

# The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2011

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

# Preface

Having the opportunity to contribute to the essential mission of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) mission for a fourth year by assembling the collection of articles by undergraduate fellows has been an immense pleasure. Reducing the severe under-representation of certain minority groups in higher education is no small task, yet the MMUF program has risen to the challenge. Through its support of more than 3,700 undergraduates, the MMUF program is facilitating the journey to the PhD for more than 600 fellows and has already assisted more than 400 fellows to earn their doctorates and begin teaching. The program continues to play a critical role in increasing the number of minority students and others with a demonstrated commitment to eradicating racial disparities in the pursuit of PhDs in the arts and sciences—offering significant progress in the aim of diversifying faculties across the nation.

The 2011 *MMUF Journal* highlights the intellectual efforts of current fellows and recent alumni alike. This year, there was an overwhelming response to the call for Fellows to showcase their original research, resulting in an unprecedented number of submissions. While we could not include each one, these 31 articles are indicative of the breadth and depth of insight represented in the program's 21 fields of designated study.<sup>1</sup> These articles explore a range of topics: from Bradley Craig's and CaVar Reid's pieces that challenge us to rethink popular and scholarly historical narratives on the manifestations of black masculinity and responsibility, to Irtefa Binte-Faird's analysis that expands our notions of the actors engaged in the struggle for India's liberation. Whether probing the challenges of constructing post-colonial narratives in literature, film and national memorials, reframing our understanding of essentialism in feminist discourse and the contributions of translation in comparative literature, or offering glimpses into the lingering consequences of narrow conceptions of beauty in Moroccan women's lived experience—the issues they examine extend our historical, practical and theoretical knowledge.

The work of these apprentice scholars is not only intellectually engaging, but timely and practically significant—raising questions about the juxtaposition of consumerism and charity in cause-related marketing, the role that increased Internet accessibility may play in addressing contemporary inequality, and the challenges of encouraging civil society participation in new republics. Moreover, engaging pieces like Jasmine Elliot's examination of the role changing interpretations of the 14th Amendment played in the outcome of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and Monica Smith's research on the barriers minority veterans faced in gaining equal access to the benefits of the GI Bill offer sobering reminders of the challenges that have hindered educational equality in America. I hope their insightful analyses serve as clarion calls to action that keep us pressing forward in our work to realize MMUF's aims and mission.

We present these students' original research in the 2011 *MMUF Journal* in continued support of their aim to obtain doctorates and become exceptional scholars. Enjoy!

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<sup>1</sup> Designated fields for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship: Anthropology, Area Studies, Art History, Classics, Computer Science, Demography, Earth Science, Ecology, English, Ethnomusicology, Foreign Languages, Geology, History, Literature, Mathematics, Musicology, Philosophy, Physics, Political Theory, Religion, and Sociology.

# Table of Contents

3	Adrián Aldaba, <i>Harvard College</i> Abjection of Homosexuality in the US Latino Canon Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Dr. José Rabasa	51	Marlise Jean-Pierre, <i>Princeton University</i> Don't Silence the Victim: The Representation of Incestuous Rape in the novel <i>The Bluest Eye</i> and the film <i>Precious</i> Mellon Mentors/Advisors: Professor Diana Fuss and Professor Valerie Smith
7	Irtefa Binte-Faird, <i>Williams College</i> Insurgency as Civil War: The Case of the Indian Liberation Struggle	56	Caroline Karanja, <i>Macalester College</i> The Red Revolution: A New Chapter in Corporate Branding Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Leola Johnson
11	Lauren Cardenas, <i>Swarthmore College</i> The Substance and Style of <i>Len Dong</i> : Healing, Transformation, and Aesthetic in Spirit Possession Rituals of Hue City Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Yvonne Chireau	60	Bretney Moore, <i>CUNY Hunter College</i> How We Talk about Talk: The Pervasiveness of Covert Racism in Cases of Linguistic Discrimination Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Candice Jenkins
15	Candrianna Clem, <i>Rice University</i> Social Media Capital: Social Media as a Vanguard for Social Capital Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Michael O. Emerson	64	Rebba Moore, <i>Rice University</i> Joining Fox Nation: An Ethnographic Content Analysis of the Fox News Network Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Michael O. Emerson
19	Adriana Colón, <i>Harvard College</i> The Body as Space: Mapping the Physical and the Fictional Mellon Mentors/Advisors: Professor Doris Sommer; Debra Caplan, PhD candidate	69	Mary Morales, <i>Princeton University</i> Chinese Rural Migrant Women: A Struggle to Find a Sense of Self Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Everett Zhang
23	Bradley Craig, <i>Harvard College</i> "Pass It over in Silence": Race, Sexuality, and the Unspoken in an 18th-Century Slave Crime Narrative Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Caroline Light	73	Sophia Nuñez, <i>Washington University in St. Louis</i> Reading the Real Biblioteca del Escorial: Incorporating the Dangerous Other Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Stephanie L. Kirk
27	Cassandra Eddington, <i>Wellesley College</i> Biracialism and the Post-Colonial Binary in <i>Rebel Music</i> : The Bob Marley Story and Nadine Gordimer's <i>Country Lovers</i> Mellon Mentors/Advisors: Joy Renjilian-Burgy, Angela Carpenter, Tracey Cameron	78	Nasrin Olla, <i>University of Cape Town</i> Building for Difference: Essentialism in the Work of Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Natasha Distiller
31	Jasmine Elliot, <i>Rice University</i> The Law as a Weapon in Transforming Equality: <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) and Select Precedent Cases Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Dr. Nicole Waligora-Davis	82	CaVar Reid, <i>Wesleyan University</i> Black Fatherhood Before and After Slavery Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Claire Potter
35	Jaime Estrada, <i>Smith College</i> Sir Walter Scott's "Un-English" Woman Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Ambreen Hai	86	Adara Robbins, <i>Rice University</i> Religion or Race?: Assessing the Likelihood of Membership in Multiracial Congregations in Houston Mellon Mentors/Advisors: Dr. Jenifer Bratter and Dr. Ruth Lopez Turley
39	Steven Garza, <i>Yale University</i> Applying Translation to Studies in Comparative Literature Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Paulo Moreira	91	Hadiya Sewer, <i>Spelman College</i> Beauty Standards and Beauty Rituals: An Ethnographic Examination of the Social Implications of Skin Color and Hair Texture on the Black Identity in Morocco Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Dr. Alma Jean Billingslea Brown
43	Simone Gonzalez, <i>Harvard College</i> Merchants of Addiction—Parsi Involvement in the India-China Opium Trade Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Daniel Jensen Sheffield, Ph.D. candidate	96	Braxton Shelley, <i>Duke University</i> Postmodern Gospel: Richard Smallwood's Compositional Aesthetic Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Dr. Anthony Kelley
47	Thomas Hernandez, <i>Washington University in St. Louis</i> Civil Society Participation and Legitimization through Transparency Initiatives in Azerbaijan Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Dr. James Wertsch		

## Table of Contents

101

Monica Smith, *Washington University in St. Louis*  
Jim Crow's Middle Class: An Examination of the Socioeconomic Impacts of Devolution on Colorblind Legislation  
Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Garrett Albert Duncan

104

Thomas Snyder, *Harvard College*  
Descent into Darkness: The Catholic Center Party and the Fall of the Weimar Republic

108

Amy Sun, *Carleton College*  
Shaken Syntax and Silence: Language as Resistance in Post-Colonial Writing

112

Kristen Sun, *Northwestern University*  
Ambivalent Relations: Korean and American Cinemas in a Comparative Context  
Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Jinah Kim

115

Elena Swartz, *Bryn Mawr College*  
Re-visioning Memory in the Rainbow Nation: Challenges and Critiques of Post-Apartheid Nation Building through Memorials in South Africa  
Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Gary W. McDonogh

119

Mercedes Trigos, *Rice University*  
Ghost Ship: *The Slavery*  
Mentor: Dr. R. Lane Kauffmann

123

Daniel Valella, *Columbia College*  
How Spike Lee Brought Down Ed Koch: The Politics of 1989's *Do the Right Thing*  
Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Gary Y. Okihiro

127

Doris Zhao, *Macalester College*  
The Whitening of the United States in the 1940s and 1950s  
Mellon Mentor/Advisor: Professor Ernesto Capello

# Abjection of Homosexualidad in the US Latino Canon

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## Abstract

The paper introduces *Latinidad* or “Latino-ness” through cultural theory addressing the patriarchal heteronormativity in Latino culture reflected in the US Latino canon. Through the analysis of three texts: Piri Thomas’s *Down These Mean Streets*, Junot Díaz’s short story “Drown,” and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/The New Mestiza*, we explore how the homosexual Latino male is signified as an “other” through his abjection from the archetypal Latino male trope through either his feminized portrayal or through a lack of portrayal thereof. Anzaldúa is used as a counterpoint in analyzing the Queer Latina view on homosexuality and exploring how she breaks the silence in the US Latino canon. Using Judith Butler’s theory on heterosexual melancholia, one explores how the US Latino canon thus abjects the homosexual Latino male because his sexuality challenges the culturally defined paradigm of the heterosexual Latino male, therefore disrupting the structure defining this developing canon.

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The emerging US Latino canon represents a vibrant culture that embodies *Latinidad*, or “Latino-ness.” This *Latinidad* is a collective identity formed in the United States from the identities of the 21 Latin American countries and dependencies. William Luis, author of *Dance between Two Cultures* (1997), argues that “[r]egardless of the differences among them, Latinos share the same marginal experience in the United States” (qtd in Caminero-Santangelo, 12). This marginal experience has allowed different narratives to flourish under the umbrella of the US Latino Canon.

However, like the Latino culture it reflects, the canon portrays a heteronormative patriarchal structure that has

been challenged by few. Queer Latina writers, primarily Chicana scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga with their works, *Borderlands/The New Mestiza* and *This Bridge Called My Back*, respectively, have challenged this structure in the claim of *The New Mestiza Consciousness*, breaking binaries that repress homosexuals and women.<sup>1</sup> Homosexual Latino males have yet to make such strides. White society marginalizes the gay Latino for being Latino and his fellow brethren marginalize him once more for his homosexuality. In this paper, I will discuss the abjection of the gay Latino in two literary texts, *Down These Mean Streets* and “Drown,” and the divergent strategies the authors employ.<sup>2</sup> In the US Latino canon, the gay Latino is marginalized by being placed in a feminine archetype or by demonstrating exaggerated female characteristics. Using Judith Butler’s theory on heterosexual melancholia, I argue that the US Latino canon abjects the homosexual Latino male because his sexuality challenges the cultural paradigm of the heterosexual Latino male, therefore disrupting the structure defining this developing canon.

In her essay “Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix,” Judith Butler defines heterosexual melancholia as heterosexuality’s mourning for homosexuality. Butler writes, “Indeed, the stricter and more stable the gender affinity, the less resolved the original loss, so that rigid gender boundaries inevitably work to conceal the loss of an original love, that unacknowledged, fails to be resolved” (Butler, 86). Accordingly, the male subject with an affinity toward women has an original loss, the melancholy, of affinity toward men. The heterosexual male trope thus works to conceal this homosexuality, which persists due to its lack of resolution. Butler highlights this homosexual taboo, which creates heterosexual “dispositions [that are] trained, fixed, and consolidated by a prohibition which later and in the name of culture arrives to quell the disturbance itself” (Ibid.). These dispositions create the cultural paradigms that abject homosexuality and resignify it as a weakness, as abnormal, and as undesirable.

Piri Thomas’s coming of age memoir in the streets of Spanish Harlem, *Down These Mean Streets*, exemplifies the cultural paradigms that Butler unpacks in her theory of heterosexual melancholia.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the text, Thomas finds himself caught between the black-white dichotomy

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this essay, I will be using the terms queer, homosexual, and gay interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> Julia Kristeva characterizes abjection in her 1980 essay titled *Pouvoir de l'horreur* as something that we don't recognize as a thing (10). This concept is useful for our analysis of the gay man's presence in Latino literature because he, as the signified object, is stripped of his masculine signifiers, and thus becomes an abject.

<sup>3</sup> In this essay, Thomas is used to refer to Piri Thomas in his role as an author and Piri in reference to him as a “character” in the memoir.

prevalent in the United States as he tries to define his own identity as a dark-skinned Puerto Rican. Marta Caminero-Santangelo writes, “While Thomas’s autobiography certainly points toward the instability of racial categories, it ultimately relies less on notions of hybridity and heterogeneity than on what Gayatri Spivak might call a “strategic essentialism that often reproduces the language of racial polarities” (54).<sup>4</sup> Throughout, Thomas searches for solidarity to define his own identity through his relationships with individuals like his African American friend Brew, boys in Harlem, and the Black Muslim leader Muhammed while in jail. Aside from friendship and social interaction, much of his race issues are also worked out through sexuality. In the chapter “Barroom Sociology,” Thomas and Brew go south to help him get a better understanding of himself outside of Harlem. Throughout the chapter, Piri observes a woman and her physique but never describes her color. He states, “The broad was still there, still coming on. I thought *pussy’s the same in every color*, and made it over to the music” (Thomas, 178). Thomas critiques racial structures by highlighting their superficiality, noting that underneath the varying skin colors, everyone is exactly the same. This commonality as portrayed by Thomas’s Latino urban culture, views heterosexual sex as a racial equalizer, but as we will see, he portrays homosexuality and gay Latinos in a different light.

Thomas abjects homosexual Latinos for the first time in his novel while searching for acceptance from his boys in Harlem. While sitting on the stoop, they begin a discussion about gays; in response, one of his boys proposes they take a trip to “the faggot’s pad and cop some bread” (Thomas, 55). Thomas writes, “All the guys felt like I did. Not one of them looked happy. So why were we making it up to the *maricones’* pad? Cause we wanted to belong, and belonging meant doing whatever had to be done” (55). The trip to the gay Latinos’ apartment was not one of want, but one of need. Backing out would show weakness where he himself would be feminized. Thus, he and his boys take the challenge to retain their masculinity. Here, Thomas begins to uncover the dichotomy dividing the perceptions of homosexuality and heterosexuality. For example, Piri and his boys never address the gay Latinos in this chapter as men, but as “faggots” or the Spanish equivalent “maricones.” Through these derogatory slurs, the gay Latino is not recognized as a man, but rather as a sexual object. This de-signification allows Piri and his boys to get “bread” without attraction, as the gay Latinos have no masculine signifiers. This abjection, thus, illustrates Butler’s theory of the dispositions set in place by

Latino culture and all heteronormative cultures to prohibit homosexuality. Culture justifies not only his thoughts but also his trip to the gay Latinos’ apartment, to prove himself worthy and “man” enough to roll with the boys.

The gay Latinos in this scene are not given one archetypal “male” attribute, that is until there is direct contact between Piri and the gay Latinos.

It was too late . . . I looked down in time to see my pee-pee disappear into Concha’s mouth. I felt the roughness of his tongue as it both scared and pleased me. *I like broads, I like muchachas, I like girls*, I chanted inside me . . . I felt like I wanted to yell. Then I heard slurping sounds and it was all over (Thomas 61).

This marks the first time Thomas gives agency to the gay Latino male and refers to him as male. In his internal monologue, we see a resurgence of the cultural dispositions present at the beginning of this scene. The force of this cultural prohibition shines through when Thomas utters *muchachas*, as the code switching to Spanish represents the heteronormative Latino paradigm that is abjecting his concurrent homosexual act.

In Butler’s theory of heterosexual melancholia, she argues that although these dispositions are in place to conceal homosexuality, the unacknowledged is still unresolved. Thus one could argue that Thomas’s description of his gay oral sex experience as both scary and pleasurable is the emergence of that unacknowledged homosexuality from the margins. Thomas tries to hide this surge of homosexuality through ignorance. In referring to his genitalia as a “pee-pee,” Thomas infantilizes himself through language, trying to blame the situation on factors that are out of his control, primarily, being “taken advantage of” by Concha. He also masks the pleasure of his orgasm with silence. Piri’s wanting to yell could be interpreted as a desire to express the pleasure out of this homosexual experience, yet the pull of Latino tradition silences this desire. Moreover, the language Thomas uses to describe the end of his experience belittles the situation itself by refusing to acknowledge any pleasure in the experience, abjecting it from a sexual experience to nothing but *it*.

This abjection of a homosexual experience is further explored in Junot Díaz’s short story “Drown” from the 1996 collection of the same name. “Drown” tells the story of two friends, Beto and the male narrator, whose friendship falls apart after they have a summer fling before Beto goes to

<sup>4</sup> Spivak defines strategic essentialism as the construction of a group identity based on a sense of solidarity.

college. The reader finds a different representation of the gay Latino than in Thomas's text as there are more salient normative signifiers of an archetypal young man. Through the text, the narrator hides his desire to reconnect with Beto by signifying him as *pato*, a Dominican slang word signifying homosexuality. Despite this abjection, the reader observes nostalgic flashbacks that remind the narrator of their prior relationship. For example, when at the mall with his mother, he is flooded with memories of their looting days. He explains, "At this Beto was the best. He even talked to mall security, asked them for directions . . . and me . . . standing ten feet away, shitting my pants" (Díaz, 97). Though the narrator identifies Beto as *pato*, he is still portrayed as a typical young man from the *barrio* with strong masculine traits. The narrator thus finds himself in a difficult in-between, his nostalgia calls Beto back to his life, even as he tries to push him further and further into the margins.

Beto's abjection provides another example of heterosexual melancholia. Butler writes, "[one] chooses the heterosexual . . . [in] fear of castration—that is, the fear of 'feminization' associated within heterosexual cultures with the male homosexuality" (86). Because the narrator's Latino culture abjects *patos*, and he refuses to associate with them in fear of him being thought a *patos* as well. The narrator chooses to rest within the heterosexual trope in fear of psychological castration, his own abjection into the feminine trope by Latino culture.

Similar to Piri's experience with *La Concha*, the narrator suppresses thoughts and memories associated with his sexual experiences with Beto. It is only through nuances in the text that the reader can uncover this "secret." The narrator first reveals this information to the reader halfway into the short story when he states, "Twice. That's it" (Díaz, 103). Their first encounter occurs when Beto comes on to him after a trip to the pool while they were watching pornography at his house. Afterwards, the narrator observes, "Mostly, I stayed in the basement, terrified that I would end up abnormal, a fucking *pato*, but he was my best friend and back then that mattered to me more than anything" (Díaz, 104). The narrator shows signs of conflict and confusion as he cannot fully grasp his experience with Beto. Participating in this homosexual act breaks with the Latino cultural paradigm, making the narrator seek to escape the potential cultural repercussions of his actions—being tainted a *pato* and being figuratively castrated of his *masculinidad*. Thus, the narrator claims above that it was only his friendship that got him out of his apartment and in search of Beto. Yet one could also argue that it was more than his friendship, but the

underlying unresolved homosexual attraction that Butler highlights. This argument proves true as their meeting leads to a second sexual encounter. The narrator states:

We sat in front of his television, in our towels, his hands bracing against my abdomen and thighs. I'll stop if you want, he said, and I didn't respond. After I was done, he laid his head on my lap. I wasn't asleep or awake, but caught somewhere in between, rocked slowly back and forth the way surf holds junk against the shore, rolling it over and over (Díaz, 105).

The narrator gives the reader clues alluding to oral sex, yet he relays nothing about the experience itself. With the image of the shore, the narrator gives a feeling of lulled contentment, though he does not admit it. This metaphor of the shore can be argued to reflect not only the narrator's emotional state but also his psychological state as he is himself throughout the narrative as a whole, tossed back and forth in regards to his sexuality. He is being pushed by the surf, by his Latino *barrio* culture towards heterosexuality, while subconsciously, he wants to float away toward homosexuality.

Contrary to Díaz's marginalization and Thomas's feminization of the queer Latino male, the Queer Latina has made a space for herself in the blossoming US Latino canon. Gloria Anzaldúa, with her narrative, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, calls for the new Mestiza consciousness, a new way of viewing women and queers, primarily Chicana/Latina lesbians, in the heteronormative Latino culture. Anzaldúa writes, "The Mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended" (102). The Latina woman, also marginalized in this white, patriarchal culture, is also "hung up between two sticks," to borrow Thomas's words (119). Through her work, Anzaldúa examines binaries in Latino culture that keep women and queers oppressed and through them she reconstructs this new way of thinking that creates a space for the oppressed members of the Latino community, making them equals to the heterosexual Latino male who marginalizes them.

Thus, for the 21st-century gay Latino male, the challenge will be deconstructing the Latino male archetype to create a space for himself in his own culture. The Latino community has difficulty grasping the concept of being gay and Latino because queerness is associated, for the most part, with white *Americana*. Jorge J.E. Gracia in his book,

*Latinos in America*, comments on various social identities and how they are related to each other, writing, “Even a superficial perusal of these cases indicates that there are differences, sometimes significant, because ethnic identities often include behavioral patterns and views on gender orientation and sexuality” (Gracia, 4). Gracia emphasizes that ethnic identities are stronger and more definitive than other social identities. For example, the word Latino evokes the quintessential hetero macho Latino male. Thus, a queer male or female who is Latino/a must qualify his sexuality to tailor the ethnic identity to his sexuality, hence gay Latino or queer Latina, etc. Putting Gracia’s argument in Anzaldúa’s context, Anzaldúa, with her *New Mestiza Consciousness*, deconstructs and reconstructs the ethnic identity itself so that the signifier Latino or Chicano encompasses all faces of the community. Anzaldúa writes, “The *mestizo* and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is intricately woven together and that we are spawned out of similar souls” (107). Thus, Anzaldúa offers an affirmation of equality between gay Latino/as and Latinos as a whole. The Latino and the gay Latino/a are all brothers and sisters coming from the same mixture of blood. *Latinidad* is born out of the shared struggle, the shared marginalization, and the shared experience that Latinos face in the United States. Gay or not, Anzaldúa argues that there is no reason for anyone, especially one’s own brethren, to be marginalizing one another.

*Latinidad* represents a rich vibrant culture, born out of many roots and origins, that has found a foothold in cultural Americana. Likewise, homosexuality in white America has made many strides forward. However, *homosexualidad masculina* in Latino culture is still taboo. Anzaldúa, in the late 1980s, not only shook up the Latino cultural paradigm, she made a space for Latina lesbians in the US Latino canon and in the canon of theory and criticism, attaining a space in the *Norton Anthology* with other great thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. Gay Latinos have yet to make such strides. Though gay Latinos are shaking the very foundations on which heterosexual Latino males have been defining themselves for generations, they have yet to secure a space for themselves in the US Latino canon as it continues to abject them. Albert Memmi, a post-colonial theorist, argues that relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is mutual for the colonized accepts himself as separate and different as defined by the colonizer (151). Using Memmi’s argument, we cannot place the blame solely on the heteronormative Latino archetype, but one must also hold

accountable the gay Latino himself. The US Latino canon is defining itself via the ethnic identity it represents and thus we will see progress in neither until someone breaks the silence. Anzaldúa broke it for Latina women. Queer Latino males need to step up and be heard. Who will be our voice? Who will be our *hombre*?



# Insurgency as Civil War: The Case of the Indian Liberation Struggle

Irtefa Binte-Faird, *Williams College*

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*Irtefa graduated from Williams College in 2011 with a degree in Anthropology. She hopes to pursue a PhD in Cultural Anthropology and is busy applying to graduate schools that will allow her to combine her passion for ethnographic methods with area studies in South Asia and the Middle East. This year, she is falling in love with her job as a Kindergarten Teaching Assistant.*

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## Abstract

This paper looks at the Indian struggle for freedom as an insurgency with multiple parties. Traditionally, we are taught to view *Mahatma* (Great Soul) Gandhi as the messiah whose path of *ahimsa* (non-violence) brought forth freedom for India. However, a historical overview shows that there were many other players involved in the Indian freedom struggle. This paper looks at the actions of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt of the Hindustani Socialist Republican Association, labeled a “terrorist” organization by the British and the Indian National Congress. It also examines how the Indian people reacted to their violent and oft-forgotten non-violent tactics. The paper then proceeds to make the claim that an insurgency against a foreign power is simultaneously a civil war between indigenous groups to gain the most legitimacy at home in order to secure power once “freedom” is achieved.

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## Insurgency as Contest of Legitimacy

Insurgencies are contests of legitimacy and are inherently civil wars. An insurgency arises when the government that is supposed to provide basic services to its subjects fails to do so. An alternate power structure arises and gains popular support by meeting the needs of the citizens. This model becomes complicated when there is more than one group challenging the authority of the state. The civil war becomes multi-faceted as each group tries to gain more legitimacy than the rest in order to establish itself as the real power. In the real world, it is difficult to find a situation where only two groups (the state vs. “the insurgents”) are pitted in a power struggle; usually, the challenge to a regime comes from many different groups.

In India, where *Mahatma* (Great Soul) Gandhi’s *satyagraha* (truth-force) movement is credited with ousting the mighty British Empire, there were other actors involved from the turn of the century, including more radical and violent ones. However, in the pre-Internet, pre-satellite TV era, only the “legitimate” body of dissidents had access to foreign media. Gandhi’s ability to use the media, including

Western media, gave him and the INC (Indian National Congress) an edge over the other groups fighting for independence, making him the spokesperson for India to the West and gaining him further legitimacy at home.

Being from South Asia and having grown up seeing Gandhi as an idol of peace, I was intrigued by the idea of what a closer look at the era of Indian liberation with a focus on multi-player insurgency would bring to light. This paper aims to look at what happens once an insurgency is over: who wins the civil war? Instead of converting the conflict into a binary struggle between the INC and the British Raj, I am going to look at some other groups involved in the struggle. I am specifically going to look at Bhagat Singh and the Hindustani Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) to see how he challenged the Gandhian notion of *satyagraha* yet was immensely popular in India during his lifetime. Finally, I am going to look at the reason for the decline of his popularity and tie it to the importance of creating legitimacy for the group that comes into power once the foreign force is expelled. Gandhi, despite his reputation as a saint, was a politician and he manipulated the press and national memory to ensure primacy for the INC and his ideals of non-violence. By condemning Singh as a “terrorist,” the INC was better able to disregard his claims for social redistribution and an end to exploitation while furthering its own agenda and maintaining the status quo (Nair, 649).

## The Rise of Militant Nationalism in India and the Emergence of Gandhi

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as *Mahatma* (Great Soul) internationally and *bapu* (father) throughout the subcontinent, was the prophet of India who delivered her from the shackles of British bondage to freedom in 1947 through his philosophy of non-violence. While many of his supporters did not agree with his philosophy of *ahimsa* (non-violence), they went along with his leadership because he was the only one who could create a mass movement in India. Jawaharlal Nehru was popular, Subhas Bose was revered in Bengal, but an all-India movement required the leadership of Gandhi (Biswas, 145). However, this also meant that in certain provinces (e.g., Bengal), his popularity lagged behind prominent provincial leaders.

Reflecting the tradition of Vivekananda and Bankim, Bengalis were not satisfied with passive resistance. Anglicized by their early contact with Britain, cut off from local traditions but not able to fully integrate themselves into the English society, the youth of Bengal soon became

disillusioned with the promise of progress the West held out. Focus shifted to “liberating” India from the shackles of the West. Around that time, Swami Vivekananda taught Bengalis to answer the call for sacrifice in the cause of their motherland. While the Swami did not preach violence directly, his focus on *shakti* (strength—with a connotation of violence) and fearlessness was adopted by revolutionary groups fighting against the division of Bengal during the *Swadeshi* era (1905-1911). Revolutionaries all across India drew strength from the success of the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal. Vivekananda’s belief in the assertion of man and his global fame made him an inspiration for young revolutionaries all over India. Bhagat Singh from Punjab was inspired by Vivekananda. Yet for the revolutionaries of Punjab, the religious core of Vivekananda’s message was troublesome. Bengal’s militant nationalism, focused on India’s Golden Age when the Hindus reigned supreme, made for a vision where Muslims were unwanted. To young socialist revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, the impact of religion on Bengal’s nationalism was extremely upsetting. However, by the 1920s, Bengali revolutionaries, for the most part, had given up their religious fundamentalism (Nayar, 51). Therefore, even as Gandhi began to preach his doctrine of non-violence, an ideal borne out of his religiosity, Bengal was moving away from religious nationalism and the exclusion it brings forth.

Nevertheless, following his return to India in 1915, Mohandas Gandhi began to gain prominence nationwide. Gandhi was able to tap into the village psyche of India and able to mobilize peasants and workers who, till then, had been beyond the scope of politics; he was able to offer himself as one of their own and promise change. Yet revolutionary leaders continued to berate him for his ties to Indian capitalists and his “compromises” with the British. The revolutionaries, along with their sympathizers in Congress (like Subhas Bose), condemned Gandhi’s mentality of “appeasement” (Habib, 29). It was a known policy of the imperialist government of Britain to keep the colonial “leaders” busy with various constitutional problems and by occasionally making small concessions to avoid any serious revolutionary outbreaks: “The Congress and Gandhi posed no problem to them. The revolutionaries did.” (Nayar, 61). The revolutionaries were able to see through the guise of the colonial power, but were not able to express their views to a large audience. They gained certain popularity following daring acts against the British government (like killing British police officers, robbing the British treasury, etc.), but they were not able to maintain that popularity.

There was a struggle between the Congressional body and their undeclared leader, *Mahatma* Gandhi, in how to deal with the revolutionaries. Congress was torn between taking more radical action to get rid of the British and claim power for themselves, and following the non-violence creed of their leader. As the young men began to take more direct actions against the British, Gandhi bitterly condemned their actions even as Congress lauded them. The revolutionaries tried to use the rift among the older politicians for their own benefit, but a quick and strong response by Gandhi sealed their fate. He, along with the British government, was able to effectively disregard their calls by labeling them as *aatankari* (terrorists): “Gandhi did not engage with the revolutionaries’ criticism of the way he seemed to compromise with the British or with Indian capitalists: he focused on violence” instead (Nair, 671). Even when some revolutionaries employed non-violent means to present their case, Gandhi continued to refer to their violent past. His unwillingness to allow the revolutionaries the chance to define the Indian struggle for independence is best illustrated in the example of his reaction to Bhagat Singh’s hunger strike for the rights of political prisoners. In the next section, this paper will look at the episode in detail to better understand the struggle. It was not merely about violence vs. non-violence, but about who got to name the terms of independence; it was about who won the legitimate authority to shape India’s future.

#### **Inquilab Zindabad—Long Live the Revolution!**

On April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw a bomb onto the corridors of the Assembly where Congress was busy debating two bills unpopular with the Indian people but supported by the British—the Trade Disputes Bill, meant to ban strikes by industrial workers, and the Public Safety Bill, which would give the government the power to detain suspects without trial. The revolutionaries aimed carefully so that no one got hurt, threw leaflets onto the Assembly floor, and waited calmly for their arrest. They made no attempts to get away. Their leaflets began with, “It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear”—a quote by the French anarchist Valliant, and went on to list their grievances against both the British and the Indian National Congress:

Without repeating the humiliating history of the past ten years of the working of the reforms (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms) . . . we see . . . the Government . . . thrusting upon us new repressive measures like those of the Public Safety Bill and the Trade Disputes Bill . . . We are sorry to admit that

we who attach so great a sanctity to human life, we who dream of a glorious future when man will be enjoying perfect peace and full liberty, have been forced to shed human blood. But the sacrifice of individuals at the altar of the great revolution that will bring freedom to all, rendering the exploitation of man by man impossible, is inevitable. Long Live Revolution.

Starting with this leaflet, the Hindustani Socialist Republican Association hoped to make their voices heard. The HSRA wanted to clarify that for them, revolution did not mean the “cult of the bomb” or increased use of violence; instead it meant an end to the inherent injustice present in the status quo. They were not happy with just a change in power, with the white master being replaced by the brown *sahib*. They called for the end of exploitation of the laborers, peasants, weavers, masons, smiths, carpenters—the working classes of India and of the world. Activists involved in the HSRA, including Singh and Dutt, were willing to resort to violent means to gain access to the courts. Because so much media attention was focused on courtroom drama, the HSRA wanted to use the courtroom as a platform from which they could expound their ideals and clear up their reputation as “deluded patriots” and “murderers.” The initial “violent” action—throwing the bomb—was merely a way to gain access to the media; Singh’s and Dutt’s arrests and subsequent trial were a way for them to advocate the cause of the HSRA and gain further legitimacy for revolutionary actions.

#### **Bhagat Singh: Revolutionary vs. *Satyagrahi***

While they were being tried for throwing the bomb into the Assembly, Singh and Dutt went on a hunger strike to protest the treatment of political prisoners. In addition to defending their position in court, Bhagat Singh wanted to show the nation that the revolutionaries were willing to use any tactic within their means to bring about independence. Singh also wanted to show the world that revolutionaries were not concerned solely with taking human lives; they too were willing and able to suffer for the motherland (Nayar, 82). He followed the Gandhian rules on *satyagraha* when embarking on his hunger strike; he wrote a letter to the Superintendent explaining his reasons. He said that he had been sentenced to life and was thus a “political prisoner;” as such, he had a right to basic provisions, including a better diet, toiletries, books, at least one newspaper per day, and an exemption from forced labor. Speaking on behalf of the other “political prisoners,” he claimed that they would continue the hunger strike until their demands were met. Their

strike started making headlines, and soon enough the whole nation was focused on the conditions of the prisoners. Many newspapers began to publish daily reports on the health conditions of the prisoners; the strict discipline showed by the revolutionaries even after their health began to deteriorate won Indians over. According to *The Tribune*, thousands of Lahoris expressed their solidarity with the prisoners by fasting with them; June 30th was observed as “Bhagat Singh-Dutt Day” in most of the districts in Punjab. Even Congress was not untouched; Jawaharlal Nehru published “The Defence [sic] Statement by Bhagat Singh and Dutt in the Assembly Bomb Case” in the *Congress Bulletin* on July 1, 1929 much to Gandhi’s consternation (Nair, 658). A correspondent to *The People* explained that it was not the issue itself that roused such passion but the “manner and spirit” in which it was undertaken:

Heart-and-soul devotion to a cause, heart-and-soul loyalty to associates, fidelity to the death, are virtues which command our involuntary reverence. Nowhere are they so common as not to be held in high honor. If Sardar Bhagat Singh and Mr. Bhutakeshwar Dutt [sic] persist in their fast to fatal extremities, India will be immensely the poorer for her loss (Nair, 659).

Political prisoners who survived the ordeal remember that the most difficult part of the strike is not the fight against hunger but “the fight against the instinct of self-preservation” (Jatinder Nath Sanyal, quoted on Nair, 659). The determination with which the prisoners pursued the hunger strike was striking; their belief in the importance of their cause was sufficient to mobilize not just politicians but also ordinary people. The genius of the issue that Singh and his comrades chose is that it was directed at the very basis of British rule, which assumed its right to rule over India. It was “the white man’s burden”: the responsibility of the civilized, Christian West to bring order and civilization to the barbaric, infidel East. Therefore, for the British to concede that the revolutionaries were “political prisoners” would mean acknowledging their motives as political and not merely personal and distinguishing them from common criminals, giving their acts a form of legitimacy denied to revolutionaries in India before (Nair, 664).

The controversy over the hunger strike in Britain and the incredible popularity of Bhagat Singh and his fellow prisoners within India stemmed from their choice of a cause that bridged other ideological divides. Both revolutionaries and Congressmen had suffered horrible fates in prison because they were not granted that status. The method

through which Singh and his comrades chose to fight the battle of principles was vivid and emotional and took immense toll on the body of those fighting. Death by hunger is horrendous; yet a young Jatindra Nath Das died on the 63rd day of his fast. His martyrdom united politicians from all ideological backgrounds to the same platform, but Gandhi would not concede; he called the actions by the revolutionaries “an irrelevant performance” (Nair, 658). Gandhi, because of his philosophical leanings, failed to capture the momentum around Das’s death to push for better treatment of political prisoners. He defended his decision by saying: “... authors of political murder count the cost before they enter upon their awful career. No action of mine can possibly worsen their fate” (Habib, 31).

### Conclusion

Even when the country was glued to the fate of the revolutionaries during their peaceful hunger strike, even when foreign powers became invested in their struggle (Mary MacSwiney, sister of Lord Mayor of Cork Terrence MacSwiney of Ireland, sent a telegram of sympathy to Calcutta saying “Freedom will come”), Gandhi would not let go of the violence in their past. He completely disregarded Bhagat Singh’s claim that “*mein aatankari nahin hoon, mein ek krantikari hoon*”—I am not a terrorist, I am a revolutionary (Nair, 670)—and refused to help him in his struggle. It is ironic that *Mahatma* Gandhi, the man who preached the gospel of winning over one’s enemy through inflicting suffering on yourself and appealing to his better nature, failed to see the revolutionaries through the lens of his own beliefs. He failed to see the “truth” in their *satyagraha*—even after their deaths. For good or bad, by labeling Bhagat Singh a “terrorist,” Gandhi and the British Raj were able to successfully remove him from the conversation regarding independence and slowly build sympathy for the INC’s non-violent platform in the global media. The insurgency ended, India achieved its independence, and Gandhi came to be known as the prophet who delivered it; the “terrorists,” despite the sacrifices they made for the motherland, were soon forgotten. As their names died, the INC leaders found it easier to ignore the critiques raised by said revolutionaries and create legitimacy for themselves. Status quo prevailed, with the brown *sabib* replacing the white master.

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# The Substance and Style of *Len Dong*: Healing, Transformation, and Aesthetic in Spirit Possession Rituals of Hue City

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## Abstract

One essential element of *len dong* or spirit possession ritual is *loc* or lucky gifts from the spirits of the mother goddess pantheon. The gifts themselves are among the two categories of tangible and intangible. Tangible gifts include lucky money, votive paper, fruit, food, stones, amulets, and other items that may have been imbued with the favor of the spirits. The intangible gifts, though, are some of the most interesting—and will be the topic that this paper will seek to explore. Rather than focus on *len dong* as simply an element of cultural heritage in need of preservation, my paper will focus on the function that this particular ritual plays in the lives of practitioners, and the larger societal narrative it grew out of—that is, the intangible gifts of *len dong*.

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*Len dong* is a spirit possession ritual practiced in the mother goddess religion of *Tu Phu*. *Tu Phu* roughly translates to “Four Palaces” or the sacred homes of the four spirits of the earth, heaven, water, and mountain or woods.<sup>1</sup> As there is no formal organization of the religion, there is considerable freedom in its expression among practitioners. For example, the styles, designs, and intricacy of the costumes may vary, as well as the size of the accompanying ritual orchestra. Yet there remains one very essential element of the spirit possession ritual: *loc* or lucky gifts from the spirits of the mother goddess pantheon. The gifts themselves are among the two categories of tangible and intangible. Tangible gifts include lucky money, votive paper, fruit, food, stones, amulets, and other items that may have been imbued with the favor of the spirits. The intangible gifts, though, are some of the most interesting—which this paper will explore.

## Background

There is a unique religious subculture in Vietnam, of a rather eclectic nature. It consists of pictures of frolicking cats with smiling faces, of altars with offerings of fruit and flowers, images of Ho Chi Minh, and of lucky lottery tickets sold on street corners and cafes. In Vietnam, the religious scene is dominated by the presence of mediumship related

to *Dao Mau*—mother goddess worship. The rituals of *Dao Mau* are bountiful and include spirit possession and exorcism. I chose to conduct my research in Hue City in particular, as it is rich in imperial Vietnamese history. Hue City is the old capital of the Nguyen emperors whose employment of mediums in private and public court activities is well known. Though the days of the Nguyen Dynasty are gone, there remains an echo of a powerful spiritual past, made all the more deafening and cacophonous in post-*Doi Moi* era of a rapidly developing Vietnam.

The relationship of the Vietnamese government with mother goddess traditions is interesting because the government tends to support the performance art aspect of the *len dong* ritual, while quietly discouraging interest in the actual religious content of the ritual. For example, a public government-sponsored *len dong* ceremony was held in Ha Noi in early February of 2011, which focused on *len dong* as a method of preserving Vietnamese cultural heritage. It was the government’s attempt to show how the practice of spirit possession might be acceptable to endorse, if they could deflect attention from the perceived darker, more problematic religious content—specifically surrounding commonly asked questions like, “Is it real?” or, “Is it evil/black magic?” Rather than focus on *len dong* as simply an element of cultural heritage in need of preservation, my paper will focus on the function that this particular ritual plays in the lives of practitioners, and the larger societal narrative it grew out of. *Len dong* is an artistic performance, a history lesson, and a lived expression of the history of the Vietnamese. While this is helpful, as this paper will show, there is more to *len dong* than beautiful costumes, eating delicious ceremonial food, and music. *Len dong* is a highly controversial act, not just for outsiders viewing the ritual, but amongst the mediums themselves among whom there is much debate over proper performance technique and decorum.

## Research Methodology and Purpose

The so-called “superstition” surrounding possession that the government wishes to avoid is what this paper will seek to explore through photographs, recordings, interviews, and personal narratives. I will analyze the murky, more difficult though incredibly interesting topic of the healing benefits (tangible and intangible gifts), and of the transformation of lives through *len dong*. A focus on *len dong* as lived religion is important because it enables an understanding of how it serves as a tool for creating and sustaining various relationships with communities of the living, the dead, the natural, and the supernatural. Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> Introduction. *Possessed by the Spirits: Mediumship in Contemporary Vietnamese Communities*, 7.

possession lives because it is embodied in mediums that perform the mythologies and who engage in a kind of personal and communal therapy. For spirit possession to survive it must adapt along with the people, according to changing environments, and thus offers a response to and a commentary on social, political, economic, and cultural change in Vietnam.

### *I. De's Mother: Feeding the Spirits*

De's mother is the owner of a catering service an hour outside of Hue City. Prior to this job, she owned a small business selling various products. One day, De's mother found that many of her products had gone missing. She believed that another woman in the neighborhood had stolen them from her, but she could not prove it. The situation cost De's mother nearly all of her money trying to take her case to court; she faced serious financial ruin. At the same time, her husband went through a bout of sickness that left him debilitated. De recalls one evening,

"I was sleeping and suddenly I woke up to the sound of my mother's voice. I went outside and saw her pacing the yard. She was talking, but I knew they weren't her words. She started speaking to me, and the voice told me to study hard in order to help my mother. After that, she would have dreams where voices spoke to her."

De's mother also sought the help of a medium—

"She went to the woman and was told that she was chosen."

De's mother explains the concept of *co can*, to be chosen:

"There are two worlds, the living and the dead. They are parallel worlds. A spirit or soul targets a living person, usually someone who has a sixth sense. The dead choose that person to communicate with. They send that person premonitions and make them do certain actions or say certain words.

Sometimes the person shares a trait of the spirit or soul; they may have the same likes and dislikes, or resemblance in appearance and demeanor. I was not scared when I was chosen; I wanted to take the responsibility."

It was afterward that De's mother was initiated in *Tu Phu*, and hired by Ms. Hong to be her ceremonial cook. De's mother is an attentive and hard-working cook. She knows all

of the traditional recipes for *len dong*, and prepares the pork, sticky rice, and sweet soup—the essential offerings in any ceremony. At the celebration to commemorate the initiation of a new temple to a water goddess of *Tu Phu*, De's mother and a group of seven women successfully cooked for the 100+ people who arrived over the course of the morning and late afternoon—in addition to preparing the ritual offerings of food for the many altars in the temple. De's mother cooks for Ms. Hong's *len dong* ceremonies every year, gaining many clients through it. At the ceremony I attended, she placed her business cards on each table. De tells me that her catering business runs very well, and that though times are still hard, she and her husband are much better off.

### *II. Superstition: The Government's Opinion of Len Dong*

"Hue people are very superstitious," says De. "They believe in *len dong* and mediumship and fortune-tellers." When asked about the government's position on such practices, he says, "It is not illegal. The government does not encourage it, but it also does not prevent it." De explains that the government cannot take action against popular rituals such as spirit possession because it is considered an important part of Vietnamese culture. "It has a history in Vietnam. It is a part of every Vietnamese person so the government cannot take it away."

Master Tri, the president of a local organization dedicated to the preservation of *Dao Mau* (mother goddess religions) like *Tu Phu* also speaks to authenticity and legitimacy issues that De mentioned above:

"During the Vietnam war period, *Dao Mau* existed. In 1974, the main Association of *Thien Tien Thanh Mau* (*Thien*: Heaven; *Tien*: Fairy; *Thanh Mau*: Holy Mother) in the entire south of Vietnam was established. This association had regulation, systems of teaching, legal status but *Dao Mau* is not an official religion in the country, because it's not true according to scientific evidence, you know? And some people have taken use of the religion to cheat others..."

Master Tri relates a story of a government official's experience with *Tu Phu*:

"The former secretary of the Vietnam Communist Party was shot and killed by an American soldier. For a long time, the State and the relatives couldn't find his body. One day, his family visited a medium, who said she could help find the lost body. This woman was reliable because of her contribution to the State in finding the lost bodies of Vietnamese soldiers.

... But the man's nephew, the secretary of the Communist Party of Ha Tinh province, didn't believe. The dead man came to the nephew in a dream. Three years later, the dead soul penetrated directly into his body. As a result, he believed, and finally the body was found.

Today, Vietnamese government supports the use of mediums for finding Vietnamese lost to the wartime."

Based on De and Master Tri's explanations, one finds that there is a possibility of exploitation in *len dong*. According to De, because people are superstitious, and since for the most part, *len dong* does provide real benefits in their lives, there is a trend for some mediums to overcharge for their services. The reason why some practitioners would still seek the services of an expensive medium is that they believe they will get more spiritual favor.

Master Tri's story reveals the complexity of the relationship between *Tu Phu* and the government. The government appears to believe whole-heartedly in the ability of mediums in *Tu Phu* to re-locate Vietnamese bodies lost during the wars. Their issue is not with the substance of the religion, but with the style: the aesthetic. The aesthetic, the ritual, is what costs money—and what is often made the focus of attention at the expense of its function.

The story that Master Tri shares is, at its core, a sorrowful one. Respect and love of family, a search for reuniting broken families, of making peace with the dead, is the substance discovered upon a deeper analysis. One sees a crucial function of mediumship as that of bridging the worlds of the living and dead, of communicating between the living and dead—to ultimately find peace, reconciliation, and unity. This in itself is a critically intangible gift that *Tu Phu* brings: the gift of family, of reunion.

The mythic model of *Tu Phu* is a response to changes in Vietnam, and particularly, a method of coping with the country's tragic history. People are in search of their lost loved ones, of bringing peace to their families, of recovering and thriving. Once again, one sees mediumship as an essential practice because it allows for the communication of the living with the dead and vice versa.

The same mythic model is the foundation upon which De's mother's story rests: De's mother faces financial ruin and controversy regarding her business. Unable to prove the theft of her goods, she is frustrated; facing difficulty in

supporting her family, she is on the brink of despair. De's mother comes to *Tu Phu* because she believes it was her destiny. As a response to the hardship in her life, undergoing initiation in *Tu Phu* allowed her to gain a sense of control and meaning in an otherwise chaotic situation. Given his mother's explanation of parallel worlds, one can see how spirits intervened to help her and her family.

De's mother had been chosen by the spirits, as she later expresses reoccurring instances of possession, and uncontrollable physical and mental afflictions throughout her life. In addition, her initiation into *Tu Phu* coincided with the extreme sickness of her husband, who later initiates into the religion. It would seem that De's family was indeed receiving signs—so much so, that they were coming to an unavoidable climax.

#### Conclusion: False Dichotomies of Substance vs. Style

What is "religious" about the *len dong* ritual? Is the visual aesthetic emphasized at the expense of the meaning behind the ritual? I hope to have shared, by way of two candid stories of personal experience, the real "meat" of the religion—its function, its purpose, how it transforms the lives of individuals. However, one cannot deny the importance of style—of performance, art, and presentation. What makes popular religion in Vietnam, and elsewhere for that matter, so unique is its fluidity. It has the ability to morph to the needs, concerns, and desires of the people as they arise.

Popular religion escapes antiquity, yet straddles the intersecting lines of the past, present, and future. *Len dong* expresses this quality. *Len dong* bridges generations of families, of living and dead, past and present, creates a path that leads to the future, yet always acknowledges its roots. Mediums and participants in *Tu Phu* take pride in their religion—nothing but the best must be given to the spirits, and ultimately, to each other. A beautiful ceremony is certainly important, as is the deeper more elusive meaning behind it. Ritual performance itself can be the substance. There does not have to be division between the two spheres.

When one experiences the *len dong* ceremony, when one observes, eats, tastes, smells, hears, that individual becomes part of the fabric of the religion and of the mystery that takes place. One cannot step outside of the situation, for the situation is all around. It transcends ethnicity, geography, a shared political history, and draws forth what is human: love, fear, desire, nostalgia, pain. *Len dong* emerges as a response to tragedy, to loss, to war—championing the

persistence of the human spirit. It is manifested in the brilliant phoenix embroidered on the back of a medium's robe, the gentle and precise footwork of a medium's dance, the camaraderie shared over ritual meals of roast pork, sticky rice, and fresh vegetables. As much as *len dong* is a serious event, it is also an entertaining and light-hearted event. It brings happiness and joy; it brings the chance to communicate well wishes, to ask questions, to find solace. *Len dong* is, itself, a gift.

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# Social Media Capital: Social Media as a Vanguard for Social Capital

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*Candrianna Clem, a Sociology major from Tomball, TX, hopes to pursue a PhD after she graduates in the spring of 2012. She hopes to further explore the impact of the Internet on communities, and social capital.*

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## Abstract

This is a literature review for a larger study in progress. This study analyzes how the frequency, mode, and nature of Internet usage, social media in particular, influences levels of trust and civic engagement within two low-income Houston neighborhoods, Pecan Park and Denver Harbor. Pecan Park is the first neighborhood in the nation to have a “Super WiFi” hotspot, a result of the FCC approval to convert unused TV channels for high-speed, wider-ranged wireless Internet access. Denver Harbor was chosen as a control group because of its similar socioeconomic characteristics. The data for this project will be collected using a survey and focus groups, and will contribute to the development of a senior honors thesis. This project is a part of an interdisciplinary effort made by Rice faculty members Dr. Robert Stein and Dr. Stephanie Post of Political Science from the Center for Civic Engagement, and Dr. Edward Knightly and Dr. Lin Zhong of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

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Social capital has been defined as the collective value of all social networks and social support, and the trust that arises from these to bring citizens together to resolve collective problems (Putnam, 2000). A decrease in the levels of social capital has been observed in America over the past couple of decades. Putnam (2000) considers the rise of media, such as television, to be the reason for this decrease, due to its presumed cause of decline in social engagement and interactions. The Internet removes the ability to share and form physical relationships, making Internet users less likely to be engaged in traditional, physical spaces that

promote intimacy (Rusciano, 2001). However, researchers have argued against these claims, highlighting the role of Internet use in increasing the interactions and interconnectedness of individuals within a community (Resnick, 2002). These scholars assert that the Internet may actually remove barriers, such as distance and time, allowing for easier communication both within and across groups and communities. This ease of communication can directly influence the relationships needed to build and maintain social capital. Past research preceded the rise of social media, which helps reverse the erosion of social capital by reconstituting social ties, deepening community members’ connection to one another, and offering meaningful outlets for expression and conversation. Putnam’s (2000) study of social capital only considered face-to-face interactions, and failed to address social media’s ability to supplement the offline relationships made online.

Many grassroots organizations across the nation are working to provide a viable wireless Internet alternative to members of low-income communities. One organization, Technology for All (TFA), a member of the Texas Connects coalition,<sup>1</sup> has partnered with faculty members at Rice University, developers of one of the largest wireless mesh research networks of its kind, to provide low-cost wireless Internet access to over 4,000 users in one of Houston’s lowest-income neighborhoods, Pecan Park. Last fall, September 23, 2010, the Federal Communications Commission approved the conversion of public “white space” or unused TV channels, for a new long-range, wall-piercing version of WiFi.<sup>2</sup> Rice University faculty and students upgraded the slower, 802.11n wireless network<sup>3</sup> in Pecan Park to the new “white space” technology, making Pecan Park the nation’s first “Super WiFi” hotspot.<sup>4</sup> Although there is a growing body of empirical research that explores the relationship between Internet use and social capital, there is almost no current research that studies the Internet’s influence on social capital in communities with access to a

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Connects Coalition (TCC2) was formed by leaders from Austin Free-Net (AFN), the Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network (MAIN), and Technology for All (TFA) to provide broadband opportunities to underserved and vulnerable Texans who face socioeconomic pressures or disabilities that make it difficult for them to access the technology tools that many Texas residents take for granted.

<sup>2</sup> After the conversion of analog television channels to digital, the Federal Communications Commission unanimously agreed to open up unused broadcast TV spectrum for unlicensed use.

<sup>3</sup> 802.11n is the industry standard for high-speed WiFi networking. 802.11n works by utilizing multiple wireless antennas to transmit and receive data, and increases both the range and throughput of a wireless network. 802.11n networks operate on a higher frequency, and do not have the same ability to pierce through walls as “white space” networks.

<sup>4</sup> This lower frequency “white space” sits between TV channels, and is often described as “Super WiFi” or “WiFi on steroids” because its wavelengths stretch far, penetrating buildings better than regular WiFi.

public “white space” wireless network. The rise of “white space” networking signifies a dynamic shift in the function of the Internet as an institution governing information and communication technology. Ultimately, this study seeks to understand how individuals respond to such an institutional change. Using a survey, to be administered in Pecan Park, and future TFA partner Denver Harbor, this study undertakes the following research question: What are the consequences of Internet connectivity on social capital?

