



# The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2010

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

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

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# Preface

It has been my distinct pleasure to assemble the collection of articles authored by undergraduates in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) for a third year. Having welcomed its 25th cohort of Fellows in 2010, the MMUF program has offered support to more than 3,500 undergraduates and continues to play a critical role in increasing the number of minority students and others with a demonstrated commitment to eradicating racial disparities that pursue PhDs in the arts and sciences. Indeed, with more than 150 fellows who are graduate students at the ABD level, in addition to more than 340 fellows who have earned their PhDs and are now actively teaching, MMUF is making significant inroads in reducing the serious underrepresentation of certain minority groups on faculties across the nation.

The articles presented in the 2010 *MMUF Journal* showcase the original research of fellows who participated in the program during the 2009–2010 academic year as well as the program's recent alumni. This year's *MMUF Journal* spotlights just a few of these apprentice scholars as they begin to define their own scholarly agendas. Fellows were encouraged to submit works showcasing their intellectual endeavors, particularly the culmination of their Mellon research projects.

The diverse articles in this year's journal reveal the breadth of perspectives represented in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship 21 fields of designated study.<sup>1</sup> They probe in the essays range from Cindy Camacho's exploration of Latina reproductive health and Nicole Gervasio's examination of how stigmatization, HIV, and disability inheres in the postcolonial body, to Melinda Rios's research on architecture in the Gilded Age, Kyera Singleton's portrayals of Japanese-American identity, and Alonzo Vereen's exploration of the manifold influences on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s writings and speeches. The breadth of students' research topics—traversing the globe and spanning disciplines, historical eras, and conceptual commitments—bears testament to their promise in the pursuit of knowledge and engagement with their world(s).

Whether exploring the practice of critical pedagogy in elite institutions, the dilemma of implementing HIV/AIDS prevention treatment, or the inner workings of microfinance institutions and loan diversification in St. Lucia, these students are examining issues critical to our intellectual, social, political, and practical understanding of underrepresented groups *and* society at large. Their engaging questions and analyses are a testament to the added value—and necessity—of such scholars to diversify the homogenized nature of institutions and provide new perspectives in our quest for knowledge.

We present students' original research in the *MMUF Journal* in continued support of their aim to obtain doctorates and become exceptional scholars. We hope you will enjoy their articles.

**Jovonne J. Bickerstaff**

*Editor*

*MMUF Graduate Student Advisor, 2006–2010*

*Harvard University, PhD Candidate in Sociology*

**Meg Brooks Swift**

*Contributing Editor*

*MMUF Coordinator, 2006–2010*

*Harvard University*

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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

- 2  
Nathalie G. Ais, *Smith College*  
Critical Pedagogy in Practice: Institutional Structures and Individual Practice of Critical Pedagogy at an Elite Institution of Higher Education  
Advisor: Professor Adrienne Andrews, Smith College
- 9  
Darren Arquero, *Rice University*  
Out of the Closet: Frank Kameny's Militant LGBT Activism of the 1960s
- 13  
Christiana Pinkston Betts, *Hampton University*  
The Show Must Go On!: Creating a Place in Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*  
Mentor: Dr. Ameer Carmine
- 15  
Cecilia Caballero, *University of California, Berkeley*  
Indigeneity, Mythistory, and la Virgen de Guadalupe in Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*
- 19  
Keru Cai, *Harvard College*  
The Aesthetics of Music According to Proust: Its Human and Superhuman Capacities
- 22  
Cindy Camacho, *Oberlin College*  
Divergent Discourses: Medical and Cultural Understandings of Latina Reproductive Health in the Era of Gardasil
- 27  
Eliazar Masansi Chacha, *University of California, Berkeley*  
Compromising Race: The Politics of Being Three-Fifths  
Mentor: Charles Henry, Ph.D.
- 31  
Patricia Cho, *Williams College*  
Ishmael's Failed Heresy: Perpetuating the Overrepresentation of Man  
Mentor: Cecilia Chang
- 36  
Michael P. Esquivel, *Rice University*  
Alfred, King of Wessex, and Anglo-Saxon Kingship
- 39  
Darryl Finkton Jr., *Harvard College*, and Gerrel Z. Olivier, *Boston College*  
Social Profit from Microfinance Institutions: A Survey of the Perceived Impact of Loan Diversification in St. Lucia
- 42  
Nicole Gervasio, *Bryn Mawr College*  
Operating on the Postcolonial Body (Politic): Stigmatization, HIV/AIDS, and Disabled Identity in Africa
- 46  
Jason Craig Harris, *Wesleyan University*  
"An Exhortation and Caution to Friends": A Short Analysis of a Quaker Antislavery Treatise  
Mentor: Professor Elizabeth McAlister
- 51  
Destin K. Jenkins, *Columbia University*  
Conflicting Reports: The Role of Foreign Correspondents in Shaping Coverage of Wartime China  
Mentor: Eric Foner
- 55  
Kimberly Love, *Tuskegee University*  
Remembering *Beloved* and Discovering *A Mercy*: The Roles of Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Race During Slavery  
Advisor: Dr. A. Ankumah
- 59  
Yvette Martinez, *University of California, Los Angeles*  
A Study of Transculturation vis-à-vis Language and Design Elements in *A Bowl of Beings*  
Mentor: Marissa K. Lopez, Ph.D.
- 63  
Juliana Partridge, *Spelman College*  
Multiracial Racial Identity in Contemporary America: An Overview  
Mentor: Dr. Barbara Carter
- 67  
Albert Rigosi, *Columbia University*  
Optical Characterization of Gallium Arsenide (III)  
Mentor: Aron Pinczuk
- 70  
Melinda Rios, *Wellesley College*  
Personal Expression in Gilded Age Architecture
- 74  
Tyler J. Rogers, *Brown University*  
Interpreting Difference through Different Interpretations: Ethnohistories at Plimoth Plantation
- 78  
Tamlyn Roman, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*  
Can We Treat Our Way Out of the Epidemic?
- 83  
Kyera Singleton, *Macalester College*  
Ambiguous Bodies: Rethinking Race and Gender through the Trope of the Octoroon in Antebellum Louisiana  
Mentors: Dr. Kennetta Perry and Dr. Peter Rachleff
- 87  
Susan Tan, *Williams College*  
Wishing the World Undone: Domestic Destruction in *Macbeth*  
Mentor: Professor Robert Bell
- 90  
Sharon Tran, *Macaulay Honors College at CUNY Queens*  
Looking Behind the Bedroom Door: Productive Sensationalism and Domestic Violence in Leonora Sansay's *Secret History*
- 95  
Alonzo Vereen, *Morehouse College*  
One's Heritage Does Not Define Oneself: An Analysis of Factors that Contributed to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Writings and Speeches
- 98  
Kayla Vinson, *Yale University*  
Paradigmatic Confinement: Examining the Limitations of the "Acting-White Hypothesis"
- 102  
Britney Wilson, *Barnard College*  
The Regulation of Cyclooxygenase-2 by MicroRNA-101 in Prostate Cancer Cells  
Advisors: Dr. Xing Gu, Dr. Yubin Hao, Yuan Zhao

# Critical Pedagogy in Practice: Institutional Structures and Individual Practice of Critical Pedagogy at an Elite Institution of Higher Education

Nathalie G. Ais, *Smith College*

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*Nathalie G. Ais, who hails from Plantation (Fort Lauderdale), FL, graduated in 2010 from Smith College, with a double major in sociology and government. With her passion for education and teaching, she plans to continue her research on critical pedagogy, earning a Master of Arts in Teaching and doctorate in the Philosophy of Education to be a teacher and college professor.*

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## Abstract

As the culmination of my MMUF two-year research project, this article discusses my major research findings on the practice of, and structural impacts on, critical pedagogy at an elite institution of higher education. Emerging from radical social thought and progressive social movements committed to the empowerment of the oppressed, as an approach to teaching, critical pedagogy empowers students to think critically about power relations in the classroom and in society, to engage in critical dialogue and reflection, and to engage in praxis or thoughtful action to create social change, improve student learning, and foster student transformation. However, little has been written on the practice and purpose of critical pedagogy in elite institutions where the majority of students come from non-marginalized backgrounds. Employing qualitative research methods and applying the sociological concept of social structure and individual agency, I examine how instructors at an elite institution of higher education articulate their pedagogical goals, implement their teaching practice, and analyze how the structures of an elite institution impact their practice of critical pedagogy. I argue that the structures of elite institutions of higher education both facilitate and constrain the practice of critical pedagogy.

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## Introduction

Critical pedagogy emerged from a long historical legacy of a heterogeneous radical social thought and progressive social movements that through application of democratic principles were committed to the empowerment of oppressed, culturally marginalized, and economically disenfranchised students and communities (Baltodano, Darder, and Torres, 2009). As an approach to teaching, critical pedagogy empowers students to think critically about the subject matter and power relations, both inside the classroom and in society, as well as challenge power dynamics within society, engage in critical dialogue and reflection, and engage in praxis (Freire, 1970) or thoughtful action to create social change, improve student learning and educational

outcomes (Duncan-Andrade and Morrell, 2008). However, little has been written in the literature on the practice and purpose of critical pedagogy in elite settings, where the majority of students come from non-marginalized and often more privileged backgrounds. My research examines the ways in which the social structures of elite institutions of higher education impact the practice of critical pedagogy. My analysis of my respondents' interviews shows that the structures of elite institutions of higher education both facilitate and constrain the practice of critical pedagogy.

## Theoretical Framework

The debate over the primacy of structure or agency in determining outcomes in the social world is one of the most central issues in sociology. Social structures are recurrent patterns of relationships or behaviors and enduring patterned arrangements in society such as in groups or entities, social institutions, cultural and societal norms and expectations that influence, shape, often constrain, and can facilitate individual agency (Calhoun, 2002; Merton, 1938). Individual agency reflects the choices, decisions, wills, intentionality, and actions that emphasize and focus on the freedom of individuals. "Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices" (Barker 2005:448). Individuals influence the social structure, and the social structure, in turn, impacts the actions of individuals.

In regards to elite institutions of higher education and the culture of elitism, the term elite refers to the presence of a high concentration of students from financially wealthy backgrounds—backgrounds that confer authority, privilege, and that historically enable members of this demographic to wield significant influence in society. Elite, by definition, also signifies a position that only a few possess, which the majority of people do not have and often desire to have (Stevens, 2007). Additionally, schools are defined as elite because they are perceived as elite. For example, the undergraduate academic reputation criterion that contains the peer prestige survey is one of the largest components of schools' ranking in the *U.S. News and World Report* (Morse, 2010). None of the components to the ranking criterion in the *U.S. News and World Report* actually use direct measures of school quality such as academic performance of students while they are attending the institution. To be seen as legitimate, elite status has to be conferred by a third party so that others adopt the belief that an institution is elite. Just as an individual cannot confer elite status to oneself, nor can an institution



(Stevens, 2007). Utilizing the sociological constructs of social structure and individual agency, I will evaluate how the social structures of an elite institution of higher education impact the ways that professors practice critical pedagogy.

### Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy views all education as inherently political and posits that education must cultivate the intellect and promote emancipatory change in both the student and society. Critical pedagogy is education for social justice. Brazilian educator, philosopher, and activist, Paulo Freire is considered to be the most influential figure in the development of critical pedagogical thought. His book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970), lays the theoretical foundation for critical pedagogy.

The three core characteristics of critical pedagogy are criticality, accountable self-reflection, and praxis (Freire, 1970; Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Martin, 2008; Kinchelo, 2008; Shor, 1992). Criticality is an awareness of power relations and an implementation to challenge those dominant ideologies. Criticality includes “critical conscious purpose” (Duncan-Andrade, 2007) or an astute commitment to social justice pedagogy, critical thinking, critical dialogue, and critical content. Accountable self-reflection involves a deep engagement with the knowledge being developed by thinking on how the knowledge applies to one’s life and experiences in society. Self-reflection keeps teachers and students accountable to what they are learning. “Praxis,” a term coined by Freire, means reflection and action in the world in order to rectify social injustices and to ultimately transform it through, and as a result of, that action. According to Freire, and other critical pedagogues, it is not enough to think critically, one must act on the knowledge developed to create a more equitably just world.

### Research Questions

In conducting the research for this project, I wanted to explore the following three research questions: 1) How do instructors incorporate critical pedagogy within the context of an elite institution of higher education? In other words, what does critical pedagogy look like in practice? 2) How do professors articulate their teaching? 3) How does the structure of higher education impact (i.e., facilitate and constrain) the incorporation of critical pedagogy into teaching—pedagogy and practice—in an elite institution? The structures of higher education that I will be analyzing are the institutional culture of a selective liberal arts college, the

socioeconomic class of the student body, faculty academic freedom, institutional resources, and curricular limitations relative to implementing critical pedagogy within varying academic disciplines.

### Research Methods

To investigate these research questions, I employed qualitative research methods, conducting one-on-one interviews with four professors and one lecturer at a selective liberal arts college. The strength of qualitative research is that it allows a researcher to delve more deeply into a research topic, gather rich data, and answer the whys and hows of a topic. The limitation of qualitative data is that the information and analysis developed may not be generalizable to the greater population or to wider contexts. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews that ranged from one hour to one hour and 45 minutes. The average time of the interviews was 90 minutes. I used snowball sampling technique by speaking with professors who recommended faculty who incorporated some form of critical pedagogy in their courses. The respondents are members of the social science, foreign language, and science departments of the institution where they teach. I asked faculty members about their: 1) pedagogical goals (articulation of their pedagogy, values, purpose of teaching, desired outcomes); 2) teaching practice (pedagogical strategies, course activities, methodology, behaviors, praxis); and 3) teaching experiences. All names used for respondents in the paper are pseudonyms.

### Discussion of Qualitative Data

#### *Respondents’ Pedagogical Goals*

The respondents’ pedagogical goals collectively centered on students thinking critically about the subject content and power, developing strong academic skill sets, helping students see themselves as active participants in the world, and applying the course material to students’ lives. Heather Garrison teaches in the science department, and her pedagogical goals emphasize student responsibility for learning, challenging power relations in the classroom, course material, and society, and student empowerment:

The main value that I am sort of focused on has to do with power relations. And that’s—because of this goal about social change, it’s in the teaching and personal transformation. My main expectation has to [do] with their willingness to take responsibility for learning, and that’s something that they struggle with (personal communication, April 16, 2009).

She called her pedagogy “liberative pedagogy,” which encompasses a feminist critique of critical pedagogy. Garrison also conducts research on practicing liberative pedagogy in the sciences.

Farona Jip teaches in the social sciences, and her focus is on shaping society, facilitating individual growth of students, helping students be aware of their location in society, and helping them to be critical, active members in the world:

I want to facilitate individual growth in my students beyond their existing levels . . . to help students interact with their world in a more informed and critical way . . . to see themselves as agents, you know, people who are active in the world to whom things don't just happen—they also can make things happen and have the power to influence things around them (personal communication, April 24, 2009).

Erica Tall teaches in the social sciences and her pedagogical goal is to develop respect and trust in the class and responsibility for student learning:

You have to respect each other enough to know that knowledge is going to come from unexpected places. And you have to trust each other enough to openly challenge and disagree with each other . . . to take responsibility for the classroom. I do want them to learn a breadth and depth of knowledge. But I want them to have all that in the context of a kind of humility. Yeah. That to know is not to own. That to know is not to control (personal communication, April 28, 2009).

Tall wants her students to know that theory is bodily, to know is not to own, to have humility in learning, and be critical thinkers. Tall utilizes community-based research to implement praxis.

Carrie Dweed teaches in a foreign language department, and her pedagogical goals are to develop community and communication with her students:

. . . that connection to critical pedagogy for me stems from this sense that we are a community . . . to feel that you can be supportive and critical of each other within a positive supportive community, I think is important (personal communication, April 30, 2009).

She also wants to help her students understand race, class, gender, and cultural differences as they learn a new language.

Stephanie Oleandor teaches in the social sciences, and her pedagogical goals are for her students to learn the curriculum, be critical thinkers about the academic discipline in which she teaches, understand research and methodology, help students be active participants in the world, and to reflect on their learning:

a larger purpose is to get students to be critical thinkers. To get students to feel confident about their participation in the world as thinkers and creators, as creative people, who have something to say (personal communication, May 1, 2009).

Collectively, the instructors' articulation of their pedagogical approaches to teaching and fostering student learning shows a desire for students to think critically about their education through being informed by a social understanding of the world to address the problems of our society. Their pedagogies give the foundation to their teaching practice.

#### *Teaching Practice*

To answer the research question, What does critical pedagogy look like in practice?, I coded teaching practice into two categories: course activities and pedagogical strategies. Course activities include the different projects and assignments that professors utilize to engage students through their practice of their pedagogy. Pedagogical strategies include behaviors and actions professors utilized in the classroom. Table 1 and Table 2 measure the course activities and pedagogical strategies that the professors utilized according to the tenets of critical pedagogy. I found that all of the course activities and pedagogical strategies contain critical thinking, reflection, and content. Most of the course activities and pedagogical strategies contain critical dialogue. Only three course activities contain praxis. Arguably, one of the most important and challenging aspects of critical pedagogy is praxis. I would posit that finding that only three course activities contain praxis reveals that the social structures of elite institutions of higher education constrain the practice of praxis.

**Table 1. Course Activities**

Course Activities	Critical Thinking	Critical Dialogue	Critical Reflection	Critical Content	Praxis
Co-Creation of Syllabus	X	X	X	X	
Non-Western Conceptions about Science	X	X	X	X	
Creative Projects	X	X	X	X	
Service Learning	X	X	X	X	X
Community-Based Research	X	X	X	X	X
City Project	X	X	X	X	
Field Assignments	X	X	X	X	
Science to Life	X	X	X	X	X
Writing Papers	X		X	X	

**Table 2. Pedagogical Strategies**

Pedagogical Strategies	Critical Thinking	Critical Dialogue	Critical Reflection
Circular Seating Arrangements	X	X	X
Modeling Mistakes	X	X	X
Have Students Work with Students They Normally Would Not Work with	X	X	X
Application to Students' Lives	X	X	X
Class Discussions	X	X	X

*Course Activities*

I will discuss two of the course activities that show how professors incorporated critical pedagogy into their teaching. Co-creation of the syllabus is where a professor invites students to critically reflect about why they are taking the class, what they are learning, what they would like to learn, and what resources they would use to learn about the topic. It is an effort to help students think about issues of power and discourse in relation to who decides what we

learn, what should be on the syllabus, and helping students to develop knowledge together with the professor, a core tenet of critical pedagogy. Garrison and Tall expressed that they wanted to change the idea that the professor is the single arbiter of knowledge.

Tall built in community-based research as part of her teaching practice. Through community-based research, the class worked *with* and not *for* a group of people in a community addressing problems the community identified as important to address. One community-based research project centered on working with an impoverished community in their efforts to sustain and maintain a community garden in an area that did not have sufficient nor adequate grocery stores, leaving the community with inadequate access to nutritional foods. Community-based research is praxis, a key part of critical pedagogy, for it reflects on a problem affecting a community and works to use their education to develop knowledge and put into *action* to address the problem.

*Pedagogical Strategies*

I will discuss two of the pedagogical strategies that show how professors incorporated critical pedagogy into their teaching. Garrison realized that her students in the front of the classroom were more engaged in learning than students in the back of the classroom. She decided to change the seating arrangement to have the class sit in a circle. She noticed that students were more engaged in the learning process. Making that change was also important because it symbolically showed that all students' voices were important to the classroom dialogue and that knowledge can be produced from anywhere.

For Tall, modeling mistakes was another important pedagogical strategy. She experienced students' intellectual arrogance early in her career as a professor. By demonstrating what a wrong reading of a passage may be, she could show students that they can learn more from their mistakes than trying to have the correct analysis of a passage. This modeling, in turn, also related the significance of having humility in the classroom. Especially for students from more privileged backgrounds, engaging in critical pedagogical work meant to have a sense of empathy about learning so that one does not usurp knowledge and realizes that knowledge can come from anywhere.

### *Variation Across Instructors' Approaches*

One of my major findings is that the respondents were not a cohesive group as I expected. I expected to find that among professors who identified with practicing critical pedagogy, some would practice this method differently. All the respondents incorporated or practiced a variation of critical pedagogy, but not all *identified* with practicing critical pedagogy. Three of the respondents, Garrison, Tall, and Dweed, all identified with practicing some form of critical pedagogy. Jip hesitates to label her pedagogy critical pedagogy, finding labels constraining. Instead, in expressing her goals of teaching, she notes that she incorporates aspects of critical pedagogy, but does not reduce her teaching to any one pedagogic strategy. In this case, her goals very much align with critical pedagogy. Oleandor feels that one cannot completely practice critical pedagogy in a collegiate institution that in many ways socially reproduces the social class structure and legitimizes middle- and upper-middle social classes. She articulates a limitation to the practice of critical pedagogy presented not only by elite institutions, but colleges in general. She wishes she could count herself a critical pedagogue, but that she would not be at the institution if she were. She jokingly called herself a closeted critical pedagogue and describes herself as incorporating aspects of critical pedagogy into her teaching.

This finding is significant because it revised my conceptualization of the practice of pedagogy. Pedagogy is a way that a person teaches, but a person may not teach in only one way. Furthermore, the variation in respondents' approaches to the identification of practicing or incorporating critical pedagogy highlights the tension of practicing critical pedagogy in an elite context. By incorporating critical pedagogy in an elite context, one is not adhering to the historical, if you will, classical sense of critical pedagogy that is practiced with marginalized or oppressed peoples (Freire, 1970). Not only does the practice change, but the pedagogy changes. Critical pedagogy in an elite context helps privileged students be critical thinkers and participants in the world—especially in regards to the privilege they carry in society. It empowers them to not only work humbly and respectfully with marginalized people for social justice and social change, but to challenge the privilege they carry in society. Furthermore, even if one does not identify with the label, one's teaching practice may still share many similarities with it. Many people who teach may practice

tenets of critical pedagogy but may not call it “critical pedagogy.” Thus understanding the practice of critical pedagogy or any pedagogy is not dependent on self-identification, but rather on an examination of how and why one teaches. Therefore utilizing a label of critical pedagogy, though it streamlines identification and locating research respondents, can also limit the sampling pool. This is a significant research finding, a realization that will improve the quality and approach I take to future research endeavors.

### *The Impact of the Structure of Elite Institutions of Higher Education on the Incorporation of Critical Pedagogy*

The impact of the structures of elite institutions of higher education on the incorporation of critical pedagogy into teaching was articulated by the respondents' interviews. While institutional culture can provide a great working environment in terms of the prestige of working at an elite institution, the institutional goals of preserving upper-class privilege and producing social inequality through social reproduction can oppose the goals of critical pedagogy that incorporate a philosophy and practice of social action in the interest of social change. In elite institutions, students tend to come from middle- to upper-class backgrounds (McPherson and Schapiro, 1998:44). They tend to have stronger academic skill sets (Klitgaard, 1985:109-115), but also have resistance to non-traditional pedagogy and may carry elitist views that can make it challenging to practice critical pedagogy (hooks, 1994; Riley, 2004). Tall had explicit conversations with her students about respect and empathy when engaging in praxis with marginalized communities. Additionally, while academic freedom and abundant institutional resources may provide faculty the flexibility to practice experimental teaching styles and support their creativity through institutional resources, the academic discipline requirements for some courses may constrain the practice of critical pedagogy in terms of utilizing praxis and depth in critical dialogue and reflection. My analysis of my respondents' interviews show that the structure of elite institutions of higher education can both support and limit the practice of critical pedagogy. Table 3 displays how these structures facilitate and constrain the practice of critical pedagogy.

**Table 3. Impact of the Structures of Elite Institutions of Higher Education on the Incorporation of Critical Pedagogy**

Structures of Higher Education	Supports	Limits
Institutional Culture-Elite	Prestige, great working environment (Jip)	The institutional goals seem to oppose purpose of critical pedagogy, respondents may not feel like they are practicing critical pedagogy (Oleandor)
Student Characteristics	Academically successful, skilled, primarily middle- to upper-class students (All)	Student resistance to non-traditional pedagogy, elitist views, discomfort with talking about power (Garrison, Oleandor)
Academic Freedom	Allows for experimental teaching styles, provides flexibility to delve into critical dialogue, content, and more opportunities for praxis (Garrison, Oleandor, Tall)	Lack of direct institutional support for a particular teaching style such as a non-traditional teaching style of critical pedagogy (Garrison, Tall)
Institutional Resources	Academic learning centers Transportation, financial support help facilitate pedagogy (All)	Part of and supports the eliteness/prestige of the institution
Academic Discipline Requirements	Some disciplines may seem to lend themselves easier to practice critical pedagogy than others	To some extent, one is restricted to teach the content/technical aspect of a course, may be difficult to practice in some disciplines versus others (Dweed, Garrison)

**Note:** Names in parentheses correspond to the respondents who articulated this impact.

### Conclusions

Pedagogy is not static. It is embodied by the professor and the context in which one teaches. Instructors practice critical pedagogy in varying ways that highlight critical thinking about power and the subject material, helping students see themselves as active participants in the world and applying what students are learning to their lives. Although students may be resistant to this non-traditional form of pedagogy, and institutional culture may oppose the goals of critical pedagogy, institutional resources and faculty academic freedom support instructors' incorporation of critical pedagogy into their teaching. Thus the structures of elite institutions of higher education both facilitate and constrain the practice of critical pedagogy.

Further research considerations include theorizing the application of critical pedagogy in elite contexts and/or with non-marginalized groups. I would like to further explore how the purpose and practice of critical pedagogy changes in elite contexts. I also believe that student assessments of critical pedagogy and its gains are important to improve the quality of the practice of critical pedagogy and the application to teaching.

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# Out of the Closet: Frank Kameny's Militant LGBT Activism of the 1960s

Darren Arquero, *Rice University*

*Darren, a native of Sugarland, TX, will graduate from Rice University in 2011 and plans to pursue a doctoral degree in Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. This paper was written for a history course titled American Biography.*

## Abstract

Within the context of the United States, the Gay Rights Movement has largely been historicized to the year 1969 when the Stonewall Inn riots occurred in New York City, catalyzing activism among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals and positioning their rights as one of the most pressing issues of the current generation. However, further inquiry would suggest that the movement had its antecedent within an individual, Frank Kameny, whose militant activism starting in 1957 laid the foundation for events like Stonewall to occur.

Silence never won rights. They are not handed down from above; they are forced from pressures from below (Roger Nash Baldwin, ACLU founding member).

## Introduction: Gays Before Stonewall?

As many social inequities of the United States were systematically and directly confronted with the development of numerous civil rights organizations in the 1960s, the era can be defined as a decade of regulation by the federal government through a vast array of customs and agreements, found in legislation relating to the concept of "human rights." Catalyzed in part by the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* that announced "basic civil, economic, social, and cultural rights for all members of the human family [that] firmly establishes a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations,"<sup>1</sup> the concept of human rights became a viable avenue for ordinary citizens to speak against mistreatment they experienced at the hands of their states. "All in all," as stated by human rights lawyer Cecilia Jimenez, "human rights can be seen as having a moral basis that has developed into legal claims on the part of the human being and into obligations on the part of states."<sup>2</sup> In broadening their agendas to include universal concepts of "humanity," "freedom," and "equality," many social and political

movements were thus successful in lobbying the federal government to include minority groups within the fold as full American citizens.

It would not be a stretch, then, to label the 1960s as a "decade of defiance," insofar as the concession of rights was a product of actions among second-class citizens who conveyed and provoked widespread resentment over government repression. But because the dominant discourse has mainly focused on the activism of African-Americans and women, little attention has been given to the plight of individuals within the gay rights movement whose stories and experiences are just as imperative to understanding the political landscape of the 1960s. While many queer scholars point to the 1969 Stonewall riots as the defining event that laid the foundation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement, a detailed look into the life of Frank Kameny provides an alternate timeline of gay activism in the United States—one that precedes the events at Stonewall. This timeline begins instead with Kameny's 1957 dismissal from federal employment. By establishing the Mattachine Society of Washington (MSW) in 1961,<sup>3</sup> Frank Kameny became the first individual to operationalize the words "activism" and "militancy" at a time when such words were seen as too radical for a movement based on the politics of sexuality.

*"Remember; this was a totally different era. While I was aware of my feelings, I bought into the prevailing philosophy, which was that it was a phase I was going through."<sup>4\*</sup>*

Born in New York City to a Jewish middle-class family in 1925, Franklin E. Kameny entered Queens College at the young age of 15 and soon enlisted in the Army in 1943. It was through his time spent in World War II combat that Kameny first became aware of his attraction to men.

I knew what I was looking at and what was attracting me. I had a few isolated homosexual episodes in school and when I was in the Army. In retrospect, I can look back and bemoan not picking up on all the opportunities that came my way in the Army.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Weinberg, Matthew. "The Human Rights Discourse: A Bahá'í Perspective." *The Bahá'í World 1996–1997*: 247–73. *Bahá'í Topics*. The Bahá'í World News Service. Web. 12 Dec. 2009. <http://info.bahai.org/article-1-8-3-2.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Jimenez, Cecilia. "Contemporary Human Rights Discourse: A Continuing Challenge." *Philippines International Review* (1997–1998). *Philippine European Solidarity Centre (PESC-KSP)*. Web. 12 Dec. 2009. <http://www.philsol.nl/pir/HRDiscourse-97p.htm>.

\* All subtitles are direct quotes of Franklin E. Kameny.

<sup>3</sup> Retter, Yolanda. *Gay and Lesbian Rights in the United States: A Documentary History (Primary Documents in American History and Contemporary Issues)*. Ed. Walter L. Williams. New York: Greenwood, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Kisseloff, Jeff. "Frank Kameny: The Pioneer." *Generation on Fire: Voices of Protest from the 1960s, an Oral History*. New York: University of Kentucky, 2007. 183–93.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Although aware of his homosexual feelings early on as a teenager, it was not until Kameny was 29 that he first heard the term “gay” and had his first sexual experience with another man.<sup>6</sup> Continuing his education after the war and receiving his doctorate degree in astronomy from Harvard University, Kameny was hired in 1957 as a federal employee of the U.S. Army Map Service. Despite receiving “superior” ratings from the Civil Service Commission, he was fired five months into his employment when a government investigation found evidence that he was a homosexual.<sup>7</sup> Kameny did not deny the charge. However, matters became worse a month after dismissal when he lost his government security clearance, which ended his hopes of ever being employed by the federal government. Because Kameny was “a specialized astronomer, he had little idea how to locate work outside the scientific community. Within the small pre-NASA world of professional astronomy, everyone knew Frank was a homosexual.”<sup>8</sup>

Although Kameny ultimately failed in fighting his dismissal after losing all forms of legal redress when the Supreme Court declined to review his 1961 appeal, his became one of the first lawsuits filed in the United States that contested job discrimination against homosexuals.<sup>9</sup> To Kameny, it was “a declaration of war against him by the government”—a declaration that catalyzed his 18-year battle with the United States government.<sup>10</sup> As he states, “When I was fired, everything changed for me. I had a burning sense of injustice. This simply wasn’t right, and something needed to be done.”<sup>11</sup>

*“While everybody speaks of the ’60s, for gays things didn’t really get going until the second half of ’69 to the ’70s.”<sup>12</sup>*

Almost ten years prior to Frank Kameny’s dismissal from the civil service, Alfred Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) indicated that ten percent of the world’s population was homosexual—a statistic that many believed would have the potential to normalize a stigmatized identity.<sup>13</sup> Instead, there was an intense counter reaction to Kinsey’s report, which materialized in Executive Order 10450 issued by President Eisenhower in 1950, stating:

“sexual perversion was a basis of denial for both civil service employment and security clearances.”<sup>14</sup> As discrimination against homosexuals continued on through the 1960s, homophobia among the American public remained a rampant fear that soon became intertwined with elements in the fight against Communism. Thus, “many of those fired from government positions during the loyalty crusades were dismissed not as Communists but as homosexuals.”<sup>15</sup>

The controversy surrounding homosexuality points to yet another aspect of the decade that the conventional narrative has tended to ignore. Just as the fight against Communism and the expanding hand of the federal government became two primary battlegrounds that solidified the rise of the New Right,<sup>16</sup> homosexuality also played an intricate role in the conservative resurgence of the 1960s. Because a homosexual identity was perceived as a menace to the religious sanctity of Christian values that destroyed the capitalist foundation of the heterosexual family unit, conservatives on the Right felt justified in their moral abhorrence of LGBT individuals who they claimed did not represent the traditional mantra of “God, Family, and Country.”<sup>17</sup>

As stated by Kameny, “There was a mythology that had grown up, with no facts to support it, that all gay people were cringing, submissive victims of endless blackmail attempts. They were also emotionally unstable, and therefore they were unreliable and untrustworthy in all ways.”<sup>18</sup> If the stigma attached to homosexuality was so great that most LGBT individuals feared public exposure, then what was the trigger that helped the movement “come out of the closet”? Historian Mark Hamilton Lytle provides the best explanation for their inspiration.

The general redefinition of sexual standards, the spirit of greater tolerance inspired by the civil rights movement, more liberal Supreme Court rulings on privacy, contraception, and obscenity standards, and growing acceptance of alternative lifestyles all contributed to a more favorable social and legal climate.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Minton, Henry L. “Frank Kameny and the Attack on the Medical Model.” *Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America*. New York: University of Chicago, 2001. 242–46.

<sup>7</sup> See reference 3.

<sup>8</sup> Marcus, Eric. *Making Gay History: The Half Century Fight for Lesbian and Gay Equal Rights*. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> See reference 6.

<sup>10</sup> See reference 8.

<sup>11</sup> See reference 4.

<sup>12</sup> See reference 4.

<sup>13</sup> Kinsey, Alfred C. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1948.

<sup>14</sup> See reference 4.

<sup>15</sup> Lytle, Mark Hamilton. *America’s Uncivil Wars: The Sixties Era from Elvis to the Fall of Richard Nixon*. New York: Oxford UP, USA, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Steigerwald, David, and Michael Flamm. “The Liberal-Conservative Debates of the 1960s.” *Debating the 1960s: Liberal, Conservative, and Radical Perspectives*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007. 99–161.

<sup>17</sup> Mantra from Hamill, Pete. “Wallace.” *Ramparts Magazine* 1968: 348–51.

<sup>18</sup> See reference 4.

<sup>19</sup> See reference 15.



Attesting to the confrontation at New York City's Stonewall Inn nightclub, the civil rights movement helped inspire gay activists to become more assertive in their stride towards equality, ultimately becoming successful in making the personal political. So where does historical memory remember the contributions of Frank Kameny?

1961: "We are the experts on ourselves, and we will tell the experts they have nothing to tell us!"<sup>20</sup>

Prior to the events at Stonewall, a desire for anonymity kept many LGBT individuals closeted in fear of the same repercussions that fell upon Frank Kameny. As he remembers from the early days of the movement:

The movement was bland, apologetic, unassertive, unwilling to view ourselves as the authorities on ourselves. They deferred to the 'experts.' It sounds harshly critical, but it's not intended to be. They were as the era was, but none of that suited my personality, and so I took a very different approach once I started going on things in 1961.<sup>21</sup>

Through a determination spurred by failure, Kameny established the Mattachine Society of Washington in 1961, named after one of the earliest homophile groups started ten years earlier in Los Angeles.<sup>22</sup> Leading the MSW in a dramatic confrontation against the federal government, Kameny's more aggressive stance was a direct result of the influences from other social movements of the day, namely the black civil rights movement. Rather than continue the passivity that characterized the homophile movement in the 1950s, Kameny "championed a bold, strong, uncompromising, and militant stance that called for absolute equality for homosexuals."<sup>23</sup> As evidenced by the numerous firsthand accounts collected in the Kameny Papers Archive,<sup>24</sup> he rejected the idea that homosexuals would gain acceptance by depending upon sympathetic heterosexual experts to make their case. "Homosexuals themselves," Kameny argued, "are the true experts of homosexuality, and they should not be cowed by ignorant

psychiatrists parading as authorities."<sup>25</sup> Wanting homosexuals to stop internalizing society's negative view of their sexual feelings as criminal, sick, or sinful, Kameny—long before Stonewall—advocated LGBT Americans to embrace their sexuality with confidence and morality. Further, as his scientific background helped him critically review the psychiatric research on homosexuality that led to his own publications revealing inconsistencies within its logic, Kameny was instrumental in getting the American Psychological Association to eliminate homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1974.<sup>26</sup>

With Kameny's leadership, the Washington Mattachine Society engaged in launching a series of challenges to the discriminatory practices of the federal government, primarily focusing on their exclusionary policies toward homosexual employment.<sup>27</sup> Through such persistence, Kameny was able to ally with the American Civil Liberties Union in 1965, "convincing them to condemn government investigations of peoples' private sexual behavior."<sup>28</sup> Although it took until 1975 for the Civil Service Commission to formally amend its anti-gay policy, Kameny's persistence in bringing about court suits, writing letters to congressmen, and sending out press releases all testify to his conviction that homosexuals had a voice for themselves.

#### Conclusion: "Gay is good."<sup>29</sup>

Although Frank Kameny was unsuccessful in his attempt at running for Congress as the first openly gay candidate in 1971, his influence and the progress of the gay rights movement since the time of his activism is evident in the recent mayoral success of Annise Parker in Houston, making it the largest U.S. city to elect an openly gay mayor.<sup>30</sup> LGBT activists can also look to the five states that currently permit gay marriage licenses as tangible steps to achieving marriage equality, in addition to ten other states that allow civic unions or domestic partnerships.<sup>31</sup> But in chronicling the history of the gay rights movement,

<sup>20</sup> See reference 8.

<sup>21</sup> See reference 4.

<sup>22</sup> See reference 6.

<sup>23</sup> See reference 3.

<sup>24</sup> "Correspondence." *The Kameny Papers*. Library of Congress. Web. 13 Dec. 2009. <http://www.kamenypapers.org/correspondence.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> See reference 3.

<sup>26</sup> Summersgill, Bob. "HGLC 2002 Achievement Award." *HGLC: Harvard Gay and Lesbian Caucus*. Web. 13 Dec. 2009. <http://hgclc.org/about/awards.html>.

<sup>27</sup> See reference 24.

<sup>28</sup> See reference 3.

<sup>29</sup> Tobin, Kay, and Randy Wicker. *The Gay Crusaders*. New York: Arno, 1975.

<sup>30</sup> "Houston elects first openly gay mayor." *BBC News*. The BBC, 13 Dec. 2009. Web. 13 Dec. 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8410389.stm>.

<sup>31</sup> *Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA): Legal Resources and Information*. Web. 13 Dec. 2009. <http://www.domawatch.org/index.php>.

historians and scholars must begin earlier than Stonewall, starting instead with the actions of Frank Kameny who, almost single-handedly, “formed and popularized the ideological foundations of the gay rights movement in the 1960s: that homosexuals constituted ten percent of the population, that they were not mentally ill, that they didn’t need to be spoken for by medical experts, and that they had a right not to be discriminated against.”<sup>32</sup> From launching a campaign against sodomy laws in 1963 to organizing the first gay demonstrations that opposed federal government policies in the summer of 1965,<sup>33</sup> the actions of Kameny and the Washington Mattachine Society represented a shift from an accommodationist approach to one that demanded attention, ultimately signaling a *radicalization* of the gay rights movement. And while remnants of the 1960s struggle can still be seen with the recent defeat of a measure that would have enabled same-sex couples to wed in Maine, contemporary LGBT activists can find inspiration through Frank Kameny’s hope in the future for the movement:

We pushed against a sometimes willing, and sometimes a very unwilling, larger mass; but I never thought that it was possible that the movement would become as large as it is today. Of course, as this has happened, the far Right has gotten more shrill, but only because they’re fighting a battle they know now they cannot win.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Clendinen, Dudley, and Adam Nagourney. *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> See reference 6.

<sup>34</sup> See reference 4.

# The Show Must Go On!: Creating a Place in Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*

Christiana Pinkston Betts, *Hampton University*

*Christiana Pinkston Betts graduated from Hampton University in 2010 with a degree in English Arts. She currently attends the University of Connecticut where she is pursuing a PhD in English, concentrating on Asian-American literature.*

## Abstract

This paper was presented at the 2010 College Language Association conference. The paper argues that marginalized Others create Places for themselves to shape their identities.

Place (spelled with a capitalized "P"), in this paper, refers to an environment where people or different groups of people exist and interact in equality and harmony. Dr. Benedict Anderson, in his book, *Imagined Communities*, asserts that a nation is:

an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (6).

For example, an American living on the West Coast is a member of an imagined community because he or she belongs to this nation of "America." The only thing that binds him or her to an American who lives on the East Coast, however, is this notion of "Americanism." With this inclusiveness, however, there is always a sense of the outsider. Those people who do not fit under the traditional umbrella of "American," therefore, are excluded from that community. They are marginalized, becoming the Other, by those members of the communities to which they do not belong. By creating a Place for themselves as marginalized Others, the group of outcasts become empowered because they have a place where they can belong. Thus, they form their own community, one that is not imagined.

