profoundly shaped my thinking on Joan Didion, W.B. Yeats, and Lauren Berlant. Second, I am tremendously thankful for the generous support I received for this project from the Hurford Center for the Arts and Humanities, where I was awarded a research fellowship in 2018 to pursue archival research on *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* at the Beinecke Library, Schlesinger Library, and New York Public Library. Third, I am immensely grateful for the encouragement I received from incredible friends, family throughout the writing process and throughout my time at Haverford: my parents, S and K; my brother, Liban; my close cousins, Guleed and Iman; Allison Turner; Anna-Alexandra Fodde-Reguer; Andrew Nguyen; Anthony Foy; Ashley Guzman; Charlie Markbreiter; Christopher Good; Colson Lin; Cooper Lovano; Cormac Rada; David Constine; Elana Kates; Gabby Martin; Gus Stadler; Hayden Kesterson; Hugo Cervantes; James Weissinger; Jixin Jia; Joseph DeBrine; Juli McCue; Katy Frank; Kimberly Benston; Madeleine Durante; Mary Kearney-Brown; Maud McInerney; Michelle Laggan; Mike Brier; Nanda Bhushan; Noemí Fernández; Paul Farber; Rebecca Hickey; Remy

Erkel; Rio Morales; Tate Miner; Theresa Tensuan; Tom Devaney; Veronica Doughlin; Victoria Cabrera; and Walt Plumlee. Last but not least, I would like to express my warmest and deepest appreciation to Dr. Lindsay Reckson, my mentor in the Mellon Mays program during my time at Haverford. This project emerges out of the close reading and thinking we embarked on together in an independent study titled "American Utopias" during the Spring 2018 semester. Her unwavering confidence in my ideas and tremendous care are what sustained the majority of this project, most especially during periods of seemingly insurmountable turbulence. This accomplishment would not have been possible without her invaluable guidance and enthusiasm.

In a letter to her editor, Henry Robbins, at Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Joan Didion offers Robbins two readings of her forthcoming collection of reportage and personal essays written over the course of the 1960s, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, published in 1968: "You could say the book [is] a confrontation with the golden land, but you could also say it [is] a report on the ways in which the center is not holding" (Didion to Robbins, 2 October 1967). The title of the collection, which draws from W.B. Yeats' poem, "The Second Coming," indexes a 1960s California that "troubles [Didion's] sight" (Yeats 13)—a distinctly "harsher California" (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 3), one characterized by severe social and moral fragmentation and disorder. Echoing Yeats' vision of "the widening gyre" (Yeats 1), *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* stages an anarchic vision of a new California disturbed by the corrosion of necessary attachments to history, or more precisely, historically-determined social and moral values and instincts. Yet where Didion casts the present as in the midst of catastrophic rupture, brought on by the emergence of some new "rough beast" (Yeats 21), she simultaneously projects an emergent suspicion towards a more sentimental historical past, towards the very Bethlehem or California of Old she so phantasmatically reminisces, "the world as [she] had understood it [that] no longer existed" (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* xii).

Yeats' "The Second Coming" offers a dramatic vision of a world subsumed by indeterminacy and catastrophe, anticipating an emergent biblical revelation prophesying the return of Christ. Like the Yeats poem, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* paints an arresting and authentic vision of an anarchic social and moral landscape, seizing upon—according to Didion—the poem's particular images of "the widening gyre, the falcon which does not hear the falconer, the gaze blank and pitiless as the sun," lines which Didion prefaces "have reverberated in [her] inner ear as if they were surgically implanted there" (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* xi). In *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, Didion takes up these precise images as foundational to her mimetic formulation

of a New California, articulating that for her they served as “points of reference, [. . .] against which much of what [she] was seeing and hearing and thinking [during the 1960s] seemed to make any pattern” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* xi). Like Yeats, Didion endeavors to track a national fantasia undone by the “blood-dimmed tide” which has drowned “the ceremony of innocence” (Yeats 5–6). Seizing upon several spectacular images of children—a five-year-old on acid, a girl too young to drink recently married in Las Vegas—Didion conceals a drama of the disintegration of the social and moral infrastructure of everyday life, heightened by the infantile impulses of those who seemingly never inherited the *correct* social scripts, who latch onto the wrong “images that shimmer” (Didion, “Why I Write” 270), who are cathected to a golden dream divorced from the apparent working “games that [hold] society together” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 85).