### Literature Review

#### *Social Capital, the Internet, and Social Media*

The first contemporary analysis of social capital was made by Bourdieu (1985), who examined social capital at the individual level, which is determined by a person’s social network, resources, and how these resources are used; social capital was viewed as a collective asset of these individual networks and resources. Like Bourdieu, Coleman (1988) also defined social capital in terms of social structure and the facilitation of actions in the structure, performed either by individuals or collectives. Putnam (2000) broadened the concept to a community level, arguing that the community relationships that create social capital are associated with social networks that lead to high levels of trust, social support, and civic engagement. Social capital can be mobilized more willingly and effectively when there is a stronger sense of community and belonging. Social capital and community are closely related and mutually reinforcing because social capital can be created and maintained within communities (Wellman, et al., 2002).

Today’s community has moved from the public to the private arena, with the Internet creating a new form of public space that allows people to participate while still being in a private place physically (i.e., in their own home). One feature of the Internet is that it leads to the creation of two distinct forms of community: local community, consisting of offline relationships, and community of interest, consisting of online relationships. Local communities operate within physical boundaries based upon common location, and perceives its members as a social network possessing common values and feelings of belonging to one another. Communities of interest are not bound by physical space, and operate within social boundaries based upon common interest (Wellman, 1999). Internet users can find companionship in online “communities of interest” regardless of physical propinquity, contributing to a more vibrant society (Fortier, 1997).

According to Resnick (2002), “Sociotechnical Capital,” that is, the social relationships that are maintained by information and communication technology, is a valuable tool in building social capital. Technology directly influencing the relationships needed to build and maintain social capital by removing barriers, such as distance and time, allowing for easier communication both within and across groups and communities (Resnik, 2002). Although, there is no substitute for the intimacy that forms when individuals are physically drawn together (Putnam, 2000), even behind the isolation of one’s computer, the sophistication of the Internet has been successful in bringing people closer to public issues, encouraging civic involvement and collective action. New social media tools such as blogs, podcasts, wikis, and social networks are becoming the new arenas for civic engagement as they build communities of similar interests and gather people around common causes. These online exchanges can inspire collective action as they bring people together to discuss issues of public concern on the web (Turner-Lee, 2010). Social media has played a critical role in building and sustaining many political revolutions across the globe. Young activists in countries such as Egypt, Syria, and Libya not only organize protests via Twitter and Facebook, but use YouTube and Flickr to post videos and photos, often documenting government abuses, when traditional media has been shut out.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Trust as the Key to Social Capital*

Trust, social support, and social networks are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Trust and social support strengthen the creation and efficiency of different kinds of social networks and in these networks produce trust and supportive behavior (Putnam, 1993). Fukuyama (1995) defines trust as, “the expectations that arise within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community.” According to Ostrom (1998), face-to-face interactions reinforce trust and cooperation among individuals. Face-to-face interactions were found to be more conducive to trust building since it is much easier to interpret signals sent by the other person (Bacharach and Gambetta, 2001). Trust towards a given group goes up or down with the number of positive or negative (respectively) face-to-face interactions with members of that group (Labonne, 2010). Face-to-face interactions consistently enhance cooperation in social dilemmas (i.e., collective good problems), thereby promoting collective action. Through collective action, communities can provide the supportive structures and beneficial exchanges to acquire the human

<sup>5</sup> During political revolutions in countries such as Egypt, the government blocked Facebook and Twitter and eventually shut down Internet access completely.

capital necessary for productive, healthy citizenry (Ostrom, 1998).

Trust is defined both in terms of thick and thin trust. Thick trust consists of strong ties and is generated by frequent contact between people, often of the same class or ethnic background (Coleman, 1988). However, modern society and online communities are based on thin trust, or a broader, but weaker and more abstract form of trust than thick trust (Luhmann, 1988). The Internet does not make people more or less trusting, but shapes how people interact with one another. The Internet, with its anonymity, contributes to a different sense of social trust (Uslander, 2000). According to Fukuyama (1995), the anonymity and lack of rules on the Internet can have a negative impact on trust since freedom provided online is easily abused. The anonymity of online life may encourage superficial relationships, discouraging the creation of trust (Uslander, 2000). Ostrom and Walker (2003) claim that communication in online virtual networks, that lack the face-to-face interactions needed to build robust trust, will be much less efficient than offline communication where face-to-face interactions occur.

However, social media helps to make social capital more tangible, strengthening our ties and keeping these connections going when individuals are not face to face. Relationships that are created and supported through thoughtful online interaction allow people to understand each other better and have more trust in one another. This trust can be built through frequent, modest interactions, such as Twitter or Facebook status updates, or less frequent but more intensive interactions, like blog exchanges or video conversations. The trust developed in relationships built online does not hold the same value as the trust in face-to-face relationships, which is usually earned through years of shared experiences and values. Although it is difficult to build the same level of trust in online virtual networks, social media employs a dialogue that keeps online users constantly engaged with one another. Through social support and shared values, others assume that they “know” the individual, or their online identity, better through the connections made from what is posted online. Ultimately, the relationships built online help to supplement offline relationships by not only satisfying the needs that they are unable to fulfill with face-to-face interactions, but eliminating the spatial barriers between individuals as well (Shah, et al., 2001).

Trust is regarded as a resource or emergent feature of social networks and social support, while social support and social networks are considered to be the foundations of

social capital. Therefore, social capital is accumulated through trust, a psychological feature of social capital, emerging from social networks and social support; and is used to help encourage civic engagement, a behavioral result of social capital. This, in turn, helps to resolve collective action problems, through the spontaneous mobilization of an unstructured group of people on the basis of a belief which redefines social action (Smelser, 1998). This study is theoretically grounded in the idea that an increase in trust, the psychological result of social capital, can produce a behavioral result of social capital, increased civic involvement through group membership, and political participation, both offline and online. It takes its point of departure from the following research question: How does the mode, usage, and frequency of Internet connectivity, particularly the use of social media, influence community-wide levels of social capital, specifically, trust and civic engagement, both offline and online? Taking into account development in recent research, I propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Intensity of social media usage has a positive effect on trust online.

H2: Intensity of social media usage has a positive effect on trust offline.

H3: Intensity of social media usage has a positive effect on civic engagement online.

H4: Intensity of social media usage has a positive effect on civic engagement offline.

#### **Future Work**

This study is currently at the stage of creating a survey instrument to be administered by the University of Houston Hobby Center for Public Policy to 350-500 residents in both Pecan Park and Denver Harbor. My role in future research is to develop quantitative measures of social media social capital to perform multivariate analysis using SPSS and STATA software. Focus groups will also be conducted in the future to add qualitative insight to the results of the quantitative survey data. Furthermore, as more households adapt the recently FCC-approved “white space” technology, this study will be able to explore the usage of the “Super WiFi” network as a public good. Specifically, I would like to explore the role of a closing digital divide on social capital, particularly how the demand for devices has helped to close this gap. Finally, I would like to further understand the role of social media in activism and social movements, and the consequences on social capital.

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# The Body as Space: Mapping the Physical and the Fictional

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*Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Adriana Colón fell in love with performance participating in a street theater troupe in San Juan. From then on, she was unwilling to confine theater to the auditorium, and today her artistic projects explore the dynamic of public and private spaces. Graduating in 2012 with a Special Concentration in "Performance and Perception of the Body," Adriana is considering a PhD in Performance Studies and/or a theater-related MFA.*

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## Abstract

This essay outlines a taxonomy of how space functions in the theater via an analysis of the spaces present within any given performer's body. Gay McAuley's taxonomy of the spaces of theater can be extended to develop a parallel theory of the body. Like McAuley's stage, the body contains Physical Space and Fictional Space, albeit differently construed. The Physical Space is the body—with its architectural features and its potential embellishments—that is exposed to others and serves to anchor the Self. Meanwhile, the Fictional Space where the Self exists is intrinsic to the relationships between one body and the next.

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The origin and the endpoint of all possible actions, space is where everything takes place. I propose in this essay to outline a taxonomy of how space functions in the theater via an analysis of the spaces present within any given performer's body. We can broaden our vision of the body to view it as a micro-space wrapped within layers of stage, city, state, continent, planet, even universe. However, this concept of layered space is not limited to the stage of the theater or even the world outside the body: I suggest that we turn the lens inward and consider the taxonomy of the body itself as a layered space in order to better understand the constructed nature of human identity.

In *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theater*, Gay McAuley carefully sets up a "taxonomy of spatial function" with which to think of theater. In doing so, McAuley elaborates on the relationship between the Physical and the Fictional in theater using three terms: Stage Space, Presentational Space, and Fictional Space (25, 29–30). This same language can be applied to the body as a kind of stage. McAuley's discussion of the relationship between Location and Fiction will be particularly useful in our discussion. After all, the performer's body ceases to be labeled as his at the moment it is presented as someone else, a kind of fiction specific to the stage. I propose that McAuley's taxonomy of the

spaces of theater can be extended to develop a parallel theory of the body. Like McAuley's stage, the body also contains presentational space, stage space, and fictional space, albeit differently construed.

Discussions of the body often identify a mind/body duality, while in theater there is a parallel "physical reality/fictional place duality" (27). These relationships both involve cohabitation of two disparate forms of being. "The space the spectator is watching during the performance [...] is always both stage and somewhere else" (27–8); likewise, when one person observes another, he is subjected to both manifest (evident) and latent (abstract) aspects of the Other. While the latent aspects of the Other are under constant negotiation, the manifest content is readily accessible. In terms of the body, the manifest content is the visible exterior.

## The Physical Space

McAuley defines the Stage Space as "the basic architectural features of the building [that] provide a physical grounding for the performance" (29), such as the dimensions of the space itself. It is common to regard the physical dimensions of the body as bearing cultural significance, as evidenced by the emphasis on waist-hip ratios or tall-and-slender runway models. I propose that the body of the performer then is analogous to the Stage Space, since it is a foundation that can be built upon, but whose physical qualities demand to be acknowledged.

McAuley's Presentational Space, or "the physical use made of this stage space in any given performance" (29), typically involves the aforementioned construction or embellishment upon the Stage Space. The connection between the Presentational Space of the theater and its applicability to the body is supported by Erving Goffman's concept of "Fronts" from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*—a seminal text that explores human social action through the lens of performance. Goffman defines Fronts as "that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance" (19). A facet of the Front, the "Setting" depends on the scenic dressing: the placement of furniture or props, the choice of lighting, etc. Analogous to this is the "Personal," which depends on factors such as the individual's clothing, but also on size, age, and racial characteristics; this relationship is the same as between McAuley's mutable Presentational Space and its foundational Stage Space.

In order to further explore the relationship between the Stage Space and Presentational Space as projected onto the body of the performer, let us entertain an example: Eugen Sandow, the pioneering bodybuilder who acquired fame in the 1890s for his ideal proportions. As John F. Kasson elaborates in his book *Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man*, what made Sandow different from his strongman counterparts was his awareness of “the importance of social credentials as well as great physical strength” (33). When wearing a suit, one would never guess that what lay beneath the surface was muscle after rippling muscle as Sandow had “the appearance and demeanor of a gentleman, if a rather flamboyant one” (33)—and Sandow exploited this surprise in his act. Sandow had special evening clothes that could be swiftly ripped off to reveal his physique, and he took pride in the astonishment this provoked in his audiences.

This transformation “from man of the crowd to marvel of muscle” (38) can be understood as a subversion of the relationship between the Presentational Space and the Stage Space. The concealment of the body resembles an Off-Stage Space (the part of the Stage Space that does not coincide with the Presentational Space) that allowed Sandow-the-performer to strip himself of one identity and into the next, stepping into the light as an exposed body. The Stage Space, though integral to the composition of the Self, is typically unexposed; then to display the architectural foundation of the body is to equate the Stage Space to Presentational Space. Sandow’s act allowed his body to speak for itself. The equivalent of Sandow’s exposed body in theater terms would resemble a decadent opera sung on an open stage with rigging and lighting exposed to the audience in the Brechtian spirit of “baring the device.”

### The Fictional Space

The interior of the body is naturally an Off-Stage Space. Our guiding question, then, is this: is the ability to “bare the device” exclusive to the Physical Space, or is it applicable to the bodily Fictional Space as well? Let us remember that it was not always possible to look inside the body without tearing into its tissues. Thus, in Eastern medical tradition, the body was mapped through the idea of flow (see *Figure 1*), while in Western medical tradition, the body was conceptualized from the skeletal structure (see *Figure 2*). This potential of the body to be perceived and then interpreted in such distinct ways exemplifies the constructive nature of human discernment. However, opening the body does not quench this impulse to elaborate, and while the

biological systems that function together to allow us to exist depend on one universal design, the systems that define the Self do not rely on our isolated physical being—and are thus open to elaboration.

The defining factor of McAuley’s Fictional Space is arguably that “[the] idea contained in fictional place is broader than the locus dramatis of the action” (30). Thus, the acting body as a fictional space is more than just a body, even though said intangible “more”—the Self—cannot be stringently mapped within the tangible body. Drawing from Goffman’s structuring of *The Presentation of the Self*, in which he posits that “[in] Ichheiser’s terms, the individual will have to act so that he intentionally or unintentionally *expresses* himself, and the others will in turn have to be *impressed* in some way by him,” (2) we can construe that the Presentational Space is expressive, while the Fictional Space is the impression that results.

The “expression” posited by Goffman supports the idea that there are aspects of the body that impress upon the observer the latent content of the Other. This idea is echoed by McAuley’s statement that “[it] is not simply that the physical space of the stage presents or represents a fictional state, but [ . . . ] that the spatial organization of the stage and the bodily presence/behavior of the actors constitute a commentary on the nature of the place” (28). Each observer cultivates this idea of “nature” or latent content individually, including the Other, by self-reflection. The constructed perception of a Self that is contained by the body suggests an uncertainty that strays from the objective and calls on the subjective. However, since the observer—not the presented body itself—elaborates this uncertainty, one must attribute this quality to another realm: the Fictional Space.

A constructed Self analogous to the Fictional Space continues to hold under the premise that “[in] some plays the presentational space gives us a single fictional place; in others multiple places are presented, either alternating or succeeding one another or simultaneously present in different parts of the stage space” (McAuley, 30). After all, a person can be seen as a parent, a political figure, a shopper at a grocery store, or a therapy patient. While it is clear how a person can fulfill one role, how do we come to accept an array of roles as a single person? For McAuley, the composition of the theater’s Fictional Space relies “not [on] the number of places nor even the method by which they are suggested but their anchorage in relation to the physical space” (30). In our taxonomy, this aforementioned physical

anchoring space is the body itself. While in theater the different fictional places “do not require separate categories, as they are not different in kind or function but are simply aesthetic possibilities” (30), the variety of roles a person performs is a demonstration of the potential to adapt to new circumstances. Thus, the multiplicity of identity is then not a hindrance to identity as it in fact enriches a person’s dimensionality.

As mentioned, the intangible constructions of the Self must be thought to reside (or be anchored) in the body. The universal impetus to locate the Self within the body is exemplified by a 1907 contested study by Duncan MacDougall, MD of Haverhill, MA, who claimed to have determined the mass of the soul to be 21 grams. The ideation of the Soul is an apt example for the concept of Fictional Space as one definition of the soul is “a person’s moral or emotional nature or sense of identity.”<sup>1</sup> In MacDougall’s study, patients with terminal illnesses were placed on a balance scale and had their weight tracked as they took their final breath—with the time of death marking a sudden drop in the scale that suggested the release of the Soul. The study was later disregarded, as its results were not reproducible. Nonetheless, the study’s inflated presence as urban legend does provide some insight regarding the extreme power of the impulse to prove the existence of an abstract entity within the physical body.

There was friction between MacDougall’s team and the officials in charge of caring for the patients (241, 264) as many were concerned for patient comfort and dignity in their final hours. This tension between acting on this spiritual curiosity through science and the empathy that is universally understood to be necessary for the moribund only underlines that there is a tremendous human drive to quantify and physicalize the soul. MacDougall saw great merit in proving the material existence of a Soul, a Self that inhabits the body while being independent of it so that it may continue on after death:

The theories of all the philosophers and all the philosophies offer no final solution of the problem of continued personality after bodily death. This fact alone of a space-occupying body of measurable weight disappearing at death, if verified, furnishes the substantial basis for persisting personality or a conscious ego surviving the act of bodily death, and in the element of certainty is worth more than the postulates of all the creeds and all the metaphysical arguments combined (244).

The Physical Space then offers a certainty or an appealing concreteness that the Fictional, characterized by its mutability, does not as it applies to what is not evident and cannot immediately be proven. Fiction is then a guiding force that is impressed upon us by expressive bodies that inhabit our Physical Space.

## Conclusion

There is then an inverse pattern between the organization of the Physical and Fictional in theater and the organization of these spaces within the body. While in theater the Fictional Space envelops the Stage Space which holds the Presentational Space, in the body the Presentational Space is the outer layer encompassing the Stage Space which then encapsulates the Fictional Space. The Physical Space is the body—with its architectural features and its potential embellishments—that is exposed to others and serves to anchor the Self. Meanwhile, the Fictional Space where the Self exists is intrinsic to the relationships between one body and the next. The Fictional Space is then dependent on the quality of the exposure taken on by the Physical Space. This is then a testament to the need for honesty and integrity on all fronts: how one lapse infringes on the authenticity of the whole. Just as the body is the outer boundary of our space, it is also an inner layer within the larger space that is our environment. Thus, our actions are not exclusive to our own existence, but instead permeate the overall quality of all that which surrounds us.

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<sup>1</sup> *New Oxford American Dictionary*. 2nd edition. Oxford University Press, 2005.

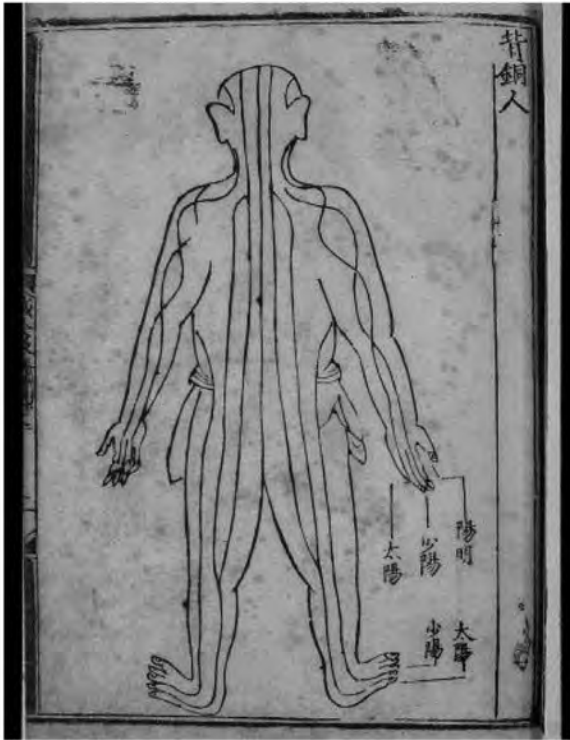


Figure 1. From an edition woodcut published in 1537 (16th year of the Jiaping reign period of the Ming dynasty).

The image shows the standing acupuncture figurine (the “Bronze Man”), from the back view, with five channels extending over the entire body.

Credit: Wellcome Library, London

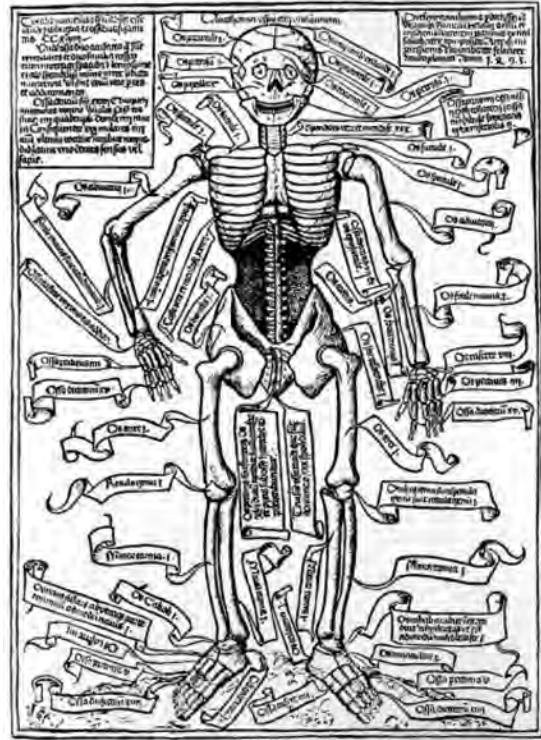


Figure 2. Skeleton of Richard Helain, Nuremberg 1493

By: Choulant, Johann Ludwig

From: *History and Bibliography of Anatomic Illustration*

By: Choulant, Johann Ludwig

Published: University Press. Chicago: 1920. 71.

Credit: Wellcome Library, London



# “Pass It over in Silence”: Race, Sexuality, and the Unspoken in an 18th-Century Slave Crime Narrative

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## Abstract

This paper, written for Societies of the World 39: Slavery and Slave Trade in Africa and the Americas, analyzes a slave crime narrative from 18th-century Massachusetts to historicize the historical and literary trope of the black racist. By focusing on the ways in which sexuality is silenced in the narrative, the paper highlights the instability of racial ideology in early America.

North American slave narratives have gained scholarly attention from historians and literary critics alike because of the ways in which they both help to recover social histories of the enslaved and recuperate a sense of African American literary subjectivity. Narratives like those of Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and others have inspired a vast array of scholarly undertakings that have enriched our understandings of the history of slavery and sharpened African American literary criticism. John Sekora, a scholar who has published extensively on the topic of slave narratives, argues that historians have most often been called upon to weigh in on questions of authenticity in slave narratives.<sup>1</sup> Placing slave narratives in their broader historical context, then, plays a crucial role in evaluating the reliability of tropes that achieve intellectual currency in both literary and historical circles.

One such trope is that of “the black rapist,” the hypersexual, aggressive, and threatening black male slave. The notion of a “black rapist,” however, proves problematic insofar as it inhibits the development of an informed historical perspective on the identity of enslaved African American men. Revisiting the narrative of an African American man named Arthur who was enslaved in 18th-century Massachusetts with an eye towards the historical context of the era serves as a useful intervention into the historiographical debate around “the black rapist.” A closer examination of the silences in Arthur’s narrative—that is, the places where he resists offering explicit details—reveals that the “black rapist” was not yet the dominant paradigm through which African American male sexuality was understood. Rather, Arthur’s narrative helps us to map a larger move towards a broad public consciousness of a sexualized racial ideology in 18th-century America.

“The Life, and Dying Speech of Arthur, a Negro Man; Who Was Executed at Worcester, October 20, 1768. For a Rape Committed on the Body of One Deborah Metcalfe,” presents an exemplary 18th-century source with which to clarify historical debates about “the black rapist” because he was, in fact, accused of raping a white woman. Arthur’s dying words detail the events, punctuated by habitual criminal activity, leading up to his eventual execution in Worcester, MA, on October 20, 1768. Born January 15, 1747, Arthur lived for 14 years in the Taunton, MA, household of Richard Godfrey, who owned his mother. Arthur recalls his master’s kind treatment, including the fact that he was taught to read and write. However, animosity between Arthur and Godfrey’s wife led him to escape to Sandwich, MA, where he “lived two Months in a very dissolute Manner, frequently being guilty of Drunkenness and Fornication, for which crimes [he became] famous.” Arthur’s departure from Sandwich was occasioned by his first incident of theft. He stole a shirt for which he eventually had to pay 20 shillings. Arthur’s thievery continued aboard two ships before he found himself back at Godfrey’s house in the year 1764. Upon his return, he lived in Taunton peacefully for six weeks until he went to town with friends of his, got drunk, and, as he reports, “on returning home went into an House where were several Women only, to whom I offered Indecencies, but was prevented from executing my black Designs.”<sup>2</sup>

After this event, Arthur was punished and subsequently sold. At this point in the narrative, he recounts a continual cycle of crime and punishment, exchange from one owner to the next, and several sexual encounters with local Native American women. The transgression for which Arthur was prosecuted and sentenced to death occurred in 1767. Hearing from a friend that the Native American woman he had so frequently mentioned “was desirous of seeing [him],” Arthur drunkenly took off with a horse stolen from his master. He found that she was away from home, so he decided instead to pay a visit to a local widow named Deborah Metcalfe, a white woman, whom he “in a most inhumane manner, ravished.” Although Metcalfe was initially reluctant to press charges against Arthur, a man named Nathaniel Jennison took matters into his own hands and issued a warrant for Arthur’s arrest. After two elaborate escape attempts, Arthur was recaptured and tried on September 17, 1768, culminating in his confession and execution.<sup>3</sup>

Existing historical scholarship makes it necessary to question any view of Arthur’s narrative that sees it as solely

<sup>1</sup> John Sekora, “Black Message/White Envelope: Genre, Authenticity, and Authority in the Antebellum Slave Narrative,” *Callaloo* 32 (Summer 1987), 483–484.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur, “The Life, and Dying Speech of Arthur, a Negro Man; Who Was Executed at Worcester, October 20, 1768. For a Rape Committed on the Body of One Deborah Metcalfe,” *Documenting the American South*. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/arthur/arthur.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

emblematic of a racist archetype. The historiography of “the black rapist” as a legible identity in 18th-century America remains subject to debate. Several scholars have weighed in on the debate about when the trope can be said to have emerged.<sup>4</sup> In his seminal monograph, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812*, Winthrop Jordan argues that an immutable belief in black men’s innate hypersexual tendencies persisted from the 17th century forward.<sup>5</sup> Others, like Daniel Cohen, assert that such a stereotype did not appear until the 19th century.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Thomas Foster has argued that the notion of a “black rapist” was central to conceptions of masculinity in 18th-century Massachusetts. In his book *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man*, Foster perhaps provides the most compelling account of how the notion of “the black rapist” may have actually constituted a stereotype used to reinforce white masculine ideals.<sup>7</sup>

Before taking up the question of what light Arthur’s statement sheds on this historiographical debate, it is important to situate his account in relation to certain narrative conventions. Arthur’s speech stands out because it is at once a slave narrative and a criminal narrative, a reality that poses unique challenges for its analysis. Both genres employ similar, yet subtly divergent tactics to aid the construction of the individual historical subject. John Sekora writes that, unlike general autobiography, “the stated purpose of the slave narrative is far different from the creation of a self.”<sup>8</sup> He suggests that instead, “the overarching shape of that story is mandated by persons other than the subject. Not black recollection, but white interrogation brings order to the narration.”<sup>9</sup> Sekora’s use of the word “interrogation” to describe slave narratives illuminates a great deal about Arthur’s speech. Indeed, unlike the subjects of more famous slave narratives like Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass, Arthur was a much more explicit object of interrogation in both the religious and juridical senses. Arthur’s entanglement in the criminal justice system undeniably influenced his perception of himself as “hardened in [his] Wickedness.”<sup>10</sup> Both the Court and the Rev. Mr. McCarty, to whom he repents, serve as Arthur’s interrogators. White interrogation, therefore, doubly determines the historical

significance of his statement as an enslaved man convicted of an interracial sex offense.

The religious aspect of this compound interrogation proves indispensable to understanding the applicability of “the black rapist” trope to Arthur’s story. The primacy of religious themes in Arthur’s narrative complicates the notion that it only served to build racist propaganda around “the black rapist.” Consistent with Sekora’s assessment that slave narratives in the 18th century presented an image of selfhood informed by evangelical Christianity,<sup>11</sup> historian Richard Slotkin identifies a strong Puritan influence on crime narratives from the same period.<sup>12</sup> He further argues that convicted slaves figured into the paternalistic Puritan social order as an example of deviance because “[they] could be portrayed both as an ungrateful child and as a rebel against law and propel social ordering.”<sup>13</sup> Yet, Slotkin goes on to rehearse the usual conclusion that 18th-century crime narratives produced “the black rapist” as a legible type. He refers to black male sexuality as “a crucial element” in crime narratives, one that is “characterized as evil and threatening through its association with the figure of the black rapist.”<sup>14</sup>

However, the entire thrust of Arthur’s narrative does not appear to be charged with hypersexual and racist overtones. Here, historian Sharon Block’s analysis of rape narratives in the context of 18th-century legal structures proves useful. Block notes that the ultimate goal of the execution narrative was to inspire religious conversion among the audience.<sup>15</sup> Given the British influence on early American attitudes toward sexual immorality, the social threat embodied in rape was not overtly racial, but rooted in a general disdain for unrestrained passion.<sup>16</sup> The religious element of crime narratives, therefore, steered men towards pious self-restraint. The penitent epilogue to Arthur’s narrative appears no different. He declares:

I earnestly desire that this Recital of my Crimes, and the ignominious Death to which my notorious Wickedness has bro’t me, may prove a Warning to all Persons who shall become acquainted therewith. But in a particular Manner, I would solemnly warn those of my Colour, as they regard their own souls, to avoid Desertion from their Masters,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 164–165.

<sup>5</sup> Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 164.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas A. Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 148.

<sup>8</sup> Sekora, “Black Message/White Envelope,” 509.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur, “The Life, and Dying Speech.”

<sup>11</sup> Sekora, “Black Message/White Envelope,” 509.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Slotkin, “Narratives of Negro Crime in New England, 1675–1800,” *American Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (March 1973), 5.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>15</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 34.

Drunkenness and Lewdness; which three Crimes was the Source from which have flowed the many Evils and Miseries of my short Life.<sup>17</sup>

Arthur's final words include a universal appeal to religious conversion and a specific plea to other enslaved African Americans to remain loyal to their owners. Such a petition does not refer to any natural baseness assigned to enslaved blacks that racist archetypes like "the black rapist" would connote, but rather speaks to the potential for moral reform that lies in the institution of slavery. Accordingly, historian Daniel Cohen writes that any prevalent notion of a "black beast" stereotype was "overshadowed in the literature as a whole (and in almost all of the individual works) by a variety of evangelical, liberal, picaresque, and sentimental motifs."<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, the legal standards of the era suggest that racial prejudice likely played a part in Arthur's execution, but not to the exclusion of religious moralizing. Sharon Block's work on the legal history of sexual violence in early America may again be enlisted to tease out the specifics of the society in which Arthur lived and was convicted. The distinction between rape and what would have been considered consensual sex differs significantly from present day understandings.<sup>19</sup> Laws in Massachusetts and the other British colonies outlined two important criteria for rape: force and unwillingness.<sup>20</sup> Both conditions were required for the courts to rule that a case did instantiate rape, and physical coercion need not necessarily imply lack of willingness.<sup>21</sup> In light of this, the ambiguity in Arthur's narrative regarding his encounter with Deborah Metcalfe proves quite telling. Metcalfe was initially unwilling to press charges against Arthur, but suggested instead that his owner send him out of the country. It was only when Nathaniel Jennison intervened that Arthur found himself subject to criminal trial.<sup>22</sup> Block suggests that "the ongoing production of racial ideologies" in early America—rather than outright racism—explains such skepticism toward a woman's ability to identify rape.<sup>23</sup> Arthur's own rendition of the encounter also reveals the ambiguity of the particular circumstances. He writes, "[T]he Devil put it into my Head to pay a Visit

to the Widow Deborah Metcalfe, whom I, in a most inhumane manner, ravished."<sup>24</sup> The word "ravish" in the 18th century could alternately signify rape and engaging in immensely pleasurable sexual intercourse.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Arthur's reference to his inhumanity in this instance might be attributed to the way that he failed to uphold the religious standard of self-restraint discussed above.

Therefore, one must look to what else Arthur's narrative might—or in this case, might not—reveal to untangle the complicated web of law, religion, and race in 18th-century Massachusetts. While Block convincingly argues that the disproportionate number of convictions of African American men for interracial rape preceded the emergence of a coherent racial ideology, she also concludes that rates of conviction alone reflected the use of the rape trial as "a political tool in the creation of white American citizenship," serving a role that would later be filled by widespread lynchings and incisive rhetoric.<sup>26</sup> Arthur's narrative, however, includes a few instances of palpable silence that belie the notion that his conviction might have figured so explicitly in shaping racial ideology. When describing a sexual encounter with a different white woman at a husking, for example, he states, "And our Behaviour was such, as we have both Reason to be ashamed of, I shall for her sake pass it over in Silence."<sup>27</sup> He recognizes the shame associated with consensual interracial sex and the stigma attached to speaking it aloud. In reference to a visit with a Native American woman, he says that he "spent [his] Time in a manner which may be easily guessed," indicating that his reputation for sexual abandon precedes him.<sup>28</sup> Again, when referring to the incident with Deborah Metcalfe, he declares, "The Particulars of [the encounter] are so notorious [...] that it is needless for me here to relate them."<sup>29</sup> This is perhaps the most interesting silence because it gestures towards the fact that the details of the alleged rape had been circulated among members of the community.

The broad awareness evidenced by the silences in the narrative reveal the ambiguities of nascent racial ideology in 18th-century America. T.H. Breen refers to this sense of collective consciousness as the newly emergent concept of

<sup>17</sup> Arthur, "The Life, and Dying Speech."

<sup>18</sup> Daniel A. Cohen, "Social Injustice, Sexual Violence, Spiritual Transcendence: Constructions of Interracial Rape in Early American Crime Literature, 1767–1817," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (July 1999), 484.

<sup>19</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Arthur, "The Life, and Dying Speech."

<sup>23</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur, "The Life, and Dying Speech."

<sup>25</sup> Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man*, 53.

<sup>26</sup> Block, *Rape and Sexual Power*, 208.

<sup>27</sup> Arthur, "The Life, and Dying Speech."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

public opinion, referring to the wide circulation of political discourses in early America and their connections to individual peoples' experiences.<sup>30</sup> Arthur's autobiographical omissions indicate that word of his exploits traveled widely in Massachusetts communities, both black and white.<sup>31</sup> While these interconnections imply that information about interracial sex was widespread, it does not suggest a coherent opinion. Breen looks at accounts of Arthur's criminality in both newspapers and sermons, determining that the public verdict was cast in what he calls "the muffled language of communal uncertainty."<sup>32</sup> Arthur realizes that people were already familiar with and had formed ideas about his sexual activities, rooted in general stigma about interracial sex and black men's sexuality, but the inconclusiveness of the silence suggests the multivocality of racial ideas circulated in the period.

Locating Arthur's autobiographical address within the context of 18th-century religious and legal discourses troubles the assumption that the idea of "the black rapist" existed as an immutable component of a racist early American ideology. The silences in his narrative illustrate that ideas about black men's sexuality and criminality were bubbling below the surface, but did not overshadow the religious message of the statement, and therefore did not equate blackness with total depravity, invalidating the salvific potential of the slave system. Bringing together the voices of scholars who, like Cohen, insist that racialized notions of rape did not emerge until the 19th century, and those who see the proto-racist tones of narratives like Arthur's helps to move the historiographical debate forward. In many ways, what Arthur does not say proves just as significant, if not more, than the supposed facts that he presents in his story. As John Sekora writes, "A new literary history will recognize that the silence of the slave narrative was partial and temporary, of its time and not of ours."<sup>33</sup> Such a history views silences like those in Arthur's narrative as productive silences that reflect and contributed to the production of 18th-century racial ideology through the registers of slavery and freedom.

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<sup>30</sup> T.H. Breen, "Making History: The Force of Public Opinion and the Last Years of Slavery in Revolutionary Massachusetts," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, edited by Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute, 67–95, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 92.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>33</sup> Sekora, "Black Message/White Envelope," 511.

# Biracialism and the Post-Colonial Binary in *Rebel Music*: The Bob Marley Story and Nadine Gordimer's *Country Lovers*

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Post-colonial literature often employs a narrative binary that tends to pit black against white, colonized against colonizer. This binary is often necessary in fiction in order to easily demonstrate a contrast between the original culture and values of the colonized and the imposed culture and values of the colonizer. As a result, any element that challenges this binary, like biracial relationships and biracial individuals, is often ignored in post-colonial literature. While there are reasons for overlooking biracial ancestry in a post-colonial era in which there is constant racial definition, biracialism can be a very important tool in post-colonial literature, demonstrating commonality and the possibility of coexistence. I will discuss two examples of biracialism, that is, being racially composed of two races, white and black, in a post-colonial context—as a successful literary symbol and as a suppressed personal narrative in Nadine Gordimer's *Country Lovers* and the work of Bob Marley, respectively.

Suppressing biracialism in the post-colonial narrative can seem justifiable, as post-colonial literature is more interested in correcting the original colonial conflict of cultural and racial imposition, rather than confronting the conflicts and peoples resulting from colonialism, including the hybridity of biracialism. The story of the original conflict, whereby an intruding culture introduced by a colonizing force eventually influences or encompasses the original culture, is priority. People resulting from this colonial imposition do not fit into this binary and thus, are not useful in fictionally recreating it. Recreations using this binary can be seen in significant works of post-colonial literature, like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, in which a marked point of transformation within the novel occurs when the white missionaries are introduced into the story.

More significantly, a biracial individual who readily identifies his or herself as "biracial" is not easily categorized within the post-colonial binary structure of black versus white. While it is highly likely that a black individual would claim a biracial individual as black, it is unlikely that a biracial individual would be identified as white by whites because the perception of race is largely a visual phenomenon, as I will discuss in reference to Bob Marley. Moreover,

embodied biracialism may not be the most effective symbol in fiction because of its ambiguity; Westerners often do not know what to make of biracialism. "Miscegenation, the sexual union of individuals assigned to different racial categories, blurs [...] distinctions, thereby threatening race-based systems of social order and privilege," because "as both anthropologist Bruce Trigger and philosopher Anthony Appiah have suggested, the age-old historical fact of miscegenation undermines the validity of race as either a scientific or a philosophical construct," making it a threat to the Western world (Wilson, 88).

Ofentimes, racial identity is dependent on Western perception for its existence. Thus, such identity is highly subjective not only in regards to individual perspectives, but also to the perception of the West, which heavily influences racial conceptions of self, as the case of Bob Marley demonstrates. Marley, born to a black mother and a white father, could not have chosen to identify as white, even though he never denied his paternal ancestry. In fact, Marley explicitly acknowledged his biracialism in *Rebel Music*, a documentary about his life, noting that he was angry at neither side for his being biracial. But the visual facet of racial identification both enabled Marley to identify as black and allowed the Western world to identify him as such and, as a result, to treat him like a second-class citizen. The common experience of second-class treatment shared by those who are visibly black—or "African" as Marley termed them—is a dominant theme emphasized throughout Marley's work; Africa was constantly referred to in his lyrics. In *Rebel Music*, Rita Marley observes:

Africa to Bob means everything. In terms of proving to himself how much of Africa is him, [...] and showing that, "Hey, as much as you all think I'm half white or half black. I'm an African. My heritage is in Africa" (Marley, *Rebel Music*).

Bob Marley's ideas were in agreement with Pan-African philosophy. Historically, Pan-Africanism has been a movement "dedicated to establishing independence for African nations and cultivating unity among black people throughout the world," essentially connecting all people whose ancestry contains one drop of African blood (Pan-African movement). In line with his Rastafari beliefs, Marley maintained a Pan-African political consciousness. This is apparent in his song, "War," which quotes Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia's 1963 speech to the U.N. about equal human rights. This is also evident in Marley's song, "Africa Unite":

So-o Africa unite:

'Cause the **children wanna come home / Africa unite** / 'Cause we're moving right out of Babylon, yea / And we're grooving to our Father's land, yea-  
ea. / How good and how pleasant it would be before God and man To see the **unification of all Rastaman**, yeah. / As it's been said a'ready, let it be done! / I tell you who we are under the sun: **We are the children of the Rastaman; / We are the children of the Iyaman**. [...] / Africa, you're my (Africa unite) forefather cornerstone! Unite for **the Africans** (Africa uniting) **abroad!** (Marley, "Africa Unite," emphasis added.)

However, despite Marley's self-identification and his Pan-African views, there was still noticeable public interest in the fact that his father was white. Indeed, at one point in *Rebel Music*, civil rights activist Dera Tompkins suggests that the fatal melanoma that caused Marley's death came from the genes of Marley's father, in effect blaming Marley's European ancestry for his death. Marley was conscious of interest in his ancestry. Among the stories that Rita Marley tells about Marley in *Rebel Music*, she recalls that Marley used to ask her to put shoe polish in his hair to make it "look more African." If an individual is to stand as an icon and emissary to an idea or people, it is essential that he or she embody that idea. Marley identifying as African played a huge role in his success as both a musician and an agent of social change in a post-colonial era. Had Marley presented himself as biracial and had he identified as such while maintaining his message of African unity, his message and image would have been significantly undermined.

History shows that leaders of change and progress who supplant the dominant powers for black/African people in the post-colonial era have been strongly affiliated with the African people and their own African identity. Though colonialism has created many African people with mixed ancestry, those who represent the people do not claim their mixed ancestry. Biracialism does not seem to have a legitimate place in this post-colonial political battle. In the context of literature, however, biracialism proves to be a powerful tool of symbolism and progress.

In Nadine Gordimer's *Country Lovers*, a kind of interracial mixing of characters occurs that takes post-colonial literature (and the post-colonial narrative) in a different direction. The story takes place in post-Apartheid South Africa on a wealthy family's farm. The two main characters, Paulus and Thebedi, are childhood playmates. Paulus is the son of the white man who owns the farm; Thebedi comes

from a black family who works for Paulus's father. The story tells of how the two grow up together favoring each other but began to drift apart when Paulus goes abroad for school, as is custom. However, in late adolescence, the two begin an undisclosed romantic relationship, which they are careful to hide because of racially conscious standards particular to each individual. Eventually, Thebedi becomes pregnant with Paulus's child but marries another man. Ultimately, Gordimer suggests that upon discovering the child, Paulus murders her with Thebedi's knowledge and passive acceptance. Consequently, the relationship ends, and the two never speak again.

Gordimer's stories are thought-provoking because she challenges the simple binary of good versus evil—there are no villains, no heroes. In *Country Lovers*, both parents are complicit in their child's death. More importantly, Gordimer's stories do not perpetuate the post-colonial binary of black versus white discussed previously. Eliminating the post-colonial binary from her work serves to make her Western audience comfortable and facilitates its ability to relate to the many characters and situations Gordimer creates. Arguably, as a result, she is able to reach a broader audience, beyond those readers who are already sympathetic to the post-colonial cause. Consequently, she is also able to awaken a common sense of humanity in her readers; *Country Lovers* is the epitome of that objective. Nevertheless, while Gordimer does not maintain the binary used throughout post-colonial literature, except when historically essential (e.g., Apartheid), she does utilize the same racial polarity that post-colonial literature often employs, which is exemplified in the narrative voice.

*Country Lovers* is narrated by an omniscient narrator who gives the impression that he/she is removed from the society that is being described. In the beginning, the narrator's tone is almost anthropological, as if reporting rather than storytelling, denoting habit and custom:

The farm children play together when they are small; but once the white children go away to school they soon don't play together any more, even in the holidays. There comes a time when the white children have surpassed these with the vocabulary of boarding school. This usefully coincides with the age of twelve or thirteen; so that by the time early adolescence is reached, the black children are making, along with the bodily changes common to all, an easy transition to adult forms of address, beginning to call their old playmates missus and baasie—little master (Gordimer, 61).

The tone changes, however, in the next paragraph. We're introduced to the challenge of the story and the challengers of the customary order of things—"The trouble was Paulus Eysendyck *did not seem to realize* that Thebedi was now *simply one of the crowd of farm children...*" (Ibid., emphasis added). The language emphasized in this quote is condescending. According to the narrator, Thebedi is supposed to blend into her surroundings, and this blending demonstrates the "natural order of things." This condescension is salient throughout the story. The narrator never once uses Thebedi's name in describing her and Paulus's sexual encounters. Furthermore, when the birth of the child is described, it is done unceremoniously. The narrator tells us, simply, that Thebedi "[W]as going to have a baby [and that] two months after her marriage she gave birth to a daughter" (Gordimer, 65).

Some time is taken to describe the child who is said to have hair like "fine floss, like that which carries the seeds of certain weeds in the veld," "spidery pink hands," and "eyes [that] saw nothing" (Gordimer, 66-7). The child is introduced to the reader with a derogatory description, represented through imagery that connects the child to the "adventurous possibilities of the veld" from Paulus and Thebedi's childhood (Gordimer, 61). These are not the usual images employed to describe a newborn baby. The child is continually objectified in the story, referred to as "it" by the narrator, and significantly, never called "Paulus's child," but always "Thebedi's child." In essence, she is something to be looked over, disregarded by the narrator and her audience. To the narrator, the child is merely a tool meant to assist in the storytelling; she is a means to an end.

By the end of *Country Lovers*, the narrator makes Thebedi anonymous, calling her "the black girl" who "speak[s] in her own language," effectively putting Thebedi back into her place (Gordimer, 70, emphasis added). She is nameless and one of many, made other and separate from the narrator and Paulus. Through the last line of the story—"we don't see each other any more" (Ibid.)—the narrator asserts that all is made right; both characters acquiesce to their appropriate roles within society, bringing the story full circle.

As for the child, she no longer exists. While accepted within the black community that Thebedi lives in and never questioned by Thebedi's husband, she is not even allowed to live within the black community by her white father. There was no necessity in the child's death. The child is killed only because Paulus cannot cope with the human embodiment of

his connection to Thebedi, who is black. This self-disdain is made clear through Paulus's first reaction upon seeing the child. He struggles "for a moment with a grimace of tears, anger and self-pity and says, 'I feel like killing myself'" (Gordimer, 67).

The murder of the child is never depicted as tragic in the narrator's recounting. It is the judge who draws attention to the subtextual story of Thebedi's child while presiding over the case concerning the child's murder. The judge takes a moment to "commend the honourable behaviour of the husband [...] who had not rejected his wife and had 'even provided clothes for the *unfortunate infant* out of his slender means'" (Gordimer, 69, emphasis added). The narrator, however, focuses solely on Thebedi and Paulus's lack of interaction during the trial. The narrative voice is essential in making the story line of the biracial child subtextual, concerned only with outlining the disruption, and subsequent correction, of the social order.

The narrator serves as the voice of the West silencing the subtext, and the story of Thebedi and Paulus serves as a parable. From the narrator's perspective, their parable illustrates the tragedy that inevitably occurs from racial mixing. For the reader, by contrast, the parable illustrates how the rejection of black and white's common humanity results in a nonsensical logic that causes the baby's death. The child never grows up and thus, is never given a chance to self-identify or prove its capability to exist as a product of difference. Although her black father is willing to accept her as his own, as black, her fate as a biracial child is ultimately decided by her white father. Oddly enough, Thebedi, the mother, is willing to participate in her child's death. Thebedi not only allows Paulus to be alone with the child knowing his intentions, but she also covers for him. Thebedi's actions muddle and complicate the usual simplicity of blame in the binary narrative. Through the "the unfortunate infant," *Country Lovers* communicates that there is little hope for coexistence when either parent rejects the child, and thus the embodiment of their ability to create a common and cohesive future.

In *Country Lovers*, the subtextual story of Thebedi and Paulus's biracial relationship and their biracial child is effective in blurring the binary line between black and white and who is to blame. In the case of Bob Marley, the effect of his being biracial is different—likely because Bob Marley's work and Gordimer's short story have two different objectives. While they both retell the story of the colonized,

*Country Lovers* does not have a clear agenda, while Bob Marley's intention was explicitly Pan-Africanist.

While all post-colonial literature is not Pan-Africanist, defining and depicting an interconnected experience is instrumental to its goal of telling the story of the colonized. In striving towards this goal, anything that does not fit into the racial binary narrative, such as the identity of a leader like Bob Marley, is often left behind. In this context, the existence of the "biracial" becomes a tragedy and "miscegenation" becomes a dirty word. The result is that biracial narratives are often rejected because their complexity leaves us unclear about definition and distinctions in the black versus white binary. Yet thus, even in literature grappling with biracialism, this polarity in the storyline often remains, as is evidenced in several works of post-colonial fiction, like Gordimer's *Country Lovers*. But, by taking this polarity and transforming it into the type of ambiguity that Gordimer creates, post-colonial literature can transform our conceptualization of race itself. Rather than just redefining a race within the binary by marginalizing a new "other," a type of pluralism seems possible and perhaps can be realized by giving voice to the third narrative that has resulted from colonialism—that of the post-colonial biracial child.

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# The Law as a Weapon in Transforming Equality: *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and Select Precedent Cases

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## Abstract

In the United States, law is theoretically based in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Yet, the broad language of the Constitution has led to contradicting interpretations that influence how the law is practically applied. Turning to the legal record and secondary sources treating these cases, I propose that the ideal of equality as defined by the 14th Amendment was subverted by the *Plessy* ruling. Yet, a combination of factors, including a focus on civil rights and civil liberties issues in the Hughes Court and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's legal strategy, reestablished the original meaning of equality with regards to education. *Brown* was one of the first cases to successfully attack segregation and discrimination. Now, with affirmative action and education reform in the forefront of 14th Amendment controversies, legal scholars are looking back at this landmark case to understand the true definition of "equal" education.

The law theoretically acts as a check to political or personal power, a fundamental protocol that binds and protects everyone, and a guardian of society's moral values. Yet, the ideal of equality secured in the 14th Amendment has been among those privileges that when interpreted by certain judges, as it was in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), can prove harmful to society. Written by Justice Brown during the Fuller Court, the majority opinion of *Plessy v. Ferguson* redefined equality as merely providing equal facilities, not equal access or equal opportunities as the 14th Amendment could have promoted. This definition helped to legitimize the idea of "separate but equal" as precedent for almost 60 years. It was not until Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and several other members of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) argued against segregation in higher education in *Pearson v. Murray*, 169 Md. 478 (1935), *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950), and *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629 (1950) that the ugly "separate but equal" doctrine began to be overturned. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) reinstated the idea of the law providing active, equal protection for minorities.

This essay explores the implied meaning of equality as argued in the 14th Amendment, the *Plessy* opinion, the judicial atmosphere of the Supreme Court from 1930 to 1954, the NAACP LDF's strategy for *Brown*, and the *Brown* opinion.<sup>1</sup> Turning to the legal record and secondary sources treating these school segregation cases, I assert that the idea of equality and equal protection, defined by the 14th Amendment, was subverted by the justifications used in the *Plessy* majority opinion. Yet, a combined effect of a focus on securing civil rights starting in the early 1900s and the NAACP LDF's comprehensive legal strategy led to the outcome of *Brown*, which effectively revamped the original meaning of equality. The legal definition of equality that emerged from *Brown* fueled the legal justification and social momentum that drove the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

## The 14th Amendment

*All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*<sup>2</sup>

Ratified on June 9, 1868, the 14th Amendment intended to legally secure citizenship and its rights and privileges for recently emancipated African Americans. The ratification of the 14th Amendment was a radical, progressive step toward ensuring equal rights during the Reconstruction Era. The opening sentence of the amendment advances equality by reducing citizenship to a singular, societal community with the same rights. It does not create differing levels of citizenship based on race. By defining "citizen" in an inclusive manner, this legislation furthered the goal of an integrated society. Yet, the amendment neither directly addressed nor advocated for integration or for equal access; the absence of such targeted language, indeed the breadth produced by this diction, technically permits a judge to broadly interpret this clause.

The vague language in the amendment ultimately undoes the work it was ratified to perform. Notably, the phrase "nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" from the second sentence of the clause fails to explicitly advance equal protection. While the amendment technically protects minorities from state-enacted, actively discriminatory laws, the amendment

<sup>1</sup> Primary materials for this research were drawn from the Law Library of Congress, the George Mason University Law Library, Fondren Library at Rice University, and Westlaw Campus Research Online Database.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Constitution, amendment XIV, §1. Emphasis mine.

absolves the Court of the power to advocate for equal application of the law. The 14th Amendment is hailed as the “equal protection clause” of the Constitution, yet the language used in the amendment was too imprecise to truly champion for equality 30 years after it was ratified.

### *Plessy v. Ferguson*

The Fuller Court’s opinion in *Plessy v. Ferguson* infamously subverts both the spirit of the 14th Amendment and the meaning of equality. In 1892, Homer Plessy, a black man, rode in the segregated white car of a train, challenging Louisiana’s enforcement of separating cars by race. The appellant brief argues that permitting “a railway conductor to assort” people “arbitrarily according to his ideas of race” is “not consistent” with the “one equal citizenship of the United States” defined in the 14th Amendment.<sup>3</sup> Instead of basing his opinion on the 14th Amendment, Justice Brown decided the issue by “determining the question of reasonableness” and considering “the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people.”<sup>4</sup> The Court found in favor of the statute, arguing that there was nothing unreasonable about separating racial groups as long as the physical facilities were equal.

To add insult to injury, the *Plessy* decision refused to grant credence to the argument that segregation endorses a social hierarchy and a feeling of inferiority within the black community. The plaintiff brief argues that the “establishment of legalized caste-distinction among citizens” encourages “the happiness of one class by asserting its supremacy and the inferiority of another class.”<sup>5</sup> The *Plessy* ruling squarely blames African Americans for the inequities they experience, and insists that that a “badge of inferiority” only prevails “because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.”<sup>6</sup> Brown absolves the Court of the power to promote equality by transferring integration from a legal to a social question. The opinion states that “if the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities.”<sup>7</sup> The Court only has to impede the enforcement of a state-mandated removal of freedoms but does not have to promote equality. The “separate but equal” precedent legitimized by *Plessy* (1896) spread from public transportation to any public good and service, including education. This decision remained influential for the next 50 years even though forces within the legal system began working against it at the turn of the century.

<sup>3</sup> *Plessy*, 163 U.S. Pl. Br., §6, April 6, 1893.

<sup>4</sup> *Plessy*, 163 U.S., ¶23.

<sup>5</sup> *Plessy*, 163 U.S. Pl. Br., §5, 11, April 6, 1893.

<sup>6</sup> *Plessy*, 163 U.S., ¶24.

<sup>7</sup> *Plessy*, 163 U.S., ¶24.