In Maxine Hong Kingston's novel, *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* (1987), the protagonist creates a Place for the Othered characters through the medium of a play. Kingston's main character, Wittman Ah Sing, is a free-spirited young man who attempts to create a Place for Asian-Americans in theater. Wittman is a fifth-generation Californian Chinese-American who is more like the poet he is named after (Walt Whitman) than any "Fresh Off the Boat" Chinese immigrant (Kingston 5). During an interview

with Maxine Hong Kingston, Marilyn Chin described Wittman, saying, "He's a precocious and unhappy and alienated anti-hero, wading through . . . American life" (qtd. in Skenazy and Martin 89).

A poet-turned-playwright, Wittman sees that there is a need for Asian-Americans actors to have a Place to perform without always ending up in stereotypical roles. He discovers this need when he spends time with Nanci Lee, another character in the novel. She tells him:

They say, "You don't *look* oriental." I walk in. . . . I'm wearing my high heels, and walking elegant, you know? The a.d. hands me the script, and tells me I have to take my shoes off. . . . I know what my part will be—an oriental peasant. You only need high heels for the part of the oriental prostitute. . . . And I have to say, I have to say, you know, something stupid. I have to speak in a way I've worked hard not to speak like. I stand there barefoot saying a line like—like that. And the director says, "Can't you act more oriental? Act oriental" (Kingston 34).

This passage illustrates the discrimination that Nanci faces when she auditions for a role. Regardless of her talent as an actress, she is either cast in the role of the oriental peasant or the oriental prostitute. In addition, her director wants her to look and sound "oriental." To him, she is Asian—not Asian-American or simply American. He separates her from himself, because to him, she does not belong to his community. Wittman sees that this is a problem: members of his Asian-American ethnic group are narrowed and squeezed into limited Places within the theater. So, Wittman tells her, "I'm writing a play for you, Nanci" (27). He decides to create a Place for Nanci and others like her. In this Place, people like Nanci would not have to sound or look like someone they were not. The text reads:

By writing a play, he didn't need descriptions that racinated anybody. The actors will walk out on stage and their looks will be self-efficient. They will speak dialects and accents, which the audience will get upon hearing. No need for an unreadable orthography such as Mark Twain's insultingly dumb dis and dat misspelling and apostrophying. Yes, the play's the thing (34).

Later on in the novel, Wittman's Place expands to incorporate many more of the novel's characters. Kingston said in her interview with Marilyn Chin, "[Wittman] wants to make a difference, socially. And he wants to form community" (qtd. in Skenazy and Martin 90). Wittman, himself,

says to the man who is housing his play on opening night, “We make theater, we make community” (Kingston 261). By forming a community, Wittman takes the misrepresented Other and provides a Place for them to express themselves as they are. This Place is both a physical space for the play to be performed and a metaphysical Place for the characters to create a sense of community. The Othered encompass all the characters of the novel, who are from different walks of life. Wittman’s parents, for example, are two completely different people. His mother and her friends seem to be more traditional Chinese-Americans. Not only do they speak in Chinese, but they gather together and have mahjong parties. Wittman’s father and his friends, on the other hand, seem to come from a different culture. While they too are Chinese-American, they seem to be more “Americanized.” They prefer to sit in a trailer, drinking beer and playing poker. Despite their differences, both sets of people come together for the theater and Wittman’s play.

In addition to creating a Place where two separate groups of Chinese-Americans can co-exist in peace, Wittman brings in those who come from different ethnic backgrounds. Lance Kamiyama, for instance, is Japanese-American. His wife, Sunny, the unnamed Yale Younger Poet, and Wittman’s wife, Taña, are all Caucasian-Americans. All of these people are welcome participants in Wittman’s play. Kingston’s omniscient narrator notes, “Yes, in our theater, we will have regard for all kinds no matter they’re disregarding us” (275). Wittman creates a Place for any and everyone, regardless of his or her race or prior training. He says, “I’m including everything that is being left out, and everybody who has no place” (Kingston 52). He liberates all involved from the dichotomy of separateness and unites them under the umbrella of wholeness. In this Place he has created, men are equal to women, and everyone has a role no matter what his or her age or background may be. Every actor has the freedom to be who he or she is without fear of prejudice or discrimination. In their newly created Place, the participants of the play have created their own community. It is outside of the traditional theater, and yet it is pulled off successfully.

To conclude, Wittman creates a Place for the characters to be themselves. Each character is in some way considered an outcast, a marginalized Other, of society. They are, in the case of the Yale Younger Poet, unnamed and hidden from other people. The poet spends his days in the basement of the store where he works. Or, like Nanci Lee, they are discriminated against because of what they look like,

without consideration of who they are. The play, however, allows all of the characters to show who they really are without being worried that someone will judge them. Wittman is able to incorporate all people in his play, defying racial and cultural boundaries. This, in turn, empowers the Othered because they have a Place to be themselves.

Dr. Anderson claims that all imagined communities are finite; there are always boundaries beyond which lie other communities (7). It can be argued, however, that the characters in *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* form their own community, an all-inclusive community, outside of the constructs of society’s imagined ones. Their community has no boundaries in that anyone can join—just as they are. Maxine Hong Kingston, through her protagonist and his play, illustrates that boundaries need not exist for groups of people who choose to defy them. Wittman is not discouraged when he realizes Nanci’s dilemma. On the contrary, he is determined to correct the problem. He deliberately decides to create a Place for her, in the form of a play.

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# Indigeneity, Mythistory, and la Virgen de Guadalupe in Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*

Cecilia Caballero, *University of California, Berkeley*

*Cecilia Caballero is from Antioch, CA. She graduated from UC Berkeley in summer 2010 with a double major in English and Chicana/o Studies. She is currently applying to both English and Ethnic Studies graduate programs.*

## Abstract

This essay is an excerpt from Caballero's Chicana/o Studies senior honors thesis that examines Sandra Cisneros's novel *Caramelo*. Caballero argues that the young Chicana narrator of the novel "weaves" her "rebozo-narrative." Additionally, the narrator is empowered by both the indigenous representation of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, and her shunned half-sister, Candelaria. In doing so, the narrator demonstrates that her cultural and family histories are "true" and not "puro cuento" (pure story).

According to theologians such as Jeannette Rodriguez, la Virgen de Guadalupe is said to have appeared in Mexico City on December 8, 1531 to an indigenous man named Juan Diego. Guadalupe appeared as a brown-skinned mestiza, which provided hope for Juan Diego and other mestiza/os who struggled with the horrific consequences of the Spanish conquest in 1521. As proof of her appearance, Guadalupe miraculously imprinted her image on Juan Diego's *tilma* (shawl). This *tilma* has been on display in Mexico City's Basilica ever since, where thousands of followers pay their respects to her. However, Guadalupe and her narrative has been contested by a wide range of groups such as feminists, historians, and skeptics. However, Chicana feminist scholars, visual artists, and creative writers have embraced Guadalupe as an empowered, indigenous and feminist goddess-figure.

Specifically, Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros has explored Guadalupe's complexity in various essays and short stories such as "Guadalupe the Sex Goddess" and "Little Miracle, Kept Promises." However, in her 2002 novel, *Caramelo*, I argue that Cisneros presents an indigenous spiritual representation of Guadalupe. This representation of Guadalupe is crafted by Celaya, or Lala, the young Chicana narrator of *Caramelo*. Celaya is preoccupied with "weaving" her narrative like a *rebozo*, which is reflected in the title of the novel itself: *caramelo rebozos* refer to the finest type of shawls, which are typically made by Mexican women and passed down from generation to generation. However, Celaya also associates *caramelo* (literally, caramel) to the dark color of Candelaria's skin, a minor female character in the

novel. Ultimately, I argue that the symbol of Candelaria's *caramelo*-colored skin and Lala's weaving of her *rebozo*-narrative mobilizes what Chicana author and theorist Ana Castillo refers to as "mythistory." This mobilization ultimately not only validates Chicana women's narratives in response to traditionally patriarchal cultures, but it also specifically legitimizes Lala's narration as truth and not *puro cuento* (pure story).

Chicana feminist interpretations of Guadalupe originated during the second wave of feminism in the United States by Chicanas theorists such as Anna Nieto-Gomez (Garcia). Subsequently, other Chicana visual artists and creative writers portrayed their own feminist interpretations of Guadalupe in their creative work. These feminist interpretations inspired Chicana writer Ana Castillo to edit a volume titled *Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe* (1996). In the introduction, Castillo rejects the traditional, patriarchal representation of Guadalupe. Instead, Castillo chooses to embrace Guadalupe by locating her in an indigenous history which validates women's spirituality. Using the 17th-century colonial Mexican document titled *Nican Mopobua* as her guide, Castillo demonstrates how indigenous aspects are typically removed from the traditional Guadalupe narrative. Castillo then theorizes a concept of "mythistory," which means there is "no one version, no one meaning, [which is] handed down to subsequent generations" (xviii). Mythistory conveys Guadalupe's indigeneity by highlighting the ever-changing nature of her narratives which are passed down from generation to generation.

Additionally, Castillo argues that mythistory functions on a visual level as well. She discusses this visual aspect in regards to Guadalupe's image on the *tilma*, which is "replete with indigenous symbolism" (Castillo xix). She discusses how the mantle covering Guadalupe's head "is similar to the *rebozo* worn by Indian women; it is the color of quetzal—a highland bird whose feathers also were quite valuable and used only to connote nobility and that which is holy" (xx). I argue that it is extremely significant that Guadalupe's shawl is similar to the *rebozo* indigenous women wore because it elevates the status of indigenous women who were placed at the bottom of the racial *casta* system, a colonial Mexican caste system in which "Indians" were placed at the very bottom. Guadalupe's *rebozo* not only elevates indigenous women in Mexican society, but Guadalupe's indigenous aspects as a whole influence *Caramelo*'s rendering of Guadalupe and its narration as a *rebozo*-narrative.



In Sandra Cisneros's *Caramelo*, Celaya is the only female in a Mexican-American family of *siete hijos* (seven sons). As the narrator, Celaya recounts three generations of her family's history in the United States and Mexico. However, it is Celaya's role as the narrator of *Caramelo*, which is crucial to the formation of Celaya's own mythistory, a mythistory that breaks her silence in patriarchal Mexican and Chicano cultures. Since Celaya is able to "weave" her narrative as if she is creating a *rebozo*, she is able to link the indigenous feminine qualities of la Virgen de Guadalupe to Candelaria, an illegitimate child whose *caramelo*-colored skin is "so sweet it hurts to even look at" (Cisneros 12). I argue that Cisneros emphasizes the connections between Guadalupe's indigenous qualities, Candelaria's *caramelo*-colored skin, and the symbol of the text as a *caramelo-rebozo* in order to mobilize what Castillo refers to as "mythistory."

*Caramelo* represents Celaya's authority to create her own *rebozo*, even though she is a young Mexican-American girl who is called "too *hocicona*" by her family members. This derogatory word for Mexican women (which translates as "big mouth") is similarly explored by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands*, "*hocicona, repelona, chismosa*, having a big mouth, questioning, carrying tales are all signs of being a *mal criada* [badly raised]" (76). Anzaldúa goes on to note how these terms are usually "applied to women . . . and never to men" (Ibid). Celaya, too, is an "*hocicona*" who bears the risk of being labeled a "*mal criada*" simply because she is "carrying tales" as she weaves her narrative, and yet this very act is negatively gendered in Chicana/o culture. However, Celaya's strength lies precisely in her ability to "tell . . . a story, even if it's a lie" as the preface of the novel proclaims:

The truth, these stories are nothing but story, bits of string, odds and ends found here and there, embroidered together to make something new. I have invented what I do not know and exaggerated what I do to continue the family tradition of telling healthy lies. If, in the course of my inventing, I have inadvertently stumbled on the truth, *perdonenme*.

To write is to ask questions. It doesn't matter if the answers are true or *puro cuento*. After all and everything only the story is remembered, and the truth fades away like the pale blue ink on a cheap embroidery paper: *Eres Mi Vida, Sueno Contigo. Mi Amor, Suspiro Por Ti, Solo Tu*.

This disclaimer supplements *Caramelo*'s subtitle, "*o Puro Cuento*." "*Puro cuento*" can be translated as "pure fabrications," or "pure story," in which the fictional aspects of stories are emphasized. Yet, as the narrator of three

generations of her family's history, Celaya "frequently stumbles on the truth" numerous times in the book, and yet it is the narration itself which allows Celaya to "embroider together" a new "mythistory." By "embroidering together" this *rebozo*-narrative, Celaya is able to document and convey her own personal understanding of her family's history, which ultimately provides a form of agency and independence for Celaya.

This agency and independence is exemplified in the first chapter of the novel, which is entitled "Recuerdo de Acapulco, which translates to "a memory of Acapulco." In it, Lala describes the memory of her family's photo being taken on a beach in Acapulco and numerous inaccuracies in the photo itself. Celaya describes the photo which depicts her brothers and the Awful Grandmother "holding them even though she never held them in real life" (3). It is only through Celaya's "color embroidery" of her narration that this inaccuracy is revealed.

Celaya continues by noting the most significant inaccuracy in the photo, "[She's] not there" (4). Celaya comments, "My family forgot about me when the photographer walking along the beach proposes a portrait, un recuerdo, a remembrance literally" (4). However, it is not until the picture is developed that the rest of the family realizes she is missing. By simply viewing the picture, an outsider can incorrectly infer that "it was as if [Celaya] didn't exist" (4). As a result, Celaya reinforces herself as the "weaver" of her mythistory by comparing herself to a photographer. As Ellen McCracken argues, Celaya's narration "situates readers in the liminal space between genres . . . between fiction and truth, invention, and documentation" (6). Indeed, it is Celaya who gains autonomy by guiding the reader through the multiple layers of her *rebozo*-narrative because "it's as if [Celaya] is the photographer walking along the each with the tripod camera on my shoulder asking, —¿Un recuerdo? A souvenir? A memory?" (4). Since her role as a "weaver" and documenter of "mythistory" is established from early on, she is given the ultimate authority to dictate what is included in the *rebozo*-narrative.

Celaya recounts her first encounter with the mysterious Candelaria early on in the novel. Although Celaya already has been "weaving" her own *rebozo*-narrative made up of memories and events before she met Candelaria, she pays special attention to Candelaria. Celaya notes, "The first time I see anyone with skin the color of a *caramelo*, I am walking behind the Grandmother and step on her heel" (34). Celaya is literally thrown off track by Candelaria's skin tone,

which in turn interrupts her *rebozo*-narrative. When she questions her Grandmother about this mysterious girl, the Grandmother does not answer her but instead insults Celaya by calling her “*bocicona*” (big-mouth)—yet this imposed silence is what Lala resists throughout the entire novel.

Celaya is fascinated by Candelaria as she struggles to find a comparison in order to adequately describe her skin color. Candelaria is not “shark belly pale like Father and the Grandmother,” or “the red-river clay of Mother and her family” either (34). Instead, Candelaria is unique, she is “not like anybody . . . [her skin] deep as burnt-milk candy” Celaya has ever encountered (Ibid.). At this initial meeting, Celaya is struck by Candelaria’s dark skin and her unfamiliar indigenous beauty. Celaya finds Candelaria strikingly beautiful with her “black hair, black-black like rooster feathers that gleam green in the sun,” and “peanut-butter skin, deep as burnt-milk candy” (Ibid.). These physical qualities set Candelaria apart from anyone else in Lala’s life, and the richness and depth of Candelaria’s beauty is directly related to her indigenous ancestry and history. The allusion to Candelaria’s “burnt-milk candy” also refers to *caramelo* (caramel candy) and the significance of Celaya’s *rebozo*-narrative as a whole.

Celaya highlights Candelaria’s indigenous aspects in order to mobilize her own version of “mythistory.” This validates Candelaria’s positive indigenous representation because she is associated with Guadalupe’s indigenous representations. According to Tey Diana Rebolledo, this new representation of indigenous history is necessary in order for Chicana women to reinvent themselves (Rebolledo 45). Echoing Castillo’s theory of mythistory, Rebolledo argues “mythology often functions as a collective symbolic code that identifies how we should live . . . these stories enable us to differentiate correct behavior, transmit moral values, and identify those traits considered desirable by a group or society” (50). In other words, new myths are needed in order to convey new collective realities and experiences, such as new, positive “mythistories” in Chicana feminist ideology.

Celaya’s Chicana feminist-inspired *rebozo*-narrative culminates when she is finally told by her mother that Candelaria is her half-sister who was born to a different woman before he married Celaya’s mother. However, Celaya is not surprised or upset. Instead, she thinks back to when she observed Candelaria in Acapulco, “bobbing in the sea . . . the sun sparkling little gold flecks all around her” (404). The golden flecks surrounding Candelaria evokes the imagery of Guadalupe’s golden full-body halo. This imagery

serves not only to elevate Candelaria’s lowly socio-economic status, but it also serves to highlight Candelaria’s indigenous roots to Guadalupe. By reclaiming Candelaria as her sister, Celaya also reclaims her indigenous heritage and spirituality into her *rebozo*-narrative. With the positive affirmations of (re)claiming Candelaria as her sister and (re)claiming her indigenous history which is rooted in Guadalupe, Lala “overcomes the tradition of silence” in patriarchal Mexican and Chicano culture (Anzaldúa 18).

Ultimately, Guadalupe serves as the binding in Celaya’s colorful *rebozo*-narrative. This is made clear at a significant turning point in Celaya’s adolescent development. When Celaya and her high school boyfriend run away to Mexico City without permission, the boyfriend quickly decides he made a mistake and he quickly breaks up with her. Celaya then decides to seek comfort in Guadalupe by visiting her shrine at the Basilica. Guadalupe provides clarity and consolation for Celaya when she cannot make sense of her tangled *rebozo*-narrative. This is exemplified when Celaya is in the Basilica and she describes how “[she] looked up, and La Virgen de Guadalupe looks down on [her], and, honest to God, this sounds like a lie, but it’s true. The universe [is] a cloth, and all of humanity interwoven. Each and every person connected to me, and me connected to them, like the strands of a *rebozo*. Pull one strand and the whole thing comes undone” (389). Through Guadalupe, Celaya ultimately realizes that “each and every person is interwoven” in her *rebozo*-narrative, a narrative which is infused with indigenous spiritualities, mythistories, and family secrets.

In conclusion, Celaya’s *rebozo*-narrative is a colorful representation of her family’s mythistory. Celaya’s *rebozo*-narrative is significant because she is able to create new mythistories in order to resist patriarchal Mexican and Chicana/o cultures. Celaya’s *rebozo*-narrative also connects Guadalupe and Candelaria together, which is accomplished by highlighting their similar indigenous qualities. Candelaria’s association with Guadalupe also serves to legitimize Candelaria’s lowly societal status as well. Additionally, Celaya recognizes Guadalupe’s spirituality and ability to unite everyone in her life because only through Guadalupe was Celaya finally able to understand that “the universe is a cloth” which is interwoven together in her *rebozo*-narrative. Although Guadalupe’s “mythistory” has been continually reworked by historians, scholars, writers, and artists, Celaya’s own *rebozo*-narrative reflects the need to continue documenting new mythistories in order to pass on powerful feminist narratives.

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# The Aesthetics of Music According to Proust: Its Human and Superhuman Capacities

Keru Cai, *Harvard College*

*Keru Cai, currently a senior at Harvard majoring in English and American Literature and Language, was born in Chengdu, China, but immigrated to the United States at the age of two. Her early immersion in English novels, Chinese stories, and French language courses led comparative literature to become her foremost intellectual passion. She intends to pursue graduate studies in English Literature.*

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## Abstract

In this paper, I scrutinize one particular passage from the “Swann in Love” section of Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*. In this passage, Swann unexpectedly encounters a strain of music from Vinteuil’s piano and violin sonata, an experience that triggers the recollection of memories from his former love affair with Odette. My paper examines Proust’s philosophy of music as described through Swann’s encounter with the sonata, this philosophy’s legitimization elsewhere in the novel, and its broader implications about human life.

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At a party hosted by the Marquise de Saint-Euverte, Swann unexpectedly encounters the “national anthem” (238) of his love for Odette, a musical phrase from Vinteuil’s sonata for piano and violin. The result is “agonisingly painful” (375): like the Madeleine cookie of the Overture, the phrase prompts an overwhelming recollection of suppressed memories, in this case scenes from the golden era of Swann’s love affair with the now indifferent Odette. The music reduces Swann to tears, to self-pity, and to jealousy of his former “self whom she had loved” (377). In spite of the emotional anguish that it triggers, however, the music also brings Swann a kind of solace. In the following few pages, Proust launches into an exploration of the aesthetics of music, showing how this solace is possible. This paper examines, firstly, how Proust describes Swann’s reaction to the music; secondly, what this description implies about Proust’s own philosophy of music; thirdly, whether his philosophy finds legitimization elsewhere in the novel; and fourthly, what his philosophy might suggest about human life more broadly.

Swann perceives the music as divine firstly because it has the ability to “imitate” and “recreate” (379) emotions whose importance humans may lack the sagacity to appreciate. As a result he feels that music has superhuman sapience and redemptive power, like “a protective goddess” (378). Furthermore, music is superhuman to Swann not only

because it recreates emotions, but also because it reveals truths that he cannot discern without its aid: “they awaken in us the emotion corresponding to the theme they have discovered . . . showing us what richness, what variety lies hidden, unknown to us, in that vast, unfathomed, and forbidding night of our soul which we take to be an impenetrable void” (380). These powers that Swann perceives in music contribute to what he considers its deity-like capacity of consolation: when he listens to music that coincides with some feeling within him, the music seems to make a gesture of sympathy and understanding. This is why Swann feels soothed when the music, like a goddess, “was whispering to him of Odette. . . . Had it not often been the witness of their joys? . . . Of those sorrows which the little phrase foreshadowed to him then . . . it seemed to say to him, as once it said of his happiness: ‘What does it all matter? It means nothing’” (378–379). Consequently, he finds it fitting when, after the performance, the Comtesse de Monteriender exclaims, “It’s astonishing! I’ve never seen anything to beat it . . . since the table-turning!” (384). Swann finds “an underlying sense” (384) in this comparison of music to the Ouija board because both invoke the guidance of supernatural beings.

In this quote, as well as in numerous other moments when Proust describes Swann’s fanciful, exaggeratedly fervent and sentimental thoughts, Proust’s tone is not entirely serious: he is playfully but subtly making fun of Swann’s extreme emotional response to the music. Swann thinks of music as a superhuman entity with agency that actively divulges information; through his faintly humorous portrayal of Swann’s reaction, Proust really implies the more realistic idea that music is a passive tool by which the listener himself is able to heighten his own emotional wisdom. In other words, music is not wise itself but rather triggers the crystallization of subconscious ideas and brings them into consciousness. The characterization of music’s power as divine accentuates Proust’s high esteem for the ideas that music allows the listener to recognize and articulate. According to Proust, these truths are comprehended not through the logic of the reason, but rather through the intuition of emotion: “one sensed a content so solid, so consistent, so explicit. . . that those who had once heard it preserved the memory of it on an equal footing with the ideas of the intellect” (380). This esteem and confidence in the ability of music to augment our capacities for emotional understanding is a critical component of Proust’s attitude toward music.

Swann considers the music divine also because of its ineffable beauty. His faculty of vision is unable to account satisfactorily for the origin and elegance of the sounds: "One . . . sees only the wooden case, delicate as a Chinese box, but, at moments, one is still tricked by the siren's deceiving call; at times, too, one thinks one is listening to a captive genie . . . a devil . . . a pure and supernatural being" (378). The combination of its invisibility and its lightness and purity (378) gives the music a "divine sweetness" (379), which he finds "supernatural, delicious, frail" (383). By showing that Swann finds music lovely to the point of divinity, Proust stresses the tremendous potential of what Philip Fisher terms the "new art" which Proust advocates in this novel. This is an art that focuses on the invisible world, whose beauty we cannot savor through sight alone. Swann's opinion of the divinity of music, then, reveals another important component of Proust's philosophy of music: its potency lies, at least in part, in its inaccessibility to sight.

The music is not only superhuman but also intimately "human" (381) in Swann's point of view. By thus blurring the binary between the mortal and the immortal, Proust emphasizes the centrality of musical experience to human life. The music seems human to Swann because the wisdom it awakens in us is as fundamental to our understanding of the mortal realm as our notions of the laws of physics, "of light, of sound, of perspective" (381). Therefore, because of the very qualities that make it seem divine, music is so much a part of our lives that the truths it allows us to grasp must live and die with us (381). Hence arises the enigmatic claim that "the phrase of the sonata really did exist" (381). By "exist" Proust means that the phrase is able to live with Swann in this human way. If the phrase had been written with a lesser genius, then it would not be capable of existing thus:

And one proof that Swann was not mistaken when he believed in the real existence of this phrase, was that anyone with the least discernment would at once have detected the imposture had Vinteuil, endowed with less power to see and to render its forms, sought to dissemble, by adding a counterfeit touch here and there, the flaws in his vision or the deficiencies of his hand (381–382).

In other words, because Vinteuil possessed the skill to "coax forth" (381) the supernatural quality of the music—its capacity to stimulate the listener's emotional consciousness—the discoveries that it can prompt become a vital component of our understanding of human life.

Thus, Proust portrays music as simultaneously human and divine, and he also claims that listening to music blurs the line between our mortal and immortal states: "We shall perish, but we have as hostages these divine captives who will follow and share our fate. And death in their company is somehow less bitter, less inglorious, perhaps even less probable" (379). The first two effects of music, making death "less bitter, less inglorious," are fairly easy to understand. The more we listen to music, the more we feel—when faced with death—that our lives, though brief, have at least been enriched and ennobled by these nuggets of truth. The assertion that death may be "less probable" is more puzzling. I posit that Proust intends to make two different observations. The first observation arises if we consider this statement as a hyperbole: the more we become absorbed in the "divine sweetness" (379) of music, in other words its moving representations of emotional life, the more we revel in this acute and beautiful sense of being emotionally alive and consequently forget the comparative ugliness and bitterness of death. Perhaps Proust means to express an idea like, "If we can exist in the same beautiful realm as this music that seems to dissolve the distinction between the human and the superhuman, how can something as sinister as death threaten us in this same realm?" The second observation arises if we consider his statement more literally: since music can reawaken Swann's deeply buried memories, it is in this way rejuvenating parts of Swann's past. So music is, in fact, temporarily preventing the many little deaths that occur throughout Swann's life as he forgets former versions of himself or episodes of his past. In this way music is actually a limited immortalizing force. For these two reasons, Swann finds a kind of consolation in the same musical phrase that initially causes him anguish, and thus Proust expresses his philosophy that music can make us fuller, more radiant versions of ourselves.

Other passages in the novel support Proust's notion of music as transcendently powerful in its beauty and capacity to solidify scattered stores of subconscious emotional knowledge. Proust often describes Swann's perception of divinity in music to emphasize these qualities. Whenever a pianist plays for him the special musical phrase, Swann thinks of it as "dancing, pastoral, interpolated, episodic, belonging to another world" (238). Later, "It rippled past, simple and immortal, scattering on every side the bounties of its grace, with the same ineffable smile" (238). In other passages music appears superhuman also in the sapience that Swann imagines within its strains: "Swann thought that he

could now discern in it some disenchantment. It seemed to be aware how vain, how hollow was the happiness to which it showed the way” (238). In fact, the music itself does not predict the future trajectory of Swann’s love affair, but rather awakens Swann’s own deeply buried awareness of the future outcome. Swann only confronts this awareness when these hidden fears seem to be reflected by the mood of the music—as a result, the music appears to him so wise.

Proust’s argument for the centrality of musical experience in life, for its ability to “espouse our mortal state” (381), also finds legitimization elsewhere in the novel. Earlier, the little phrase of music has a constant presence in Swann’s psyche not only because it symbolizes, to him, his love for Odette, but also because it constantly urges him to intellectual rejuvenation:

Swann found in himself, in the memory of the phrase that he had heard . . . the presence of one of those invisible realities in which he had ceased to believe and to which, as though the music had had upon the moral barrenness from which he was suffering a sort of recreative influence, he was conscious once again of the desire and almost the strength to consecrate his life (230).

The “invisible reality” of the music is like what Proust later calls its “content so solid, so consistent, so explicit” (380), which renders the ideas it inspires as fundamental and crucial in human minds as the laws of physics. In this passage, the music has a redemptive effect of salvation like that of religion. And it is this divine trait of redemptive power that renders the music human, in other words makes the music’s effect integral to Swann’s life. In this later philosophical passage we have examined, it is precisely the fluid boundary between the superhuman and the human in music that Proust describes in order to underscore his philosophy regarding the centrality of music in human life and its ability to make us fuller people.

Through Swann’s reaction to the music, perceiving it as both human and superhuman, Proust reveals these facets of his philosophy of music: its ability to enhance our emotional awareness, its powerful invisible beauty, its centrality in human existence, and its resultant capacity to bring us in touch with more aspects of ourselves. What, then, are this philosophy’s broader implications about human life? We can find one answer in the same passage that we have just explored:

[Swann] knew that . . . the field open to the musician is not a miserable stave of seven notes, but an immeasurable keyboard (still almost entirely unknown) on which, here and there only, separated by the thick darkness of its unexplored tracts, some few among the millions of keys of tenderness, of passion, of courage, of serenity, which compose it . . . have been discovered by a few great artists who do us the service . . . of showing us what richness, what variety lies hidden, unknown to us, in that vast, unfathomed and forbidding night of our soul (380).

In Proust’s optimism toward art, he asserts that there exists an infinite potential supply of music; and since music is reliably revelatory about individual experience, there are therefore infinite potential ways to think about our souls, our emotions, and our lives. Proust’s philosophy of music, then, justifies his obsession with *recherche*, for it suggests that there must exist infinite potential possibilities of research in our lives.

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# Divergent Discourses: Medical and Cultural Understandings of Latina Reproductive Health in the Era of Gardasil

Cindy Camacho, *Oberlin College*

*Cindy Camacho, a senior in Sociology from Dallas, TX, is a Sociology major and Politics minor at Oberlin College. She plans to pursue a master's degree in Public Health and a doctoral degree in Sociology. During her time at Oberlin, she has served as the research intern for Family Planning Services. She is also an advocate for comprehensive immigration reform through her work with La Alianza Latina, an activist group on campus.*

## Abstract

Although the Gardasil vaccine is an advance in the fight against cervical cancer, reports show that Latinas have low vaccination rates of Gardasil, while having disproportionately higher rates of cervical cancer and lower rates of cervical cancer screening than women of other ethnicities. I argue that these disparities exist in part due to cultural, linguistic and religious barriers specific to Latinas. I have identified three groups that have produced the most influential discourses in the debate around Latina reproductive health: medical communities, academics, and Latina communities and individuals. My work will focus on what these three discourses say about the problem of Latina reproductive health care and how producers of these discourses can enter into conversation with each other in order to reduce the number of Latinas whose lives are directly affected by cervical cancer.

## Introduction

In 2006, the vaccine Gardasil began being distributed in the United States. Gardasil was created to block four strains of human papilloma virus (HPV), two of which cause about 70% of cervical cancers and two more that cause 90% of the cases of genital warts.<sup>1</sup> This advance in medicine seemed to be a great step forward to combat cervical cancer. However, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that only 1.1% of Latinas have used Gardasil. Furthermore, reports show that rates of cervical cancer are 65% higher and death rates are 42% higher among Latina women than White women.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Latinas are screened for cervical cancer much less than White or Black women. Why is it that, even though Latinas have higher rates of incidence and mortality for cervical cancer, both their rates of cervical cancer screenings and Gardasil vaccination are lower than other women?

I argue that Latinas are not accessing reproductive health care at rates equal to women of other ethnicities in

part because of barriers specific to their culture, language, and faith. In order to begin addressing this problem, I have identified three groups that have produced the most influential discourses in the debate around Latina reproductive health: medical communities, academics, and the Latina communities and individuals. My work will focus on what these three discourses say about the problem of Latina reproductive health care; what each communities' understanding of Latinas' culture, language, and faith are and how that plays out into their actions that either facilitate or hinder reproductive health care for Latinas.

## Medical Discourse

One of the leaders within medical discourse is Merck, the manufacturing company of Gardasil, which has a website where you can get information that ranges from what the vaccine is to questions you can ask your own doctor about the vaccine. On Merck's website, an "en Espanol"<sup>3</sup> option did not exist until July 2010, four years after the vaccine had been released. This oversight may reflect the lack of importance and respect that the manufacturers of Gardasil give to their potential Spanish-speaking consumers.

The disconnect between the medical community and the Latina community was evidenced by a statement made by the lead creator of the vaccine, Dr. Eliav Barr, as he received the 2009 Discoverers Award—the pharmaceutical industry's highest scientific honor. When Dr. Barr was asked about his experiences and challenges creating the vaccine, he responded with another question, "How do you get *ornery* people—who either don't go to the doctor very often, believe in their own immortality, or try not to listen to their parents—vaccinated?"<sup>4</sup> This quote suggests that Dr. Barr has a narrow understanding of potential consumers that are hesitant to take the vaccine. In the statement Dr. Barr presents his answer, which suggests that any dissent can be labeled as deviant, irresponsible, and disobedient. Potential consumers could be dissuaded from wanting the vaccine if they feel like their hesitancy is being viewed as deviance.

In an attempt to reach out to the Latina community, Merck produced a Gardasil commercial in Spanish in which Latinas, seemingly from different Latin American countries, were included. Even though the Gardasil commercial featured information about the vaccine and was delivered by Latinas, the content of the commercial was identical to the one aired in English and only aired for a year. It seems that

<sup>1</sup> Official Gardasil website. 2009. Merck & Co., Inc., 15 June 2009, <http://www.gardasil.com/hpv/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2009*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society. 2006, 2009, provided by <http://www.say-something.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Official Gardasil website. 2010. Merck & Co., Inc., 7 July 2010, <http://www.gardasil.com/espanol/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA). "The Gardasil Story." (n.d.): N., 18., July 2009, <http://www.innovation.org/index.cfm/StoriesofIn...>



Merck did not account well for Latinas specific questions and fears. There is a need for Merck to not only increase marketing to Latinas, but also to do so in a more culturally sensitive manner that would address the questions of Latinas. One potential fear some Latina mothers may have is that by vaccinating their children, they are pushing them to have sex. I would hypothesize that including information that explicitly addresses this fear and highlights that Gardasil is a preventative vaccine for certain types of cervical cancer may make it more inviting to this community. Furthermore, including images of young adult Latinas feeling empowered to ask their doctor about the vaccine would target that specific subgroup. These interventions may make Latinas more comfortable with the vaccine.

To overcome the disconnect between the medical community and the Latina community, a group of physicians and scientists have begun to organize to address prominent minority health disparities, including cervical cancer. The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Conference on “The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities,” will be held for a third year on September 30, 2010. The actions taken by the medical community exhibit an effort to try to organize to find solutions to these problems.

#### Academic Discourse

In the academic discourse scholars have identified language,<sup>5</sup> culture,<sup>6,7</sup> acculturation,<sup>8</sup> insurance,<sup>9</sup> socioeconomic status,<sup>10,11,12</sup> education,<sup>13</sup> and faith<sup>14</sup> as barriers to Latinas accessing health care. In assessing the current state of reproductive health care for Latinas, it is important to acknowledge that these barriers exist and that there is a need to improve accessibility for this population.

Research indicates that from 1995 to 2002, contraceptive services, preventative gynecological care, pregnancy-related care, and STD-related care of HIV testing increased among women with private physicians, while reproductive care remained unchanged for women visiting clinics or hospitals.<sup>15</sup> For routine gynecological care, 80.9% of women visited private doctors and 16.8% visited a publicly funded clinic.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, Latinas are less likely than White non-Latinas to receive preventative care services such as pap smears;<sup>17</sup> although once poverty and education are controlled for, the disparity between White and Latina women receiving pap smears closes. Including pap smears, uninsured women had the lowest rates of use across all services measured<sup>18</sup>—suggesting that socioeconomic disparities are fundamental to reproductive health care disparities.

To further explore the barriers of culture and religion affecting Latinas’ access to reproductive care, the work of scholars Zavella and Castañeda sheds light on the importance of virginity, the ritual and meaning of marriage, and how both translate into value, honor, and respect for Chicanas. The way these cultural norms intersect with faith can influence women’s choices about reproductive health care.

Some religious authorities stigmatize even the provision of information about sexuality that includes sexually transmitted infections, and they see such information as a way of encouraging experimentation outside the institution of marriage. Local priests and preachers identify, condemn, and equate sexual pleasures even with divine punishment, which sinners deserve for having done “what God forbids.”<sup>19</sup>

If women see an illness or symptoms of illness as punishments sent from God, they may be reluctant to search for reproductive health care. The views of virginity and the

<sup>5</sup> Anders, Robert L., Hector Belcazar, and Leticia Paez. “Hispanic Community-Based Participatory Research Using a ‘Promotores de Salud’ Model.” *Hispanic Health Care International: The Official Journal of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses*, 4.2. 2006. 4.2: 71–78.

<sup>6</sup> Allison, Kathleen G., Marilyn Duran, and Ninfa Pena-Purcella. “Cervical Cancer Screening Practices among Hispanic Women: Theories for Culturally Appropriate Interventions.” *Hispanic Health Care International: The Official Journal of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses*, 3.2: 61–67.

<sup>7</sup> Zavella, Patricia, and Xochitl Castañeda. “Sexuality and Risks: Gendered Discourses About Virginity and Disease among Young Women of Mexican Origin.” *Latino Studies*, 3. 2005. 3.: 226–245.

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<sup>9</sup> Fernández-Esquer, Maria Eugenia, and Marylou Cardenas-Turanzas. 2004. “Cervical Cancer Screening among Latinas Recently Immigrated to the United States.” *Preventive Medicine*, 38.5: 529–535.

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<sup>12</sup> Sambamoorthi, et al. (2003).

<sup>13</sup> Anders, et al. (2006), Sambamoorthi, et al. (2003).

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<sup>15</sup> Frost, 1814.

<sup>16</sup> Frost, 1815.

<sup>17</sup> Guendelman and Wagner 1999 in Sambamoorthi, Usha, and Donna D. McAlpine. “Racial, Ethnic, Socioeconomic, and Access Disparities in the Use of Preventive Services among Women.” *Preventative Medicine*, 37.5. 2003: 475.

<sup>18</sup> Sambamorrthi, et al., 475.

<sup>19</sup> Zavella and Castañeda, 236.

messages that religious authorities send are influential voices for some Chicanas. Ayala, the author of *Latina Girls: Voices of Adolescent Strength in the United States*, finds that “mothers frame sexuality within a discourse of danger, violence, and victimization.”<sup>20</sup> These teachings frame men as sexual predators for Chicanas, yet the men in their own family—their brothers or fathers—are portrayed as guardians against the predators. These contradictions shape adolescent females’ interpretations of sex and sexuality, and may influence reproductive health care choices by inculcating either a fear of male doctors or a fear of their own sexuality. These messages of fear can be passed down from mothers to daughters making it difficult to distribute sexual education and resources to Latinas.

To address some of the unique experiences that Latinas have when it comes to sexuality, faith, and gender negotiations in the United States, scholars are finding ways to work with different Latina communities to help them access health care. Allison, Duran, and Pena-Pucella explain that cultural factors play an important role in cervical cancer screening behaviors in spite of “knowledge and access to health care.”<sup>21</sup> The authors present a theoretical framework called PEN-3 that includes three dimensions to increase the rates of cervical cancer screenings: health education, educational diagnosis, and cultural appropriateness. They argue that these three dimensions are essential to creating culturally appropriate education programs and to addressing communication barriers between the health care system and Latinas.

The Promotoras de Salud model is one good source of education that could be used in other communities in the future. The Promotoras de Salud (PS) are Latinas who work in their communities along the U.S.-Mexico border to educate other families about the health care resources available, usually focusing on heart disease and diabetes. These women “serve as the interface between the community and health researchers who may or may not have these culturally specific competencies.”<sup>22</sup> Anders, Belcazar, and Paez’s work describes how the PS models can integrate research into a community movement for addressing health disparities. Community-based research models, such as the PS model, are ones in which researchers along with community members develop a research question concerning public health, and the product of the research is what is disseminated in the community by Latinas. This model of research and education is one that is

working well in cities on the U.S.-Mexico border because this model involves all of the family in health issues in the community. The educational information is spread in the cities by members of the community and is delivered in a language that all community members can understand. By using a community-based research model, such as the PS model, scholars empower community members to answer their own questions and educate their community. Both the work of Allison, et al. and Anders, et al. are important to replicate in other communities to begin to decrease the disparity of cervical cancer. There is a need to have culturally and spirituality sensitive approaches by medical institutions to educate and make accessible reproductive and preventative health care measures for Latinas.