This essay pursues a reading of *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* against the grain of Yeats’ “The Second Coming,” taking up how chaos precipitated by young Americans during the 1960s laid bare innumerable “contradictions and lacks” in “the political public sphere [of ‘adult’ or ‘full’ citizenship]” (Berlant 29). In doing so, I turn my critical gaze towards “Marrying Absurd,” an earlier essay in the collection, arguing that several paradoxes and indeterminacies of adult citizenship emerge out of what Didion takes up as attachments to what I call “the sentimental historical past.” Sentimental historical attachments, I define, are misplaced attachments cathecting everyday citizens to the variously wrong “images that shimmer” (Didion, “Why I Write” 270)—“middle-class Freudian hang ups” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 87) such as the \$30,000 salary, or the three children for the Christmas card (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 8). Ultimately, my reading is inflected by my understanding of Lauren Berlant’s theoretical formulation of the figure of the “infantile citizen,” a critical apparatus forged out of the several stories which take up the experiences of children travelling to the nation’s capital, and whose innocence and sentimental illiteracy “disrupt the norms of the national locale” (Berlant 28).

In *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, Berlant theorizes that an immediate “[crisis] emerges from [the infantile citizen’s] encounter between America as a theoretical ideality, and America as a site of practical politics, [. . .] eliciting scorn and derision from ‘knowing’ adults but also a kind of admiration from these same people, who can remember with nostalgia the time that they were ‘unknowing’ and believed in the capacity of the nation to be practically utopian” (Berlant 28–29). Regarding adult citizenship, Berlant offers up that “as it is, citizen adults have learned to ‘forget’ or to render as impractical, naive, or childish their utopian political identifications, in order

to be politically happy and economically functional,” and so, consequently “confronting the tension between utopia and history, the infantile citizen’s stubborn naïveté thus gives her/him the enormous power to unsettle, expose, and reframe the machinery of national life” (Berlant 29). Berlant critically raises: “Is the utopian horizon of national identity itself a paramnesia or a Žižekian ‘fantasy’ that covers over entrenched contradictions and lacks in national culture?” (Berlant 29). In their chapter theorizing infantile citizenship, Berlant finally takes up: “How a given text answers these questions has little to do with the particular infantile citizen who generates its national crisis; it has everything to do with the contradictions threatening ‘adult’ or ‘full’ citizenship in the political public sphere” (Berlant 29).

Via “Marrying Absurd,” I argue that Didion’s travelogue of the golden land betrays how sentimentality can chillingly accelerate, and eventually default on itself. Mobilizing Berlant, I take up how the infantile citizen of *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* brazenly treads and troubles the illusory romanticism of the golden dream; encountering, identifying, and revealing on their pilgrimage several fractures in the utopian political delusions manufactured by adults. Ultimately, although the political stakes of sentimental historical attachments might at first register as indeterminate or inconsequential in contrast to the inherent contradictions enmeshed within, for example, a Washingtonian realpolitik (which Berlant’s formulation of the infantile citizen characteristically upsets), I argue that the acceleration of sentiment is what primarily facilitates the erosion of culture which Didion, in both her preface to the collection and letter to Henry Robbins, stages an attempt to describe.

In “Marrying Absurd,” Didion reports on the recent phenomenon of children and teens traveling en masse to the city of Las Vegas in order to get hitched. Tracking the artificial and exaggerated punctilio of Las Vegas weddings, Didion takes up the events of one particular evening, where “between 9:00 p.m. and midnight of August 26, 1965, [. . .] one hundred and seventy-one couples were pronounced man and wife, [. . .] sixty-seven of them by a single justice of the peace” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 80). In summary, on August 26, 1965, Mr. James A. Brennan, the justice of the peace in question, administered sixty-six weddings in his office. Of this accomplishment, Mr. Brennan bragged: “I got it down from five to three minutes, [. . .] I could’ve married them *en masse*, but they’re people, not cattle. People expect more when they get married” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 80). Of Las Vegas, Didion observes that the business of getting married is seemingly underscored by an urgency which suggests that “marriage, like craps, is a game to be played when the table seems hot” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 81). In this part of the country, any couple may be granted a marriage license at the Clark County Courthouse at any

point during the day, save for the particular hours between “noon and one in the afternoon, [. . .] eight and nine in the evening, and [. . .] four and five in the morning” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 79). Even more, “to be married in Las Vegas, Clark County, Nevada,” Didion reports, “a bride must [only] swear that she is eighteen or has parental permission and a bridegroom [only] that he is twenty-one or has parental permission. Someone must put up five dollars for the license. [. . .] Nothing else is required” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 79). Ultimately, a Las Vegas marriage offers up multiple conveniences—the convenience of being loosely regulated, the convenience of being able to spontaneously contract on most occasions—and yet, Didion observes, Las Vegas marriages appear “to [also] offer something other than ‘convenience’” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 82). Didion writes: “what strikes one most about the Strip chapels, with their wishing wells and their stained-glass paper windows and their artificial bouvardia, [is that the city also is merchandising] ‘niceness,’ the facsimile of proper ritual, to children who do not know how else to find it, how to make the arrangements, how to do it ‘right’” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 82).