### The Influence of the Court and the Strict Scrutiny Test

Formed in the early 1900s, the NAACP alongside the American Civil Liberties Union fought both legislatively and judicially to secure rights for underrepresented communities. The interventions of both organizations forced courts to deliberate over civil rights issues and equal opportunity. In his book, *The Rights Revolution: Lawyers, Activists, and Supreme Courts in Comparative Perspective*, Charles Epp writes that the “earlier growth in the Court’s attention to civil liberties and civil rights provided a foundation” for the battle against school segregation in the 1950s and for the Civil Rights movement.<sup>8</sup> The Hughes Court (1930–1941) particularly gave small but limited gains to the school integration movement based on the justification that “states must furnish ‘equal facilities in separate schools.’”<sup>9</sup>

During this time, the interpretive framework used to adjudicate these kinds of concerns shifted from a rationality test (e.g., the “question of reasonableness” employed in *Plessy*) to a strict scrutiny examination. A strict scrutiny test is defined as a “compelling state interest in a legislative classification.”<sup>10</sup> This form of justification was a significantly more active way to improve equality than the previous way of establishing jurisdiction because it considers the disparate impact of an action instead of relying on the rationale behind it. Furthermore, according to Epp, the appointment of Chief Justice Earl Warren in 1953 “shifted the balance of power towards those favoring an expansion of judicial support of individual rights.”<sup>11</sup> The liberal dominance of the Court at this time ushered in a radical age of judicial activism that actively established equal protection under the laws.

### The NAACP LDF Legal Strategy

The NAACP LDF’s 20-year campaign to override the “separate but equal” doctrine, culminating in *Brown v. Board of Education*, coincided with this changed judicial atmosphere. For Charles Houston and Thurgood Marshall, the well-known crafters of the legal strategy used in *Brown*, the battle started in 1935 with the success of *Pearson v. Murray*. Houston and Marshall effectively argued that Murray should be allowed into the University of Maryland law school based on the inadequate physical and educational facilities of the law program at the Princess Anne Academy. By using graduate schools, their plaintiffs were older and more educated. As a

<sup>8</sup> Charles R. Epp, *The Rights Revolution: Lawyers, Activists, and Supreme Courts in Comparative Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), 39.

<sup>9</sup> David M. O’Brien, *Constitutional Law and Politics: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties*, 7th ed., Vol. 2 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 1389.

<sup>10</sup> O’Brien, *Constitutional Law and Politics*, 7th ed., Vol. 2, 1339.

<sup>11</sup> Epp, *The Rights Revolution*, 39.

microcosm of the real world and a critical key for securing employment, disparities in resources and opportunities among professional school programs directly affect the livelihood of their graduates and the field in general.

The last pieces of the puzzle to eliminate school segregation fell into place in 1950 with *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* and *Sweatt v. Painter*. George McLaurin was accepted to the University of Oklahoma Graduate School but was forced to sit in a special row, have lunch at a different time, and be segregated from his class. Based on the strict scrutiny test, the Court found these actions unconstitutional, stating that “our society grows increasingly complex, and our need for trained leaders increases correspondingly . . . . Those who will come under his guidance . . . will necessarily suffer to the extent that his training is unequal.”<sup>12</sup> These words recognize the increasing presence and influence of African Americans in society and look to the future of social cooperation and progress. Decided in the same year, the *Sweatt v. Painter* opinion states that “few students . . . would choose to study in an academic vacuum” and that there are “qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness in a law school.”<sup>13</sup> These two statements effectively name the diverse social make-up of a school as a factor that enhances one’s education and that “the equality of educational privileges could involve intangible as well as tangible factors.”<sup>14</sup> The opinions in these cases provided the precedents needed to end school segregation; the NAACP LDF just needed to translate their arguments for public education.

For the consolidated cases of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the NAACP legal team specifically picked a variety of examples ranging in location and levels of inequality. By selecting schools from both the North and South, the LDF

sought to ease political tensions. Representing schools with both inferior and equivalent physical facilities in comparison to the nearby white schools also comprehensively challenged the “separate but equal” doctrine. *Brown* is one of the first Supreme Court cases in which a significant portion of its argument is based on social science analysis. These arguments were controversial and potentially dangerous but necessary in securing legal rights for African Americans against the “racist realities of society.”<sup>15</sup> Evidence compiled by psychologists like Dr. Kenneth B. Clark<sup>16</sup> concluded that segregation inevitably forces African Americans to see themselves as “different and inferior.”<sup>17</sup> This evidence was the first direct attack to the *Plessy* opinion regarding the feeling of inferior status due to segregation. Essentially, as author Juan Williams summarizes, the NAACP LDF gave the ultimatum that “the only way the Court could allow blacks to be segregated in public schools was if it concluded that blacks were inferior to whites.”<sup>18</sup> The Appellate Brief argues that “segregation is discrimination,” and a child “cannot attend separate schools and learn the meaning of equality.”<sup>19</sup> This statement firmly places the case under the strict scrutiny test by connecting the damaged psychology of segregated African American schoolchildren to their consequential disillusionment with America’s fundamental beliefs.

#### Chief Justice Warren’s Opinion for *Brown v. Board of Education*

The opinion for *Brown v. Board of Education* was given in May 1954. In a concise brief “that could be printed in newspapers” for everyone citizen to read, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of the appellants and effectively deemed the practice of segregation in public schools unconstitutional.<sup>20</sup> The decision was unanimous in order to justify the controversial ruling against any “widespread resistance.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *McLaurin*, 339 U.S., ¶8.

<sup>13</sup> *Sweatt*, 339 U.S., ¶8.

<sup>14</sup> Marcia Beth Bordman, “Dear Old Golden Rule Days: A Study in the Rhetoric of Separate-But-Equal in *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849), *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)” (Thesis, University of Maryland College Park, 1993), 102.

<sup>15</sup> Freidman, ed., *Argument*, xxxii.

<sup>16</sup> The Clarks are famous for their “Doll Test,” an experiment with results that were included in the argument of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The tester would give elementary schoolchildren two identical dolls, except one was white and the other was black. The tester would then ask questions like which doll was good, which was bad, and which they related to the most. Statements from Dr. Clark regarding the results of the doll experiment: “What was surprising was the degree to which the [black] children suffered from self-rejection” (as quoted in Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: the History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 318). “I remember one young girl . . . who cried . . . she sort of walked out of the testing room because she did not like the fact that she was rejecting herself” (as quoted in Williams, *Thurgood Marshall*, 197).

<sup>17</sup> Leon Freidman, ed., *Argument: The Oral Argument before the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS, 1952–1955* (New York: Chelsea House, 1983), xxxii.

<sup>18</sup> Williams, *Thurgood Marshall*, 222.

<sup>19</sup> *Brown*, 347 U.S. Appellate Brief, Statement as to Jurisdiction, ¶35, 9.

<sup>20</sup> O’Brien, *Constitutional Law and Politics*, 7th ed., Vol. 2, 1402.

<sup>21</sup> O’Brien, *Constitutional Law and Politics*, 7th ed., Vol. 2, 1402.

The language of the opinion explicitly considered the sociological effects of segregation as a major validation, disregarding the previous thought processes. Chief Justice Warren cited both *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* as precedents, acknowledging their legal validity and applicability, and stated that the decision has to consider “the effect of segregation itself” instead of the “tangible factors” of the schools or the historical intent of the 14th Amendment.<sup>22</sup> Instead of using traditional constitutional interpretation, the Court radically based its decision in social science. Adhering to the legal logic of strict scrutiny, the *Brown* ruling stated that public education is “the most important function of state and local governments,” which defines state interest and proves their right of jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the jurists argued that separating children by race “generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community” that may bear psychological consequences “in a way unlikely to ever be undone.”<sup>24</sup> In its turn to the psychological effects of segregation, *Brown* unequivocally reversed *Plessy*.

The *Brown* opinion defined equality not as the basic providing of equal services and facilities, but as the ability to join the general citizenship or community of the United States in order to gain equal opportunities—a tenor consistent with the very language of the 14th Amendment. Based on this restored meaning of equality, the Court found that “separate education facilities are inherently unequal.”<sup>25</sup> Justice Warren was careful to explicitly limit the jurisdiction of this decision to segregation in education, but the social analytical language of the opinion was applied to other components of society, securing legal precedents for major gains in civil rights and civil liberties for minorities in the 1960s.

The law in practice is not based solely on the words of the Constitution. The meaning of equality through the legal history of school segregation is an example of the Constitution’s malleability, where the definition of equality in the 14th Amendment was legally subverted by *Plessy v. Ferguson* but reinstated and strengthened by *Brown v. Board of Education*. Further research can be pursued on the legal definition of equality provided by *Brown* in relation to the state of American education today to determine *Brown*’s effectiveness. Some critics of *Brown* believe that “quality education, not integration, should have been the goal of *Brown*.”<sup>26</sup> At the time of *Brown*, integration was believed to be the key to equal opportunity, but today, African Americans and Hispanics have been disproportionately affected by poor standards in

public education.<sup>27</sup> Analyzing the text of influential legal cases is important for enabling us to better understand the legal history of social justice issues, including equal access to quality education. The interpretation of a mere phrase within an argument or an opinion can significantly shape the impact of the decision or how it is practically implemented. By understanding the power of language in law, legal advocates can learn from the past how to effectively word their arguments, and legal scholars can further the academic movement of seeing law as a type of literature.

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<sup>22</sup> *Brown*, 347 U.S., ¶7.

<sup>23</sup> *Brown*, 347 U.S., ¶9.

<sup>24</sup> *Brown*, 347 U.S., ¶11.

<sup>25</sup> *Brown*, 347 U.S., ¶12.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, *Thurgood Marshall*, 401.

<sup>27</sup> Southern schools were the most desegregated schools in the nation by 1970. Yet, in 1988, racial segregation began to increase. By 1992, almost two-thirds of black students and almost three-fourths of Latino students attended predominately minority schools. McClain and Stewart, “*Can We All Get Along?*”: *Racial and Ethnic Minorities in American Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2006), 170.

# Sir Walter Scott's "Un-English" Woman

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Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) is a romance, an adventure novel, a *bildungsroman* and, according to Georg Lukacs, the pioneering text of the historical novel genre. Lukacs suggests, "For [Scott] it means that certain crises in the personal destinies of a number of human beings coincide and interweave within the determining context of a historical crisis" (Lukacs, 41). This paper will examine how the national identity, gender, and sexuality of the two female "heroines," Rose Bradwardine and Flora MacIvor, intersect to support patriarchal power dynamics for the male characters. These power dynamics are considered especially in relation to Scott's representation of the "Un-English" woman and her function as a nationalizing literary trope. By "Un-English woman," I mean fictional representations of female characters that are given undesirable and socially-antiquated characteristics.

Over the last few decades, critics have approached *Waverley* through various lenses but have seldom explored intersections of gender, sexuality, and race<sup>1</sup> in Scott's portrayal of female characters. In *Waverley*, marriage is not simply about romance, it is the story of union between England and Scotland. The main character, Edward Waverley, is sent off by his aristocratic uncle, Sir Everard Waverley, and aunt to Scotland on tour because they are afraid he might fall in love with someone unsuitable for his birth. Once there, he has to choose between loving and marrying lowlander Rose Bradwardine (daughter of Sir Everard's Scottish friend) or his idolization of highlander Flora MacIvor's person and political aspirations.

Regarding the historical context of the text, Scott writes in 1814 about fictional events surrounding a historical crisis that occurred in 1745. Scott's "Un-English" woman and her biases represent the nexus of the religious and political battles involved in 19th-century British national identity formation. Historian Linda Colley suggests in *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (1992) that, "One of the recurrent argument[s] of *Britons* is that the overwhelming Catholicism of large parts of Continental Europe, especially France and Spain, provided a newly-invented Britain with a formidable 'other' against which it could usefully define itself" (Colley, xvi). Rose and Flora represent the splitting point between Catholic Scottish identity and Protestant Scottish identity. Flora's identity and aspirations are expressed through her hopes for her brother, "she believed it was the duty of her brother, of his clan, of [e]very man in Britain, at whatever personal hazard, to contribute to that

restoration which partisans of the Chevalier de St. George had not ceased to hope for. For this she was prepared to do all, to suffer all, to sacrifice all" (Scott, 168). The highlander clan that Flora dedicates herself to fighting for is closely linked with the French crown and Catholicism, thus making her an automatic outsider and "Other" to Tory-bred Edward.

Set during the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, *Waverley* follows the life of a young aristocratic Englishman named Edward Waverley on his tour of Scotland and explores his wavering political and national alliances. Examining power and sex in terms of male relations, Eve Sedgwick asks, "What does it mean—what difference does it make—when a social or political relationship is sexualized? If the relation of homosocial to homosexual bonds is so shifty, then what theoretical framework do we have for drawing any links between sexual and power relationships?"(5). I use Sedgwick's questions as points of departure for my project, focusing especially on possible theoretical frameworks within which one might understand links between sexual and power relationships. I posit that the homosocial relationships in *Waverley*, for example that of Sir Everard Waverley, Baron Bradwardine and Edward Waverley, depend strongly on the female characters to subordinate and support them. As husbands, fathers and soldiers, the men of *Waverley* look to their female subordinates to welcome them into the domestic sphere. This is evident in the narrator's description of Baron Bradwardine's relationship:

For its readers, *Waverley* sets up a binary of antiquated against modern so as to influence Scottish men to view themselves better off as British subjects.<sup>2</sup> I am interested in how and why Scott uses representations of "Un-English" women to tell a gendered Scottish *bildungsroman*. By using the term *bildungsroman*, I mean Scott's narrative is a coming-of-age tale. It is a coming-of-age tale not in the traditional sense for an individual human character but rather, a coming-of-age tale for Scotland as whole as it moved politically and socially to become a member of the British nation. The novel straddles two important time periods for the British nation: the mid-18th century, the time period it was written about, and the early 19th century, the period it was published in. Scott's historical novel allowed for the mixed genres of history and romance to create a foundation for Scott's representations of "Un-Englishness." This "Un-Englishness" works with an ideology of Scottishness that speaks to the "historical crisis" Scott's male audience experienced in the early 19th century.

<sup>1</sup> For more on these critics and the critical themes they analyze within the text, consult "*Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* by Sir Walter Scott," *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*. Ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 110. Detroit: Gale, 2002. 228–347. The essays ranged from 1969 through 1997.

<sup>2</sup> See Ina Ferris' work on Scott's critical reception.

Additionally, the question of how Scott represents his female characters cannot be broached without attention to how Scott addresses his desired audience. Scott alludes to his goals for his readership in multiple addresses to the “fair” reader: “I beg pardon, once and for all, of those readers who take up novels merely for amusement, for plaguing them so long with old-fashioned politics, and Whig and Tory, and Hanoverians and Jacobites” (Scott, 63). Here, Scott shows his intention to establish his historical novel as not “merely for amusement” indicating that he is pioneering a genre of novel that is meant to be taken seriously, presumably by male readers.

As two components of the “Un-English” trope, Rose and Flora represent two different aspects of Scottish life in the early 18th century. More precisely, they represent specific national ideologies: Rose, a lowland Scottish beauty who lives in “A Scottish Manor-House Sixty Years Since” (Scott, 74), signifies the potential of the newly forming Scottish-British nation-state and what union with England could mean, whereas Flora, “The Chieftain’s Sister” (Scott, 167), represents an older, more wild aspect of Scottish life, the passionate life of the highlanders.

Following the trajectory of the plot, Edward meets Rose first and through communication with her begins to understand more of lowland Scotland vernacular:

The first greetings past, Edward learned from her that dark hag, which had somewhat puzzled him in the butler’s account of his master’s avocations, had nothing to do either with a black cat or a broomstick, but was simply a portion of oak copse which was to be felled that day (Scott, 86).

In this moment, Edward thinks about the things that are familiar to him, a “black cat” or a “broomstick,” while trying to understand the unknown “dark hag.” Rose is the first person that Edward meets in Scotland that is able to culturally translate for him. She speaks and acts with an understanding of English aristocratic notions. Flora represents the opposite of this complicity to understanding and translating Englishness. Rather, Flora is the epitome of old Scottishness, her ancient Scottish highland ties and her sympathy to the Jacobite Rebellion. Flora’s character works in combination with her lowland foil, Rose, to illustrate different types of Scottish identity: old and new.

Exemplified by a combination of Rose and Flora, the “Un-English woman” is a literary trope that was read and internalized by Scott’s increasingly male readership. The

“Un-English woman” illustrates a literary to cultural dynamic where a fictional Scottish woman serves to uphold patriarchal norms and a concept of British nationalism. The subservience and ultimate banishment of the exoticized Un-English woman directly supports homosocial male relations, dominance and nationalism above individual female identity. Rose and Flora are the “objects” of Edward Waverley’s sexual desire. Rose and Flora serve as a foil that reveals how the existence of a standard for marriageable women allows women to serve as bargaining chips through which aristocratic men create bonds of nationhood.

Furthermore, by addressing the audience as “fair reader,” he uses a tone that might be construed as pejorative to his female audience. He employs the historical context of the “old-fashioned politics” and the “Whig and Tory, and Hanoverians and Jacobites” to make his fiction relevant to his male readers. Especially notable is a break in the narrative in which Scott intimates via authorial voice to his female readers, “The truth is, I cannot promise them that this story shall be intelligible, not to say probable, without it” (Scott, 63). The unnamed “it” here is Scott’s portrayal of Flora and Rose as otherized “Un-English” women in relation to “old-fashioned politics.”

When Edward first visits Rose’s village of Tully-Veolan, his mental comparisons of England and Scotland become clear immediately: “The houses seemed miserable in the extreme, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages. They stood, without any respect for regularity” (Scott, 74). This early juxtaposition of English regularity and properness with Scottish decay and wildness situates *Waverley* as a certain kind of bildungsroman. The bildungsroman genre component of *Waverley* functions in two ways: it is a coming-of-age tale happening within the fictional boundaries of the text and it is a coming-of-age that occurs outside of the text in the mind of the reader. Scott’s representations of England and Scotland via the relationships between Edward and the two “Un-English” female characters attempt to persuade the reader to accept that an English aristocratic life is preferable to the wild, romantic life of the Scottish highlands.

Scott’s move is to show how Edward and Rose’s love is functional in an English framework. Rose’s “Un-Englishness” is curable, whereas Flora’s is disastrous. Through the banishment of Flora to the French nunnery, Scott creates a new ideology of unification. In other words, this text urges fellow Scotsmen to consider the national benefits of joining England

and, by extension, to become more English through banishment of the “Un-English” woman.

In one critical analysis of this homosocial male dynamic evident during the formation of British nationalistic identities in the 18th century, Katherine Wilson describes the dominant British perception of femininity during the Enlightenment as one of vulnerability and argues that women were seen as, “less able to withstand the lure of the exotic, bestial or sensual . . . they . . . could too easily forget about their own culture” (Wilson, 6). By representing women and femininity as weak and easily subverted, Scott strengthens male patriarchy and the burgeoning homosocial bonds of upper-class Scottish and English gentlemen. In this instance, I use the term “Un-English” to describe the way in which 19th-century authors such as Scott portrayed the antithesis of proper Englishness partially through representations of the weakness of femininity.

Thus, Scott’s highland anti-heroine Flora represents an “Un-English” woman who gives in to the “lure” of Catholicism and the “exotic” and “sensual” life of a Highland chieftain’s sister, resulting in her exile. Flora cannot even physically remain in the British Empire because she has committed treason of the mind, and in her eyes murdered her own brother with her inability to submit to patriarchal power. It is her body leaving Scotland that symbolizes the old Scotland surrendering and giving over to a new form of intellectual as well as military English dominance. Opposing Flora’s incurable “Un-Englishness,” anglicized Rose marries the proper British gentleman, Edward, symbolizing Scott’s ideal Scottish-British union. Unlike Flora’s “Un-English” political goals and aspirations for her Highland brother, clan, and dethroned king, Rose’s version of femininity accepts English norms and embodies the consummation of the political and ideological marriage between England and a modernizing Scotland.

Thus, it could be argued that Rose and Flora do not portray women, but rather Scott’s political and social ideals embodied in women. Scott’s use of the male-oriented tradition of the bildungsroman, combined with the new historical novel, orientalizes the Scottish highlands and an old-fashioned sense of outlandish Scottish identity. Returning to Segwick’s question, I propose that Scott’s representation of Rose can be read as a “link between sexual and power relationships” in the homosocial relationship between Englishman Edward Waverley and Scotsman Baron Bradwardine. The power that Baron Bradwardine holds is closely related

to his status as Sir Everard Waverley’s old friend as well as patriarchal father-figure to the beautiful and desirable Rose.

The concern that Flora expresses for Rose can only be expressed through the homosocial male relationships to which the women are subject. Rose will function as “nothing” without a husband. Her soul is controlled by her husband or father: “She will see nothing, and connect herself with nothing, but by him and through him” (Scott, 183). Even as her outspoken “friend,” Flora admits this to Edward when he mistakenly seeks Flora’s hand in marriage instead of Rose’s: “If she [Rose] becomes the property of a churlish or negligent husband, she will suit his taste also, for she will not long survive his unkindness” (Scott, 184). Here, the “Un-English” woman is educating the English man in his patriarchal role and showing him how she would make an improper wife for him within the English aristocratic framework Scott promotes. Rose’s lack of agency and malleability, however, make her the perfect wife for Edward. The function of the bildungsroman genre is clearly illustrated when Edward is described as trying to figure out what he believes, which woman he really loves and who he wants to side with in the Jacobite Rebellion: “The conflicting passions and exhausted feelings of *Waverley* had resigned him to a late but sound repose” (Scott, 319). I would argue, however, that it is not only the conflicting passions and exhausted feelings of his hero that Scott treats here, but the passions and feelings of the burgeoning Scottish nation.

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# Applying Translation to Studies in Comparative Literature

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## Abstract

Though translation and Comparative Literature share many fundamental tasks and objectives, they have somehow become alienated from one another. I argue why conducting translation is necessary for students of Comparative Literature to fully understand the text, as well as its place within the students' context. Through the contributions of a few contemporary translation theorists whose work relates to this topic, namely in polysystem theory, deconstruction, and post-colonialism, the essay traces the progress of the translation theory while it argues the case for translation as a tool in Comparative Literature.

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Contemporary Comparative Literature of late seems to have lost the truly multidisciplinary nature its name implies. Academics in the field bemoan the professionalization that forces them, and even more so their students, into shrinking areas of concentration. The limits of their study have become increasingly narrow and impermeable, none more harmful to the field than those isolating Translation Studies from broader literary criticism.

Recent translation theories have hinted at the potential of translation to reveal unique characteristics of the literary target and source. However, to my knowledge, none have recommended translation as a necessary tool for studies in Comparative Literature, nor have they offered a model of analysis through literary translation. Recent developments in polysystem theory and deconstruction, as well as the post-colonial theories inspired by deconstruction, have motivated Translation Studies to cultivate the process of translation into more than simply a search for equivalencies. Contemporary theories have transformed translation into a movement between languages, cultures, and times. Through the exchange, translators expose these realms, describing them in terms that are not absolute, but relative to and dependent on the relationship between target and source.

In the early 1970s Israeli scholar Itamar Even-Zohar first introduced his polysystem theory to describe the relationships between systems within a society. Although in his theory all elements of a society interact, he inexplicably posits relative autonomy of literature. The literary system within Even-Zohar's polysystem includes its own interrelating hierarchy, where the importance of the literary work (its designation as low or high, non-canonized or canonized) depends on its contribution to the larger cultural polysystem. Even-Zohar defines the value of literary works through Russian Formalist criteria, designating higher worth to more defamiliarizing works.

Polysystem theory questions the notion of translator as an unbiased cultural conduit. The theorists recognize the inevitable influence of the systems that surround the translator and their work. As such, since the social norms and literary conventions that help determine the translation constantly change, Even-Zohar abandons previous efforts of prescribing techniques for translation.

With this model of systemic interactions, translations adopt a new significance. They no longer provide only a rough approximation of the original text. Since distortions in translation are caused largely by specific characteristics of the target society, they may form patterns that reveal information about the target polysystem. By determining societal factors as the source of mutations of texts in translation, Even-Zohar opens possibilities for what translations represent.

Gideon Toury, a student of Even-Zohar, works to quantify the claims of polysystem theory in a series of papers collected as *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. Toury collected data from translations conducted in Israel within a 15-year span that recently preceded the publication of these papers. Rejecting the vacuum in which prior Translation Studies hypothesized ideal readers and translators, Toury investigates real translation productions in order to study translation as it actually occurs. He examines the most practical, economic intention of translation, and finds that cultural conditions of the receiving system, including the social, economic, and historical, dictate the majority of the decisions.

If Toury's and Even-Zohar's polysystem theory is applied to studies of Comparative Literature, translation becomes a tool to uncover internal information about the receiving culture; namely, how members of a culture perceive the foreign text due simply to their belonging in their respective societies. One cannot comprehensively study a

foreign text without applying knowledge of one's native society, how it determines our perception and shapes our understanding of the text. However, one question remains: How are members of the target society to detect these distortions? How does Toury find the differences that he uses to represent the decisions of the translators?

This question begins the unraveling of Even-Zohar's polysystem. Since the translation in Even-Zohar's polysystem theory depends on the society and historical moment in which they take place, the distortions theorists detect are subject to relative temporality. And since translations change over time while the original remains unaffected (according to polysystem theory), the differences may just as well be ascribed to the changes in the receiving society as the society's relationship with the foreign culture. For this reason, Even-Zohar must use a literary hierarchy of defamiliarization to establish a standard for the influence of translations between societies, while Toury betrays his pragmatic studies by offering a "hypothetical entity constructable on the basis of a systemic (textemic) analysis of Source Text, and it is used as the invariant of the comparison." (Toury, 1980: 49). Toury repeats the mistake of prior theorists who idealize their own position, and deem themselves able to offer an objective basis of comparison. Meanwhile, Even-Zohar distinguishes canonical from non-canonical literature, appointing societal influence only to defamiliarizing texts, while innovations trickle down to stagnate in the noncanonical popular literature. He asserts that a translation can either be canonical or non-canonical depending on conditions in the target and source system. For example, younger nations like Israel grant translations a more canonical status than older cultures like France. Even-Zohar establishes a basis of comparison between cultures by the status each give to translation, which he determines by the level of defamiliarization translations achieve in the literatures of their respective target countries.

Even-Zohar's artificial literary hierarchy is problematic for two main reasons: one cannot give higher value to elite-class literature over popular literature, nor can one do so on the basis of defamiliarization. Evaluation on linear scales are inadequate judgments of anything more complex

than numerical quantification, and attempts to do so only represent vestiges of obsolete empiricist philosophy.

Polysystem theory grants Comparative Literature a model of multiple systems within society acting on and influencing one another. Because the entire goal of translation is to "carry over," it represents a direct interaction between systems, and results in an observable product. Thus, it is reasonable for polysystem theorists to offer translation as a way to expose these systems, especially the forces that would be invisible if studied in isolation. However, since Even-Zohar opens such possibilities by examining the influence of society, history, and culture, we are left with no basis for comparison; researchers can attribute differences in translation just as easily to changes in these factors, rather than to distorting effects that shed light on the relationship between the target and source culture. Comparative Literature, then, cannot utilize translation based on polysystem theory without resorting to artificial hierarchies or false hypotheticals. Because polysystem theory operates under the assumption of an original, immutable source, the original, unchanging text, they view translation phenomena as relative to the societal forces of the target culture only, *ignoring the influence of the target culture on the source culture*. By questioning this assumption of original source, deconstruction continues the progression of Translation Studies.

The goal of deconstruction is to break down artificial structures by seeking that which cannot be thought within our current language. Translation holds a special place in deconstructionist analysis.<sup>1</sup> Translation offers the unique opportunity to witness language referring to language, not to our perceptions of reality. Through the lens of another language, words separate from the things they represent. Thoughts that are unthinkable in a single language come to light in the interactions between two or more, and the meanings of words are expanded beyond (mis)representation. In this way, *translations modify the original*, augment it. They open the meanings of the original and expose spaces for the play of traces that did not exist prior. By spreading wide the spaces of meaning of the translation and the original, the imperfections of language manifest themselves in the meaning each individual language cannot express alone.

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1 It only occurred to me after writing this section the implications Derrida's stance on logocentrism and the written word have for translation. Derrida notes in the second chapter *Of Grammatology* that writing, or other media of communication that separate speaker from listener, grant language much of its autonomy. It is when the speaker cannot clarify himself that meaning is most deformed and language most distanced from reality. We might see translation as a reengagement of dialogue with the original speaker, a refreshing of the lines of communication, of the connection between text and reality. I only want to add this as a supplementary note reinforcing translation's importance in reading and interpreting literature.

The findings of deconstruction endow translation with a power still largely unrealized, especially insofar as Comparative Literature recognizes the potential contribution of translation. Translation essentially deconstructs a work by expanding its meaning into an entirely different linguistic system, modifying that meaning itself in a process that exposes the (re/o)ccurring deformations.

After deconstruction, Translation Studies, and all affected fields, are left only with questions, which don't help restructure, so much as reevaluate what we think we know. Post-colonial theory inspired by deconstruction solves this problem of creative utility by aiming deconstruction at specific social/political/historical relationships between cultures. Adopting deconstruction's mutual interaction between source and target text, post-colonial theorists such as Tejaswani Naranjana see careless, overgeneralized translations as forces that continue the subjugation of colonized societies. Naranjana postulates translations inform the source culture of their own identity and limit their self-conscious perspective to that of the West.

Because post-colonial theorists are so completely identified with the sociopolitical history of their country and its relationship with their former colonizers, theorists such as Gayatri Spivak use deconstruction of the text specifically to examine the effects of colonization on the subaltern consciousness at a specific point in history.<sup>6</sup> (Spivak, 1993: 286) Spivak is careful not to repeat the mistake of the foreigner who exoticizes by overgeneralizing. She also does not draw overarching political conclusions from her translations, but emphasizes the individual and his or her situation, and translation's ability to highlight the cultural differences between the individual and the situation in different societies. While deconstructionists view translation as an opportunity to expose and/or expand the imperfections in language, Spivak sees it as a chance to demonstrate real cultural differences between the target and source culture.

However, like scholars of polysystem theory, Naranjana and Spivak pose the target and source cultures as two distinct entities, which deconstructionists would say is a false distinction caused by language's misleading conceptual purifying. Deconstruction ignores the real cultural differences both post-colonial theorists and polysystem theorists find and emphasize in the process of translation. The project post-colonial theory begins is a reconstruction of the entities that inspired our linguistic framework in the first place. Difference, as Derrida claims, is the mode through which language gains meaning; similarly, by reemphasizing the lines

Derrida blurs by questioning our notions of communication and perception, post-colonial theorists reassert difference and meaning through a largely polysystemic structure. The post-colonial polysystem, however, retains the gray area of deconstruction, which allows it to explore the co-modifying relationships between source and target, colonizer and colonized, cause and effect, consciousness and identity, especially its asymmetry based on unequal power structures.

In extremely deconstructive fashion, the only aspect limiting post-colonial theory is the very quality that distinguishes it as a theory: its concentration on colonization. This form of deconstruction cannot be reproduced when analyzing relationships between cultures with much more ambiguous power relations, such as between the U.S. and Mexico. By aiming deconstruction specifically to the effects of colonization, post-colonial theorists apply deconstruction to real systems, saving it from the infinite recursion deconstruction causes when it concentrates solely on linguistic free play.

How, then, are American students of Comparative Literature to utilize translation? Our goals are distinct from the post-colonial theorists. We do not seek to expose the differences between cultures so that the effects of colonization can be explored and, partially, undone. Rather, in a way, we must avoid repeating the processes of colonization or more specific to our field, misrepresenting by overgeneralization. By producing and comparing translations (including the original as a translation in some sense), which are essentially direct exchanges between the translator and the writer (each of whom are both at once), we see not only how we as individuals translate, but how our particular circumstance within our cultural polysystem can deconstruct the meaning of the original in a specific way, can translate through us. The translation provides a specific production of the interactions not only between cultures, but between the translator and writer, and provides us with clues as to how their respective cultures shape them. By analyzing the differences between texts, we begin to understand how our particular placement within a culture deforms our reading, while it deconstructs the text by introducing this deformation into the meaning. If we read a foreign text without having undergone this process, without having yielded this information for ourselves and our study, the text remains unengaged and our cultures alienated. Our perception remains uncritical of its own deformations and as a consequence, the meaning we apply, whether we produce a translation or not, is not borne (translated) from within our perspective into reality, where we can examine it separate from its immediate distorting effects.

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# Merchants of Addiction—Parsi Involvement in the India-China Opium Trade

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## Abstract

In this paper, I analyze the role of Parsis in the 18th- and 19th-century illicit commodities trade between India and China, exploring their comprador status in the colonial power structure of Bombay, in order to understand how their relationship with the British shaped the economic history of their community. I examine the contradictions that are presented by the fact that Parsis, or followers of the Zoroastrian faith living in India, who value truthfulness and purity so highly, amassed great wealth through the opium trade with China.

Over 100 years after its dissolution, the East India Company remains a potent symbol of the economic imperatives that drove the development of the British Empire in Asia. Throughout the history of the Empire, British officials often found it politically, socially, and financially expedient to enlist the support of native populations in their ventures. Thus, in occupied territories throughout the Empire, a class of colonial elites emerged whose cooperation with British colonizers allowed them to benefit from European support. The relationship between British mercantilists and the Parsi business community in 19th-century Bombay provides insight into the workings of this colonial power structure.

Some scholars are quick to emphasize the symbiotic, benign nature of the interactions between British and Parsi populations.<sup>1</sup> However, this notion of admirable and mutually beneficial cross-cultural exchange is refuted by sinister historical realities. While British patronization of the Parsis was based more on financial calculations than mutual respect, neither group is free from charges of exploitation. Indeed, the Parsis were complicit in the illicit trade of opium to China in the 18th and 19th centuries, the legacy of which still persists to this day. Sir Rustom Masani, late Vice-Chancellor of Bombay University, once wrote of Parsis, “Their virtues lie very close to their weaknesses.”<sup>2</sup> While this statement was not made in direct reference to Parsi

involvement in the illicit commodities trade, it nevertheless tersely sums up the inconsistency inherent to their endowment of charitable projects through funds gained in the transport of opium. The role played by Parsis in this venture is also inconsistent with the beliefs they held as Zoroastrians, adherents of a faith based on the teachings of the ancient prophet Zoroaster. Indeed, Parsi collaboration with British merchants in the India-China opium trade represents a fundamental departure from the tenets of Zoroastrianism.

Long before the arrival of the British to India, the Parsi community had established a reputation for being adept in the realm of trade. While the traditional historical narrative ascribes the original exodus of Zoroastrians from their homeland in Iran in the eighth century to the coming of Islamic invaders, some historians believe this process of migration actually corresponded with a desire to pursue trade links between Iran and the west coast of India. Scholar André Wink posits that the coming of the Parsis to India was not a “flight from oppression,” but rather the “result of the opening of new avenues of communication and commerce . . . extending and deepening pre-existing contacts.”<sup>3</sup> Early communities of Parsis inhabited Gujarati towns such as Sanjan, Navsari, and Surat. By the 17th century, Surat, a thriving seaport, had become the hub of Parsi activity in India, and it is there that the relationship between European traders and Parsis engaged in commerce began to flourish.<sup>4</sup> While Parsi merchants headquartered in Surat had dealings with both Portuguese and Dutch traders, it is their relationship with agents of the East India Company that proved to be the most significant to the future development of the Parsi community.

Established in 1600, in September 1668 the East India Company gained possession of Bombay from the English government, which itself had received the territory from the Portuguese as part of the dowry of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II in 1662.<sup>5</sup> Then a collection of seven unexceptional islands, it likely seemed doubtful that Bombay would ever achieve prominence. However, the decline of Surat in the 18th century paved the way for its eventual rise as the primary port in western India. The British actively encouraged Parsis to relocate to Bombay, and understanding the potential benefits of aligning themselves with British traders, many undertook the move. The transformation of Bombay into an urban metropolis certainly did not occur

<sup>1</sup> See Christine Dobbin, “Bombay: The Parsi-British Affinity,” *Asian Entrepreneurial Minorities* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 104.

<sup>2</sup> Sohrab Davar, *The History of the Parsi Panchayet of Bombay* (Bombay: New Book Co., 1949), ii.

<sup>3</sup> André Wink, *Al-Hind, The Making of the Indo-Islamic World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 108.

<sup>4</sup> T.M. Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 84.

<sup>5</sup> Jesse Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 35.

quickly. Rather, it was a gradual process that was inextricably connected to the fortunes of Parsi families that decided to relocate. While some had already achieved great prominence from business ventures in Surat, Bombay was where the majority of future Parsi community leaders established a reputation, drawn by their “ability to foresee the avenues to opportunity and wealth, to accommodate themselves to changing political realities.”<sup>6</sup> While often downplayed, the economic elevation of the Parsi community in Bombay is inescapably connected to the transport of opium.

While the precise geographic origin of *papaver somniferum*, known commonly as the opium poppy, is still a mystery, the practice of opium eating, ingesting the resinous sap of the poppy either in solid form or dissolved in liquid, is known to have a long history in India.<sup>7</sup> Beginning with the Portuguese, the expansion of European maritime commerce led to the increasingly high-profile presence of western traders in India. Portuguese dominance gave way to Dutch commercial supremacy, but it was ultimately the British, through the East India Company, who managed to establish first economic then political control over the Indian subcontinent—which allowed them to become the key players in the lucrative opium trade.

British entrance into the India-China opium trade was initiated out of economic expediency. By the late 18th century, the East India Company was facing mounting debt.<sup>8</sup> While the Company was saved by an increased demand for Chinese tea in England, the thought of losing vast quantities of silver bullion in order to finance the large-scale importation of tea was displeasing. The solution to this problem lay in utilizing their colonial resources. Indian cotton and opium proved to be the commodities that evened out the trade imbalance between England and China. However, cotton did not have the same long-term market viability as opium. Historian Martin Booth writes that, “From the start, opium was the only import the Chinese really wanted,” and indeed, by the early 19th century opium had replaced cotton as India’s most profitable export to China.<sup>9</sup> Although the Chinese had a long history with opium before the arrival of European traders, prior to Western interference the sole

method of using the drug had been opium eating; in the 17th century Dutch merchants introduced a far more insidious practice into Chinese society—opium smoking.<sup>10</sup> The English were able to exploit the proliferation of this highly addictive method of using opium.

As early as 1729 Chinese officials took steps to rein in the use of opium—issuing the first Imperial edict against the narcotic.<sup>11</sup> Given the unfavorable associations, British merchants did not want to be blatantly linked with the trade of this drug. Thus, instead of directly exchanging opium for tea, Company officials preferred that the drug be smuggled to China, where it was sold at mainland ports such as Canton. The profits from the sales would then be used to purchase the desired tea. In essence, a triangle-trade emerged in which Indian opium generated the silver that could then be used to buy tea legally.<sup>12</sup> However, opium quickly became such a sought after commodity in China that profits from the opium trade far outstripped the cost of tea.<sup>13</sup> By the mid-19th century, vast amounts of silver bullion were being remitted back to India, enriching both Company officials and smugglers who were complicit in the trade.

The wide-scale involvement of smugglers in the India-China opium trade arose from the East India Company’s desire to retain a façade of propriety and merit although plying the Chinese population with insidious opiates. In a letter from 1766 British officials stationed in India wrote on the topic of opium in China that “introducing it there can only be in a clandestine manner, we have too much reason to apprehend very bad consequences may result to the Company by the embarrassment of their affairs with the said [Chinese] government.”<sup>14</sup> Private traders, serving as middlemen, allowed for a degree of separation between the Company and the Chinese officials at Canton. This separation was especially valuable following the Chinese Emperor’s 1799 proclamation expressly banning the importation of opium to China.<sup>15</sup> In light of this turn of events, the system of “country trade” was implemented, whereby private firms licensed by the East India Company, but remaining largely autonomous, engaged in the illicit trade between China and India, remitting funds back to the Company at

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See Martin Booth, *Opium, A History* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 1–11.

<sup>8</sup> Dobbin, 83

<sup>9</sup> Booth, 109.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>11</sup> Hunt Janin, *The India-China Opium Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1999), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Chouvy, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Asiya Siddiqi, *Trade and Finance in Colonial India 1750–1860* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 14.

<sup>14</sup> C.S. Srinivasachari, *Fort William—India House Correspondence Vol. IV* (Delhi: National Archives of India, 1962), 165.

<sup>15</sup> Booth, 110.

Canton.<sup>16</sup> In many cases immense fortunes were accrued through this trade. This was certainly true in the Parsi community, where businessmen, shipbuilders, and merchants all took advantage of their unique ties to the British in order to profit from the opium trade.

Parsis first made a name for themselves in the realm of finance as guarantee brokers at the British trading houses and as master shipbuilders, where their skill was so prodigious it has been said that, “the Parsi shipbuilder rather than the English merchant was the true maker of Bombay.”<sup>17</sup> Parsi involvement in shipping and the high-volume opium trade set them apart from businessmen who focused solely on money lending. There are many recorded instances of Parsis, in their role as merchants, establishing residences in China—in 1829 a Parsi cemetery was built in the city of Macao.<sup>18</sup> The Parsis who moved to coastal regions in China retained their religious convictions. The faithfulness of these Parsi expatriates was mirrored by the religious zeal of the Parsis in Bombay.

While Parsis overwhelmingly embraced British culture openly and enthusiastically, the one notable exception to this is in the realm of religion. As a group the Parsis remained steadfastly devoted to the creeds of Zoroastrianism from their earliest days in Bombay, and attempts at conversion largely fell flat.<sup>19</sup> From maintaining *dakhmas* and fire temples to wearing the *kusti*, a traditional belt woven with 72 threads, and respecting the *dasturs*, or priests, of the community, Parsis were vigilant about fulfilling the ritual and spiritual aspects of their religion. This strict religious observance was coupled with notable philanthropic spending. As select Parsis gained vast wealth and the accompanying high social standing in 19th-century Bombay, they spent heavily on charitable causes. These ranged from basic infrastructure such as roads to museums and hospitals. This pervasive benevolent giving is emblematic of the Parsis’ commitment to providing opportunities for all members of their community.

Perhaps the most well-known Parsi philanthropist is Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. Born to a humble weaver of Navsari in 1783, he eventually went on to become the first Indian to be knighted and to receive a baronetcy, in 1842 and 1857, respectively. While many of the details of his early career remain uncertain, it is known that between 1800 and 1808 he

went on four voyages to China.<sup>20</sup> Throughout his career, he benefited from establishing personal friendships with key figures in the India-China trade. These associates included the Chinese merchant Howqua, and most importantly, the famed English trader William Jardine.<sup>21</sup> In 1832, Jardine joined forces with James Matheson to form Jardine, Matheson & Co., a firm based in Canton that would go on to become the most important and successful in the India-China opium trade. Jejeebhoy served as the firm’s principal supplier in Bombay in the years leading up to the Opium Wars.

When the first Opium War began 1839, it did so in a move reminiscent of the Boston Tea Party, as indignant Chinese officials threw vast amounts of the narcotic into Canton harbor. Really more of a collection of “insignificant naval clashes” than a full-fledged war, the conflict ended in 1842 with the Treaty of Nanking, which opened up a series of new Chinese ports and ceded Hong Kong to the British in perpetuity.<sup>22</sup> Far from ending the illicit commodities trade, the first Opium War was a boon to smugglers. Just as the Parsis had been some of the first early settlers in Bombay at the request of the British, as a consequence of the war, Parsis were in the vanguard when it came to populating the new British territory of Hong Kong. Both the opium trade and the shipbuilding industry thrived in Hong Kong, and thus the Parsi community flourished; indeed, throughout the 19th century Parsi firms “gradually engaged in businesses that were more connected with Hong Kong than with India.”<sup>23</sup> Again, similar to the case of Bombay, the Parsis played a fundamental role in the development of Hong Kong.

Despite the great success enjoyed by Parsi merchants in the India-China trade, by the mid-19th century the difficulties associated with the venture were beginning to mount. The notion that the British were somehow deeply invested in the economic well-being of their Parsi partners does not align with the manner in which they conducted their trading. The British had devised a system whereby the majority of risks fell not on European-run trading houses but rather British colonial subjects. By employing the expertise of Parsi merchants, not only did the Company and private trading houses manage to capitalize on Parsi financial resources, but also prudently avoid direct involvement in what was an illegal trade in China, and, crucially, insulate themselves from price fluctuations and exchange snafus.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, following the first Opium War Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy began to grow

<sup>16</sup> Siddiqi, 193–94.

<sup>17</sup> Qtd. in Palsetia, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Guo Deyan, “The Study of Parsee Merchants in Canton, Hong Kong and Macao,” *Review of Culture*, 2003, 56. <http://www.icm.gov.mo/deippub/rcMagE.asp>.

<sup>19</sup> Luhrmann, 114–115.

<sup>20</sup> Amar Farooqui, *Opium City: The Making of Early Victorian Bombay* (Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective, 2006), 26–27.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Booth, 135.

<sup>23</sup> Saksena, 32.

<sup>24</sup> Siddiqi, 202.

somewhat disenchanted with Jardine, Matheson & Co., the firm with which he had such a strong trading relationship.

Of course, the true victims of the illicit opium trade were not the Parsis, but the Chinese. China during the period of the Opium Wars is frequently portrayed as a “nation of addicts.” While this description is used more for dramatic effect than to mirror the historical realities of the time, it does impart a strong sense of the urgency of the problem. For example, in the 1840s it is estimated that only about one percent of the Chinese population smoked opium.<sup>25</sup> However, by the early 20th century the number of addicts had ballooned to 40 million.<sup>26</sup> The smoking of opium, not a major national problem in China until the outset of the 19th century, became a legacy of the British that only worsened with time.

The Parsi community shares this unfavorable legacy with the British; in the words of Amar Farooqui, when it came to the systematic dispensation of opium to a vulnerable populace, “the Indian business class showed great zeal alongside the East India Company.”<sup>27</sup> The role of Parsi merchants in this corrupt trade has serious implications for the greater community, given their supposed religiosity and high moral caliber. While scholar Christine Dobbin emphasizes the idea that “the increasing material wealth of Zoroastrians is regarded as glorifying Ahura Mazda [the creator God],”<sup>28</sup> the source of this wealth for the Parsi elite of Bombay surely repudiates the positive associations. It is true that in order to prove their altruism, leading Parsi families could point to a long record of philanthropic causes that had been funded through their generosity. Philanthropy was held in great esteem throughout the community, as it was seen as being “fundamentally born of the Zoroastrian life-affirming philosophy to contribute to the welfare of the world.”<sup>29</sup> However, their actions suggest that the Parsis were mainly concerned with contributing to the welfare of their own society exclusively. At any rate, they do not appear to have been deeply troubled over the ethical dilemmas kindled by their involvement in the opium trade, or the contradiction presented by the fact that their religion places great importance on the concepts of truth and honesty. Indeed, the illicit commodities trade which helped establish Bombay as a major seaport and played an integral role in the history of Parsi community was in direct contradiction to the Zoroastrianism axiom of “good thoughts, good words, good deeds.”

Over 100 years after the pinnacle of the India-China opium trade, the legacy of that era still persists. The prominent trading house Jardine, Matheson & Co., which was once the largest company involved in opium trafficking, is still in existence, now going by the name Jardine Matheson Holdings, Ltd. A multinational business conglomerate headquartered in Hong Kong, in 2007 they released a promotional publication for their 175th anniversary looking at the history of the firm. This 43-page document highlighting the “enterprising spirit” of the two founders is rather vague in terms of the actual details of their trade; it states that Jardine, while working for the East India Company, “developed a good sense of what commodities sold well,” and that Matheson was eager to get involved in the “rapidly expanding Indian export market”—what exactly was being exported, or what the top-selling commodities were, is never mentioned.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps it is not surprising that the corporation’s own literature would fail to broach the connection to the opium trade. What is more striking is the way in which Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy’s role in the firm’s early development is downplayed—he barely garners a paragraph. While Jejeebhoy is still a prominent historical figure in the Parsi community, he is not primarily remembered for his participation in the opium trade. In the final analysis, while the illicit trafficking of opium in the 19th century has had far-reaching consequences for the Zoroastrian community in India, the unsavory nature of the trade has led to its suppression in the general historical narrative.

<sup>25</sup> Janin, 51–51.

<sup>26</sup> Booth, 168.

<sup>27</sup> Farooqui, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Dobbin, 97.

<sup>29</sup> Palsetia, 44.

<sup>30</sup> “175 Years of Looking to the Future,” 7. <http://www.jardines.com/profile/ebook.html>.



# Civil Society Participation and Legitimization through Transparency Initiatives in Azerbaijan

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## Abstract

This study investigates how “political development” initiatives in the Republic of Azerbaijan restructure representations of the actors involved. In particular, it examines how a body politic lacking agency is transformed by providing civil society leaders a space for political participation. Through interviews with Azerbaijani civil society leaders, textual analysis, and field observations, I specifically consider the discourse of “transparency,” or the notion that societies should have free access to state revenue and budgetary information as a means of mitigating corruption. Leaders attribute problems to the social consciousness of both state actors and the body politic, thereby reifying civil society leaders’ position as actors incapable of producing political change. Similar to Ferguson’s work on governmentality’s “unintended consequences,” transparency discourse recreates the common Azerbaijani as lacking political agency, thereby providing civil society leaders a legitimized space for political participation and contestation of the state.

*“Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.”*  
—Anton Chekov

## Introduction

On the tenth floor of a high-rise office building in downtown Baku, Azerbaijan sits a middle-aged man wearing modest but clean Western business attire. He is Mr. Sizat,<sup>1</sup> the director of an Azerbaijani public finance monitoring civil society organization (CSO)<sup>2</sup> charged with weighty responsibilities. Our conversation is not long and is interrupted by three brief, but seemingly important, phone calls to Mr. Sizat—one in Russian, another in Azerbaijani, and yet another in English. While on the phone the director leans back in his chair, often gazing out a tall window at a Baku skyline congested with construction and other development projects. As I sit waiting for him to return to my questions, my eyes are drawn to a small framed quote hanging on an otherwise barren wall: “Knowledge is of no value unless you put it into practice.” “Who,” I ask the director, “puts this knowledge into practice?” “We do,” the director said. “Our office and others like it!”

During my Mellon research trip to Azerbaijani the summer of 2010, I met with Mr. Sizat in his capacity of heading an organization whose mission is to “monitor and track the budget expenses of the republic of Azerbaijan,” an agency funded by exogenous public and private institutions who advocate for greater governmental transparency. I traveled to Azerbaijan interested in “political development” initiatives, that is measures under the heading of “good governance,” which are meant to bring the developing world out of poverty by fixing what some see as broken or underdeveloped political institutions. “Good governance” is widely endorsed by international political development experts as an important method in improving society’s check on governing institutions by bolstering democratic mechanisms. One key aspect of political development is the promotion of increased state “transparency,” that is providing society with access to information about state activities as a means of holding the state accountable. Political development experts claim that the more knowledge a society has about their government, the greater its capability to enact change via both formal or informal political mechanisms—for instance through participation in activities like democratic elections, canvassing for political candidates, and protesting against incumbents.

Mr. Sizat’s comments were fascinating because they suggested a shift in the locus of control away from societal forms of political representation predicated on a faith in majority rule via democratic elections, to the participation of a small, mostly homogenous group of Azerbaijani citizens who claim to represent the body politic. His remarks also raise questions about how to analyze this sort of political reform.

Working from an ethnographic perspective, I contend that in Azerbaijan (a) civil society leaders legitimate their actions by imagining the general Azerbaijani population as lacking political agency due to a shared Soviet legacy, and (b) these leaders assume that having access to state budgetary information creates a form of political participation. To explore these claims I consider the small faction of Azerbaijani citizens like Mr. Sizat, who are involved in transparency advocacy through endogenous civil society organizations. I then consider the implications of these findings, using James Ferguson’s work on the “unintended consequences” of development schemes. Building on Ferguson’s claim that even “failed” development projects

<sup>1</sup> The name Mr. Sizat is a pseudonym, as all interviews were conducted anonymously. “*Siz ad*” means “without name” in Azerbaijani.

<sup>2</sup> CSOs are also considered by other scholars as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I specifically choose instead to use the term “civil society organization” because of the attention civil society has been given in post-Soviet spaces (see Howard, 2003). Civil society is taken to be forms of voluntary and social organizations that are outside the structures of state institutions and commercial institutions of the market.

produce structural changes, I discuss the consequences of the CSO leader's construction of Azerbaijani society as incapable of utilizing political development schemes.

### Research Methods

I conducted 12 interviews between June 14, 2010 and July 8, 2010 in the capital city of Baku, Azerbaijan. All interviews took place during work hours in the offices of these organizations, which had been named by the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) to serve as the civil society monitoring section of the initiative. Interviewees ranged in age from 23 to 64, included three women and nine men. Ten interviews were conducted in English, and two were translated from Russian. Interviewees had a variety of work and education experiences, including teaching at state universities, working in the state oil ministry as top officials, leading opposition parties, or attending college abroad. While there was considerable diversity in their personal experiences, they were similar in each having modest but comfortable salaries, earning post-secondary education degrees or higher (often in European and North American universities), and having access to international social networks through supporting exogenous institutions. Almost all interviewees had worked or studied in Europe or North America within the last 15 years. I asked participants about the transparency efforts underway, their role, and the interaction amongst transparency agencies, the populace, and the government. The study design, informed consent, and confidentiality procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board at Washington University in St. Louis on May 26, 2010.