### Latina Discourse

Discussions are beginning to emerge within the Latina community about reproductive health care. Resources available to Latinas regarding reproductive health care include publications like *Latina Style* as well as organizations like the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH). *Latina Style* is a magazine that serves as a source of information for professional Latinas. Their website has a Women’s Health section that contains a database of the most recent health care issues for Latinas, including reproductive health care. Although *Latina Style* has a large database for health care issues and opportunities for Latinas, their publications are only in English and they exclude some Latinas because the magazine “is dedicated to the needs and concerns of the contemporary Latina professional working woman and the Latina business owner in the United States.”<sup>23</sup>

NLIRH is a reproductive justice organization that has a cervical cancer prevention campaign at work in several states to educate Latinas. Their mission is “to ensure the fundamental human right to reproductive health and justice for Latinas, their families, and their communities through public education, community mobilization, and policy advocacy.”<sup>24</sup> NLIRH’s three program areas are Abortion Access for Latinas, Addressing Reproductive Health Disparities in Underserved Communities, and Immigrant Women’s Rights. Their website provides all of their information in both Spanish and English. The efforts of this organization seem to be reaching some Latinas, however the organization is limited in its reach.<sup>25</sup> Organizations can serve Latinas well in specific

<sup>20</sup> Ayala, 34.

<sup>21</sup> Allison, 65.

<sup>22</sup> Anders, et al., 72.

<sup>23</sup> *Latina Style*, 10 July 2009, *Latina Style*, <http://www.latinastyle.com/index.html>.

<sup>24</sup> National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health: Health, Dignity, and Justice, n.d. 22 June 2009. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, 18 June 2009, <http://www.latinainstitute.org>.

<sup>25</sup> National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health: Health, Dignity, and Justice, n.d. 07 July 2010. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, 07 July 2010. <http://latinainstitute.org/organizing/lans>.

communities, but there is a need to have greater resources directed to existing organizations and for new organization formation. Ultimately the health care system in the U.S. structurally needs to assess why such NGOs are needed in the first place. NLIRH is an effective organization because they are members of the communities that they serve, but there is still much to be done to reach more Latinas.

In contrast, Univision, the largest national Spanish language media source, does not include anything on health care for women on their website. On the *Mujer* webpage, their resource for Latina women, there are only tabs for baby care, beauty, weddings, the kitchen, diets and exercise, family, and fashion. There is no information for health care with the exception of the newest diets, as if obesity is the only health concern in the Latina community. The lack of information on health care for Latinas through Univision is likely because the network does not want to address a subject that is culturally taboo and is likely to offend or discomfit some of its viewers. When examining the Latina discourse, findings show that information regarding reproductive health care for Latinas is minimal, not always comprehensive, and very often solely in English.

### Conclusion

Given that Latinas have disproportionately high rates of cervical cancer and low rates of both screenings and vaccinations, it is necessary to make sure that greater numbers of Latinas have and gain access to reproductive care. The three discourses discussed in this paper each send different messages about the same dilemma. While the medical community created Gardasil to combat cervical cancer, they are not communicating effectively with Latinas regarding Gardasil and may be sending messages that could discourage Latinas from using the vaccine. Academic scholars are working to document what Latinas are saying about sexuality and how that intersects with their faith, however that information does not reach all of the women affected by this problem. Latinas themselves are sending fear-filled messages regarding sexuality that are informed by culture and faith, which can influence their reproductive health care choices. Finally, the few Latinas who organize to address cervical cancer are not reaching everyone because they work with only specific subgroups of Latinas due to limited resources and people power. In conclusion, to reduce the racial disparity in usage of reproductive care, it is necessary bring all of these communities, each with distinct discourses, into communication. Doing so will pave the way to reducing the number of Latinas whose lives are affected by cervical cancer.

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# Compromising Race: The Politics of Being Three-Fifths

Eliazar Masansi Chacha, *University of California, Berkeley*

*Eliazar Masansi Chacha was born in Oakland, CA, and raised by Tanzanian immigrants in Richmond, CA. He is a senior at the University of California, Berkeley, double majoring in African-American Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies: Law and Race with a minor in Education. He will be applying to PhD programs in History with an interest in studying how American wars, specifically the American Revolutionary War and American Civil War, have affected notions of legal and social citizenship for African-American men and women. This article is Eliazar Chacha's MMUF project and honors thesis for his Interdisciplinary Studies: Law and Race major.*

We subscribe to the doctrine, might one of our Southern brethren observe, that representation relates more immediately to persons, and taxation more immediately to property, and we join in the application of this distinction to the case of our slaves. But we must deny the fact, that slaves are considered merely as property, and in no respect whatever as persons. The true state of the case is, that they partake of both these qualities: being considered by our laws, in some respects, as persons, and in other respects as property”<sup>1</sup> (James Madison, Federalist Paper #54).

James Madison’s quote directly touches upon the thesis of my work where I discuss the “mixed legal characteristic” of slaves as property and persons. The term “Slaves” was used as a label to not only identify Black<sup>2</sup> people after Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676 until the culmination of the American Civil War in 1865, but also to make the separation clear between the Black slaves and their White masters who were “human.” Through analyzing the implications of the complex relationship between Black slaves and the White delegates present at the Constitutional Convention of 1787, I argue that this “property characteristic” trumped any hope of the Black individual to be considered a human well into the 1800s. In order to substantiate this idea, I discuss the status of slavery in the United States during and immediately following the American Revolutionary War. This, in turn, leads to the inner workings of the Constitutional Convention and how its environment promoted the belief that Black people were property and less than human. By analyzing the

Constitutional Convention and the creation of the Three-Fifths Compromise within it, it becomes obvious that the decision had everything to do with the disassociation of African slaves from the concept of being “human.” From the 1780s to the 1860s, these benefits included American citizenship, owning land, and essentially being free.

Slavery in the 13 colonies consisted of the brutal exploitation of African people for the exchange of free labor and, thus, economic profits. This insatiable need to import African people for capital profits without concern for the physical and emotional damage done to the African community characterizes the 13 colonies as slave societies. It is indisputable that more of the Southern colonies were dependent upon the labor of African people through their need for free labor to grow and cultivate staple crops such as cotton but, in very critical ways, the North was dependent upon the slavery system as well. This was evident, for example, in the Pennsylvania Colony where despite Quaker opposition to slavery, 4,000 slaves were shipped in Pennsylvania by 1730. These numbers would continue to rise well into 1790, where the census confirmed that there were at least 10,000 more slaves present there than there were years prior.<sup>3</sup> The Census of 1790 also proved that at least 8,000 of these same slaves were still enslaved despite the ratification of the Pennsylvania Gradual Abolition Act of 1780<sup>4</sup>—illuminating not only the dependency of this Northern colony on slavery, but also the separation between what is legally stated and social reality.

To understand the origins of this dependency and why White colonists kept slaves, it is important to discuss the colonies’ relationship with Great Britain and the system of “indentured servitude.” Great Britain’s creation of the Virginia colony in 1607 is where American slavery had its origins.<sup>5</sup> With the colonization of Virginia came the need for the cultivation of the soil for the growing, selling, trading, and consumption of crops for Great Britain’s economic benefit. This meant that a workforce was needed that would work the fields and, in return, would allow for a profit to be made on the crops. According to Virginia’s public records, despite the colony being in the middle of a period later known as “The Great Migration” from 1618 to 1623, during

<sup>1</sup> James Madison, “Federalist No. 54: The Apportionment of Members among the States from the New York Packet.” *New York Packet*, Feb. 12, 1788.

<sup>2</sup> I interchange the term “African-American” with the term “Black” throughout this paper. I choose to use a capital “B” for the term “Black” because Kimberlé Crenshaw states, “Blacks, like Asians, Latinos, and other ‘minorities,’ constitute a specific cultural group and, as such, require denotation as a proper noun.” Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law,” 101 *Harvard Law Review*, 1331, 1332, n. 2. (1988).

<sup>3</sup> United States Census of 1790. *University of Virginia Library*. 2007. Web, 09 July 2010. <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/start.php?year=V1790>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.)

which its population grew from 400 people to over 4,000 residents, extremely high mortality rates from disease, malnutrition, and war with Native Americans kept the population of able-bodied laborers low.<sup>6</sup> This lack of an adequate workforce in Virginia, coupled with the obsession for attaining profits and crops for consumption, motivated Great Britain to indulge in the transportation of workers from Europe and Africa to the New World.<sup>7</sup> This process of transporting requisite labor would be characterized under the greater system of indentured servitude, where workers would sign contracts to be transported from their home country to the New World in exchange for their labor for a specific number of years and often some land, after their work obligations were complete.<sup>8</sup>

According to Richard Hofstadter in *America at 1750: A Social Portrait*, over half of all White immigrants that traveled to the North American colonies during the 17th and 18th centuries might have been indentured servants.<sup>9</sup> Due to the fact that African workers traveled to the colonies with other indentured servants of mostly Irish, Scottish, English, and German descent, they were technically considered human and respected as White indentured servants. This is truly amazing in light of the subsequent history of Africa enslavement because African workers had as equal opportunity for upward social mobility as White European workers did after the terms of their contracts were met. Moreover, because indentured servants had the opportunity to attain land after their work obligations were complete, they could possibly economically surpass the White farmer to whom they were first indebted.<sup>10</sup> Sadly, this opportunity was short-lived following Bacon's Rebellion of 1676. According to Samuel Wiseman's *Book of Record: the Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia*, Bacon's Rebellion began as a dispute among English settlers in Virginia over American Indian policy. However, it ultimately erupted into a civil war putting anti-American Indian western settlers and Black and White indentured servants against Governor William Berkeley and his allies who encouraged more appeasing policies toward indigenous peoples.<sup>11</sup> The rebellion would take the name of Nathaniel

Bacon, a young White man that came to Virginia in 1674 and was immediately welcomed into the elite society, but Wiseman argues that the causes and consequences of the rebellion, like all wars, were more profound than the ideas and leadership of a single man.<sup>12</sup>

In response to White and Black people forming an alliance in 1676 in Bacon's Rebellion, the ruling class of landowners reacted by creating a racial system that purposely made all White people free and Black people permanent slaves. This was a perfect solution for the White ruling class because this racial social order would ultimately keep White landowners profitable. David Brion Davis goes as far as to say that the racial caste of slavery was not only created as a result of Bacon's Rebellion, but it was also socially, legally, economically, and violently enforced because of it.<sup>13</sup>

The contradiction of implementing this slavery system becomes lucid during the American Revolutionary War from 1775 to 1783, where the 13 colonies would unite to fight against Great Britain. The colonists felt enslaved to Great Britain for having to ship their crops and profits to their "mother country" without proper representation in Parliament. As a result, the colonists declared their sovereignty and independence from Great Britain in 1776. The White colonists could have empathized with the enslaved Africans at this time due to the similar unappealing feeling of enslavement that they both shared. Instead, the colonists would not only continue their practice of enslaving Africans, but they would do so despite George Washington's lifting of the ban on Black enlistment in January of 1776. According to Sidney and Emma Kaplan in *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*, at least 5,000 Blacks fought for the American army.<sup>14</sup> African-Americans' war participation, however, was seemingly disregarded after the Americans were victorious and had to develop their own governmental structure during the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

The main emphasis of the Constitutional Convention was agreeing upon a structure the U.S. would use to govern its citizens. Three structures were proposed: the Virginia

<sup>6</sup> Frank R. Diffenderffer, *The German Immigration into Pennsylvania through the Port of Philadelphia, 1700-1775*. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1979.)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.)

<sup>9</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *America at 1750: A Social Portrait*. (New York: Vintage, 1973.)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Wiseman and Michael Leroy Oberg, *Samuel Wiseman's Book of Record: The Official Account of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2005.)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Davis, 124.

<sup>14</sup> Sidney Kaplan and Emma Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution*. (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.)

Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and Hamilton's Plan.<sup>15</sup> This emphasis on individual plans, however, would shift when the discussion turned to slavery. In those discussions and in the convention entirely, there were no persons of color, let alone Black persons, invited to listen to or appeal decisions that would decide their status in the newly forming United States of America. In fact, the discussions of the Constitutional Convention would remain secret until after James Madison's death when his infamous notes were found and published.<sup>16</sup> These notes show that the secrecy and lack of a Black presence contributed to the way the United States Constitution was created, the continued legality of slavery, and the ratification of the Three-Fifths Compromise. Delegates James Wilson and Roger Sherman proposed the Three-Fifths Compromise that would count all people of African descent as Three-Fifths a person for taxes and enumeration purposes. This compromise not only merged the Virginia Plan and New Jersey Plan so that both the Northern and Southern colonies were satisfied, but it also legalized the notion that Blacks were not fully human nor citizens—but some portion of both. Thus James Madison, in the Federalist Paper #54, concludes bluntly that “we must deny the fact, that slaves are considered merely as property, and in no respect whatever as persons. The true state of the case is, that they partake of both these qualities: being considered by our laws, in some respects, as persons, and in other respects as property.”<sup>17</sup> In Madison's statement, “slave” was a universal term used for Black people. By describing Black people as a mixture between property and persons in the Federalist Papers, which were created to persuade the American people and politicians to ratify the United States Constitution, Madison implicitly argues for this belief to be accepted among the general population as well.

In conclusion, James Madison's description of Black people as not being fully human was reinforced through the legal and social actions of the United States prior to and

after its formation. Evident from the decision to continue the legalization and practice of slavery following the American Revolutionary War, regardless of Black and White soldiers fighting alongside one another, the newly formed United States disregarded the actions of Black soldiers in order to protect the benefits they gained from enslaving Black people. Thus, Professor Cheryl I. Harris, in *Whiteness As Property*,<sup>18</sup> argues that with the initial formation of Whiteness, which occurred when Blacks were made permanent slaves and all Whites free, became a collective interest to protect the racialized privilege that has kept Whites socially, economically, politically and legally superior to any other race in America.

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<sup>15</sup> Delegate Edmund Randolph, on May 29, 1787, introduces the Virginia Plan, which sought to have representation within the National Legislature based upon population. This plan would be naturally supported by all the “big states” with a high population. The New Jersey Plan, proposed by Delegate Roger Sherman on June 11, 1787, was more supported by the smaller states with the fewest population levels because of the equal representation it gave to all states within the National Legislature, regardless of population. Finally, Hamilton's Plan was proposed by Delegate Hamilton on June 18, 1787 as a way to not only attack the faults in both the New Jersey and Virginia Plans, but to also propose a “checks and balances” system where the executive offices had “life positions,” while the congressional offices were re-elected after certain amount of years and had the power to impeach executive offices.

<sup>16</sup> James Madison, “Avalon Project—Notes on the Debates in the Federal Convention.” *Avalon Project—Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy*. Yale Law School, 2008. Web, 09 July 2010, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/debcont.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/debcont.asp).

<sup>17</sup> James Madison, “Federalist No. 54: The Apportionment of Members among the States from the New York Packet.” *New York Packet*, Feb. 12, 1788.

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# Ishmael's Failed Heresy: Perpetuating the Overrepresentation of Man

Patricia Cho, *Williams College*

*Patricia Cho, from Corona, CA, recently graduated from Williams College with a major in Asian Studies with a focus in Linguistics. She will be part of MATCHCorps in Boston for the 2010–2011 academic year. She is currently applying to graduate programs for Political Science and, specifically, International Affairs.*

## Abstract

In this article, I explore the notion of a range of intellectualism in terms of categories or types of intellectuals in an attempt to understand the sources of Ishmael's failed heresy in C.L.R. James's *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways*, and the further implications this provides regarding the ways that these categories of intellectuals can or cannot resist normative epistemes and enact epistemic change. Applying Sylvia Wynter's theories of liminality and the overrepresentation of man, I argue for the necessity of the notion of a range of intellectualism in the struggle for epistemic change against the totalitarian forces of capitalism which strip intellectuals, like Ishmael, of their agency. Ultimately, the failure of Ishmael's heresy lies in his inability to locate agency in the creative capacity of the masses; it is a failure that lies in his own perpetuation of the overrepresentation of Man and his static notion of intellectualism.

C.L.R. James's *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways* (*MRC*) has, of late, enjoyed a surge in popularity, as it rightly should in an age suffering as the modern one does from the grip of the totalitarian forces of capitalism. It has never been more imperative that "The Ceremony . . . be Found,"<sup>1</sup> that Caliban's Reason achieve normativity in a radical upheaval of the very consciousness dictating what it means to be "human."<sup>2</sup> Yet the current resurgence of scholarship revolving around this text has yet to explore the character of Ishmael in sufficient depth, to color in the rich range of symbolic implications of agency coupled with the concomitant warnings of Ishmael's potential for totalitarian danger that *MRC* affords.<sup>3</sup>

James is adamant that it is not an allegorical significance that his reading of *Moby Dick* provides, rather, a

symbolic one, which "gives indications and points of support by which the innermost essence and widest reaches of the universal may be grasped."<sup>4</sup> The actual character of Ishmael "can only go so far,"<sup>5</sup> the choice he is forced to make between the captain and the crew ultimately leads to his downfall, as his intellectual neurosis throws him headfirst back into individualism, "enclosed in the solitude of his social and intellectual speculation."<sup>6</sup> Ishmael, it must be understood, is not intended as the portrait of the liminal figure itself, but rather, as its skeleton. His own downfall is only one of the pluralities of fleshy manifestations of the intellectual made possible by *MRC* (Pierre is another one and Ahab yet another). But Ishmael is imbued with the potential of filling the liminal role to an extent, which the other intellectual figures are not; he has the choice of self-identification and self-placement into whatever episteme he chooses. This choice is what seems to grant him agency in enacting epistemic change. But Ishmael, a member both of the normative intellectual episteme epitomized by Sylvia Wynter's "Man," as well as that of the liminal "other," is himself subdued by the totalitarian nature of Man's overrepresentation, pitted back into submission by the very forces he claims to struggle against.

Thus this paper engages in the task of orienting Ishmael's role in the struggle against the "totalitarian madness" of modern society that, left unchecked, "threaten(s) to overwhelm . . . the whole of the world."<sup>7</sup> The current notion of the intellectual must be undone if the epistemic change that Wynter considers necessary for effective struggles against oppression is to be enacted by those liminal figures. This article shall explore the notion of a range of intellectualism, in terms of categories or types of intellectuals, in an attempt to understand the sources of Ishmael's failed heresy. Additionally, it explores the implications that such an understanding provides for social and epistemic change and for revolution.

Stemming from the enlightenment, the intellectual, the "Man" is attached to the notion of "natural right" through his possession of supreme reason.<sup>8</sup> According to Wynter, "Man" exists in a dichotomous relationship with the "Other," traditionally seen as the native, the barbaric: man's human counterpart that (being devoid of reason) is

<sup>1</sup> Wynter (1984: 19).

<sup>2</sup> Wynter (2003: 268).

<sup>3</sup> Previously conducted examinations of *MRC* neglect to place sustained emphasis on Ishmael and as such, the deeper implications regarding the nature of his failed heresy and his lack of agency remain yet to be explored. See Cameron McCarty, "Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: C.L.R. James and the Radical Postcolonial Imagination" (2001); Nicolas Veroli, "Panegyric for the Revolution: C.L.R. James and the Self-Overcoming of the Intellectual" (2001); and Williams E. Cain, "The Triumph of the Will and the Failure of Resistance: C.L.R. James's Readings of *Moby Dick* and *Othello*" (1995) for further examination.

<sup>4</sup> James (1992: 210).

<sup>5</sup> James (2001: 44).

<sup>6</sup> James (2001: 41).

<sup>7</sup> James (2001: 14–15).

<sup>8</sup> Henry (2000: 132).



not deserving of the inalienable right to freedom. It is the totalizing nature of this discourse that perpetuates not only the oppression rampant in modern society, but also dictates the terms of the struggle. Thus, this discourse succeeds in forcing the oppressed to effectively subjugate themselves in their very efforts for emancipation.<sup>9</sup>

In the modern age, the “Man” is granted his “natural right” of “*rational* redemption” through capitalistic gain, and it is this which gave rise to our current specific notions of “Man” and the “Other.”<sup>10</sup> With the secularization of the world, came the concomitant emergence of a “newly projected human/subhuman distinction.”<sup>11</sup> The emphasis was now on the “rational” aspect of redemption, which separated humans on the grounds of reason. Each individual’s placement within the epistemes of rational human and irrational human “other” was dictated by the presence or lack of the faculty of rationality.<sup>12</sup> As such, Caliban, the dark-skinned, the native, the unfortunate subset of humans left to flounder at the margins by biology’s unfortunate neglect to endow them with reason, emerged as the new “other” of modernity.<sup>13</sup>

But the nature of this totalitarian overrepresentation, which engages in such selective “rational redemption,” is that the oppressed are not the only ones who fall prey. The intellectuals like Ishmael and Ahab are also victimized, for the fight they believe they are engaging in will prove futile and will result only in a neurosis that fails to enact any change. The fight, in fact, actually serves to further the goals of totalitarian capitalism. This phenomenon gives rise to the perverted struggles of this modern age, for example “poorly fashioned” postcolonial reconstruction projects that give rise only to “counterproductive entrapment in the liminal categories of the Western *episteme*.”<sup>14</sup> Such is the nature of Ishmael’s misguided battle against the capitalistic society focused solely on individualism, which he finds so repulsive; it is a perversion of the true struggle against totalitarianism by his adherence to and belief in his own intellectual superiority.

For Wynter then, the war is misdirected, and the struggle perverted from its true goal; for the oppressed must struggle not only directly against the oppressors but also against the consciousness, which the “Man” has

imposed upon them; one which dictates the very terms of the struggle.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, the only way to combat this semio-linguistic force of subjugation is to re-order society and the very mode of consciousness it operates under, to push against the existing epistemes and allocate new boundaries for the image of the human<sup>16</sup> “based on a trans-racial mode of inclusive altruism, beyond the limits of the national subject and the nation-state.”<sup>17</sup> So the war must proceed on multiple fronts, for there are multiple concomitant groups suffering subjugation by “discursive authoritarianism.”<sup>18</sup> United by their common categorization of difference by their placement outside the realm of normativity, all the different types of “other,” whether subjugated on grounds of race, gender, or any other schematic, are all “liminal, that is, part of the transgressive chaos of the outside.”<sup>19</sup> The difficulty of enacting epistemic change is thus made strikingly salient: what is required is not only a reordering of consciousness, but a *conscious* reordering of it; what is necessary is to become heretical.<sup>20</sup>

The very notion of intellectualism then must be de-centered and fitted to include that which can be found in the creative capacities of the masses. As James says, “Freedom is creative universality, *not* utility.”<sup>21</sup> Only when the realization of the creative capacities of the masses occurs can true change materialize, because if as Wynter says, epistemic change is to occur, this notion of the overrepresentation of man must be done away with entirely. Only then will intellectuals such as Ahab and Ishmael, who cannot distance themselves from the notion of their own normativity, cease to be subjugated by that very thing which they have come to accept as truth. Therefore, the agents of social change can only be those who are able to establish a normativity that does not support this overrepresentation of man. In essence, normativity must be re-centered upon those who have traditionally been excluded from the normative episteme; the sub-humans must also be deemed intellectuals. For James, this process occurs through the intellectualization of the masses, which can be identified in their creative capacities; “the creativity of the masses, everything begins here . . . the great philosophical problems . . . can be solved only in the revolutionary reason of the masses.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Wynter (1984: 35–36).

<sup>10</sup> Henry (2000: 127).

<sup>11</sup> Wynter (2003: 264).

<sup>12</sup> Wynter (2003: 266).

<sup>13</sup> Wynter (2003: 307).

<sup>14</sup> Henry (2000: 132).

<sup>15</sup> Henry (2000: 132).

<sup>16</sup> Greg (2006: 10).

<sup>17</sup> See Sylvia Wynter, “1492: A ‘New World’ View” (1991) for further reading.

<sup>18</sup> Henry (2000: 123).

<sup>19</sup> Henry (2000: 133).

<sup>20</sup> Greg (2006: 22).

<sup>21</sup> James (1986: 117).

<sup>22</sup> James (1986: 129).

Ishmael, the tormented intellectual, is of the same make as those individuals who would consider themselves the vanguard party, that which would lead the proletariat to the revolution. But Ishmael's neurosis, the same neurosis that plagues the self-proclaimed intellectuals, effectively causes him to fall victim to the totalitarian forces of oppression. As unknowing proponents of the overrepresentation of man, those like Ishmael succeed only in furthering the very modes of oppression they claim to fight against. Thus, Ishmael's neurosis can be further understood as one induced by the lack of significance in the choice he is faced with between the crew and Ahab. That he is *forced* to make this decision unravels his agency, which he desperately searches for to affect his battle against the society, which he cannot but detest.

The limited traditional understanding of intellectualism, which Ishmael uses to ascribe his understanding of the world, effectively prevents him from filling the role of the agent of social change; he remains bound to the current normative notions of intellectualism governed by linguistic traditions of "Man's" rational redemption and the "Other's" irrational damnation. Ishmael fails to fully become heretical. The vision of change he hopes for is issued through the very terms used to subjugate; he finds himself incapable of expanding the notion of intellectualism to include not his ridiculous philosophical ponderings but the creativity found in the crew.<sup>23</sup>

But the failure of Ishmael's heresy is far more intricate than the current scholarship, or lack thereof, would make it seem. Though completely overtaken by the totalitarian personality of Ahab, Ishmael's utter lack of will is stifled at times by his moments of clarity, in which he engages in an admiration of and camaraderie with the crew. Ishmael can never see Queequeg and himself as equals. Queequeg, the savage, falls short of men endowed with the capacity for reason, and so Ishmael cannot but invariably separate himself from the crew and herein, his failure lies. Nevertheless, in response to Queequeg's "untamed and undefeated appearance," "poor lonely Ishmael" cannot help but "feel something melting in him."<sup>24</sup> Regardless of the fact that he finds himself helpless to combat the force of Ahab's totalitarian madness, Ishmael's simultaneous attraction to the crew illuminates the true nature of the struggle. Though he

himself, as an unquestioning adherent to the class of normative overrepresented men, is incapable of widening the scope of intellectual activity, his connections with the crew provide glimpses into the true source of agency: the creativity of the masses.

The society that Ishmael comes from suffers from an insatiable lust for money impelled by the totalitarian force of capitalism. It arises from the notion that consumptive capacity determines one's worth in the modern age and subsequently passes judgment on one's normativity. In such a society, the Ishmaels and Queequegs alike are subjugated by the oppressive totalitarian forces of capitalism. It is in this world that the intellectual and the savage who sells shrunken heads are placed in the same room at the hotel before the *Pequod* embarks on its voyage. They are units of consumption and as such, the level of their consumption is directly proportional to the measure of their human-ness. The point is Queequeg, just like any other "Man," " 'pays reg'lar.' Nothing else matters."<sup>25</sup> Ishmael the intellectual "Man" of reason and the savage "other" are, on the level of economic value, grouped into the same episteme.

Here are the first indications of the source of Ishmael's heresy. It is his inability to "endure the social class in which he was born and reared" manifesting in periodic neurotic fits that ultimately implores him to go to sea, to enter the transgressive chaos with the other liminal figures and engage in the process of poesis enacting a shift in existing epistemes.<sup>26</sup> Although he is an intellectual, considered to be the "normative" economically successful, well-educated "Man" (Wynter would add "overrepresented"), he is also attuned to the power pulsating from the creative capacity of the masses. Consequently, it is not surprising that "Ishmael is offered the only accommodations available—to share a bed with a savage," for his liminality is undeniable.<sup>27</sup> The possibility of Ishmael's heresy is unquestionable, but the ever-present distinction in his mind between himself, the civilized intellectual, and the savage crew without reason, leaves his liminality unacknowledged.

It is thus in Ishmael's inability to consider the collective unity that permeates throughout those on board, his inability to grasp the fact that Tashtego is just as much of a man as he is, that the source of Ishmael's failures emerge.

<sup>23</sup> James (2001: 43).

<sup>24</sup> James (2001: 39).

<sup>25</sup> James (2001: 36).

<sup>26</sup> James (2001: 37).

<sup>27</sup> James (2001: 36).

While he sees the glory of the native savages, the “other,” and admires it such that the “ball of free will dropped from (his) hand,” he is far too embedded in the intellectual foundations of his own identity. As such, even though Ishmael finds himself at a loss for words, his own ridiculous philosophical introspections flailing in comparison to Tashtego’s might, he is only “vaguely aware” that “Tashtego is [not], philosophically, a barbarian” . . . that “his very lack of self-consciousness in life and work is itself a philosophical attitude to life.”<sup>28</sup> To Ishmael, Tashtego’s creativity is fundamentally opposed to intellectualism. Unable to shake the oppression of the totalizing dichotomy governing all epistemic discourse, Ishmael’s heresy is left unexplored and his capacity for agency left untouched. This is the source of his neurosis, this intellectual’s struggles were perverted by the ingenious blindfold of overrepresented man.

James makes his definitive break from Trotskyism in *State Capitalism and World Revolution*, a break that reverberates throughout *MRC* in the dangers revealed in Ishmael, who found himself in complete submission to the totalitarian forces driving the modern world toward total destruction. It is impossible to ignore the connections between the vanguard party and this type of intellectual who claims to be a part of the proletariat and thus, by extension, the intellectual leaders of the movement. James, like Wynter, recognizes the danger that this presents to the struggle against oppression; by dividing the subjugated, totalitarian forces succeed in blinding the proletariat to such an extent that the entire movement is made stagnant. In the same way that Ishmael is incapable of pinning down the collective unity or even identifying its existence in the first place, those who believe in the vanguard party succeed only in further over-representing themselves as individual intellectuals/men, while they simultaneously reject the power to be found in the creativity of the masses.<sup>29</sup> Thus, James proclaims, “philosophy must become proletarian.”<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, James’s speech, “Black Power,” reflects his fervent belief in the commonality of the struggles of all those suffering oppression under the totalitarian forces of capitalism. James comes to the conclusion that all forms of oppression are, if not rooted in, then inextricably linked to class struggle. The black power movement “further extended the negro struggle to the third world.”<sup>31</sup> This incorporation of the third world represents for James that Stokely Carmichael has realized the fundamental connection intertwining all struggles against the oppression of the

totalizing forces in the modern world.<sup>32</sup> This is the connection that Ishmael misses, a mistake arising from the blindness thrust upon different segments of the subjugated population. The intellectuals, like Ishmael and like those who consider themselves to be constituents of the vanguard party, set apart from the crew and from the subhuman intellectual masses, forget the collectivity of their struggle. Thus, they also fail to understand that their subjugation is a collective suffering with a singular source: the totalitarian force which fuels capitalism.

For James, raising the status of the masses to “human” would require an upheaval of *the intellectual* to be replaced by *intellectualism*, marking a departure from the current disjointedness between the individual movements that plague the struggle for freedom. Ishmael’s struggle (that of the intellectual), and the crew’s struggle (that of the masses) should in fact be understood as part of the aggregate comprising the general proletarian struggle. Thus, he describes the danger of denying the connection between the independent struggles, and allaying this danger would require Ishmael to recognize and acknowledge his connection to the crew in a unification of human and non-human to finally recover agency and combat totalitarian forces, the true source of oppression.

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<sup>28</sup> James (2001: 43).

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# Alfred, King of Wessex, and Anglo-Saxon Kingship

Michael P. Esquivel, *Rice University*

*Michael Esquivel graduated cum laude from Rice University in May 2010 with a bachelor of arts in History. This native of San Antonio, TX, and winner of the Beinecke Scholarship is taking a year to study French before going to graduate school to pursue a degree in History.*

## Abstract

Anglo-Saxon kings defined their kingship through various means. Alfred the Great, king of Wessex from 871 to 899, exemplified the manner by which Anglo-Saxon kings defined their kingship through his use of law codes, coinage, images, and his influence on the writers of the day.

The Anglo-Saxon period in England dates roughly from the mid-sixth century to 1066, the year when William of Normandy conquered England (depending on when one dates the establishment of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in Britain). One of the most important questions for historical research concerns the role of the Anglo-Saxon king in government as many documents from the Anglo-Saxon period focus on the actions of kings. Central to this understanding is the concept of kingship, a term that not only encompasses how the king's subjects perceived him, but also what duties he was expected to perform. Alfred, king of Wessex, from 871 to 899, left a major impact on the practice of kingship. He also left a wealth of information about himself and how he perceived his kingship.

Of major importance to the study of how Alfred viewed his kingship is the law code he issued. Alfred included as part of the preface to his laws excerpts from the Ten Commandments, along with other proscriptions from the book of Exodus.<sup>1</sup> Through these excerpts Alfred attempted to connect himself with Moses, who conveyed laws directly from God to the Hebrews. As part of his preface, Alfred also cited regulations from the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> As such, Alfred not only appeared as a lawgiver, but also as having derived authority for his laws, and by extension his kingship, from the Bible and ultimately from God.

At the end of the preface to his law code, Alfred noted that he derived laws from his predecessors, the past kings of Anglo-Saxon England. He cited Ine, Offa, and Æthelbert as the kings he followed.<sup>3</sup> Alfred thus connected himself to earlier kings, not all of whom were kings of Wessex, namely Offa of Mercia and Æthelbert of Kent. Alfred began, through this list of kings, to incorporate other kingdoms under his rule. He may not have yet declared himself king of all Anglo Saxons, but he issued a set of laws that he wanted to appear as deriving from sources with greater authority than traditionally held by the king of Wessex.

Alfred also sought to stress his claim to ruling over more than Wessex and Kent through the production of images. Surviving images of Alfred can be found on coinage produced at the behest of Alfred and on an object known as the Alfred Jewel. The coins produced under Alfred's rule show his attempt to display the extent and nature of his kingship. One of the surviving coins, known as the Two Emperors Type, features two seated figures beneath the wings of an angel on one side and a crowned king with the inscription *Aelfred Rex Anglo[rum]* [Alfred King of the English] on the other.<sup>4</sup> The inscription indicates that Alfred claimed to be king over more than Wessex and Kent. In addition, as the coin's name suggests, the coin's imagery is similar in style to Roman iconography.<sup>5</sup> Through this coin, Alfred sought to display his kingship as similar to the earlier Christian Roman emperors.

Alfred further reinforced the idea of his kingship's similarity to Roman emperors with the production of what is called the Alfred Jewel. The exact function of this object remains debatable, but scholarship has traditionally assumed the object to be the head of an *æstel*, a book pointer,<sup>6</sup> which contains a refashioned Roman rock crystal in the midst of an Anglo-Saxon encasing.<sup>7</sup> The use of a Roman rock crystal indicates an attempt by those fashioning the object to connect it and their ruler, Alfred, to the Romans. The figure portrayed in the Jewel cannot be identified as a particular person, but scholarship most frequently identifies it with a personification of wisdom or sight of God.<sup>8</sup> By creating such an image, the maker wanted to highlight the importance of

<sup>1</sup> Felix Liebermann, trans. *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle A.S.: M. Niemeyer, 1903), 27–43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 43–45.

<sup>3</sup> F.L. Attenborough, trans. and eds. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1974), 63.

<sup>4</sup> John Hines and Catherine Cubitt, eds. *Anglo-Saxon Studies*. Vol. 3, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England* by Catherine E. Karkov. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2004), 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

wisdom to the king as well as his devotion to that wisdom. Fashioning the figure's robes as purple and gold, the traditional colors of royal authority,<sup>9</sup> also reveals that the maker wanted the jewel to be associated with the king. Thus, those viewing the image would recognize the personified figure of the wisdom of God and royal authority, i.e., Alfred, as one. The jewel also reinforced the idea that the king commissioned this object's creation, as the Jewel is inscribed *Aelfred Mec Hebt Gewyrcan*, Alfred had me made.<sup>10</sup>

Alfred defined kingship in much the same way as his predecessors, with the exception of his attempt to appear as a Christian Roman emperor. Yet, Alfred brought an element to Anglo-Saxon kingship that had previously been non-existent—the concept of learning. As king of Wessex and Kent, Alfred had multiple works translated from Latin to Old English, with the intent of spreading the knowledge found in the Latin works to his subjects. By commanding that the works be translated, Alfred assumed the role of patron of learning. He was also a preserver and disseminator of the ideas contained in these works. This role served as a part of Alfred's duty as defender of Christianity, through the preservation of the Bible and other Christian works, against non-Christian invaders.

Alfred further emphasized this new role in his kingship as teacher and guide to his subjects by preparing a translation of Pope Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* or *Pastoral Care*. Alfred claimed to have translated Pope Gregory's work himself.<sup>11</sup> This claim shows how Alfred sought to portray himself as a king of letters. It is worth noting those who read *Pastoral Care*. Originally the work was intended for those holding ecclesiastical office, and Alfred remained true to that purpose by directing the translation be sent to all the bishops of his realm, but this work contains counsel that could also be applied to secular offices, such as the king's.<sup>12</sup> As a result, this work tells us not only what Alfred wanted bishops to do, but also what he wanted the image of kingship to be. In addition, by issuing this work to all the bishops of his realm, Alfred assumed a position over them, in a sense becoming more akin to Pope Gregory himself rather than remaining only a transmitter of Pope Gregory's ideas.

Alfred began the translation of Pope Gregory's work with a preface explaining that English society and governance functioned better in the past. He notes how learning was widespread and how kings, who had authority over everyone, "obeyed God and his messengers; and how they not only maintained their peace, morality, and authority at home, but also their territory outside; and how they succeeded both in warfare and in wisdom."<sup>13</sup> In his preface, Alfred revealed his idealistic concept of England—an ideal which never existed. Alfred also demonstrated his beliefs concerning the duties of the king. According to Alfred, kingship required obedience to God and his messengers, whomever they might be. Kingship also included a duty to maintain power, peace, and morality in one's kingdom and in neighboring kingdoms, a clause that helped justify expansion of the kingdom. Furthermore the king had to be excellent in war and in learning. This passage then is a comprehensive overview of Alfred's kingship.

Of particular importance to the study of kingship is Alfred's translation of chapter three of *Pastoral Care*, which concerns the burdens of a ruler. This chapter notes how Christ avoided royal authority in order to set an example for humanity to avoid greed and pride.<sup>14</sup> In the original and in the translation, the writer remarks that the best antidote for pride is suffering and tribulation and then tells how both the biblical kings Saul and David fell to pride, with the latter being redeemed only through toils and tribulations.<sup>15</sup> When this statement is placed in the context of all the battles Alfred fought with the invading Vikings, it develops a new meaning.

Alfred also influenced the writers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, with his ideas of kingship leaving an imprint on the *Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* writers favored Alfred and his kingship and therefore reinforced his ideas concerning kingship. The *Chronicle* focused mainly on Alfred's military endeavors, portraying him as a king who fought well, commanding his forces in the field in a defense against all invaders throughout southern England.<sup>16</sup> The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* even facilitated Alfred's claim to be king of the Anglo-Saxons, by proclaiming that everyone not under Danish rule submit to him.<sup>17</sup> As such, the *Chronicle* left little room for arguments against Alfred's claim to rule over all the Anglo-Saxons.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 31–32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 127–128.

<sup>16</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker, eds. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 54–58.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 52.

Another work that Alfred influenced that is crucial to the study of his kingship is Asser's work on the life of Alfred. Asser sought to create a work that created an image of Alfred as a saintly king, while simultaneously reinforcing the image of kingship that Alfred advocated. In the beginning of his work, Asser included Alfred's genealogy, which shows Alfred to be descended from the great rulers of Wessex and mythological heroes.<sup>18</sup> This genealogy connects Æthelwulf, Alfred's father, to earlier kings and sets his lineage apart from other men by the inclusion of an apocryphal fourth son of Noah. Asser adds Alfred and accordingly, Alfred gains the same benefit as his father.

Asser continues to portray Alfred as a devout king with an almost saintly quality about him when he writes that Alfred suffered from an illness that first developed in his youth and which plagued him for most of his life.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore Asser connects Alfred's illness, real or imagined, to Alfred's desire to remain focused on serving God, even after he had taken a wife<sup>20</sup>—emphasizing Alfred's desire to be seen as a particularly pious king, almost to the point of being considered a saint. Even Alfred's battles with the invading Viking, who Asser referred to as pagans, acquired a sacred nature. The use of the word pagan created a contrast to Alfred's subjects, the Christians, whom he defended. Alfred's fight with the pagans becomes a sort of holy war, waged by a saintly king. Thus, kingship for Alfred and his successors began to acquire a more sacred aspect.

In addition to Asser's portrayal of Alfred as a devout king, chosen by destiny to be king, Asser shows Alfred to be a king concerned with learning. Asser notes that Alfred received a much desired book of poetry from his mother, after he defeated his brothers in a competition, that required learning to recite the poems contained in the book.<sup>21</sup> This love of learning, according to Asser, remained with Alfred for the rest of his life, even through all his sufferings.<sup>22</sup> Asser records that Alfred sought to bring the most learned people to his court, which included not only Grimbald from Gaul and the monk John, but also Asser himself.<sup>23</sup> The representation that Alfred brought such figures to his court created an image of Alfred seeking to surround himself with the brightest minds and to cultivate learning. He became a sort of new Solomon, always seeking wisdom and finding riches

as a result.<sup>24</sup> This invocation of Solomon adds another layer to Alfred's kingship. Alfred had already connected himself to King David, and now through Asser, he connected himself to Solomon, whose wisdom was legendary. Alfred wanted his kingship to be seen as sacred and full of wisdom. This comparison, therefore, helped Alfred to complete the development of this image. In sum, Asser's portrayal of Alfred not only followed Alfred's own portrayal of kingship, but augmented it. Alfred is depicted as an even more devout and sage king. Calling Alfred the "ruler of all the Christians of the island of Britain, king of the Angles and Saxons," Asser also asserts Alfred's claims to rule over more than Wessex and Kent.<sup>25</sup>

Alfred, through his law codes, translations of great works, and influence on the writers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser, actively defined his kingship.