In Las Vegas, the infantile citizen’s “stubborn naïveté” has the effect of magnifying the problems of the adult culture; unravelling the sentimental politics of marriage by reducing it to its discrete, recurring icons (Berlant 29). In one notable scene centering a blushing bride’s diaphanous veil, Didion contends with the disintegration of the sentimental machinery of marriage, taking up a startling wedding clip that appears to stutter, loop, and perversely echo. In the scene in question, one bride enthusiastically lends her illusion veil to six other brides in the queue in Mr. Brennan’s office (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* 80). On this occasion, each passing of the veil has the effect of butchering—an effect multiplied by the gesture’s each subsequent instance—the characteristic intimacy of the ritual of getting married, casting a quality of vacuity onto the icon of the veil. Yet rather than each bride’s passing gesture casting a new, characteristic vacuity onto the culture of American weddings, the infantile citizen instead refracts the culture’s inherent problem, one of an already-extant emptiness, an emptiness already configured by adults yet obfuscated by their sentimentality.

“Marrying Absurd” casts a somewhat perturbed—yet also, fascinated—gaze towards the emergent pattern of children and teens—that is, “infantile citizens”—marrying in Las Vegas; constructing a ludicrous drama of innocent kids performing somewhat crack-brained, “blank” re-enactments of an adult ritual oversaturated with an already mordant sense of illusion. Chronicling how the instincts and actions of children agitate the sentimental machinery of the American everyday, Didion’s suspicious gaze however never

fully launches into a particularly rigorous or determined critique of the infantile citizen as catalyst of social pandemonium. Paralleling Yeats’ formulation of the “rough beast / [slouching] towards Bethlehem to be born,” Didion’s configuration of the infantile citizen instead refracts the spirit of *Spiritus Mundi*’s vision; anticipating the arrival of some dark, supersensible figure in the sands of the desert whose presence precipitates hostility, and whose emergence invites the interpretation that it might either lead its followers out of their culture of anarchy or doom them to perennial devastation. In *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, Didion gestures to feeling “paralyzed” (*Slouching Towards Bethlehem* xi) by this precise indeterminacy, unclear as to whether the “rough beast” which has emerged out of the chaos of the everyday should be registered as either a cultural panacea or threat. Configuring the infantile citizen as the “rough beast” which has emerged out of both local and national cultures delimited by mayhem, Didion ultimately registers the impulses of children as symptomatic of the cultural problem which *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* stages an attempt to describe, rather than necessarily the precise problem in and of itself.

Works Cited

- Berlant, Lauren Gail. *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Duke University Press, 1997.
- Didion, Joan. Letter to Henry Robbins. 2 October 1967[EJ9]. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. Records, New York Public Library, Box 86, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* General Folder.
- _____. *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968.
- _____. “Why I Write.” *The New York Times*, 5 December 1976, p. 270.
- Yeats, William Butler. “The Second Coming.” *Poetry Foundation*. 1989. Web. 10 April 2019.

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2019

Barnard College
Bowdoin College
Brooklyn College (CUNY)
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
California Institute of Technology
Carleton College
City College of New York (CUNY)
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Duke University
Emory University
Grinnell College
Harvard University
Haverford College
Heritage University
Hunter College (CUNY)
Macalester College
Northwestern University
Oberlin College
Princeton University
Queens College (CUNY)
Rice University

Smith College
Stanford University
Swarthmore College
University of California
at Berkeley
University of California
at Los Angeles
University of California
at Riverside
University of Cape Town
University of Chicago
University of New Mexico
University of Pennsylvania
University of Puerto Rico
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of the Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand
Washington University
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University
Whittier College
Williams College
Yale University

Claremont Colleges Consortium

Claremont McKenna College
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Scripps College

United Negro College Fund Participants

Allen University
Benedict College
Bennett College
Bethune-Cookman University
Claflin University
Clark Atlanta University
Dillard University
Edward Waters College
Fisk University
Florida Memorial University
Hampton University
Houston-Tillotson University
Interdenominational Theological Center
Jarvis Christian College
Johnson C. Smith University
Lane College

LeMoyne-Owen College
Livingstone College
Miles College
Morehouse College
Morris College
Oakwood College
Paine College
Paul Quinn College
Philander Smith College
Rust College
Saint Augustine's College
Shaw University
Spelman College
Stillman College
Talladega College
Texas College
Tougaloo College
Tuskegee University
Virginia Union University
Voorhees College
Wilberforce University
Wiley College
Xavier University