### Findings

Like the multiple languages they speak or the overlapping histories they draw from, Mr. Sizat and many of the Azerbaijanis I interviewed reflected the complex socio-historical past of the state. This history helps explain the events informing civil society leaders' collective imagination and reveals the context for civil society leaders' perception of modern-day Azerbaijani as lacking political agency. One aspect of this explanation is their feelings of being at the intersection of various forces of history. The republic of

Azerbaijan, formed only in 1991 out of the Soviet Union, has often been conceptualized by its citizens as a country situated at a spatial and temporal crossroads. Economically, Azerbaijan is currently at the cusp of a shift from command economy stagnation to market economy growth, prompted by an estimated \$10 billion in investment over the next five years—much of which will come from the oil and natural gas industries.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, area experts often describe the country, socially and politically, as being caught between Soviet-style authoritarianism and Western-promoted democracy.

Interviewees suggested that governmental revenue transparency efforts have been a source of pride for the state government and multinational oil companies. For example, they spoke of the importance of the internationally accessible EITI launched in 2002 by former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair. The EITI is a voluntary initiative that aims to increase the transparency of natural resource revenues by developing standardized reporting requirements for companies and governments.<sup>4</sup> The Azerbaijani government was one of the first in the world to enact the initiative. Indeed the Cabinet of Ministers formed the National EITI Committee in 2003, making Azerbaijan the first ever ratified member. The EITI principles—the cornerstone of the initiative—state, “that a public understanding of government revenues and expenditure will help public debate and inform choice of appropriate and realistic options for sustainable development.”<sup>5</sup> It was out of the EITI initiative that the first CSO coalition examined in this article formed.

Transparency rhetoric found in the EITI, however, differed from interviewee responses about using transparency laws and the challenges such initiatives face. They also spoke of a shared frustration with the “minds” of Azerbaijani citizens and government leaders problematizing public consciousness in such a way that “society” was portrayed as incapable of using budgetary information to enhance a participatory voice. As Mr. Sizat reminded himself with the quote above, knowledge is of no use when left in the hands of a disinterested public. One way the interviewees formed this problem was evidenced in what CSO leaders termed a “Sovietization of the mind”<sup>6</sup> noting the effects the collapse of the Soviet Union had

<sup>3</sup> Warner, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Specifically, it requires SOFAZ and multinational oil companies working in Azerbaijan to report revenues on a bi-annual basis. An external auditor then compares SOFAZ's reported revenues, with all of the oil companies' reported payments, in hopes that the two numbers will be equal.

<sup>5</sup> “The EITI Principles and Criteria.” Web. <<http://eiti.org/eiti/principles>>.

<sup>6</sup> This term was popularized by writers such as Alexander Zinoyev in his 1985 article “Homo Sovieticus.”

on the population's trust in government institutions. While by no means the only explanatory mechanism, this phrase was used often by interviewees, and refers more generally to the maintaining a way of life and mentality that emerged in the Soviet Union era. Attributes of the "Sovietization of the mind" included distrust of government, lack of ownership of government budgets, a residual culture of fear and silence, and a general depression.

Interviewees who had interacted with community members through CSO-initiated programs noted that a concept of citizen ownership of state funds does not yet exist and is only promoted by SOFAZ's distant relation to public revenues. One interviewee stated, "The most common thing I hear from citizens is, 'I'm not paying anything to the budget, it's all in oil revenues. Therefore, I don't need to care about it.' This is a great problem because an absence of understood resource ownership makes it hard for people to care." Indeed a common feature of resource-rich states during periods of great export is comparatively low taxes.<sup>7</sup> While this may mean the state can provide services without excising taxes, interviewees explained that one consequence of this approach is a popular belief that the state budget is not publicly owned or litigated. Other interviewees detailed the many other daily worries that the vast majority of Azerbaijanis face, including employment, education, and healthcare. Interviewees explained that concerns with immediate well-being might be part of the reason for citizens' overall disinterest in budgetary particularities. As one older interviewee who had formerly taught in a state university said, "It is a luxury to care about such things here."

Finally, many interviewees highlighted the traumatic nature that the post-Soviet experience had on them and their families. One interviewee explained that much of the older generation of Azerbaijanis experiences an "invisible depression" as a result of rapid change—seeing one system collapse, and another created, followed by an increasingly distant young generation that looks beyond what they were able to imagine as citizens of the Soviet era. Furthermore, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many people lost all of their life savings as many of the banks in which they had placed their savings were shut down in a period of a few days. One interviewee explained that this was the reason why "people's minds are not rendered towards a market economy." Thus, the new system of democratic participation calls on many people to go well beyond what they understand and believe.

## Discussion and Conclusion

If CSO leaders portray the general society as incapable of turning knowledge into action, then who is Mr. Sizat's quote useful for? Some insight into this can be derived from returning to the conceptual framework of James Ferguson, who explains that even "failed" development projects can bring about important structural changes.<sup>8</sup> The imagining of Azerbaijani citizens as having mental inclinations that make them unlikely to participate in democracy is part of the picture in the case, and this has effects on the initiatives CSOs implement. Using Michel Foucault's concepts of "governmentality" and "knowledge/power"—taken as the organized practices through which subjects are governed<sup>9</sup>—Ferguson's analysis of planned technical development interventions suggests the likelihood of unintended outcomes that end up "incorporated into constellations of control that turn out in the end to have a kind of political intelligibility."<sup>10</sup> In Azerbaijan the construction of citizens as apathetic, afraid, or unable to use budgetary knowledge imparts this form of knowledge/power.

While the intent may not be to take away the participatory power of citizens in Azerbaijan (in fact CSOs claim to do just the opposite), civil society organizations can help reify this authorless strategy by reaffirming the belief in the lack of political agency on the part of citizens. Those putting knowledge into practice are not then, as transparency theory supposes, the larger society using "proper" use of democratic mechanisms, but rather a small and educated sector of society whose careers are to represent society's interests. Thus, it may not just be a coercive state but the shared belief that citizens lack agency that prevents the use of budgetary information as a tool for direct action. Transparency discourse therefore creates a legitimized space for participatory contestation of the state's activities, but contestation is understood to be in the domain of CSOs.

Using the construction of the "Sovietization of the mind" to explain the weakness of the state/society relationship is not limited, however, to CSO leaders in Azerbaijan. An abundance of post-Soviet research in the social sciences has tried to explain the "weakness" of civil society in post-Soviet spaces in terms of a shared Soviet legacy.<sup>11</sup> The Russian writer Alexander Zinovyev notes, for example, that two common features of "Sovietization" are indifference to common property and petty theft from the workplace and obedience or passive acceptance of everything that government imposes on them.

<sup>7</sup> Lynn, 171.

<sup>8</sup> Ferguson, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, 111.

<sup>10</sup> Ferguson, 21.

<sup>11</sup> See: Rothschild 1989, Howard 2003.

Whatever the extent of the effects of “Sovietization,” future scholars should not only consider why civil society is relatively weak in post-Soviet spaces, but also how this explanation might further perpetuate the “Sovietization of the mind” narrative for governments and development policy makers.

Interview responses suggest that the concept of “good governance” can be embraced by civil society groups in theory but can be implemented via unforeseen pathways. Theoretically, greater access to information via the EITI and Access to Information Act could allow for greater large-scale public mobilization. In practice, however, it seems that the people who actually utilize these new transparency mechanisms are a small, Western-educated group of intellectuals who have found a way for their organizations to plug in to the political system. While there are social, institutional, and economic explanations for the challenges to transparency and the mismanagement of resource revenues, civil society leaders tend to explain this failure with a socio-historical narrative about the people’s shared experiences of Sovietization.

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# Don't Silence the Victim: The Representation of Incestuous Rape in the novel *The Bluest Eye* and the film *Precious*

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## Abstract

Both the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and the film *Precious* broach the subject of incestuous rape. In *The Bluest Eye*, incestuous rape represents a symptom of a family struggling under the weight of racism and white standards of beauty. The novel focuses so heavily on the ways that racism has affected Pecola's family's history that Pecola's story never fully surfaces. By largely omitting Pecola's story in favor of her father's, Morrison in *The Bluest Eye* inflicts injustice on Pecola as a victim of incestuous rape. In contrast, in the film *Precious*, director Lee Daniels takes great pains to explore Precious's victimization; thus, this film's emphasis on the victim's perspective allows it to serve as the better art form for shedding light on the issue of incestuous rape.

Only specific forms of art possess the ability to represent issues of race, poverty and the effects of governmental institutions in the life of a young Black girl in a beautiful yet compelling and powerful manner. Toni Morrison describes the necessary requirements for an art form to effectively and forcefully shed light onto societal issues in her short essay, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation." She says, "[i]t should be beautiful, and powerful, but it should have something in it that enlightens; something in it that opens the door and points the way. Something in it that suggests what the conflicts are, what the problems are. But it need not solve those problems because it is not a case study, it is not a recipe."<sup>1</sup> Morrison utilizes a psychoanalytic approach to closely examine the dysfunctional Breedlove family in her novel *The Bluest Eye* as a lens into the harmful effects of racism, poverty and white standards of beauty in the life of her protagonist, Pecola. While Lee Daniels, the director of the film *Precious*, looks towards the broader institutions of society such as the education and welfare systems as a means of understanding their deleterious effects on Precious, the protagonist of the film.

Both the protagonists of the novel *The Bluest Eye*, written by Toni Morrison, and the film *Precious*, directed by Lee Daniels, suffer similar plights under the weight of societal discrimination and perceptions; society considers

them dark, ugly and lowly. Furthermore, their fathers rape them and they both bear their fathers' child(ren). The novel and the film do not focus exclusively on the issue of incestuous rape; rather, it acts as a symptom of societal issues. Morrison's preoccupation with the dysfunctional nature of Pecola's family due to racism leads her to view incestuous rape as merely another tool for promoting a psychoanalytic framework for her novel. By largely omitting Pecola's story in favor of her father's, Morrison in *The Bluest Eye* inflicts injustice on the victims of incestuous rape. Her novel does not fulfill the requirements of an effective and forceful art form; to use her analogy, *The Bluest Eye* opens the door into incestuous rape, but does not point the way—it fails to enlighten readers on its effect on Pecola. *Precious*, however, pays close attention to the victim's perspective and therefore, its treatment of incestuous rape allows it to serve as a better art form for representing, examining and broaching the subject of incestuous rape.

By focusing on unconscious and conscious desires and motivations of each member of the Breedlove family, Morrison takes a psychoanalytic approach to understanding the impact of racism, poverty and white standards of beauty on Pecola. She takes, specifically, a Freudian approach to psychoanalysis, which relies heavily on the family unit as a means of understanding the situation at hand. In her book *Psychoanalysis in Black Novels: Desires and the Protocols of Race*, Claudia Tate describes the impact of Freud's theory on the works of Black authors who employ psychoanalytic approaches, especially Morrison:

Such origins have produced a psychoanalytic practice that silences its own ideological history by presuming the culturally neutral family as its object of investigation. This displacement is important because it designates the family as primarily responsible for the tragic fates of real individuals who, for example, are like . . . Pecola Breedlove of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) (Tate, 16).

At the center of Freud's attempt to analyze the minds of humans exists the Father. Freud builds his theory of psychoanalysis on the cornerstone of the human longing for one's father; hence, he makes fatherhood and fathers crucial to understanding the family unit as a whole ("father complex").<sup>2</sup> By placing the most important event of the novel within the framework of Pecola's father, Cholly's, history, Morrison affirms the novel's emphasis on psychoanalysis, especially Freudian psychoanalysis.

<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison, "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation," in *What Moves at the Margin*, ed. Carolyn C. Denard (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2008), 58.

<sup>2</sup> During the period of 1910–1913, Freud coined the phrase "father complex" in his article "The Future Prospects of Psych-Analytic Therapy" to describe a phenomenon of guilt and anxiety relating to fathers that he saw in his patients. This theory later evolved into his well-known theories called the Electra and Oedipus complexes.

Throughout the novel, Morrison employs different headings to set up a framework for the chapter. Morrison employs this heading in the chapter that ends with the rape of Pecola:

“SEEFATHERHEISBIGANDSTRONGFATHER WILLYOUPLAYWITHJANEFATHERISSMILING SMILEFATHERSMILESMILE” (Morrison, 132). The emphasis on repetition of the word “father” suggests the framework of psychoanalysis and shows that this section of the novel will focus heavily on Cholly. Strung together without breaks or pauses, the words allude to Morrison’s psychoanalytic approach to understanding Cholly’s life—past, present and future—as a sequence of events that continuously affect one another. There is no beginning or end, break or no pause in-between events in Cholly’s life: they roll together into a senseless sequence that needs to be deciphered and separated out just as the seemingly meaningless chapter heading must be separated into words. After the heading, Morrison then delves immediately into Cholly’s past. The chapter begins with the sentence, “[w]hen Cholly was four days old . . .” (Morrison, 132). Morrison now invites readers into Cholly’s past as a means of fully understanding the imminent act of rape. She uses numerous time references such as “four days,” “four years” and “two years later” to remind readers of the importance of thoroughly understanding Cholly’s history and the timeline of the events in his life.

In keeping with a psychoanalytic perspective’s emphasis on the Father, the entire chapter that contains the rape of Pecola does not give Pecola a voice; instead, the chapter and her rape are narrated from the perspective of the rapist, her father:

Removing himself from her was so painful to him he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina . . . Cholly stood up and could see only her grayish panties, so sad and limp around her ankles. Again the hatred mixed with tenderness. The hatred would not let him pick her up, the tenderness forced him to cover her (163).

Throughout the entire rape scene, Morrison focuses on the emotions of Cholly such as the “painfulness,” “hatred” and “tenderness.” In contrast, the text fails to examine the emotions of Pecola and even refuses to acknowledge Pecola’s humanity by referring to her as simply “the child” instead of using her name (163). Pecola no longer exists as a person with a name and a story; therefore, the text dehumanizes her. She is reduced to an object to

further the exploration of Cholly’s emotions, becoming a tool for showing the depravity of her father and the dysfunctional nature of the family resulting from society’s discriminatory practices.

Though it could be argued that Morrison’s dehumanization of Pecola mimics the dehumanizing nature of the act of rape, I contend that Morrison still has an obligation to delve more deeply into Pecola’s experience in order to enlighten readers on the complex issue of incestuous rape properly. Throughout the novel, Morrison presents the same situation several times from different angles and perspectives. For example, she explains the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Breedlove in two different chapters in order to incorporate their different perspectives and histories.<sup>3</sup>

*The Bluest Eye* does end with an attempt to read and understand Pecola’s perspective on her traumatic experience. However, this happens in only one brief section of the novel and is structured as an internal dialogue between Pecola and her imaginary friend. This dialogue does not discuss the rape in-depth and merely alludes to a subsequent rape. The italicized words represent the imaginary friend and the non-italicized words represent Pecola, “*I wonder what it would be like, Horrible. Really, Yes. Horrible. Then why didn’t you tell Mrs. Breedlove? I did tell her! I don’t mean about the first time. I mean about the second time, when you were sleeping on the couch*” (Morrison, 200). The novel drops the issue of incestuous rape without fully developing its impact on Pecola, as the text’s brief allusion to a second rape in this quote strongly shows. Furthermore, Pecola constantly refers to her desire for blue eyes during her conversations with her imaginary friend, demonstrating the novel’s primary emphasis on Pecola’s internal desires that result from society’s white standards of beauty. This aligns well with psychoanalysis’ prioritization of one’s long-term internal desires as a means of analyzing a situation over understanding the current tremendous suffering that her father’s rape may have caused her. Though Pecola’s increased desire for the bluest eye may help illuminate her methods of coping with the trauma, the novel fails to explain how obtaining “the bluest eyes” will help her to assuage the painful aftermaths of her rape.

This refusal to acknowledge the gravity of incestuous rape and the immense trauma caused by this event does injustice to Pecola. In this manner, Morrison mimics society’s discrimination against the Breedlove family. She deems that Pecola is unworthy of examination in the same manner

<sup>3</sup> The novel describes the story of Mrs. Breedlove in the chapter before the chapter that focuses on Cholly’s history and Pecola’s rape.

that society deems the Breedloves as unworthy. Thus, she adheres to society's practices of silencing the perceived weak and lowly of society although she claims to do the opposite in her condemnation of racism and white standards of beauty.

The film *Precious*, on the other hand, does not concern itself with the desires and history of Precious's father and mother. While the father does not appear in the novel *Push* by Sapphire, on which the film is based, readers learn that Precious's father is a crack addict and that his substance abuse contributes to his frequent sexual assaults on his daughter (Sapphire, 34). This fact about Precious's father goes unmentioned in the movie. Although examining incestuous rape from the perspective of the father in a non-psychoanalytic manner can also help heighten awareness of incestuous rape, this movie rejects the father altogether as a means of vehemently opposing psychoanalysis. Precious's story, not her father and mother's, reigns supreme in this film.

Focusing solely on Precious's stories and struggles, especially after her father rapes her repeatedly and impregnates her twice, enables Lee Daniels to explore incestuous rape while simultaneously reviewing the larger governmental systems that oppress her. He emphasizes the literality and non-symbolic nature of Precious's trauma. Cathy Caruth, author of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, discusses the literality of a traumatic event such as incestuous rape:

Indeed, modern analysts as well have remarked on the surprising *literality* and traumatic dreams and flashbacks, which resist cure to the extent that they remain, precisely, literal. It is this literality and its insistent return which thus constitutes trauma and points toward its enigmatic core: the delay or incompleteness in knowing, or even in seeing, an overwhelming occurrence that then remains, in its insistent return, absolutely *true* to the event. It is indeed this truth of traumatic experience that forms the center of its pathology or symptoms; it is not pathology, that is, of falsehood or displacement of meaning, but of history itself (Caruth, 5).

Precious's traumatic experience *must* be taken literally and as the truth, not as a means of psychoanalyzing Precious's tumultuous life. Lee Daniels establishes that Precious, as a human, has a unique situation that separates her from all others. Hers is not simply another case to be filed away in the drawers of a welfare caseworker; Precious deserves to have her story told with precision and literality.

In line with Daniels's emphasis on Precious's story, the film functions as a documentary representation of her life as well. At the start of the film, writings appear in Precious's handwriting with spelling errors, imitating her voice and the writing style of the novel *Push*. The film glorifies the autobiographical written process as an important and necessary process in documenting and understanding the effects of racism, poverty and white standards of beauty on Precious. A number of scenes consist of people writing and of words sprawling across the screen. The writing process gives Precious a voice of her Precious's trauma.

One poignant scene shows Daniels's accentuation of the importance of documenting Precious's trauma and more broadly, the trauma of all victims of incestuous rape. Precious has just discovered that she is HIV positive. While her entire class writes fervently in their notebooks, she sits refusing to write with only two words written in her notebook, "Why me?" (*Precious*, 1:23:34). Her teacher, Blue Rain, notices the words written in her notebook and beckons Precious to come into her office. Precious refuses and tells the entire class that she tested positive for HIV. Viewers get a medium shot of Blue as she says, "Remember when you once told me, you never got to tell your story. Write." Next, viewers get a close shot of Precious as she tearfully shouts back: "Fuck you! You know nothing of what I've been through. I ain't never had no boyfriend. My daddy said he gonna marry me. How he gonna do that? It would fucking be illegal!" (1:24:38–1:24:56). The camera follows Blue Rain as she walks towards Precious and commands again, "Write." A close-up shot of Precious shows Precious's tear-stained face as she pleads with her teacher, "I tired, Ms. Rain." A crying Blue Rain declares her love for Precious, and the scene ends with a close-up shot of her commanding more ferociously, "Write!" (1:24:56–1:25:05). The voice-over readings of Precious's diary entries help viewers to understand her specific struggles and comprehend her rapes, pregnancy, and sickness, all results of her horrible situation in society. It also shows the difficulty that a victim faces in documenting her own trauma and hence, it becomes crucial that she finds support to propel her to express herself.

The film *Precious* also combines the documentary elements with visual and auditory elements to solidify the horror of incestuous rape in the minds of the viewers. During the two rape scenes, the audience gets an uncensored visual experience of the rape in order for them to comprehend the physical nature of the act of rape. First, viewers witness images of Precious's father raping her in two separate instances in-between flashing images of daily activities such

as a frying egg and a crawling cat. The images on the screen imbue two more senses: the frying egg induces the sensation of taste and the hand reaching into the Vaseline, possibly used as lubricant, conjures up the feeling of the warm ointment on one's skin. Next, viewers see Precious's vagina as her father pushes her onto the bed (00:6:38–00:6:40). Medium shots allow for Precious's father's forceful thrashing of his hips into her vagina to be seen with clarity. Close-up shots of the father's belly, drenched in sweat, enable viewers to experience the sloppiness of the act of rape and to understand the imminent exchange of body fluids between a father and a daughter. Her unsupported breasts underneath her blue shirt move to the rhythm of her father's constant exertions into her. Her bed's bouncing coils demonstrate its failure to fulfill its role as her safe haven and place of comfort; rather, her bed betrays her and acts as a conspirator in the rape by enabling her father's violent sexual acts against her. Her mother also fails to fulfill her role as the daughter's nurturer. She, instead, nurtures a destructive environment for her daughter by acting as a shadowy presence in the background that stands in silence as her husband rapes her daughter (00:6:52–00:6:53).

Seeing the mundane occurrences such as the frying egg and the cat, which interrupt the rape scene, allows viewers to experience the kind of dissociation Precious encounters. Dissociation can occur when a victim mentally separates from her body in order to escape from the incredible psychological distress of rape. The frying egg and cat along with the fantasy sequences give a concrete look into Precious's thought processes during the acts of rape as she dissociates. The connection between these images and how they enable Precious to handle the repeated rapes are clear. Viewers understand that Precious searches her mind for other mental pictures to escape the rape scene, just as viewers must rely on these images to temporarily relieve them from the painfulness of watching the rape scene. Placing the viewers in Precious's shoes gives them a glimpse of the possible inability for a victim to stay in the present during the act of rape whereas in the novel *The Bluest Eye*, readers must interpret Pecola's mental processes for themselves during her rape.

Moreover, auditory elements give viewers a complete and holistic understanding of incestuous rape. The sounds doing the rape scene are at once muddled and amplified. Viewers hear the sound of the sheets ruffle as Precious hits the bed, the squeaky floors as her father approaches, the sliding of her father's belt as he undoes and lowers his pants,

the creaky coils of the bed bouncing up and down, the sizzling of the egg and bacon, the opening of the Vaseline box, her father's hands as they slide down his pants, his heavy panting as he thrusts himself into her, the meowing of the cat as it climbs over the couch and the shadowy father saying "Yes, yeah. Right there. Yeah. Daddy loves you" (00:6:39–00:7:04). Purposefully, the director does not use music to convey the seriousness of rape. All of these sounds run into one another and happen in quick succession, causing a cacophony of actual sounds a victim of incestuous rape may hear. This demonstrates once more the director's commitment to depicting the rape as accurately as possible through the eyes of the victim.

In addition, the process of listening to these sounds makes the viewers feel an intimate connection with Precious. Trauma theorist Dori Laub says, "[t]he listener, therefore, by definition partakes in the struggle of the victim with the memories and residues of his or her traumatic past . . . [t]he listener has to feel the victim's victories, defeats and silences, know them from within so that they can assume the form of testimony" (Laub, 58). Thus, the viewers who listen to the sounds that Precious listens to forge a connection with Precious in order to understand and experience with her the incestuous rape.

Incestuous rape, an issue effecting hundreds, cannot be taken lightly. Because the movie *Precious* gives voice to Precious, the victim of incestuous rape, this movie serves as the better art form for understanding the immense impact of this weighty issue. On the contrary, *The Bluest Eye* does not thoroughly enlighten readers of the horrors of incestuous rape. Morrison focuses so heavily on the rapist that the victim of incestuous rape's story is mostly absent. Thus, all art forms, whether novel or film, that touch on the issue of incestuous rape must not silence the victim but rather, include an in-depth delineation of the victim's story in order to fulfill the requirements of an effective and forceful art form.

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# The Red Revolution: A New Chapter in Corporate Branding

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## Abstract

This paper, which draws on research for her Mellon Mays undergraduate paper, seeks to explicate and critique the political and social framework within which Red operates. Among other issues addressed, it mainly explores the implications and problems of using a neo-liberal model that is anchored in transnational corporate profitability as the primary tool to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa.

*“One of the primary results—and one of the primary needs—of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories.”—Wendell Berry*

## What Is Red?

Red is a charity-related brand name that was first introduced to the international community by U2’s Bono during the 2006 World Economic Forum (a multilateral neoliberal economic organization based in Davos, Switzerland). The website that was set up for the brand’s launch stated that one of its goals is to “transform our incredible collective power as consumers into a financial force to help others in need,”<sup>1</sup> and in particular, those suffering from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa.<sup>2</sup> The brand’s architects seek to produce this charitable giving by permitting corporations to tag their products with the Red logo, under the condition that these corporations donate at least 1% of the profits to Red. The Global Fund receives the profits, which help provide medicine for those infected with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in Africa.

## Social Responsibility and Corporate Philanthropy

Red is an important model to investigate because it represents a new era in corporate social responsibility, which is a self-regulating practice in which businesses seek to claim responsibility for their actions and their impact on their workers, the environment, and shareholders. Ironically, with the rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the last three decades, corporations have in many ways become less “socially responsible” to their consumers and workers, as evident by the aggressive campaigns many have waged against unionization, the dramatic shift to outsourcing among some corporations, and widespread corporate reductions in health

and pension benefits. Hence, the rise in CSR has had an obscurantist impact, since it has deflected mainstream attention away from outsourcing, benefit cuts, and other actions that are not seen as “socially responsible” by corporate critics. Red pushes the boundaries of CSR by playing both sides in the conversation about corporate social responsibility. By positioning itself as a charitable enterprise, Red’s visibility and commercial viability as a brand proactively produce positive press.

Corporate social responsibility evolved to a hybrid of consumption and charity in the early 1980s, under the leadership of American Express, a multinational financial services corporation that promised to donate one percent of each transaction to the restoration of the Statue of Liberty. This seemingly unprofitable maneuver actually increased revenue and led to a 45% increase in the number of new credit seekers,<sup>3</sup> and thus this was the birth of cause-related marketing (CRM), the commercial merging of a brand with a charitable cause. As seen above, there can be strong economic incentives for companies to embrace CRM. Red arguably ushers in a new stage in CRM by consolidating existing CRM practices with the brand itself. Because it operates as a co-brand and not a company that produces products or services, and because it exists only through companies that do produce products and services, Red becomes a corporation that challenges Milton Friedman’s notion that corporations exist simply to maximize profit.<sup>4</sup> Precisely because of its “united” multi-branding but simultaneously non-economic social presence, it has been extremely effective in terms of marketing and cultivating megabrand partnerships. What’s more, its complicated positioning in the worlds of commerce and charity allows Red to create a section of capitalist society that obscures companies’ ethical and humanitarian infractions. Red consolidates multiple marketing techniques (philanthropy, CSR, CRM) in the service of relocating both charity and commerce in a universe composed primarily of brands rather than things.

This is most easily seen by examining the ethical and human rights records of some of the corporations involved with Red, such as the Gap and Nike, both of which have faced allegations of unethical practices. In 1999, for example, Gap was among 18 other manufacturers to be charged with human rights violation in their manufacturing buildings. In 2008, Gap was once again caught up in a scandal, as Jin Shun, a factory associated with Gap in Queens, NY, was found to have paid its workers less than minimum wage and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.joinred.com/FAQ>.

<sup>2</sup> Part of Red’s branding technique is formulating a monolithic Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Polishchuk Leonid, Firsov Evgeny. “Doing Well by Doing Good: An Industrial Organization Perspective of Corporate Philanthropy.”

<sup>4</sup> Friedman, Milton. “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits.” *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970.

forced them to work overtime.<sup>5</sup> Nike, one of the largest corporations in the world, has also been tied to several human rights violations, most visibly in a case that led to *Kasky v. Nike*, where plaintiff Marc Kasky filed a lawsuit against Nike stating that they falsely advertised working conditions in their factories. Allegations like those faced by Nike and Gap must not only be settled financially, but more importantly, also require companies to rectify their public images.

The Red brand can be used as a tool for corporations to publicly advertise their commitment to social justice in the wake of criticisms about their records in this area. Not only does it help deflect criticism, but also Red's co-branding strategy can produce an advantage for corporations among socially conscious consumers who are not aware of the criticisms. Red celebrities (Chris Rock, Alicia Keys), politicians (Desmond Tutu, President Barack Obama) and activists (Maya Angelou) are important in legitimizing the brand because they project their personas of socially responsible celebrities onto the branded products.

One of the most interesting trends in today's neo-liberal, privatizing economy is that charity has emerged, at least discursively, as one of its main components, at least in the opinion of Slavoj Žižek, a well-known Slovenian critical theorist. Žižek refers to this as the trend toward cultural capitalism, and he argues that it not only merges charity and privatization, but also merges consumption and anti-capitalist ideology. For example, in buying fair trade coffee, one buys not only the coffee, but in the act of buying coffee, recognizes the farmers and supports their endeavors because it is fair trade. Also, in the consumerist act of buying a product, Žižek states, consumers can simultaneously buy their redemption from being *just* a consumer.<sup>6</sup> Corporations such as Starbucks employ this ideology to the benefit of their images as well as their profits. Starbucks is built on the idea that one not only buys coffee in its establishments, but one also buys into a community that has a foundation in morality, including Starbucks's commitment to ethical practices in its relationships with coffee producers. Indeed, most corporations that embrace the Red brand try to position themselves as the producers of moral and ethical communities. Much like Starbucks's green marketing, which supports indigenous production, Red embodies the idea that profit-oriented consumption can also be an act of social solidarity and uplift.

### Red as Part of a Longstanding Corporate Liberal, Neo-Liberal, or Corporatist Project

In *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State*, historian and leftist journalist James Weinstein tracked the ways in which banks and businesses have used liberal ideology to maintain and reinforce the existing social hierarchy from the earliest period of corporate capitalism, namely, the period of industrialization at the turn of the 20th century. By offering limited support to the needy and to workers' rights—a practice of corporate social welfare Weinstein refers to as “corporate liberalism,” corporations at the turn of the 20th century sought to brand themselves as socially responsible. Corporate liberalism has been especially effective, according to Weinstein, because it has enabled corporations to accommodate and eventually neutralize their political opponent, who most frequently chose to abandon calls for radical change in favor of accepting corporate charity and aid.

Accordingly, Weinstein and others argue that corporate support for social welfare initiatives, the kind of support reflected in Red, does not necessarily mean that corporations are progressive. In some ways, neo-liberalism, as described by David Harvey, is a more recent iteration of some of the ideas about corporate liberalism that Weinstein articulated regarding the industrial era. In particular, Corporate Social Responsibility in some ways mirrors the kind of charity that corporations championed in the industrial era. Neo-liberalism, which is based on political and economic theories that privilege privatization and individual freedom for both citizens and businesses, with as little government intervention as possible—unless, of course, the intervention benefits business—on the surface seems to contradict the idea of CSR. The neo-liberal critique of State action, along with the rise of corporate power, helped legitimize multilateral, multinational, corporate financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the Global Fund, both of which embedded anti-social, individualistic neo-liberal practices into their lending policies. The influence of neo-liberalism spread as nations not directly involved with global financial institutions fell under the power of economists trained by Milton Friedman, who exported neo-liberal Chicago School economics to the Global South. From the viewpoint of critics like Harvey, neo-liberalism is intensely anti-social and individualistic, and can be seen as a form of neo-colonialism, a formation that Nkrumah once denounced as the last stage of

<sup>5</sup> Greenhouse, Steven. 2008. “Apparel Factory Workers Were Cheated, State Says.” (Metropolitan Desk; Jin Shun, New York Labor Department), *The New York Times*. 157 (54381).

<sup>6</sup> Žižek, Slavoj. “First as Tragedy, Then as Farce.” Lecture from Royal Society of Arts, San Francisco, CA, November 24, 2009.

imperialism. In fact, this intensely critical perspective gave rise to a vigorous transnational social movement, as expressed in events like the Battle in Seattle, the famous mass demonstration that occurred during the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle. Within this body of criticism, Red can be seen as a cultural development that helps further a neo-liberal project by using corporate profits to shift social services and social uplift to the private sector, rather than leaving it to government service as required under a Keynesian or Marxist or Socialist system.

Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci's theory of the struggle for hegemony as part of a "war of position" provides one way of talking about the way Red fits into the neo-liberal project. Gramsci uses trench warfare as a metaphor for explaining how the bourgeoisie struggles to maintain its social and political power against the possibility of class revolutions. He states that the bourgeoisie is constantly adjusting its position in response to attacks and counterattacks from its enemies. In this sense, hegemony (or domination) is never secure. It is always unstable, under attack by enemies, and it must be won over and over again. Using this framework, corporations can be seen as employing the Red brand in a "war of position" with critics of neo-liberalism, such as the people who attacked them during the Battle in Seattle. The idea of corporate social responsibility is, in this scenario, merely a position taken by the ruling class to deflect or neutralize unfavorable publicity and allegations of unethical conduct that emerge under neo-liberalism. As a proactive project, Red frames the corporations as ethically sound, positioning them as socially aware subjects committed to social justice ahead of any allegations to the contrary. And since Red is a freestanding entity, one that stands for the eradication of AIDS and other diseases that are ravishing large parts of the Global South, Red positions the branded companies as friends of the oppressed, in a kind of solidarity (real or imagined) with other corporations, with consumers and with the people of Africa.

#### **Branding: A Specific Consumer, a Specific Product**

Naomi Klein is one of the leading young left intellectuals of her generation, and her main project is criticism of corporate and/or neo-liberalism. Her contributions have been especially influential in terms of drawing attention to the importance of branding in the neo-liberal corporate order. She locates the growing importance of branding in the growing flexibility of production across national lines, otherwise known as "outsourcing." When products began to be assembled, produced, and created abroad, or across

national boundaries, corporations needed to find a way to bracket the public's general fear of what outsourcing would be to established national economies. Thus, branding became the main form through which corporations produced visibility for themselves across national markets. Although branding began as a way to normalize flexible production, or production overseas, it soon began to serve another purpose.

In *No Logo*, Naomi Klein looks at the ways in which ideas of branding transformed a simple representation of a product (visual representations that mediated people's concerns regarding the anonymity of packaged goods) to the packaging of ideas. In the '80s, brands were created with particular identities and emotional ties. Quickly, they became the primary mode of creating corporate identities. Brands and the visions packaged in the brands gained more worth than actual products, and the monetary value of a brand (e.g., Nike) became worth more than the product (the shoe). This is the ultimate purpose that branding serves. Brands that are well established are able to evoke a feeling, concept, or value in consumers. They help to produce a myth that captures the imagination of many, according to *Global Reach's* Richard Barnet. Effective branding makes the consumer associate their goals and sense of self with a brand; thus, they buy the brand rather than the product. Successful branding mass produces a myth, idea, or goal that captivates the minds. The culture's identification with and relation to the brand adds value to the brand.

#### **Red, or the Corporate Branding of HIV/AIDS**

For some, Red has become a way of validating expensive purchases while simultaneously gaining credibility as a concerned global citizen by purchasing on behalf of the poor. The Red consumers cannot only afford elite brands, but can also see themselves as socially conscious and ethical. Red appeals to the "aware" consumers, who are likely to care about the environment and other world issues. Furthermore, Red helps justify what Thorstein Veblen the economist and sociologist calls conspicuous consumption. Red consumers are not your average Wal-Mart shoppers. They value particular brands, and Red products are very particular. There is no household product included in Red marketing, nor are there regularly consumed products that everyone has to buy. There are computers, iPods, sunglasses, and concerts, products purchased only occasionally. This, of course, narrows their consumer base to those with relatively high disposable incomes, and considerably narrows possible opportunities for "donation." As a

consequence, Red is the perfect demonstration of the possibility that a high-end, affluent consumer can also be committed to bettering the world.

One difficulty that Red faces in doing this dance is that the market is saturated with brands, and consumers are well trained to tune out new branding pitches. As Naomi Klein, among others, points out, this constant collision of signs has made us in many ways immune to advertisements. What this means is that any new branding project must do something that stands out in a very crowded universe of signs. Thus, corporations now look for different methods of product differentiation, and this search is clearly evident in the branding strategy followed by Red, particularly in its production of fast-moving images valuing cultural differences and framed as works of art.

### Conclusion

In this essay, I have provided the foundation for a close examination of the brand known as Red. I have tried to locate the strategy that gave rise to this brand historically, and also examine its political functions in a period of growing transnational corporate domination, and also of increasing resistance to this domination. In further work, I hope to reveal how the Red strategy works visually, identifying the ways in which it deploys visual markers of race, gender and art. I also want to explore some of the practical implications of the Red project, especially the ways in which it impacts choices and constraints in the fight against AIDS, HIV and other diseases on the ground, especially in Africa. This latter topic, which is in my opinion of paramount importance, will allow me to examine the impact of CSR in the area of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, through examining such things as how corporate action enables or constrains the use of generic versus brand name drugs.

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# How We Talk about Talk: The Pervasiveness of Covert Racism in Cases of Linguistic Discrimination

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## Abstract

On December 18th, 1996, the Oakland California Unified School Board unveiled a resolution on the behalf of those African American students they dubbed “Ebonics” speakers. “Ebonics,” which is generally held to be a variety of non-standard English, was positioned within the resolution as a language. The resulting controversy put African American “Ebonics” speakers at the forefront of a national debate. The discourse surrounding “Ebonics” and other non-standard speech varieties begs the question, how much does the identity of the speaker factor into the perception of their speech? Using the 1996 “Ebonics” controversy as a particular instance of linguistic discrimination, this article elucidates the connection between speaker identity and speech. It also considers the covertly racist strategies employed in the reproduction of the status quo and the inequality that status quo entails.

On December 18th, 1996, the Oakland California Unified School Board officially unveiled a resolution that provoked a veritable media fracas. The board’s African American Task Force, growing ever-concerned about the educational plight of a number of African American students within their district, demanded both the funding necessary as well as the pedagogical tools needed in order to properly address the fiscal and educational inequalities facing those students they termed “Ebonics” speakers. While the definition of “Ebonics” has changed and evolved since Robert Williams’s initial 1973 baptismal meaning of the term, in this case “Ebonics” refers to a language system spoken by some African Americans, and often stigmatized by people and institutions that espouse and valorize the hegemonic standard English language. The school board sought a language classification that would qualify their students for the Title VII funding that is generally allocated to ESL programs. In order for their “Ebonics” speaking students to qualify for Title VII, the Task Force dubbed “Ebonics” a language, having a biological basis, as opposed to a dialect. This classification was a deliberate move meant to align “Ebonics” and its speakers with ESL students. The resolution was met with both rabid disdain and support, leading to

a trial with literally no conclusion. While the legal battle reached a stalemate, Pandora’s box had been opened in terms of the socio-political debates regarding “Ebonics.” Socio-linguists, who have universally agreed upon the legitimacy and rule-governed nature of “Ebonics” since the extensive body of research on African American language systems came out of the 1960s, were bewildered by the palpable rage that this debate aroused in a number of Americans. Why did it so anger certain Americans, both black and white, that portions of the African American community had retained a language system that is all-at-once legitimate, poetic, stylistic, and wholly individual? The answer to this question may lie in the nature of how we conceive of language systems and speakers; the answer may lie in how we conceive of racial discourse in a contemporary temporality.

The 1960s saw the rise of the socio-linguistic movement. William Labov’s seminal research on African American Vernacular English paved the way for its legitimation by the Linguistic Society of America. It is the work of socio-linguists to explore the relationship between language and speakers, the relationship between speakers and society. Linguist and educator John Baugh’s work on “Ebonics” takes up this call to arms, presenting the Oakland controversy from a variety of angles and with a particular focus on its educational and social implications. Baugh opens *Beyond Ebonics* by quoting Harlem Renaissance scholar W.E.B. Du Bois. In response to Roland Barthe’s support of the change in racial classification of African Americans from “Negro” to “colored” Du Bois asserts: “Things are the reality that counts. If a thing is despised, either because of ignorance or because it is despicable, you will not alter matters by changing its name” (qtd. in Baugh, 1). Baugh reveals the timely application of Du Bois’s 1928 sentiment within the more contemporary “Ebonics” controversy, suggesting that how we choose to classify things and people is sometimes of less importance than how we perceive them.

The voices of multifarious proponents and detractors are presented in Baugh’s *Beyond Ebonics*, where a singular theme weaves their voices together—covert American racism. Baugh argues that, “overt racism is declining in favor of forms of symbolic and economic racism that still have the same intended exclusionary effects” (Baugh 112). The “Ebonics” debates, as well as the debates surrounding other forms of non-standard English varieties or stigmatized foreign languages, have proven to be sites where exclusionary practices may be reproduced in order to enact inequalities that negatively affect the life chances of language minorities.

Rooted in what linguistic anthropologist Jane Hill refers to as the “folk theory” of racism, covert racism is paradoxically all pervasive and also largely invisible. It is the elusive nature of the language of this kind of racism, as exhibited and espoused by dominant institutions as well as certain individuals, that has allowed for the reproduction of social- and class-based inequalities in American classrooms and American society.

While conducting ethnographic research for the critical essay, “‘I Am Not a Racist But . . .’: Mapping White College Students’ Racial Ideology in the USA,” researchers Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tyrone A. Forman found that “new racial ideology has emerged that . . . avoids direct racial discourse but effectively safeguards racial privilege” (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 52). This “new racetalk” still depends upon and perpetuates a system of upper-class privilege, it simply approaches the discussion of that privilege using language that does not openly assert racist intent. Intention becomes crucial to an understanding of the simultaneous prevalence and invisibility of contemporary racial attitudes. Hill elucidates the problematic nature of an intentionalist focus in discourse about race. She writes:

Personalism insists that each individual has an invisible interior self which is the site of beliefs and intentions and emotional states such as love and hatred. Personalist ideology permits us to say that when a speaker speaks, he or she “means” something. That is, meaning resides not only in the content of words, as determined by baptismal ideology, but in what the speakers intend by uttering them (Hill, 88–9).

The obsession with intention allows people and institutions a great deal of leeway in claiming, often after their actions or words have had unforeseen or unfortunate consequences, that they had not willfully intended such outcomes. “Personalism” projects onto words and statements connotations largely outside of their content, meanings that instead focus inward into the heart and soul of the individual. Intention as a legitimate barometer of racism is a pre-Civil Rights era conception of racism employed in a post-Civil Rights era temporality. Such a temporality ought not be conflated with what is often termed our post-racial moment. While the contemporary racial discourse in this post-Civil Rights era is mediated and moderated through more covert means, racism is still present and quite active in reducing the life chances of a number of Americans. In the particular case of this essay, contemporary or neo-racism is mediated through language and discussions of speech. Language

serves as a catalyst, an aural reminder of racial difference, while simultaneously obfuscating the issue of race.

Department of Education Secretary Richard Riley, the first man on the scene when the Oakland School Board presented their resolution, provides an excellent example of how intentionalism and “Personalism” are manifested. His actions illustrate how covert racism transcends intention and should instead be considered through an appraisal of the racial consequences of one’s actions. Riley rejected the notion that “Ebonics” is an “African language system” that is “genetically based and not a dialect of English” (Baugh, 44). Employing an administratively based incarnation of “new racetalk,” Riley made a policy-based assertion that depicted itself as being outside the realm of racial discourse. He argued, “The Administration’s policy is that Ebonics is a non-standard form of English and not a foreign language” (Baugh, 49). Arguably operating on the fear that funding this school system might lead to funding other school systems serving minority and low-income students, Riley’s position failed to address and perpetuated the inequities of the Oakland California school system by dashing any hopes of funding under the federal guidelines of Title VII. Baugh explains, “Federal definitions of language-minority students are delineated so as to exclude non-standard English, African American students for whom standard English is not native continue to be ignored by federal educational language policies” (Baugh, 50). The real fear was that “Oakland was threatening to reslice the Title VII pie, thereby evoking Secretary Riley’s prompt regulatory restraint” (Baugh, 50). Through an invocation of and dependence upon the ideology of standard language, often referred to by socio-linguist Rosina Lippi-Green as the “mythical beast,” Riley attempts to transcend the unpleasant racial implications of the “Ebonics” controversy, while shifting his focus instead to the linguistic differences between languages and dialects.

While it is unfair to classify Riley a “racist” simply due to his policy, it is important to consider the racial consequences of his actions, namely leaving many struggling African American students, who were a significant portion of the students in this district, without access to funding or to any of the pedagogical tools that may have facilitated their ability to bridge from their home language, “Ebonics,” with standard English. The substantial body of research on African American English that emerged in the 1960s often argues the educational merit of using the student’s home language in order to progress to the more commonly lauded language of the classroom and the public sphere—standard English. The resolution outlines the direness of the academic

situation for struggling students: “The standardized tests and grade scores of African American students in reading and language arts skills measuring their application of English skills are substantially below state and national norms” (Baugh, 45). The board goes on to argue that “such deficiencies will be remedied by application of a program featuring African Language systems principles in instructing African American children both in their primary language and in English” (Baugh, 45). Programs like the 1977 “Bridge” program, developed by Gary Simpkins and Grace Holt, featured textbooks in standard English and in “Ebonics.” The program proved successful in elevating reading comprehension and language arts skills, but was discontinued by textbook manufacturers due to a lack of revenue.

While Riley should hardly be crucified for his rejection of the board’s language classification and funding demands, it is important to view such a rejection within a larger framework of the racial coloring of structural inequality. As Du Bois argued, “Things are the reality that counts,” suggesting how we classify racial discourse may be less important than how such discourse reproduces the status quo. As Baugh, Bonilla-Silva, and Forman all argue, the semantics of racism have been altered in this contemporary moment, but the inequality bolstered by such discourse continues to be reproduced through covert means.

Jane Hill’s work on “folk theory” critically examines contemporary attitudes about race and racism, exposing a number of general conceptions that she believes most privileged Americans espouse. Hill’s work on personalist ideology is most applicable to an understanding of covert racism or “new racetalk.” Personalist ideology or intentionalism “holds that racism is entirely a matter of individual beliefs, intentions and actions” (Hill, 6). This belief suggests that inner states be considered in any assessment of the meaning behind utterances, and any assessment of the speaker’s character. This aspect of “folk theory” holds that only super-racists, such as members of the KKK, engage in racist actions and racist discourse. Making a scapegoat of the small minority of extreme racists allows “regular folks” the leeway to engage in activities like avoiding certain neighborhoods, making judgment calls based upon someone’s last name without censure or fostering conditions that perpetuate housing segregation. It can also prevent people from seeing any connections between having an aversion to “Ebonics” and negative feelings and stigma towards African Americans more broadly, allowing them to attribute their position to a seemingly benign and race-neutral position on language classification.

The “Ebonics” trial began only six days after the resolution was proposed, and featured testimony by educators, linguists, and politicians alike. An appraisal of the testimonies offers insight into the seemingly benign or race-neutral positions held on language. Each testimony, regardless of position, makes salient the connection between language and speakers. Senator Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina “decried the politics of race and their Ebonics surrogates as one of the most ‘absurd’ examples of extreme ‘political correctness’ that he had ever encountered” (Baugh, 53). An unnamed African American minister lambasted “Ebonics” between quoting scripture, conflating the non-standard variety with “bad English” and “slang” (Baugh, 55). A conservative radio talk show host boldly expressed his disapproval of “Ebonics” in the classroom by citing a French immersion class he had attended. While lending inadvertent approval for the classification of “Ebonics” as a language and not a dialect, he argued that using the student’s home or heritage language in the classroom is wholly unnecessary. In order to fairly present the wide range of positions expressed in the trial, it seems fitting to also consider the testimony of proponents. Orlando Taylor, an African American academic and prominent scholar of African American speech, offered testimony in favor of the school board’s resolution. “Far too many African American children have not acquired sufficient proficiency in standard English . . . . These children speak as their primary language system a rule-governed social dialect of English . . . . This variety of English, as other non-standard English dialects, has often been stigmatized by the mainstream society” (Baugh, 57). Taylor’s testimony was offset by the testimony of educator Michael Casserly who presented comparative data about African American students nationwide and the achievement gaps between African American students and their European American counterparts.

In the case of each testimony, from Taylor’s assertion that African American students who speak “Ebonics” face the stigma of not measuring up to hegemonic American norms to Faircloth’s palpable anger regarding the extreme and “absurd political correctness” of the debate, it is clear that language is neither race nor class neutral. Lippi-Green explicitly poses the critique that language is an inherently racial discourse. She writes:

What is surprising, even deeply disturbing, is the way that many individuals who consider themselves democratic, even-handed, rationale, and free of prejudice, hold on tenaciously to a standard English ideology which attempts to justify restriction of individuality and rejection of the other (Lippi-Green, 78).



Lippi-Green's body of research focuses on what is termed the ideology of standard. This is an ideology premised on the notion that standard English is naturalized through a variety of subordination methods aimed at the control of non-standard speakers. Socio-linguist Bonnie Urciuoli and the participants in her study also reach similar conclusions regarding the racial foundations upon which language ideologies are formulated. Urciuoli writes:

Language difference in the United States is deeply racializing. When people use languages other than English in public and in ways that are not tightly scripted or framed by an unequivocally middle-class presentation, they are seen as dangerously out of order . . . . This is where the political economy of language begins: with the matrix of conditions that shape racialized perceptions of language difference (Urciuoli, 38).

Language is not, and cannot be, a race-neutral discourse. It is intrinsically tied to identity and thus connected to often-hierarchized cultural difference. Within the "Ebonics" controversy and the subsequent trial, the stigmatization of certain African American speakers played out on a national scale. In this and other cases, covert racism is shrouded in a discourse of linguistic orthodoxy, and perpetuates and maintains a status quo that unevenly allocates social and tangible resources. A failure to critically consider the connection between speaker and speech may have very dire consequences. Too simplistic a view of contemporary racial and linguistic discourse often aids and abets the reproduction of policy and ideology that negatively affects the life chances of non-standard and stigmatized speakers. The 1996 Oakland California "Ebonics" controversy, a singular moment of linguistic discrimination within a broader culture of linguistic discrimination, is proof that the way that we talk about talk is also the way that we talk about people.

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# Joining Fox Nation: An Ethnographic Content Analysis of the Fox News Network

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## Abstract

This study explores how race surfaced on the Fox News Network, in the midst of the budget crisis on Capitol Hill in the spring of 2011. Fox News was viewed for a total of 36 hours. This condensed report explains how the usage of race mirrors deeper sentiments of racial anxiety commonly seen within the political theater. This study not only finds extreme bias in reporting on the Fox News Network, but concludes that Fox News is a cultural artifact of a racialized society in a bipartisan nation.

Racial controversy shadowed Fox News Network long before Glenn Beck declared President Obama carried a deep-seated hatred for white people. In 2005, hip-hop artist Nas launched a one-man national campaign against Fox News, arguing the network spread racial propaganda and portrayed African Americans in a negative light. The network's questionable move to hire Lou Dobbs, a former CNN correspondent notoriously pushed off the air back in early 2010 for his continuous rants against undocumented immigrants, has not helped to subside beliefs about the network's insensitivity to racial affairs. In 2010, comedian Sarah Silverman lashed out at Fox News, claiming: "The entire Fox News Channel is a 24-hour-a-day racism engine, but it's all coded, all implied . . . Lou Dobbs used to scream on CNN about 'immigration,' not 'filthy Mexicans'" (Shae 2010). While comedians and rappers may not hold academic clout, were their comments merely the ranting of hungry-for-fame seekers, or do they speak to a more notable cause? The often-outlandish commentaries of Lou Dobbs and Glenn Beck are more than sensationalized prime-time television, but insight into a fault in American politics that has been widening over the last half century. The role of race in this ongoing ideological battle has been a question of debate in political and sociological literature, particularly in understanding the political behavior of whites and the rhetoric used to bolster support for the conservative political movement. This study examines how race surfaced on the Fox News Network in the midst of the budget crisis that waged on Capitol Hill in the spring of 2011.

## Literature Review

Across the country an ideological war between Democratic and Republican camps has been brewing for nearly half a century (Aldrich 1995, Pool and Rosenthal 1997, Collie and Mason 2000, Fleisher and Bond 2000, Hetherington 2001). Increasing polarization has not only occurred within Congress, but is visible amongst the parties' mass identifiers and activist bases (Layman and Carsey 2002). Political polarization has even surfaced in the media as cable news audiences begin to align along partisan lines. The Pew Research Center found that the share of Republicans saying they regularly viewed Fox rose from 14 to 36 percent from 1998 and 2008. Although the Fox News Network maintains that it provides "fair and balanced news coverage," a small body of empirical research argues that the network promotes conservative ideals and Republican political power (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2006). The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press (2009) reported that more Americans viewed Fox in ideological terms over any other news network, while 47 percent of respondents surveyed in a Weekly News Interest Index Survey believed that Fox was "more conservative" (Pew Research Center 2009).

Common issues that often divide the Democratic and Republican Party often center on social welfare, cultural, and racial issues (Layman, et al., 2006). The modern racial conflict concerns arguments of whether institutional discrimination exists, if racial equality has been achieved, and whether equality of outcomes should be sought over equality of opportunity (Emerson and Yancey 2011)? This debate often unfolds across partisan lines, while the conservative right has embraced sentiments of racial egalitarianism, a principle largely based in the notions of individualism and colorblindness. Despite stockpiles of empirical evidence that overwhelming suggests race remains a significant factor in determining opportunity, access, and general well-being, many White Americans still believe the average African American fares just as well, if not better than the average White American (Blank 2001). Ford (2008) defines the concept of "post-racism" as a world drastically different from the Jim Crow era of white tyranny and blatant discrimination. In a post-racist world old-fashioned racism is unacceptable (Virtanen, et al., 1998). Open discrimination is outlawed, and the legal and constitutional laws that once constrained the movement of minority groups have fallen away, but while the physical veil of discrimination has been drawn, its shadow remains deeply etched within social institutions and branded across the American psyche. The "post-racist" era represents an oxymoron within itself. Ironically, while it signifies progress and racial success, a

daunting new challenge of racially charged inertia and subtle prejudices plague this era (Forman, et al., 2003). The persistence of racial inequality well into the 21st century signifies that the “post-racist” world of today may be nothing more than a well-disguised plateau in racial progress (Forman 2004). Colorblind rhetoric frames race as an avoidable issue, wiping the topic of race from the table before the issue can even be breached.