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<sup>18</sup> Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, trans. and eds. *Alfred the Great: Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources* (London: Penguin Group, 1983), 67.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 88–92.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 89–90.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

# Social Profit from Microfinance Institutions: A Survey of the Perceived Impact of Loan Diversification in St. Lucia

Darryl Finkton Jr., *Harvard College*, and Gerrel Z. Olivier, *Boston College*

*Darryl Finkton, from Indianapolis, IN, studied Neurobiology and African-American Studies at Harvard College. A 2010 Rhodes Scholar, Darryl will pursue an M.Sc. in Global Health and an MBA at Oxford before continuing on to medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. Interested in research topics from nutrition, to water and sanitation, to microfinance, he has applied his research through his role as CEO of the African Development Initiative, Inc. and hopes to continue finding ways of using research to improve the effectiveness of community development projects both domestically and abroad.*

*Gerrel Olivier, from Randolph, MA, majored in Finance and Economics at Boston College. He graduated in 2010 and received the 2010 Edward H. Finnegan Award, the College's top Commencement honor given to the senior who best represents the University's motto, "Ever to Excel." Gerrel will be working as a mergers and acquisitions analyst for Morgan Stanley in New York while continuing his efforts to provide microloans to people in St. Lucia through the African Development Initiative, Inc.*

## Abstract

Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) seek to provide financial resources to those who have traditionally lacked access to these services. In recent years, microfinance has played an important role in fueling economic growth in developing countries, particularly those in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Since 2001, the combined gross loan portfolio in the region has increased approximately 700% (\$1.2Bn to \$8.6Bn) and the total number of borrowers has increased by approximately 450% (1.8MM to 8.0MM).<sup>1</sup> Given this surge in the presence of microfinance in LAC, it is important to consider whether or not MFIs will continue to meet the needs of their clients. MFIs, by definition, are supposed to fulfill a social need, serving as the financial services provider for poor consumers that are typically deemed "uncreditworthy." Still, MFIs must ensure that they are operating with sustainable default rates while still capitalizing on profitable opportunities that could come from the expansion and/or diversification of their services. Thus the question stands: Will diversifying MFI loan offerings benefit, hurt, or have no effect on MFI performance in LAC?

The objective of this study was to gauge the *social* impact of loan diversification amongst various microfinance institutions in the Latin American and Caribbean regions. Most MFIs follow the concept of the "Double Bottom Line,"

where performance is categorized by both economic and social profit. To better understand the social effects of loan diversification amongst MFIs, we visited the Caribbean island of St. Lucia to perform a case study. Given the relatively small geographical size of the island, it was possible to travel to every region of the country, interviewing lenders and borrowers about their experiences with microloans. We sought to understand the perceived impact these MFIs have on individuals, families, and communities of varying income levels, industries, and educational backgrounds. Also, we studied how these MFIs were or were not able to offer this social good while simultaneously battling high delinquency rates. We utilized these questions to understand the causes of mission drift—a trend whereby MFIs shift their client base away from the populations they originally sought to assist as they adopt stricter loan qualification requirements to counter unfavorable delinquency and default rates. Mission drift has negative implications on the *social* profit of MFIs, which can be measured by monitoring the advancement of impoverished peoples as a result of the services they offer.

While in St. Lucia, visits were made to the three following organizations. **The Paul Owens Development Fund Inc.** (POD Fund)<sup>2</sup> has central offices located in the heart of Castries, St. Lucia. The fund was established four years ago as a governmental initiative to provide low-cost loans, business training, and other support services to impoverished, unemployed St. Lucians seeking to establish their own microenterprises.<sup>3</sup> Thus, they work to lower the unemployment rates by increasing entrepreneurial activity. The POD Fund currently offers credit for service and trade, retail and distribution, manufacturing, tourism, animal husbandry, agri-business, and agro processing.

**Advancing Saint Lucia** (ASL) is a government-funded, large-scale corporation that offers several different types of products to its clients, in hopes of facilitating development within the country. Specifically, their mandate is to support entrepreneurship, economic and social development through business counseling services, technical assistance, and the provision of funding through loans, equity financing, and other forms of assistance.

**The Saint Lucia Development Foundation** (SLDF) is a Non-Governmental Organization. The SLDF provides loans, training, and consultancy services for the benefit of micro and small enterprises, which may be organized as sole proprietors, partnerships, companies, or co-operatives. They also provide research services, larger commercial

<sup>1</sup> Navajas, Sergio, and Luis Tejerina, "Microfinance in Latin America and the Caribbean: How Large Is the Market?" *Sustainable Development Department Best Practices Series* (2006): Inter-American Development Bank.

<sup>2</sup> Visits with the microenterprise clients of this organization were conducted as well.

<sup>3</sup> The names of the organizations and their employees in this paper have been changed to protect their privacy.



loans, and housing loans as well. They focus on small enterprise development while offering larger loans for commercial purposes in addition to housing loans.

At the POD Fund we spent time with Mr. Adam Piton, a head loan officer at the fund. Rather than diving right into the topic of loan diversification during the interactions with Mr. Piton, we instead attempted to gain a better understanding of the business. Shortly after meeting with Mr. Piton, it became apparent that the POD Fund was in financial trouble and in dire need of new ideas. Mr. Piton commented that the POD Fund's seed capital came from a large government investment, and thus the only way that the organization would be able to stay alive and focus on its mandate would be through the utilization of revolving funds generated by the business. This same pool of funds was also, somehow, supposed to cover the salaries for employees like Mr. Piton, in addition to other general operating expenses. Revenue was to be generated on the basis of interest and payback; ideally, once a loan is closed, a new business would be funded. Nonetheless, Mr. Piton discussed the issue of extraordinarily high delinquency rates, due to non-compliant clients and their failing micro-businesses. "If this continues to persist," said Mr. Piton, "our business will suffer and our operational existence will be threatened without further funding." Unfortunately, Mr. Piton could not provide an exact delinquency rate, but we were able to gauge this ourselves through several client visits.

We spent time with Mr. Piton travelling throughout the island as he attempted to collect regular loan payments from the POD Fund clients for which he was responsible. One particular day, we visited 15 of Mr. Piton's clients. Only two of these individuals actually made their payments, yielding an effective delinquency rate of roughly 87%. Piton cited this as a reoccurring issue with the POD Fund despite recent efforts to devote more time and resources to their entrepreneurs. Additionally, we observed that most clients had entered saturated markets. Many of them, for instance, ran small, local grocery shops. Only one customer had successfully managed to keep personal expenses separate from business finances. The others utilized goods and space from their stores for personal reasons, rather than using those resources strictly for business, removing much needed capital from their microenterprises. With the complexity of their credit-based transactions, many struggled to keep proper accounting reports, further contributing to the high delinquency rates. We also learned that most of the borrowers had not received any formal education past primary school.

As Mr. Piton agreed, we conjectured that this lack of education inhibited efforts to alter poor business behaviors through seminars and workshops as clients struggled to comprehend and retain the lessons. Our initial meetings and client visits made it clear that the future of the POD Fund was in jeopardy.

Establishing a relationship with Mr. Piton enabled us to discuss his views on loan diversification as it relates to the POD Fund. His initial responses were fairly superficial, yet, as we spent more time with Mr. Piton, he revealed that the POD Fund was dealing with several challenges in loan collection, and accordingly, he felt diversifying the loan portfolio and offering different types of loan products to the same type of client described in the POD Fund's mandate might be risky. Not only would further monies be needed, but an increased amount of risk would have to be taken for loans for mortgages and consumption, given the prospect of various clients having an inability to pay them back. Thus, the POD Fund would have to seek clients using stricter guidelines in order to grant such loans, which could result in mission drift.

At ASL, we also spent time with Miss Linda Beaulieu, a chief risk officer at the organization. Much of the conversation with Miss Beaulieu revolved around the sustainability of MFIs given their high delinquency rates. We had similar discussions with Mr. Dante Stroques, the managing director of the SLDF.

Both the ASL and SLDF offered loans for various purposes. They disbursed loans for housing and large-scale commercial projects while continuing to lend to small microenterprises. We sought to gain insight into the specific requirements necessary to receive these loans not intended for small microenterprises. These MFIs were meant to serve people living at or below the poverty line, yet loans for housing and large-scale business traditionally require creditworthiness and collateral beyond what poor St. Lucians can be expected to have. Hence, we were curious to understand if ASL and SLDF had excluded the poorest people of St. Lucia from their non-microenterprise loan services. Both Miss Beaulieu and Mr. Stroques noted that the requirements for receiving such loans were indeed different than those for microloans. Qualifications included being employed for a certain number of years, having a set number of loan guarantors, and even being employed by the government, as such jobs tend to be the most stable. The traditional client of an MFI, however, does not typically meet these requirements.



Which leads us to question, why would an MFI offer these types of loans?

Miss Beaulieu and Mr. Stroques commented that although traditional MFI clients are not targeted to receive housing and large-business loans, they still directly benefit from the loans. Given the stricter employment and collateral requirements on non-microenterprise loans, recipients of these loans have higher repayment rates and much less delinquency. This serves as a “buffer” to poor yields associated with loans for high-risk microenterprises, allowing MFIs to “diversify” their portfolio and thus hedge risk. Mr. Stroques specifically emphasized that there is a good chance that his microenterprise arm at the Saint Lucia Development Foundation would not exist if he had not expanded its loan offerings.

Thus, *social profit* can increase with diversification, as a balanced loan portfolio can allow MFIs to maintain their efforts in offering risky microenterprise loans. These findings suggest support for the theory of diversification, as a firm that typically refrains from placing “all of its eggs in one basket,” can realize favorable results. The very purpose of microfinance is to provide loans to people who are so high risk that other financial institutions refuse to lend to them. Lenders could counter these high risks with equally high interest rates, as many MFIs now do in St. Lucia (and the rest of LAC), however burdensome interest rates are contrary to the humanitarian goals of microfinance. Still, it appears that MFIs must either integrate a profitable arm without humanitarian limitations into their organizations or accept inevitable insolvency due to a constant depletion of their funds via microloan delinquency. We recommend that MFIs in St. Lucia and the rest of the LAC use stable housing and large-business loans as a buffer for their microfinance endeavors. Although they will then have to dedicate a large portion of their labor efforts towards non-humanitarian focused loans, this revenue could allow MFIs to continue to serve the poor over long periods of time.

While the efforts of organizations like the POD Fund are admirable, there are clear limitations to the benefits that these MFI clients are receiving from their training sessions. Despite the workshops and regular follow-ups that the POD Fund offers, its clients still practice many of the poor business behaviors associated with high-risk borrowers. As aforementioned, we hypothesize that with the low levels of formal education most MFI clients have received, significantly more training services are necessary to successfully

teach borrowers positive business habits such as proper accounting, market analysis, and separate management of personal and business finances. Perhaps with more emphasis on these skills, MFIs could convert their high-risk clients to more qualified entrepreneurs, improving delinquency rates by increasing the likelihood of microenterprises succeeding. MFIs will likely have to lower the total number of microloans they distribute to be able to provide more sufficient, prolonged education and technical support to all of their clients, but this seems to be a necessary sacrifice to ensure the sustainability of these MFIs. With these recommendations, MFIs may be able to create a buffer against their higher risk lending through loan diversification while reducing that very risk through education and business support.

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# Operating on the Postcolonial Body (Politic): Stigmatization, HIV/AIDS, and Disabled Identity in Africa

Nicole Gervasio, *Bryn Mawr College*

*Nicole Gervasio, a native of Trenton, NJ, graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 2010, where she was a double major in English and Growth and Structure of Cities with concentrations in Creative Writing and Africana Studies. Through her Mellon Mays Fellowship and a Hanna Holborn Gray Research Grant, she has undertaken an extensive interdisciplinary study of African literature, sexuality, and tropes of shame and alienation on the continent. In the fall of 2011, Nicole plans to pursue a PhD in English with a focus on postcolonial and queer theory as a Beinecke Scholar.*

## Abstract

This article is a theoretical analysis of the effects of stigma on the postcolonial consciousness, written for a class at the University of Cape Town, entitled, “Thinking Africa Differently: Culture, Identity, and Globalization.”

In its conventional definition, stigmatization is examined as a process by which fear of bodily differences marginalizes whole groups of people based on their physical attributes, such as illness, race, and disability. However, few theorists have focused on how stigmatization conflates prejudice on bodies that bear multiple markers of difference. In displaying a myriad of supposedly negative differences, the individual body becomes symbolic of a more pervasive cultural terror. Disease and disability visibly mark the afflicted body as an *anti*-body, so to speak. The *anti*-body is contaminated and, theoretically, contagious. As outcasts, these *anti*-bodies are beyond the limits of political control. Nevertheless, politicians whose job it is to stabilize society attempt to neutralize the threat posed by such *anti*-bodies, supposedly for the well-being of the entire body politic. Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi (2005) have observed that “a universal unconscious fear of collapse and chaos” instigates citizens who remain free of stigma to “cope by projecting their worst fears onto identifiable out-groups” (808) like the disabled and HIV positive. The resulting project of othering arises not from a biological drive for survival but from “the unreflected imposition of a culture [of fear]” seeking to eradicate the contaminative presence of “dangerous,” or diseased, bodies (Fanon 1986: 144; 191).

According to Deacon, Stephney, and Prosalendis (2005), citizens of specific cultures and historical moments “construct their reality through socio-cultural processes . . . [and so] diseases acquire social meaning (influenced by biological factors) within a specific political and historical context” (9). In the context of postcolonial African countries,

where nation building is an ongoing project, the well-being and manpower of the body politic stand in as gauges for the strength of the nation. Stigma, particularly when applied to disability and HIV/AIDS in postcolonial Africa, exiles the unwell body from nationhood. In my rereading of stigmatization, those marked as *anti*-bodies, a term I coin to describe citizens who are classed as raced, disabled, and ill, are simultaneously *anti*-nation. In other words, stigmatization causes emotional affliction to the individual even as it intends to strengthen the supposedly nobler goal of nationhood. Stigmatization operates to circumscribe citizenship, punish sexuality, and conflate morality according to widely held patterns of prejudice, supposedly in the service of ensuring the stability and order of the nation as a whole.

Although social identity theory has established that “human beings have a fundamental need for self-esteem,” stigma, by definition, places individuals precariously on the limits of the state’s protection (Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi 2005: 812). While stigmatized individuals may be protected under the law in Africa, stigmatization itself is a social process occurring *outside* the law that withholds dignity from certain groups of people in order to maintain social control. In the context of African nation building, stigmatization arises once perceived threat infiltrates the collective imagination with two related fears: of “physical contagion” and “symbolic contagion,” a threat . . . to the well-being and legitimacy of the status quo” (808). Once fear of the disabled or diseased body saturates the collective imagination, a network of fears arises that symbolically associates “damaged” bodies with “dangerous” groups (810). Fear of bodily harm brought upon oneself for associating with the stigmatized conflates into an incontrovertible terror of an *anti*-body, the stigmatized person whose body signifies that harm. In a scramble to safeguard their own welfare—and the welfare of the vulnerable nation—unafflicted citizens “articulate their own group identities as different in key risk-reducing ways from groups stigmatized as deviant and ‘other,’ who are then blamed for having risk-enhancing characteristics” (Deacon, Stephney, and Prosalendis 2005: 7). Thus stigmatization becomes a tool for social control that is literally *anti*-body, or opposed to the endurance of the diseased body. Being labelled an *anti*-body results in not only the dehumanization of the body but also the depersonalization of a stigmatized person’s identity: by positing disability and disease as the endpoints of compassion, the nation grants recognition to the “potent sign of the morally disciplined, conventional self” as it persecutes and disenfranchises “the ‘unhealthy other’” (Ibid.).

In other words, one's physical (dis)ability to contribute to the project of nation building determines the extent to which stigma operates through the body by circumscribing citizenship. The term "disability" functions on multiple echelons of awareness since it "encompasses impairments that are visible to the eye and permanent, as well as those that are relatively hidden and episodic" (Craddock and Dorn 2001: 313). Disability itself then, like stigmatization, is a socially constructed category derived from negative reactions to physical differences, and biological impairment alone does not catalyze stigma (Sherry 2007: 10). Rather, stigmatization works to manifest potentially concealed abnormalities on the surface of the body through negative discourse. Indeed, disability discourse perceives disabled persons as materially dependent on the state, yet simultaneously institutes a culture of pity to relegate the identity of the disabled individual. Institutionalized pity, McDougall (2006) rationalizes, renders the "heroic" disabled person a "non-entity . . . [since] to be perceived in mythic proportions is not really to be perceived" (388). Even the act of elevating disabled citizens forcibly removes them from normal society and, consequently, renders them invisible.

Although the relationship between HIV/AIDS invisibility, disability, and postcoloniality may not be immediately apparent, the interface of visibility and disability permeates colonial discourse as "colonialism in Africa has been presented as 'disabling the colonized'" (Quayson cited in Sherry 2007: 14). To disable the colonized is to rescind the agency of subjugated peoples and mute their voices. According to this logic, colonialism is an ideological malady. Any physical disability that threatens the health and productivity of the fragile, newly liberated African nation threatens that nation's autonomy from colonial rule. As Lane (cited in Sherry 2007) has observed of deafness and the colonial impulse, the disabled citizen is assumed to be not only bodily but also intellectually deficient—negatively stereotyped and culturally exploited in the colonial paradigm. Rather than allowing the deaf to sustain a culture of their own, "hearing paternalism likewise sees its task as 'civilizing' its charges: restoring deaf people to society" (11).

However, in the case of HIV/AIDS stigma, the disease signifies more than the solely physical handicaps associated with deafness. HIV/AIDS stigma correlates with sexual and moral offenses that would supposedly weaken civilization beyond a merely biologically reproductive level. Punishing sexuality in response to such a perceived threat subsumes physical autonomy as the indicator of one's ability to reproduce the values of a healthy nation. AIDS stigma preys on the presumed faults of an "aberrant" sexuality

since, as Posel (2003) highlights, "aspirations to nationhood are intimately linked to the productive disciplining of sexuality as a force of order rather than chaos, life rather than death" (21). Since HIV/AIDS stigma functions solely on an invisible level, lacking physical markers more readily attributed to race and disability, invisibility actually "exacerbates stigmatization and encourages people to use secondary markers . . . to identify who has the condition [of HIV/AIDS]" (Deacon, Stephney, and Prosalendis 2005: 12).

During postcolonial nation building, raced, disabled, and potentially diseased bodies are more vulnerable to having secondary markers of HIV/AIDS infection ascribed to them through stereotypes, such as that of "the sexually promiscuous black male" (Craddock and Dorn 2001: 314). As Posel (2003) has observed, HIV/AIDS stigma parasitically feeds off the political implications of modern sexuality by combining its effects with other marginalized identities that "bear the imprints of other vectors of inequality and difference, such as race" (3). Fanon (1986) has described "the Negro [as] a phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety" whose body becomes marked because of its potential to elicit "a terror mixed with sexual revulsion" (151; 155). While race can cause sexual titillation as well as terror, disability contributes to "the creation of specific mental 'pathologies' and 'disorders' as a result of the colonial relationship" (Sherry 2007: 14). Although Fanon's (1986) analysis occurred before the onset of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, his sardonic description of the colonial stereotype that "Negroes . . . have tremendous sexual powers . . . with all the freedom they have in their jungles," demonstrates how stigmatization has often been manifest in ways that conflate derogatory racial and sexual stereotypes, such that the right to postcolonial nationhood was reserved for only some raced, sexed, and abled bodies (157).

Morality and an emphasis on sexuality in HIV/AIDS discourse get conflated as multiple marginalized identities become symbolically associated with behavior that is conventionally recognized as immoral. In the absence of bodily indicators of disease, perpetrators of HIV/AIDS stigma suspect certain racialized bodies of infection, and therefore, sexual depravity. Colonial discourse has instituted the stereotypes that "the Negro is the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions . . . [and] when one is dirty, one is black—whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness" (Fanon 1986: 177, 189). If modern sexuality, as Posel (2003) has posited, is "the sight of *right*" (5), then HIV/AIDS stigma intends to reinforce righteousness by punishing deviance. Stigmatization also operates

under the false presumption that its causes are noble insofar as it chastises *anti*-bodies for two reasons. First, *anti*-bodies have been physically defiled with terminal disease. But second, and perhaps more importantly, they have impurely abetted “the moral anxiety, social instability, and political contestation” that surface during the precarious nation-building process by harboring a supposedly catastrophic contagion (Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi 2005: 809).

Moreover, HIV/AIDS infection coalesces with stereotypes about promiscuity, bringing the ability of a maturing nation to reproduce civilized citizens into question. The risk of moral pandemonium inflates to epidemic proportions as “the virus becomes a marker of rampant sexuality which spreads contagion as much through the family and the community as through the body” (Posel 2003: 14). Meanwhile, persons infected with the virus become reduced to the inimical implications of their bodies as “the virus [is] a signifier of ‘bad’ sexuality” (15). Their individual sexualities become defunct as tools of nation building and devolve into “loci of moral shame . . . of ways of life which were fuelled by the old social order” of colonialism (Ibid.).

Historically, colonialism and misperceptions of power, government, and order on the continent have tinged and reinforced some Western perceptions of African sexuality. These biased and inaccurate perceptions have overshadowed the positive reality of African sexuality. In doing so, they have led to a Western dismissal of HIV/AIDS as the consequence of epidemic immorality, even though researchers like Epstein (2007) have found that “African men and women report roughly similar, if not fewer, numbers of lifetime partners than do heterosexuals in many Western countries” (51). Martina Morris has theorized that, contrary to stereotypes in the West that assume African sexuality is rampant and unchecked, HIV/AIDS has disseminated throughout Africa via “concurrent or simultaneous sexual partnerships . . . [which] are far more dangerous than serial monogamy, because they link people up in a giant web of sexual relationships” (55). According to Morris’s hypothesis, it is not promiscuity but rather a non-Western tradition of intimacy that may account for the prevalence of AIDS in Africa, “not because African people have so many sexual partners, but because they are more likely than people in other world regions to have a small number of concurrent long-term partners” (144). Yet, despite such scientifically grounded, objective explanations for the spread of the virus, Western societies continue to stigmatize black Africans as diseased and disabled to invoke the moral superiority of their own nations. Reasserting the moral stability of the African nation then

becomes paramount to African politicians’ agendas, and their disavowal on a political, if not legal, level incites in victims of the virus “a sense of inferiority, shame, and powerlessness that would later inhibit discussion of sexuality and paralyze the response to AIDS on much of the continent” (64).

Politicians’ solution to stifle dialogue signifies that the voices of HIV/AIDS survivors—whether disabled or not, white, black, or other—are not valued. Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi (2005) have characterized HIV/AIDS as “an ‘epidemic of signification’ at the same time as it is a biomedical epidemic” (809). In the context of this epidemic of signification, stigma towards the disabled or diseased body marks it as an unfit “vehicle for affirming the status quo,” incapable of fortifying the budding nation (Ibid.). As the dignity and status of people with HIV/AIDS depreciate in value, stigmatization “serves to support systems of social inequality and social difference and to reinforce the interests of powerful social actors seeking to legitimize their dominant status” (808). Indeed, as a catastrophe that is both continental and national in scope, the AIDS crisis in Africa imperils the very “politics of ‘nation building,’ as the debate about HIV/AIDS becomes a reflection on the identity and values of the national subject, along with the moral character of the nation” (Posel 2003: 20). This threat of lost authority extends not only to national government but also to other axial institutions of power, especially the Church, which seeks “to regain this lost moral authority . . . [by] vigorously linking sexual transgressions and AIDS with sin, immorality, and, sometimes, even the end of the world,” thus fanning the flames of prejudice (Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi 2005: 813). In the context of postcolonial nation building, a citizen’s ability to demonstrate sexual temperance—and the state’s ability to harness those incendiary sexual energies—are seen to generate what Posel (2003) terms “a productive, life-giving sexuality [that] inheres in the idea of a stable, orderly, and unified nation” (21).

The success of the nation-building project persistently emphasizes disability, sexuality, and morality, in part, due to the aims of postcolonial African nations to assert their dignity in the global, Westernized community. Ironically, this assertion comes at the same moment when many African leaders are quietly observing the debasement of their own stigmatized citizens. Rallying in solidarity against minority populations with HIV/AIDS can lend healthy citizens a false sense of security that they are upholding national integrity when their nation wishes to appear as “a healthy, growing, energetic, and disciplined body”—an image that the diseased or disabled body cannot uphold



(Posel 2003: 21). Thus, African political leaders repudiate the connection between HIV and AIDS and regulate people with the disease by sanctioning their stigmatization. However, their denials speak more to “repressed anxieties about race and the colonial sexualization of race, as well as . . . national unity, and the identity of the national subject” than to an intrinsic desire to persecute victims of HIV/AIDS or deny the gravity of the disease (17).

For example, Thabo Mbeki’s renunciation of the impact of HIV/AIDS stigma on South Africans, an estimated 5.7 million of whom were living with HIV or AIDS as of 2007, can be understood as endeavouring not to disavow citizens with AIDS deliberately but to dismantle the sort of primitive, racialized prejudices that Fanon described (UNAIDS 2008: 214). Mbeki’s national discourse demonstrates his idealization of the kind of citizen best fit to carry on the genesis of an African Renaissance—a citizen who swaggers with strength, authority, and confidence, and most importantly, who disease has not crippled (Campbell, Foulis, Maimane, and Sibiyi 2005: 809). Although his vision of the paragon-citizen excludes and stigmatizes the HIV/AIDS-infected body, Mbeki claimed that the interests of the post-apartheid nation were at heart of his strategy. In his view, his leadership called for erasing an “imagery of sexuality which [he] associates with the orthodox rendition of HIV/AIDS [as] the specter of the past: the colonial nightmare which imprisoned the black mind, enslaved the black body, and degraded the pursuit of pleasure” (Posel 2003: 24). Saddled with a range of stigmatic associations, the HIV/AIDS-infected body is paradoxically perceived as the perpetuator of racism and colonial domination in the new nation-state, becoming a “living symbol of all that had gone wrong in their country during the preceding decade” (Epstein 2007: 152). Since “the absence of disability within ethnic minorities is rhetorically employed as a measure of worthiness to be a citizen,” abjurations of AIDS—and, consequently, citizens with AIDS or disabilities, or those deemed *anti-body*—attempt to position post-independence, majority black African nations as stable political entities (Sherry 2003: 18). Subjugating certain citizens’ rights and dignity on the basis of conditions of disease or disability, even when done in an effort to combat institutionalized racism, create policies of stigmatization that replicate patterns of injustice and undermine the establishment of democratic nations.

The interface of race and disability/AIDS stigma in the project of nation building cannot be reduced to the realization of a healthy citizenry, but requires the “need to put our fingers on every sore that mottles the black uniform”—

whether those sores are the corporeal imprints of disease or the psychological impressions of injustice (Fanon’s 1986: 187). Rather than reverting to stereotypes of Africa as “the Sodom and Gomorrah depicted by 19 missionaries,” leaders and citizens alike must collaborate to create a public image that features Africans’ strength as citizens without conflating morality, invisibilizing disability, or further defacing HIV/AIDS (Epstein 2007: 146). The construction of a stable nation calls for a re-vision of the body as a reproductive tool for the body politic. Instead of fixating on its individual citizens’ bodily constitutions, the nation-building project must focus on preserving the legal constitution of those citizens’ human rights in order to ensure dignity for all far into the future.

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# “An Exhortation and Caution to Friends”: A Short Analysis of a Quaker Antislavery Treatise

Jason Craige Harris, *Wesleyan University*

*Jason Craige Harris, from West Haven, CT, graduated in 2009 from Wesleyan University, where he majored in Religion and African-American Studies. Jason is a recently matriculated master's candidate in Black Religion in the African Diaspora and a Marquand Scholar at Yale Divinity School. As an undergraduate fellow at Wesleyan's Center for the Humanities, he wrote an honors thesis that analyzed theological anthropologies and race discourses along political fault lines throughout U.S. evangelical history.*

## Abstract

Toward charting the complex relationships between slavery, abolition, and Christianity in North American history, this article examines the intertwined character of racial and religious ideas in an antislavery treatise set forth by Pennsylvania-settled Quakers in the late 17th century. It investigates both the provisions and the limitations of one instantiation of Quaker abolitionist discourse and more generally articulates a challenge to purportedly emancipatory visions and projects.

The large abolitionist movement that blazed trails throughout the U.S. during the late-18th and early-19th centuries derives in part from the early tireless efforts of the Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers.<sup>1</sup> This egalitarian marginalized religious group originated in England in the

1650s.<sup>2</sup> By 1685, droves of them had fled religious persecution in England to settle in Pennsylvania, a colony newly acquired by the Quaker William Penn. In contrast to their minority status in England, in Pennsylvania the Quakers found the space they needed to become a dominant religious and political force in the Middle Colonies. They retained their position as the largest religious group in Pennsylvania well into the 1720s.<sup>3</sup> Despite their newfound dominance and the increasing importance of slavery to colonial economic productivity and English (and to an extent, Pan-European) identity, many Quakers protested their co-religionists and co-colonialists' involvement in the trafficking of Africans.<sup>4</sup> Apparently their intimate acquaintance with the pain of alienation and their non-hierarchical inclusive theology were enough to secure the Quakers a spot in history as one of the earliest and most steadfast religiously animated abolitionist groups.

In addition to giving rise to well-known abolitionists like Anthony Benezet and the Grimke sisters,<sup>5</sup> Quakers collectively and individually produced some of the most incisive antislavery treatises. An analysis of one such 1693 treatise, a Jeremiad published nearly seventy-five years after the first Africans landed on American soil,<sup>6</sup> will reveal that the Quakers' antislavery position grew out of their understanding of Christian identity, of the Christian gospel and its God, and of moral rectitude.<sup>7</sup> Many Quakers questioned the religious professions of those who identified themselves as Christian

<sup>1</sup> Randall Balmer, Jon Butler, and Grant Wacker, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 234.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 81. Quakers settled in other North American colonies as well, but they had a uniquely dominant presence in Pennsylvania.

<sup>4</sup> In *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002), George M. Frederickson contends: “The notion that there was a single pan-European or ‘white’ race was slow to develop and did not crystallize until the eighteenth century,” 53. For him, slavery and the colonial encounter between lighter-skinned and darker-skinned peoples in the New World were foundational to the process whereby “whiteness” and “blackness” came into being as racialized symbolisms, a view that has not gone uncontested. Some studies attentive to the operation of race in early Christianity have considered the possibility that a concept of race may have existed in embryonic form before its crystallization in the modern period. In this sense, race, as modern readers know it, does not appear *ex nihilo* or as a radical discontinuity; rather, it emerges as a combination of old and new forms of signifying human difference and identity. In other words, race has a pre-life. As Denise Kimber Buell notes, it is possible that ancient ways of constructing difference “anticipate” or “haunt” us through our contemporary notions of race. See Buell's essay in Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Laura Nasrallah, *Prejudice and Christian Beginnings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 166–174.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on these abolitionists, see Maurice Jackson's *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) and Gerda Lerner's *The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> See Tim Hashaw, *The Birth of Black America: The First African Americans and the Pursuit of Freedom at Jamestown* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> In *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford U., 1974), Winthrop D. Jordan argues: “More than for other white Americans, slavery for them [Quakers] was a particularly crying defect in moral societal relations. In fact, Quakers, far more than other Americans, interested themselves in the Negro's condition after emancipation. They concentrated especially on education of blacks,” 139.



while supporting slavery. Because this “contradiction” was not universally recognized, it had to be defined in theological terms before it could be popularized. The debates among Quakers (and between Quakers and others) over the morality of slavery revealed contested notions of religious authenticity and authority. Ultimately these debates attest to the inextricability of race and religion, slavery and Christianity, in colonial America.<sup>8</sup>

For Quaker opponents of slavery, no less than the “Christianness” of society was at stake. Yet there were also plenty of Pennsylvania Quakers who actively supported slavery, as it redounded to their economic benefit.<sup>9</sup> While classic historical accounts of U.S. slavery tended to portray slavery as purely a Southern phenomenon, this picture was in fact accurate only for the 19th century. Earlier, slavery played a substantial legal, economic, and social role in some northern colonies.<sup>10</sup> For example, in Pennsylvania slaves were employed in a variety of jobs, from tanneries and copper mines to farms. As grain became a popular crop, more and more slaves were funneled to the Mid-Atlantic colonies to work the land.<sup>11</sup> According to John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “Between 1682 and 1760, slaves accounted for 20 percent to 30 percent of Philadelphia’s workforce, with most of the city’s slaveholders owning one or two slaves.”<sup>12</sup> Although slaveholding did not dominate Pennsylvania life as it did in other colonies, it did become increasingly important to Pennsylvania’s economy, at least during the 18th century.

The demands of colonial life in the “New World,” the particularities of Quaker theology, and Quakers’ estrangement from the dominant English identity gave rise to competing impulses within the Quaker community: slaveholding and abolitionist sensibilities existed side by side. It thus seems quite logical that the emergent Quaker antislavery movement would focus primarily on reforming Quakerism and upbraiding Quakers who participated in the trade of black bodies.<sup>13</sup> In 1688, a group of Quakers in

Germantown, PA “passed a formal remonstrance against slavery to the local meeting,” after encouraging their co-religionists to imagine what it would be like to be slaves, to have their freedom violently wrenched from them without the certainty of eventual manumission.<sup>14</sup> Apparently this local resolution was not enough to purge the Quaker community of slaveholding tendencies. Fearing expansion of slavery, the Society of Friends issued *An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping Negroes* on August, 13, 1693 at one of their monthly communal meetings and “recommended [it] to all our friends and brethren.”<sup>15</sup> Published by William Bradford, the official printer for New York and an early advocate for freedom of the press,<sup>16</sup> the exhortation has been attributed by some to George Keith, a particularly outspoken Scottish Quaker and preacher.<sup>17</sup> What makes Keith’s sole authorship less significant is that the document is written in the first person plural, which suggests the authority of a unified collective.<sup>18</sup> Such authority must have been considered necessary to convince the intended audience—other Quakers and possibly non-Quaker Christians—of the treatise’s validity. Because the actual authorship cannot be determined, I shall refer simply to “the authors.”

The document begins with a reference to the universal salvific work of Jesus Christ and explicitly names “Negroes” as worthy recipients of that grace. The authors assert that blacks are as capable of being saved as “White Men,” that they are potential bearers of God’s image.<sup>19</sup> This assertion overtly humanizes blacks, a gesture with significant implications for a population often viewed as non-human and soulless, and therefore incapable of salvation. It reduces the anthropological and religious distance between white and black people on which the slaving enterprise relied for justification. What is more, it challenges the reality and morality of white domination during the colonial period. And it unsettles the internal coherence of white domination’s logic, which built itself on the co-constituting categories of race, religion, and political economy. Describing

<sup>8</sup> For a theoretical analysis of the co-constitutive character of race and religion, see Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister’s edited volume *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Maurice Jackson, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 69.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 69–70.

<sup>13</sup> Jordan, *The White Man’s Burden*, 113.

<sup>14</sup> Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978), 111.

<sup>15</sup> George Keith, *An Exhortation and Caution to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping Negroes* (New York: William Bradford, 1693).

<sup>16</sup> For more information on William Bradford and conflicts over freedom of the press, see Leonard W. Levy’s *Freedom of Speech and Press in Early America: Legacy of Suppression* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963).

<sup>17</sup> Wikipedia, “George Keith,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Keith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Keith) (accessed March 26, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> It is likely that Keith drafted the treatise on behalf of the collective after they had vested him with the authority to do so. In order to ensure that it was appropriate, each individual member at the monthly meeting probably read the treatise, or the group had someone read it aloud so all could hear and demur, or offer their conditional or unconditional approbation.

<sup>19</sup> Keith, *An Exhortation and Caution*, 1.

this prevailing conflation of racial, religious, and political factors, Winthrop D. Jordan contends that “the terms *Christian*, *free*, *English*, and *white* were for many years employed indiscriminately as metonyms” in the North American colonies.<sup>20</sup> The authors challenge this metonymic construction and the all-too-easy association between “heathen,” “slave,” “African,” and “black” that served as its corollary. If the most fundamental meaning of “black” could be shown to mean something other than “heathen” or “slave,” the “naturalness” of black slavery would be significantly called into question. A shift between seeing black slavery as natural, to seeing it as having been *naturalized* by particular forces, would undermine the symbolic hegemony of whiteness, and slaveholding could come to represent moral transgression.

In articulating new assumptions about religious, racial, and political identity, this group of Quakers conceptually makes possible an alliance between God and blacks, by extension denying any automatic alliance between God and whites. They posit that God is not just God in general, but God in particular, the potential God of black slaves and non-slaves, as well as of white people, so long as they oppose the immorality that is slavery. This contextualized and politicized God comes into view quite clearly toward the end of the opening paragraph, which asserts that Jesus

came not to destroy men’s Lives, but to save them, nor to bring any part of Mankind into outward Bondage, Slavery, or Misery, not . . . to detain them, or hold them therein, but to ease and deliver the Oppressed and Distressed, and bring into Liberty both inward and outward.<sup>21</sup>

In presenting a God that may seem to us like a prefiguration of the God of 20th-century liberation theologies,<sup>22</sup> the authors make clear to their audience that God is on the side of the oppressed, not on the side of the oppressor. This Quaker understanding of the Christian God positions Jesus’s mission on the earth as oriented toward securing both inward (spiritual) and outward (physical and political) freedom for all people. Any condition of bondage, whether spiritual or physical, is antithetical to Jesus’s mission, and those who resist his mission cannot count themselves among his followers. For these Quakers, true or authentic Christians cannot be slaveholders, because slaveholding stands in opposition to the very nature of God and

his love. As they write, “all faithful Friends should discover themselves to be true Christians by having the Fruits of the Spirit or Christ, which are Love, Mercy, Goodness, and Compassion towards all in Misery.”<sup>23</sup> Here Christian identity is emancipated from racial and political identities and linked instead to actions and their morality. The character of one’s action (or inaction) determines the authenticity of one’s Christian identity. Said differently, performative ontology trumps supposed biology (white skin) and political identity (free or English).

The document further portrays a Jesus who actively liberates people from all forms of slavery, not a Jesus who passively resists or simply absents himself from directly participating in slavery. By extension, the authors challenge their religious peers to work toward freeing Quaker territories of slavery. Other Quakers should not “buy any Negroes, unless it were on purpose to set them free,” and if they have already bought slaves, they should manumit them after a “reasonable time of service,” in the meantime, the authors strongly suggest, teaching them to read and giving them a Christian education.<sup>24</sup> Normative religious practice, for these Quakers, includes antislavery activism, which they link to Christianizing and educating slaves. Part of being a Quaker, a Christian, is to “ease and relieve them [slaves], and let them free of their hard Bondage.” In this way slaves will experience the Christian witness of these “true” Quakers and find the Christian faith desirable. Antislavery activism thus becomes a marker of Christianity’s credibility; conversely, the enslaving enterprise delegitimizes Christianity. In fact, the authors maintain that “to enslave them and their Posterity to the end of the World, we judge is a great hindrance to the spreading of the Gospel.”<sup>25</sup> The “true” Gospel is inextricably bound to “true” Christian love. To the authors of the treatise, slavery is robbery “of the highest Nature” because it involves the “evil Practices of Man-stealing” and transgression of the “Golden Rule and Law, To do to others what we would have others do to us.” In sum, slavery is sin and abolition is love, a notion that explicitly includes black people in the sphere of Quaker altruism and human consideration. At the heart of this idea of antislavery work is evangelism, understood as the highest expression of a Christian’s love for the souls of the non-converted. Slaves need to be freed in order to be *really*, that is, spiritually, freed—the instrumentalization of political freedom for spiritual purposes.

<sup>20</sup> Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1968), 97.

<sup>21</sup> Keith, *An Exhortation and Caution*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> For more information on the various strands of 20th-century liberation theology, see Miguel de la Torre’s edited volume *Handbook of U.S. Theologies of Liberation* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

In framing their antislavery activism as a religious and moral “duty” inspired by Christian love, the authors are stripping slavery of the “othering” central to its functioning and doing so through language meant to incite its readers emotional and religious sensibilities. They write, “Therefore as we and our Children would not be kept in perpetual Bondage and Slavery against our Consent, neither should we keep them in perpetual Bondage and Slavery against their Consent.”<sup>26</sup> When they challenge their readers to see that they share a common humanity with black slaves, they are contesting the monopoly of whiteness as the representation of the human. They invoke the sacred authority of the Bible, pointing to scriptural passages in Deuteronomy that instruct the ancient Israelites on the manners in which they should (and should not) treat “the Strangers,” those with whom they do not share kinship, but to whom they must nonetheless show mercy and kindness.<sup>27</sup>

In a final overt swing at the religious authenticity of slaveholders, the authors contend that “It would be better for all such as fall short of the Practice of those Infidels, to refuse the Name of a Christian, that those Heathen and Infidels may not be provoked to blaspheme against the blessed name of Christ.”<sup>28</sup> The authors end this section with a powerful prophecy of the divine judgment that awaits slaveholders if they do not repent.<sup>29</sup> The authors boldly declare: “Surely the Lord doth behold their Oppressions and Afflictions, and will further visit for the same by his righteous and just Judgments, except they break off their sins by Repentance.”<sup>30</sup> Corroborating such a strong statement, they end the treatise with a quotation from Revelation, the final, apocalyptic book of the Protestant Bible: “He that leads into Captivity shall go into Captivity.”<sup>31</sup> Although the precise nature of this latter captivity is left vague, it is *captivity* nonetheless, imposed by an angry God on the transgressor, who has been forewarned of the consequences of sin. At the very least, this captivity can be interpreted in spiritual terms. The implication is that slaveholders are themselves enslaved, slaves to the sin of slaveholding, which brings its own noxious rewards.

Religion provides these antislavery authors with the otherworldly authority they need to contest a racialized

socio-economic practice they find reprehensible and to infuse that contestation with cosmic significance. They portray slaveholders as positioned against the omnipotent God of the universe, a notion that could cause the most ardent of slaveholders to tremble and to think twice, if only for a moment. At least imaginatively and temporarily, slaveholding whiteness is held up as immoral vis-à-vis both “authentically” Christian non-slaveholding whiteness and enslaved (Christian or non-Christian) blackness. Slaveholding whiteness narratively *becomes* the quintessential representation of ontological alterity, in sorer need of redemption and at greater risk of judgment than non-Christian blackness. Looking at these racial, religious, and political constructs today, we can see that they have always been fundamentally interdependent, making sense only when seen in relation to each other. These categories infuse each other with constantly shifting meanings, which, in turn, shape the categories themselves.<sup>32</sup>

Although these early antislavery advocates were undoubtedly progressive for their time, their arguments were not without limitations. Admittedly, they did not “fix” the heathen status of slaves as they called for their conversion, nor did they relegate slaves to a category outside the human. Yet, they still saw slaves as objects in need of conversion or spiritual freedom. This view implied a conceptual order in which black slaves oscillated between being conceived of as full members of the human family endowed with the *Imago Dei* and objects in need of Quaker benevolence. In focusing on white people who are enslaving, white people who are manumitting, and white people who are evangelizing, the treatise says nothing about the political and spiritual agency of enslaved Africans themselves. Why are enslaved Africans cast as passive recipients of white benevolence or white cruelty? A cynical response might be that if Christian identity was conceptually tied to antislavery activism for these Quakers, perhaps they needed someone to free in order to feel spiritually free themselves, in effect, to feel “Christian.” For better or worse, the impulse to free another from perceived bondage has often been a manifestation of power, replacing one hierarchy with another, perhaps less vicious, one.<sup>33</sup> The act of freeing another certainly reveals

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on the American Jeremiad and the genre of prophecy as political speech, see George Shulman, *American Prophecy: Race and Redemption in American Political Culture* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 2008) and David Howard-Pitney, *The African American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> For more information on the inherent instability of social constructions and their reliance on unconscious human participation, see Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, Anchor: 1969).

<sup>33</sup> Here I have in mind Chandra Mohanty’s critique of the problematic quest of Western white feminists “to free” Third World women, who they perceive to be oppressed in unprecedented ways. See Mohanty’s famous essay, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” in Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1991), 51–80.

the power of those doing the freeing, but the very *need* to free—to be the benefactors—might also show their weakness, their lust for power and moral superiority.<sup>34</sup>

What is more, the antislavery Quakers' acceptance of the use of slaves in their community for a "reasonable" time of service curiously leaves that word undefined, open to varied interpretations. Such ambiguity has often favored the powerful and dulled the sharpness of prophetic critique. Like the 20th-century's school desegregation "with all deliberate speed," gradual emancipation not only served the economic aims of Euro-Americans, it also privileged their psychological interests over those of the black minority.<sup>35</sup> The cultural logic underlying these political projects has been that black people are not ready for, not worthy of, freedom and civil rights. It seems that when black people have not been defined as non-human, they have often been cast as sub-human.

Ultimately, slaves represented for these well-intentioned Quakers a kind of spiritual deficiency that supported the Quakers' self-conception as spiritually adequate Christians. Even though these Quakers destabilized the "Black=Heathen, White=Christian" formula, they essentially reinforced it in their evangelistic and antislavery quests. Black slaves were creatures in *need* of spiritual and physical freedom, and antislavery white Quakers could facilitate both. Blackness gets signified as lack and spiritual unfreedom, a certain kind of whiteness as abundance and spiritual freedom. Antislavery activism provides the symbolic conditions that allow these new racialized meanings to emerge, through religious language. Perhaps ironically, in constructing a God antithetical to any form of slavery—spiritual or physical—Quakers set the stage for a certain Christian triumphalism. They circumscribed the spiritual space in which Blacks could operate and metaphorically "shackled" their spiritual and physical freedom to a particular God, whom they may or may not have wanted to serve. Thus antislavery white Quakers ensured their own ability to dictate the terms on which, and the particular cosmic purpose for which, black freedom should be secured. Here we have a particularly subtle manifestation of racialized religious power. In the end, this treatise tells us more about the moral imaginaries of late 17th-century Quakers than it does about real Africans.

This case study suggests that liberationist projects generally have limitations and often re-inscribe at least some of the dynamics that they set out to eradicate. Hegemonic structures prove resistant to justice making. Indeed, the colonial and genocidal impulses embedded within these structures have often found their way into the resistance projects that ostensibly form in opposition to them.<sup>36</sup> What remains is the need for justice-seeking collectives to recognize and seriously reckon with these impulses through a thorough decolonization of their liberation projects.

<sup>34</sup> Traci West argues that "blacks occupy the status of a perpetual mission project within Christian consciousness, and whites (and Europeans) are seen as the central actors shaping the meaning of Christianity," that blacks often function as "receptacle[s] of [white] benevolences." *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 60.

<sup>35</sup> For more information on the complex history of American abolitionism, see Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> For trenchant analyses of the imperialistic strands in many emancipatory movements, see Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000) and Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005).



# Conflicting Reports: The Role of Foreign Correspondents in Shaping Coverage of Wartime China

Destin K. Jenkins, *Columbia University*

*Destin Jenkins, a native of Queens, NY, is a 2010 graduate of Columbia University who majored in History. Destin will begin the doctoral program in U.S. and Chinese History at Stanford University.*

## Abstract

This work is part of a larger project that examines black American perceptions of China from the dawn of the 20th century to the outbreak of WWII.<sup>1</sup> It builds upon the recent work of historians who have delved deep into the field of black international history (Plummer 1996, Kelley 2004, Von Eschen 1997, and Horne 2005, 2008). Despite these efforts, there remains a dearth of scholarship examining African-American perceptions of East Asia (but see Kearney 1998, Allen Jr. 1994, Gallicchio 2000, Prashad 2007, and Kelley 1999). This article extends this line of research by examining how conflicting ideological perspectives helped to shape black American opinion towards China during the early stages of the Second Sino-Japanese War. This article treats newspapers as political agents in making international events accessible to local populations. I am interested in the role of foreign correspondents for the *Chicago Defender* and *Pittsburgh Courier* in shaping coverage of wartime China during the early stages of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). The two periodicals presented radically different portrayals of the war. I argue that two radical, Marxist-leaning correspondents built upon the *Defender*'s pre-existing support of China. The *Courier*, on the other hand, ignored China's travails and apologized for Japanese imperialism. One explanation for this divergence in coverage can be attributed to W.E.B. Du Bois's position as a journalist for the *Courier* and his longstanding, unabashed support for Japan.

In *The African American Encounter with Japan & China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945*, Marc Gallicchio traces black perceptions of Japan and China. He argues that while there were certainly those who criticized Japan's imperial ambitions in the Far East, for the most part black Americans remained insensitive to China's plight until

the early years of World War II. He concludes that from 1905–1945, “many black internationalists continued to defend Japanese actions, and to varying degrees they argued that Japan's victories benefited all of the darker races, including the Chinese.”<sup>2</sup>

However, Japan's earlier image as the “Champion of the Darker Races” was a historic relic by the early 1930s. Indeed, Japan's invasion of “Manchuria in 1931 and growing aggression in China seemed to make Tokyo an unlikely ally in the worldwide liberation struggle of oppressed colored peoples.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Gallicchio's suggestion that Japan's image remained intact until the early stages of WWII or that the fear of being charged with sedition for supporting Japan that led African-Americans to the “rediscovery of China,” seem to be seriously inaccurate.<sup>4</sup> Although many African-Americans stressed the role of race in international affairs, they were not so naïve as to believe that Japan was fighting for the so-called “colored races.” This complexity is demonstrated in the competing coverage of events in East Asia in two African-American newspapers—the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

Between the *Courier*'s first political commentary on China in 1911 and 1937, the paper routinely used orientalist rhetoric to describe China.<sup>5</sup> We can better understand the *Courier*'s coverage of China by examining Edward Said's discussion of 19th-century Orientalism. Indeed, from the 19th century onward, “a formidable mechanism of omniscient definitions would present itself as the only one having suitable validity for your discussion.”<sup>6</sup> Words such as “stationary,” “despotism,” and “superstitious” pervaded nearly all references to China.

In many ways, the *Courier* was no different from American mainstream media and popular opinion. Early in its coverage, the *Courier* appropriated orientalist rhetoric to show that the rise of China would benefit all non-white peoples. However, the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War served as another example of a continuing tendency for the *Courier* to characterize “Ancient China” as a once great empire that “stopped progressing, became stagnant, and dormant.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My entire thesis can be read online in digital form as part of the Academic Commons. [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/resource-library/Jenkins\\_thesis.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/history/resource-library/Jenkins_thesis.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Marc Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter with Japan & China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895–1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000, 85.

<sup>3</sup> William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, 144.

<sup>4</sup> Gallicchio, 132–136.

<sup>5</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, “Afro-American Cullings,” June 10, 1911.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, 156.

<sup>7</sup> *Pittsburgh Courier*, “Don't Be a China,” Sept. 18, 1937.

The *Courier's* September 1937 political cartoon and caption depicted the invasion of China by Japan's "death DEALING" aerial and ground attacks on Chinese streets and countryside, "wrecking fair cities, [and] KILLING indiscriminately." The moral, however, was that China's continuing indolence brought about its own destruction. The message to black Americans was clear: "Don't be a China."<sup>8</sup>

According to the *Chicago Defender*, by contrast, the Sino-Japanese War revealed "determined Chinese resistance" to the invading Japanese. The *Defender* reported that in north and south China, "Chinese troops are not only holding their own against combined attacks led by the Japanese army, navy, and air force, but have penetrated the Japanese lines in several places."<sup>9</sup> In short, the *Defender* presented China as a model of resistance, not a stagnant country.

From the 1920s, the *Defender* saw China as a global ally against the formidable forces of capitalism, racism, and imperialism. During China's protest against Christianity and imperialism during the 1920s, the *Defender*, among others, began to notice that, in many ways, Chinese demands for self-determination were akin to those of black Americans. The radicalization of the *Defender* during the 1930s further developed its favorable coverage of China. Writing from the Soviet Union, communist columnist Homer Smith who adopted the penname "Chatwood Hall," provided readers with the image of a determined China fighting against Japanese militarists.<sup>10</sup> Smith continued the socialist critique of world affairs put forward by socialists A. Phillip Randolph and Chandler Owen during the late 1910s and 1920s.

Homer Smith's articles certainly served multiple purposes. Smith not only increased African-American exposure to communism during a time of global economic depression, but also helped dispel the notion that Japan was a "friend of all colored races." Instead, Homer Smith highlighted Japanese military defeats in the Shangdong region and urged his readers to support China in its protests against imperialist exploitation.<sup>11</sup>

In May 1938, Smith reported that Chinese resistance had translated into military success. The Japanese army had miscalculated. Smith pointed to the irony of Japan's justification for invading China. Even if Japan attacked China "merely

to make her have a backbone and stand up like a man," an explanation Smith rejected, the Japanese military had their expectations fulfilled. Numerous cities and provinces witnessed the "boomerang" effect, with scenes of Chinese forces launching successful coordinated attacks. China's strengthened backbone resulted in Japanese troops "on the run and furiously yelling to the rear for reinforcements."<sup>12</sup>

The *Defender* provided a visual to complement Smith's description of the "boomerang" effect in China. A May 1938 political cartoon depicted a Japanese soldier being bombarded with swords in one of China's remote provinces. The image and caption echoes the theme of a "united Chinese people" rising up "to defend their national existence and independence from Japanese aggression and plunder."

### CHINA RISES UP AGAINST JAPS



"China Rises Up Against Japs," *Chicago Defender*, May 14, 1938

Still, it is incorrect to assume that Smith was single-handedly responsible for raising awareness around Japanese imperialism. The *Defender's* foreign editor Metz T.P.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "Jap Generals Slain by Own Men in China," Sept. 18, 1937.

<sup>10</sup> Homer Smith, *Black Man in Red Russia, A Memoir by Homer Smith*, 1. Homer Smith adopted the penname "Chatwood Hall" as a student in the School of Journalism at the University of Minnesota during the late 1920s. Smith lived in the Soviet Union from 1932 to 1946.

<sup>11</sup> Chatwood Hall, "A Column from Moscow," *Chicago Defender*, April 28, 1934.

<sup>12</sup> Chatwood Hall, "Jap Invaders Face Defeat in N. China," *Chicago Defender*, May 14, 1938.



Lochard further exposed Japan's imperial ambitions and alliance with fascist Italy. His column, "Panorama of World News," exposed the contradictions of imperialism in various nations in an attempt to show black Americans that they had a stake in the colonial uprisings against foreign rule.

The simultaneous struggle of China and Ethiopia against imperialist Japan and Italy allowed the *Defender* to stress the "counterpart of Ethiopia in China."<sup>13</sup> For Lochard, both Ethiopia and China could point to a rich and long history, were the victims of imperialism, and might emerge from the conflict as more unified nations.

Lochard emphasized the fact that China and Ethiopia were the victims of a 50-year history of imperialist exploitation. While it is true that by 1933, the *Chicago Defender* entertained the idea that Japan could "uplift" China, renewed Japanese attacks reaffirmed what the *Defender* had observed some ten years earlier: "Japan has no altruistic motive in her invasion of China." In the context of African-American outrage over Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, coupled with the revelation that Japan would recognize Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in exchange for Italy's recognition of Japan's puppet state in Manchuria, Lochard observed that Japan was only concerned with expanding its territory and increasing its economic prosperity. Mussolini, "likewise, doesn't give a damn about the Ethiopians."<sup>14</sup>

Despite China and Ethiopia's travails, Lochard found hope in their respective struggles. Lochard argued that unity must be a key ingredient if China and Ethiopia were to emerge as stronger nations. Just two months after he stressed the need for unity in China, Lochard pointed to communist resistance against Japan as a sign that "a new China is being recreated." As he had hoped for in Ethiopia, foreign aggression brought together competing groups who allied themselves for the preservation of the nation. Lochard admired the ability of the communist party to transform "the whole of the Chinese people" into political agents. As empowered citizens in a newly unified nation, the Chinese entered "with self-confidence and determination into the great historical fight against Japanese imperialism."<sup>15</sup>

The significance of the *Defender's* support for China is twofold. It reveals that one of the most influential black newspapers supported China and saw Japan as an imperialist nation no different from Britain and the United States. Most

importantly, the *Defender* recognized the parallels not just between the black American and Chinese struggle, but also between African-Americans and the colonized, non-white world. In this way, African-Americans viewed themselves—namely in facing dilapidated housing, economic inequality, and second-class citizenship—as colonized subjects.

The *Defender* used its coverage of the Sino-Japanese War to show its readers that those who supported China were a part of the colonial collective. Inclusion in the colonial collective was predicated on support for the Chinese boycott against Japanese goods. The *Defender* highlighted boycotts launched by Mexican labor unions against Japan<sup>16</sup> and statements made by India's future Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that "a boycott of Japan is justifiable."<sup>17</sup> To show that African-Americans also participated in the protest against Japan, the *Defender* included a short description of the nearly 28,000 African-American members of the New England Conference of Negro Youth who "enthusiastically endorsed resolutions supporting . . . a boycott of Japanese goods."<sup>18</sup> Thus, African-Americans, along with protesters in Mexico, India, and other colonized nations, stood in solidarity with China.

As we have seen, the *Defender* embraced Marxist and socialist ideas. Ultimately, however, many of its writers supported China not merely because that nation was struggling against a capitalist invader, but also because in many ways China's social and political situation was seen to mirror that of African-Americans. Segregation in Shanghai, a long-standing absence of unification, and China's struggle for self-determination allowed these African-Americans to conclude, "Whoever helps China, helps humanity, freedom, and democracy."<sup>19</sup>

Considering the opinion put forward by the *Defender*, how, then, does one account for the *Courier's* aforementioned indifference towards China and support for Japan during that nation's imperialist invasion in 1937? The answer can be found by examining W.E.B. Du Bois's position as a columnist for the *Courier* during the late 1930s. Du Bois extended his "talented tenth" philosophy to the international sphere, viewing Japan as engaging in "benevolent uplift." As a result, he frequently denigrated China's protests against Japan.

<sup>13</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "See Counterpart of Ethiopia in China," March 8, 1936.

<sup>14</sup> Lochard, "Panorama of World News," *Chicago Defender*, Aug. 28, 1937.

<sup>15</sup> Lochard, "Panorama of World News," *Chicago Defender*, Oct. 30, 1937.

<sup>16</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "Mexican Workers Boycott Jap Goods," Feb. 12, 1938.

<sup>17</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "India Goes to Support of Chinese," Oct. 23, 1937.

<sup>18</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "Support Anti-Japan Boycott," May 14, 1938.

<sup>19</sup> *Chicago Defender*, "The Japanese Blockade," June 8, 1939.

During the late 19th century, Du Bois, under the influence of German Romanticism, developed a ranking system in order to reconcile his strong belief in European notions of progress with the undeniable terror caused by European imperialism. If a nation engaged in uplift, Du Bois ignored the consequences and saw destruction as necessary for the greater good of the “backward” population. Indeed, Du Bois articulated this terminology as early as 1897.<sup>20</sup> It was during this period in which Du Bois built upon Alexander Crummell’s notion of a “talented tenth:” the need for “the Negro race, like all races” to be “saved by its exceptional men.”<sup>21</sup> Following the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, Du Bois saw Japan as a “civilized,” “colored nation.” This perspective allowed him to ignore Japanese imperialism in China by extending the idea of the “talented tenth” to the global sphere, seeing Japan as being best equipped to uplift the Asian masses.

Du Bois’s trip to China and Japan in late 1936 reaffirmed his admiration for Japan and ambivalence towards China. A few months before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, his tour of Asia took him to Shanghai, the “epitome of the racial strife, economic struggle, [and] the human paradox of modern life.” While in Shanghai, Du Bois was reminded of Mississippi: administrative sectors policed by white officers, ports operated by white businessmen, political institutions controlled by white elected officials; the meekness of Chinese men during their encounters with white children. Du Bois found these scenes depressingly similar to conditions in the American South.<sup>22</sup>

Du Bois carried not only his memories of racial oppression but also his elitist leanings to Asia. His bourgeois preoccupations are underscored when one juxtaposes his descriptions of Chinese daily life with that of Japan. “Above all,” declared Du Bois, “the Japanese are courteous, neat, prompt, and marvelously efficient.” He provided a description of a Japanese home, one in which “no dust or dirty feet ever penetrates.” Most importantly, Du Bois’s observation of Japanese efficiency points to his portrayal of Japan as the “talented tenth.” Du Bois concluded that because of their awareness of time, the Japanese “get things done, and done right.” Their determined work ethic made them most fit to challenge white world rule.<sup>23</sup>

Although the *Courier* maintained an independent stance vis-à-vis international affairs, Du Bois’s description of Japanese efficiency undoubtedly resonated with *Courier*’s founder Robert L. Vann. For much of his life, Vann remained committed to the belief that “hard work would elevate oneself and one’s race.” In 1937, the “*Courier* abandoned its aloofness to applaud Japan’s humbling of the West in China.”<sup>24</sup> By 1939, the *Courier*’s executive editor P.L. Prattis completely ignored Japan’s imperialist policy towards China.<sup>25</sup>

### Conclusion

It goes without saying that at no time did there exist a monolithic opinion among African-Americans towards China. More radical newspapers such as the *Defender* became one of the earliest critics of Japanese imperialism and presented China as not only fighting for their own right to self-determination, but also as a model of resistance for African-Americans. The *Courier*’s commitment to the “uplift ideology,” by contrast, built upon Orientalist conceptions of China. This perspective allowed the *Courier* to reject China and see the nation as responsible for its own undoing. Indeed, Sept. 18, 1937 revealed the culmination of this conflicting coverage of China in the *Defender* and *Courier*’s radically different interpretations of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

More broadly, by examining the African-American encounter with China, we can better understand the long civil rights movement of the north. As recent scholars have shown, African-Americans living in northern cities saw the connections between 1960s black America and the third world.<sup>26</sup> Through an analysis of African-American perceptions of China between 1900 and 1939, we discover that the 1960s critique of the black community as a colony has roots that can be traced to 1920s Chicago and Harlem, among other northern cities. Indeed, throughout the 20th century, African-Americans have always had an international perspective, which helped clarify and develop methods of protest against racism at home.

<sup>20</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Conservation Races,” in *The Oxford W.E.B. Du Bois Reader*, ed. Eric Sundquist. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 42.

<sup>21</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Talented Tenth,” in *The Negro Problem*, ed. Booker T. Washington, et al., Amherst: Humanity Books, 2003, 33.

<sup>22</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, Feb. 13, 1937.

<sup>23</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, “Forum of Fact and Opinion,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, March 20, 1937.

<sup>24</sup> Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter*, 79.

<sup>25</sup> Gallicchio, *The African American Encounter*, 79–87.

<sup>26</sup> For scholarship on the Northern Civil Rights movement, see works by Martha Biondi, Matthew Countryman, Peniel Joseph, Robert Self, and Thomas Sugrue, among others.

# Remembering *Beloved* and Discovering *A Mercy*: The Roles of Patriarchy, Capitalism, and Race During Slavery

Kimberly Love, *Tuskegee University*

*Kimberly Love was born in Huntsville, AL, and received her bachelor of arts from Tuskegee University in English in 2010. She is currently pursuing a PhD in English at the University of Virginia with a focus in African-American Literature.*

## Abstract

“Remembering *Beloved* and Discovering *A Mercy*,” an excerpt from a research paper, questions Toni Morrison’s decision to revisit slavery in her latest novel, *A Mercy*, 21 years after *Beloved* was published. The complete research analyzes and classifies several events in the novel as genuine or non-genuine acts of mercy based upon Paulo Freire’s notion of “false generosity” in *Pedagogy of Oppressed*. The research concludes that in *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison illustrates genuine and non-genuine acts of mercy to not only explore the effects of slavery, but to explore three main facets of the institution of slavery that still lie at the underbelly of America’s foundation: patriarchy, capitalism, and the construction of race.

In 1987, Toni Morrison published a gripping tale of family, love, and infanticide during slavery in her novel, *Beloved*. The novel is a fictional portrayal of Margaret Garner, an actual slave who killed one of her daughters in an unsuccessful attempt to kill all of her children to prevent them from being forced back to slavery. Through this infanticide, Morrison explores the psychological impact of slavery on mothers through the reincarnation of *Beloved*, the murdered daughter of Sethe who represents the fictional Margaret Garner. For years, scholars have delved into the pages of *Beloved* to explore how slavery impacted the lives of slaves, especially the slave family. Twenty-one years later, in 2008, Morrison revisits slavery in her newest novel, *A Mercy*, this time set in the North during slavery’s inception, to again explore the institution of slavery.

In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, Toni Morrison describes her purpose as a novelist:

My job becomes how to rip that veil drawn over ‘proceedings too terrible to relate.’ The exercise is also critical for any person who is black, or . . . marginalized . . . for historically, we were seldom invited to participate in the discourse even when we were its topic (191).

Morrison’s intention as a novelist is not merely to recount stories. Similarly, Morrison’s intention for writing *A Mercy* was not to revisit slavery simply to explore the same

psychological effects of slavery and to reiterate the same horrors that were illustrated in *Beloved*. Morrison uses her position as a novelist to expose realities, particularly those that have been left largely unexplored or falsely explored. Morrison revisits slavery to tell a new story with a new, relevant purpose.

Morrison’s objective in writing *A Mercy* can be determined by considering the social atmosphere in which the novel was written and published. *A Mercy* was released during a time where the relevance of race and slavery has been called into question. For example, in an article titled, “End of the Black American Narrative,” also published in 2008, the novelist, professor, and theorist Charles Johnson asserts that “a new century calls for new stories grounded in the present, leaving behind the painful history of slavery and its consequences” (1). Today’s black culture, according to Johnson, is beyond slavery, and our discourses should reflect that. Johnson’s article expresses the sentiments of many Americans and reflects the atmosphere in which *A Mercy* was written and published. Morrison’s decision to write *A Mercy* during a prevalent post-race and post-slavery social atmosphere was not a coincidence. It can be assumed then, that Morrison’s novel addresses the idea that America is beyond the history of slavery, because Morrison herself stated that her purpose as a novelist is to lift veils that blind the truth. In *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison not only explores the effects of slavery, but she explores three main facets of the institution of slavery that still lie at the underbelly of America’s foundation: patriarchy, capitalism, and the construction of race.

The role of patriarchy during slavery is primarily illustrated on Jacob’s plantation in *A Mercy*. Jacob’s plantation is composed of his wife, four female slaves, and two black male indentured servants. Although all the characters’ lives are intertwined and dependent upon Jacob, the novel focuses on the stories of the women in this novel and how their lives are affected by male supremacy. A section in the novel reads, “Although they had nothing in common with the views of each other, they had everything in common with one thing: the promise and threat of men. Here, they agreed, was where security and risk lay” (Morrison 98). Through Jacob, Morrison explores the paradox of the slave master: he simultaneously represents protection and even, in some cases, stability, yet he also represents danger and uncertainty. Slave masters made meager provisions of food and shelter for slaves and even provided protection for slaves, yet they disciplined slaves with harshness and brutality and were subject to sell slaves and disrupt their entire livelihood.

In *A Mercy*, a sense of community exists among the slaves, Lina, Sorrow, and Florens; the slave mistress, Rebekka; and Jacob. Jacob controls the plantation, like all other slave masters, but the slaves and Rebekka manage the plantation. After the death of the slave master, the male leader of the plantation, the fragility of the bond that once existed is revealed. Morrison writes:

They once thought they were a kind of family because together they had carved companionship out of isolation. But the family they imagined they had become was false. Whatever each one loved, sought, or escaped, their futures were separate and anyone's guess. . . . Minus bloodlines, [Scully] saw nothing yet on the horizon to unite them (155–156).

Although a sense of community exists among the women on the plantation in *A Mercy*, Jacob is an integral component of that community. He accounts for the patriarchal bond that cannot be sustained after his death. Because of the death of Jacob, the true nature of slavery is revealed: nothing is safe from destruction.

Jacob is a humane master in comparison to most slave masters during slavery, but his sentiments towards slaves are parallel to his sentiments towards animals. Morrison writes, “On the way [Jacob] saw a man beating a horse to its knees. . . . Few things angered Jacob more than the brutal handling of domesticated animals” (28). Jacob’s relatively humane treatment of his slaves does not indicate that he considers his slaves to be human, but that he considers them as part of his livestock. Furthermore, Morrison explains:

[Jacob] knew there was no good place in the world for waifs and whelps other than the generosity of strangers. Even if bartered, given away, apprenticed, sold, swapped, seduced, tricked for food, labored for shelter, or stolen, they were less doomed under adult control (32).

Jacob justifies his holding of slaves through his belief that they are much better off under his supervision than if they were homeless, even if they are slaves.

Whether slavery was beneficial or detrimental to the economy has long been debated, but what cannot be refuted is that there were economic motives for slavery—motives that resemble the motives of capitalism. In *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, David Brion Davis concurs, “there is now a broad consensus that plantation slavery, far from being archaic, was not only highly

productive but anticipated much of the efficiency, organization, and global interconnectedness of industrial capitalism” (77). In *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present*, M.A.R. Habib notes that Karl Marx’s foremost objection to capitalism is that it creates a foundation for and results in exploitation of the class of laborers because one class controls and owns the agencies for economic production (528). In the case of slavery, although slaves were not part of the working class, they were the lowest class of laborers who generated the most profit for their white slaveholders and epitomized exploited workers.

In *A Mercy*, the role of capitalism is most clearly seen in the infectious nature of slavery. *A Mercy* reveals that slavery was not just a breeding ground for the wicked, but that even humane individuals fell prey to the evils of slavery. Habib notes that, according to Marx, eventually “capitalism reduces all human relationships to a ‘cash’ nexus, self-interest, and egotistical calculation” (528). In the beginning of the novel, Jacob repeatedly reflects on how much he detests the institution of slavery, but later he consistently finds reasons why slaves are needed on his plantation and excuses as to why acquiring slaves will benefit the slaves. In the beginning of the novel, Jacob says, “God help me if this not the most wretched business” (26). Morrison notes, “Jacob winced. Flesh was not his commodity” (22). However, by the middle and end of the novel, Jacob has a small, yet well-established plantation of his own that includes three enslaved women and two indentured male servants.

The evolution of Jacob from a small-town trader to a small but legitimate slave owner reflects a key component of capitalism: surplus. According to Habib, surplus value provides the basis for Marx’s delineation of capitalism, but surplus will eventually be its downfall (528). Likewise, Jacob’s insatiable desire to acquire the station and wealth that he sees in other slaveholders leads to his ultimate downfall and death, which reflects another Marxist claim that capitalism creates “a world after its own image” (Marx 258). In order for capitalism to endure, it must flourish, and Jacob falls prey to its tentacles. Lina notes:

That third and presumably final house that Sir insisted on building distorted sunlight and required the death of fifty trees. . . . There was no need for a third. Yet at the very moment when there were no children to occupy or inherit it, he meant to build another, bigger, double-storied, fenced, and gated like the one he saw on his travels (43).



Jacob becomes obsessed and envious of the lifestyle that his clients have achieved through slave labor, and he begins to mimic what he has witnessed on other plantations beginning with increasing his slave count and possessions. In the novel, Jacob never becomes a brutal master to his slaves, but before the construction of his third house, Florens comments, "When he returns this time he is different, slow, and hard to please. He is short with Mistress" (38). Jacob's attitude becomes more negative in proportion to his growing greed and dreams of "a grand house of many rooms rising on a hill above the fog" (35).

*A Mercy* is set during the inception of slavery, and readers get a glimpse of what theorists call the social construction of race. In "Race and the Construction of Human Identity," Audrey Smedley explains:

Today scholars are beginning to realize that 'race' is nothing more and nothing less than a social invention. It has nothing to do with the intrinsic, or potential, qualities of the physically differing populations, but much to do with the allocation of power, privilege, and wealth among them (698).

Race, according to Smedley and other scholars, is not a genetic characteristic, but an ascribed status based on division. To justify slavery's brutal treatment of human beings, supremacists created social, political, and economic divisions between white people and the darker complexioned people brought to America from Africa by insisting that the Africans were genetically inferior and disparate from the white racial category. Morrison explores the construction of race using Lina, an indigenous woman whose tribe was decimated by smallpox. Black racial identity has African roots, yet Lina does not have African ancestry. However, because she is an American slave, she is now grouped into the black racial category.

With slavery and the construction of race came a loss of heritage and ethnicities as well as a merging of folklore, religions, and spiritualities. American slavery was primarily comprised of men and women from Africa, but Morrison illustrates that America's indigenous people were also sold into slavery though not as commonly. bell hooks states, "Crucial in the preparation of African people for the slave market was the destruction of human dignity, the removal of names and status, the dispersment of groups so that there would exist no common language, and the removal of any overt sign of an African heritage" (19). The same was true for the small number of natives who were enslaved. Lina is rescued by a group of Presbyterians after her tribe is nearly

obliterated by disease. The religious group takes the first step in the dehumanization of Lina by changing her name. Lina has no recollection of her birth-given name, and she only remembers that her Presbyterian guardians renamed her Messalina and shortened it to Lina.

During slavery, the living, creative parts of African heritages were most prevalent in the religion, folklore, and music of the slaves. Like Lina, slaves merged what they remembered of their native faiths with what they were taught in America and with American customs. W.E.B. Du Bois states in *The Souls of Black Folk*, "... there is no true American music but the wild sweet melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales and folk-lore are Indian and African" (698). Slave spirituals are both religious and musical and reflect the hybridity of slave identity. Most spirituals focus on Christian biblical figures, but the execution of the slaves' songs has African roots. Du Bois explains, "The first is African music, the second Afro-American, while the third is a blending of Negro music with the music heard in the foster land. The result is still distinctively Negro and the method of blending original, but the elements are both Negro and Caucasian" (761). The African presence in slave culture was never lost but firmly woven into the culture of slaves.

Both *Beloved* and *A Mercy* can be situated between main arguments regarding race during the respective times that they were published. In "Ghosts of Liberalism: Morrison's *Beloved* and the Moynihan Report," James Berger maintains that Toni Morrison uses *Beloved* as an "intervention in two ongoing debates about American race relations" (408) in the 1980s. Berger identifies Reaganist conservatism as one side of the debate, which denied institutionalized racism as a continuing traumatic reality for blacks in America. Berger identifies the opposing side as the New Left and black nationalism that denied the presence of any trauma in the black familial structure. According to Berger, Morrison dispels both arguments with *Beloved* by illustrating trauma and its effects on the black family as a result of slavery.

Likewise, over two decades later, race still permeates the social atmosphere, but now discussions largely focus on the relevance of slavery and the prevalence of race. On one side of the debate are individuals such as Charles Johnson who interpret the undeniable success of black people as ultimate progress and assert that the old black American narrative is dated and irrelevant to the present. The other side of the argument is composed of individuals like Louis Farrakhan who assert that the progress of individuals does

not void the still prevalent group victimization of black people that stems from slavery (Johnson 8). There are also those who position themselves in the middle of both arguments and admit that while race is not the sole contributor to black struggles in America, it is still very prevalent and an active contributor to disparities that still exist in society for all minorities. Morrison situates *A Mercy* in the midst of the third argument. Morrison's *A Mercy* gives relevance to slavery by illustrating that what laid beneath the surface of slavery still lies beneath the surface of current American society. Slavery's past is still present in the economics, organization, and definitions of race in America.

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# A Study of Transculturation vis-à-vis Language and Design Elements in *A Bowl of Beings*

Yvette Martinez, *University of California, Los Angeles*

*Yvette Martinez, born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, CA, holds a bachelor's degree from UCLA with a major in English and minor in Theater Arts. She recently began her doctorate in Theater and Performance Studies at UCLA, where she is receiving support from the Eugene V. Cota-Robles Fellowship. Yvette's interests include ethnic and racial studies, gender studies, and identity formation in American theater.*

## Abstract

This paper is an excerpt from the introduction of my senior thesis. The full thesis involves a four-part analysis of verbal language, body language, lighting, and costumes to delineate how Culture Clash, a contemporary Chicano comedy troupe, makes performative what they define as Chicano. In this introduction, I provide a foundation for my argument. I argue that Culture Clash defines Chicanismo as a mental state that, while stemming from the Chicano Movement, is not specific to race or ethnicity. Instead, the term focuses on a shared immigrant experience. Overall, this research provides a deeper understanding of Chicanismo by showing how the lack of content and stylistic restrictions in the *Bowl of Beings* play accurately reflects the Chicano identity.

## Introduction



Figure 1. Culture Clash flyer with original members of Culture Clash, circa 1985. (Courtesy of CSUN Oviatt Library, Latino Cultural Heritage Digital Archives)

Culture Clash, a contemporary Chicano comedy troupe that has earned national fame, was originally a six-member group of comedians called "Comedy Fiesta" formed in 1984 by visual artist Rene Yanez to headline a Cinco de Mayo celebration performance at the Galeria de La Raza in San Francisco's Mission District. By 1988, the members Marga Gomez, Monica Palacios, and Jose Antonio "Tony" Burciaga, left the troupe. The remaining members, Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Siguenza, formed Culture Clash. They focused on writing full-length plays about contemporary issues Chicanos faced in the United States.

Their later plays are more site-specific and ethnographic, an approach which has attracted scholarly attention. Scholarship on Culture Clash has not addressed their earlier works, which make liberal use of monologues and employ an episodic structure, from which they departed in the mid-1990s (Rodriguez 102). For instance, drawing on traditions of Chicano theater, they wrote their second full-length play, *A Bowl of Beings*, in 1991. Building on previous scholarship, through a close analysis of performance elements of *A Bowl of Beings*, I aim to show how Culture Clash's social commentary is related as much to material aspects of theater as it is to the content of their plays.

Both the topical and performance aspects of their work evidence Culture Clash's location in the Chicano theatrical tradition. The term "Chicano Theater" entered the lexicon in the 1960s, when the Mexican-American civil rights movement (*el movimiento*) was at its peak. The movement dealt with a wide range of problems from general issues of discrimination and racism to more specific issues in the education system and workforce (Rosales 241). In the education system, Chicanos fought for reduction of dropout rates, development of bilingual or bicultural programs, and expansion of support services. In the workforce, the United Farm Workers (UFW), led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, fought for restoration of land grants, better working conditions, better living conditions, and higher wages. The farm workers were the first Mexican-Americans to utilize theater as a means of social protest. One of the most well known promoters of the movement was Luis Valdez, the founder of El Teatro Campesino (ETC).

Founded in 1965, ETC intended to help the UFW by creating another non-violent form of protesting against the mistreatment of farm workers. The actors created "actos" which were improvised scenes delineating the day-to-day struggles of working in the fields (Huerta 1982).

They would perform on flatbed trucks with costumes and properties, which were often homemade. They were known for incorporating tradition of the Mexican *carpa* (itinerant tent shows) with their mobile stage, and grounding their *actos* in a working-class perspective earned them a reputation for *rasquachismo* (Broyles-Gonzalez 1994). *Rasquachismo* is known as an underdog perspective that is expressed aesthetically by using discarded everyday material in performances; it is a “combination of resistant and resilient attitudes devised to allow the Chicano to survive and persevere with a sense of dignity” (Mesa-Bains 157). Similarly ETC’s performances also utilized discarded materials. Their work was often collaborative, short, simple, improvised, exaggerated, and satirical. Most importantly, ETC used theater to raise money and raise awareness in the community.

ETC’s highly political performances influenced many theater groups to follow. For example, in 1971, “Teatro de las Chicanas,” the first all-female theater group to represent Chicana issues, was formed. They performed at political rallies and antiwar demonstrations in their Southern California communities (L.E. Garcia, et al. 2008). That same year, the National Theater of Aztlan (TENAZ, Teatro Nacional de Aztlan) was founded. From 1971 through the mid-1980s, this theater company organized festivals, workshops, and published newsletters in an effort to use the arts as a form of liberating Latino communities from oppression (Huerta 1971). Emerging theater groups like these started what is known as the protest theater movement<sup>1</sup> (D.G. Garcia 2006). Since then, playwrights such as Carlos Morton, Luis Valdez, and Cherrie Moraga have published a series of plays that highlight Chicano and Latino experiences in the United States.

While ETC’s performances aimed to educate their audiences on race-specific issues and to strengthen an already politically active crew of performers, Culture Clash takes a more indirect and broad approach to politics. Their more recent performances include a wide range of characters such as the Greek gods in their play *Peace* (2009) and the Native American tribe in the play *Palestine, New Mexico* (2009). Moreover, Culture Clash also has roots in traditional European theater, and has often been associated with German director Berthold Brecht’s “epic” theater, developed to educate audiences and inspire them to change society (Brecht 1978). Brecht uses postmodern qualities, such as the alienation effect where events, actions, and characters are purposefully ambiguous, to confuse the audience and distance them enough to watch the show more critically (Brecht 1978). Postmodernism in theater originated in the

1960s as a reaction against modernism and is, generally, a movement that resists popular culture (Wright 1989).