### Data and Methods

An exploratory study granted ample freedom in exploring several avenues that led towards the study’s objective to understand the political function of race in Fox Network programming. Sole reliance on quantitative measures assumes the mechanisms in which race surfaces in Fox programming. The utilization of ethnographic content analysis allowed for reflective movement between concept development, sampling, data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation (Miles and Huberman 1994). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that media may use other forms of emphasis beyond sheer repetition. The ethnographic methods used allowed for a richer analysis, and present findings that can help guide the construction of qualitative tools for measurement in further analysis. In this study, Fox News was viewed for a total of 36 hours throughout the spring of 2011. Viewing hours followed no systematic selection process and were randomly selected. Using a grounded approach,<sup>1</sup> data was coded for how many times a guest speaker or belief contrary to neo-liberal conservative ideals was either jokingly or seriously labeled as an opponent of American core values. Common terms used to label oppositional characters included: socialist, communist, separatist, radical, or the inadvertent use of an anti-American labeling.

### Results

Topics of conflict arose over government spending, the persistence of racial inequality, the competency of the democratic party and President Obama, labor unions, immigration reform, and same-sex marriage. Forty-six of the 126 cases regarded the budget cuts, while only ten directly concerned racial inequality. Ultimately beliefs or guests that were counter to neo-liberal and conservative ideology were 2.79 times more likely to be labeled anti-American by the facilitating news correspondent than not (reference Appendix on p. 68). However, what commonly surfaced in casual discourse, especially in light of the debate over the budget cuts,

was a thin underlying of racial tension in the classic political debate over conflicting ideologies.

The Fox News Network definitively stood in support of the limited role of government and government spending as the debate raged on Capitol Hill. Notable newscasters such as Sean Hannity, Glenn Beck, and Bill O’Reilly would frequently discredit economists who supported raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans as “leftist” non-credible sources. On the Fox News Network, redistribution was a foul word, and taxing the wealthy would ruin the nation. While the Fox News Network clearly advocated for the minimization of government spending, the rhetoric used by newscasters provided ample material for analysis. Common themes that arose throughout the programming were concerns over government spending and taxes, and the Democratic Party’s use of hard-working Americans’ tax dollars to fund frivolous social programs. Such rhetoric has been studied within recent political psychological and sociological literature and is suggested to have racial undertones.

Sniderman and Piazza (1993) argue that most Americans now evaluate policies and candidates according to nonracial values such as individualism, egalitarianism, and the ideal size of government (Sniderman and Carmines 1997). However, research on social categorization and group stereotyping suggests that such processes often operate below the level of conscious awareness (Banaji and Hardin 1996, Mendelberg 2001). Gilens (1996) argues that in the political theater, crime, welfare, and immigration are “coded issues” that activate White America’s negative views against African Americans and Hispanics while not explicitly raising the issues of race. Controversial topics such as government spending, taxation, and redistribution have been noted for the political potency to tap into divisive racial undertones. Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) find that subtle racial cues in political advertising can prime racial attitudes; furthermore, their study finds that: “the language of government spending and taxation have become racially ‘coded,’ in such a way that the invocation of the terms in political appeals primes racial considerations even in the absences of racial imagery (87).” Mendelberg (1997) notes that alluding to coded issues such as government spending and taxation often allows for political elites to play on racial tensions to draw political support.

<sup>1</sup> Grounded theory is an exploratory method that jumps into data collection. From the data collected, the key points are marked with a series of *codes*, which are extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts* in order to make them more workable (Miles and Huberman 1994).

### A Rift in the Top-Down Coalition

In the 1960s and 1970s, racial issues first catalyzed the process of political polarization seen today. Carmines (1989) notes that the Democratic Party suffered major blows in their political base, once civil rights for minority populations surfaced on the liberal agenda. This era was associated with the deconstruction of the Democratic New Deal Coalition,<sup>2</sup> as the rights revolutions of the '60s and '70s sparked a massive realignment of Northern working-class whites, and Southern white populists in the presidential electorate. Historically, white working and lower-middle-class democrat voters first turned away from the party, believing their own interests were being neglected by Democrats for the sake of "special interest" minority groups in the fight for equal rights (Edsall and Edsall 1991).

Beck's coverage on the union protest in Wisconsin<sup>3</sup> demonstrated two principles: (1) the at-times conflicting interests of the working-class Republican Party base and Republican elite; and (2) the usage of the notion of conservative morality that was first born during the Reagan campaign in the politics of today. Edsall and Edsall (1991) note that one of the greatest inventions during the Reagan campaign was the invention of conservative morality, an idea that fostered ideas of a wholesome America being ravaged by the non-morally compliant. In a heated monologue directed toward protestors in Wisconsin, comprised primarily of white constituents, Beck cried out:

Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you where you stand . . . . Do you see America the same way these people do? [alluding to Bill Ayers] Do you see America the same way these people do? The same way these Islamists, radicals, separatists, and anarchists do?

Beck's comments to protestors, who fit the typical profile of the Republican Party's base, appeals to a notion of conservative morality in order to silence their dissent from the Republican political agenda. By asking his intended audience "where do you stand?" Beck asks for protestors to reconsider their deviant actions, and unwillingness to support the neo-classical Republican agenda.

### Minority Advantage and Racial Anxiety

In a segment where O'Reilly defended President Obama against accusations from the Birther Camp,<sup>4</sup> the following comment was made: "While he most certainly received affirmative action, and taxpayer dollars, President Obama never did receive foreign aid to pay for his schooling." O'Reilly comments illustrate the poignancy of the belief in minority advantage, a belief that the current political and educational system is rigged to benefit minority constituents. The rhetoric used by O'Reilly alludes to minority advantage while dismissing the intellectual capacity of the president. Unfolded, this compact statement ultimately paints the current African American president as an undeserving cheat who scammed his way into college on the dime of American taxpayers. Comments such as these illustrate how racial caricatures are disguised within political rhetoric, and the commentary that arose on the Fox News Network. While much attention is paid to discourse concerning minority advantage, the network does little to address persisting inequalities and discrimination still faced by these populations today. Instead the network bolsters the idea of racial egalitarianism, and hides behind an individualistic-conservative ideology that champions a hard-work ethic as the key to success.

Also one of the most well-hidden attacks were those that subtly dismissed the credibility of minority correspondents, specifically black correspondents. A professor from Columbia University was introduced on the program *Red Eye*; the fun fact he followed his introduction, "He rolls papers like he grades them." To quote *Red Eye* host Greg Gutfeld when commenting on the prohibition of head scarves in France, "If you immigrate to a country, you better be ready to assimilate." Furthermore, segments such as "Homegrown Hate" that explored how minorities were growing up anti-America illustrated how the network provides an unbalanced coverage on racial affairs that seemed to evoke senses of racial animosity. Similar tactics resemble rhetoric used by the Gun Rights movement; by appealing to the anxieties of the Fox audience, the network is able to uphold the ideals and practices of dominant social groups, in the rhetorical construction of moral threats to American society (Lio, Mezler, and Reese 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Coalition united labor unions, big city machines, white ethnics, African Americans and rural white Southerners (Carmines 1989).

<sup>3</sup> In March 2011, Wisconsin lawmakers voted to strip nearly all collective bargaining rights from the state's public workers, ending a heated standoff over labor rights. The legislation passed was a victory for the Republican governor and State senator who targeted unions in efforts to slash government spending.

<sup>4</sup> Movement against President Obama, strongly rooted in the far right, that questions the authenticity of the President's legitimacy of the President's birth certificate. Followers believe the President was born in Kenya and is therefore ineligible to be the President of the United States.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Findings from this study align with previous research that indicates the Fox Network displays strong ideological preferences towards the right. Biased reporting in light of strong Republican viewership possibly contributes to the increasing salience in political ideology amongst strong party identifiers, and activists' bases. Limited empirical research has explored the uses of social media in political mobilization (Newton 1999, Walgrave & Manssens 2000). Further research should attempt to understand how the Fox Network may work in a similar manner, and provide an ample forum for the Republican elite to circulate information privy to their own political agenda. Further empirical studies should seek to understand how Fox News maintains racial boundaries, by providing one-sided racial discourse, and continues to ignore the root causes of racial inequality, and how such notions are used today to solidify the Republican base.

While the Fox Network relies heavily on symbolic gestures of diversity, the program actually leaves little room for multiculturalism, and differentiating opinions. Newscasters are active participants in the process of identifying "non-patriotic" behavior, and indirectly and directly emphasizing Anglo conformity as the only path forward. Fox News voices the tired and somewhat enraged voice of white-male guilt, tired of being defined the perpetrator of all of society's ills. Minority advantage is commonly advocated, and those who present information that suggests that discrimination against minorities exists are mockingly labeled as socialist, anarchist, communist, or separatist. Such language defines the American core as solely those who buy into the colorblind status quo, and those who dare question it are described as unpatriotic and incompetent. On the Fox News Network, you are either with Fox Nation, or against America.

Race is politically lucrative, and on the Fox Network it is commonly used to silence socio-democratic sentiments in order to bolster the agenda of the Republican elite. Race has become a powerful political tool, often used to divide and conquer the political interests of the working and middle class. The scars of race are visible across American life, but the mechanisms and forces that perpetuate their significance remain largely misunderstood by the American public. The Fox Network serves not only as a cultural artifact of an increasingly polarized America, but as a window into a racialized society in the "post-race" era.

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# Chinese Rural Migrant Women: A Struggle to Find a Sense of Self

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*Mary Morales plans to teach in Asia or work at an NGO in order to become more fluent in Chinese and also to get more training in teaching and the work that it involves, as well as a better grasp on the different methodologies used for teaching students.*

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## Abstract

This paper is a shortened version of the culmination of the independent work project for her “Junior Paper” required by the Anthropology Department, which serves as a precursor to the Senior Thesis that she will write this following academic year.

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Young, rural, unmarried migrant women were not a topic of focus in cultural research in China until fairly recently. But due to the many struggles and hardships that migrants have had to go through in their sojourns to the cities, the specific experience of women as compared to men has caught the attention of many scholars. The traditional place for an unmarried rural woman was beside her parents until marriageable age. After Chinese economic reforms during the late 1970s, urban migration of unmarried rural women was quite uncommon, despite the loosening on restrictions of the *bukou* system and migration control.<sup>1</sup> Such a change on previously structured migration had serious effects on rural women’s personal and family lives. How is the autonomy of migrant women today shaped by state and family structures beginning with the Maoist period? What implications does this have for the future? Patriarchy and the traditional rural Chinese family are structures that have challenged rural migrant women in a rapidly modernizing and changing Chinese state.

## Kinship and Patriarchy

The household economy and agrarian systems have long been the primary forms of subsistence for the rural populations of China, and the patriarchal family stems from these economic arrangements as well as Confucian ethics (Zuo, 545). The patriarchal structure of Chinese families positions the grandfather or father as the head, and as such he has authority over all of the members of the household. He had absolute control over all of the family finances and a direct link to the family ancestry and ancestor worship (Hamilton, 83). His role as the authoritative head was not only a culturally established norm but the law, based on Confucian ideals (Hamilton, 83).

Such systems of patriarchy effectively changed with the 1949 revolution, which transformed China into a socialist state led by Mao Zedong (Zuo, 555). Beginning in 1949, China’s patrilineal systems went through dramatic restructuring during the Maoist period (Zuo, 555). During the First Congress of the Chinese Women’s Federation in 1949, Deng Yingzhao, the vice chairman, announced that women were expected to be actively involved in both land and, marriage law reforms, and to take part in the socialist economic reconstruction of China under Mao Zedong’s leadership (Andors, 29). With the support of the Communist Party, women sought to liberate themselves from the Chinese familial structure that was seen as the source of their oppression. The symbol of liberation and equality of China became the “iron woman” who was fully incorporated into the economic means of production of the nation (Xu, 147).

Author Feng Xu attributes the current influx of young unmarried women migrant workers into the city directly to this history. He argues that Chinese socialism and collectivization interrupted the then extremely strong, patriarchal family system (Xu, 139–140). Although China has gone through some drastic economic reforms since the end of the Maoist period, the current position of women and their new freedom to work outside the home is a result of the interruption of the patriarchal family structures by new Communist Party policies during the Maoist period (Xu, 140). The communal system was a means toward this end, it was a system where private property was abolished and the land was owned by the collective (Hok Bun Ku, 65–66). This new communal structure, where everyone participated in the production, and equally shared what they produced, was instituted by the government in order to undermine the hierarchical structures that governed Chinese society (Xu, 140). It attempted to destroy class differentiations as well as the patriarchal family structure (Andors, 32). By attempting to restructure the ideas of family, and extending the definition to incorporate everyone in the commune, as well as those outside it, the government effectively undermined patriarchal structures (Xu, 140–141). This was a very forward attack on traditional Confucian beliefs regarding kinship. The Maoist ideal calling for communal living specified that people were no longer bound by kinship ties, but that each member was considered part of the commune, part of a whole (Xu, 140). Under Maoist socialism having women explicitly confined to the home became “bourgeois” and negative (Xu, 146–147). Therefore, the opportunity to acquire a

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<sup>1</sup> The signing of the “Directive Concerning Establishment of a Permanent System of Household Registration,” in 1954 by Premier Zhou Enlai, marked the beginning of the establishment of one of the strictest systems of controlled population movement known as the *bukou* system. It strictly regulated rural to urban migration and designated benefits based on established residency (Cheng and Selden, 654).

job and make monetary contributions to the family helped develop women's sense of agency and independence, even though most of the jobs they were able to acquire during the Chinese economic reforms were rural factory jobs (Xu, 147). Yet, these jobs soon came to signify independence and freedom from the old norms of the countryside.

Phyllis Andors, however, disagrees with Feng Xu's argument. She argues that although women were incorporated into the production process, this did not mean they gained gender equality (Andors, 32). Andors states: "The 'special oppression' of women was to be subordinated to 'the oppression both men and women shared' under the old system" (Andors, 32). By incorporating women into the production system, the party "... directives argued not that collectivization would create new opportunities for women so much as they argued that the use of female labor would lead to increased production that would benefit the community as well as the women involved" (Andors, 40). Therefore, the emphasis was not on incorporating women as a means of accomplishing gender equality, but rather incorporating them for the labor production they could provide.

The new party ideals toward gender inequality in no way challenged the traditions long engrained in Chinese society about women's maternal and household responsibilities (Andors, 42). "The successful integration of familial collective roles in this manner did not necessitate changing the prevailing social attitudes toward women, nor did it require treating women as economically equal to men" (Andors, 92). In contrast, Xu argues that these migrant women would not have been successful in their sojourns to the city, if it were not for the changing patriarchal kinship system in the countryside. In many other countries where patrilineal kinships are common, such as Malaysia, migrant women are often looked down upon, and are seen as immoral and corrupt (Xu, 146). Their chastity is often under question when they have been away from the supervision of their families. Xu argues that in China migration does not carry such connotations. Even though parents often disapproved of the migration of young unmarried women, they often had no choice in the matter. As a result of the established Maoist norms of working women, women were more at liberty to exert their independence from their families without necessarily tarnishing their reputations as chaste women (Xu, 149).

### Migration and Autonomy in a Family-Structured Society

When restrictions by the *hukou* system were loosened in order to allow for migration between rural and urban locations, migration became a possibility for many young rural women. They faced much resistance at first, but due to the pre-established position of women workers, they were able to make their way into the cities to work a variety of jobs (Jacka, 173). But just how much of an opportunity for autonomy does migration award women? Migration certainly frees women from much of the household and farm work they would have been relegated to in the countryside, but how effective is migration in granting these rural women a significant sense of autonomy (Davin, 129)? In many accounts migrant women state that migration has given them a newfound sense of freedom that they would never have experienced had they not traveled away from home. Ultimately, however, it seems that "family-based" rural Chinese society has too strong of a hold on these women's lives, and while migration, very much like the Maoist period, has disrupted many hierarchical structures within the Chinese household, it undoubtedly still restricts these women's life options (Jacka, 173).

In the family, the daughter-in-law is seen as the lowest in the hierarchy and until she gives birth, her position in the family is not fully cemented (Zuo, 545). Giving birth to a son is the most advantageous because her son is entitled to inherit family possessions and property, and accordingly she, as his mother, has a fixed position within the family (Zuo, 542). Daughters, by contrast, are considered temporary family members, since their future is to be married off into another family, and therefore they are not given much consideration in any respect (Zuo, 549). Despite the growing work opportunities that women gained during the Maoist period, familial patriarchy still has a strong hold over rural Chinese society (Davin, 127). Many migrant women realize this and know that their future will only consist of getting married, giving birth, and raising their children (Jacka, 137). This is the inevitable future that they see for themselves and migration is an attempt to delay or circumvent this future.

Many scholars believe that rural migrant women's autonomy gained through migration tends to be temporary and short-lived since many of these Chinese women tend to return to the countryside (Gaetano, 630). I argue that despite this fact, the freedom and agency gained throughout their journeys can pose a threat to the traditional family structures that confine their existence. It is extremely difficult for these women to truly gain complete autonomy



whilst living under such a hierarchical family structure (Davin, 127). But as can be seen from their stories, their life experiences have been expanded by migration, giving them a stronger sense of independence from these family structures (Davin, 127–29). The physical distance between their family and the village allows for the cultivation of a sense of independence, creating the opportunity to define themselves outside of the context of the family, while interrupting the traditional way of life that they would otherwise have led (Davin, 127). Although they may still be in communication with their families, they are too far from them to be significantly influenced by the power dynamics of the household (Jacka, 177). These women make decisions on their own without any family involvement and earn their own wages through their hard work. Thus migration serves a function very similar to the Maoist discourse which disrupted patriarchal family structures. Often the conditions of these women's place of residence in the city were very inadequate, and they struggled to make ends meet. Nonetheless many would still agree that despite the harsh and marginalized lives they led in the city, they still felt that their lives were much improved since migrating (Gaetano, 138).

But the unimportant and under-appreciated lives that they would be living under their parents' roofs pale in comparison to one of the underlying reasons for migration: early marriage (Gaetano, 142). These women know that the tradition is for women to be married by their mid-20s, have children, and be good wives and mothers (Gaetano, 135). It is the future they have to look forward to and one they are extremely familiar with; after all they have watched their mothers and other women in their villages follow this exact path (Jacka, 139). By migrating, however, women disrupt the traditional plan of marriage. Many of these women's families often pressure them to return home and get married, and by migrating and refusing to return home, despite their parents' insistence, they undermine the structures of the rural Chinese family (Gaetano, 135).

Many of these women try to stay in the cities as long as they possibly can, some even reaching an age where it will be difficult to find husbands if they do not return soon (Gaetano, 144–45). This is the main obstacle that threatens to undermine the progress they make in establishing a sense of autonomy. Most employers will only hire young unmarried migrant women because they can be treated as temporary workers since marriage is seen as an inevitable part of these women's lives (Gaetano, 145). Employers know that because of their *bukou* status, their options will be limited; they will have to go back home to marry (Xu, 126). This gives

their employers a license to treat them as temporary workers and give them fewer benefits (Xu, 126–27). Moreover, in the city their employment options will be drastically reduced as they age, since most employers strictly hire only women in their 20s (Gaetano, 145). The restrictions of the *bukou* system make it even more difficult to marry another rural migrant and settle in the city, since without urban *bukou* their children will not be entitled to education or any sort of benefits in the city. Moreover, marrying an urban man is more like an unreachable dream for most given their low status as rural migrant women without urban *bukou* (Cheng and Selden, 661). Consequently, some of these women can feel stuck in limbo, displaced in both places. They reject the traditional notions and plans that their families and villages have for their futures, but at the same time they are not fully accepted and incorporated into urban society (Gaetano, 146). They have to choose between two futures, and both with drawbacks. In the countryside they continually feel pressure from their parents to carry on the traditional rural life cycle where daughters are married off at a relatively young age, and must join their husbands' family (Gaetano, 142). Still, after experiencing the variety of freedom they have in the city, life in the countryside feels like a step back.

As a result of the restricted life options that migrant women have, a great deal of them have very little choice but to return to their rural villages and continue the very life that they attempted to avoid by migrating to the city (Gaetano, 142). Therefore, many researchers argue that the freedom and autonomy that these women gain when migrating to urban areas is undermined by the fact that they will eventually have to travel back and resume the role of the wife and mother under the traditional rural Chinese family structure (Gaetano, 630). But although this may seem like the end of their life in the city and a return to the inevitable subordination in the countryside, it can be argued that their sojourn to the cities dramatically affects their lives in the countryside. Scholars like as Yunxiang Yan, who has done extensive research on the changes undergone by the traditional Chinese family, argue that not enough attention has been given to the role young women played in the changes to the patriarchal generational power structures (Yan, 133). Migration serves to threaten such family structures because it provides women with more agency and it creates conflict within the household, which in turn threatens to dismantle traditional hierarchical structures within the Chinese rural home (Davin, 127).

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# Reading the Real Biblioteca del Escorial: Incorporating the Dangerous Other

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## Abstract

Given the atmosphere of increasing censorship and intolerance in early modern Spain, the apparent anomaly of a royal, religious library accepting Hebrew, Arabic, and forbidden books presents a unique window onto aspects of Spain's political, cultural, and intellectual life at the time. While treating the Real Biblioteca del Escorial as such a microcosm of Spain's larger issues, the significance of its surprisingly inclusive collections can be explored as contrasts between the treatment of books and that of people are drawn. Reading the library entails an examination of early modern attitudes towards libraries, books, and readers, along with attendant views on censorship, intolerance, and destruction. From this background, proposed explanations for keeping "dangerous" books include expressing power over the conquered, showing royal pride and prestige through a universal and valuable library, and minimizing the risk that the books present by isolating them from all but trustworthy readers in the Escorial.

Although Philip II of Spain prohibited the use of the Arabic language in 1566, he also founded the Real Biblioteca del Escorial (Lapidus, 319). Ironically, despite losing some 2,500 Arabic codices to a fire in 1671, the Escorial still contains about 2,000 Arabic works (*Real Biblioteca*). The Escorial's official librarian, Benito Arias Montano, is likewise a puzzling character, who ordered books for the Escorial, yet also wrote the 1570–71 Index of prohibited books (Dopico Black 105–6). How was it that in a time of increasing censorship and intolerance, this royal monastery library accepted books by heretics, Muslims, and Jews? How can I situate this lovely and perplexing library in Spain's larger political, cultural, and intellectual life? I argue that libraries provide an excellent lens for examining aspects of cultural and religious synergy (e.g., transmission of classical learning to Europe through Arab sources), as well as censorship, intolerance, and destruction. Drawing on theories about libraries, readers, books, and book-burning, I explore interlinked issues of

power, prestige, scholarship, and religion behind the Real Biblioteca del Escorial's history and collections.

Before delving into the paradoxical figures and contents of the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, I first discuss the theoretical background from which I draw my interpretation of the library's significance for cultural history. I turn to Roger Chartier and Fernando Bouza Álvarez, cultural historians and specialists in the history of the book, to understand early modern attitudes towards libraries and views about the inherent danger and rebelliousness of reading and books. My premise, in using libraries as a site through which to examine cultural interaction, follows Dopico Black in using Foucault's idea of the "heterotopia" to understand libraries as microcosms of the larger society. Finally, I take inspiration from Dopico Black's analysis of the Escorial as a "machine of incorporation" that absorbs the texts of other cultures, which makes connections between library history and that of national and cultural history, between books and bodies (106).

The contending ideas that Chartier and Bouza suggest about the meanings of libraries in the early modern period illuminate the perplexing assortment of attitudes and purposes within the Escorial. Ideals of the library ranged from comprehensive (the dream of a universal library) to essential (distilling necessary knowledge from select works, and rejecting "superfluous" ones) (Chartier 68–69). Hence, in excluding or burning books, censors may have been serving the ideal of an essential library of only the best knowledge. As we will see, these competing ideals are manifested in different users' views of what sort of books the Escorial should hold. Bouza highlights another relevant confrontation: after about 1550, noblemen and *letrados*<sup>1</sup> conflicted over the ideal of civility—whether it consisted in inherent nobility or in learning—and in their attitudes toward books and private libraries (64). *Letrados* valued books as practical for a profession, while nobles possessed "books of the purple" as signs of distinction and innate nobility (Bouza, 65). Generally, Bouza explains, the stance toward books was intermediate: the Real Biblioteca del Escorial "inherently expresses Philip II's majesty, by virtue of the high quality of its original copies . . . [It is also] an almost immeasurable deposit of universal knowledge, in the service of this Catholic monarch's confessional objectives" (66). In the contemporary descriptions of the Escorial's acquisitions, both perspectives are indeed present. For instance, the chronicler Juan Páez de Castro informs Philip II of "the age of the libraries and the esteem in which they were held"<sup>2</sup> and "the

<sup>1</sup> *Letrados*, or men of letters, were learned and often in legal professions, but generally not noble.

<sup>2</sup> "La antigüedad de las librerías y el aprecio en que se tuvieron." Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

honor and benefit that come to the kingdom and to all the people”<sup>3</sup> that a library would bring in his “Memorial” (qtd. in *Real Biblioteca*).

I find the connections Dopico Black draws between libraries and wider cultural and national histories both inspirational and problematic. Explaining this connection, she writes: “The idea or dream of the library is intimately linked . . . with the consolidation of empire, with national definition, and with the acts of incorporation and exclusion that canon formation—whether literary or national—inevitably mobilizes” (Dopico Black, 96). To clarify the sort of “cultural pirating” that brought 4,000 Arabic manuscripts into the Escorial in 1614, while the last of the moriscos were expelled, Dopico Black describes the library as “a machine of incorporation that swallows whole the cultural output of a group expelled as waste from the national body” (106). However, this leaves lingering questions about what *did* happen to the “swallowed” books: did they lie inert, controlled, and decaying in the library-mausoleum? Or rather, if as the old adage says, “we are what we eat,” did they pervade the conquering body? While the criticism that she cites of the Escorial as a “magnificent sepulcher [*magno sepulcro*] of books where the cadavers of manuscript codices are conserved and rotted” (qtd. in Dopico Black, 121, her translation) suggests the former, I am not fully convinced.

From the first donation of books in 1565, the king encouraged the acquisition of manuscripts and printed books for the Escorial, donating his own books, sending ambassadors across Spain and Europe to procure books, and soliciting donations from nobles (*Real Biblioteca*). Instituting the Inquisition, Philip II gained some prohibited books from its tribunals, like Saint Theresa of Ávila’s handwritten *Libro de la Vida* (Bossler, 191). During the reign of Philip III, about 4,000 volumes arrived to the Escorial in 1614 from the Sultan Muley Zaydan of Morocco’s library of Arabic codices, captured by the ships of Luis Fajardo in 1612 (*Real Biblioteca*). Precisely why and how this acquisition occurred is debated,<sup>4</sup> but in a sad bit of irony, Muley Zaydan had hired the ship *Notre Dame-de-la-Garde* to transport his precious library to safety in Agadir to protect it from rebels, only to have it

intercepted and seized by three Spanish ships (Roman, 196). The king deposited the books in the Escorial, asking that they be kept “isolated from the other books, as much forbidden as not forbidden”<sup>5</sup> (qtd. in Justel, 182). Storing the books apart further isolated these valuable but potentially dangerous codices, not only from most readers of Arabic.

Naturally, the Moroccans attempted, repeatedly and unsuccessfully, to reclaim the valuable library of Sultan Muley Zaydan. Some members of the Council of State and the Inquisition argued that copies of the Qur’an, manuscripts dealing with religion, or even the entire collection should be burnt rather than returned (Roman, 196–7). Yet keeping the manuscripts was also a matter of pride and power, besides valuing their beauty and age. In the Consejo de Estado’s report following Muley Mohamed’s 1651 request for the books, the Marqués de Leganés notes, “these books have been in Spain for many years . . . it is greatly inconvenient to come and give him any”<sup>6</sup> (qtd. in Justel, 186).

In its contents as much as its decoration, the purpose of the Real Biblioteca del Escorial was less religious than royal. José de Sigüenza, librarian of the Escorial from 1591 and head librarian starting in 1592, argues that while it is part of the Monasterio San Lorenzo, the library is unlike a monastery in both decoration and contents, since “libraries are common pharmacies and stores for all sorts of men and of talents; books are that way, and so must be the figures”<sup>7</sup> (qtd. in Thompson, 87). He explains:

This library is Royal, and they must find all tastes as are placed on the Royal table, and even if one is rightly concerned, even for the very religious there is in this what they call profane and gentle, good subjects and occasions for divine praises, and motives for holy meditation, and the very wise saints of heaven valued highly this that so disgusts some, and gave rules so that one takes much fruit from them (Sigüenza qtd. in Thompson, 88).<sup>8</sup>

Thompson notes the “universality about a royal library, just as ‘todos los gustos’ should be accommodated at the royal table” (89). Whereas a monastic library might select only moral, Catholic-appropriate books, this passage

<sup>3</sup> “La honra y provecho que viene al reino y a toda la nación.”

<sup>4</sup> See Justel, 171–177, for some of these conflicting accounts.

<sup>5</sup> “Apartados de los otros libros, tanto vedados como no vedados.”

<sup>6</sup> “Estos libros ha muchos años que están en España . . . tiene inconveniente grande el venir en dalle ninguno.”

<sup>7</sup> “Las librerías son apotecas y tiendas comunes para toda suerte de hombres y de ingenios; los libros lo son, y así lo han de ser las figuras.”

<sup>8</sup> “Esta librería es Real, y han de hallar todos los gustos como en mesa Real lo que les asiente, y aun si bien se adierte aun para los muy religiosos ay en esto lo que llaman profano y gentilico, buenos sugetos y ocasiones para loores divinos, y motiuos de santa meditación, y los santos muy enseñados del cielo estimaron en mucho esto de que algunos hazen tantos ascos, y dieron reglas para que se sacasse mucho fruto dellos.”

suggests that the Escorial library was more universal—including the “profane and gentile”: heretical books, books by Muslims and Jews, and extravagant, secular paintings. Even if the contents and decorations offend the very religious, they are beneficial to others. The king, in fact, was one of the main beneficiaries of this isolated, well-stocked and decorated library. Thompson cites a note by Sigüenza as evidence that “the king used to visit it to find solace from the weighty burdens of his office” (89). Although the library served the monastery, it also served the college and, crucially, the king.

While the royal library needed a selection for “todos los gustos,” access to potentially dangerous books was more limited, minimizing the risk. When the new index of the Inquisition came out in 1612, Lucas de Alejos (who succeeded Sigüenza as head librarian) “obtained a license to have the prohibited books here, and that the prior, the librarian, and the professors of the College might be able to read them, and to justify the action more, made an archive of the Inquisition in the high library, where they brought a quantity of books of rabbis, Mohammedans, heretics, and heresiarchs, and other prohibited ones”<sup>9</sup> (*Memorias sepulcrales*, qtd. in Justel, 62). These prohibited books were kept apart in the salón alto, where they were only available to select, trusted, discriminating readers: the “prior, the librarian, and the professors of the College,” and, presumably, the king. Moreover, although books in the Escorial were theoretically “for the public benefit of all men of letters who may wish to come and read them,” the site north of Madrid at the foot of the Sierra Guadarramas was too far from urban centers and universities<sup>10</sup> to make this realistic (Philip II, qtd. in Kamen, 109, his translation). The books, dangerous and benign, were under extra-special protection against theft as well. An inscription in the salón principal proclaims Pope Gregory XIII’s 1572 threat of excommunication to anyone who steals books or other objects from the library (Justel, 57). So strong a warning protects the books from people, but it also protects people from the books by keeping them sealed safely in the Escorial.

I now return to concepts of the reader, books, and the cultural-political function of libraries to apply them to the particular history of the Escorial. With its limited number

and kinds of readers, and its tight control of books, the Escorial can be viewed, as Dopico Black suggests, as a “magnificent sepulcher” of books along with royal cadavers that hermetically seal off dangerous texts and influences (106). Such control of books and readers can also be viewed in light of the reasons Bosmajian lists for book-burning, as attempts “to extirpate history, to intimidate, to stamp out opposition, to create solidarity, to cleanse the land of ‘pestilence and disease,’ to purify” (4). Storing forbidden books in the Escorial was sometimes an alternative to burning them, but by sealing off contaminating texts, it could still have a cleansing function. Furthermore, the incorporation of Arabic, Hebrew, and a few indigenous manuscripts from the Americas served to bury the other and their history.

Of course, possessing many rare and beautiful manuscripts also brought prestige for the library and sponsoring king: “there have been many books that may have authorized said royal Library and will make it very notable for being very ancient handwritten originals”<sup>11</sup> (official document qtd. in Justel, 139). Indeed, the age and rarity of the manuscripts is what makes them valuable and thus brings the library renown. Despite religious misgivings, the desire to have a prestigious library containing valuable manuscripts won out. An unnamed notary in the official document accepting the first important shipment of Arabic manuscripts in 1572 from Juan Páez de Castro’s personal collection, reflects:

I have heard argued that for a library of Religious these curiosities and rarities are not necessary . . . it is right that the library of the Royal monastery may be as notable and important as all of its other things. And so that it may be so celebrated it is advisable that it may have such books as his Majesty procures for it . . . certainly there are many hidden in the manuscripts and others very ancient and therefore very prized (qtd. in Justel, 140).<sup>12</sup>

Even prohibited works, if old and beautiful, could be valued and included in this way.

Contrasting the incorporation of works in Arabic or Hebrew and forbidden works into the Escorial with the persecution and expulsion of Muslims and Jews and the

<sup>9</sup> “Obtuvo licencia para tener aquí los libros vedados, y que los pudiesen leer el prior, el bibliotecario y los catedráticos del Colegio, y para justificar más la acción, hizose archivo de la Inquisición en la librería alta, adonde se truxeron cantidad de libros de rabinos, mahometanos, herejes y heriarcas, y otros prohibidos.”

<sup>10</sup> In this, the Escorial is unlike Valladolid, site of the celebrated university, where Páez de Castro recommended that Philip locate a library: “así porque V.M. reside allí muchas veces, como por la audiencia real y universidad y colegios y monasterios y frecuencia de todas naciones” (qtd. in *Real Biblioteca*).

<sup>11</sup> “Se han hallado muchos libros que autorizaran la dicha real Librería y la haran muy ynsigne por ser originales muy antiguos escritos de mano.”

<sup>12</sup> “Yo he oydo replicar que para librería de Religiosos no son menester estas curiosidades y estrañezas . . . la librería del Real monesterio es razon que sea tan insigne y señalada como todas las otras cosas del. Y que para que sea así celebrada conviene que tenga tales libros como su Magestad le procura . . . cierto ay muchos yncognitos en los manuscritos y otros muy antiguos y por eso muy preçiados.”

Inquisition's punishment of heretical authors reveals striking differences and similarities in the treatment of "dangerous" books and of "dangerous" people. Due to the Inquisition's vigorous persecution of all Jewish literature, the Escorial never held more than 110 Hebrew manuscripts; there are currently 76 manuscripts and nearly 150 printed volumes (*Real Biblioteca*). Arias Montano laments the lost riches of Hebrew works: "of Hebrew books, of which there were great riches in Spain, there is now great poverty . . . in that language there have been many lessons and all manner of arts"<sup>13</sup> (qtd. in *Real Biblioteca*). Apparently, most Hebrew books fared little better than their owners, who were expelled or forcibly converted in 1492; "judaizing" converts were subsequently persecuted by the Inquisition. While appreciation for Arabic manuscripts and culture was apparently greater,<sup>14</sup> gathering Arabic codices and recognizing their worth did not make them widely read. Indeed, Arias Montano advised Philip II, "Much that was known and studied in Europe from three hundred to seven hundred years back was rich in Arabic books . . . it is good that in the treasure of Your Majesty's books there may be copy of those in this language, although now it may not be understood or used among scholars"<sup>15</sup> (qtd. in *Real Biblioteca*). Isolated safely in the Escorial, with limited reader access, the Arabic manuscripts brought the library prestige and little danger of perpetuating an Arab identity. Aside from prized, useful, non-threatening books on science, Greek philosophy, medicine, etc., I postulate that other books—namely those on history and religion—were preserved as a monument to Spanish triumph, in an attempt to stay connected to the past, opposing the "erasure of history" that Lowenthal describes (8). Keeping a record of the grandeur of Arab civilization could enhance the worth of the Spanish victory, by showing the enemy in full splendor.

Whatever it meant at the time—and the acquisitions process was fraught with various meanings and controversies—the decision to preserve books in the Real Biblioteca del Escorial rather than destroy them was a triumph for posterity. This more peaceful reaction to the dangerous "other," or to a threatened orthodoxy, is much gentler than how heretical books sometimes fared, burned at the stake along with their

owners and authors, or destroyed as they were forcibly converted. Studying the Inquisition and book-burnings provides ready lessons in tolerance and freedom of expression for our modern-day lives, yet examining scenes of incorporation and preservation is likewise instructive. At the Escorial, the difference between books and bodies is highlighted, but the inclusion of dangerous books is itself not a simple matter. The separate storage of Arabic works, the select group of potential readers, the library's mixture of religious and royal purposes, and the fire of 1671 complicate what would otherwise seem an exemplary scene of cultural synthesis.

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<sup>13</sup> "De libros hebraicos, de que hubo grande riqueza en España, hay ahora grande pobreza . . . en aquella lengua ha habido mucha lección y de todo género de artes."

<sup>14</sup> The inclusion of the Syrian astronomer, astrologer, and mathematician Abdelaziz Alcabicio as one of the four prominent personages painted under the figure of Geometry is graphic evidence to me that the Escorial's founders recognized the intellectual contributions of Arabic civilization (Justel, 30).

<sup>15</sup> "Cuanto se sabía y estudiaba en Europa de trescientos años atrás hasta setecientos manaba de libros arábigos . . . es bien que en el tesoro de libros de su Majestad haya copia de los de esta lengua, aunque ahora no se entienda ni se use entre los estudiosos."

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# Building for Difference: Essentialism in the Work of Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak

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## Abstract

This paper considers two different approaches to the question of essentialism within feminism. In the first part of the paper, I offer a reading of Judith Butler's conception of gender as performativity as a critique of essentialism, in so far as it recognises "gender" as always in progress and as a historical situation. In the second part of the paper, I consider Gayatri Spivak's phrase "strategic essentialism" in both her eventual rejection of the phrase and her commitment to the "strategic." I conclude by suggesting that the questions these theories raise are powerful in of themselves.

Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure  
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words  
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which  
One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each venture  
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate

. . . For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our  
business. —T.S. Eliot, "East Coker"<sup>1</sup>

To speak, to write, is in T.S. Eliot's words a "wholly new . . . raid on the inarticulate," which inevitably produces at each individual attempt "a *different* kind of failure." To be sure, language is a trade in essences; part of its failure is the inability to render anything entirely transparent or to rigorously define. Within feminist circles this tendency of language to trade in essences has been the cause of much debate. Such words as "man" and "woman," which feminism both attempts to critique, and seems to rely on, are, in different and valuable ways, approached by the work of Gayatri Spivak and Judith Butler. The purpose of this essay is to illustrate the usefulness of these two contributions to the writing, thinking, and practice of feminism.

## Judith Butler's Performativity

There is no "being" behind the doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is *everything*.—Fredrick Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*<sup>2</sup>

Judith Butler's conception of gender as performativity can be read as a theoretical gesture away from essentialist conceptions of the gendered self. She writes in *Gender Trouble*:

In this sense, *gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysic of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed.<sup>3</sup>

Performativity suggests that what we understand to be "gender" is the effect of repeated acts, gestures, and so on. Gender as performativity is, in one sense, a way of dislodging static or essentialist conceptions of gender by insisting on a gendered self that is always in progress. Performativity highlights the way that gender is always in some way delayed or displaced. It is always a somewhere, a place that one should, as promised by the static name (woman, man, and so on) arrive at, *but never does*. In other words, "gender" has no core and only appears coherent as a result of recurring acts.

This conception of gender is influenced by the phenomenological work of philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Summarising Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the body, Butler writes:

That the body is a set of possibilities signifies (a) that its appearance in the world, for perception, is not predetermined by some manner of interior essence; and (b) that its concrete expression in the world must be understood as the taking up and rendering specific of a set of historical possibilities. Hence, there is agency which is understood as the process of rendering such possibilities determinate. These possibilities are necessarily constrained by available historical convections.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore gender is understood as a "constrained" relation to "historical possibilities." That is to say, performativity is always situated in a historical moment and any form of subversion is always in negotiation with that moment.

Performativity articulates gender as, at once something familiar and unfamiliar, something that is most

<sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Collected Poems, 1909–1962* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1963) 202–203.

<sup>2</sup> Quote referred to by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999) 34. Emphasis mine.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (Dec. 1988): 521.



intimately distanced from the subject. Therefore when one says “my gendered performance is that of a woman,” it is a gesture that attempts to use the word woman while maintaining the understanding that “woman” is not a place that I have, or indeed ever will, arrive at. Such a concept allows one to, not entirely, but more rigorously (be)speak a gendered position.

In a later piece entitled “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” Butler writes:

I am not at ease with “lesbian theories, gay theories,” for as I’ve argued elsewhere (in *Gender Trouble*, 1990), identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalising categories of oppressive structures or as rallying points for a libidinal contestation of that very oppression. This is not to say that I will not appear at political occasions under the sign of lesbian, but that I would like to have it permanently unclear what precisely that sign signifies.<sup>5</sup>

For Butler, it is not a question of abandoning the sign, rather it is a question of rendering that sign “permanently unclear.” Such a task is needless to say extremely difficult, yet the very influential idea of gender as performativity, perhaps, inaugurates this very task.

I have been suggesting that within this trope of performativity there is a contribution to the feminist essentialist debate, yet it is hardly one that is easily applied in a situation outside of the written. Butler in an interview says:

Sure, you say it; you must say it; you use language; you become dirtied by language; you know you’re lying; you know it’s false, but you do use it . . . . When asked, “Are you a woman or a man?” as I was asked two weeks ago, I said that I *am* a woman—although I accompanied my affirmation with a certain bewildered laughter. My interlocutor has to live with that as part of the speech act itself.<sup>6</sup>

In certain realities, when actually asked about one’s gendered position “Are you a man or woman?” the performativity trope is perhaps less easily applied. In other words, it is more difficult in speech, for example, to hold onto the “still to come” dimension of performativity. I am a woman (even coupled with laughter) loses the delayed, perpetually dislodged element of performativity, yet as Butler correctly notes: “you say it, you must say it.”

### Strategic Essentialism

Indeed, it may be that the problem and the solution are always entangled, that it cannot be otherwise.—Gayatri Spivak, “Marginality in the Teaching Machine”<sup>7</sup>

Spivak in a 1993 interview reflects on her, at best tempestuous, relation to the concept of “strategic essentialism”:

The strategic use of essentialism. You know, I gave a long interview in the opening issue of *Differences* where I said that I no longer want to use it . . . . When in the United States, the statement “the personal is political” came into being given the socio-intellectual formation, it really became quite quickly “only the personal is political.” In the same way, my notion just simply became the union ticket for essentialism. As to what is meant by strategy, no one wondered about that. So, as a phrase, I have given up on it. As to whether I have given up on it as a project, that is really a different idea.<sup>8</sup>

The first problem with this phrase was that it was quickly generalised into a “union ticket for essentialism.” The second, major problem was that “strategic essentialism” proposed a strategy (as opposed to a theory). Spivak, in “In a Word,” writes:

“Strategy” is an embattled concept-metaphor and unlike “theory,” its antecedents are not disinterested and universal. “Usually, an artifice or trick designed to outwit or surprise the enemy” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) . . . . If one is considering strategy, one has to look at where the group—the person, the persons, or the movement—is situated when one makes claims for or against essentialism. A strategy suits a situation; a strategy is not a theory . . . matching the trick to the situation . . . better I think to look for the bigger problem: that strategies are taught as if they were theories, good for all cases.<sup>9</sup>

The problem with the phrase is that it too easily becomes a “ready to go,” easily applicable in all situations. In fact, “strategic essentialism”—if both words are considered seriously—is a process involving much attention to the situation or historical moment: “matching the trick to the situation.” Ironically, this process would first require one to actively look beyond the essentialism and then use it. It would always be a self-aware process.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperch (New York and London: Routledge, 1993) 308.

<sup>6</sup> Judith Butler, “Changing the Subject: Judith Butler’s Politics of Radical Resignification,” Interview with Gary A. Olson and Lynn Worsham, *jac* 20 no. 4 (2000) 743.

<sup>7</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993) 53.

<sup>8</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Sara Danius, Stefan Jonsson, “An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,” *boundary* 20 no. 2 (Summer 1993) 35.

<sup>9</sup> *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 3–4.

Spivak, in an essay entitled “Feminism and Critical Theory,” writes:

I cannot speak of feminism in general. I speak of what I do as a woman within literary criticism. My own definition of a woman is very simple: it rests on the word “man” as used in the texts that provide the foundation for the corner of the literary establishment that I inhabit . . . no rigorous definition of anything is ultimately possible, so that if one wants to, one could go on deconstructing the opposition between man and woman, and finally show that it is a binary opposition that displaces itself. Therefore, “as a deconstructivist,” I cannot recommend that kind of dichotomy at all, yet, I feel that definitions are necessary in order to keep us going, to allow us to take a stand. The only way I can see myself making definitions is in a provisional and polemical one: I construct my definition as a woman not in terms of a woman’s putative essence but in terms of words currently in use. “Man” is such a word in common usage. Not *a* word, but *the* word. I therefore fix my glance upon this word even as I question the enterprise of redefining the premise of any theory.<sup>10</sup>

Here, one sees Spivak position herself in a manner that is specific to her historical moment “used in the texts that provide the foundation for the corner of the literary establishment that I inhabit.” Furthermore, it is self-aware: always “provisional” and “polemical.” Deconstruction, for Spivak, is the critique of that which we intimately rely on; therefore it is a critique that is always from *within*. In other words, “redefining the premise of any theory” requires a subversive adoption of that very theory.

In Spivak one finds a movement toward a new kind of essentialism, one that is not theoretical, but instead attempts to be strategic. Interestingly, Spivak’s vision, and perhaps lived reality, is of a feminist who “thinks on her feet”: “matching the trick to the situation.” This requires a negotiation between the theoretical understanding that no definition is rigorous and the practical one that a definition is a (potential) tool. This dynamic call, perhaps, also presupposes a feminist that is involved, as so few academics are, in a literal relation with the other(s) that appear within her texts.

### Building for Difference

These are uses of essence which you cannot go around. You are written into these uses of essence. This is the strategy by which history plays you, your language plays you, whatever the miraculating

agency might be speaks you. It’s not a question of choosing the strategy. You are, to an extent, distanced from it with humility and respect when you “build for difference.”—Gayatri Spivak, “In a Word”<sup>11</sup>

The work of Spivak and Butler, perhaps, leaves one with more questions than answers. (Is this not the mark of good theory?) Even if we cannot form a theory of the strategic, how does one know when it is “strategic” to evoke essentialism? What does it mean, when Spivak talks about “build(ing) for difference”? Is such a task possible? How does one go about rendering a signifier, to use Butler’s words, “permanently unclear”? Jean-Luc Nancy, in his book, *The Inoperative Community*, writes:

What might a politics be that does not stem from the will to realise an essence? . . . It is always the same bond that I shall be speaking: of a bond that forms ties without attachments, or even less fusion, of a bond that unbinds by binding, that reunites through the infinite exposition of an irreducible finitude. How can we be receptive to the *meaning* of our multiple, dispersed, morally fragmented existences, which nonetheless only make sense by existing in common? . . . One thing at least is clear: if we do not face up to such questions, the political will soon desert us completely, if it has not already done so.<sup>12</sup>

My suggestion is that we ought to always ask the question and perhaps it is in this continuous rephrasing and reimagining of *the question* that “a bond that unbinds by binding” will form. For the formulation of certain questions are, in themselves, forms of subversion or in T.S. Eliot’s words: “For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.”

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<sup>10</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), 102–103.

<sup>11</sup> *Outside in the Teaching Machine*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, “Preface,” *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor (USA: University of Minnesota): xi–xii.

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# Black Fatherhood Before and After Slavery

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## Abstract

This excerpt is taken from my African American Studies honors thesis, “Ain’t No Fathers in the Hood: Constraint and Confinement of Black Fatherhood in the Contemporary United States.” The goal of my thesis is to make an intervention in contemporary U.S. policy debate that defines good fatherhood by taking into account the historical and present-day complexities of African American fathering that occurs in a context of mass incarceration and underemployment. In this excerpt I attempt to historicize efforts to “reform” African American fathers.

The African American family occupies a strange position in the history of America’s social-policy agenda. Through the years the black family has often been constructed as deviant, pathological, in need of fixing. This definition dates back to slavery, and must be understood in light of what E. Franklin Frazier called “the manner in which Negro slaves were collected in Africa and disposed of after their arrival in this country.”<sup>1</sup>

After emancipation, white and black Southerners harbored fundamentally contrary expectations as to how the system of labor and the social order would function. For newly freed blacks, the moment seemed to offer an opportunity to redesign their lives and interact with whites as equals. To them, freedom meant a right not simply to survive, but to work and thrive without white intervention on the land they had worked as slaves, land where generations of their ancestors had lived, toiled, and died. They also sought control of community institutions such as schools and churches, and claimed rights under the changing laws of Reconstruction. White Southerners viewed the situation very differently. To white property owners, bargaining with their former slaves was unthinkable, and they expected their

workers to continue to labor as many hours each day and under many of the same restrictions as before. At the very least, they insisted that their former bondspersons treat them with the deference characteristic of antebellum times.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau, was established in March 1865 and given the task of reconciling these different aims. According to Congress, the main objective of the bureau was “the supervision and management of all abandoned lands, and the control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen from rebel states.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to uniting families separated during slavery or as a result of war, the bureau supervised labor agreements between blacks and their former masters, monitored state and local treatment of freed people, established informal tribunals to settle disputes between whites and blacks and among blacks themselves, instituted clinics and hospitals for former slaves, aided efforts to provide freed people with education, and temporarily provided clothing to refugees, freedmen, and their wives and children in the Civil War’s aftermath.<sup>3</sup> Yet even as the bureau helped blacks successfully negotiate the transition from slavery to freedom, there was much concern among both Northern reformers and white Southerners that blacks did not understand how to be free.

Blacks’ refusal to work under conditions like those of slavery often manifested itself in resistance to entering into labor contracts. Whites saw this resistance as a threat to the immediate peace and good order of a region still recovering from war. In a letter to a fellow bureau commissioner, the bureau director of Memphis complained,

There is an abundant demand for labor in this District, for which the highest wages are offered. I regret to say that in spite of this inducement many freed people prefer a life of precarious subsistence and comparative idleness in the suburbs of the city, to a more comfortable home and honest labor in the country.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly frustrated by black people’s use of their freedom, a planter from Tennessee wrote to the Freedmen’s Bureau Superintendent of Memphis:

<sup>1</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, “The Negro Slave Family,” *The Journal of Negro History* 15.2 (1930) 203.

<sup>2</sup> “An Act to establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees,” March 3, 1865 in U.S., *Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*, vol. 13 (Boston, 1866) 507–9.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Cimbala, *Under the Guardianship of the Nation: The Freedmen’s Bureau and the Reconstruction of Georgia, 1865–1870* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> “Freedmen’s Bureau Superintendent of the Subdistrict of Memphis to the Headquarters of the Freedmen’s Bureau Assistant Commissioner for Kentucky, Tennessee, and Northern Alabama” in *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867*, Series 3: Volume 1 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 266.

A large number of Negroes have procured arms and are making such threats and demonstrations as are calculated to disturb the peace and tranquility of the community and which may lead to serious results if not speedily checked.<sup>5</sup>

To resolve this threat he suggested the:

calling of meetings of the freedmen . . . let them [blacks] be addressed by Government officials & made clearly (& thus authoritatively) to understand their true status—the relation they sustain to their former owners in point of property and the penalties annexed to any violation of the laws—especially in regard to demonstration of an insurrectionary character.<sup>6</sup>

To the bureau, however, black people's "true status" as freed people primarily meant independence from government aid, and this objective could be most immediately accomplished by making black men financially, legally, and morally responsible for their children and wives.

In the bureau's eyes there was nothing more damaging to social reconstruction than an able-bodied black man, particularly a man with a wife and children, who did not work for wages. Black men's desire to be independent of such labor indicated to reformers at best a lack of knowledge of their primary responsibilities as the heads of households, and at worst a lack of concern for their families. The Freedmen's Bureau wanted to turn black men into responsible citizens who would work to enjoy the fruits of their labor, provide for their families, and—when the bureau was no longer around—protect their own interests. In discussing his arrival in Lynchburg, VA, a bureau commander reported:

I found it swarming with Negroes wandering restlessly about from place to place, without aim and possessed of but one idea that they were now free. This state of affairs was alarming and required immediate correction. Some summary measures were

adopted which had the desired effect of settling the labor—all of my efforts were directed to impressing upon the freedmen's mind their duties and responsibilities as free men & as husbands and fathers.<sup>7</sup>

Here we see a direct link between the establishment of a reliable workforce—"settling the labor"—and the enforcement of black men's roles as fathers and husbands. According to Thomas Holt, the bureau's function "was not merely to make ex-slaves work, but to make them into a working-class, that is, a class that would submit to the market because it adhered to the values of a bourgeois society: regularity, punctuality, sobriety, frugality, and economic rationality."<sup>8</sup>

In his General Orders, formulated in order that "freed people may more fully comprehend their position, and more clearly understand their duties and responsibilities,"<sup>9</sup> the Military Commander of Lynchburg wrote:

The freed man must recognize his responsibility to live with and support his family; he must provide them with a house, food, clothing, and all in his power for their comfort; he must be responsible for their conduct; must receive their wages and . . . provide for their support.<sup>10</sup>

Evidently, a man's primary role would be economic, with his secondary role that of socializing his children, particularly his sons—future fathers—into the world of work. In order to ensure black men's compliance, he decreed that "able bodied men will be prevented as far as it is possible, from deserting women, children, and aged persons; and where there is no good cause shown why they left, they will be sent back."<sup>11</sup>

But even as emancipation imposed the responsibility of economic fatherhood,<sup>12</sup> the opportunities for fair employment and economic stability for black families were difficult to secure. Many obstacles, both legal and extralegal, blocked black men trying to support their families, chief among them

<sup>5</sup> "White Tennessean to the Freedmen's Bureau, Superintendent of the Subdistrict of Memphis, Tennessee," October 30th, 1865 in *Freedom* 833.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 833.

<sup>7</sup> "Commander of the Military District of Lynchburg to the Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner, Enclosing Seven Orders by the District Commander," July 1865 in *Freedom* 245.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Holt, "An Empire over the Mind": Emancipation, Race, Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South" in *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James McPherson, 283–313. (New York: Oxford UP, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> "Commander of Military District" in *Freedom* 248.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>12</sup> Nancy Dowd, in her book *Redefining Fatherhood* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), uses the term "economic fatherhood" for the doctrine that teaches men that their primary responsibility to society and their children is to provide for them financially and that their children's happiness and the fathers' masculine identity depend on this support.

the resistance of white planters who, although they accepted the demise of slavery, rejected the idea that laborers should be free to sell their labor and to work without coercion.

The attempt to deny black freedom gave rise to the Blacks Codes, intended to reduce free blacks to a new kind of legal servitude. A black person who left an employer without permission could be arrested as a vagrant, effectively limiting his mobility and economic opportunities. The 1865 Ordinance of Opelousas, LA, criminalized actions that could be interpreted as expressions of self-determination by blacks: “No Negro or freedman shall be permitted to keep a house within the limits of the town under any circumstances” or “sell, barter or exchange any articles of merchandise or traffic within the limits of Opelousas.”<sup>13</sup> All the former slave states enacted similar codes after 1865.

Many blacks complained to the bureau that employers were exploiting them. Some reported being beaten or threatened with violence and forced off plantations, often without pay for work they had performed. In cases adjudicated by the bureau in Virginia, blacks reported “being threatened with being killed,” being “struck by a stone thrown by his employer,” being “shot at [by whites who wanted to] let the government authorities know that they ruled on their plantations.”<sup>14</sup>

The Freedmen’s Bureau continued to maintain that freedom and citizenship required freedmen to embrace economic fatherhood instead of being forever protected and provided for by a benevolent federal government. But in practice black men’s power was less than the law implied. The ability of white Southern employers to dictate labor terms, and, by extension, the structure of the family, was a prominent feature of the post-emancipation economy, making it difficult, if not impossible, for black men to conform to the dominant definitions of what it meant to be a good father or a good husband.

Yet even before emancipation, black men had tried to be good fathers. In April 1859, the *Douglass Monthly* reported that Emanuel Mason, a free black man, was arrested for harboring one of his own children.<sup>15</sup> Mason’s wife and children were all slaves to his former owner, and they lived with their

master “at the other end of town.” Mason contributed financially to them by “hiring his wife from time to time and . . . supporting his children until they were old enough to be of service to their master.” Apparently his economic contributions were intended to keep the family together. While his wife worked for him, she could be safe at home with him. When Mason’s youngest child, who had been living with him, turned ten, “the master demanded him . . . to be taken he [Mason] knew not where.” In response, Mason hid his son. A warrant was issued for his arrest, and he was put in jail. *The Douglass Monthly* lamented the cruel irony that the taking of Mason’s son to “sell it off to the far South” was legal, while Mason’s desire to keep his son safe was a criminal offence. In August 1859, another free father, Tom Snowden, was arrested for attempting to run away with his enslaved family.<sup>16</sup> The citizens of Rochester, NY, held them at gunpoint. The paper reported that Snowden “fought desperately and was several times knocked down before he would yield.”<sup>17</sup> The paper reported he and his family were all incarcerated pending trial.

To some black men, economic fatherhood meant buying their wives and children when possible. In September 1864, after being denied the opportunity to buy his daughter’s freedom, Spotswood Rice explained to her, “Your Miss Kaitty [the mistress] said I tried to steal you but I’ll let her know that God never intended for man to steal his own flesh and blood.”<sup>18</sup> And he assured his daughter that, “I have not forgot you and that I want to see you as bad as ever . . . be assured that I will have you if it cost me my life.”<sup>19</sup> In a letter to his Miss Kaitty, Rice wrote, “Now I want you to understand that Mary is my child and she is my God given rite of my own” and because Kaitty had stood in the way of this right, “where ever you and I meets we are enemays to each orthere.”<sup>20</sup>

No wonder, then, that emancipated black men would view the protection of their families as a civil right. In a letter to the Freedman’s Bureau commissioner listing grievances perpetrated against their families on Roanoke Island, black soldiers from North Carolina lamented:

<sup>13</sup> “Ordinance: Relative to the Police of Recently Emancipated Negroes or Freedmen, within the corporate limits of the Town of Opelousas,” July 15, 1865 in *Freedom* 237.

<sup>14</sup> “Cases Adjudicated by the Freedmen’s Bureau Superintendent at Gordonsville, Virginia,” Gordonsville, VA, August 16–September 13, 1865 in *Freedom* 523.

<sup>15</sup> “A Father Incarcerated for Harboring His Own Child,” *Douglass Monthly*, April 1859.

<sup>16</sup> “A Father Running Off with His Family,” *Douglass Monthly*, August 1859.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> “Missouri Black Soldier to His Daughters, and to the Owner of One of the Daughters,” St. Louis, MO, September 3, 1864 in *Families and Freedom: A Documentary History of African American Kinship in the Civil War Era*, ed. Ira Berlin and Leslie S. Rowland (New York: The New Press, 1998) 195–197.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

Our families have no protection the white soldiers break into our houses act as they please steal our chickens rob our gardens and if any one defends their-selves against them they are taken to the guard house for it.<sup>21</sup>

The security of the family and the right to live without white interference constituted what little property these men had. Tennessee freedmen made this point clear in a letter to their district commissioner:

We now, simply ask that we may be secured as others, in the just fruits of our toil: protected from unjust, and illegal punishments, and we are sure we will keep our families from want, and do our part as good citizens of the United States to add to the wealth and glory of the Country.<sup>22</sup>

During the post-emancipation period, whites were quick to characterize African American fathers, thwarted in their attempts to establish economic independence, as deficient heads of household. Black fathers could not protect their families from racist, vindictive landlords when white landowners used the law to impose discipline and to strike fear into the hearts of impoverished, landless blacks. These factors, however, did not stop men from being fathers. They continued to seek ways to protect the security and sanctity of their families and take responsibility for their children's care, even when they were prevented from conforming to the dominant ideology of economic fatherhood.

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<sup>21</sup> "North Carolina Black Soldiers to the Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner," June 1865 in *The Black Military Experience*, ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 1985) 125.

<sup>22</sup> "Black Residents of Nashville to the Union Convention," January 9, 1865 in *The Black Military Experience*, ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, 811–816.

# Religion or Race?: Assessing the Likelihood of Membership in Multiracial Congregations in Houston

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## Abstract

Under Emerson's definition of multiracial congregations—whereby no one ethnic group makes up more than 80% of the congregants—only 7% of U.S. congregations are racially mixed. Is race or religion more likely to determine likelihood of multiracial congregation membership? This analysis uses the 2010 Houston Area Survey, which draws on a random 750-respondent sample of Harris County residents. I examine the association between membership in a multiracial congregation and three variables: respondents' race/ethnicity, religious tradition, and level of religiosity. I find that blacks are almost twice as likely to join multiracial congregations relative to Anglos. Catholics are 62% less likely to join multiracial congregations compared to Protestants, independent of race and religiosity. Respondents who indicate religion is "very important" in their lives are most likely to join. Future research might include analysis of another urban area, perhaps one with less neighborhood-based segregation or a different geographic distribution of racial diversity.

## Introduction

The racial makeup of religious congregations is overwhelmingly homogeneous. Only 7% of U.S. congregations are racially mixed under the definition set forth by Emerson (2006): no one ethnic group makes up more than 80% of the congregants. Under this definition, congregations in general are 10 times more segregated than their home neighborhoods and 20 times more segregated than our nation's public schools (Emerson, 2011). Though scarce, multiracial congregations are certainly present in the United States. The fact that these congregations *exist* is understood, yet important questions remain about *who* is most likely to belong to them. Are worshippers of certain faiths more likely than those of other faiths to belong to multiracial congregations? In what proportions do multiracial congregations tend to be populated by white, black, Hispanic, or Asian members? Is race or religion more likely to be the deciding factor when determining likelihood of membership in such congregations? In this piece, I will attempt to answer these questions in an effort to further illuminate the ties between race and religion in the United States today.

Belonging to a multiracial congregation diversifies social ties, changes racial attitudes for the better, decreases social distance across race, reduces race-based stereotyping, bridges racial boundaries, and elevates the status of members whose racial groups may be seen as more "low-status" in society beyond the congregation (Emerson & Mirola, 2011; Yancey, 1999). Such benefits are undoubtedly positive for all involved; why, then, are multiracial congregations so scarce in the U.S.? One cause may be racial border patrolling, or "the belief that people ought to stick with their own . . . the driving force behind efforts to force individuals to follow prescribed racial rules" (Dalmage, 2000). Another, popular among white church leaders, is that by focusing on one racial/ethnic group, a church can expand more rapidly and efficiently, thus providing an overall better experience for members of that one group. Members may feel more "at home," cared for, or included among members of their own ethnicity (Emerson, 2011). Finally, white structural advantage—the presence of whites in positions of power/prestige—could be exposed if whites were to relinquish colorblindness and recognize racial differences in the pursuit of a multiracial world (Emerson, 2011). Additionally, what may appear to be racial homophily (a tendency for those of similar races to associate with others in their racial group and thus form racially segregated social ties) may indeed be a desire to worship with those of similar *religious* backgrounds, yet due to existing church racial homogeneity, that translates into worship with those of similar *racial* backgrounds (Quillian & Campbell, 2003).

Neither race nor religion fully explains who is most likely to join a multiracial congregation. On one hand, membership patterns strongly differ by race—whites are least likely (of all racial groups) to be members of these congregations. On the other hand, religion affects the extent to which these patterns play out. Across all racial groups (except Hispanics), Catholics are most likely to join multiracial churches (Emerson, 2006). These patterns are based on a nationwide sample, yet the "race vs. religion" question is even more relevant in Houston, the fourth-largest city in the U.S., and one with significant potential for multiracial congregational growth. The 2010 Houston Area Survey allows further insight into this question. Thus, examining the Houston area may provide a crucial step towards understanding the factors behind successful multiracial congregations in an increasingly racially diverse country, findings which can be extrapolated to other urban areas around the U.S.



## Data/Methods

This analysis uses the 2010 Houston Area Survey, which draws on a random sample of Harris County residents through telephone polling conducted over a six-week period between February and March of 2010. Residents were contacted using a two-stage random-digit dialing procedure to ensure that all residents with phones have an equal chance of being contacted. The survey utilizes a mixture of random sampling and over-sampling to ensure that Houston's diverse population is appropriately represented within the sample. Spanish-speaking residents are accommodated using bilingual interviewers and "back translation." The total sample size was 750 residents, 100 of who were contacted via cell phone. Response rates have averaged 40% in recent years, while cooperation rates have averaged 59% in recent years. The analytical sample drawn from in this paper is based only on those respondents who answered the multiracial congregation question ( $n = 412$ ).

The dependent variable in this analysis is membership in a multiracial congregation (MMC), which is ascertained through a question read, "Though it's hard to know for sure, would you say that [R's ethnicity] make up 80 percent or more of the worship service that you normally attend?" MMC was coded as a dichotomous variable [yes or no]. The independent variables that were explored include respondents' race/ethnicity, religious tradition, and level of religiosity. Race/ethnicity categories are Anglo, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and "other." Religious tradition categories are Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, "other religion," and "no religion." Religiosity is ascertained by the following question: "How important would you say religion is in your life: Would you say: very important, somewhat important, or not important?" A logistic regression was utilized to examine the association between the independent variables and the dichotomous dependent variable. Exploring these relationships may provide further insight into the presence and role of multiracial congregations in the Houston area.

## Results

### *Univariate Statistics*

As Table 1 (p. 89) indicates, of the 412 respondents, 51.0% were Anglo, 30.3% were Black, 12.8% were Hispanic, and 3.9% were Asian. The majority of respondents—65.0%—were Protestant, while 24.0% were Catholic, 2.2% were Jewish, 5.3% were another religion (such as Hindu or Buddhist), and 2.7% indicated "no religion." In terms of level of religiosity, the overwhelming majority of respondents (86.2%) indicated a high level of religiosity by answering that

overall, religion was "very important" in their lives. 10.7% of respondents answered "somewhat important," while only 2.9% of respondents indicated religion was "not important."

### *Bivariate Statistics*

I show the results of the bivariate analysis in Table 2 (p. 89). Within each independent variable, I calculated a percentage of respondents who were members of multiracial congregations and compared these percentages using two-way chi-square tests of independence to detect significant differences in the dependent variable. The two-way chi-square test indicated that the race and religious tradition variables were significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (95% confidence interval). Post-hoc tests were conducted to evaluate the differences among individual variables within each broader independent variable category. Tukey's HSD indicated significance in both the Black and Hispanic categories.

Looking at the general sample without distinctions made by race or religion, 30.6% of the population is a member of a multiracial congregation. When looking at the independent variable breakdown, differences emerge. Compared to the sample, a similar percentage of Anglos (32.4%) are members of multiracial congregations. Hispanics are significantly more likely than Anglos and the general population to be members of these congregations (45.9%). Blacks are significantly less likely with only 20% in multiracial congregations—a full 10% lower than the sample average. Asian membership in multiracial congregations is not significantly different than Anglo representation (31.2% vs. 32.4%). Even more striking differences occur across religious tradition. Protestants and Jews are the least likely to be members of multiracial congregations, with 20 and 11 percent of respondents in these faiths respectively responding that they did attend such a congregation. Meanwhile, 45% of Catholics are members of a multiracial congregation.

### *Multivariate Statistics*

In Table 3 (p. 89), I show the results of the multivariate logistic analysis to explore the question, "What influences membership in a multiracial congregation: race or religion?" I show odds ratios of MMC and employ race, religion, and level of religiosity as predictors to detect which is more strongly associated to membership in a multiracial congregation. Reference categories for these variables, respectively, are Anglo, Protestant, and "very important."

Independent of religion, we find different patterns of membership by race than reported in the bivariate analysis. Blacks are almost twice as likely to join multiracial congregations relative to Anglos, a result which was significant at the

$p < 0.05$  level. Asians continue to be just as likely as Anglos, while Hispanics are only half as likely (though these results were not statistically significant). The Black-Anglo gap contradicts the results of the bivariate statistics, in which a chi-square test indicated that Blacks were less likely than Anglos to be members of multiracial congregations, showing how race is strongly tied to religion in determining likelihood of MMC. Catholics are 62% less likely to join multiracial congregations compared to Protestants, independent of race and religiosity (sig = 0.000). The other two religious groups (Jewish and “other religion”) were not statistically significant. In terms of religiosity, as expected, respondents who said religion was “somewhat important” or “not important” in their lives were less likely to join multiracial congregations, as compared to respondents who indicated religion was “very important” in their lives, though these differences were not significant. Ultimately, the results show that neither race nor religion by themselves can fully determine one’s likelihood of membership in a multiracial congregation. Each affects the other, and both therefore must be accounted for in further analysis.

#### Discussion/Conclusion

From the data, it is clear that both race and religion affect who joins a multiracial congregation. Perhaps even more significantly, these effects play out differently than expected. Forty-five percent of Catholics were members of multiracial congregations, compared to 30.6% of the general population, which may be accounted for by the large number of Catholic Hispanics who are members of such congregations. However, the logistic regression indicated that once race of respondent is adjusted, Catholics were less likely to join a multiracial congregation as compared to Protestants. This discrepancy merits further inquiry. The parish-based neighborhood organization of the Catholic diocese might help explain this pattern. Houston neighborhoods are highly segregated in terms of both race and socioeconomic status, so segregation in individual parishes built around these segmented neighborhoods may simply reflect the racial and socioeconomic segregation of the neighborhoods themselves, which in turn may contribute to a lower likelihood to join a multiracial congregation. Similarly, Jews are 2.5 times more likely to join multiracial congregations. This data should be carefully assessed due to a small Jewish sample size, which may overstate differences based on a small number of cases. One possible explanation for the pattern found in the Jewish population may be while a respondent may be Jewish, that does not necessarily mean that they are attending a Jewish congregation. Many Jews are intermarried (married to a non-Jewish spouse who did not convert) and may attend their spouse’s (multiracial) congregation.

In terms of race, there are also differences in terms of who is most likely to join a multiracial congregation. Blacks are nearly twice as likely to join a multiracial congregation as Anglos, independent of religion—a gap that is statistically significant. This is particularly interesting in light of homogeneous African American churches such as African Methodist Episcopal congregations. A more detailed study of multiracial churches in the Houston area is needed to ascertain to what extent these non-AME churches reach out to African Americans, in particular. The Asian-Anglo gap was small and not statistically significant, while the Hispanic-Anglo gap was larger but also not significant. In examining the impact of race on membership in a multiracial congregation, future study should include details of neighborhood segregation/socioeconomic inequality. Many congregants may choose congregations nearby, further contributing to racial homogeneity within congregations (except in the cases where multiracial congregations might be geographically centered within neighborhoods). In terms of religiosity, people who view religion as “very important” in their lives are more likely to choose multiracial congregations than are people who view religion as only “somewhat important” or “not important,” mainly as a function of the fact that people who view religion as very important are more likely to join congregations of any type—not just multiracial congregations.

The addition of more control variables would enable us to account for education, gender, age, and income differences among respondents. Additionally, a more specific “religion” variable, drawing out differences between Buddhist, Hindu, etc. beyond just “other religion,” would offer valuable information about the impact of religion on likelihood to join a multiracial congregation. Finally, a larger sample size could provide more generalizable results. Future research might include analysis of another urban area, perhaps one with less neighborhood-based segregation or a different geographic distribution of racial diversity.

Multiracial congregations are crucial to the development of race relations within the U.S., as religion is uniquely suited to bring people together in a way which surmounts pre-existing boundaries and conflicts. As Emerson notes, truly “transcending racial barriers” requires a certain type of interracial contact (2011). The contact must be non-superficial, cooperative, not coerced, supported by authority figures, and experienced between social equals. Multiracial congregations are a clear possible facilitator of such contact. The growth of multiracial congregations, institutions, and organizations should be encouraged and accepted by the wider religious community. This growth holds significant potential to usher in a new era of mutual obligation and increased racial understanding.

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	
<i>Membership in a Multiracial Congregation</i>	
	%
Yes	30.6
No	69.4
<b>Independent Variables</b>	
<i>Race</i>	
Anglo	51.0
Black	30.3
Hispanic	12.8
Asian	3.9
<i>Religious Tradition</i>	
Protestant	65.0
Catholic	24.0
Jewish	2.2
Other religion	5.3
No religion	2.7
<i>Level of Religiosity</i>	
3 (very important)	86.2
2 (somewhat important)	10.7
1 (not important)	2.9

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>% of each category who are members of a multi-racial congregation</b>
GENERAL SAMPLE	30.6
<i>Race*</i>	
Anglo (ref)	32.4
Black	20.0*
Hispanic	45.9*
Asian	31.2
<i>Religious Tradition*</i>	
Protestant (ref)	24.3
Catholic	45.4*
Jewish	11.1
Other religion	27.3
No religion	63.4*
<i>Level of Religiosity</i>	
3 (very important) (ref)	29.0
2 (somewhat important)	34.0
1 (not important)	58.3*

NOTE: Asterisks indicate significance differences relative to the reference category according to the two-way chi-square test of independence, with post-hoc tests such as Tukey HSD, LSD, and Bonferroni used to determine significance across the categories of each independent variable. Criteria for significance is determined by  $p < 0.05$ .

<b>Name of Independent Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (B)</b>	<b>Std. error</b>	<b>Exp (B)</b>	<b>Significance</b>
<i>Anglo (ref)</i>	-	-	-	-
Black	0.650	0.268	1.915	0.015*
Hispanic	-0.572	0.296	0.564	0.054
Asian	0.052	0.559	0.926	0.926
<i>Protestant (ref)</i>				
Catholic	-0.956	0.247	0.384	0.000**
Jewish	0.941	1.070	2.562	0.379
Other religion	-0.158	0.499	0.854	0.752
No religion	-1.698	0.643	0.183	0.008**
<i>“Very important” (ref)</i>				
“Somewhat important”	-0.758	0.584	0.527	0.228
“Not important”	-0.996	0.666	0.369	0.135

\*Significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level

\*\*Significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level

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# Beauty Standards and Beauty Rituals: An Ethnographic Examination of the Social Implications of Skin Color and Hair Texture on the Black Identity in Morocco

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## Abstract

This work is an overview of “Beauty Standards and Beauty Rituals: An Ethnographic Examination of the Social Implications of Skin Color and Hair Texture on the Black Identity in Morocco,” Hadiya’s independent study project with the School of International Training’s Morocco Migration and Transnational Identity Program. Grounded in action theory and symbolic interactionism, this study investigates the ways in which high school- and college-aged students’ beauty regimens were informed by their perception of the black identity. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were triangulated for this four-month ethnographic study in the cities of Rabat and Fes.

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The reverence of beauty permeates societies around the globe, and people have been in pursuit of aesthetic ideals for quite some time. Representations of beautiful people are everywhere; they are romanticized in the media and made human by our daily interactions with good-looking individuals. The cultural obsession with beauty is an indicator that beauty is very much a social symbol (Webster Jr. and Driskell Jr. 1983; Reischer and Koo 2004). People are not inherently beautiful or ugly; perception plays a role in determining physical attractiveness. It is our social constructions that allow us to attach meanings to physical characteristics and deem them pleasing to the eye (Reischer and Koo 2004). Livingston once noted that, “Beauty comes as much from the mind as from the eye.” Consequently, an examination of shared beauty standards and beauty rituals within a society can reveal pertinent information about identities and social status.

This study proposes to examine beauty standards and beauty rituals and the insights these perceptions and actions reveal about racial and color identities in North Africa, through an ethnographic examination of opinions regarding beauty, skin color and hair texture, among high school- and college-aged students in Rabat and Fes, Morocco. Skin color and hair texture are social symbols articulating other facets

of identity (Reischer and Koo 2004). Schutz (1972) views actions as the product of reflection and intention. In alignment with Cooley’s (1902) “Looking Glass Self” and Mead’s (1938) notion of reflexivity, people recognize the social symbols and use them to measure their own sense of self and beauty. Thus, beauty regimens can be seen as the actions taken after conscious or subconscious reflection.

The guiding question posed to students was, “What skin complexions and hair textures do you find beautiful and what, if anything, does this tell me about the black identity in Morocco?” This ethnographic report is an account of the responses that ensued.

## Literature Review

The study uses the cues extracted from perceptions of beauty to better understand the identity of North Africans and tries to present evidence that will advance the more general argument that North Africans should be included in the scholarly global examinations of black identity despite a tendency in the humanities and social sciences to isolate North Africa from the rest of the continent. “For centuries Africa has been rigorously divided into two unrelated parts: “white” Africa—Arabic and Moslem—and “black” Africa, that voluptuous variety of tribes and ethnic groups. Yet this distinction is no longer altogether valid” (Baulin 1962). Countries in Northern Africa, such as Morocco, are truly racially and ethnically diverse. The people of Morocco are Semitic (Arab and Jewish), African (Amazigh), Black (Africans from south of the Sahara), and European (Caucasian). As Chegraoui (2011) notes, it is unrealistic to assume that Northern Africa is exclusively white. Blacks have always existed in North Africa despite many attempts to attribute [or perhaps to reduce the presence?] the presence of blacks in Morocco to one historical event, the Trans Saharan slave trade.

Drake (2004:342) refers to black people as people of the “black world,” a term that has been operationalized to mean “all of those areas where the population is actually black in a phenotypic sense, or where the people think of themselves as black despite considerable miscegenation, or where they are so defined by others.” This description of blackness speaks to several significant facets of identity. Though biologically contested, physical characteristics have been used historically to define race and demarcate racial categories (Winant 2000). The ability to self-identify allows the individual(s) being identified to retain a sense of agency. Also, this understanding of “blackness” takes into consideration

the role that the “other” plays in the establishment of one’s identity. The “other” in this case is both informal, any person in one’s vicinity, or formal, the legislation and policies of the land. If this definition of “blackness” is to be considered, it should be determined whether, and if so to what degree, the people of Morocco recognize the black label. Racial labels tend to refer to group identities whereas color labels do not (Golash-Boza 2010). If the people of Morocco recognize the term “black” as a color or race label, their notions of “blackness” should be documented in the literature.

Academia has valued beauty as a means of discerning social values for quite some time. The examinations of the social implications of beauty tend to focus on the following paradigms: beauty as a product of social structure and beauty as a shaper of social structure. Webster Jr. and Driskell Jr. (1983) ascribe to the latter. They suggest that beauty is a status characteristic. It provides the “beautiful people” of the world with social advantages. Scholars that share this viewpoint have made a wide variety of claims about the perks of beauty ranging from higher marks on essays than non-attractive people (Landy and Sigall 1974) to attractiveness as a precursor to popularity (Waller 1937).

Scholars that study beauty as a product of social structure tend to focus on the ways in which status cues such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class impact one’s perception of beauty and others’ perception of one’s beauty. Academia has shifted its focus to examine the role of racial identity on beauty. Scholars have examined the Eurocentric standard of beauty in an effort to discern its effect on non-White women. These studies are grounded in the understanding that beauty standards are created by those who hold powerful positions in society. This outlook has spawned several studies that focused on body image, skin complexion, hair texture, beauty standards, beauty rituals, and self-esteem (Hunter 2002; Masi de Casanova 2004; Sekayi 2003). Historically, such studies have focused on Black/African American women. Recent works have begun to examine how women in societies that have a “racial continuum” relate to beauty standards and beauty rituals (Masi de Casanova 2010).

Skin color and hair texture make up a significant amount of the conversations on beauty standards and beauty rituals among people of African descent. Scholars have noted that there tends to be a preference for persons with lighter skin complexions across the African Diaspora (Hunter 2002). Studies contend that lighter skin is associated with Europeans and elevated social status, whereas

darker skin is associated with dominated persons of African descent. In some communities, this has led to a preference for Eurocentric features like lighter skin, straighter hair, and the prevalence of skin-lightening creams and hair straighteners (Tate 2007). Also, hair straightening and the use of weaves and hair extensions have become quite popular among people of African descent. Scholars continuously debate the source of these activities. Some scholars argue that hair straightening among people of African descent is merely a style choice (Patton 2006), whereas others contend that it is an adherence to Eurocentric beauty standards that suggest that physical characteristics such as light skin and straight hair are more attractive. Nevertheless, Patton contends that black hair is still very political.

Few studies were found examining beauty standards and beauty rituals among North African women. Consequently, an examination of beauty in the Moroccan context is valuable for several reasons. It contributes to the existing scholarship on beauty and identity while addressing the emerging body of scholarship on the black identity in Morocco.

### Research Questions

I have three guiding questions for this study:

R1: How is the black/African identity perceived in Morocco?

R2: What are the beauty standards in Morocco as they pertain to skin gradation and hair texture? Is there a skin color preference when determining physical attractiveness in Morocco? Is there a hair texture preference when determining physical attractiveness in Morocco?

R3: How are beauty rituals impacted by beauty standards in Morocco?

### Methods

This ethnographic examination of beauty standards and beauty rituals in Morocco triangulates research methodologies in an effort to gain valid, reliable answers to the aforementioned research questions (Glesne 1999). My methodology included a 24-item survey, a focus group consisting of six students, participant observations in homes and hair salons, seven individual interviews structured by several guided questions, and a content analysis of the four magazines (*L’Officiel Maroc*, *Femmes Du Maroc*, *Nissaa Min Al Maghrib*, and *Laba Magazine*) most frequently referenced by research

participants. The data was attained during a span of four months when I lived in the Old Medina of Rabat, Morocco.

The skin complexions and hair textures of research participants and media images were coded on a skin complexion scale of 1–16, with 1 being the lightest and 16 being the darkest and a hair texture scale of 1–4, with 1 being straight, 2 being wavy, 3 being curly, and 4 being extremely curly or coily. The researcher and a research assistant each coded the hair textures and skin complexions separately to ensure the validity of the chosen measures. Copious field notes were taken during participant observations and later the transcripts were coded and utilized to conduct an inductive analysis on the data to discover trends.

The survey, administered in both French and English on Beauty and Identity in Morocco, was comprised of Likert-type, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. The questions on the survey addressed the identity of the respondent, the respondent's personal beauty standards and beauty rituals, as well as the respondent's perception of beauty and identity in the Moroccan context. My research sample includes Moroccans, students from the South of the Sahara studying at Moroccan universities, and African American and Afro-Caribbean students studying abroad via the School of International Training's Morocco Programs. They were recruited using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods.

## Findings

*R1: How is the black/African identity perceived in Morocco?*

My data concurs with existing literature; my research participants upheld the image of a white Northern Africa and a black Africa to the South of the Sahara. Many did not want to identify as black/African because they associated Africa with the images of a war-torn, poverty stricken continent that emerged during the colonial era. Some acknowledged that this dichotomous view of Africa was common but foolish. A Senegalese student at the University in Fes noted that the distinction was ridiculous because, "geographically speaking Morocco is in Africa." A Moroccan participant noted, "We are all in Africa. It's bad, you know, the way we distinguish "ourselves" from "them," but that is to show you how well we have been socialized to view one another as different."

*R2: What are the beauty standards in Morocco as they pertain to skin gradation and hair texture? Is there a skin color preference when determining physical attractiveness in Morocco? Is there a hair texture preference when determining physical attractiveness in Morocco?*

The magazines sampled reveal an overwhelming preference for lighter complexions and straighter hair textures. In the images coded (n = 222), a woman with the skin shade of 11 was the darkest complexion found. She was an outlier in the data. The most frequently occurring skin complexion on the scale of 1–16 was 1.5, and the average skin complexion was a 2.68. Half of the magazines (n = 4) featured skin-bleaching creams in full-page advertisements. Straight hair textures were the most common in the magazines. Eighty-one percent of the women featured in magazines featured straight hair textures.

*R3: How are beauty rituals impacted by beauty standards in Morocco?*

Hair straighteners were quite common in Morocco. Research participants straightened their hair in the privacy of their homes and permanent hair relaxers were not easily detected in public salons. The notion of "good hair" and "bad hair" was frequently mentioned throughout the study. Research participants noted that people with "bad hair" often went to the salon more often than others to have their hair straightened. Hair straightening was not a gender-specific action. Two male students at the University of Fes informed me that boys straightened their hair also.

None of my research participants directly admitted to using skin-bleaching creams. However, each of them noted that they knew someone who used the product. Boys suggested that skin-bleaching creams were more popular with the females because there was a preference for women to have white or lighter skin.

## Conclusion

Blackness is still stigmatized; marred by legacies of colonialism and enslavement. Moroccans dance around issues of blackness and identity; many are conscious of it, but few are willing to address it in academia. El Hamal (2002) attributes this to the shame and guilt of having participated in the Trans Saharan slave trade despite Islamic law. Yet, some conversations need to persist. If not, Arab-Islamic hegemony will continue, and persons will be marginalized under the guise of Islamic unity. I do, however, believe that there is truth to the "tolerance" spiel. Morocco is often illustrated as a nation that is accepting of the diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of its inhabitants. Faith and nationality foster a unified social identity; many Moroccans identify first and foremost as Muslim and Moroccan. Thus, the rest of the world can benefit from learning about Morocco's attempts at tolerance in a multicultural and multi-ethnic context.

Beauty rituals are guided by dominant beauty standards, even in Morocco. The preference is for lighter, tanned, and olive-toned persons with wavy and curly hair. Although darker complexions are still vilified to some degree, research suggests this can be transcended. For instance through cultural whitening (Golash-Boza 2010), persons of African descent from the West are not often treated as though they belong to the black racial category. The label black, as it pertains to them, is merely a color label.

Yet, blackness is a symbol regardless of whether or not it is being used as a race or a color label. The mere fact that it is a symbol of colonization and associated with inferiority suggests that we, the people of the world, still have a long way to go in our attempts to be “color blind” and to overcome historical inheritances of racial hegemony and oppression. Although Africa has become a symbol for blackness; it is not a synonym for “black.” The distinction between Northern Africa and the Africa that exists to the south of the Sahara panders to the sociopolitical and economic hierarchies constructed during the colonial era. Perhaps, El Hamel (2002) and Chegraoui’s (2011) more unified view of Africa and attempt to include Moroccans in African Diasporic studies can help to positively reconstruct the ways in which blackness is perceived.

Scholars should continue to contribute to the emerging scholarship on the black identity in Morocco and North Africa. There are more questions to be asked and more answers to be found. While some believe that North Africa should be excluded from the on-going dialogue of “blackness,” identity, and race, I beg to differ. There are people in Morocco who identify as black. Not all of them are from the South of the Sahara or the West. Some of them are black Moroccans. Nor are all of them the descendants of slaves, some are indigenous to the Moroccan soil. Throughout my stay in Morocco, several black Moroccan women often pointed to my skin and hair before telling me that we were “kif-kif,” the same. They identified with my blackness, though some may have viewed black as a “race,” whereas others saw it simply as a “color.” The women that wanted me to know that we were the same may have also each attached their own meanings to blackness. Nevertheless, their experiences, understandings, and articulations of African Diasporic identity are worth further exploration. The beauty standards and beauty rituals found amongst college- and high school-aged Moroccan women reverberate with those of other women of the African Diaspora, particularly in the United States and the Caribbean. Thus, I contend that the narratives of blacks in Morocco should be included in the larger discourse on the people of the African Diaspora.

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# Postmodern Gospel: Richard Smallwood's Compositional Aesthetic

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## Abstract

Richard Smallwood is an award-winning composer of African American Gospel Music. Popular critics and Smallwood himself have referred to his compositional approach as a synthesis of Classical Music and Gospel Music; this critical assessment is evaluated in this article. One of Smallwood's signature pieces, "Total Praise," effectively models his compositional aesthetic as the piece's harmony, voicings, and form, while based on Gospel's conventions, feature a number of classical elements. Smallwood's integration of Classical and Gospel elements represents the reconciliation of a vernacular music with an art music. This postmodernist creative strategy continues the historical hybridity of African American Gospel Music.

Richard Smallwood is one of the most successful living composers of African American Gospel Music. Throughout his career he has recorded more than a dozen CDs and won Grammy, Dove, and Stellar awards. This year brought Smallwood an honor that may surpass all of his previous accolades: the release of the National Baptist Convention USA's Sunday School Publishing Board's new hymnal, *Total Praise: Songs and Other Worship Resources for Every Generation*, which was published in conjunction with GIA publications.<sup>1</sup> The hymnal is named after one of Richard Smallwood's best-known compositions. This honor confirms that Smallwood and his music have earned a place in the canon of African American Church Music, specifically, African American Gospel Music. Smallwood's stature results not only from his commercial success, but also from a recognition that Smallwood is an innovative composer who has

made a lasting mark on African American Gospel Music. Popular critics and Mr. Smallwood himself hint at the nature of his lasting mark when they describe his music as a Gospel/classical synthesis.<sup>2</sup> This synthesis, while continuing Gospel's tradition of hybrid composition, represents a post-modern approach to composition as it combines an art music tradition, Classical music, with a vernacular music, Gospel, in a manner which challenges the perceived barriers between the two. In this article, Smallwood's "Total Praise" will be used to discuss elements of his compositional approach.

African American Gospel Music exists at the intersection of Popular Culture and sacred music, as it is a popular music genre that most often resides in the sacred space of the Black Church. The twin influences of the Black Church and Popular Culture make this a hybrid musical genre. Meeting the demands of this hybrid musical genre has been a task with which composers have wrestled throughout the idiom's history. Fortunately for them, Gospel is not the only hybrid genre or institution in the constellation of African American cultural practices. Guthrie Ramsey, a musicologist and author of *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop*, contends that, "a self-conscious hybridity has marked the development of African American religious practices since their appearance in the New World."<sup>3</sup> That is to say that Gospel's hybridity is in many ways a reflection of the Black Church's own complexity. The diversity of perspectives that can be found in the Church has frequently caused controversy for Gospel composers who have sought to negotiate their popular and sacred influences. A stellar example of this is the late Rev. Thomas Dorsey, who played a crucial role in the formation of Gospel music.

Reverend Thomas Andrew Dorsey, frequently referred to as the "Father of Gospel Music," spent much of his life as a blues musician. Later in his life, he turned away from secular blues performance in favor of church work; he retained his blues musical techniques. Dorsey's new genre was frequently referred to as "the Gospel blues."<sup>4</sup> The music Rev. Dorsey composed was not well received by traditional forces in the Black Church who referred to these new musical offerings as "the Devil's music." The reception of Dorsey's Gospel blues foreshadowed the response to "Rosetta Tharpe's blend of jazz and Gospel during the 1940s; Edwin Hawkins's and Andre Crouch's pop-Gospel of the late 1960s; and the Winanses' smooth-soul Gospel of the

<sup>1</sup> "Products—Total Praise: Songs and Other Worship Resources for Every Generation hymnal," Sunday School Publishing Board, <http://www.sspbnbc.com/totalPraise.php> (accessed July 5, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> "Richard Smallwood," The Official Verity Records Site, <http://www.verityrecords.com/artist/richard-smallwood> (accessed May 4, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 190.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Heilbut, *The Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times—25th Anniversary Edition* (Hal Leonard Reference Books), Anniversary ed. (New York: Limelight Editions, 1997), 63.

1980s, [which] were all seen as hybrid—and quite controversial—expressions in their day.”<sup>5</sup> Ramsey reasons that the tension between innovative composers and protective church leaders, when combined with the commercial success of Gospel, has raised questions about the genre’s ability to function as both an entertaining cultural symbol and a liturgical resource. He then translates the previous question into language that is immediately relevant to this discussion: he asks if Gospel can be “art and folk at the same time?”<sup>6</sup> Richard Smallwood’s work offers an affirmative and, in this author’s opinion, postmodernist answer to that question.

This author’s interpretation of Richard Smallwood’s aesthetic values is influenced by John Kramer’s article “The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism,” wherein he argues that scholars should view postmodernism not as a historical period, but as an attitude that influences compositional practice. Kramer contends that postmodern music is written by composers who share a number of attitudes, including, among other things, a commitment to challenging barriers between “high” and “low” styles and questioning the mutual exclusivity of elitist and populist values.<sup>7</sup> By these measures, Smallwood’s hybridity, as evidenced in his music and public commentary about it, is postmodern. Smallwood’s synthesis of Gospel and Classical compositional practices is unlike other previous iterations of hybridity on the part of Gospel composers who integrated musical techniques from other vernacular idioms into Gospel. His is postmodern Gospel, a compositional aesthetic that was doubtlessly influenced by his personal and musical background.

Richard Smallwood was born in 1948 in Atlanta, GA, into a family led by an itinerant pastor whose occupation required that his family move frequently as he sought to plant churches throughout the country. Though they traveled frequently for the first years of Richard’s life, his family would later settle in Washington, DC. Smallwood, a child prodigy as a vocalist and pianist, was an active part of his

father’s ministry, frequently playing and singing before his father’s sermons. The young Smallwood began playing piano by ear at five and would begin formal study at the age of seven. In addition to his service in his father ministry, Smallwood’s musical background was enhanced by his mother as she gave him recordings of Rachmaninoff piano concertos and took him to symphony concerts.<sup>8</sup> Among the many musicians who influenced the young Smallwood, Roberta Flack, his junior high school teacher and future pop vocalist, is remembered fondly. Smallwood’s diverse musical experiences would continue when he studied voice and piano at Howard University in Washington, DC. He graduated with Latin honors, having excelled academically and as a part of the university’s emergent Gospel scene. Smallwood began focusing on his career as a composer and recording artist in the late 1970s.<sup>9</sup> His compositions were marked by his use of techniques and, even, melodies from the Classical tradition. An early Smallwood piece, “The Resurrection,” is especially demonstrative of this as it is based on parts of Rachmaninoff’s Vocalise, Op. 34 No. 14.<sup>10</sup> This explicit use of references from the Classical tradition suggests that there are further, subtler examples of this compositional practice. The article’s next section uses one of Smallwood’s signature pieces, “Total Praise,” to demonstrate how his multiple musical influences can be seen in his music.<sup>11</sup>

“Total Praise”’s sacred influence and purpose is clear from its lyrics. The piece’s opening section contains lyrics that are very similar to Psalm 121:1–2 in the Christian Bible. This psalm text reads, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help, my help cometh from the Lord . . .,” but Smallwood renders the text as “Lord, I will lift mine eyes to the hills, knowing my help is coming from you.” In so doing, Smallwood makes his lyrics better fit with the traditional lyrical methods of contemporary Gospel’s praise-and-worship style, a sub-genre which is focused on creating reverential communication from the worshipper to God.<sup>12, 13</sup> After the near-quotation from the Scripture,

<sup>5</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 191.

<sup>6</sup> Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 191.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan D. Kramer, “The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism.” *Current Musicology* (1999), 10.

<sup>8</sup> “Richard Smallwood,” The Official Verity Records Site, <http://www.verityrecords.com/artist/richard-smallwood> (accessed May 4, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> “Richard Smallwood Biography,” The Official Richard Smallwood Site, <http://www.richardsmallwood.com/content/biography> (accessed July 5, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> “Richard Smallwood,” The Official Verity Records Site, <http://www.verityrecords.com/artist/richard-smallwood> (accessed May 4, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> A reduction of “Total Praise” appears on p. 100.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Wise, “Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2001), 270.

<sup>13</sup> Other Gospel styles include the contemporary style which began with Edwin Hawkins’s “Oh Happy Day.” See Raymond Wise, “Defining African American Gospel Music by Tracing Its Historical and Musical Development from 1900 to 2000” (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2001) for more.

Smallwood's original lyrics continue the praise-and-worship aesthetic as his choir declares "your peace, you give me in time of the storm," to lead to the climax at "You are the source of my strength. You are the strength of my life. I lift my hands in total praise to you." Notice the subjects in this are "I," and "You," which again serve the purpose of Gospel's praise-and-worship style: worshipful communication between individuals and divinity.

Smallwood's setting of the lyrics provides a valuable window into his compositional technique. The form of "Total Praise" can be described as ABC, with each letter referring to one of the piece's three sections: verse, chorus and coda. This general form is prominent through Smallwood's body of work and is significant as it is also the basic form of hymns—another musical staple of the Black Church. The piece's form is exceptional when compared to other hymns because of its single verse and extended coda. The use of the choral voices and the instrumental accompaniment varies between sections. In order to appreciate these variations, one must understand an important convention of Gospel composition.

The traditional choral framework in African American Gospel Music is the three-part, Soprano, Alto, and Tenor chorus. There is also frequent use of unison singing. When in harmony, or, in the vernacular of many genre practitioners, "in parts," the chorus most frequently sings in close harmony, moving in the same direction. This convention can be traced back to what some musicologists identify as an African preference for the use of parallel intervals and chords.<sup>14</sup> Gospel's conventional choral framework presents special challenges for the composer as its choruses are typically limited to parallel and similar motion. This choral texture differs from the classical approach to choral writing which typically includes four choral parts—soprano, alto, tenor, and bass—and, in many early periods, stresses avoiding parallel octaves and fifths. In Gospel choral writing, parallel fifths abound. Smallwood's negotiation of these different approaches provides a helpful window into his compositional aesthetic.

The A section is characterized by melodically dominated homophony, a texture that is characteristic of many chorales. In this section the three choral parts plus the instrumental bass, which is played by the keyboard instruments and the bass, comprise the chorale's four parts. This section generally conforms to Gospel's choral convention with a few notable exceptions. In the reduction of "Total Praise," one can see how, in measure 3, Smallwood's tenor line descends

to a lower neighbor before returning to the D flat on the next lyric. Smallwood included similar tenor-lower-neighbors in measures 7 and 19. With these brief deviations from the convention, Smallwood creates oblique motion, which will allow the parts to resolve in contrary motion for the next chord in three of the four examples. Smallwood also departs from the convention in measure 4, where the tenors descend a minor third from D flat to B flat, while the sopranos and altos remain on the same pitch, leaving the interval of a perfect fifth between the lowest two choral voices. This oblique motion also sets up additional oblique motion as the soprano and alto parts resolve the upper member of the V 6–5 /ii harmony to the supertonic triad. The A section of "Total Praise" ends with a dominant substitution of bVII7 for V, a kind of harmonic substitution that is characteristic of popular music idioms, including Rock.

Two four-measure phrases comprise the B section of "Total Praise." Though the second of these phrases is very similar to the A section, the first differs in several important ways. This section, which contains the piece's climax and hook, makes use of more syncopated rhythms than in the piece's other two sections. Another important difference is that, unlike in the other sections where the instrumental bass functioned as a part of a four-part chorale, in measures 13–16 Smallwood's instrumental accompaniment engages in clearly accompanimental gestures with the other instruments. First the bass acts as a pedal in measure 13, while the three choral voices rhythmically restate the cadential six-four harmony. In measure 14, the bass descends a perfect fourth to the supertonic while the three choral voices are holding their chord from the previous measure. In measures 15–16 new lyrics are set to harmonies that are nearly identical to those in the previous two measures. Under this choral repetition, the bass and instruments execute an ascending fourths sequence of the following harmonies: Bb minor 7, Eb dominant 9, Ab minor 7, Db dominant 9, Gb major 9, Cb dominant 7. This sequence ends in measure 16, when the bass is reunited with the choral voices to form the second iteration of the bVII7 harmony. The three-part choral harmonies of the section between the two bVII7 chords in measures 13 and 16 are possible because only three voices are needed to create the cadential six-four harmony and supertonic harmonies which characterize this section. Unlike in other sections of the piece, there are no seventh chords, thus, the instrumental bass and the choral voices are free to diverge for this brief section.

The final section of "Total Praise," Section C's coda is another very well-known part of the piece. It is, in essence,

<sup>14</sup> David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 116.

an altered and extended amen cadence. Smallwood's inclusion of the coda is significant as amen cadences, technically known as plagal cadences, are frequently found at the end of hymns. The typical harmonic progression of a plagal cadence is a IV-I or iv-I progression. Smallwood's coda represents a combination of ideas from a plagal cadence, a Gospel convention, which is referred to as "inverting," and four-part writing. Smallwood's modified plagal cadence makes use of inversions of the following harmonies: bVII<sup>9</sup>, V/iv, iv, a passing six-four, and I. This section features two active vocal parts and one that serves as a tonic pedal point. This progression occurs four times, with the three choral parts being re-voiced between sopranos, altos, and tenors each time. This re-voicing technique, which causes the sopranos to take the previous tenor part in a higher octave, the altos to assume the previous soprano part, and the tenors to adopt the previous alto part, in each successive iteration of the progression, is referred to as "inverting" in the African American Gospel genre. This differs from the conventional use of the harmonic term "inversion," which refers to movements of the bass. In Gospel music, however, the term "inversion" is used to describe musical situations when the bass stays constant and the choral voices are re-voiced in the manner described above. The use of this technique in this piece allows for the repetition of the plagal cadence, which typically occurs only once in hymns. The repetitions provide space for increasing intensity as the piece nears its end.

Throughout Richard Smallwood's body of work, various approaches to choral harmony are visible. His "Total Praise" contains several of these, including a four-part chorale, three-part Gospel hook, and the contrapuntal four-part coda. Smallwood pieces like "Anthem of Praise" and "Calvary" make use of choral textures ranging from unison singing to a four-part canon. His approach to choral harmony represents but one element of Smallwood's compositional postmodernism, which, while relatively unique in Gospel, is not without precedent. The work of African American art music composers provides a useful context.

Olly Wilson, the famed African American composer and scholar, wrote about the way African American composers who work in both European-American musical traditions and more vernacular African American traditions reconcile their dual musical impulses. He highlighted the examples of Harry T. Burleigh—credited with the creation of concertized spirituals as a combination of the folk-spiritual

aesthetic and traditional classical choral techniques—and Scott Joplin, who distilled "Ragtime" from its oral, vernacular roots into the written tradition. Wilson uses the term "duality" to suggest that African American composers who are "multi-lingual" use values and ideas which rest on a continuum that runs from one set of aesthetic ideas to another.<sup>15</sup>

Smallwood's compositional practice is also consonant with the hybridity by which his genre of choice has long been characterized. Earlier in the article, Gospel's historical hybridity was revealed through examples of composers, including Rev. Thomas Dorsey, Rosetta Tharpe, and others who integrated techniques from other popular music idioms, in which they were conversant, into Gospel. During the early history of contemporary Gospel music, there were not examples of composers who were similarly intentional about integrating classical techniques into their Gospel compositions. Gospel performer and music scholar, Pearl Williams-Jones, in her 1975 article, "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic," asserted that, "unlike the art song arrangements of black spirituals, or the movement in the 'third stream' jazz techniques, which actively and deliberately incorporated European classical musical concepts and practices, black Gospel music has not consciously sought the assimilation of European religious music practices or materials into its genre."<sup>16</sup> Her article, one of the first scholarly articles written about African American Gospel music, illustrates the void that Smallwood's work has helped to occupy. Richard Smallwood's postmodern compositional practices have resulted in the creation of a remarkably successful body of work.

This article began with a brief discussion of one particularly salient example of Smallwood's canonization, the naming of the new hymnal. In addition to being the namesake of the new hymnal, "Total Praise" occupies the collection's first two pages of printed music. This is remarkable symbol of Smallwood's singularity as a Gospel composer. This article's focus on the influence of classical compositional techniques on Smallwood's music should not be understood to mean that he only writes one type of Gospel song; he is a versatile composer. The focus of this work simply reflects the attributes for which Smallwood is best known. Richard Smallwood's work merits greater study as it would likely provide valuable insights into the compositional practices of composers within and beyond African American Gospel Music.

<sup>15</sup> Olly Wilson, "Art/Classical Music" in *African American Music: An Introduction*, New Ed, ed. Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maulsby (New York: Routledge, 2005), 232–236.

<sup>16</sup> Pearl Williams-Jones, "Afro-American Gospel Music: A Crystallization of the Black Aesthetic," *Ethnomusicology* 19, no. 3 (Sept. 1975), 373–385.

# Total Praise

Arranged by Braxton Shelley

Richard Smallwood

$\text{♩} = 48$

Soprano Alto Tenor

Bass (Instrumental)

Lord, I will lift mine eyes to the hills, knowing my

SAT

B

help is coming from you. Your peace, you give me in time of the

12

SAT

B

storm. You are the source of my strength; You are the strength

16

SAT

B

of my life. I lift my hands in total praise to you.

21

SAT

B

you. A men A men.

This coda, beginning with measure 21, is repeated four times, with the choral parts being revoiced each time in the manner described on page 98. On this page, only the final amen is scored. The first one begins with the three choral voices an octave lower.

# Jim Crow's Middle Class: An Examination of the Socioeconomic Impacts of Devolution on Colorblind Legislation

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## Abstract

This study proposes that state-level implementation of the GI Bill of 1944, as mandated by devolution, permitted local agencies and bureaucratic figures to undermine the provisions of the Bill. To examine one of the least studied but more consequential elements of the bill, that is, access to higher education, a statistical analysis of black veteran representation in higher education is conducted to assess whether there are the existence of significant state-level differences. Such an analysis supports V.O. Key's black-belt hypothesis regarding the ways a white minority reacts to a large black population. This study demonstrates that devolution of the GI Bill of 1944 contributed to differential distribution of military benefits based on race and suggests that devolution may be instrumental in the propagation of discriminatory practices in the U.S.

Upon the end of World War II, Congress enacted the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, hereafter referred to as the GI Bill of 1944, in an effort to assimilate America's World War II veterans into civilian society without endangering the fragile economy. The Bill deferred veterans from the existing labor force by encouraging them to instead attend school, acquire a trade, or invest in a business enterprise. These unprecedented military benefits provided a unique opportunity for veterans to achieve socioeconomic mobility, resulting in the Bill's legacy as "the best investment the U.S. government ever made."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the GI Bill of 1944 challenged prevailing social norms by allowing all veterans, regardless of their race, to reap its benefits, earning it the title of America's first piece of colorblind legislation.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the GI Bill's reputation as "the great democratizer," it is unclear that those charged with implementing

the Bill's provisions abided by its mandate of equal access to all veterans, regardless of race.<sup>3</sup> Scholars argue that the framers of the Bill intentionally delegated implementation to the state level, so as to appease regional interests that favored the subordination of non-whites.<sup>4</sup> The possibility that the GI Bill of 1944 may have been constructed in such a way as to permit discrimination against an entire demographic brings to light a political conflict between federal intentions, as expressed in legislation, and a state's power to undermine those intentions. It also suggests that the federal government's practice of devolution may ultimately act as an obstacle to the economic mobility meant to result from such social welfare programs. A close analysis of Georgia's political system of the 1940s and the influence it had on education legislation demonstrates how devolution of the GI Bill of 1944 provided an opportunity for prevailing local sentiment and political turmoil to subvert the overarching intent of federal legislation.