Like Brecht, Culture Clash’s *A Bowl of Beings* performance shares many elements of postmodern theater. For example, both forms of theater implement fictional accounts of historical figures and perform stories that parallel contemporary issues. They both utilize metatheater techniques to draw attention to their existence as a performance. Both also refuse to follow a linear structure that has traditional plots and conflicts. Instead, performances are episodic, with no clear beginning, middle, or end. But while Brechtian theater elements aim to alienate the audience members from the characters on the stage, Culture Clash aims to bring the audience closer to them and to break that boundary between actor and audience member. This method that Culture Clash employs has implications of transculturation<sup>2</sup> because Culture Clash’s performance, though similar to Brechtian Theater, resists assimilation by subverting the postmodern goal of alienation.

Although Culture Clash’s plays are descendants of various theatrical practices, scholars from the *American Theater Journal* (2009), among others, deemed *The Mission*, *A Bowl of Beings*, and *Chavez Ravine* as “Hispanic-themed plays” (21). Because of their wide-ranging material and non-traditional traits, Culture Clash is also compared to European postmodern theater. On a broader scale, scholars like Jorge Huerta and Harry Elam point out Brechtian and European influences of Chicano theater. These scholars compare Culture Clash performances to a wide variety of performances ranging from many Latin-American theatrical practices as well as many contemporary American shows.

The classification of broader labels is problematic however, because just as identities change, labels also change in meaning with the passage of time. It is convenient to label but general labels do not acknowledge Culture Clash’s past, present, and future inspiration. Other scholarship on Culture Clash has already addressed some of the problematic issues of classifying and homogenizing a performance that is inherently hybrid. Such studies utilize ethnographic, theoretical, and linguistic research methods to better understand the complexity of Culture Clash’s performance. What they do not address are the visual elements of the performance and how costumes, lighting, and sets affect these issues.

Taking an ethnographic approach, David Gumaro Garcia argues that Culture Clash’s performance art brings the lives of marginalized communities center stage to

<sup>1</sup> The social protest theater movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s amongst several theater groups including El Teatro Campesino and the Black Revolutionary Theater.

<sup>2</sup> By transculturation, I refer to what Fernando Ortiz defines in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (1947) as the merging of indigenous and foreign traits to create something new.

challenge social and racial injustice (D.G. Garcia 2006). Garcia is the first to produce what I would argue is a more appropriate classification for Culture Clash's performance art, which he calls "critical race theater." Garcia states that his goal is "not to provide an exhaustive literary analysis of the complete body of Culture Clash's work . . . [but] instead [take an] interdisciplinary cultural history approach" (3). He draws his evidence from a series of separate interviews that record the individual biographies of Culture Clash members, and links his analysis of them to other social protest groups such as the Black Revolutionary Theater and El Teatro Campesino. Garcia's approach, however, relies on the member's recollections of certain performances and does not take note of what actually happened during the live performances.

On the other hand, Chantal Rodriguez does take note of the actual performance space, using a theoretical approach to analyze Culture Clash's more recent play, *Chavez Ravine*. Rodriguez argues that Culture Clash's "performance has proved an efficacious vehicle for the staging and documentation of alternative histories of California and Los Angeles from a decidedly Latina/o perspective" (16). She focuses on how Culture Clash fuses the genres of documentary and comedy to create forms of social and political resistance that resist existing hegemonic histories. Rodriguez's theoretical approach points out how the play moves across time and space to reflect the complex relationship between memory, history, and identity. Rodriguez's approach, however, is more theoretical than visual because instead of tracing how these visual elements figuratively represent the Latina/o perspective, she compares the performance space to Dodger Stadium, the actual space it is meant to represent. Instead of analyzing what is on the stage for its figurative meaning, Rodriguez compares the stage to its literal representation.

Finally, Lauren Mason uses another methodology drawing on a linguistic lens to argue that the characters in Culture Clash's skits are created through "linguistic features . . . and embodied action . . . all the while expressing a particular stance toward identities" (Mason 3). Her argument places language at the forefront of social action. She notes how language can be used for either deliberate or non-deliberate manipulation to capture the agency of the speakers. For example, she uses both language and embodied performance to position performers in respect to their character's socio-cultural identities. Mason's linguistic approach places a heavy emphasis on the facial gestures and vocal pronunciation of one episode from a short running television variety show that Culture Clash recorded in 1994. Though

she relies heavily on their videos, she does not mention any other visual stylistic features of the performance.

Mason, Rodriguez, and Gumaro Garcia classify Culture Clash under many genres of theater. I want to move away from exclusive labeling because it grants too much weight to the social aspect of theater, rather than the material and performative. I will focus on how Culture Clash uses contrasting theatrical elements to emphasize the conflicting categories of the Chicano identity and challenge the concept of having singular normative genres, through an analysis of the following aspects of performance: verbal language, body language, lighting, and costumes. Through these performance elements, Culture Clash introduces multiple theatrical and racial dualities that act in opposition to one another and allows them to exist within the same scenes. Each performance element when merged together demonstrates a form of transculturation that moves across both theatrical and ethnic boundaries. For instance, the scenes include dialogue in Spanish and English, the actors' body language does not always reflect the words they speak, lights can shift from natural lighting to heavy artificial lighting, and costumes can reflect as many as three different time periods at once. These examples show how Culture Clash merges multiple performances styles into one show. These examples also illustrate a Chicano perspective because of their emphasis on unification rather than exclusion.

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# Multiracial Racial Identity in Contemporary America: An Overview

Juliana Partridge, *Spelman College*

*Juliana Partridge graduated summa cum laude from Spelman College in 2009 with a bachelor of arts in Sociology. She was a domestic exchange student at Stanford University and participated in research programs at Northwestern University, Tufts University, and Emory University. Juliana, a member of Phi Beta Kappa and a previous member of Spelman College's Ethel Waddell Gibbii Honors Program, is pursuing a PhD in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania.*

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## Abstract

The following is the literature review from Juliana's senior honors thesis, entitled: "The Racial Identification Experiences of Multiracial College Students: A Case Study of Multiracial Undergraduates at Spelman College and Stanford University." Using a postmodern framework, the study deconstructed the term "multiracial" by exploring what meaning, if any, mixed-race college students give to the term "multiracial," and how they arrived at their understanding of the term. In order to investigate this research interest, she conducted 19 semistructured interviews with mixed-race Stanford University and Spelman College undergraduates of a variety of racial backgrounds.

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In the United States and across the world, race has been socially constructed out of the desire to create a racial hierarchy to support white supremacy and to keep the lines of the racial hierarchy clear and distinct (Gillem, et al. 2001). The "one-drop rule of hypo-descent," commonly referred to as simply the "one-drop rule," is a particularly pervasive social construct created to keep those with any amount of "black blood" at the bottom of the social hierarchy. For most of United States' history, Americans have generally accepted the one-drop rule. However, this acceptance was majorly challenged during the debate in the 1990s over adding a multiracial category to the 2000 Census (Rockquemore and Brunson 2002a). Multiracial categorization is a recent identity demonstration that defies traditional conventions of race in America and is consequently challenged and celebrated by various groups and individuals (Pellegrini 2005).

It is often assumed that every American identifies with one racial group. Psychologists view racial identity formation as one of the primary goals of adolescence; by adulthood, individuals are expected to be able to easily designate their racial identity (Spencer, et al. 2000). Most social scientists originally presumed that members of the same racial group underwent similar racial identity formation processes, regardless of whether they were monoracial or multiracial.

For example, it was assumed that a black/white multiracial individual would undergo the same racial identity formation process as a black individual. However, some recent social scientists argue that using a monoracial model to judge multiracial racial identity formation is as fallacious as judging black racial identity formation through a white racial identity model, for it denies the complexity of racial identity and the potentially significant differences in the life experiences of multiracial and monoracial individuals (Gillem, et al. 2001).

In light of these critiques, a number of racial identity formation models have been developed to describe the multiracial experience. Most of these models begin with the individual either accepting a personal racial identity or becoming aware of racial difference early in life, and end with an integrative multiracial identity. For example, in response to racial identity models that incorrectly assume that multiracial individuals are always accepted by their minority culture, Poston (1990) created a five-stage racial identity model for multiracial individuals: 1) Personal identity: young children hold a personal identity, not necessarily linked to a racial group; 2) Choice of group categorization: based on factors such as cultural knowledge, appearance, group status, and social support, an individual chooses a multicultural identity that may include one or both parents' racial group; 3) Enmeshment/denial: the individual feels guilty for not being able to identify with all parts of his racial heritage, possibly leading to feelings of shame, anger, or self-hatred; 4) Appreciation: the individual begins to appreciate and explore all parts of his racial background, although he still may identify more with one racial group than the other(s); and 5) Integration: the individual integrates and values a multicultural and multiracial identity (Renn 2008).

Root's (1990) multiracial identity model, though organized differently than Poston's, also assumes that multiracial identity formation is complete when the individual adopts a multiracial identity. However, Root's model begins to explore the importance of social interactions on multiracial identity. Moreover, she argues that an individual might move fluidly among racial identities and might self-identify in multiple ways. The four-step model includes: 1) Acceptance of societally assigned identity—family relationships and an alliance with and acceptance by a minority racial group spur an individual to identify with the racial group to which he would traditionally be assigned; 2) Identification with all racial groups—societal support and personal ability to maintain a multiracial identity in the face of resistance allow an individual to identify with all heritage groups; 3) Identification with one racial group—regardless



of social pressure, the individual decides to identify monoracially; 4) Identification as a new racial group—the individual moves fluidly among racial groups but identifies most strongly with other multiracial people of all backgrounds (Renn 2008).

While Root and Poston's models focus on the experiences of multiracials, both make the assumption that multiracials must accept and assert a multiracial identity in order to have a healthy self-concept. Thus, these models overlook multiracial individuals who do not claim a multiracial identity, such as those who believe multiracial identification to be racially divisive (Nakashima 1996). Recognizing that not all multiracial people identify as such, and that self-identities may change over time and in different scenarios, Gatson's (2003) schema of multiracial identity divides multiracial individuals into three categories: 1) radical multiracials, who argue for a separate multiracial category; 2) radical one-race identifiers, who are mixed-race but identify monoracially; and 3) amorphous multiracials, who are connected to several simultaneous identities but do not insist on a separate multiracial category. Gatson's conceptualization is useful in that it does not assume that there is a certain sequence of life events that leads multiracial individuals to a certain racial identity.

Another significant model is Renn's (2008) five patterns of multiracial identity. Derived from her study of multiracial students from six postsecondary institutions, she argues that college provides opportunities for identity exploration in academic, social, and interpersonal settings. Her patterns of multiracial identity include: 1) monoracial identity; 2) situation-based multiple monoracial identities; 3) multiracial identity; 4) extraracial identity, or opting out of identification with U.S. racial categories; and 5) situational identity, where racial identity is stable but different elements are more relevant in some contexts than others. Renn found that 48 percent of respondents identified themselves as monoracial or in multiple monoracial identities, 89 percent indicated a distinctly multiracial identity, 23 percent held an extraracial identity, and 61 percent identified situationally, explaining why the total is greater than 100 percent (Renn 2008).

While Renn's study is particularly useful because it explores multiracial racial identification in college students from a variety of racial backgrounds, other studies have provided important contributions to the understanding of multiracial identity through explorations of multiracials from specific racial backgrounds. Using a sample of 177

black/white multiracials from the metropolitan Detroit area, Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002b) found that 61.3 percent identified as neither black nor white, but a unique multiracial category that encompasses both races, 13.1 percent of participants identified as exclusively black, 3.6 percent as exclusively white, 4.8 percent as sometimes black, sometimes white, and sometimes multiracial depending on the situation, and the remaining 13.1 percent claimed to have no definable racial identity. Significantly, Rockquemore and Brunnsma separate those with a "border identity," defined as neither black nor white but a unique, inclusive category, into two categories: validated and unvalidated border identity. Thus, they recognize that a person's personal racial identity may or may not be validated by his community.

Lee and Bean's (2007) study also focuses on multiracials with specified racial backgrounds, using 2000 U.S. Census data and in-depth interviews of multiracial Latino, black, and Asian adults to explore how multiracial individuals construct racial definitions. The authors found that multiracial Latinos and Asians experience and self-define race in ways that are similar to white Americans. Put another way, the behaviors and self-perceptions of Lee and Bean's multiracial Latino and Asian participants indicated that these individuals feel more socially connected to white Americans than to black Americans. In fact, multiracial Asian and Latino participants in this study seemed to be assimilating into white culture as "honorary whites." Lee and Bean argue that these findings suggest the reemergence of a black/non-black hierarchy that separates blacks from other racial and ethnic groups. Commenting on Lee and Bean's findings, Gallagher (2007) argues that a sizable part of the white multiracial population may experience "racial redistricting" as the boundaries of whiteness expand to include groups that would traditionally have been defined as non-white.

Some multiracial identity theorists argue that just as multiracial individuals assume a variety of racial identities, it is also possible for a multiracial individual's racial identity to fluctuate based on different scenarios. Discussing black/white multiracials, Rockquemore and Brunnsma (2002a) describe those who shift their racial identity according to different scenarios as possessing a "Protean Identity," that is, having the ability to be black, white, and/or multiracial depending on the social context. Individuals who simultaneously reference themselves in a number of racial communities have also been deemed to have an "Integrative Identity" (Daniel 1996). Williams (1996) details that multiracial individuals who base their racial identity on their social context

are actively “doing race” by adjusting their racial identity to their circumstances, racially negotiating their social space, and projecting different racial selves in different scenarios. The situation-based nature of multiracial identity allows some multiracials to “move in and out of various racial identities,” through a process that Dalmage terms “traveling” (2000: 23). As these scholars suggest, racial traveling undermines the strength of the color line, as it allows multiracial individuals to challenge the United States’ racial dichotomy and the notions of race being fixed and biological.

While today’s multiracial individuals can, to a certain extent, choose identities that were once socially proscribed, their viable racial identity options are influenced by structural, cultural, and social factors. Their identity choices are differentially available depending on their social and structural context, as well as limited by macro forces like institutional inequality and ideological racism, and micro factors such as interaction, manipulation, and presentation. Thus, identity formation is a reflexive process that reflects both external constraints and individual agency (Rockquemore 2002).

Multiracial identification decisions are based on a number of factors, including a person’s age, socioeconomic status, physical features, neighborhood, family structure, educational level, and peer group, as well as the larger racial politics of the area in which he is embedded (Dalmage 2000). Defying dichotomous racial classifications is often dependent on the existing status of race relations in any given area. For instance, Rockquemore and Brunnsma’s (2002b) participants with singular black identities or unvalidated border identities tended to come from predominately black social networks, and those with a validated border identity tended to live in predominately white areas. An individual’s religious involvement, experiences with interracial relations, and the quality and type of interpersonal relationships she has with family and friends can also strongly influence her multiracial identity formation (Demo 1990).

Identity negotiation is also a gendered process. In her study of black/white multiracials, Rockquemore (2002) found that her female participants had very different experiences with black men and black women than did her male participants. Black/white multiracial females described experiences of being accused of thinking they were better than other blacks and faced jealousy, resentment, and distrust from other black women, largely based on their appearance. Some participants described feeling as though their black identity was threatened by their interactions with other black Americans.

Renn (2008) describes multiracial identity development as a person-environment or psychosocial process influenced by physical appearance, cultural knowledge, and peer culture. Additionally, she acknowledges that not only are physical characteristics such as skin tone, eye and nose shape, and hair texture and color important, but identity is also influenced by the ways in which a multiracial individual’s appearance is interpreted by others. Multiracial college students must navigate campus life with an appearance not always recognizable to others, often provoking the question: “What [race] are you?” Renn also found that situations such as peers believing a student looks “too Asian” to participate in a Latino organization, or does not “look black enough” to be a part of the black student group can influence multiracials’ feelings of racial authenticity. She also found that some multiracials seemed to believe cultural knowledge, the ability to speak certain languages, participation in race-themed student groups, and interest in certain genres of music were prerequisites into joining campus communities of color. Thus, Renn’s (2008) work finds that the context of peer culture is an essential aspect of multiracial students’ racial identity development.

While it may initially seem as though the ability to choose one’s racial identity would give multiracials more freedom of expression than their monoracial counterparts, multiracials often feel a great deal of pressure to “make the right choice” when racially self-identifying (Korgen 1998). Because they were not born into a clearly defined racial category, multiracial individuals face the threat that their racial identity decision will be questioned and/or challenged. Multiracial identifiers may be faced with feelings of confusion, anger, skepticism, concern, pity, hostility, curiosity, or superiority when they share their racial identity with others (Dalmage 2000). They may face resistance from those who believe that the assertion of a multiracial identity adds to the racial problems in the United States, or those who believe asserting a multiracial identity feeds into the notion of racial categories being biologically real (Spencer 2004).

Negative responses may be especially prevalent for part-black multiracials, as black racial identities have historically been more questioned, stigmatized, and rigidly defined than most other racial groups in the United States. For this reason, part-black multiracials may experience a great deal of resistance to asserting a multiracial identity. Additionally, some leaders of the black community led the fight against a multiracial category because of the threat of a decreased Census count and subsequent political and financial consequences, but also because of opposition toward the

idea that multiracials may wish to distinguish themselves as separate from African-Americans (Rockquemore and Brunnsma 2002b).

Overall, the existing literature has effectively begun to describe the racial identification experiences of multiracials. There is now a generalized understanding of the micro and macro factors that influence identity development. However, few scholars have focused specifically on the experiences of multiracial college students. Additionally, many studies have limited their sample to participants of a specific racial background, limiting the ability to assess the existence of a collective multiracial experience.

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# Optical Characterization of Gallium Arsenide (III)

Albert Rigosi, *Columbia University*

*Albert Rigosi is a senior at Columbia University pursuing a bachelor of arts in Physics with a concentration in Mathematics. He was born in New York, NY, and moved to Mount Arlington, NJ, where he was raised. Ultimately, he hopes to pursue a PhD in Physics.*

## Abstract

Condensed matter physics is the study of microscopic systems under intense conditions. This paper relates experimental observations of two metals, aluminum gallium arsenide (AlGaAs) and gallium arsenide (GaAs), under such conditions that are not predicted by classical (i.e., Newtonian) physics. These observations demonstrate how quantum mechanics governs the subatomic world, deepening our understanding of these physical systems. Moreover, they have implications for certain practical applications, like quantum computing.

## Introduction

Electrical current is the flow of electrons, most familiarly through metal cables and wires. Metals that allow for the transport of electrons are called conductors. For example, electrons are free to move around in wire, moving in a particular direction when a voltage or power supply is applied. No conductor, however, is perfect. That is, they all have a property called resistance. This property describes the degree of friction electrons experience in the material through which they are traveling. In 1911, it was found that chilling certain metals or compounds to extremely cold temperatures (e.g., below 20° Kelvin or -253° Celsius) could bring their internal resistance down to zero, making electrons capable of roaming without obstacles. When the resistance of a material is zero, that material is said to be “superconducting.”

Ordinarily, physicists describe electrons (and all particles, for that matter) in terms of quantum mechanics. That is, electrons are not truly particles as we think of “particles”—discrete objects, sometimes called “point particles”—but clouds of probability; only when one attempts to measure the position or momentum of the electron does it become a point particle as explained in Heisenberg’s famous “Uncertainty Principle,” a simple mathematical conclusion that serves as a basis for quantum mechanics. As soon as the act of observation is over, it turns back into a cloud of probability. Although this is an accurate description of what is going on at a basic level, in the experiment I describe, the quantum mechanical approach is perhaps not the best

conceptual model. Instead, for the purpose of this paper, I will describe these phenomena using classical physics, which I would argue is a more accessible model.

In this perspective, atoms and electrons are thought of as true point particles, with the electrons orbiting the nucleus. There are 118 elements in the periodic table. Every element has a certain number of protons and neutrons in its nucleus. Neutrons have no charge; protons have positive charge; and electrons have the same amount of charge as the proton, only the charge is negative. Normally, an atom is electrically neutral due to having equal amounts of electrons and protons. The electrons in an atom arrange themselves in such a way as to form numerous “shells” around the nucleus, each of which can contain only a specific number of electrons. The outermost shell of the nucleus is called the valence shell. When light, which is a form of energy, is directed towards the atom, some electrons absorb some of the light and become “excited.” This excitement makes them “jump” into orbits that are not filled to capacity.

## Description of the Sample

Aluminum gallium arsenide (AlGaAs) and gallium arsenide (GaAs) are superconducting metals at low temperatures. This eliminates the problem of resistance when trying to study the behavior of the electrons. The interface between these two compounds in the sample create a space called a “quantum well” (QW). Because of the slightly different properties of the two compounds, one would expect electrons to travel to the interface and stay there, creating a “two-dimensional electron system,” or a wall of electrons restricted to a plane (Figure 1).

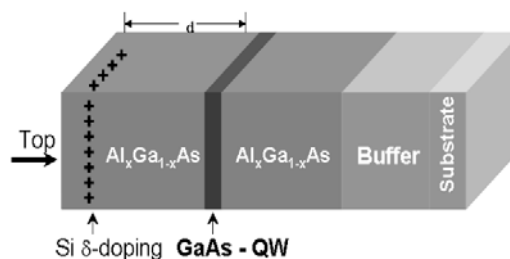


Figure 1. Model of the GaAs sample with quantum well (QW).

*One would imagine excited electrons flowing from either side to the QW, where they would form a two-dimensional electron system.*

The two compounds, however, have full valence shells, making it very difficult for the compounds to donate their electrons. Since such donations are easiest to make when the valence shell is not filled to capacity, we insert a

very thin layer of silicon, whose valence shell is not entirely filled, an arbitrary distance from the QW so that it may donate its “extra” electrons. The donated electrons, when excited to break free of the comparatively weak valence shell, are thus free to travel to the interface (QW), more commonly referred to as the conduction band.

Finally, one needs to think of the shells in an atom as energy levels. It takes energy to make an electron jump to a higher orbit, and an electron emits energy (in the form of light) when it drops down into a lower orbit—which is only possible when that lower shell is not full. Keep in mind that the conduction band has an energy level structure also. Thus, if an electron becomes even more excited, it may jump to higher energy levels in the conduction band.

### The Experiment

Our lab uses optics—mainly lasers, mirrors, and lenses—to characterize the properties of the sample and to describe the behavior electrons exhibit while under certain environmental conditions. There are many components to setting up such an optical experiment (Figure 2).

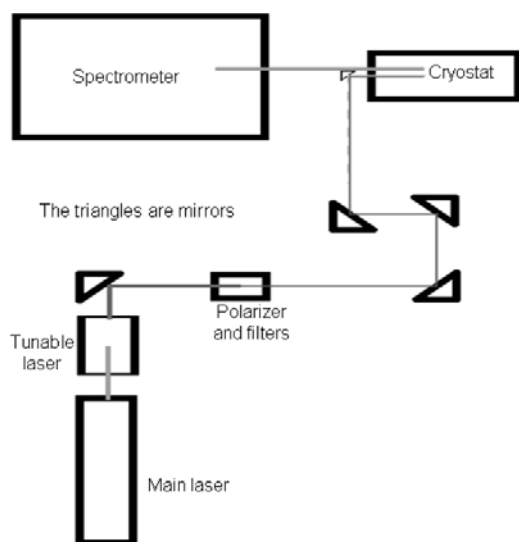


Figure 2. Schematic representation of optical experimental apparatus.

First, we place the sample in a large tank called a cryostat. We cool the inside of the cryostat with liquid nitrogen, and then we cool the chamber within the cryostat that contains the sample with liquid helium. This drops the temperatures of the sample to about 2° Kelvin (−271° Celsius). As soon as the sample reaches this temperature, the laser is turned on and shot into the tunable laser, which allows us to

control the wavelength (and therefore the energy) of the light emitted by the main laser.

As the tuned laser beam travels, we must adjust the optics (mirrors and lenses) to ensure that the laser beam goes into the cryostat and hits the sample, which can be difficult as the sample and the cross section of the beam are small, measuring approximately 1 cm<sup>2</sup> and 1 mm in diameter, respectively. When the sample is hit with the laser, it not only reflects some of the beam like a mirror, but it also emits its own signals in all directions as the electrons absorb and emit some of the laser’s energy. Our aim is to read these latter signals, which are emitted opposite the direction of the incoming beam by collecting these signals with a spectrometer. This device takes in a signal and interprets it as light waves with different energies. In order to have clean data, the spectrometer must collect only signal data, not the reflected laser beam. Thus, the reflected laser beam is rerouted by the same mirror out of the area. Finally, as we run the experiment, we change certain parameters over time, such as the temperature, the laser wavelength, the power (or intensity of the light), and the polarization of the light (i.e., the “tilt” of the light wave).

### Results and Interpretations

The graph below (Figure 3) displays “lambda dependence,” where lambda stands for the wavelength of the laser. Each color represents a different wavelength used for the incoming laser light. Some important features that are listed are the polarization, the power of the laser (a typical laser pointer in class is under 5 milliwatts), the temperature of the sample chamber, the sample number (since there are multiple samples in the experiment), and the date of the experiment.

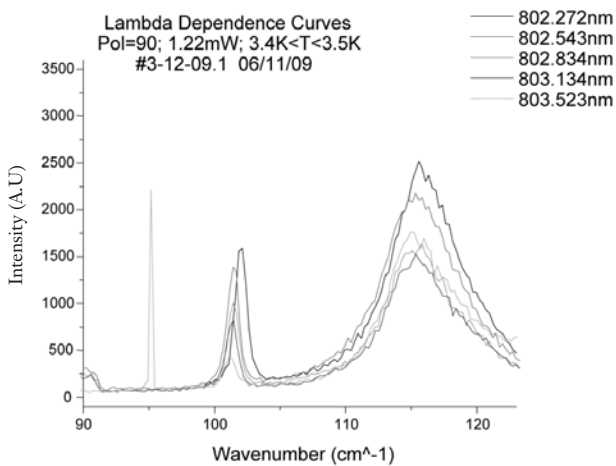


Figure 3. Lambda dependence curves generated by optical experiment. (Image courtesy of the Pinczuk laboratory)



The x-axis represents the energy of the signal while the y-axis represents the relative intensity of those signal energies. The number on the y-axis, by contrast, is used only for comparing two points on the graph. For example, if we took the signal with a corresponding energy of 93 wave numbers ( $\text{cm}^{-1}$ ) on the x-axis and read across to the y-axis, we find that it has a relative intensity of 100. The equation is, relative to what? Now, if we take the signal corresponding to an energy of  $102 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , the associated peak is around 1500. Thus, comparing these two, one can claim that the signal at  $102 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  is 150 times more intense than the signal at  $93 \text{ cm}^{-1}$ , or that the  $102 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  signal has 150 times more light waves coming into spectrometer than the  $93 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  signal.

When we plot the data given by the spectrometer, we find behaviors that are strange in the context of Newtonian physics. First, we see a large peak on the right that appears for multiple wavelengths of laser light. However, this peak is predictable on the basis of quantum mechanics, or the “Uncertainty Principle.” An electron that has already been excited and jumped from the valence band of the silicon into the conduction band becomes even more excited, jumping to a higher energy level in the conduction band. What appears odd according to classical physics, however, is that these excitations only occur at certain ranges of the incoming laser wavelength. These behaviors are called Single Particle Excitations (SPEs).

The left peak is also predicted by quantum mechanics, and the name of this peak is a Spin Density Excitation (SDE). Spin is a property that particles possess, much like the property of mass or charge. Describing this peak as a physical phenomenon in terms of Newtonian physics, however, is completely anomalous and inconsistent with the Newtonian model.

What makes this entire experiment difficult is trying to interpret the observed behaviors in terms of quantum mechanics, a subject which itself is not well understood. In essence, confirming the existence of these behaviors predicted by quantum mechanics predicts is a testament to the fact that the theory behind the behavior is correct.

#### Further Research

Ideally, we would like to fully understand how these physical systems work under all arbitrary conditions. That is, once we know all we can, at, say, a zero magnetic field, we will expose the system to a powerful magnetic field to

explore the Fractional Quantum Hall Effect (FQHE)—a physical phenomenon that gives the illusion that particles of fractional charge exist. Learning more about the FQHE can create a smoother path for engineers to build more efficient and stable quantum computers—microscopic devices capable of processing information at speeds much greater than today’s computers. If an efficient quantum computer were built, it would be capable of decoding the most complicated computer encryptions. In this context, it is also possible for these quantum computers to generate new types of encryption that are virtually impossible to decode. Although engineers and scientists have successfully built quantum computers, they are much too small and unstable for very large operations such as those needed for sophisticated computer encryption. Our research, then, provides preparation for the applied research agenda that is theorized to lead us to new methods of building larger and more stable quantum computers.

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# Personal Expression in Gilded Age Architecture

Melinda Rios, *Wellesley College*

*Melinda Rios, who hails from Bronx, NY, graduated from Wellesley College in 2009, where she majored in Architecture. She plans to pursue a master's degree in Art History.*

In the book titled *From the Ballroom to Hell: Grace and Folly in Nineteenth-Century Dance*, Elizabeth Aldrich discusses the culture and etiquette surrounding the Gilded Age ballroom. In it, we are transported to a time and place when the grace and follies of Gilded Age society are made all the more apparent within the lavish and beautifully decorated interiors of the ballroom. During this period, etiquette helped to distinguish the elite from a *parvenu*—one who had risen economically and socially in rank, but had not yet gained social acceptance by others in his class. The industrial revolution had catapulted the fortunes of individuals who had not, until that point, been exposed to the privileges of elite society. Etiquette, fashion, and architecture were all tangible symbols that helped to identify a person's status in a climate where social class structures were constantly being challenged.

The architecture and interiors of Gilded Age mansions designed around the turn of the 19th century reflect an increasing anxiety to validate one's social rank through the display of wealth and luxury goods. Gilded Age mansions merit investigation for their unequivocal beauty and scale. However, many of the interiors, although richly varied and stimulating, are also garish and ostentatious. For this reason there is much to dislike about Gilded Age architecture, including the "Knickerbockers" and corrupt "robber barons" that dominated elite society. Despite these patrons' unfavorable reputations, there is something compelling about their Gilded Age mansions. Beyond their beauty, the architects who designed them had a surprising understanding of the patrons who commissioned their design. Unlike in Newport, RI, where architects and designers created numerous spaces for public reception; the architects of The Mount and Kykuit in New York created environments that reflected each patron's desire for domestic privacy and intellectual fulfillment. The exclusion of a ballroom in the architectural plan of Gilded Age mansions indicates that patrons desired a home in which the preoccupation of entertaining in order to prove membership into a distinguished social class was not always of utmost importance.

When one considers the dominant style of architecture produced in the late 19th century, a diverse range of floor plans and architectural styles emerge. There is a strong reliance on the use of classical details, columns, and sculpture in many of the most distinguished Gilded Age mansions. The interest in eclectic historicism, which dominated much of the architecture produced during the Gilded Age, was prompted by the influence of The Ecole des Beaux-Arts school of architecture in France. The methodology behind its training and education of the architect extolled the study of classical monuments and ancient structures. "Architecturally, it meant buildings with a clear relation to the great works of the past through domes, triumphal arches, the orders, colonnades, and temple fronts."<sup>1</sup> The laying out of the plan, with its strong reliance on proportion and symmetry, was an important aspect to design. The Beaux-Arts style could encompass a combination of historic architectural styles as well as the use of symmetry and the proliferation of classical details.

The Beaux-Arts style appealed to the American elite audience of the late 19th century for many reasons. A mix of philosophical ideas prevailed to support their interest including the genteel tradition, the cosmopolitan view, and the search for a historical national identity.<sup>2</sup>

The architecture of the Gilded Age is ambiguous because of the diversity and complexity of its design. The Gilded Age mansions are strikingly varied and each demonstrates a unique artistic vision. Their interesting and dynamic combinations were unlike anything seen prior. The notion that a particular artistic style could reflect the morals of a nation led Americans to make claims of their own unique heritage; one that would reflect the identity and diversity of their nation's taste and people. Exploration and experimentation were important aspects of this process. Scientific eclecticism enabled architects to experiment with a wide range of classical styles and motifs to reflect their patron's interest and personal unique taste. "In architecture, the classifying, cataloguing, filing, and recording of styles, motifs, and details became a central activity."<sup>3</sup> The development of the period room in Gilded Age mansions demonstrates how Americans sought to classify specific historic styles within distinct interior spaces. The stronger impetus for the explosion of architectural splendor seen in the 19th century, however, appears to have come from the desire to emulate the taste and culture

<sup>1</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, *The American Renaissance, 1876–1917*, Exhibition catalogue, The Brooklyn Museum, 1979–80 (Philadelphia: Falcon Press, 1979), 30.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, "The Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983): 73.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, "The Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983): 85.

of the European aristocracy in order to align oneself with a long established ancestral history. Lavish balls, filled with hundreds of society's most elite guests, provided the perfect opportunity to display the vast collection of objects, art, and furnishings inside Gilded Age mansions, which were clearly fashioned after European aristocratic interiors.

With the new attention brought to art, architecture, and interiors, the period also saw the establishment of philanthropic organizations, museums, libraries, and music halls for the sake of public and moral education. The elite now had taken on the added social responsibility of establishing taste for the enrichment of a nation. Some argue, however, that their reasons for establishing these organizations were motivated by more superficial aims. If display and impression are what mattered most to Gilded Age society, nowhere was this idea more apparent than in the design and interior decoration of Newport's most astonishing Gilded Age mansions. Their scale and exuberant display of marble, gilding, paintings, textiles, and crystal chandeliers attests to the need to astonish and impress.

In his chapter, "Building for Eternity," King observes that among the mansions of Newport "these private houses grew more lavish and overtly dedicated to their ceremonial functions as stages for their owners' privileged pageants. These houses were determinedly grand, often oppressively powerful, and rarely personal in their statements."<sup>4</sup> Gilded Age mansions were visual reminders of social supremacy within the circle of Gilded Age society. Interiors were abundantly filled with art, textiles, furnishings, and items. Their overall arrangement was designed with reception in mind, in order to capitalize on public perception. Distinctions between spaces for reception and private functions, however, became less determinate. Each room appeared to have been designed for the reception of numerous guests. Even the private quarters in the upper stories were largely scaled, opulent, and decadent in the display of fine fabrics, textiles, paintings, ancestral busts, moldings, and gilding.

If we look at Gilded Age mansions merely as theatrical environments, then the existence of the ballroom in close proximity to a grand stairway would be an essential component to their interiors. What then do we make of Gilded Age mansions that have a similar ambiance but are scaled down, lacking large reception rooms for entertaining? How do we understand these examples if we are to simply think of Gilded Age mansions as statements of power and impression? I would argue that not all of these mansions were designed with entertainment or reception in mind. Rather,

some served as environments where the patron could escape the pretension of Gilded Age society to reflect on his own personal interests and, accordingly I dare say, the mansions themselves *are* more personal in their statements.

One of the period's most distinguished critics reacting against the pretensions of Gilded Age society was Edith Wharton, a prolific writer and author of many of the centuries prized literary works, including *The House of Mirth* and *The Age of Innocence*. Wharton had the privilege of growing up within Knickerbockers' society. Her fortune was modest in comparison to the amassed fortunes of her peers, but despite her limited income, by the time she was of marriageable age, she was well versed in European culture and etiquette. She had traveled in Europe, lived in France and Italy, and was fluent in multiples languages including French, Italian, and German. In her novels, the settings and characters were strongly based on actual events, people, and places she had visited throughout her life. Wharton's characters portrayed the shallow existence and hypocritical manners of Gilded Age society. Her sharp judgment and critique of Gilded Age society, including the trappings of its lifestyle, caused her to retreat from it—particularly given that her intellectual literary pursuits made her unpopular with men and women of her time.

When Wharton was first married, she had properties in New York and Newport. Having actually lived in Europe, she had very strong opinions about interior decoration and design. Her need to design a house that would reflect her individuality and personal style, while providing her the freedom to pursue private affairs, prompted her to build The Mount in the Berkshires of Lenox, MA, in 1901. "The Mount was Edith's attempt to carve out her niche in a social group unsympathetic to, if not suspicious of and puzzled by, her literary concerns."<sup>5</sup> Locating the mansion in the Berkshires was, itself, a novel convention. Although still married, by moving her residence to the country, Edith isolated herself from the fluster of activity and entertainment in Manhattan and Newport societies. With fewer distractions, she therefore had the freedom to pursue a more independent lifestyle, something unheard of for a woman of her time. Nestled within the woods of the Berkshires, The Mount had a poetic, elegant, and refined character. It satisfied Edith's need for a simpler way of life, without compromising the privileged lifestyle that she had grown accustomed to.

Observing the exterior façade of The Mount, we are immediately struck by the difference in its appearance as compared to other previous Gilded Age examples of the

<sup>4</sup> Greg King, *A Season of Splendor* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 179.

<sup>5</sup> Theresa Craig, *A House Full of Rooms, Architecture, Interiors & Gardens* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1996) 23.

period. While the house maintains a strict classical symmetry, it combines elements of the English country style with a courtyard in the French tradition, an Italianate terrace, and the green and white exterior color scheme of a New England estate. Its H-shaped plan and exterior elevation is modeled after an English country estate, Belton House, in Lincolnshire, England. In the floor plan, a centrally positioned ballroom has been replaced by the drawing room. If entertaining took place, the size of the drawing room could accommodate 15 to 20 at most. The terrace, which is exposed to the elements of the outdoors, is given the most generous space in plan. Its scale as compared to the rest of the rooms emphasized Edith's love of nature. At The Mount, she felt liberated by the beauty and comfort of her gardens and natural surroundings.

In "The Architecture of Manners," Sarah Luria suggests that Wharton intentionally "centered her domestic plan on an innermost room, a space of reflection and writing. The rest of the house served to provide a sequence of increasingly private spaces which led to and protected this sacred chamber."<sup>6</sup> The intimate scale of the rooms, their lowered ceiling heights, and their limited access serves to promote a sense of privacy as one circulates through the house. Display and impression were not as strong as factors in the layout and design of The Mount as compared to other Newport homes.

Someone who shared Edith's sentiments concerning the need for privacy and retreat was John D. Rockefeller (JDR). In 1893, JDR purchased 400 acres at Tarrytown on the Hudson, in New York, and began construction on Kykuit. Immediately we see a difference in terms of Kykuit's façade as compared to other classical Beaux-Arts styles of Newport. Kykuit was intentionally designed as a country estate, but it also served as JDR's main residence. JDR had come from humble beginnings and amassed his fortune through his company, Standard Oil. He had very strict protestant values and principles that he practiced throughout his life—in both business and family dealings. "The Protestant ethic according to which he was raised also taught that indulgence of any kind was sinful and that money itself was dangerous to the health of the soul."<sup>7</sup> Despite JDR's attempts at creating a simple country estate, his son, Jr., convinced his father that a house more suitable to his family's elite status was needed. Accordingly, Kykuit went through a grandeur remodeling in 1911. The façade

was changed to resemble the popular Beaux-Art's classical style. Despite the changes to the exterior façade, the interior plan maintained its distinctive T-shaped form. The most dominant feature of the house was a music room, complete with an Aeolian organ and oval opening in the ceiling with a view to the second floor. The modest style, distinctive shape, and intimate scale of the music room give Kykuit a stately, elegant character.

Unlike The Mount, circulation at Kykuit was fluid. When standing at the entrance of the music room, you can see views of the vestibule, exterior surroundings, sitting and drawing rooms. Like The Mount, however, entertaining at Kykuit was limited to a select few guests. There isn't a ballroom or any room large enough to accommodate a huge crowd or gathering. While JDR had ample space to build, he chose to maintain a more discreet scale, a modest yet elegant interior design. Like his peers, however, his collection of art, furnishings, and objects within the house were vast. The monochromatic off-white painted sculptural details throughout the house are as delicate and ornate as those in other mansions. At Kykuit, however, their design is neither ostentatious, nor overwhelming. Its graceful elegance and beauty give Kykuit a distinctive charm uncharacteristic of other Gilded Age mansions.

In an article titled, "The Art of Being Rich," Patrick Pacheco describes how Kykuit is distinctive for its time. Beyond his accurate description of its uniqueness, he is also very perceptive in his observation that, "the adage that 'money can't buy happiness' may or may not be true, but it can buy the environment in which happiness is most likely to occur."<sup>8</sup> There is a clear sense that the patrons of The Mount and Kykuit would agree. Each commissioned a house to be built in a surprising manner. In several aspects, their choices ran counter to what was common in the era. The breathtaking and commanding views of nature and gardens surrounding The Mount and Kykuit are extensive, pointing to the patrons' desire to retreat from Gilded Age society into Edenic surroundings.

It is also no coincidence that each of these properties had a statue of Pan located in a prominent location—either in an entryway or reception room. "As described by Virgil in his *Bucolica*, Arcadia was the idyllic and pastoral home of Pan, the god of woods and fields, flocks and shepherd. . . . No one ever worked in this imagined paradise, and human

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Luria, "The Architecture of Manners; Henry James, Edith Wharton and the Mount," in *Domestic Space; Reading the Nineteenth-Century Interior*, ed. Inga Bryden and Janet Floyd (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 188.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Louise Pierson and Ann Rockefeller Roberts, *The Rockefeller Family Home Kykuit* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1998), 11.