## The Georgia's County Unit System

A thorough historical analysis of Georgia's political system is necessary to understanding how that structure impacted black World War II veterans. Beginning in the 1876 Democratic Primary, Georgia's state political system operated under a county-unit system, in which county-unit votes were used to determine the winners of statewide Democratic primaries. The Neill Primary Act of 1917 established a weighting scheme in which the eight most populous counties each received six unit votes each, the next 30 most populous counties received four unit votes each, and the remaining 121 counties received two unit votes each.<sup>5</sup> The plurality winner of a county retained all of the unit votes from that county. This particular system significantly increased the importance of less populous rural counties. Indeed, "A gubernatorial candidate, for example, could secure enough unit votes among the smaller and medium sized counties alone to win an election without any unit votes in the largest urban and populous counties."<sup>6</sup> The employment of this sort of strategy has "encouraged candidates to irritate the already sensitive attitudes of rural voters toward their big-city brethren."<sup>7</sup> Essentially, the power afforded less populous rural counties heightened the urban-rural tension evident in much of Georgia's political history.

<sup>1</sup> Herbold, Hilary. "Never a Level Playing Field: Blacks and the GI Bill." *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 6 (1994): 104-08.

<sup>2</sup> The GI Bill of 1944 earned this reputation because unlike other New Deal legislation, it did not explicitly limit the opportunities of non-whites to take advantage of its provisions. For an overview of legislative practices that hindered access of non-whites to the legislation's benefits, see Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Herbold, 104.

<sup>4</sup> See Ira Katznelson for an analysis of the racial implications of the construction of New Deal legislation, including the GI Bill of 1944.

<sup>5</sup> Bullock, Charles S. and Jessica L. McClellan. "The County Boss in Statewide Elections: A Multivariate Analysis of Georgia's Bifunctional Politics." *Politics and Policy* 32.4 (2004): 740-55.

<sup>6</sup> Key, 114.

<sup>7</sup> Key, 115.

Table 1 illustrates the weight of the white vote in counties of various sizes. From this table, the inflation of the least populous counties is evident, as the eight most populous counties, accounting for about 30% of the total population, only account for 12% of the popular vote. Essentially, although the county-unit system may purport to provide proportional representation, it significantly inflates the influence of the smaller counties.

County Group		Unit Votes Each	Total Population	Total Votes	Weighted Unit Votes
(8)	Most Populous	6	30.1%	48	11.7%
(30)	Next Most Populous	4	26.4%	120	29.3%
(121)	Remaining	2	43.5%	242	59.0%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

One of the primary consequences of this county-unit system is the increasing influence of local political bosses, individuals able to influence election outcomes through the mass manipulation of voters. Indeed, “Election administration is extremely lax in some Georgia counties and overtly corrupt in others. Controllers of election machinery can at times deliver the margin of plurality as effectively as a boss whose followers respond to the snap of his fingers.”<sup>9</sup> Candidates campaigning under this particular system focused their efforts on a few counties that decided the outcome of the election. Oftentimes, winning an election required gaining the favor of local political bosses in addition to traditional campaigning. As such, state-level political competitions were actually decided at the local level, where candidates fought for the support of a handful of local political bosses.

### Georgia’s Demagogue

The political structure in Georgia allowed for the rise of a political figure adept at navigating the county-unit system. For over a decade, Eugene Talmadge served as the quintessential Georgia demagogue. He competed in every statewide Democratic primary between 1926 and 1946, running for positions ranging from commissioner of agriculture to U.S. Senator. He and his son, Herman Talmadge, who was elected Governor in 1948, exploited racist ideology and class-based prejudices to create a bifactional political system.<sup>10</sup>

Eugene Talmadge’s favorable relationships with many influential county bosses and his divisive rhetoric that demonized urban voters contributed to the decline of Georgia’s multifactional politics, resulting in an era of bifactionalism clearly defined by a pro-Talmadge and anti-Talmadge cleavage. The Talmadge family’s political success can be attributed to exploitation of Georgia’s county-unit system. Eugene Talmadge made no qualms about expressing his attitude of white supremacy, once declaring that his “political disposition is that of an aroused white citizen of Georgia, which means that I breathe no ill winds of hatred against any race, color, or religious creed, but believe that the rule of our government should be left entirely in the hands of white citizens.”<sup>11</sup> This father-son pair’s willingness to campaign on such divisive issues certainly contributed to the air of bifactionalism that settled upon Georgia in the 1940s.

Eugene Talmadge’s white supremacist ideology transcended his campaign tactics. Perhaps one of the most controversial events in his political career occurred in 1941 when he fired Walter D. Cocking, a progressive educator focused on improving education resources for all students, regardless of race. After Cocking recommended a new school to train black and white teachers without developing specific guidelines for segregated facilities, Talmadge demanded that the Board of Regents fire him. Initially, the Board refused, and Talmadge, declaring, “I’m not going to put up with social equality in this state as long as I’m Governor,” rejected the Board’s decision regarding Cocking’s employment. Before the next meeting of the Board of Regents, Talmadge attempted to reduce Cocking’s salary, replaced Board members that had voted to retain Cocking with his own followers, and attempted to manufacture incriminating evidence that would create a scandal. Though these particular efforts were not successful, the Board of Regents affirmed Governor Talmadge’s request to fire Walter Cocking.<sup>12</sup> The Board’s decision resulted in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools revoking accreditation of ten Georgia institutions of higher education due to “unprecedented and unjustifiable political interference” in the administration of education. True to his belief that “the good Negroes don’t want [integration] and the good white people don’t want it,” Talmadge declared “as long as I am Governor, Negroes will not be admitted to white schools.”<sup>13</sup>

When serving as Governor, both Eugene and Herman Talmadge had the authority to maintain segregated

<sup>8</sup> Key, 115. Only applies to white voting population. Population totals based on the 1940 Census.

<sup>9</sup> Key, 124.

<sup>10</sup> Cook, James F. “The Eugene Talmadge – Walter Cocking Controversy.” *Phylon* 35.2 (1974): 181–92.

<sup>11</sup> Cook, 189.

<sup>12</sup> Cook, 184.

<sup>13</sup> Brooks, Jennifer E. *Defining the Peace: World War II Veterans, Race, and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004.



facilities and maintain prevailing racial hierarchies as they saw fit, even within the realm of social welfare programs. Eugene Talmadge “found himself intellectually and temperamentally at odds with the New Deal. . . . He bitterly resented Federal control over the administration in Georgia of federally financed relief, welfare, and public works. He failed to co-operate in the passage of state legislation to enable Georgia to participate fully in the New Deal.”<sup>14</sup> Under both Eugene and Herman Talmadge’s administrations, the state of Georgia enacted legislation regarding the administration of veteran benefits. With an opportunity to promote his white supremacist ideology without interference from the federal government, Talmadge’s legislature enacted House Bill 32–937, which stated, “Colored and white children shall not attend the same schools; and no teacher receiving or teaching white and colored pupils in the same schools shall be allowed any compensation out of the common school fund. Honorably discharged veterans of World War II could attend the common schools of this State, regardless of age, under rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1949, the legislature enacted the Veterans Education Reorganization Act of 1949, House Bill 78–4, which transferred the control of veteran education “to the State Department of Veterans Service, the Veterans Service Board and the Director, thereof, respectively.” The legislation further mandates that:

In order to promote the full realization of all the educational advantages offered to Georgia war veterans by reason of any Act of Congress. . . the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the State Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Regents, the Chancellor of the University System of Georgia and all other public education authorities of this State, shall cooperate with the State Department of Veterans Service in the formulation of such educational and training policies as may conform to accepted standards of efficiency and economy.<sup>16</sup>

Essentially, this state-level legislation delegated the implementation of veterans’ education to an organization specifically for veterans, but that delegation required the cooperation of a number of other local agencies.

Furthermore, all of these agencies were subordinate to the power of the Governor, who had the power to “create or authorize the formation of such advisory bodies or voluntary

groups of citizens primarily interested in the education of veterans, as may be deemed desirable in developing the recommendation and formulation of sound education policies.” In other words, this state-level legislation empowered the Governor, at this time the white supremacist Herman Talmadge, and the advisory committee he created to develop the guidelines by which the educational opportunities of veterans were administered. The delegation of the federal GI Bill of 1944 left the education of Georgia veterans in the care of an outwardly racist and segregationist Governor whose power to administer federal educational opportunities remained unchecked by any other educational agency, federal or otherwise. This sort of power entrusted to one man in the context of an illegitimate state government calls into question the degree to which the educational provisions of the GI Bill of 1944 actually assisted in the education of black veterans who had to navigate a number of obstacles, both *de facto* and *de jure*, in their attempt to pursue higher education.

### The Case Against Devolution

This study of Georgia illustrates how regional political interests might take priority over efforts to maintain the non-discriminatory nature of the GI Bill of 1944. Moreover, it suggests that some of the obstacles toward black veteran higher education might have been prevented with federal oversight. While many arguments against devolution hinge on the fiscal implications of the practice, the educational provisions of the GI Bill provide an opportunity to observe the impacts of devolution outside of these limitations, as the states were not required to spend money in order to distribute these benefits.<sup>17</sup> It is apparent that even without the fiscal consequences of devolution, some states were still unwilling to support those veterans that were deserving of their educational benefits. In demonstrating the role of devolution in permitting the manifestation of such obstacles, this study calls for increased federal oversight of social welfare programs, particularly with regard to political issues with which states may have an interest in prioritizing regional interests above federal mandates. In maintaining some degree of control over social welfare programs meant to provide benefits for a group, regardless of minority status, the federal government can work to prevent the promulgation of institutional discrimination by seriously considering whether devolution is the proper means to distribute social welfare benefits.

<sup>14</sup> Key, 116.

<sup>15</sup> Georgia. *Free Tuition; Colored and White Children Separate; Admission of Veterans of World War II*. 1947. HB 32–937.

<sup>16</sup> Georgia. *Veterans Education Reorganization Act*. 1949. HB 78–4.

<sup>17</sup> For a review of the fiscal arguments regarding devolution, see Hovey, Harold A. *Can the States Afford Devolution?: The Fiscal Implications of Shifting Federal Responsibilities to State and Local Governments*. New York: Century Foundation, 1999.

# Descent into Darkness: The Catholic Center Party and the Fall of the Weimar Republic

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The Weimar Republic emerged in Germany from a violent cacophony of five years of war, catastrophic defeat, and revolution with the adoption of a constitution on August 11, 1919.<sup>1</sup> It was the beginning of a new era in Germany, as espoused in the constitution's preamble: "The German people united in every respect and inspired by the determination to restore and confirm the Reich in liberty and justice, to serve peace at home and peace abroad, and to further social progress has given itself this constitution."<sup>2</sup> Integral to the coalition which founded this truly parliamentary Germany was the Catholic Center Party. Yet by 1933, the Center Party had helped to pass the Enabling Act, effectively providing Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP) with dictatorial control over the nation.<sup>3</sup>

The German government saw a striking shift in political radicalization throughout the brief Weimar years with the meteoric rise of the NSDAP and the Communist Party (KDP).<sup>4</sup> This dramatic change forced Center Party leaders, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning and his successor Chancellor Franz von Papen, Center Party chairman Ludwig Kaas, and others to adapt their party and the Weimar government to the incessantly changing political structure, ultimately ending in an alliance with Hitler. Although the leaders of the Catholic Center Party were among the founders of the Weimar Republic, the Center Party advanced the government increasingly toward authoritarianism during the chancellorships of Brüning and Papen. This was compounded by the fear of a new *Kulturkampf* in Germany from the radical right or left, which led the Center to support the Nazis in protecting German Catholic rights—destroying the Weimar Republic and their own party in the process.

The rise of Center Party member Heinrich Brüning to Chancellor of Germany began during an era of increasing crisis. In 1928, a seemingly stable government finally appeared to be in place under the Weimar constitution—with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) heading a Grand Coalition that also included the Catholic Center Party.<sup>5</sup> The next year, Heinrich Brüning quickly rose through the ranks

of the Center Party, as he recommended Center support for the Young Plan in order to restructure German payment of reparations.<sup>6</sup> However, the Young Plan increased popular opposition, led by rightists Adolf Hitler and Alfred Hugenberg, who introduced the "Freedom Law" in December 1929. This was put to a referendum "that would have made liable for treason anyone who signed any treaty that implied recognition of war-guild obligations [for Germany]," thereby making the Young Plan illegal.<sup>7</sup> Their efforts failed, but it garnered nearly six million votes and substantially increased Hitler's prominence in Weimar politics.<sup>8</sup> Ultimately, the coalition could not come to a consensus over the plan and fell apart on March 27, 1930.<sup>9</sup> President Paul von Hindenburg then asked Brüning to form his own administration as chancellor, pushing the Center Party into government leadership.<sup>10</sup>

Though motivated by his hope to maintain a functioning Weimar government, Chancellor Brüning nonetheless played an integral role in the beginnings of the Center's slide toward authoritarianism. Brüning attempted to save Weimar democracy, ironically, by abandoning aspects of the parliamentary system as ineffective. Increasingly concerned with financial reforms, Brüning attempted to govern using Article 48 of the constitution, through which "a chancellor had the power in an emergency to govern by decrees cosigned by the president, though the Reichstag could subsequently revoke the decrees."<sup>11</sup> By applying Article 48 to his rule, Brüning established a government policy of autocratic order at the expense of parliamentary democracy. Although the Center Party supported Brüning's application of Article 48, a parliamentary majority of Social Democrats, Communists, the NSDAP, and Nationalists (DNVP) under Hugenberg voted to nullify the emergency decrees, effectively undermining Brüning.<sup>12</sup>

While the undemocratic use of Article 48 may not have led directly to the rise of the Nazi dictatorship, the federal election in 1930 continued to push Brüning's chancellorship further away from the republican system. Following the Reichstag nullification of his emergency decrees, Brüning

<sup>1</sup> Detlev J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity*, trans. Richard Deveson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 3; Howard Lee McBain and Lindsay Rogers, *The New Constitutions of Europe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), 176.

<sup>2</sup> McBain and Rogers, 176.

<sup>3</sup> Peukert, 3; Ellen Lovell Evans, *The German Center Party, 1870–1933* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), 384.

<sup>4</sup> Evans, 364.

<sup>5</sup> Noel D. Cary, *The Path to Christian Democracy: German Catholics and the Party System from Windthorst to Adenauer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 129.

<sup>6</sup> Evans, 357; Cary, 130.

<sup>7</sup> William L. Patch, Jr., *Christian Trade Unions in the Weimar Republic, 1918–1933: The Failure of "Corporate Pluralism"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 199; Carey, 130.

<sup>8</sup> Cary, 130.

<sup>9</sup> Evans, 358.

<sup>10</sup> Larry Eugene Jones, "Franz von Papen, the German Center Party, and the Failure of Catholic Conservatism in the Weimar Republic," *Central European History* 38, no. 2 (2005), 205.

<sup>11</sup> Cary, 131.

<sup>12</sup> Evans, 363.

attempted a return to the parliamentary system through the election in 1930, hoping to gain mass electoral support. Instead, the ballot had devastating results. NSDAP returns shot up from 2.6 to 18.3 percent of the vote, increasing the party's representation from 12 to 107 seats in the Reichstag, while the KPD saw an increase from 54 to 77 seats.<sup>13</sup> Rather than gaining moderate political allies, Brüning's effort to return to democracy had actually worsened his situation, with popular opinion swinging away from the center toward the radical right and left.

Likewise, the presidential election in 1932 further exacerbated Brüning's difficult position and continued to solidify the nation's move toward authoritarianism. It was awkward for the Center Party chancellor to support Hindenburg, a Wilhelmine aristocrat who had been joint head of the German Supreme Command during World War I, quoted as stating that "[t]he German army had been stabbed in the back" by the founders of the Weimar Republic.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Hindenburg, his State Secretary Otto Meißner and Reichswehr General Kurt von Schleicher had "systematically set about exploiting the weaknesses in the process of forming governing parliamentary coalitions in order to build up the office of the Reich President as a competing centre of power."<sup>15</sup> Thus, Brüning's support for Hindenburg would mean continued support for an increasingly authoritarian government. However, after Hitler announced his candidacy for the Weimar presidency, Brüning saw no other choice but to campaign for Hindenburg.<sup>16</sup>

Despite Brüning's support, Hindenburg requested the chancellor's resignation after gaining reelection.<sup>17</sup> Adding insult to injury, Brüning was replaced not by a politician from a different party, but one from the Catholic Center: Franz von Papen. While Brüning had pushed the Weimar government closer toward authoritarian rule, it was Papen who would be integral to providing Hitler and the Nazis governmental legitimacy. Unlike Brüning, Papen had already embraced the movement toward the right in 1931, when he "called upon the Brüning government to exchange its dependence upon the Social Democrats for the toleration of the DNVP and National Socialists."<sup>18</sup> More alarmingly, Papen openly pushed for German authoritarianism, hoping

to "break with the parliamentary system of government and to transform the 'concealed dictatorship' into a genuine national government, a dictatorship on a broad foundation."<sup>19</sup> It became increasingly clear that Franz von Papen would not save Weimar democracy.

Papen's chancellorship aggravated two important divisions which had existed for the Catholic Center Party since its inception. The first was the internal division within the party, divided by class and status in a seemingly unified organization; the second was the separation, perceived and genuine, of the societal division between Catholics and non-Catholics in Germany. These problems were rooted in the 19th century, as a result of Otto von Bismarck's wholesale attack on Catholics. Beginning in 1871, Bismarck had begun a persecution of lay Catholics, clergy, and Catholic institutions, after questioning whether their loyalties lay with the Pope or with the recently unified German Empire.<sup>20</sup> In spite of this, by 1874, the Center had won up to one-fourth of all seats in the Reichstag.<sup>21</sup> The assault ultimately backfired because "Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* had led to the forging of the alliance between the Centre and grass-roots Catholic society," strengthening the Center Party into a political community of Catholic unity.<sup>22</sup> With the termination of *Kulturkampf*, however, the status of the Center as a party of Catholic unanimity became increasingly unstable. By the time of the Weimar Republic, "[m]uch of the party's energy was chronically absorbed by the problem of keeping the heterogeneous party from splitting apart; energy which was unavailable for coping with the larger problem of consolidating Weimar democracy."<sup>23</sup>

Papen's political goals illustrated this weak internal structure, and effectively eroded the party's unity. Class and status were central to Papen and his proponents' ideology, as most hailed from an aristocratic background.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Papen's backer and advisor to Hindenburg, General Schleicher, had realized that the "support of the NSDAP would provide Germany's conservative elites with the mantle of legitimacy they needed to carry out a fundamental revision of Germany's constitutional system."<sup>25</sup> Yet, the Center was also made up of the middle class and workers, and Papen and

<sup>13</sup> Gerhard A. Ritter, "The Social Bases of the German Political Parties, 1867–1920," in *Elections, Parties and Political Traditions: Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867–1987*, ed. Karl Rohe (New York: Berg, 1990), 34; Evans, 364.

<sup>14</sup> Peukert, 214–5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>16</sup> Cary, 133.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, 373.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>20</sup> Cary, 16–7.

<sup>21</sup> Ritter, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Peukert, 154.

<sup>23</sup> Klaus Epstein, "The Zentrum Party in the Weimar Republic," *The Journal of Modern History* 39, no. 2 (June 1967), 162.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, 200.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

his supporters' plan to create an authoritarian regime based on the old elites alienated him from mass Center support.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the Center Party's leaders still defended Weimar democracy, and the federal election of July 1932 saw the Center running Brüning as a "parliamentary alternative to Papen" and his authoritarianism.<sup>27</sup> In that vote, "the Center itself showed a small gain (from 11.8 to 12.5 percent), due mostly to Catholic excitement over Brüning's fate, but also to a smattering of Protestants who felt they now had no other way to register anti-Nazi sentiments."<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Center Party represented an anti-authoritarian opinion, limited not only to Papen but also the Nazis. However, to deprive Papen of his chancellorship, the Center would have to ally with the largest party in the Reichstag. This was the NSDAP, which had increased its share of the vote to a remarkable 37.8 percent.<sup>29</sup> Negotiations between the Center Party, led by Joseph Joos, and the Nazis over the formation of a parliamentary coalition were ultimately unsuccessful.<sup>30</sup> However, the mere discussion illustrates how the internal divisions within the Center were pushing the party in the direction of an alliance with Nazi authoritarianism.

This split between Papen and the rest of the Center, as well as the party's acceptance of a possible Nazi role in government, exacerbated the division thought to exist between Catholics and non-Catholics in Germany since the *Kulturkampf*. Throughout the Weimar era, "at election time [the Center] denounced the 'godless Marxism' of the SPD in demagogic terms; the election over, it usually allied itself with these same 'godless Marxists' for sound political reasons."<sup>31</sup> This denunciation of the left was followed by Papen, who hoped to create "a Christian and conservative regeneration of Germany's national life along authoritarian lines that would have reestablished the authority of the state and the majesty of God in public affairs."<sup>32</sup> However, the rise of a secular society among liberals and the SPD was benign compared to the tenants of Nazism and Communism, leading to an increased fear of a new *Kulturkampf* from the right or left.<sup>33</sup> While the Nazis were "virulently anticlerical, heathenistic, and pagan in their Weltanschauung," members of

the Center came to believe that the main threat was militant Communist atheism.<sup>34</sup> Even in 1931, with the Nazi threat surging in the wake of the 1930 election, one of the Center's "monthly magazine[s] *Das Zentrum* had devoted an entire triple issue—nearly half of its total pages for the year—to a tirade against Marxism and Communism."<sup>35</sup> Turning to the Nazis in hopes of protecting Catholic interests, the Center Party continued on the path leading to its demise.

Papen was central to this alliance between the Nazis and the Center Party in the defense of Catholic values, even after his resignation as chancellor in 1932.<sup>36</sup> So was Prelate Ludwig Kaas, who had been elected overwhelmingly as the first cleric to be chairman of the Catholic Center Party in 1928, and had been asked by Hindenburg in 1932 to form his own government, to Kaas's refusal.<sup>37</sup> Replaced by the brief and unsuccessful chancellorship of General Schleicher, Papen became vice-chancellor on January 30, 1933, under the newly formed government of Chancellor Adolf Hitler.<sup>38</sup>

During this time, the Catholic Center Party finally allowed the last vestiges of parliamentary democracy to collapse with the passage of the Enabling Act, essentially creating a dictatorial government. Many in the Center Party believed that a repudiation of Hitler would end up "precipitating a purge of all remaining Centrist civil servants—a purge that would [. . .] reverse decades of progress on bureaucratic parity, and remove a safeguard against religious persecution."<sup>39</sup> Fear of this threat was not shared by the Center's leaders, however. Prelate Kaas had already spoken positively with Hitler about maintaining Catholic institutions, such as schools and churches, and keeping Catholic civil servants.<sup>40</sup> Under Kaas's direction, on March 23, 1933, with a unanimous vote—albeit with Center members Brüning and Joos objecting in the party's fraction—the Catholic Center Party allowed the Nazis to legally murder the Weimar Republic.<sup>41</sup>

However, the final death knell to the Center Party would come with the passage of the *Reichskonkordat* between the Vatican and the German government, as the Center

<sup>26</sup> Peukert, 155.

<sup>27</sup> Cary, 135.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>29</sup> Jürgen W. Falter, "The First German Volkspartei: The Social Foundations of the NSDAP," in *Elections, Parties and Political Traditions: Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867–1987*, ed. Karl Rohe (New York: Berg, 1990), 54.

<sup>30</sup> Cary, 134; Evans, 380–1.

<sup>31</sup> Epstein, 161.

<sup>32</sup> Jones, 196.

<sup>33</sup> Epstein, 162–3; Peukert 268; Cary, 136.

<sup>34</sup> Cary, 135–6.

<sup>35</sup> Cary, 136.

<sup>36</sup> Evans, 382.

<sup>37</sup> David Blackbourn, "Review: [untitled]," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 5 (Dec. 1982), 1411; Evans, 349.

<sup>38</sup> Cary, 137.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>40</sup> Patch, 222; Evans, 385.

<sup>41</sup> Evans, 385–6.

Party attempted to create an official government document securing the rights of the Catholic Church in Germany. Hitler knew it would destroy the Center Party: “A few casual hints from Papen to Hitler about the background of the concordat proposal and about Kaas’s personal obsession would have been all that was necessary to indicate [the concordat was] the key to breaking the Center’s resistance.”<sup>42</sup> Yet even in the face of the weakness the concordat would cause the Center Party, on April 1, 1933, Papen met to discuss its necessity with Joos, to which Joos agreed “all Catholics must close ranks to defend Church interests, [and] that they should avoid political uproar, because toppling the current government would most likely result in a Communist dictatorship.”<sup>43</sup>

On April 10, 1933, Papen began the negotiations for the concordat with Pope Pius XI, joined by Kaas and Nazi official Hermann Göring; by July the *Reichskonkordat* was finished.<sup>44</sup> With its creation, the Center Party no longer needed to defend Catholic interests within mainstream German society, and Joseph Goebbels ordered the party’s dissolution.<sup>45</sup> The Center Party’s ultimate betrayal, however, came when Kaas made a call to Joos on July 2 or 3, 1933, asking simply, “[H]ave you people not disbanded yet?”<sup>46</sup> By July 5, the Catholic Center Party dissolved of its own volition.<sup>47</sup>

The dissolution of the Center Party was particularly astounding after it had played such a central role in founding the Weimar Republic. Likewise, under Chancellor Heinrich Brüning, the Center continued to defend the beleaguered democracy, even as he pushed it toward authoritarianism. It was ultimately the actions of Chancellor Franz von Papen which had divided the Center Party and led to its increasing acceptance of the NSDAP. Consequently, the compliance of Center Party leaders with the Nazis—not only Papen, but also Joos and Kaas—in defense of Catholic values finally gave the Nazi government legitimacy through the Enabling Act and *Reichskonkordat*. Yet in the end, even the *Reichskonkordat* was useless as Hitler and the Nazis continued to tighten their grip on Germany: “The flimsiness of the guarantees were to be abundantly proven over the next 12 years, when the Nazis, first thorough civil ‘coordination’ (*Gleichschaltung*), then through the *Kirchenkampf* (church struggle), broke virtually every one of the promises Hitler had given.”<sup>48</sup> So paralyzed by their fear of a second

*Kulturkampf* and so eager to defend their religious and moral sentiments, Center Party leaders had actually sacrificed their values, only to discover too late the true evil behind Hitler and the Nazis.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>43</sup> Patch, 222.

<sup>44</sup> Evans, 394–5; Cary, 140.

<sup>45</sup> Cary, 141.

<sup>46</sup> Evans, 394.

<sup>47</sup> Cary, 141.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 142.

# Shaken Syntax and Silence: Language as Resistance in Post-Colonial Writing

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## Abstract

This essay is a shortened version of a paper she wrote for a post-colonial literature course. In the essay, Amy discusses how writers such as V.S. Naipaul and Arundhati Roy subvert the English language in order to express a post-colonial identity.

So where do you go from here? where do I go? and where does a committed woman writer go? Finding a voice, searching for words and sentences: say some thing, or one thing, or no thing; tie/untie, read/unread, discard their forms; scrutinize the grammatical habits of your writing and decide for yourself whether they free or repress. Again, order(s). Shake syntax, smash the myths, and if you lose, slide on, *unearth* some new linguistic paths. Do you surprise? Do you shock? Do you have a choice?  
—Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*

What does it mean to express oneself? *Who* is the self? *Express yourself*: the statement seems to assume an authentic wholeness that can be explained, contained, and justified. It is the struggle to express a *whole* self, a *true* self, which is of particular significance to the post-colonial writer. As the writer and filmmaker Trinh Minh-ha asks in an interview with Pratibha Parmar: “When am I Vietnamese? When am I American? When am I Asian and when am I Asian-American or Asian-European? Which language should I speak, which is closest to myself, and when is that language more adequate than another?” (72). Minh-ha’s reference to language is far from arbitrary—it is often only through language that the self can be expressed (or repressed). “Language,” Ngugi wa Thiong’o similarly writes, “is mediating in my very being” (15). And yet that is precisely the problem with language—it *mediates* and thus becomes not simply an objective, neutral conveyer of meaning, but one that is subjective and subjugative. After all, for the post-colonial writer to be heard, (s)he must “write well.” In other words, the post-colonial writer is encouraged to express him/herself according to hegemonic norms of English language, adhering to principles of composition, style, genre, correction, and improvement. Yet by deliberately refusing to adhere to these norms—intentionally subverting the rules of

English language through silence, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary—post-colonial writers like V.S. Naipaul and Arundhati Roy challenge hegemonic constructions of identity, instead demonstrating cultural hybridity and post-colonial experiences of displacement and marginality.

In his *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Ngugi wa Thiong’o writes: “The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe” (4). More specifically, Ngugi argues, “Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other . . . . Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world” (15–16). Because language is so inextricably tied to identity, the domination of one language over another can be seen as a form of mental colonization. Indeed, Ngugi specifically observes that, “Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation” (9).

Ngugi is not the only post-colonial writer to share this view of language as a form of subjugation. In *Woman, Native, Other*, for example, Trinh Minh-ha writes that, “Clarity is a means of subjection, a quality both of official, taught language and of correct writing, two old mates of power: together they flow, together they flower, vertically, to impose an order” (16–17). Within this “order” imposed by the English language, the post-colonial writer cannot truly express him/herself. Because the experiences of the post-colonial subject fall beyond the pale of the “English” experience, the traditional forms of the English language cannot sufficiently convey the post-colonial experience. The language of the oppressor is bound to be unsuited to the oppressed, for as Trinh Minh-ha observes, “Stolen language will always remain that other’s language” (20). It is therefore not *mastery* of the language that allows the post-colonial writer to convey his/her experience but the ability to deconstruct that language, to *subvert* it, that liberates the writer.

Subversion, however, can take many forms. In V.S. Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men*, a subversive use of punctuation effectively conveys the post-colonial experience of displacement. The novel follows the protagonist, Ralph Singh, as he writes his autobiography in an attempt to make sense of what kept him from becoming a proper Englishman. Striving throughout the novel to become “real” (175), Singh eventually admits in a particularly poignant passage,

We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new (175).

Ralph Singh is, as Daniel Defoe writes, a man “without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon” (Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, ix). His childhood home, the British-dependent Caribbean island of Isabella, is a place without origin, without history—a place created through colonialism. Ralph Singh has nowhere to stand, no home. Through writing, Singh hopes to find some stable footing, some way of seizing control over the post-colonial state of disorder and uncertainty.

It was the shock of the first historian’s vision, a religious moment if you will, humbling, a vision of a disorder that was beyond any one man to control yet which, I felt, if I could pin down, might bring me calm. It is the vision that is with me now. This man, this room, this city; this story, this language, this form. It is a moment that dies, but a moment my ideal narrative would extend (97).

In the end, writing is the only way for Singh to create order; to exercise control over his own narrative. It is not insignificant that Ralph Singh’s political career begins with an act of writing. Indeed, as Singh goes on to admit, that first act of writing begins his attempt to rediscover truth:

The essay about my father for *The Socialist* wrote itself. It was the work of an evening. It came easily, I realized later, because it was my first piece of writing. Every successive piece was a little less easy, though I never lost my facility. But at the time, as my pen ran over the paper, I thought that the sentences flowed, in sequence and without error, because I was making a confession, proclaiming the name, making an act of expiation. The irony doesn’t escape me: that article was, deeply, dishonest. It was the work of a convert, a man just created, just presented with a picture of himself. It was the first of many such pieces: balanced, fair, with the final truth evaded, until at last this truth was lost. The writing of this book has been more than a release from those articles; it has been an attempt to rediscover that truth (226).

Singh’s reference to his use of writing as a vehicle for truth (however incomplete) inevitably brings to mind the author, V.S. Naipaul. The passage suggests that perhaps through writing the story of Ralph Singh, Naipaul himself is

seeking to discover a personal truth. Naipaul, in his 2001 Nobel Prize lecture, shared a quote from Proust:

This method of Sainte-Beuve ignores what a very slight degree of self-acquaintance teaches us: that a book is the product of a different self from the self we manifest in our habits, in our social life, in our vices. If we would try to understand that particular self, it is by searching our own bosoms, and trying to reconstruct it there, that we may arrive at it (479).

For Naipaul (and for Ralph Singh), therefore, the process of writing is also a process of discovering oneself. Yet as Ralph Singh admits, the “truth” that is gained from writing is incomplete—the “final truth evaded” (226). Writing within the confines of the hegemonic rules of language cannot lead to true self-discovery and self-expression. Moreover, Ralph Singh’s comparison of the process of writing to “making a confession” (226) is also problematic. As Paul Muldoon has observed, “if the confession is, as Foucault has suggested, ‘a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship,’ there are good reasons to be skeptical about its emancipatory potential . . . . If the confession is a mode of expression in which ‘dealing with difficulty involves first of all dealing with oneself,’ it will tend to shift the burden of responsibility from the oppressor to the oppressed” (41). The confessional form of writing, in other words, reinforces post-colonial discourses of power. Inevitably, therefore, Ralph Singh’s adherence to the traditional English form of writing ultimately fails to bring him a sense of completeness. The obsessive interior narrative of the self *seems* to offer some hope of order and expression, but only ends up (re)constructing colonial constructs of power and identity. By the conclusion of *The Mimic Men*, Ralph Singh has written himself into a sort of paralysis—his impeccable prose is reduced to describing, in intricate detail, the dining practices of a man named “Garbage.”

In a way then, Naipaul’s book could be described as the story of the post-colonial man struggling to express himself within the confines of an inadequate language. Yet, having established the *inability* of Ralph Singh to express himself, it is also important to observe that Naipaul’s subversion of the norms of language does actually convey an experience that otherwise could not be expressed, specifically, through Naipaul’s use (or as some might say, over-use) of colons and semi-colons in representing Singh’s voice. Unable to capture his experiences in the English language, Singh struggles to convey his thoughts through excessive descriptions and explanations strewn with colons and semi-colons. For example,

The compassion of the messiah, the man doing penance for the world: I have already explained the absurd sentiments which surprised me at the moment of greatest power and self-cherishing, the feeling that we were all riding to the end of the flat world: the child's vision, or the conqueror's, the beginning of religion or neurosis (248).

By the conclusion of the novel it is unmistakably clear to the reader—if not to Ralph Singh—that his unerring faith in the British language, his deep-seated hope that, through writing, he might find some means of self-expression, is in vain. Just as a “man's sentence is bound to be unsuited for a woman's use; and no matter how splendid her gift for prose proves to be, she will stumble and fall with such a ‘clumsy weapon in her hands’” (Minh-ha, 20), so the colonizer's language is bound to be unsuited for the colonized. The English language, in its “proper” form, cannot be the means of liberation.

At the same time, Ralph Singh's “colonial schizophrenia” (Naipaul, 485) is also unmistakably clear. This expression of Ralph's displaced state of being, this challenge to the dominant constructions of identity is, and only *can* be, conveyed through the subversive use of language. Thus, though Ralph Singh is unable to truly express himself, V.S. Naipaul is able to. Trapped within the confines of traditional rules of language, Singh can only mimic; he can never *be*. In contrast, Naipaul, by refusing to adhere to the confines of the rules of language, is finally able to write the post-colonial experience into existence.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is another novel that demonstrates how the subversion of language can challenge hegemonic constructions of power. Roy, however, uses silence and deliberate distortions of word structures and sayings to articulate a message of dissent. The book is described on its own back cover as “equal parts powerful family saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama, it is the story of an affluent Indian family forever changed by one fateful day in 1969.” However, unlike post-colonial writers such as Nuruddin Farah, who make direct political references in their novels, Roy explores the world of her main characters, Estha and Rahel, with an almost microscopic focus, refusing to move beyond the world of “small things.” The novel begins:

May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dust-green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst.

Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun (3).

The rest of the novel retains this in-depth focus on history (as opposed to History). Nevertheless, despite Roy's commitment to telling the story of individuals, her story carries powerful political implications. Fredric Jameson has argued that, “All third world texts are necessarily . . . allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, . . . even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic—necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*” (69). While it is possible to contest the universality of Jameson's claims, his argument is nevertheless important to keep in mind when analyzing *The God of Small Things*. The personal hierarchies that Roy challenges in her novel are, if we apply Jameson's thesis, also challenges to the larger national culture and society. This claim seems particularly compelling in light of the Indian government's initial reception to the novel, which was to charge the author with the crime of “corrupting public morality” (329), although the charge was later dropped. Yet what exactly is the dissent that Roy voices?

The scene that the Indian government pointed to, in their indictment of the author, was (perhaps unsurprisingly) the sex scene between the twins, Estha and Rahel:

Then she sat up and put her arms around him.  
Drew him down beside her.

They lay like that for a long time. Awake in the dark. Quietness and Emptiness.

Not old. Not young.

But a viable die-able age (310).

This, however, is hardly a passage worthy of a criminal sentence. The passage continues:

There is very little that anyone could say to clarify what happened next. Nothing that (in Mammachi's book) would separate Sex from Love. Or Needs from Feelings.

Except perhaps that no Watcher watched through Rahel's eyes. No one started out of a window at the sea. Or a boat in the river. Or a passerby in the mist in a hat.



Except perhaps that it was a little cold. A little wet.  
But very quiet. The Air.

But what was there to say? (310)

What makes this controversial passage so powerful is not what is said, but what is *unsaid*. The narrator emphasizes the quietness and emptiness of the act, the silence that surrounds it: “But what was there to say?” (310). Contrary to the accusation that the government made, Arundhati Roy did the opposite of write an immoral scene—she didn’t write it. The scene between Estha and Rahel is marked more by its silence than anything else. And yet, that’s not to say that Roy, as the author, is silent. The scene is *there*, isn’t it? In understanding this paradox, it is helpful to draw upon King-Kok Cheung’s insight:

Modalities of silence need to be differentiated . . . .  
The writers question the authority of language (especially language that passes for history) and speak to the resources as well as the hazards of silence. They articulate . . . the silences imposed on themselves and their peoples . . . at the same time they reveal, through their own manners of telling and through their characters, that silences—textual ellipses, nonverbal gestures, authorial hesitations (as against moral, historical, religious, or political authority)—can also be articulate (3–4).

In other words, the gaps in language can be just as powerful as—if not more powerful than—language itself. In the case of Estha and Rahel, instead of attempting to describe their experience within the confines of a subjugating language, Roy chooses *not* to describe it and thereby forces us to examine the political implications of our existing language.

Silence in *The God of Small Things* functions on multiple levels. There is the literal silence of the grown-up twins; Estha, who stops speaking entirely, and Rahel, whose silence takes the form of emptiness: “The emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other” (21). There is also the figurative silence within the story around *what actually happened*—no one in the family or the village wants to discuss the events that unfolded. There is the author’s articulate use of silence in describing scenes that cannot be adequately expressed within the confines of “proper” English language. Finally, there is the author’s refusal to directly address anything beside the small histories, the small things—the author’s “silence” on larger political and cultural issues. On all these levels, silence becomes

a double-voiced discourse that calls into question the stability of “truth” and “history” as well as a form of resistance to the demands of authority to speak.

“To write,” Trinh Minh-ha says, “is to become. Not to become a writer (or a poet), but to become, intransitively” (19). The dilemma facing the post-colonial writer, however, is that the language of the colonizer does not allow the writer to *become*—only mimic. The normative syntax and vocabulary of the colonizer does not allow the colonized/ex-colonized to truly express their experiences. Instead then, of conforming to the norms of English language and giving in to a hegemonic construction of post-colonial identity, V.S. Naipaul and Arundhati Roy challenge the English language, subverting the language of the oppressor in order to create a language and syntax that allow them to express themselves more authentically—to *be*. As Salman Rushdie writes in his book, *Imaginary Homelands*: “And I hope all of us share the view that we can’t simply use the language in the way the British did; that it needs remaking for our own purposes . . . . To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free” (17).

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# Ambivalent Relations: Korean and American Cinemas in a Comparative Context

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## Abstract

In this paper, I explore the fruitfulness in studying Korean cinema as a way of understanding the Korean War. I argue that the Korean War is a ghostly presence that haunts both America and Korea. Furthermore, I analyze *The Host* (Bong Joon-ho, 2006) as an example of a film that is inextricably tied with the Korean War and is haunted by the war. This paper functions as the introduction and literature review for my larger project, which is my senior thesis examining representations of male and female bodies in relation to the Korean War as the “Forgotten War,” entitled “Remembering the ‘Forgotten War’ in Film: Transnationalism and Gender in *The Host* (Bong Joon-ho, 2006), *Gran Torino* (Clint Eastwood, 2008), and *Address Unknown* (Kim Ki-duk, 2001).”

In this chapter, I explore the fruitfulness in studying Korean cinema as a way of understanding the Korean War. One of the most important reasons that Korean cinema stands apart from American cinema about the Korean War is the way that the Korean War is remembered. In the American context, the Korean War has been “forgotten.” As Bruce Cumings writes: “They [Americans] intervene on the side of the good, they appear to win quickly only to lose suddenly, finally they eke out a stalemated ending that was prelude to a forgetting. Forgotten, never known, abandoned: Americans sought to grab hold of this war and win it, only to see victory slip from their hands and the war sink into oblivion” (Cumings, p. xv).<sup>1</sup> Cumings argues that the stalemate is one of the reasons why this war has become forgotten and consequently, why this war is particularly difficult to represent in cinema. Unlike WWII (the “good war”) in which

Americans came out the victors of the Vietnam War (the “bad war”) in which Americans lost,<sup>2</sup> the Korean War has never officially ended and has left Americans in an ambivalent position. There is no national narrative in which Americans can summarize the war in Korea and despite historical dates attributed to the war—June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953—there is no clear result or ending, which Cumings argues is how the Korean War becomes the Forgotten War. Even though wars are never really over as the legacy of wars remain alive, whether it is through memorials or the memories of the survivors, the very historical dates of the Korean War only apply to the American intervention period and not to the war as a whole. Therefore, the Korean War does not fit into American history and complicates the idea of America as exceptional.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, Korean cinema is a testament that the war is still present within the context of Korean politics, contemporary South Korean-North Korean relationships, and U.S.-Korean relationships.

The “forgetting” of the Korean War in American society and the inability of Koreans to forget about the Korean War causes the Korean War to become a ghost that haunts both American and Korean societies, albeit in different ways. Grace Cho explains this process of haunting, especially in relation to Camptown—areas that serve the economic and leisure needs of American military bases in Korea.<sup>4</sup> In fact, she mentions that Korea is literally haunted by ghosts from the Korean War:

In this part of the country in particular, there is a reported phenomenon called *bonbul*, or “ghost flames,” in which flickering lights rise up from the ground, usually at the site of a massacre.... In places where buried bodies are heavily concentrated, the remains have changed the chemical makeup of the earth, causing the soul to ignite. Through ghost flames, the spirits of the dead release their grief and rage, their *han*, into the world” (Cho, p. 16).

The haunting that is an aftermath of the fighting during the Korean War forces the living to never forget about the war. Wars are impossible to forget for those who are participants as opposed to American cultural memory and its

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History*.

<sup>2</sup> The situation is more complicated, but this is a general summary.

<sup>3</sup> Even the loss of the Vietnam War could be woven into exceptional narratives, as evident with the *Rambo* films in which Americans become preoccupied with “doing things better.” Furthermore, the loss also shows the ways in which Americans can learn from their past mistakes and the loss of American innocence trope is a particularly popular trope, especially in American films about the Vietnam War. See Marita Sturken’s essay, “Reenactment, Fantasy, and the Paranoia of History: Oliver Stone’s Docudramas,” and Yen Le Espiritu’s essay, “The ‘We-Win-Even-When-We-Lose’ Syndrome: U.S. Press Coverage of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the ‘Fall of Saigon.’”

<sup>4</sup> Grace Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*.

narratives of forgetting. Furthermore, participants and veterans of the Korean War function as the *honbul* within American society in the similar way that torn family relationships, veterans, and ghosts haunt Korea as well. This haunting is reflected in South Korean cinema. For example, *The Host* (Bong Joon-ho, 2006), even though it is a film that is not directly about the Korean War, is inextricably tied with the Korean War and is haunted by the war. *The Host* takes place in Seoul, South Korea along the Han River, when a monster emerges from the polluted river (a result of U.S. military experiments) and attacks the local populace. If *The Host* deals with ghosts in such a way as to highlight them within the text, then American films such as *Gran Torino* (which is similarly haunted by the Korean War) attempt to erase those ghosts.

*The Host* also enables Korean subjects to speak back to Americans and comment on the unequal power structure of U.S.-Korean relations since the Korean War. While the film deals with themes and ideas specific to South Korea and critiques American exceptionalism, it simultaneously borrows from conventions of the monster movie genre and blockbuster style that is emblematic of Hollywood.<sup>5</sup> However, the medium of the film as a blockbuster horror/monster movie complicates its negative portrayals of Americans and Koreans acquiescing to the Americans. It is not enough to simply view *The Host* as an anti-American film, as many of its artistic influences are directly inspired by Hollywood generic conventions. Furthermore, this ambivalence turns into a transnational space that is productive, as the film constantly questions and challenges this unequal relationship.

*The Host* most powerfully challenges this relationship when its national subjects within the film directly speak back to “America.”<sup>6</sup> In one of the most powerful scenes of the film, the main protagonist, Gang-du, finally unleashes his anger. Gang-du is the father of Hyun-seo, who is kidnapped

by the monster. In this scene, which comes near the middle of the film, after the monster has been spotted and Seoul is put into quarantine, Gang-du is taken by Korean police who believe he has been exposed to the monster’s disease. We quickly learn, however, that Korean doctors are monsters themselves, using Gang-du against his will as a test subject to learn more about the monster and its impact on people.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Gang-du knows that his daughter is still alive after the monster kidnaps her because he received a phone call from her. While the doctor and the assistant discuss this, Gang-du finally spots them and cannot hold in his frustration. However, he chooses to snap not at the American doctor, but at the Korean assistant who also serves as translator.<sup>8</sup> When the white doctor discovers that Gang-du’s daughter might still be alive, he rattles off a list of organizations that Gang-du should have contacted for help: the police, the military, a television station, a human rights organization, etc. Ironically, those were the very people who quarantined Gang-du and refused to let him find his daughter.<sup>9</sup> At this point of irony, Gang-du finally breaks down and the interpreter translates his response: “Because nobody listens to me.” However, when the interpreter says this, Gang-du screams at him: “Please don’t cut me off. My words are words too. Why don’t you listen to my words?”

Gang-du’s words in themselves are particularly important to hear, but it is also important to consider how these words should be heard. Gang-du screams at the interpreter because of his refusal to be translated.<sup>10</sup> This response offers yet another critique of American culture in its implication that English is not the universal language, but rather than the language of the home country—Korean—should be the default language. This is another way in which language serves as a direct critique of the unequal relationships between Americans and Koreans. This scene is what makes Korean cinema such a fruitful area of study—it allows

<sup>5</sup> What is unique about *The Host* is that it is the highest-grossing film in South Korean history. See two anthologies of Korean cinema: *New Korean Cinema*, edited by Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer, and *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema*, edited by Frances Gateward.

<sup>6</sup> Generally speaking, this is not found within American films about the Korean War or any war, where the enemy is usually portrayed as a nameless horde. Particularly with enemies of color, they are never allowed to speak or to have any agency as subjects, serving only to dot the landscape of the film as backdrops or are reduced to objects.

<sup>7</sup> It is later revealed in the film that this disease never existed, which serves as a critique of the mismanagement of U.S.-South Korean power.

<sup>8</sup> This role of translator is particularly interesting, especially in the context of Homi Bhaba’s “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.” The translator could be seen in the position of mimicry, trying to be like his white superior although it is evident that even though his position is above Gang-du, he would never reach the position of the doctor. Gang-du’s lashing out at the Korean assistant demonstrates the anger in which the colonial subject views other members of his/her race who abandon their people to help out the colonizer. The role of translation and language comes up again in my thesis: my analysis of Chang-guk’s mother’s use of language and my analysis of Sue as cultural translator between Walt Kowalski (the American) and the Hmong.

<sup>9</sup> All of these organizations are in positions of power and show the divide between the common Korean people and people in positions of authority, mostly held by Americans and Koreans complicit with the Americans.

<sup>10</sup> Ironically, in order to understand what he is saying, I must accept the “translated” Gang-du, not in the figure of the translator in the film but through the subtitles.

for multiple voices to speak, especially those voices that seek to critique the existing hierarchy of neocolonialism.<sup>11</sup> Transnational film allows for different voices and different types of people to speak outside of the traditional narratives of the Korean War as “forgotten” in America.

Speaking from a broader perspective, reading this film alongside Christina Klein’s article, “Why American Studies Needs to Think about Korean Cinema, or, Transnational Genres in the Films of Bong Joon-ho,” it becomes apparent that ambivalence characterizes Korean cinema—and Korean politics and culture—towards America. In this way, Americans tend to view the Korean War from the perspective of heroism or winning/losing, which is why it ends up becoming a “forgotten war”—because there are no victors as mentioned in Cumings’s idea of stalemate. On the other hand, Koreans are more concerned with the hierarchical role of their status in this relationship between the two countries.

The film also uses anti-Americanism in a more complicated way than in portraying one-sided views. For example, in the scene that I analyzed, Gang-du is not only critical of the Americans, but of Korean complicity with Americans as well. Christina Klein describes this “ambivalent” relationship: “In the end, the close relationship between the two countries has produced among Koreans both a pervasive orientation toward the United States in economic and cultural matters, and a deep resentment of the fundamentally unequal terms of the relationship” (Klein, p. 875). This sense of ambivalence is further elaborated by Jodi Kim:<sup>12</sup>

Significantly, the war set into motion a neoimperial relationship between the United States and South Korea. Following the war, the United States poured \$4 billion of aid into South Korea in one decade alone and supported a string of autocratic and military-controlled regimes, beginning with Rhee’s. Today, the United States continues to maintain a strong military presence in South Korea, making South Korea’s efforts toward a peaceful reunification with North Korea much more difficult (149).

Kim and Klein demonstrate how South Korea has always been aware of the deep impact of American culture and economy, stemming from their roles as allies since the Korean War. While this relationship is not viewed as entirely equal, Grace Cho argues that it is the military

camptowns that represents the unequal relationship between the two countries, as well as Korea’s willingness to acquiesce to these demands until relatively recently. Therefore, the representation of American colonialism in relation to the Korean War as a haunting presence in *The Host* is a critique of Korea’s collusion with the system. This sense of guilt, anger, and shame is a recurring narrative within Korean cinema that is represented in *han*, which manifests itself not only within the living people, but the ghost flames of the dead as well. Korean cinema not only grapples with this ambivalence that is characteristic of Korean politics and culture, but it is also constituted by this ambivalence.

Furthermore, *The Host* takes the genre of the monster movie and uses it as a way of expressing post-Korean War contemporary society in relation to American imperialism and colonialism. In this way, *The Host* is instrumental in demonstrating the ambivalence within transnationality. On one hand, it reflects the influences of American cultural imperialism and how it is grappled with by people of other cultures. On the other hand, throughout the film there are many instances of explicit anti-American sentiment, much of which results from the still-present American occupation and the many military bases that occupy the country as a constant reminder of Korea’s position in the neocolonial hierarchy. This cultural ambivalence then permeates the very nature of the film. In this way, *The Host* is able to critique America and the Korean War in a way that is particularly productive to my project. This argument previews my argument with Chang-guk’s mother in *Address Unknown* and Sue in *Gran Torino*, in which I discuss how language and (trans)nationalism critiques existing power structures and ways of remembering the Korean War.

<sup>11</sup> Gang-du is also a bit of a marginal person (although he is the main character of the film) because he is a single father, a bit stupid, adopted, and poor. In other words, he is clearly not one of the Koreans who have benefited from the economic boom.

<sup>12</sup> This quotation is found in Jodi Kim’s chapter, “The Forgotten War: Korean America’s Conditions of Possibility,” from *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*.

# Re-visioning Memory in the Rainbow Nation: Challenges and Critiques of Post-Apartheid Nation Building through Memorials in South Africa

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## Abstract

Memorialization in its many forms is essential for nations and individual citizens to express their own identity and validate it. After the fall of apartheid in South Africa, memorialization took on a new character as many repressed and emergent groups worked for recognition after centuries of oppression. In this paper I discuss the objectives of new South African memorialization projects, such as museums and memorial sites, and their ethical implications. To illustrate the ways memories are represented and consumed in South Africa, I will use examples of different memorialization projects located throughout the country. Though these memorialization projects are meant to achieve a sense of unity in the country, they stand in contrast to ongoing socioeconomic and cultural divides between South Africans in the post-apartheid era. As the nation redefines itself, memorials must recognize history but also challenge society to address current day issues.

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Memorialization in its many forms is essential for nations and individual citizens to express and validate their identities. Following the fall of apartheid in South Africa, memorialization took on a new character as many repressed and emergent groups worked for recognition after centuries of oppression. In this article I will discuss motives of state-sponsored memorialization projects in the new, post-apartheid South Africa as well as the ethical implications of these projects. To illustrate the ways memories are represented and consumed in South Africa, I will use examples of different memorialization projects located throughout the country, including museums and memorial sites.

In the post-apartheid era, the African National Congress (ANC) has worked to create a shared South African identity among its citizens by creating spaces of memory that recognize marginalized histories and promote national reconciliation. South Africa's memorialization projects have not only been used to legitimize the new dispensation to its citizens but also to present a unified vision of the country to the international community. South Africa has experienced a

dramatic re-visioning since the first free elections in 1994. In the past 17 years, the country has worked to reflect the histories of its majority non-white population, which were suppressed by the British colonial and Afrikaner nationalist powers that dominated South Africa for the past several hundred years. This process has involved revising public school curriculums, instituting public holidays, honoring indigenous African leaders, and even changing the names of cities and towns, especially those with Afrikaans names, to names in non-white indigenous languages. The nature of these recent political changes complicates memorial building but also emphasizes the need for South Africans to recognize their pasts. As the nation continues to redefine itself, memorials must recognize South Africa's complex history but also challenge society to address current day issues. Moreover, while the South African government has carried out memorialization projects to achieve a sense of unity in the country, the focus on these projects in light of the immense need for basic service delivery (safe housing, jobs, medical care) can seem questionable as part of the national agenda. The apartheid era silenced many different voices in the historical narrative of South Africa. The building of memorials under the post-apartheid government gives voice to the previously marginalized majority of the population. More broadly, this reaction to marginalization has characterized the nation-building agenda within South Africa itself.

To illustrate the ways this agenda has manifested itself in the country, consider how the Blood River Heritage Site near the town of Dundee in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province has changed over time to reflect the political dispensations in South Africa. The site commemorates the Battle of Blood River in 1838 in which Afrikaner trekkers and Zulu fighters battled, reportedly ending in the deaths of over 3,000 Zulu while leaving only a few Afrikaners wounded (Ross, 2005: 6). In the years following the institution of apartheid policies in 1948, the battle site was regarded as a place to affirm Afrikaner identity and in 1971 a memorial was built consisting of a large ring, or *laager*, of 64 cast iron ox-wagons. This *laager* formation is said to have been a decisive battle strategy against the Zulu. This symbol, along with others, recurs throughout Afrikaner nationalist monuments and narratives that dominated South Africa for much of the 20th century.

Since the end of apartheid, memorials and museums became spaces of education on marginalized histories and reconciliation for the nation (Rassool, 2000: 2). This can be seen in the attempt to create a counter narrative to the Blood River Heritage Site through the construction of the Ncome Museum that links the Afrikaner historical narrative

under apartheid to the narrative of indigenous peoples. By using the Zulu name for the river, *Ncome*, the post-apartheid government tried to counter the apartheid-era teaching of history that celebrated Afrikanerdom and denigrated other indigenous groups. The Ncome Museum, opened in 1999 as part of the national government's Legacy Project, is located across the river from the Blood River ox-wagon monuments and presents the perspective of the Zulu and other black groups living in the area during the Battle of Blood River and following it (Ross, 2005: 13). In this way the government has created a tangible counter history to the history espoused by the apartheid government—a history that justified brutality against blacks based on perceived past atrocities committed by blacks against whites.

The Ncome Memorial is not only meant to offer a different perspective of history but also to achieve a sense of reconciliation between South Africans. To reflect this emphasis on reconciliation, a footbridge between the Blood River and Ncome Memorials was proposed to “encourage visitors to experience both perspectives” of the battle (Marschall, 2010: 286). Additionally, as part of the efforts to achieve a non-vindictive atmosphere at the monument, former president Nelson Mandela visited the site in 2002. Significantly, he “noted that blacks and Afrikaners shared a common experience in struggling against British colonial rule,” and urged the nation to channel the patriotism associated with the memorial to “build and develop [South Africa] for the good of all” (Ross, 2005: 10). Such words highlight the ways the government has worked to build national identity despite past divisions. This spirit of reconciliation and shared identity communicated at Ncome is central to the post-apartheid government's larger projects of reconciliation following years of racial division.<sup>1</sup> The post-apartheid government's efforts to reflect a multiplicity of historical viewpoints through its memorials mark an important step in achieving a more plural nation, but the ANC's emphasis on reconciliation through memorials is contentious. Such an agenda that enshrines memory cannot be achieved without creating spaces that reflect the uncomfortable legacy of apartheid in which different racial and ethnic groups are still very much at odds.

Memorial tourism in South Africa is not only meant to facilitate reconciliation between South Africans but also to establish South Africa's image in an international realm as well. In creating this impression of South Africa no image is as prominent as that of Nelson Mandela as a representative for the value of social justice and triumph over oppression

that characterize many of the projects of the post-apartheid government. However, even Mandela, as a historical figure who represents many contradictions of the anti-apartheid struggle, has been branded to portray a particular image to tourists. Often images of history are commoditized through association with places of material consumption.

The shopping center in Mandela Square in Sandton, near Johannesburg, is one of many locations where the image of Mandela has been used to attract investment. At Mandela Square, South Africa's former president is portrayed in the form of a more-than-double-life-size bronze statue, jauntily greeting visitors at an entrance to the shopping center. A popular location for conventions and business summits, Sandton presents an ideal location to display the new South Africa to those who can help in the nation's economic development, where Mandela “projects a confident image of peace and stability to the international audience of foreign public officials and private sector delegates” who visit (Marschall, 2010: 336). However, in its “eagerness to attract foreign investment and tourism,” such sites may actually simplify Mandela's role in South African history, even as this Mandela industry seeks to emphasize his story as central to the creation of the Rainbow Nation (Marschall, 2010: 336). For instance, these depictions are often of an older presidential Mandela and do not reflect the politician's earlier, more controversial career as a leader of the militant wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe. In negotiating the balance between benefitting communities and creating an image of a progressive South Africa, the government faces a challenge to keep memorial spaces meaningful to both foreign tourists and its own people. In the post-apartheid era, the question of who stands to benefit from memorialization tourism is ever-present in South Africa and is indeed part of the complicated legacy inherited by the ANC.

The post-apartheid memorialization process carried out largely by the government in South Africa has ambitious goals of unifying the nation; however, these often costly projects contrast with the needs of many South Africans still experiencing the effects of systemic poverty during the apartheid years. Determining the target audience for memorials and ways to create access to this memory are some of the main contestations in memorial projects in South Africa today. Such an example of a potential disconnect between a memorial and its current context is illustrated by the Red Location Museum of Struggle located in the New Brighton township near Port Elizabeth. Construction on the museum began in 2002 and was completed in 2005 as part of a larger

<sup>1</sup> The Ncome Memorial website explicitly states that the vision of the Museum is “to develop, preserve and promote the histories and cultures of South Africans in order to ensure social cohesion and nation building” (<http://www.ncomemuseum.org.za/>, 2010: online).

revitalization campaign for the Red Location carried out by the Nelson Mandela Municipality. The museum's vision is to "portray the horrors of Institutionalized Racism and the heroic struggles of the Anti-Apartheid movement aimed at liberating the oppressed people" in the context of the Eastern Cape and in New Brighton specifically (<http://redlocationmuseum.webs.com>, 2006: online).

The museum's location and architecture itself are meant to evoke feelings of separation and deprivation under apartheid. Curator Chris DuPreez says the museum's layout is intended to make visitors feel as if they are "isolated and separated from the rest of world" (Taylor, 2010: online). With help from government funding, the museum has successfully promoted itself as a memorial space for political events in the Red Location, and the museum is becoming a top tourist attraction. However, there are contentions around the very history of New Brighton presented at the museum that makes the space so attractive as a memorial tourism site. In particular the museum is criticized for commemorating the township's connection to apartheid solely as a "site of resistance" that "privileges the struggles of political activists over those of ordinary people." This portrayal of the township's history fits the meta-narrative of the post-apartheid government in regards to marginalized communities (Baines, 2003: 12). In some ways, however, histories continue to be marginalized by the state: if sites of memory are de-politicized by recognizing more "ordinary groups," "they are deprived of [their] claims on political resources and state power" (Baines, 2003: 12).

In response to this perceived privileging of particular histories and to the privileging of the museum itself over service delivery needs, many New Brighton residents opposed the building of the museum (Baines, 2003: 12). DuPreez notes the opposition by observing that "[residents] wanted houses . . . [and] were not interested in a museum" (Taylor, 2010: online). DuPreez also believes that the museum faced protest because "for many black South Africans, a museum was a 'very foreign concept . . . limited to white South Africans'" (Taylor, 2010: online). Although DuPreez makes this statement to justify the building of the museum, his words point to problematic aspects of post-apartheid memorial projects that represent history in ways that may not be culturally appropriate in certain communities. DuPreez also speaks of current protest against the museum as "'proof that South Africa is finally a democracy'" (Taylor, 2010: online). Protest against the museum often centers on poor service delivery in the township and focuses on the museum as an institution that is funded by the municipal

government, which is responsible for maintaining services. Just as the physical structure of the museum itself separates visitors from the surroundings of deprivation in the new South Africa, so too does the institutional structure of the museum separate itself from the community under the guise of presenting a manifestation of democracy. Furthermore, the museum is currently in the process of constructing an expansion to house an arts school and center as well as Africa's first digital library (Taylor, 2010). While such resources have the potential to benefit some members of the New Brighton population, one must question the priorities of the government in building such projects when a community faces a lack of basic services.

The example of the Red Location Museum highlights the deep chasm that still exists between South Africa's past inequalities and its present challenges. However, it is the museum's controversial nature that makes it possible for it to be a powerful space to engage with South Africa's disparities. Furthermore, the museum would be even more effective if it could also recognize the ways history is silenced and even manipulated for political reasons under the current government (Baines, 2003: 13). The case of this local museum highlights the ways that museums and memorials can, and perhaps must, not only serve as testaments to the past but also as provocative spaces where visitors must grapple with the current needs of South Africans.

Spaces of memory are important indicators of the popular envisioning of a nation's past. In South Africa memorials have been created to aid in the healing process in the post-apartheid era by helping people reflect on their pasts. These memorials have also helped South Africa assert itself among other nations. However, as South Africa continues to process its past, the government and communities must find ways to recognize its history while acknowledging the significant work that lies ahead.

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# Ghost Ship: *The Slavery*

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## Abstract

The following work is an essay on Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, written for the course "Slavery in 20th Century Film and Fiction," taken during fall semester 2010. Through an analysis of specific characters' names, the paper aims to signal the significance Morrison places on the past. All of the characters' names are connected to a previous event in their lives. Furthermore, this essay attempts to convey how in *Beloved*, Morrison explains that the only way for the characters to rid themselves of the remarkable pain and guilt slavery has inflicted on them is to recognize the effect the past has had on them.

"Good for you. More it hurt more better it is. Can't nothing heal without pain, you know. What you wiggling for?" (Morrison, 92).

A ghost ship, *The Slavery*, roams the oceans of *Beloved*, driven forward by winds of guilt and remorse. This ship is the past, and the past is slavery, allegedly dead, but actively present. It is a permanent image that sails through time and haunts the present with its unforeseen and constant apparitions. From the early beginning of the novel *Beloved*, the narrator explains that Sethe has "worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe" because "her terrible memory" of slavery "punish[es]" her (Morrison, 6, 7). At this point Sethe is unaware that her memory, the past events that have occurred in her life and that constitute *her* story, damages her more when suppressed. From Morrison's point of view, confronting the past is the sole way to reduce the force with which *The Slavery* rushes through the oceans of time, exposing the pain caused by its frightening images. Doing so weakens the winds of guilt and remorse that push the ship's sails forward. The only way to face the past is to acknowledge the power and influence it has on one's identity, regardless of how painful the confrontation may be.

In his article, "The Anonymity of the Suffering Servant," W.M.W. Roth claims "body, soul, and name make a person" (172). There can be no individual without a name, and a name, as one integral part of an individual, must represent something that s/he identifies with. In *Beloved*, a name completes the making of a person specifically because it

connects a character to his/her past. Most of the characters are named after a previous happening in their lives, and are thus each necessarily tied to a haunting past. Characters' names in the novel reveal the significance of the past and, in some cases, even serve as an indication of how or whether the character has decided to confront it.

The names of "Sethe," "Denver," "Beloved," "Baby Suggs," and "Stamp Paid" point to decisive moments in each of these characters' lives. Sethe's name refers to a time near her birth, and connects her to her mother's painful past as a slave. Sethe's mother "threw all [of her nameless babies] away" out of the ship she boarded and into the sea, except for Sethe, and "gave [Sethe] the name of a black man" (Morrison, 74). Therefore, Sethe's name, by association alone, carries the weight of her mother's history as a slave and, by extension, the horrific memory of her hanging. This is a particularly painful recollection, a strong force for *The Slavery's* sails, given that Sethe "never found out" why her mother's life was so brutally ended (73). The memory creates the impression that there never was a specific reason for her murder at all, and that even if there was, it would make little difference to the pain which the reminiscence provokes. Assuming the black man who Sethe's mother mentions is Sethe's father, then Sethe's name also links her to a man who was most likely a slave. With Sethe's past-heavy name, Morrison communicates why this character has the most difficulty facing the ghost ship. Sethe is the one with the most painful memories and guilt-laden experiences.

Denver's name comes from Amy Denver, the girl who assists Sethe in giving birth. By naming her daughter after Amy, Sethe makes sure to obliterate Amy's preoccupation that the child will "never . . . know who [Amy] is" (100). Every time Denver asks her mother to relate the story of her birth, Sethe must remember the difficult and traumatic escape from the Sweet Home plantation. The name "Denver" carries the memory of Sethe's road to Ohio, along with her "screaming feet" and the "chokecherry tree" on her back (93). Furthermore, "Denver" bears the memory of the reason behind Sethe's escape and the murder of Sethe's one-year-old daughter, Beloved. Sethe takes the name "Beloved" from the sermon she hears the preacher give at her baby's memorial service in which "Dearly Beloved," are the only two words he utters. Given that Beloved's name refers directly to her funeral, it connects her life with her death. "Beloved" contains the burden of slavery's effects on Sethe, since she murders her child in order to prevent her from living under the torment of enslavement. Sethe's desire to

forget her long and complicated past as a slave transforms into a powerful wind that drives *The Slavery* forward.

Baby Suggs's name is a mixture of two nicknames that remind the character of her husband, an enslaved man "she believed" had taken "a chance to run" in search for freedom and had "made it" (168). "Suggs" is her husband's name, and "Baby" is what he called her. For Baby Suggs, her name is a reminder of a lover she cared about greatly, and it represents the last opportunity for the two to reunite. She worries that if he ever were to look for her, he would not "find . . . her if she was calling herself some bill-of-sale name" (168). Though Baby Suggs's name ties her to a painful past, she chooses to focus on the small part of her history that provided her some happiness. "Stamp Paid" is the name this character assumes after he is forced to "[hand] over his wife to his master's son" (218). He believes "whatever his obligations were" as a slave, "that act" was so horrifying that it "paid them off" (218). "Paid" is a reference to his former debt, and "stamp" comes from the new bills of sale he "render[s] . . . paid for," aiding other former slaves "pay out and off whatever they owed in misery" (218). Stamp Paid's name is associated with "all that time [he never touched]" his wife, Vashti (274). During that period, it was too painful for Stamp to think of the young master imposing his sexual will upon his wife, but "that was as low as [he] ever got" (275).

Baby Suggs's and Stamp Paid's names, in addition to being connected to each of their pasts, also serve as an indication that these two characters have decided to face their haunting memories. There is a major difference between their names and those of the previously mentioned characters: they both choose these names on their own accord, deliberately replacing Jenny Whitlow and Joshua, respectively. "Baby Suggs is all she ha[s] left of the 'husband' she claim[s]," and Stamp Paid "change[s his] name" instead of "snap[ping]" Vashti's neck (168, 275). Baby Suggs "accept[s] no title of honor before her name" and decides to "[open] her great heart to those who could use it" when she arrives at Sweet Home (102). Her disposition to confront the past not only shows in her ability to achieve her personal liberation from pain, but also in her effort to encourage others in the community to pursue healing as well. The action of "offer[ing] . . . her great big heart" and her decision to determine her own name ensure that the clear and humble connection to the past will never be obliterated (103). The process of renaming in which Baby Suggs and Stamp Paid engage allows them to confront and assimilate their histories, to redefine their individuality based on a significant

happening in their lives. They acknowledge the imprint slavery has left without letting it prevent Suggs from "mak[ing] a living with . . . her heart," or Stamp from helping others settle their debts with misery (102). Baby Suggs and Stamp Paid do not permit the guilt from actions they took while enslaved to consume the opportunity of a new future. They keep their pasts alive and weave them into their present, providing themselves with the equipment to defend themselves from the haunting of the ghost ship whose apparitions are no longer unexpected.

The manner by which Sethe deals with her past in the beginning of the novel has quite the opposite effect; it excites the winds that propel the ship's movement. Sethe struggles with remembering moments of her past, which increases her guilt. She has "the desire to forget the terrors of slavery" but must face "the impossibility of forgetting" in order to be liberated (Gilroy, 222). The constant wish to forget as much as she can strengthens the winds, until Beloved, the ghost child, the irrepressible memory, returns to 124 Bluestone. Beloved is "an eruption of the past and the repressed unconscious" that "come[s] down to fix [Sethe]," to allow the release of some of the pain the heavy load of slavery has inflicted on Sethe (Krumholz, 397; Morrison 300). This burden refers not only to Sethe's own experience as a slave; it also includes her family's previous experiences that have been passed down through her name. In order to allow the strong winds of guilt and remorse to dwindle in intensity, Sethe's memory must be assimilated; she needs to engage in Morrison's specific notion of re-remembering. Sethe has put together and "buried within herself" the events of her past—or history's members—but the presence of Beloved forces her to re-member these happenings as she narrates them (Rodrigues, 161). Beloved's purpose is to make Sethe think about her quieted past and "disremember" it, to make her arrange the pieces one more time (Morrison, 323). Separating the fragments of her history and reevaluating their placement helps Sethe release part of the repressed pain that her slave past has forced upon her, allowing her to begin healing as she reorganizes every piece.

Beloved is "mighty thirsty" and has "an alert and hungry face" because she needs Sethe to feed her memories of *herstory* (Morrison, 61, 91). The only way to satiate the ghost child's hunger is to remember, and "the more detail . . . provided, the more Beloved like[s] it" (92). The more thorough the story, the deeper Sethe must search for buried memories, and thus the more painful and imperative for her to relate it. Once Sethe explains "every mention of her past

life hurt,” the healing process begins to take place (69). Sethe’s acknowledgement of the pain the past causes her and her willingness to work through it is the way in which she finally confronts the past. It is only “in response to the many questions Beloved” asks that “Sethe’s rememory pours out of her” (Rodrigues, 161). Sethe’s most painful and haunting memory, Beloved’s murder, is the one that ultimately proves able to liberate her. After the ghost child visits 124 Bluestone, Sethe finally manages to “forg[et] her like a bad dream” (Morrison, 323). However, forgetting does not imply that Sethe’s and her family members’ experience as slaves is obliterated, quite the contrary. It means that Sethe is able to understand her past, consciously making it an integral part of who she is in the present. She realizes that “[she is her] best thing;” neither she nor her mind is someone else’s property (322). Facing *The Slavery* for Sethe is especially significant; confronting the past has the added difficulty that her title of “slave” is never legally lifted. Sethe’s past, precisely because it is incredibly painful, is an essential part of who she is as a person. As some of Sethe’s repressed guilt for the murder of her daughter diminishes, so do the forceful winds that facilitate *The Slavery*’s travel across the oceans. As the strength of the winds decreases, the ship takes longer to reach land, giving individuals greater time to prepare for its coming and for what it carries on board.

“A disruption necessary for healing,” Beloved “catalyzes the healing process” for Sethe and for Paul D, another former slave from the Sweet Home plantation who had always desired Sethe (Krumholz, 397). Beloved demands that Paul D “touch [her] on the inside part and call [her her] name” (Morrison, 137). Since Beloved represents the buried past, her request to “touch her on the inside part” asks that Paul D remember the convoluted feelings and troubling memories which he had shut away in his tobacco tin. Paul D refuses at first, because when something or someone is named, its existence is recognized. Calling Beloved by name forces him to confront his past as a real occurrence. Beloved “demands to be removed from her nothingness, to be specified, to be ‘called,’” but Paul D refuses to make the sorrowful connection with the past (Holloway, 522). Beloved says, “[she]’ll go if [he calls] it” (Morrison, 137). He finally accedes, uttering “Beloved.” At that moment, “the flakes of rust . . . [fall] away from the seams of [Paul D’s] tobacco tin” and he finally “w[akes]” (138). Even though he does so reluctantly, the link that he creates with his troublesome past as a slave liberates him. At the end of the novel, it is only through recognizing that “[they] got more yesterday than anybody” that Paul D and Sethe are able to be and to move

forward together (322). After Beloved’s visit, they have both let their pasts resurface, acknowledging the strong imprint that it left and how they now “need some kind of tomorrow” (322). Sethe and Paul D must move forward in order to create new memories that will not be suppressed, and will become, as those relating to slavery have now been acknowledged to be, a fundamental part of who they are, individually and as a couple.

As time goes by, *The Slavery* continues its journeys, reaching never before seen places and overtaking new spaces. Beloved is “the age it would have been had it lived,” signaling that the past never stops maturing (Morrison, 301). Regardless of how much Sethe, Paul D, or any of the other characters try to bury their memories, their histories have a power that exceeds the characters’ struggle to suppress recollections. With the seemingly minute detail of Beloved’s age, Morrison dismisses Sethe’s belief that “the future [is] a matter of keeping the past at bay” (51). The past devours the present and the future, becoming the most prominent part of a person’s identity. The passage of time increases the number of events that the past holds, constantly loading *The Slavery* with additional haunting images, while it decreases the possibility of new events occurring in the future. The more suppressed memories of slavery accumulate, the more the winds intensify, and the more powerful and damaging the ship’s apparitions become. Buried memories carry the sails of the haunting ship that soars through *Beloved*’s oceans.

Even though Paul D and Sethe “forg[et] Beloved,” “sometimes . . . something more familiar than the dear face itself moves there” (Morrison, 324). The ghost ship never ceases to appear, although once its presence is faced and acknowledged, the hurtful potential of its content considerably diminishes. The ship’s image is no longer the unannounced remembrance of a repressed and painful past; it is the expected reminder of a still painful but familiar history. Sethe and Paul D “can touch [the face of the past] if they like” but can also choose not to do so (Morrison, 324). Since the memories have been “re-membered” and assimilated into their identities, Beloved stops being an unfamiliar face. The continuous confrontations with the past decrease the strength with which the winds propel *The Slavery*, whether it is by the change of a name (re-naming) or the resurgence of memory (re-membering). The ship gradually and slowly dissolves, until it becomes nothing but a shadow. However, it is impossible to forget or obliterate that shadow. It lurks perennially, for “nothing ever dies” (Morrison, 44).

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# How Spike Lee Brought Down Ed Koch: The Politics of 1989's *Do the Right Thing*

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## Abstract

In this essay, I argue that Spike Lee's 1989 film *Do the Right Thing* played a sizable role in preventing the reelection of Edward I. Koch to the New York City mayoral seat in November of the same year. Curiously, scholars have made similar conjectures only in passing. Historical evidence—in the form of newspaper articles, interviews, and other contemporaneous writings by Lee—demonstrates that *Do the Right Thing* received extensive publicity and was a source of much discussion just before the Democratic primary. Furthermore, my own close readings of the film reveal a considerable number of implicit and explicit political claims against Koch and his administration. In sum, I suggest that these proliferating messages instilled in many voting New Yorkers an anti-Koch sensibility that paved the way for his loss in the primary to David Dinkins, who would become New York City's first (and so far only) black mayor.

On the evening of August 23, 1989, 16-year-old African American Yusuf K. Hawkins ventured with three of his friends into Bensonhurst—a conservative, heavily Italian-American neighborhood in Brooklyn—to inquire about a used 1982 Pontiac for sale. A crowd of baseball-bat-wielding white youths, many of whom wrongly believed that Hawkins was dating a white girl in the neighborhood, attacked the four black teenagers and shot Hawkins twice in the chest with a handgun. He died in a hospital hours later. Three days after the incident, more than 300 black demonstrators marched through Bensonhurst, confronted there by jeering whites who chanted "Niggers go home!," screamed obscenities, and held up watermelons as a gesture of racial ridicule.<sup>1</sup> The reality of racial tensions and violence in New York was undeniable. As Claire Jean Kim explains, the Hawkins

murder "reenergized the resurgent Black Power movement" and led many New Yorkers to believe that then-mayor Edward I. Koch was responsible for the disempowerment of African Americans.<sup>2</sup> What many scholars have failed to realize, however, is that Spike Lee's film *Do the Right Thing*<sup>3</sup> (released in New York on June 30, 1989)—as well as the publicity, controversy, and discussion around it—played a sizable role in instilling an anti-Koch attitude in many voting New Yorkers before the Bensonhurst killing took place. If anything, Hawkins's death solidified the political claim of Lee and his film. Cinematic and historical evidence demonstrate that *Do the Right Thing* and Lee himself were largely responsible for Koch's loss in his November 1989 reelection campaign to David Dinkins, who would become New York City's first—and so far only—black mayor.

Much of the political power of *Do the Right Thing* lies in its adherence to what film historian Manthia Diawara calls the "cinema of the real." In an essay published one year prior to *Do the Right Thing*'s release, Diawara defines this "cinema of the real" as a form of filmmaking "in which there is no manipulation of the look to bring the spectator to a passive state of uncritical identification." Films that embrace this form "show a world which does not position the spectator for cathartic purposes, but one which constructs a critical position for him or her in relation to the 'real' and its representation."<sup>4</sup> With *Do the Right Thing*, Lee engages precisely in this cinematic practice. His film is not a Hollywood production that stereotypes its African American characters and works its visual magic so that black spectators might identify "uncritically" with them. The world that the film presents—that is, its *diegesis*—is not so far removed from the "real" world of Brooklyn in 1989. For many moviegoers, the experience of watching a film in theaters serves as a "get-away" from real life, a break from the monotony, an entry into the historical past or into a whole new realm of fiction and fantasy. Any New Yorker who walked into a local cinema to see *Do the Right Thing*, however, must have felt as if s/he had never left the outside world.<sup>5</sup> The film was shot on location and takes place in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. The story plays out on a hot summer day (Lee's movie was released June 30), all in a 24-hour period, with myriad reminders of New York's political climate.

<sup>1</sup> Sewell Chan, "The Death of Yusuf Hawkins, 20 Years Later," *The New York Times*, August 21, 2009, <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/21/the-death-of-yusuf-hawkins-20-years-later/>.

<sup>2</sup> Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Do the Right Thing*, DVD, directed by Spike Lee (New York: The Criterion Collection, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Manthia Diawara, "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 775.

<sup>5</sup> Paula J. Massood, *Black City Cinema: African American Urban Experiences in Film* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 131.

Of *Do the Right Thing's* many allusions to then-recent race-related violent acts, graffiti within the film's diegesis plays a vital role. In one particular shot, spray-painted on a red brick wall is the exclamation "Tawana told the truth!" referring to the highly publicized Tawana Brawley rape allegations two years prior to the film's release. At the age of 15, Brawley received national media attention for accusing six white men, some of whom were police officers, of having sexually assaulted her. Although a grand jury concluded in October 1988 that Brawley had not in fact been the victim of a rape and that she likely fabricated the entire affair, she received considerable support from the African American community, who accused the New York media of adhering to racial stereotypes.<sup>6</sup> *Do the Right Thing's* allusion to the incident, and the support for Brawley that the phrase "Tawana told the truth!" entails, serve to keep Brawley and the real-life racial tensions of New York in the consciousness of all who see the film. If moviegoers failed to connect the city's race-related hostilities with the power and control of the mayoral office, Lee's juxtaposition of the "Tawana" graffiti with another spray-painted message—"Dump Koch"—made the film's politics abundantly clear. One might argue that *Do the Right Thing* presented its agenda far more quietly than it should have if it really wanted to engender an anti-Koch attitude in its audience, but the beauty of the film lies in its subtlety. Viewers left the theater thinking not that they had just seen a biased documentary but, rather, a depiction of reality in their time and place.

Lee clearly wanted his viewers to walk out of the movie with an action plan, namely to "dump Koch," and he vocalized this message through the character of Mister Señor Love Daddy, the neighborhood radio DJ played by Samuel L. Jackson. On air, the DJ says, "Our mayor has commissioned a blue-ribbon panel, and I quote: 'to get to the bottom of last night's disturbance. The City of New York will not let property be destroyed by anyone.'" The irony of this "official statement" from the mayor—who, of course, would be Koch—is its interest in preventing the destruction of *property*. In *Do the Right Thing's* most climactic and controversial scene, two black characters—Buggin' Out and Radio Raheem, who carries around a boom box blasting Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" everywhere he

goes—decide to boycott Sal's Famous, a neighborhood pizzeria owned and operated by the Italian-American Sal and his two sons, Vito and Pino. The reason for the boycott, according to Buggin' Out, is Sal's refusal to put up pictures of black people alongside the photographs of famous Italian-Americans he has placed on the pizzeria's "Wall of Fame." When the two initial boycotters begin to protest, Sal destroys Radio Raheem's ghetto blaster with a baseball bat, an encounter that spawns a full-fledged brawl in and outside of Sal's Famous. Naturally, the NYPD soon arrives on the scene, and a white officer uses excessive force on Radio Raheem, strangling him to death in a chokehold with a baton. As soon as the police leave to "take care of" the now deceased Radio Raheem, Mookie—a young black man (played by Lee himself) who works for Sal—hurls a garbage can through the pizzeria's window and thus incites an onslaught of looting and vandalism. The cops then return to enforce law and order, eventually hosing a number of African Americans who "refuse to comply." So, as DJ Mister Señor Love Daddy brings to light, the city (be it the NYPD, Mayor Koch, or New York's empowered whites) maintains a far greater interest in the protection of *property* owned by whites than in the protection of Radio Raheem's life—that is, the life of a black man.<sup>7</sup>

At the very end of *Do the Right Thing*, the DJ gives a third-person announcement: "Your Love Daddy says, 'Register to vote! The election is coming up!'" The film's most conspicuous political proclamation, this shout-out is the spoken variation of the written "Dump Koch"—what Catherine Pouzoulet calls "Spike Lee's implicit encouragement to his audience to vote for David Dinkins."<sup>8</sup> Because the real-life mayoral election would not take place until four months after the movie's theatrical release, the DJ's reminder was not so much "Go out and vote now!" but more so "Remember that a great deal of racial violence goes on in this city—and it's Mayor Koch's fault. This November, vote for anyone who might bring him down." Surely, many cinema-goers left the theater with this idea implanted in their minds.

Yet another "this is the real here and now" reminder in Lee's film comes up in the protesters' chanting of "Howard Beach!" in the boycott-and-riot scene summarized

<sup>6</sup> Jim Yardley, "After a Decade, Brawley Reappears and Repeats Charges," *The New York Times*, December 3, 1997, [http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C01EEDA143DF930A35751C1A961958260&page\\_wanted=1](http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C01EEDA143DF930A35751C1A961958260&page_wanted=1).

<sup>7</sup> A number of white critics attacked Lee's film on the grounds that Mookie did not "do the right thing" when he destroyed the window of Sal's Famous Pizzeria. "White people still ask me why Mookie threw the can through the window," Lee said in an interview.<sup>13</sup> "No black person ever, in 20 years, no person of color has ever asked me why." Ironically, these critics' disapproval of Mookie's actions is the same as the NYPD's disapproval in Lee's film. Thus, both the critics and the fictional police seem to dismiss the death of Radio Raheem as inconsequential.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Pouzoulet, "The Cinema of Spike Lee: Images of a Mosaic City," in *Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing*, ed. Mark A. Reid (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 40.

above. Hundreds of looters justify their vandalism of Sal's Famous with this reference to an incident that occurred on December 20, 1986, in the Howard Beach neighborhood of Queens. Late that night, three African American men—Michael Griffith, Cedric Sandiford, and Timothy Grimes—entered New Park Pizzeria after their car had broken down nearby. After a white teenager began yelling racial slurs at the men, a verbal altercation ensued, and a wave of local youths soon started to attack. Grimes escaped unharmed, Sandiford was bludgeoned with baseball bats and tree limbs, and Griffith was run over by a car on the Belt Parkway while attempting to escape from the assailants. He died instantly.<sup>9</sup> The connections between the Howard Beach incident and the Sal's Famous riot are palpable: the outer-borough pizzeria battleground, the tensions between whites and blacks, the baseball bat as weapon, and the death of an African American male. That the genuine racial violence at Howard Beach took place less than three years before the release of *Do the Right Thing*, and that Mayor Koch was in office at the time, gave Lee's film an uncanny air of authenticity, as well as a strong backbone of historical and diegetic support for its real-world political program.

Also integral to *Do the Right Thing*'s anti-Koch agenda are the interactions between the film's African American and other minority characters. After the white police officer strangles Radio Raheem to death, the Puerto Rican Stevie stands alongside a number of African American protesters and proclaims, "It's murder. They did it again, just like Michael Stewart." Stewart, a black graffiti artist, died at age 25 after 13 days in a coma following his arrest by New York City Transit Police for illegally spray-painting a subway station wall. A police report stated that he "lost consciousness" in the street after escaping from officers, and New York City's Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Elliot Gross concluded in an autopsy that Stewart died of heart failure following a heart attack that put him into a coma, though a physician who witnessed the autopsy on behalf of Stewart's family said his death had been caused by strangulation. Eleven policemen were involved in the incident. All were white.<sup>10</sup> So, Stevie's "they" in "They did it again" can be understood as "the empowered white cops." In Lee's film, the African American and Puerto Rican residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant are allied, inasmuch as they stand together as the oppressed—in contrast to the white police officers, the white mayor of the city, and the Italian-

Americans who own and operate the pizzeria from which the "underclass" buys its food. In fact, Tina, Mookie's girlfriend and the mother of his child, is Puerto Rican as well.

*Do the Right Thing*'s Korean characters are similarly aligned with the African Americans and Puerto Ricans, although the Bed-Stuy community takes a while to realize this alliance. Just like Sal, the Korean greengrocers manage a small business of their own, while the African Americans in the neighborhood serve merely as customers, giving a great deal of their money to the "infiltrators." What *separates* the Koreans from the Italian-Americans and the whites, however, is their refraining from violent acts against the blacks and Puerto Ricans. In the film's riot scene, three black men—ML, Sweet Dick Willie, and Coconut Sid—lead the mob to the Koreans' produce stand, ready to do the same there as they have done to Sal's. The Korean clerk attempts to ward them off with a broom, shouting, "I no white! I'm black!" before pointing at ML and explaining, "You, me—same!"<sup>11</sup> Sweet Dick Willie then shakes ML and tells him, "Leave the Korean alone, man. He's all right!" Any chance of a fruit stand raid quickly disappears. The conclusion drawn is that the Korean clerk is indeed "black," in the sense that he and his family—like the Puerto Ricans and the African Americans of the neighborhood—are members of the underclass subjugated by the white authority. Here, Lee's film pits all the non-white New Yorkers against the white ones, suggesting that white is the color of power, the power of Ed Koch. Just as Radio Raheem has his stereo broken by the white Sal while blasting "Fight the Power" and is killed while "fighting the power" of the white police, in each and every scene of *Do the Right Thing* Lee cinematically "fights the power" of the Koch establishment.

In one of the film's most exceptional moments, Lee presents a quick-cutting onslaught of racial slurs, with different ethnic groups pointing the finger at one another. All of them looking directly into the camera, the African American Mookie scorns Italians, the Italian-American Pino rips at blacks, the Puerto Rican Stevie slams Koreans, the Irish Officer Long mocks Puerto Ricans, and the Korean produce stand clerk goes off on Jews. Of course, the final rant—that of the Korean—is the most politically salient. He yells, "It's cheap, I got a good price for you, Mayor Koch, 'How I'm doing,' chocolate-egg-cream-drinking, bagel and lox, B'nai B'rith asshole." Once again, the position of the

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Schmalz, "Cuomo and Howard Beach: Recalling Political Roots," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1987, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B0DE7DC1F30F93AA25752C0A961948260>.

<sup>10</sup> The Associated Press, "Date Is Set for Officers' Trial in Death of Michael Stewart," *The New York Times*, May 15, 1985, <http://nytimes.com/1985/05/15/nyregion/date-is-set-for-officers-trial-in-death-of-michael-stewart.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Samir Dayal, "Black-and-Tan Fantasies: Interracial Contact between Blacks and South Asians in Film," in *AfroAsian Encounters: Culture, History, Politics*, eds. Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Shannon Steen (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 92.

Korean character proves his alliance with the film's African American and Puerto Rican characters as *anti-Koch*. Never does *Do the Right Thing* condone these racist sentiments; it merely emancipates them from their subconscious state, projecting them straight at the camera lens in full-blown vocalized form. Here, the characters say precisely what they think, and the effect on the spectator is frightening in its psychological authenticity.

Less grotesque than these candid racist slurs, but far more striking than the subtlest of the movie's jabs at Koch, were Lee's own public vocalizations—many of which came during his nationwide promotion of *Do the Right Thing*. In a printed companion volume to the film, Lee wrote:

Racial persecution, not only in the United States, but all over the world, is not gonna go away; it seems it's getting worse (four years of Bush won't help). And if Crazy Eddie Koch gets reelected for a fourth term as mayor of New York, what you see in *Do the Right Thing* will be light stuff.<sup>12</sup>

Later, Lee blatantly addressed the anti-Koch nature of his movie. "We knew that when the film came out, it would be right before the Democratic primary for mayor," Lee told freelance writer Kaleem Aftab. "We felt that we could have a little bit of influence... and every time we could nail Koch, we would."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the "little bit of influence" that Lee and his crew felt they could have turned out to be something much greater. In the film alone, Lee "nailed" Koch directly—with writing (the graffiti), with speaking (Love Daddy's radio announcement), and with humor as unconstrained thought (the Korean greengrocer's rant). The entire project of *Do the Right Thing* might be called an indirect "nailing" of the mayor.

Finally, on July 17, 1989, Lee had a letter to the editor published in *New York* magazine. Titled "Say It Ain't So, Joe," it responded to a column<sup>14</sup> of Joe Klein's and a review<sup>15</sup> of *Do the Right Thing* by David Denby, both from the June 26 issue of *New York*. In this letter to the editor, which undoubtedly reached more readers than anything else Lee wrote in 1989, the filmmaker declared, "If anyone is to blame for allowing New York to become a racial war zone, it's Koch. He's been the mayor for the past 11 years, not Dinkins."<sup>16</sup> Klein's opinion piece had suggested Dinkins

would "have to pay the price" for the race relations depicted in *Do the Right Thing*, and Lee called out the reviewer on his rather racist insinuation that Dinkins was the man responsible for the actions of all black New Yorkers. Never missing a beat, Lee once more took the opportunity to criticize the mayor: he associated *Koch*, the man in power, with the actions of all New Yorkers, regardless of race—and he pointed out that *Koch*, unlike Dinkins, had an 11-year record of holding office amid inordinate racial violence in America's largest city.

That three major journalistic pieces discussing *Do the Right Thing* went to press in *New York* magazine in a mere three weeks gave Lee and his movie extensive publicity, especially in New York, where the mayoral election was but three-and-a-half months away. Even if Klein and Denby managed to ward potential moviegoers away from theaters, not a New Yorker could be found who had not heard something about *Do the Right Thing*. Lee's film and public appearances surely convinced a number of voters that Koch was a major part of the city's race problem; when the killing of Yusuf Hawkins garnered local and national attention, it proved true the movie's "thesis," and the incumbent mayor's chances of winning his November reelection bid dwindled rapidly. On September 12, 1989, Dinkins defeated Koch and two minor challengers to win the Democratic nomination for mayor of New York City. In the primary, he received 84.8% of the black vote to Koch's 10.3%, brought in 60.4% of the Latino vote to Koch's 31.8%, and garnered only 1.4% less than Koch among "liberal" white voters. Dinkins then squeaked his way through, in an overwhelmingly Democratic New York, to the town's mayoral seat with a 2.4% margin<sup>17</sup> over Republican candidate Rudolph Giuliani. Racism at the local and national level was far from over, but—at long last—the curiously underappreciated campaign of *Do the Right Thing* won what it had battled to earn. If the new Black Power movement paved the way for Koch's loss and Dinkins's victory, Spike Lee and his summer 1989 film certainly played a large part in the process.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>13</sup> Kaleem Aftab, *Spike Lee: That's My Story and I'm Sticking to It* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 76.

<sup>14</sup> Joe Klein, "Spiked?: Dinkins and *Do the Right Thing*," *New York*, June 26, 1989, 14–15.

<sup>15</sup> David Denby, "He's Gotta Have It," *New York*, June 26, 1989, 53–54.

<sup>16</sup> Spike Lee, "Say It Ain't So, Joe," *New York*, July 17, 1989, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 102, 107.



# The Whitening of the United States in the 1940s and 1950s

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## Abstract

This paper analyzes how immigrants and communities of color in the United States in the post-World War II period were perceived, constructed and restructured by the dominant white, patriarchal society in the effort of creating a homogenous nation that would presumably counteract the forces of Communism. With special attention focused on the changes occurring in the production of the arts and domestic life, this paper argues that “normalcy,” as defined by mainstream society, was regulated not only by legislation but also by the expectations and actions of the quotidian life.

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In the period after World War II, the United States transformed into a nation with a seemingly homogenous identity and a renewed sense of peace and justice. Using the power it accumulated during the war through industrial development, politics and military strength, the United States elevated itself into a position of global superiority and a model state, and became a highly regulatory state in its management of civic equality, maintaining order and capitalism both domestically and internationally. This isolated period of unquestioned globalized power of the United States was challenged only by those who subscribed to Communist thought. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the rhetoric of Communism was presented to the American public and it was perceived by those under the sphere of American influence as the ultimate threat to security, prosperity and global peace. The mechanisms of the government and big businesses to promote an anti-Communist ideology throughout the United States were quite productive in garnering support and made a lasting impression that would influence future matters of social and economic policy. Standards of what could and could not be considered “American” as well as what and who is American “enough” became the primary manner in which those in political and economic power would shape their anti-Communist program. Unsurprisingly, the effects of the newly implemented social rules,

manifested formally in legislation and the behavioral customs of everyday citizens, resulted in an overall whitening of the United States.

Under the influence of McCarthyism, the United States government passed several pieces of legislation and fully enacted its power to normalize how people of different races and ethnic backgrounds chose to express themselves and their histories. By targeting and eliminating the ubiquity of organizations based around ethnic commonalities, the United States government essentially erased any organized and vocal expressions of diversity within the nation in an effort to subdue any dangers. Similarly, the censoring of the prominent popular film and music industries, especially targeting those artists and contributors of African descent, furthered the whitening process as notable individuals of the still subordinate African American community were discredited in the public eye. This resulted not only in the removal of leaders of potential difference from the public arena, it also allowed for government control of national identity as expressed through visual culture and aesthetics.

Beyond bureaucratic changes, the influence of anti-Communist ideology trickled down to the privatized unit of the family. Standards of normalcy developed around the ideas of white superiority and patriarchy and were used by the United States government to signify a strong, patriotic and proper body of citizens. The pressures to meet expectations of the new family model affected primarily those individuals and groups who were new immigrants, non-white or simply identified as the “other” by mainstream American society. As a platform of homogeneity was determined in the 1940s and 1950s against the fashioned threat of Communism, privilege was given to the norms of whiteness.

Arguably the most notorious and ruthless anti-Communist campaign was in the multifaceted hunt for disloyalty and treason in the domestic United States that is now popularized as McCarthyism. Due to the heightened fears of Communism and Soviet espionage in American institutions, the United States government and Federal Bureau of Investigation implemented an extensive program of committees and agencies to investigate any individual or organization that might be participating in “un-American” activities. Labor organizers, unions, liberal activists and educators were the most frequently targeted, but special attention was directed toward immigrant groups’ cultural and ethnic centers, which suggests that the United States was redefining its standards of citizenship to make them more

synonymous with standards of whiteness. Under the authorization of President Truman, the Attorney General compiled a list of organizations constituting a threat to national security on the basis of their traces of totalitarianism, fascism, Communism or subversive action. The list published on November 16, 1950 consists of 127 organizations. Interestingly, most had already been disbanded after previous pressures and suspicions put them in Communist hunts between 1947 and 1950.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all of the organizations that were targeted, whether existent or not, demonstrated some sense of ethnic identity or connections to other nations that were deemed un-American, and thus a threat to the United States government. From the American Committee for Spanish Freedom to the American Jewish Labor Council to the Hungarian-American Council for Democracy, it seems no ethnic or immigrant minority group was free from suspicion, despite their promotions of very “American” ideals of democracy, freedom and liberty. The blatant attack on ethnic groups through policy and police monitoring was essentially a statement by the United States government calling for eliminating the influence of groups representing all national identities other than American. Thus, to remove suspicion and prove loyalty meant to denounce one’s past and history and commit to picking up the customs and models of an American citizen.

Eventually, governmental pressures to adopt whiteness became a self-regulating force for many immigrant groups who often came to desire complete assimilation into white American society without allowing even a remnant of the past to taint their image. George J. Sanchez writes about the demographic changes specifically in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights in the 1950s. Although predominately Jewish since the 1920s, it rapidly “collapsed in the postwar period due to out-migration” of the new Jewish middle class who had experienced a taste of upward mobility and whiteness and felt the need to fulfill those standards of United States citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Sanchez elaborates on the history of the Jewish community in Los Angeles explaining that prior to World War II, the Boyle Heights community was truly integrated, with large Jewish, Japanese and Mexican communities as well as the presence of Italians, Armenians, Russians and African Americans. Although this multicultural and multiracial neighborhood had previously lived in peace, the influences of the city government and other members of

the Jewish community pushed those living in Boyle Heights to assimilate into whiteness. The inherent racial diversity of the neighborhood was deemed socially improper and translated into the worst living conditions as gauged by the Federal Housing Authority. Although the Jewish community had historically been a working-class group, heavily involved in the organization of labor unions and labor change, which tied them to the other immigrant groups, a growing middle class elite of Jews in Los Angeles, mostly in the entertainment industry, set the pressures to assimilate into American society, by entirely foregoing working-class and immigrant culture. Assimilation in this case was bound to geography and economic wealth. Depending on where they chose to live, they were either integrated into the Caucasian community or left in their traditional, Old World, multicultural ways. Sanchez’s analysis leads him to conclude that there was a mass departure from Boyle Heights, with nearly 72% of Jews leaving the neighborhood for a whiter Los Angeles.<sup>3</sup>

While encouraging the absorption of certain ethnic groups into American society, those in political and economic power put as much effort into quelling leftist thinking and popular rhetoric as they did promoting patriotism and whiteness. One mechanism by which this was accomplished was enforcing strict control, censoring artists, and those in the film and music industries who were producing dangerous, “un-American” works. The fear of Communist infiltration into popular culture led the powers of McCarthyism to ban those individuals and groups who were assumed to be radical. Ultimately, the official blacklist of the entertainment industry, *Red Channel*, barred more than 150 individuals from working.<sup>4</sup> While the standards of “blacklisting” a person or group could be extremely vague and biased, perhaps predictably, a number of the 151 allegedly subversive writers, directors and performers were African Americans who were quite active in the early struggle for civil rights and whose leftist attitudes were sympathetic to Socialist thought. As the 1998 documentary *Scandalize My Name* showed, artists like Paul Robeson, Canada Lee, Harry Belafonte and Hazel Scott were extremely influential in the African American community, as well as popular culture icons, thus to simply erase them from the public eye essentially meant erasing their agendas and their citizenship.<sup>5</sup> Suppressing icons of African American success and culture

<sup>1</sup> “The Attorney General’s List of Totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, Subversive, and Other Organizations, November 16, 1950” in Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents*, The Bedford series in history and culture (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 191.

<sup>2</sup> George J. Sanchez, 2004. “What’s Good for Boyle Heights Is Good for the Jews”: Creating Multiculturalism on the Eastside During the 1950s.” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 3, 634.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 633.

<sup>4</sup> “The Blacklisted Bible: Red Channels,” in Schrecker, 244.

<sup>5</sup> *Scandalize My Name: Stories from the Blacklist*. Seattle, WA: Unapix Home Entertainment, 2000.

sent a message to all aspiring African American performers, artists and writers who now saw their window of opportunity closing. The widespread lack of visibility of African American performers in the public eye also resulted in an overall whitening of popular culture; the increasing invisibility of African American celebrities also reduced visible role models of an alternative American identity.

The void that was left in the entertainment industry by the blacklisted individuals was quickly filled by government associated films and projects that would serve to reinforce American superiority and identity. As George Lipsitz discusses in his book, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*, there were great changes in how the film industry was operated as well as what it produced. After 1945, working-class life and experiences were no longer favored as those images could be the catalyst for a Communist movement within the nation. Instead, films were produced to emphasize the importance of unity, community and patriotism as in the genres of family melodramas and westerns, but even more avant-garde expressions of film, like film noir or film gris, were used to spread a very “American” message. Lipsitz explains that the suppression of class dynamics ultimately resulted in a commonly felt sentiment that acknowledging those tensions would lead to the breakdown of the economy and the government. As it were, people were encouraged by the films they were viewing to focus on the insular problems of the home and family, not on greater social issues. Lipsitz elaborates on this idea of privatizing the enjoyment and consumption of popular gangster films and film noir, which in their respective genres targeted the audience by drawing on their sympathy towards the lead character’s loneliness, isolation and internal repression that causes them to be misfits.<sup>6</sup> In these genres the struggles of an individual take priority over the struggles of a society, and when successful, he argues that the viewing audience was manipulated to follow a school of thought that resulted in far less criticism and challenges to the governmental and economic powers.

This model can be seen in the 1964 film *Nothing But a Man*. While the film was made during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, its plot places the social issues of the 1950s in the private sphere. The main character, Duff Anderson, tries to negotiate his identity as an African American man in the South, while trying to support his new wife and growing family. Although he encounters several instances in which larger societal inequalities like overt racism and job discrimination are harming his humanity and

his chance at a fair life, ultimately the plot focuses attention on the structure and problems of his family. Much like the father-in-law he once resented for accommodating the whites in the community, Duff adjusts his own needs so that he can perform his role as a proper, American patriarchal leader of his nuclear family. The finale scene of the movie that shows Duff returning home is his redemption into the model of a white, American society.

Normativity in quotidian life reinforced the powers of the United States against Cold War threats by whitening and standardizing home life and familial relations. In an effort to inspire patriotism, American leaders presented the good citizen as the most powerful, respectable and honest figure of the nation, implying that each had a responsibility to their nation to behave well and present a good image to the rest of the world. Accordingly, the family’s role in relation to American social structure became highly symbolic and the superficial changes that occurred in familial structure reflected the whitening ideal of the United States as progress. Elaine Tyler May explores the drastic surge of family life in the postwar period and explains that Cold War ideology strongly influenced the domestic revival, while the two combined resulted in an American sensibility for liberation from the troubled past and the promise of security in the future.<sup>7</sup> Portraying the “moral fiber” of the American family as necessary for the preservation of freedom and security, was portrayed as needing to manifest itself in a patriarchal structure where an honest work ethic and morality were believed and enacted. This concept of the ideal family cast roles for every family member: the male breadwinner, the full-time female homemaker and the obedient children who would grow up to regenerate this pattern.<sup>8</sup> These expectations for familial life were especially tied to economic achievement; to provide a moral basis for family life, one would have to be at least in the middle class.

While some populations among people of color and new immigrants may not have been accustomed to these societal demands, it was entirely clear to them that the nuclear family was *the* American way and there was little room for alternatives. In efforts to eliminate their visibility as the “others” in society, people of color were pressured to conform to the middle class, suburban, white models of family structure, ethics, politics and labor. The reversion to traditionally maternal roles for women was critical to maintaining normal American life and the federal government took strong initiatives to set up standards and provide

<sup>6</sup> George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 279.

<sup>7</sup> Elaine Tyler May, “Cold War—Warm Hearth: Politics and the Family in Postwar America” in Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser, ed., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

incentives for women to follow their expected duties, especially for women of color who were assumed to require more guidance from the government. Ruth Feldstein's book, *Motherhood in Black and White*, offers insight into what qualified as "good" and "bad" motherhood. More often than not, African American women fell under the "bad" category due to their more visible defiance of white American principles such as the idea of gentle nurturing and coddling as the "proper" approach to childrearing. Once these distinctions of "good" and "bad" were racialized, the policies implemented to aid all American families started to distinguish between deserving and undeserving citizens. Whereas welfare was appropriate to maintain the white family, particularly in the instances of widowed white women with children, there was great reluctance to aid African American families because the assumed "improper" maternity of black women would affect the development of the citizen and consequently, the nation.<sup>9</sup> The simultaneous effort to assimilate some ideals of family while extinguishing others enforced the greater trend of whitening in the United States that was both imposed by political and economic powers and internalized by citizens.

The fear of external danger in the post-World War II period of the United States was a great motivator in the crafting of a national identity; the need to define oneself in the opposition of another was evident in how the United States pushed to become the dominant power of the West and portray itself as the model state of moral, hardworking whiteness. To do so, those who promoted the threat of Communism used several channels to promote a singular ideal of United States authority, encapsulated in a representation of citizenship that was heavily associated with superiority of whites. This representation was bolstered by existing racial dynamics of citizenship and the privilege granted almost exclusively to white citizens. Race began to be closely associated with, and almost inseparable from, notions of morality, patriotism and economic success. The desire for homogeneity undoubtedly created racial and class tensions. Ultimately, it resulted in a seemingly urgent need for the United States to develop a uniform national identity around traditional notions of whiteness in the 1940s and 1950s, which strongly impacted the discourse that would soon develop in the coming years. Despite the many structured, normative behavioral patterns and expectations that sought to dismantle the presumed hold of Communism on the United States, the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s would mark a shift manifested in remarkable opposition to the white, patriarchal and capitalist models so strongly promoted in the previous era.

<sup>9</sup> Ruth Feldstein, *Motherhood in Black and White: Race and Sex in American Liberalism, 1930-1965* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 72.