<sup>8</sup> Patrick Pacheco, "The Art of Being Rich," *Arts & Antiques*, Oct. 1994, 51.

beings lived in perfect harmony with nature.”<sup>9</sup> At Kykuit, the Pan figure is currently set into a grotto in one of the surrounding gardens. The sculpture’s representation within a domestic setting projects a strong desire on the part of its patron to live harmoniously within nature, away from the preoccupations of Gilded Age society.

The desire for a personal space where one could reflect on nature and have the liberty to pursue intellectual pursuits defines the architecture of The Mount and Kykuit. In an environment where anxiety in proving one’s rank often motivated the construction of enormously grand dwellings, the architects of these mansions attempted to create dynamic architectural forms. “Changes in details, combinations of motifs from different buildings, adjustments of scale and proportion, insertion of modern functions, and different spatial arrangements make them American buildings.”<sup>10</sup> More significantly, I would argue that through the architects’ interesting combinations and interpretations of classical styles, I also reveal the personal characters of the prestigious American figures that commissioned their designs.

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<sup>9</sup> Kate Burke, “Arcadian Visions” in *The Persistence of Classicism*, ed. Patricia Mainardi (Williamstown: Sterling & Francine, 1955), 59.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “The Reinterpretation of the Past in the American Renaissance,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 1983): 85.



# Interpreting Difference through Different Interpretations: Ethnohistories at Plimoth Plantation

Tyler J. Rogers, *Brown University*

*Tyler Rogers is an Ethnic Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies concentrator at Brown University. A native of Pawtucket, RI, he hopes to pursue graduate work in Ethnic Studies.*

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## Abstract

As a modern-day cultural heritage tourism site, Plimoth Plantation conveys knowledge to visitors through interpreters who stage historical and cultural reenactments. By critically examining how these juxtaposed representations of European and Native American peoples influence the construction of historical narratives, it is possible to understand the racial and ethnic implications of Plimoth Plantation. In evaluating the archaeological and interpretational methodologies at this site, I argue that these different approaches to ethnohistorical narration support European specificity alongside Native American ambiguity, and that the failure to simultaneously incorporate these perspectives into a cohesive narrative belies the complexly intertwined colonial history of Plimoth Plantation.

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## Introduction

Plimoth Plantation, as a popular tourist destination at which visitors experience cultural heritage, offers an opportunity to examine the impact of on-site interpretations and the narratives they construct. A privately owned, non-profit museum and archaeological curation site, Plimoth Plantation is designed to relate the history of the indigenous Wampanoag people and the English colonists in 17th-century Plymouth, MA. Located approximately two miles from the original settlement built by English colonists, it includes reconstructions of both Wampanoag and English communities as they were believed to have looked in the 1600s (“About Plimoth Plantation”). Due to the concurrent inclusion of Wampanoag and English perspectives at the site, it is necessary to understand how site managers negotiate multiple perspectives and how the resulting juxtapositions affect the holistic site interpretation. At Plimoth Plantation, the site interpretation fails to effectively narrate an intricate history of colonial contact between the Wampanoag people and the English colonists and instead reinforces ethnically distinct methodological approaches to cultural heritage.

## Site Background

Founded in 1946 by Henry Hornblower II, a Harvard-educated archaeologist, Plimoth Plantation is a reconstruction of how the colonial landscape is thought to have looked in the 17th century. Accordingly, the period spelling of “Plimoth Plantation” was chosen over the more modern “Plymouth Plantation” as part of an effort to make the experience as historically authentic as possible.

Due to his disciplinary background, Hornblower proposed that archaeology be a central component of the reconstruction process. By executing archaeological fieldwork and using the findings to help create the museum, this “was to be scientific history, and, in some measure, a repudiation of the filio-pietistic traditions of Pilgrim Plymouth which had dominated interpretations of the Pilgrim story since 1820” (Gomes 157–158). Previous portrayals of these 17th-century English colonists, which helped to popularize this “Pilgrim” terminology, were characterized by reenactments of historically debatable events, such as their landing on Plymouth Rock in 1620 and their cooperative negotiation of a treaty with the Wampanoag leader Massasoit (Snow 16). Although these depictions of the colonists are no longer performed at Plimoth Plantation, vestiges of this representation linger within contemporary interpretation methodologies. In particular, this legacy of reenactment is manifested in the use of on-site role players.

Since this site is not only theatrically recreated but also physically reconstructed, it is important to recognize Plimoth Plantation as a living history museum rather than a preserved archaeological site. As defined by John D. Kruger, living history museums are “all rebuilt or restored according to the best available historical, archaeological, and architectural data” (Krugler 347). Following this model, Plimoth Plantation relies heavily upon continuous scholarly research in the absence of enduring tangible structures. Using this research, site managers are able to convey particular narratives to visitors through on-site interpretation.

However, interpretation assumes different forms depending upon whose history is being told, which becomes obvious when considering two distinct ethnohistorical sites at Plimoth Plantation: the Wampanoag Homesite and 1627 English Village. The Wampanoag Homesite, evocative of a 17th-century Wampanoag summer encampment, allows visitors to experience the culture of the Wampanoag people, including the types of homes they lived in, the food they ate, and the crafts they produced. At the 1627 English Village,

there is also a focus on daily cultural practices, ranging from farming techniques to domestic chores. While both of these sites rely upon interpreters to act as mediators between the visitors and their surroundings, these interpreters serve different functions depending upon which history they are telling. As stated by the Plimoth Plantation website:

[At the 1627 English Village,] the people you will meet are costumed role players who have taken on the names, viewpoints, and life histories of the people who actually lived in the colony in 1627, popularly known as the “Pilgrims” today. Each one has a unique story to tell (“1627 English Village”).

In contrast:

The people you will meet at the Wampanoag Homesite talk of the past, but their story is also a very current one, told from a modern perspective. . . . It is important to note that unlike the 1627 English Village, there are no “characters” here; the staff dressed in traditional deerskin clothing are native people and speak in their own modern words about the experiences of the Wampanoag (“Wampanoag Homesite”).

This fundamental difference in the role of on-site interpreters must be interrogated deeper so as to understand why such a contrast exists.

### Archaeological Methodology

The utilization of such divergent interpretations is partly an extension of differing research methodologies at Plimoth Plantation. Rooted in the scholarly legacy of founder Henry Hornblower II, Plimoth Plantation pursues ongoing archaeological research in order to excavate relevant artifacts and uncover historically pertinent information. Accordingly, the scholarly content of the site interpretation is subject to constant revision as new information is literally unearthed. Amidst this dynamic academic process, interpretive methodology has remained fundamentally unchanged due to a problematic archaeological approach that favors Wampanoag ambiguity and English colonial specificity.

To reconstruct the 1627 English Village, Plimoth Plantation has excavated and curated a number of local 17th-century colonial sites. These sites include the homes of particular historical figures such as the colonial governor William Bradford, who actually lived in the settlement and is currently portrayed by on-site role players. Discoveries of ceramics, pipes, metal tools, nails, architectural remnants,

personal items, and weapons at these archaeological sites have been invaluable in the process of recreating the English colonists’ firsthand narratives (“Colonial Archaeology”).

Unlike these archaeological undertakings based upon excavations of well-documented historical structures, the material evidence used to reconstruct the Wampanoag Homesite is more imprecise. Numerous archaeological sites across New England have been employed in the process, thereby denying geographic and cultural specificity to the Wampanoag archaeological record. Demonstrating a lack of attention to detail, the artifacts used by Plimoth Plantation to reconstruct the Wampanoag Homesite “consist of projectile points, fishing weights, hammer stones, celts and other stone tools from the Archaic Period through the Contact Period . . . [ranging] from the South Shore, Cape Cod, and Martha’s Vineyard” (“Native Archaeology”). This approach operates as a result of a severely flawed premise which assumes that all pre-colonial artifacts found in the region are reflective of the material culture of the Wampanoag communities that were in contact with the English colonists.

This generalization functions both geographically, as shown by the fact that the artifacts’ origins span a nearly 50-mile radius, and culturally. During the era that Plimoth Plantation seeks to recreate, the Wampanoag Nation was composed of at least 30 distinct ethnic groups, but a disregard for this fact within archaeological research assumes a single Wampanoag cultural standard (Travers 16). By including artifacts found “from the Archaic Period through the Contact Period,” heritage managers at Plimoth Plantation also imply that Wampanoag culture was completely static before the 17th century. Not only is this factually inaccurate, but it also denies the Wampanoag people a pre-colonial history.

### Interpretation Methodology

This trend of hyperspecificity for the English colonial perspective and gross generalizing for the Wampanoag perspective is pervasive in not only the archaeological methodology, but also in the interpretive methodology. While the 1627 English Village makes use of role players who perform reenactments of daily life in the colony and assume the personas of particular historical figures, the Wampanoag Homesite employs contemporary narrators who “speak in their own modern words about the experiences of the Wampanoag.” Much like the archaeological approaches at Plimoth Plantation, these divergent tactics in the interpretation process work within a flawed paradigm. In this case, differences in chronology and ethnohistorical

narration create individual, temporally exact English colonial perspectives that contrast with collective, temporally vague Wampanoag perspectives.

Relative to the issue of chronology, the 1627 English Village is much more specific than the Wampanoag Homesite. As even suggested by the name, the narrative of the 1627 English Village is limited to the experiences of the colonists during one particular year. The actions and words of the role players at the Village are designed to reflect the daily routines of the colonists who actually lived in Plymouth during this exact year. While the employees at the Wampanoag Homesite are costumed so as to be visually reminiscent of this same time period, they are not role players and they “speak from a modern perspective about Wampanoag history and culture” offering a much more extensive historical account (“Frequently Asked Questions”).

Ironically, this decision to present the Wampanoag Homesite in such a chronologically ambiguous manner does not even prompt the site managers to encourage visitors to spend more time there; it is suggested that visitors spend at least two hours at the 1627 English Village to understand the details of this particular epoch, yet they say only one hour is needed to understand nearly 400 years of Wampanoag history since the Pilgrims first landed in Plymouth in 1620. This consequently burdens the Wampanoag Homesite staff with having to narrate a violent, highly contested colonial history. Meanwhile, the English colonial perspective is privileged due to its relegation to a moment in time that predates much of this interethnic hostility.

Also embedded in the interpretive methodology is the idea that the Wampanoag Homesite staff can somehow articulate a collective indigenous experience, while the role players at the 1627 English Village are only required to speak to the experiences of one particular colonial figure. Although visitors are encouraged to ask questions of all interpreters, the answers to these questions operate within two different contexts, which render the role players of the 1627 English Village as individuals and the staff members of the Wampanoag Homesite as a collective group. By not granting the nuance of individuality to the Wampanoag Homesite staff members, site managers displace firsthand Wampanoag perspectives. In this manner, visitors are unable to critically consider the diversity within the Wampanoag community. Instead, they hear the Wampanoag Homesite interpretation as a series of ethnic voices, clashing with the specificity of the individual voices presented by the 1627 English Village interpretation.

## Implications

These differing approaches to interpretation at the Wampanoag Homesite and the 1627 English Village, while perhaps not intentionally injurious, detrimentally impact the educational value of the site. Even though Plimoth Plantation professes cultural sensitivity, the ways in which the site managers pursue this goal is fairly counterproductive. Oddly, the choice to have staff members at the Wampanoag Homesite recount an extensive ethnic history is designed “to make visitors aware of generalizations and stereotypes about native people, and to inform them of issues and concerns that Wampanoag people face today” (“Frequently Asked Questions”). Considered alongside the reenactments and role playing of the 1627 English Village, this would actually seem to reinforce the “generalizations” that the site managers claim to contest. Unfortunately, this does little to combat ignorance and effectively educate visitors about historical nuances. Rather, it imposes a form of ethnic monolithism that homogenizes the Wampanoag people across space and time.

The interpretation methods at the two sites are not only faulty in their different presentations of information, but also in their presentation of information at two entirely separate sites. To distinguish so clearly between the 1627 English Village and the Wampanoag Homesite is to suggest that these two ethnohistories are not intricately intertwined. Despite the desire to present Plimoth Plantation as authentically as possible, the 1627 English Village and the Wampanoag Homesite have become culturally segregated spaces that establish the two groups as neighbors lacking any syncretic interactions. As argued by historian Jill Lepore, this notion of two distinct cultures at Plymouth is fundamentally untrue (“After the Mayflower”). By choosing to ignore their overlapping histories and instead establish a neighbor narrative at Plimoth Plantation, site managers do not effectively illustrate the multifaceted interchanges that resulted from colonial encounters between the Wampanoag and the English. A truly cohesive representation of this history “means more than adding yet another dimension of cultural difference” as has been done with the portrayal of the Wampanoag people at Plimoth Plantation (Rubertone 439). In this sense, the process of narrating the differences of two peoples should not necessarily entail two entirely different methodological approaches in interpretation, nor should it occur at two entirely separate sites.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, Plimoth Plantation is a tale of two ethnohistories. As a cultural heritage tourism destination, Plimoth Plantation allows visitors an opportunity to experience a history of the Wampanoag people and the English colonists in 17th-century Plymouth, MA. Through archaeological evidence, site managers have created the Wampanoag Homesite and the 1627 English Village, which give visitors an experience within a reconstructed historical landscape. However, the methodology concerning Wampanoag archaeology is extremely generalized in comparison to English colonial archaeology, resulting in two very different site interpretations. At the 1627 English Village, role players performing as actual colonists speak as individuals in a specific historical moment, but at the Wampanoag Homesite, staff members narrate a collective history that spans nearly four centuries. This consequently propagates a false image of the Wampanoag people as a homogenous community. Also, it portrays the Wampanoag people and English colonists as culturally distinct neighbors who simply lived alongside one another without elaborate interrelations.

While this interpretive methodology certainly deserves praise for its inclusion of multiple perspectives at the same site, a better strategy would be to construct a more comprehensive narrative that portrays these ethnohistories as undeniably interconnected. Although making this paradigmatic shift at Plimoth Plantation may not be easy, doing so would better relate the site's history as one of dynamic, complicated, cross-cultural human interaction that continues to this day.

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# Can We Treat Our Way Out of the Epidemic?

Tamlyn Roman, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

*Tamlyn Roman is currently completing her master's of social science in Applied Development Economics at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Her research interests include global public health and international political economy.*

## Abstract

In a paper presented by De Cock, et al. (2009), a proposal is put forward for an ambitious HIV/AIDS prevention strategy. It is based on the theory that prevention can play a significant role in preventing HIV transmission with anti-retrovirals, yet the operationalisation of this strategy is significantly undermined by the social and logistical challenges apparent in the “real world.” The challenges—which include stigma towards testing and health system incapacities—are most aptly highlighted in Steinberg’s (2008) novel, *Three-Letter Plague*. This paper provides an overview of the opinions and arguments presented within these two publications and uses both to determine the feasibility of antiretroviral treatment as a form of prevention. The conclusion is that the potential for this strategy would be enhanced by strengthening health services capacities, but for the present, this prevention strategy does not have the necessary logistical support and thus cannot be regarded as a genuine possibility.

## The case of HIV/AIDS in South Africa

The HIV-infected population in South Africa is the highest in the world and accounts for approximately 17% of the global burden of disease (UNAIDS, 2007). At present, there are around 700,000 individuals who have started on antiretroviral treatment (ART), or antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, in the country, but over the next ten years, millions more will need to be treated (HEU Information Sheet, 2009).

The National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS aims to provide ART for up to 80% of individuals in need by 2011. In order to achieve this goal, over a quarter of the public health resources currently available will have to be used between 2010 and 2019, and by 2020, the required resources will exceed the current availability by 40% (Cleary, 2009).

Universal access remains a remote aspiration unless HIV transmission is substantially and rapidly reduced. While treatment and prevention seem different concerns, recent research suggest earlier initiation of therapy may provide individual as well as public health benefits (De Cock, et al., 2009).

## What are the benefits of using anti-retroviral therapy (ART) as a prevention intervention in the management of HIV?

In industrialised countries, where HIV patterns a concentrated epidemic, ART has predominantly been used as a course of treatment for asymptomatic individuals whose CD4+ count subcedes 350/l. The consequences for the individual of not receiving treatment bear emphasising.

Briefly, HIV causes AIDS by devastating the body’s immune system by infecting the white blood CD4+ T cells in addition to macrophages and dendritic cells. As the HIV virus replicates, it destroys CD4+ T cells and as these cells decline, AIDS develops. Through various channels, the “cocktail” of drugs that make up the ART blocks the replication of HIV (Nattrass, 2007). ART involves side effects and is not a cure, yet it has been scientifically proven to delay the HIV progression and extend life. Without effective treatment, the prognosis for an HIV-positive patient is dire.

In South Africa, much like the rest of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the epidemic affects the general population, with a more conservative approach to management of HIV and AIDS: until the end of 2009, therapy was treated more conservatively and treatment was generally initiated when CD4+ counts dropped below 200/l or the individual had an AIDS-related illness (HEU Information Sheet, 2009). While clinical studies have not definitively ascertained the optimal point at which to begin treatment, recent observational studies have shown that survival rates improve with earlier uptake of ARVs (Kitahata, et al., 2009; When to Start Consortium, 2009; Lawn, et al., 2009). The South African government has now adopted the more general convention of providing treatment to individuals whose CD4+ counts drop below 350/l.

Extrapolating from these studies, De Cock, et al. (2009) use the following rationale to justify using ARVs as a tool in the prevention of HIV transmission:

Transmission only occurs from infected persons who are numerically far fewer than HIV-negative susceptible persons; viral load is the greatest risk factor for all modes of transmission; ART lowers viral load; prevention of mother-to-child transmission offers proof of concept; and there is observational evidence of reduced transmission from discordant heterosexual couples when the index partner is on ART (89).

Their conclusion is, therefore, that ART lowers HIV transmission and can thus be an effective intervention in prevention, not just treatment.



### What would the strategy entail?

If ARVs reduce viral load, then it follows that the index of HIV-positive individuals who are not on ARVs significantly contributes to new infections. Using this premise as a basis for a prevention-centred approach to HIV treatment, Granich, et al. (2009) suggest that treating 100% of infected individuals at once could reduce HIV transmission, and thus the spread of the disease. According to their paper, supporting universal voluntary HIV testing on an annual basis, with immediate ART initiation in the case of those who test positive, could reduce HIV incidence by approximately 95% in the next ten years. The hypothetical model upon which Granich, et al. (2009) base their conclusion, however, depends on several assumptions that may not coincide with realities on the ground. The authors note, “We examined a strategy of universal voluntary HIV testing and immediate ART in which all adults in our test-case community accepted being tested for HIV one a year on average and all HIV-infected people started ART as soon as they were diagnosed HIV positive” (51). Furthermore, the strategy of annual universal testing and immediate ART initiation was combined with additional prevention interventions such as male circumcision, condom promotion, and treatment of curable sexually transmitted diseases (Ibid.). While proving clinically successful, these treatment approaches prove problematic when implemented because of both traditional practices (e.g., circumcision) and stigma (e.g., condom use).

A second study, conducted by Montaner, et al. (2006), and cited by De Cock, et al. (2009), considers a similar hypothetical strategy. Here the assumption is that all HIV-infected individuals will receive treatment in the first year following diagnosis, and afterward, because treatment curtails the spread of HIV and all infected persons are being treated, they assume that there will be no new infections. According to the study, the high short-term cost of universal treatment for all HIV-infected individuals would be more than offset by the prevention of new infections. This study implicitly relies on the same rationale adopted by Granich, et al. (2009) and hence, De Cock, et al. (2009) who cite this study: to identify the infected population, testing needs to become universal, and in order to control transmission of HIV by lowering the viral load, ART needs to be initiated immediately. Thus Montaner (2006) notes, “The prospect of treating nearly 40 million HIV-infected individuals worldwide seems daunting today, but, in view of the limited effect of current efforts on global prevention of new infections, this approach merits consideration if it can offer a means to control the relentless growth of the pandemic” (534).

### What are the limitations of this strategy?

In theory, HIV prevention is easy. It is the practice, which requires consideration, that poses the actual challenge. An approach, such as the one presented by De Cock, et al. (2009), is susceptible to significant logistical and infrastructural hurdles and above all, faces the challenge of trying to gain acceptance by the affected populations. De Cock, et al. (2009) acknowledge the following as challenges to their suggested strategy: conducting the necessary research; operational and financial feasibility; ethical and human rights challenges; acceptability; and the potential for drug resistance and toxicity.

These issues are most notably addressed in Steinberg’s book, *Three-Letter Plague*. Described as a “groundbreaking work of reportage about pride and shame, sex and death, and the AIDS pandemic in Africa” (Ball, 2008), Steinberg provides a unique perspective that the academic discourse has yet to accommodate. Using the evolving relationship that one man, Sizwe, has with AIDS in his rural community as a framework for social observation, Steinberg explores issues that include: the process of AIDS testing, the acceptance of and adherence to ARV treatment, the stigma associated with the disease, as well as the infrastructural, political, and personnel challenges which encumber effective treatment programmes. Exposing and detailing the grassroots manifestations of the pandemic, as Steinberg does, presents a unique opportunity to assess the feasibility of strategies such as the ones proposed by De Cock (2009), Granich, et al. (2009) and Montaner, et al. (2006).

The strategy to use antiretroviral treatment to prevent transmission of HIV depends on identifying HIV-infected individuals, which, in turn, depends on successfully carrying out universal testing programmes. However, to date, testing has not been universally accepted. This is in large part to do with the stigma associated with being tested. For example, some believe that the needle prick will lead you to contract HIV. Others believe that the test is a means for “the white man” to carry out a programme of extermination—a mindset which is the residual from years of Apartheid in South Africa. In both instances, there is fear of the test, as Steinberg portrays in the novel.

“We are not going to test,” one of them said to her.  
“It is a waste of time.”

“Why is it a waste?” she asked. “What if you are sick?”

“So what if we are sick?” another replied. And they told Ma Marrandi that they would never test for this virus, because it was put in one’s body by witches and their demons, and antiretrovirals were useless in the face of witchcraft (Steinberg, 2008: 185).

Additionally, there is also a fear of being socially ostracized if one’s HIV status becomes known.

“What did testing day mean to you?” I (Steinberg) asked. “What have you learned from it?”

(Sizwe:) “That I must never test for HIV in my own village. If I test positive, I would be destroyed.”

“How?”

“It would be the end of my business, the end of my future. It would be the same as if my enemies tied me to a chair in front of my shop, and forced me to watch while they took it apart brick by brick, and carried away my merchandise item by item. That is what would happen” (Steinberg, 2008: 33).

These two factors in combination act as a deterrent against voluntary testing.

The alternative is to enforce compulsory universal testing, but this approach will likely result in political backlash. Moreover, it poses an ethical dilemma which cannot be absolved or justified by the potential lives saved. Compulsory testing would infringe on patient autonomy as well as individuals’ rights. Thus Steinberg writes:

At the public meeting the chief convened, he had called on people to test, and the words and phrases he used had elicited some disgruntlement.

“The government does not need its people lying down and getting sick,” the chief reportedly said at the meeting. “You have an obligation to go and test.”

Ma Marrandi has been sitting in the audience during the chief’s speech. From behind her, she heard a man’s mocking whisper.

“What does that mean? That the government is forcing us to be tested? Do my veins belong to me or to the government?” (Steinberg, 2008: 185).

Another assumption that underpins the success of antiretroviral treatment as a form of HIV prevention is that, once treatment has been initiated, individuals will adhere to the programme. At present, individuals who seek care and treatment are those who have already become AIDS-sick.

De Cock, et al.’s strategy would rely on individuals who feel well coming forward and, despite not seeming to need medication, maintaining a very rigorous and taxing treatment programme—while potentially incurring side effects and social stigma. Thus, from the participants’ side, the combined stigma associated with being tested and receiving the outcome, as well as the limited likelihood of adherence to the ARV treatment programme, all act to undermine the feasibility of a universal testing and treatment programme.

### Health System Incapacity

What if these issues could be resolved? What if individuals willingly came forward to be tested? What if they adhered to the programme? Unfortunately, the strategy suggested by De Cock, et al. (2009) still might not be realistic. The National Primary Health Care Facilities Survey, published in 2003, lists the current HIV services available as including voluntary counselling and testing (VCT), post-exposure prophylaxis for rape survivors (PEP), Nevirapine for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT), and ART (Irlam, et al., 2003: 13). This survey highlighted the poor availability of health care personnel, in addition to their inequitable distribution across the provinces (2003: 21). This survey, however, did not take into consideration access to the available services, which is, of course, a major obstacle to the success of treatment programmes.

Steinberg’s report on the nature of the public health system in rural South Africa uses the village of Lusikisiki as a case study.

Of twelve clinics, two had reliable electricity supply, one had running water or a phone, and none had a fax machine. Few of the medicines on South Africa’s essential drug list had ever found their way to the district’s clinic shelves, and those that had were there only sporadically. Less than four in ten nursing posts were filled. Per capita, the district had fourteen times more people per doctor than the national average, and in that sense Hermann was surely right: either Lusikisiki’s battered clinics and overworked staff would fight the epidemic, or no one would (Steinberg, 2008: 93-94).

A recurring theme in *Three-Letter Plague* is the role that access to medical care plays in mortality. Access to appropriate care is a function of availability of adequate services, facilities, and resources, including well-trained personnel, as well as geographical access to facilities. If the current health system is incapable of handling the present demand

for services, it seems unrealistic to expect the strategy of De Cock, et al. (2009)—which would place even greater demands on the system—to be accommodated and effective, with a successful outcome. A universal testing and treatment programme would require significant upgrading of the current health system—in terms of both infrastructure and geographical access to health care, as well as in terms of human resource provision, capability, and equitable distribution.

### Is there a solution?

What Steinberg does not do, possibly because it lies outside of his mandate of reporting the current state of HIV treatment practice, ideology, and political significances, is to consider solutions to the challenges. What is clear from his book is that currently, South Africa does not have the capacity to carry out universal testing and treatment. What is not clear is what steps need to be taken to lay the foundations for such an intervention in the future.

According to the Policy on Quality in Health Care for South Africa (2007), approximately 8% of the country's gross national product (GNP) is spent on the national health system annually. Of this amount, 60% on average is spent on the private sector which provides care to 20% of the population. The other 80% of the population depends on the public system for care, yet receives only 40% of total expenditures. Thus, strengthening the health system would require addressing the uneven distribution of health resources and improving upon the variation in the quality of care. Policies would need to incorporate a redistribution of health expenditure and human resources and should be informed by an equal focus on both curative and preventative medicine research. The imminent South African National Health Insurance is one such step toward redistribution of resources and improved access to health services.

There would also need to be greater awareness on the part of civil society about the prevention options available to them; key stakeholders such as the Treatment Action Campaign and the South African National AIDS Council have the potential to be instrumental in this regard. With greater awareness and knowledge of the policies that make provision for such options, communities would be able to mobilise around issues of importance and could bring about significant bottom-up system reform in the public health sector. Non-governmental organisations, such as Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF), would also play a significant role in the delivery of home-based care and community health services. They would also aid in improving community

knowledge about the importance of these services, and accordingly, community acceptance of the interventions.

Hermann Reuter believed that the government would eventually offer a universal service under the force of popular pressure. "All these people on drugs," he told me, "the relatives all see that their lives have been saved, the word spreads. Soon millions of people know. They start coming for treatment. The hospitals are too full so government starts using the clinics under the sheer force of the pressure. One day the drugs are in every clinic in the country" (Steinberg, 2008: 285).

### Conclusion

De Cock, et al. propose an ambitious prevention strategy. The science fully supports preventing HIV transmission with antiretrovirals, yet the operationalization of this strategy is significantly undermined by real life social and logistical challenges. These challenges include stigma toward testing and health system incapacities—both of which are highlighted in Steinberg's novel, *Three-Letter Plague*. The potential for this strategy would be enhanced by strengthening health services capacities. However, at present, using antiretroviral treatment as a form of prevention does not have the necessary logistical support and thus cannot be deemed feasible.

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# Ambiguous Bodies: Re-Thinking Race and Gender through the Trope of the Octoroon in Antebellum Louisiana

Kyera Singleton, *Macalester College*

*Kyera Singleton is a senior majoring in American Studies and Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies at Macalester College. Her research focuses on the appropriation of the Black female's body and the ways in which history silences or remembers the lived experiences of Black women. Ultimately, she plans to pursue a PhD in American Studies.*

## Abstract

This research paper explores the construction of the trope of the "octoroon" in antebellum literature in the late 19th century. Focusing predominantly on Dion Boucicault's play *The Octoroon: Or Life in Louisiana*, I want to historicize the social anxieties of slavery and whiteness that manifest in literature through the trope of the octoroon in Louisiana. By examining the play historically, I want to complicate the ways in which fiction both creates and distorts the visibility of black female subjectivity.

In 1859, Irish playwright Dion Boucicault captured the attention of American and international audiences with his play *The Octoroon: Or Life in Louisiana*. The play opened at major theaters in New York City, Chicago, Louisiana, London, and Canada, and found popular audiences for years. This 19th-century melodrama, set on a financially troubled plantation in Terrebone, LA, showcased the forced transition of its main character, Zoe, from freedom to slavery. The product of a "quadroon"<sup>1</sup> mother and a white slave holder, Zoe, a free woman of color, learns that she will be sold into slavery to settle the plantation's debt. The family's financial ruin is not the sole reason for Zoe's fall from grace. McClosky, the Yankee overseer, orchestrates Zoe's sale to buy her as his slave-concubine once she rejects his proposals of concubinage. When the one true love of her life, George Peyton, the heir to the plantation, cannot save her from slavery, she commits suicide in an attempt to both serve the interests of George and escape the looming sexual violence of Mr. McClosky.

On Dec. 15th, 1859, the *New York Times* published a review which noted, "Everybody talks about *The Octoroon*, wonders about *The Octoroon*, and *The Octoroon* thus becomes, in point of fact, the work of the public mind" (*New York*

*Times*, 1859). The press review can be interpreted in at least two ways. Not only does it display the public's fascination with the actual play itself, but it also serves as a commentary on the public's fascination with the racial category of "octoroon."<sup>2</sup> In fact, many individuals became so entangled with the representation of the "octoroon" that they attributed the "octoroon" to their imagination. A review of the play appearing in the *Chicago Tribune* a few months later, exclaimed that *The Octoroon* was such a "thrilling interest" since "the institution, [slavery] does not 'give power to bad men,' as the ex-overseer, over such transcendent and loveable beings as the octoroon, because there are no such beings in existence" (*Chicago Press and Tribune*, 1860). The story of a woman, who simultaneously commanded the unconditional love of her white family and endured the abuses of slavery, captivated audiences. For them, Boucicault's play represented a sensationalized depiction of slavery that only could be found outside of the realms of reality. The play's ability to evoke feelings of love from an audience through the "loveable" but nonexistent octoroon is precisely the construction of the octoroon that my project seeks to complicate.

In this paper, my research engages the ways in which the figure of the octoroon has been romanticized by putting literature into conversation with the realities of slavery and sexual violence to which mixed-race women were subjected in antebellum Louisiana. I will focus on several questions: How do the performances of *The Octoroon* within the text inform our readings of the slippery slope between slavery and freedom for women of color? To what extent does Zoe, and ultimately the category of the octoroon, operate outside of the realm of the sexual politics of white men, if at all? Most importantly, how does the "octoroon's" visible whiteness but invisible blackness both construct and interrupt the racial order of the antebellum South in the 1850s? Through placing Boucicault's play, *The Octoroon*, into conversation with the historical construction of Louisiana and the fancy girl slave trade, I argue it is essential to interrogate fiction through the lens of history, in order to interrogate the ways in which we remember *The Octoroon*.

During the late antebellum period, as racial tensions were growing, Louisiana began implementing laws that

<sup>1</sup> Quadroon is a racial category in which a person is believed to have one-quarter African ancestry. See Gwendolyn Midlo Hall's *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1992. Hall has a discussion within the book about the racial categories that existed in Louisiana. Also, see Monique Guillory's dissertation, "Some Enchanted Night on the Auction Block: The Cultural Legacy of the New Orleans Quadroon Balls." Diss. New York University, 1999. Web. 16 June 2010, for her discussion on the fascination of mixed-race-d women and the spaces they occupied.

<sup>2</sup> Octoroon is a racial category in which a person is believed to contain one-ninth African ancestry. Terms such as quadroon and octoroon play into Foucault's discussion of the construction of desire and power through a mythical blood quantum in the 19th century. See Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* Vol. 1 for his discussion on the thematics of blood in the construction political power. In many ways, terms such as "octoroon" are a part of this discourse in terms of thinking through slavery and sexual desire of mixed-race-d women.



assaulted the marginal freedoms of free people of color. By 1859, the same year in which *The Octoroon* was published, Louisiana passed a self-enslavement law, known as “An Act to Permit Free Persons of African Descent to Select Their Masters and Become Slaves for Life,”<sup>3</sup> so that people of color could enslave themselves. Many free people of color were considered criminals and in certain areas “night-riding bands of armed white men beat free people of color and drove them out of the state” (Schafer 148–149). The havoc rendered on the bodies of free people of color was a direct result of the instability of the legality of slavery during the 19th century. Between the years of 1846 and 1862, slaves utilized the legal system to challenge not only their condition as slaves but also the institution of slavery. As white Southerners were trying to define strictly who was to occupy spaces of freedom and who was to occupy spaces of slavery, the fiction of the time saw an increase in characters who were visibly white but contained African ancestry.

As the primary purpose of melodramas was to arouse the emotions of its readers or viewers through exaggerated plots and characters, the story of the octoroon would appear quite simple. Jules Zanger has noted that the plot structure of 19th-century melodramas encompassed in slavery rhetoric had three main components. First, he notes, the “octoroon” is tragic, beautiful, and sexually vulnerable. Moreover, he insists that the octoroon is always the bearer of sentimental romance in which a Yankee overseer attempts to violate her. The octoroon is typically courted and loved by a Northerner or European who wants to marry her. Occasionally, “she escapes with her lover, more often than not she dies of a suicide, or dies of shame” (Zanger 63–64). The very simple plot lines of melodramas robbed characters of complexity. Situating the octoroon in her work on slavery, Saidiya Hartman has noted that, during the 19th century, “melodrama explored the pleasures and dangers of racial travesty in the tales of distressed quadroons and octoroons. Moreover, while mulatto figures, who were usually women, represented a crisis in racial legibility, they nonetheless made blackness more palatable” (Hartman 28). As in the case of the octoroon, blackness was even more palatable when it was not easily recognizable. Thus, although the playwright may have intended *The Octoroon* to occupy a neutral stance on the issue of slavery, reading it through history we can interrogate how it reflected the complicated status of both whiteness and blackness in the antebellum era.

Boucicault’s play was popular and often interpreted as an antislavery text by contemporary audiences because the play explored how slavery breeds miscegenation. Moreover, what trope is more intriguing than that of a woman caught between the ambiguous spaces of racialized identity, and freedom and slavery? More importantly, what evokes more fear than a woman who is visibly white being forced into slavery? Therefore, there is a paradox occurring between the pleasure of inciting sentiment and the dangers of racial ambiguity, as it pertains to freedom. Furthermore, it should be noted that the characters are always tragic due to their mixed-race heritage and never truly because of the abuses of slavery. Therefore, the story of the octoroon, in many ways, is the story of slavery in Louisiana.

One cannot talk about the history of the state without talking about the free people of color who once lived there. I argue that Louisiana is an “Atlantic space” due to its post-colonial status in the 19th century. Blackness in Louisiana should be considered through a transnational lens due to the influx of people and culture coming from France, Spain, and the Caribbean. Also, it was not uncommon for some individuals of color to be educated in France and return to Louisiana. Thus, reading Louisiana as an Atlantic space is essential to understanding the ways in which racial hierarchies were constructed, understood, and maintained. Although it is a part of the American South, oftentimes, it is forgotten that Louisiana fluctuated between French and Spanish colonial forces before ultimately being purchased by the U.S. government in 1804. Both the French and Spanish had a fluid policy in terms of interracial relationships and free people of color. The (in)famous “quadroon” balls, analyzed by scholar Monique Guillory, were spaces in which white men would choose mixed-race-d women in order to live in concubinage, known as *placage*.<sup>4</sup> *Placage* is a French word that means common law marriage in English. Although these relationships were not legally recognized, it was not a secretive institution. Guillory points out that newspapers, such as *The Daily Picayune*, advertised these balls with taglines of “White Men Only.” Thus, the institution of *placage* allowed many Creole women to gain freedom, both freedom from slavery and economic freedom, depending on the relationships they could negotiate with white men. An important factor in these negotiations could be skin color. The creation of race and the hierarchy of phenotype, specifically within Louisiana, translated into slavery as well. A woman could be a concubine of her own volition or a concubine by force. The lighter the slave, the more likely a slave

<sup>3</sup> See Schafer’s, *Becoming Free, Remaining Free: Manumission and Enslavement in New Orleans, 1846–1862*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2003, for her discussion on the ways in which slaves and free people of color were both challenged and marginalized by the discriminatory laws of antebellum Louisiana.

<sup>4</sup> Guillory discusses the creation of concubinage and desire of mixed race-d women through examining quadroon balls in New Orleans. She tackles issues of agency for women who participated in this institution.

could participate in the sex trade, known as the fancy girl slave trade.

Although many slave auctions, regardless of location, created a racialized spectacle, the sales of mixed-race women, known as “fancy girl” auctions, were extremely popular in Louisiana. Joseph Roach writes, “the sale of quadroons and octoroons, proved an exceptionally popular New Orleans specialty” (Roach 215). These women were sold both publicly and privately. The commodification of these women’s bodies not only made these women sexually available to white men, but it also created fictitious characteristics of black female sexuality that were romanticized through the color spectrum. In *Soul by Soul: Life Inside of the Antebellum Slave Market*, Walter Johnson gives countless examples of how these sales were remembered in history. Johnson quotes a bill of sale in which a girl was marketed as “13 years old, Bright Color, nearly a fancy for \$1135” (Johnson 113). From the description, the readers are able to discern the sexual fantasy being projected on the body of this young female through the word fancy. If a slaveholder greatly “fancied” a girl, according to Solomon Northrop, “there were men in New Orleans who would give five thousand dollars for such an extra fancy piece . . . rather than not get her” (Johnson 113). Walter Johnson acknowledges, “prices paid for [fancy] women, reached three hundred percent of the median prices paid in a year” (Johnson 113). Therefore, women were being purchased at exorbitantly high prices to straddle the line between companions and objects.

Thus, when we turn to Zoe’s transition into slavery, it is useful to position the scene in which she is sold on the auction block into conversation with the sales of racially ambiguous women during slavery. Zoe’s sale encapsulates Joseph Roach’s argument that historically, “the sale, of relatively well-educated and relatively white women into sexual bondage raised the erotic stakes higher in public, democratic spectacle that rivals all but the most private of pornographic exhibitions in aristocratic Europe” (Roach 215). The slave auction scene of the play represents a complicated space of love, desire, and terror for Zoe. According to Katherine McKittrick:

The auction block can—in the past and the present—invoke a different, and underacknowledged, field of meaning. This field of meaning provides a frame of reference, which understands that bodily inscriptions be scrutinized not for their measurable corporeal identifiers, but rather for thinking about how practices of subjugation are socially produced and evidence of a larger, unfinished, geographic story (McKittrick 90).

When Zoe steps on the block, Boucicault’s stage directions read, “Enter Zoe, very pale, and stands on table—McClosky, the Yankee overseer who forces Zoe into slavery due to his unrequited love, hitherto has taken no interest in the sale, now turns his chair” (Boucicault 28). Before the scene even starts, the readers are forced to acknowledge the predatory gaze of McClosky. Although “love” seemingly fuels his feelings for Zoe, white privilege and male chauvinism fuel his quest to own Zoe, in order to fulfill his sexual desires. The auction block reaffirms the place of whiteness and blackness in society. Although Zoe is phenotypically white, her refusal to live as a concubine to McClosky allows her to assert agency over her body and her heart. However, the very use of her subjectivity, when she denies his romantic advances, also places Zoe on the auction block.

Cheryl Harris’s notion of whiteness as property<sup>5</sup> enables us to understand how McClosky’s whiteness is created through his ability to buy Zoe and force her into a position of sexual bondage. The slave auction block sale reaffirms her blackness, even if it is invisible. Furthermore, Zoe is sold for 25,000 dollars, an enormous sum of money, after an intense scene of bidding by several characters. Although the scene is exaggerated for effect, it is very similar to the ways in which men competed for women in the fancy girl trade. McClosky states, “[he] will sink every dollar [he] is worth in her purchase, [he’ll] own that Octoroon” (Boucicault 13). The play on stage reflects the staged sales of fancy girls, as analyzed by Walter Johnson, “whether they were buying these high-priced women to be their companions or simply their toys, slaveholders showed that they had the power to purchase what was forbidden and the audacity to show it off” (Johnson 114). McClosky made himself into a spectacle through the way he wielded his money for Zoe. However, the power to own Zoe represents the importance of maintaining boundaries between whiteness and blackness.

The reading of this play, and this scene in general, is normalized through a narrative of history that does not differentiate the complexities of slave societies. Although most people are aware of the sexual violence rendered on the slave’s body, sexual abuse among women during the antebellum South has become normalized in that we often do not hear about those complicated spaces that women occupied. Although *The Octoroon* is a work of imaginative drama and Zoe is a fictitious character, the play calls attention to the realities of slavery and the avenues of freedom that existed for this group of women. However, the way that Boucicault romanticizes the play presents some major problems for the

<sup>5</sup> See Cheryl Harris’s article, “Whiteness as Property,” for her discussion of how slavery and domination allowed the development of racial identity and property to become intertwined concepts.

way history is remembered and represented. During slave auctions, people did not fight to save a slave because they loved her; they fought for the ability to make the slave their possession.

In *Silencing The Past*, Michel Trouillot asserts, “human beings participate in history as both actors and as narrators”; thus, history is created between tensions of “what happened and that which is said to have happened” (Trouillot 2–3). The use of the “octoroon” in 19th-century antebellum literature represents a problem with historical memory. Tales of the “octoroon” and other “tragic” mulatto/a stories allow for many audiences to think within the trap of white supremacy. According to Daphne Brooks, the “octoroon” becomes:

a body without a nation, and yet like the slideshow freak, the transatlantic body in performance is repeatedly called on to forge some kind of national consciousness, at the very moments in which its figure exposes and affirms the tenuousness of nationalism and its fictions (Brooks 29).

How can we talk about history when the appropriations of these women’s bodies and histories have been called into being through romantic notions of death and desire? Octoroons are often remembered as tragic and their history is found mainly on the pages of fiction stories. Although these stories are flawed and distort history, they also reveal the popular fascination with these women who were simultaneously fancied and written out of historical memory. These stories leave us to wonder how our understanding of history and slavery might be transformed through examinations of women of color and the coalescing of desire, love, and violence.

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# Wishing the World Undone: Domestic Destruction in *Macbeth*

Susan Tan, *Williams College*

*Susan Tan graduated from Williams College in 2010 with a degree in English. Through a fellowship awarded by the Herchel-Smith Foundation, she will be spending the next two years studying at the University of Cambridge. In her first year, Susan will pursue a Master's in Education with a focus on children's education and children's literature; in the second, she will pursue a Master's in English Literature. Ultimately, she plans to return to the U.S., to pursue a PhD in literature.*

## Abstract

The following is the introduction to Susan's senior honors thesis, entitled "Wishing the World Undone: Domestic Destruction in *Macbeth*." Her thesis explores the role of family in *Macbeth*, looking at domesticity in the play alongside early modern conceptions of family, domestic order, and gender roles. As early modern England underwent profound changes in political rule, religious beliefs, and social ideas, the preservation of family became a pressing and urgent concern. The introduction delves into this background, exploring a period which viewed family as the cornerstone of order and society, and setting the stage for a reading of *Macbeth* through this historical and cultural lens.

## Introduction

A household is as it were a little commonwealth, by the good government whereof, God's glory may be advanced; the commonwealth, which standeth of several families, benefited; and all that live in that family may receive much comfort and commodity.<sup>1</sup>

As a kingdom cannot stand if it be divided, a house cannot stand if it be divided, for strife is like fire which leaves nothing but dust and smoke and ashes behind it.<sup>2</sup>

*Macbeth* was first performed in 1606, three years after the death of Queen Elizabeth. The Lord Chamberlain's Men had become the King's Men, and *Macbeth* seems to have been written in honour of, or to perform before, King James.<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth had reigned for 45 years of relative stability and peace within England. But the years leading to Elizabeth's reign were tumultuous, and the memories of

instability and violence that had spanned from Henry VIII's death to Elizabeth's succession would have been seared upon England's cultural memory. In the wake of the Reformation, England had changed religious directions three times: first, with Henry's declaration of the Anglican Church and Edward's Protestant reign; then with Mary's Catholic reign; and finally, with Elizabeth's reinstatement of Protestantism. Each shift and ruler brought a new wave of religious violence. Mary had Protestant supporters burned at the stake; Edward and Elizabeth had Catholic priests disembowelled.<sup>4</sup>

With the ascent of King James I of England and Scotland, many Catholics hoped that James, whose mother had been Catholic, would herald a new era of religious tolerance. They were disappointed, however, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605—an attempt to assassinate James and install a Catholic monarch—revived old suspicions and led to the reinstatement of harsher religious measures.<sup>5</sup> Monarchy and government were bloody institutions—and political violence was often a family matter. Indeed, James was part of that family and intimately connected with the same political and familial violence. James had been named ruler of Scotland in place of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, when he was barely a year old, forcing her to flee to England where she was later executed by Elizabeth, her cousin.<sup>6</sup>

Amidst this religious and political upheaval, early modern society was undergoing significant structural and social shifts. The gradual decline of the feudal system had led to distinct cultural changes, and countless pamphlets, treatises, and dramas show that early modern subjects were aware that society was in a state of transition and rapid innovation.<sup>7</sup> There was a world in flux, and early modern thinkers cast about to ground themselves, to find a source of stability. And, as social structures shifted and the communal great halls of medieval castles were gradually phased out, the relatively new space of the private home emerged as this anchor.<sup>8</sup>

In a world with "no standing army . . . no state police, and as a result of the Reformation, no church as authoritarian as the Roman church had been . . . both the monarchy and the new church of England turned to the household as the institution in which order was to be created, modelled, and

<sup>1</sup> John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government: for the Ordering of Private Families, According to the Direction of Gods Word* (London, 1598), in *Elizabethan Households*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Seattle and London: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1995), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Smith, *A Preparative to Marriage* (London, 1591), in Orlin, *Elizabethan Households*, 40.

<sup>3</sup> William Shakespeare, and William C. Carroll, ed., *Macbeth: Texts and Contexts* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Carroll, *Macbeth Texts and Contexts*, 249.

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

<sup>7</sup> Phillipe Aries, Introduction to *Passions of the Renaissance*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, *A History of Private Life*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).



enforced.<sup>9</sup> The home became central, a keystone that upheld society and government, which ensured order and stability. Every man's "house [was] his castle," a phrase coined during the time period.<sup>10</sup> Order and hierarchy within the home corresponded directly to social and political order and hierarchy. A householder ruled his home as the king ruled the nation.

At the same time, as the new importance of the home emerged, it simultaneously became a source of deep anxiety. If the home fell or was in any way "corrupted," then the fall of society and government had to follow, a belief perhaps compounded by the memory of Henry VIII's divorce, the catalyst for decades of religious violence. Those who went against the household went against the kingdom, and wives who murdered their husbands were charged with high treason, the penalty for killing a monarch.<sup>11</sup> Home, as an ideal, was highly fraught. Privacy was essential, yet had it to be monitored to ensure that it was being "properly" upheld. That is, that householders exerted appropriate authority and wives fulfilled their domestic roles. The family lay the groundwork for society, yet the family also possessed the power to destroy society through its own dissolution. Domesticity was terrifying in its supremacy.

*Macbeth* is ostensibly a political drama. It charts a political rise and fall, centering on monarchy and rule. However, just as King James I proclaimed that "the King towards his people is rightly compared to a father of children" in his *True Lawe of Free Monarchies*, so too is the political in *Macbeth* focused on family and concerned with these early modern anxieties about the state of the home.<sup>12</sup> In *Macbeth*, the domestic becomes a space of violence and death, and like the keystone envisioned by early modern thinkers, as the home decays, the rest of the world falls into chaos "till destruction [sickens]" (4.1.63).

As we place the play in its historical contexts, we can imagine that for early modern audiences, *Macbeth's* violence was highly personal. As *Macbeth* stages a political drama in domestic spaces—where husband and wife plot against a king in the privacy of their home, regicide is committed in a guest-room bed, and the spirit world is invited in under the "battlements" of the family dwelling—it raises the ghosts of a not-so-distant past, drawing on a very real and terrifying force in the lives and memories of its viewers. Shakespeare's audiences would have been all-too familiar with the

destruction a political family could wreak and all-too familiar with the consequences of this violence upon their own families.

*Macbeth's* all-encompassing destruction would have resonated on the same level. While succession has historically involved familial violence, the religious violence of the Tudors brought destruction that, for early modern subjects, would have transcended the physical. As each new monarch threatened religious dissidents with torture and death—with neighbour encouraged to spy on neighbour and church attendance noted by the authorities—survival required a willingness to assume and shed faith, to casually relinquish what an early modern subject would have considered a fundamental component of self. Political violence had the potential to wreak a destruction so complete that it threatened the soul, violence extending to the most fundamental levels of identity.

In the same way, *Macbeth* stages violence and destruction that is intimately and dangerously proximate to home, family, and self. The domestic emerges as central to all order, the keystone that supports not only society and government, but nature and identity as well. Family becomes supreme, and disruptions within the family unit sound, reverberate, and multiply, echoing through *Macbeth* as all are made to feel the consequences of familial disorder and familial loss.

Theater is closely connected with these ideas of family and order. As the state of the family and home became an increasing cultural concern, theater was used as a means of social catharsis. By staging visions of terrifying domesticity through a new genre of "domestic drama," early modern theater aired and assuaged social concerns. Theater, however, was highly fraught itself, and as it staged the terrifying proximity of violence and family, it too became dangerous, threatening to destroy and confuse boundaries of self and other, audience and spectacle.

Thus, as we examine domesticity in *Macbeth*, the exploration of family becomes much more. As family became placed at the center of social stability, political order, natural order, and individuality, the implications of familial destruction and the power of domesticity run amok come to threaten the most fundamental of boundaries, revealing a profound sense of instability in the early modern psyche.

<sup>9</sup> Orlin, *Elizabethan Households*, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Orlin, *Private Matters*, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1994), 21.

<sup>12</sup> James I, King of England, *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I*, ed. James Craigie and Alexander Law (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), 74.



The home and the private are tenuous spaces, characterized by a sense of uncertainty and very real and imminent danger, whose destabilization threatens subjectivity itself.

*Macbeth* indeed stages political events. Shakespeare undoubtedly borrowed its plot from Holinshed's *Historie of Scotland*, basing his play on a history of King James' ancestry.<sup>13</sup> But as *Macbeth* stages political violence in domestic spaces, political drama becomes a family drama and is made all the more terrifying and horrifying in its proximity. As *Macbeth* enacts the triumph of James' ancestors, it presents us with a vision of domesticity gone wrong, one associated with witchcraft and natural destruction, which brings a chaos so complete that it threatens fundamental boundaries of sleep and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, self and other. The politics of *Macbeth* become personal. The evil in *Macbeth* comes home.

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<sup>13</sup> Carroll, *Macbeth Texts and Contexts*.

# Looking Behind the Bedroom Door: Productive Sensationalism and Domestic Violence in Leonora Sansay's *Secret History*

Sharon Tran, *Macaulay Honors College at CUNY Queens*

Sharon Tran, from Little Neck, Queens, graduated in 2010 with an English degree from Macaulay Honors College at CUNY Queens. She is currently a first-year doctoral student in the English Department at UCLA specializing in Asian-American literature. Her research examines representations of Asian-Americans in relation to technology and how they use technology, particularly the Internet, to fashion new identities and diasporic relations. Sharon is also broadly interested in race and cultural studies, discourses of globalization, postcolonialism, and (techno)Orientalism.

## Abstract

This paper examines how Leonora Sansay's *Secret History* employs a productive sensationalism that calls attention to "private" acts of domestic violence and sexual exploitation that have been too often omitted from official archival accounts of the Haitian Revolution. I argue that Sansay's narrative challenges the conventional division drawn between public and private history, demonstrating how the home and the bedroom are highly politicized spaces shaped by colonial power structures. By deliberately framing the incidents and exchanges that occur within such spaces as spectacles, Sansay accentuates how this repressed "domestic" history of the Haitian Revolution should no longer be kept behind closed doors and must be finally seen, acknowledged, and addressed.

In *Secret History; or The Horrors of St. Domingo* (2008), Leonora Sansay challenges the conventional representation of the Haitian Revolution as a colonial race war by foregrounding gender relations and narratives of domestic violence. Rather than depictions of open, brutal military clashes, Sansay focuses on the conflicts that occur behind closed doors, in the home and in the bedroom. In this way, Sansay accentuates how the chaos, violence, and spirit of the antislavery revolution infiltrated all areas of society, inspiring and also making possible the achievement of female liberation from an oppressive patriarchal colonial order and the tyrannical institution of marriage. Many critics have noted how the political narrative in *Secret History* intersects with the domestic narrative in revealing ways, demonstrating how these spheres are not entirely separate.<sup>1</sup> Sansay certainly depicts gender relations in Saint Domingue during the revolutionary period as highly politicized and shaped by colonial power structures. Few critics, however, have commented on the theatricality of the text as both a

sensationalist object and a narrative heavily structured around the notion of performance. In the following paper, I argue that Sansay deliberately frames *Secret History* as a spectacle in order to encourage readers to reexamine what they see or don't see and why.

Sansay's epistolary narrative offers readers a voyeuristic glimpse of private, secret acts of violence, which are especially horrifying because they literally occur within the home. Sansay employs a productive form of sensationalism that calls attention to female oppression, while also exposing its connections and parallels with the abuses of colonialism and slavery. This hint of scandal and intrigue is immediately apparent from the title page where Sansay frames her narrative as "A series of letters, written by a lady at Cape Francois, to Colonel Burr, late vice-president of the United States, principally during the command of General Rochambeau" (59). Sansay deliberately foregrounds her real life affair and correspondence with the infamous Aaron Burr, the man responsible for shooting Alexander Hamilton and the first person in the U.S. ever to be accused of treason. Much of the narrative is structured in the form of letters written from the perspective of Mary, a fictional stand-in for Sansay, who is presented as an American woman who journeys to Saint Domingue with her newly wed sister, Clara, and her husband, St. Louis, a French colonial seeking to reclaim his island plantation. From her subtitle, Sansay certainly generates sensation for her fictional narrative by implicating historical facts and figures.

In *Romance to Novel: A Secret History*, Gretchen Woertendyke elaborates on the connection between Sansay's narrative and the 18th-century British genre of the "secret history." She explains that secret histories are Old World forms that connect tales of "political subterfuge, corruption and sexual scandal" to the private affairs and actions of political figures (260).<sup>2</sup> Woertendyke links Sansay's *Secret History* with this tradition because of the author's confession of her relationship with Burr. She therefore critiques tendencies to analyze *Secret History* as only a novel, insisting that Sansay compels readers to view her text as a "mixed genre" (275). I would assert further that this form stems from the nature of Sansay's text, where sexual relations of domination and exploitation constitute a repressed domestic history that must be retold as "fiction" because it does not fit in the conventional paradigm of history as public and political.

<sup>1</sup> See Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's "The Secret History of the Early American Novel: Leonora Sansay and Revolution in Saint Domingue," Theresa Strouth Gaul's "Recovering Recovery: Early American Women and *Legacy's* Future," and Gretchen Woertendyke's "Romance to Novel: A Secret History."

<sup>2</sup> Woertendyke provides Delariviere Manley's *The Secret History of Queen Zarah, and the Zarahines* as one example of a secret history that introduces readers to "the uncomfortable intimacy between Queen Anne's bedchamber and her governance of the nation," where private and public history converge, mutually affecting and shaping each other (260).

Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, describes an “unhomely” moment as one where “the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting” (13). I argue that Sansay’s narrative embodies this notion of “unhomeness” because it collapses the rigid binary between private and public history, as the author’s relationship with Burr is simultaneously intimate and political.<sup>3</sup> Bhabha emphasizes the need to deeply examine these “unhomely” moments because they often reveal overlooked acts of oppression while also holding the dynamic potential for reorienting perspectives, challenging definitions of “home” and “world,” of “private” and “public” as distinct entities, demonstrating how these constructed categories overlap in uncanny ways. This is true of *Secret History*, where the sensational blurb on the title page is a public historicization of a private epistolary correspondence. Importantly, it also reveals that in writing her narrative, Sansay was compelled to engage in an authorial negotiation of her relationship with other men. Her own female voice appears heavily reliant on Burr and Rochambeau as masculine, political signifiers and can only be articulated in relation to them. Therefore, while Sansay certainly capitalizes on her affair with Burr by explicitly presenting him as the intended letter recipient, we also realize that she is somewhat defined and bound by her relationship with him, ensnared in a complex patriarchal order like many of her female characters. The productive sensationalism of the opening title page becomes the frame for the rest of the narrative as Sansay offers titillating accounts of domestic violence, exposing these private (hi)stories laced with intrigue, while also turning them into public history in the process as secrets that should no longer be kept behind closed doors.

In his “Introduction” to *Secret History*, Michael J. Drexler makes the astute observation that both female narrators, Mary and Clara, never “repor[t] any eyewitness accounts of black violence in the text” (32). They reproduce the spectacles they learn about through informal information channels such as gossip and rumors that are characterized by drama, theatrical exaggeration, and fantasy. In this way, Sansay offers a commentary on domestic and racialized violence as simultaneously that which people perversely delight to see and that which cannot be directly seen. These atrocities are the subject of great fascination and are widely circulated but they also possess, as in the words of Michel-Rolph Trouillot, an “unthinkable” quality

<sup>3</sup> According to Michael J. Drexler in his “Introduction” to *Secret History*, Leonora Sansay served as Burr’s “mistress, confidante, and, perhaps, a political operative as well,” delivering messages for him as a rumored accomplice in his treasonous attempts to establish a new empire separate from the United States (27, 31).

(82).<sup>4</sup> In “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-event,” Trouillot asserts that the Haitian Revolution was “unthinkable” because it contradicted the Enlightenment project of scientific racism, where the enslavement of blacks was rationalized by their “inherent” biological inferiority and incapacity to understand the concept of freedom, much less organize a successful revolt to attain it. Sansay particularly locates the “unthinkable” aspects of the Haitian Revolution in incidents of domestic and racialized violence, which are never directly witnessed but necessarily retold and essentially re-thought from a distance. In one letter Mary relates a particularly grotesque anecdote where a Creole woman mutilates the body of a female slave:

One lady, who had a beautiful negro girl . . . thought she saw some symptoms of tendresse in the eyes of her husband, and all the furies of jealousy seized her soul. She ordered one of her slaves to cut off the head of the unfortunate victim, which was instantly done. At dinner her husband said he felt no disposition to eat, to which his wife, with the air of a demon, replied, perhaps I can give you something that will excite your appetite. . . . She rose and drew from a closet the head of Coomba. The husband, shocked beyond expression, left the house and sailed immediately for France, in order never again to behold such a monster (70).

This tale is so sensationalistic not simply because it features a brutal act of violence but because it occurs in a familiar domestic space during dinner, a mundane aspect of daily life that is deeply perverted by the serving of a slave girl’s severed head instead of ordinary food. Sansay deliberately exposes this private narrative, which centers on a husband and wife’s marital tensions and suspicions of potentially adulterous behavior, for public consideration and circulation. The fact that Mary’s letters are addressed to Burr in the U.S. particularly demonstrates that this information is not only being passed around locally among people in Saint Domingue but also across expansive geographic distances—and therefore has transatlantic implications. Sansay frames the unfortunate story of Coomba as a spectacle in order to accentuate its importance as public history, as something that needs to be witnessed.

In this scene Sansay reveals how ordinary marital conflicts escalate to a whole new level of horror and violence as a result of the racial dynamics on the island. If Trouillot

<sup>4</sup> Trouillot borrows Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of the “unthinkable” as referring to “that which one cannot conceive within the range of possible alternatives which perverts all answers because it defies the terms under which the questions are phrased” (82).

suggests that it was “unthinkable” that enslaved Africans could successfully revolt against a white colonial power, it was just as “unthinkable” for women of color to pose as real competitors against white women for male affection according to Euro-American standards of beauty. Yet the Creole lady in the anecdote viewed Coomba as such a threat that she had to mutilate her body. The serving of Coomba’s head reveals her secret fear of failing to excite her husband’s sexual appetite in the same way that the black female slave can. In his essay, Trouillot further asserts that when the occurrence of the Haitian Revolution became undeniable, people attempted to narrate the event in specific ways to uphold white European racial and cultural hierarchies.<sup>5</sup> In this episode, Sansay demonstrates how Mary’s re-telling of Coomba’s story also entails an explicit re-thinking. The husband’s attraction to Coomba is described as “symptoms of *tendresse*,” as if he is infected with some disease. The Creole woman is similarly presented as a perverse female, a kind of “demon” or “monster.” The emphasis on these peculiar, singular conditions is an attempt to draw the “unthinkable” back into the realm of conceivable, sanctioned thought. Sansay notably attributes the Creole couple’s “unnatural” impulses and inclinations to the circumstances of Saint Domingue. The man immediately leaves the island with the expectation that in France he will find a more civilized society where women do not engage in horrific, “unthinkable” acts of violence. While Sansay offers a possibly racist depiction of Saint Domingue as an uncivilized, savage terrain, she importantly refocuses our attention taking us away from the internal sphere of fraught marital relations to external systems such as colonialism and slavery.<sup>6</sup>

Clara’s narrative also emerges as an “unthinkable” repressed “domestic” (hi)story of the Saint Dominguan revolution. Much of *Secret History* is told from the perspective of Mary. While she is aware of some of the physical abuses St. Louis inflicts upon his wife, we only begin to suspect her credibility as a narrator at the end when we are presented with Clara’s epistolary perspective for the first time. She begins her letter to Mary exclaiming: “You know for you witnessed, my domestic infelicity; yet, how many of my pains did I not conceal, to spare you the anguish of

lamenting sorrows” (137). Clara reveals that the depth of her suffering has not been fully witnessed, suggesting that there are many secret abuses she will personally relate. Her tale emerges as arguably the only first-person testimony of domestic violence in the narrative, but unlike traditional captivity narratives with respect to the Haitian Revolution, Clara is not presented as a prisoner of black insurgents but rather her own white colonial husband.<sup>7</sup>

Thus far, Mary largely represented Clara as a coy, frivolous flirt. It is only after reading Clara’s letter, that we begin to realize the extent to which she suffered as a result of her marriage. She relates that she finally resolved to run away from her husband after he came home one night and “swore that he would render [her] horrible by rubbing aqua-fortis in [her] face. This last menace deprived [her] of the power of utterance; to kill [her] was a trifling evil, but to live disfigured ... was an insufferable idea and roused [her] to madness” (138). This testimony reveals the terrible abuse Clara was constantly subjected to and that her relationship with St. Louis is not so much that of husband-and-wife but rather master-and-slave. The threat of disfigurement recalls the numerous depictions of careless mutilation of black bodies throughout the novel as well as the practice of branding slaves to mark signs of ownership. While Clara’s reaction of speechless horror to St. Louis’s threat can be attributed to her feminine vanity, it can also signify her shocking realization that her position is not too different from a slave’s, that St. Louis can just as easily mutilate her body without facing any serious consequences.

In “Hegel and Haiti,” Susan Buck-Morss offers a helpful explication of Hegel’s master-slave dialect, accentuating the need to examine how it was influenced by the revolution in Saint Domingue that occurred during Hegel’s lifetime. Hegel describes the relationship as beginning with the slaves’ total dependency on the master to provide them sustenance through colonial economic surplus, where the state of “slave consciousness” is that of “thinghood” (54). The reversal comes, however, when the slaves realize the master’s dependence on them and become capable of viewing themselves as more than just things. While Buck-Morss asserts that Hegel becomes “silent” about what follows this moment of

<sup>5</sup> Trouillot discusses two different “formulas of silence” employed, one that involves a complete erasure of the Haitian Revolution through archival omission and the other, which attempts to trivialize the event in ignoring its radical, singular components by attributing its success, for example, to external factors rather than recognizing internal work of the slaves themselves (96).

<sup>6</sup> Rather than depicting the feelings and consequences of murderous jealousy as isolated problems located within the Creole women themselves, Sansay suggests that they are inspired by societal forces and conditions.

<sup>7</sup> See Jeremy D. Popkin’s “Facing Racial Revolution: Captivity Narratives and Identity in the Saint-Domingue Insurrection” for more information about captivity narratives with respect to the Haitian Revolution. Popkin examines first-person testimonies by individuals such as M. Gros and Michel Etienne Descourtilz. He discusses how they reveal a crisis in identity as these authors confront blacks who challenged their preconceived racial stereotypes, forcing them to reconcile their understanding of the Western “self” against the “new” black “other.” Popkin contends that the most unsettling aspect of Gros’s and Descourtilz’s accounts is that they not only revealed how people of color could successfully repel a white colonizing power but also how they could manipulate whites into employing their knowledge about law and medicine to their own revolutionary movement.

realization, she contends that the slaves ultimately achieve their humanity and agency in deciding to fight a revolution for freedom. Sansay suggests that this was true for the slaves in Saint Domingue who had “acquired a knowledge of their own strength” (76–77). Against the popular discourse of the time, Sansay emphasizes that enslaved Africans fought valiantly against the injustice of their enslavement.

I argue that it is also possible to consider Clara’s narrative in the context of Hegel’s master-slave dialect. St. Louis’s position as a “master” is demonstrated through her slave-like dependence on the economic surplus of his colonial possessions to finance her living expenses. The fact that Clara must travel with him to Saint Domingue accentuates the extent to which she is bound to him. Their marriage license is merely a more overt manifestation of the contractual agreements that Hegel suggests human beings are always already caught in through a complex network of “commodity exchange” (Buck-Morss 10). Clara can only break the contract and leave her husband when she realizes her master’s dependence on her because this knowledge will allow her to conceive herself as more than a mere object. I assert that this moment comes shortly after St. Louis threatens to disfigure her with acid: “From this stupor I was roused by his caresses, or rather by his brutal approaches, for he always finds my person provoking, and often, whilst pouring on my head abuse . . . he has sought in my arms gratification which should be solicited with affection, and granted to love alone” (139). As St. Louis abuses Clara he also betrays an uncontrollable attraction to her female body, punishing her with “his brutal approaches,” while also expressing a perverse delight in touching her, which Clara recognizes as a form of dependence. This discovery allows her to break free of her “slave consciousness” as she identifies “love” as something she has the right to experience.<sup>8</sup>

Sansay’s *Secret History* ultimately calls attention to the “disavowal” of female oppression in narratives about the Haitian Revolution.<sup>9</sup> She suggests that in addition to the

black slaves who were literally imprisoned and exploited through slavery, white Creole women also faced similar abuses in the tyrannical institution of marriage.<sup>10</sup> In *Modernity Disavowed*, Sibylle Fischer notes that racial and sexual oppression was inextricably intertwined in the institution of slavery as masters maintained complete “personal domination” over their slaves (17). Sansay reinforces and elaborates on that notion by demonstrating how the masters’ wives were also victims of sexual oppression. Fischer further discusses the important role women played in abolitionism and how the “language of antislavery was taken up literally by the suffrage movement” (17). This historical connection between the fight for black and female rights is especially helpful in understanding Sansay’s text and how the juxtaposition of the domestic narrative with the political race narrative is not entirely jarring or unfounded.

Sansay ultimately presents *Secret History* as a spectacle, drawing readers’ attention by employing a productive form of sensationalism. She depicts domestic violence in order to expose these private, repressed (hi)stories and turn them into public history to accentuate their need to be seen and acknowledged. Clara’s narrative particularly encourages readers to interrogate and reexamine what they see and what they are shown. Her first-person testimony casts Mary’s observations of her into doubt, revealing a secret (hi)story of domestic abuse that is constantly happening but outsiders cannot see because most are not trained to look and even those that are, cannot fully perceive or understand the extent of the abuse. Clara’s journey through El Cobre to freedom ultimately compels readers to recognize the often-overlooked parallels and interconnections between histories of female oppression and slavery.

<sup>8</sup> The “stupor” Clara falls into is similar to Hegel’s silence after he describes the slave’s moment of realization. It is a kind of speechless “madness” because the idea of leaving her husband, of staging a revolution for female independence is “mad” but still necessary to achieve liberty (Sansay 138).

<sup>9</sup> I allude to the concept of “disavowal” Sibylle Fischer forwards in her seminal text *Modernity Disavowed*, where she critiques how “the Caribbean plantation and political upheavals in the colonies rarely make it into the histories of modernity and revolution” (7). Fischer emphasizes that, above all, sugar production in the Caribbean functioned as an emblematic machine of modern capitalist economy, where industrial agriculture was predicated on the exploitation of human labor through the transatlantic slave trade (12). She ultimately characterizes the Caribbean slave economy as a “modernity disavowed.” Fischer takes care to distinguish the concept of “disavowal” from popular discourses about trauma, which merely locates events in the realm of the unthinkable and unspeakable because disavowal “forces us to identify what is being disavowed, by whom, and for what reason” (38).

<sup>10</sup> Sansay engages in the certainly precarious act of equating the experiences of these two groups, which can problematically obscure their particular, historical differences. As Clara visits various people in “El Cobre,” for example, she cannot help but examine the conditions around her through a colonial, capitalistic gaze. She deplores how one man, the “owner of countless multitudes of cattle” had trouble “procur[ing] a little milk” for his guests (143). Clara critiques the lack of productivity all around her, comparing the place to Saint Domingue where “every inch of ground was in the highest state of cultivation, and everybody was rich” (144). In this moment, Clara emerges as a disturbing proponent of capitalism and colonization, suggesting that these systems promote economic efficiency and allow for the accumulation of profit and wealth, while forgetting the oppressive patriarchal structures that come along with them. But while it is important to bear in mind that Clara occupies a vastly different social and power position from the black slaves in Saint Domingue, the parallel Sansay foregrounds is still important and valuable.



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# One's Heritage Does Not Define Oneself: An Analysis of Factors that Contributed to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Writings and Speeches

Alonzo Vereen, *Morehouse College*

*Alonzo Vereen was raised in Belle Glade, FL, and is currently a junior at Morehouse College, where he is majoring in English. Alonzo will be continuing his studies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at University College London in the UK in fall 2010 as a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow.*

## Abstract

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s profound abilities as an orator and advocate of peace are well-known, yet, the origins of his passion for both speaking and peace have been highly contested throughout the scholarly world. This article attempts to show that King was an individual who encompassed and was molded by multiple people and theologies. Ultimately, the article challenges the common portrayal of King as solely a "Black preacher" or theological and philosophical scholar.

In 1997, Wyatt Tee Walker, the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference from 1960–1964 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Chief of Staff, presented a lecture that served as a discussion of King's impact on social and public policy. Toward the middle of his lecture, while explaining King's skills as an orator, he stated, "It was not Crozer nor Boston University... nor Gandhi nor Thoreau that contributed to the construct of the life and mission of Martin Luther King, Jr. It was Jesus Christ of Nazareth! If in assessing King, you miss his being an African-American preacher, you will miss him altogether!" (Walker 132). As opinionated as this statement may seem, Walker does not stand alone in his claim. There are other scholars, such as Carolyn Calloway-Thomas and John Louis Lucaites, who also seek to prove that King's writings are essentially a body of sermons rooted in black theology (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites 1993: 2). However, this argument is not only incomplete but indicative of a larger movement that seeks to portray King as an individual influenced solely by one group of people or one way of thinking rather than as someone influenced by a myriad of factors.

Those seeking to prove one-sided views of King, such as the ones posed by Walker and Lucaites, can risk completely disregarding the knowledge Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. acquired elsewhere, particularly outside the black church. For instance, King used the information he gathered at Crozer Theological Seminary to begin a process of constructing sermons and essays that would follow him throughout the remainder of his professional career. While studying at Crozer, King discovered the works of Walter

Rauschenbusch and Reinhold Niebuhr; the literature of those theologians provided King with a personal understanding of theology that helped him remain balanced and sure of his tactics throughout the Civil Rights Movement. Contrary to Walker's claim, Niebuhr, Gandhi, and Thoreau greatly influenced the life and mission of Martin Luther King, Jr. Certainly, King was also influenced directly by the teachings of Jesus Christ, however, his interpretations of those teachings, parables, and miracles emerged, in part, from a distinctly African-American perspective. King viewed the teachings of Christ through the lenses of liberation theology, which seeks to interpret the *Holy Bible* in ways that will influence people's liberation from unjust political and social situations. The sum of these factors—the influences of Crozer, Rauschenbusch, and Niebuhr and the black church—should all be understood and respected without placing emphasis on any one or making others seem less significant.

After obtaining a degree from Morehouse College, King moved to Chester, Pennsylvania, a small industrial town outside Philadelphia and enrolled at Crozer Theological Seminary. While attending Crozer he took a course in homiletics, the art of preaching and writing sermons. His professor, Robert Keighton, taught him how to concentrate his energies when preparing sermons on the classical form of the argument. Keighton's influence on King is evident as many of the techniques Keighton personally favored can be pointed out quite often in King's work: "understatement, dry humor, tightly structured presentations, and the sprinkling of quotes from playwrights and poets" (Branch 76).

Keighton also provided King with a great deal of knowledge on how to structure a powerful sermon. The formats provided by Keighton were ones King had never received in such detail and technical specificity throughout his interactions with neither those up-and-coming Baptist preachers attending Crozer nor those in Atlanta. King did not receive those formats from his father, Daddy King. However, King received them, utilized them, and practiced them at Crozer under Keighton's tutelage. There were formats such as the Ladder Sermon, the Skyrocket Sermon, the Jewel Sermon, the Twin Sermon, and the Surprise Package Sermon.<sup>1</sup> King used each of these formats while attending Crozer Seminary, Boston University, and throughout his professional career as an in-demand orator (Branch 77).

One example of King's usage of these formats is displayed in "How a Christian Overcomes Evil," which he wrote while attending Boston University. This sermon eventually

<sup>1</sup> For more information on each sermonic format, consult page 77 in *Parting the Waters*, by Taylor Branch.

became one he gave during his first pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Its first draft shows that its structural composition was clearly modeled after the Ladder Sermon, containing three ascending steps that each divide into parts. In this sermon King also brought in another of Professor Keighton's highly favored techniques—the sprinkling of quotes from playwrights and poets—actually using one of the greatest writers of epic poetry, Homer. He contrasted the way two epic characters, Ulysses and Orpheus, overcame the evil of tempting yet fatal sirens (Branch 99). In this first draft, the influences of Professor Keighton are still very evident.

However, Walker's claim that the black church had a great influence on King is not completely untrue. King did learn a great deal from his peers and role models of the black church. Many African-American students at Crozer who spoke at black churches during the weekends for extra money created one particular technique that King and his friends liked to joke about. It was called the Rabbit in the Bushes sermon. Whenever the preacher heard the crowd stir, he or she would repeat the theme under the assumption that a sensitive topic had been mentioned. This technique is similar to a hunter that shoots at a bush after hearing it shake because he or she is under the assumption that a rabbit is there (Branch 77). Even though King joked about this technique, he eventually began to use it frequently at mass meetings in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement.

Yet, as influential as his course on homiletics was, King also gleaned a great deal of knowledge and inspiration from other courses. However, persistent insisting that the black church was the sole influence on King, as suggested by Walker, neglects considerable information that contradicts such a claim.

During his first year at Crozer, King read Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907). King cited this piece of literature, as one of the texts that had a major influence on his own religious beliefs. Many theologians view *Christianity and the Social Crisis* as the canonical text for the Social Gospel. Within this text, Rauschenbusch asserts that religious emphasis on piety, the supernatural, and metaphysics is not the best way to interpret the *Holy Bible*. He explains that Christianity should rather be interpreted as a "spirit of brotherhood [that is] made manifest in social ethics" (Branch 73).

King began to internalize Rauschenbusch's theology and definition of Social Gospel. He took on the belief that defilement comes from decisions that contradict his moral

beliefs and conscience. Taylor Branch states, in his Pulitzer Prize winning book for History, *Parting the Waters* (1988), that "By the second year [at Crozer], King was so imbued with the Social Gospel that he dared to drink beer, smoke cigarettes, and play pool openly in the presence of his father" (75). This was a King radically different from ML, King's family nickname, who entered Crozer just a year earlier. Back then, during his first year at Crozer, King visited Joseph Kirkland who was a preacher's son much like himself, and was offered a beer from the cooler. King objected "saying that they all had 'the burdens of the Negro race' on their shoulders" (Branch 75). However, this new King believed that it was not what he did in those poolrooms or the beer he drank that made him a bad person. It was the decisions he made in the poolroom or the decisions he made after drinking that determined the type of person he was. I posit that this form of theology and way of thinking is what allowed King to navigate through the many moral crises he faced during the Civil Rights Movement. Without this form of thinking, King may very well have been incapable of creating such moving and persuasive arguments while dealing with spiritual and personal problems (Branch 79).

However, this is not to say that King failed to include the opinions and scholarship of other theologians from his studies at Crozer into his decision on theology. One particular theologian who had a huge impact on King's life was Reinhold Niebuhr. Yet, Niebuhr's text, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1934), challenged the Social Gospel's premise that the steady advancement of reason and goodwill in the new age would eventually eradicate social evils. Niebuhr believed that the steady advancement of reason and goodwill were not the only factors needed to effectively eradicate social evils. He argues that the problems with injustice deal not with ignorance but with our own "predatory self-interest." During his last year at Crozer, King read this text that suggests that the group in power must be forced to give justice and equality to those disenfranchised and underrepresented. The people yielding power, according to Niebuhr, were selfish and would have to be forced to give any of that authority away. King began to lean towards the belief that individual people were the ones who responded to reason and calls of justice while larger groups, such as labor unions and nations, have always been and would always be servants of their own "self-interest" (Branch 81-82). Niebuhr's writings gave King the approval for using of the Gandhian practice of nonviolence. As a result of meditating upon Niebuhr's theology, King felt as if the Gandhian technique was best in bringing both moral and rational factors together harmoniously.

Without Niebuhr, King probably would not have taken the technique as seriously or believed in it as wholeheartedly as he did (Branch 81).

The theologies of both Rauschenbusch and Niebuhr affected King's construction of his life's mission. The influences of these theologians brings me to the last segment of Wyatt T. Walker's statement, which reads, "If in assessing King, you miss his being an African-American preacher, you will miss him altogether!" (132). It is true that King was birthed within a lineage of Baptist preachers; he was a son, grandson, and great-grandson of Baptist preachers. It is also true that Daddy King, King's father, expected to pass down the pastorate of Ebenezer Baptist Church to ML once he retired. Within this framework, it is expected that King would have received a great tradition of the "Black hermeneutic." Black hermeneutics, as explained by Charles B. Copher, a biblical scholar at the Interdenominational Theological Center, consists of the methods of interpretation that continues a theme of liberation theology in each message (Ware 28). Black hermeneutics is also connected to Black theology, to which King was heavily steeped in having grown up in an environment that allowed him to meet and converse with many of the leading black Baptist preachers of his century. James Evans, a prominent African-American theologian, explains the main endeavors of Black theology: to place the religious faith within a historical and sociopolitical context (such as the struggle for civil rights); to relate biblical messages with current day black experience; and "to suggest how to live out Christian faith" (Ware 33).

In many cases, King's style can be placed under the category of Black theology and Black hermeneutics perfectly; however, there are ways in which he backed away from those techniques. For instance, as Evans notes, one major factor of Black theology is its subordination of reason in place of revelation: "Reason is not a necessary source of Black theology" (Ware 42). Preachers who adhere to this form of theology hardly ever consult philosophers or "prevailing academic canons of rationality and truth" (Ware 42). Yet, as mentioned earlier, King was in constant dialogue with what theologians were saying about his personal beliefs and the messages he gave while preaching. This constant reference to other theologians is seen in King's reading of Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Thurman's text explains why Christianity should be interpreted through the lenses of liberation theology, and King utilized it to find ways of combating the social injustices of sanitary workers in Memphis, TN.

In conclusion, the statement made by Wyatt T. Walker at Duke University's School of Divinity for its Annual *Martin Luther King Lecture Series* in 1997 failed to provide a complete picture of King's rhetorical origins. Some might argue that Walker was attempting to resurrect one aspect of King's influences that had long been forgotten or undermined. However, King was influenced by myriad factors, all of which shaped his ability to step back, view, and judge a world that went well beyond his cultural heritage.

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# Paradigmatic Confinement: Examining the Limitations of the “Acting-White Hypothesis”

Kayla Vinson, *Yale University*

*Kayla Vinson is a senior majoring in Sociology and African-American Studies at Yale University. Her research examines the role that race, gender, class, and systems of power play in the schooling experiences of public school students of color in the United States. More broadly, she is interested in America's obligation to and responsibility for its children. After graduation, Kayla plans to spend some time teaching high school in Atlanta before enrolling in a dual-degree graduate program in Sociology and Education.*

## Abstract

The systemic underachievement of black males is one of the major issues facing American public schooling. The “acting-white” hypothesis proposed by Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu (1986) continues to play a significant role in how this underachievement is understood. As a result, black males students, their families, and their communities are often blamed for their academic failure. This article explores the extent to which the “acting-white” hypothesis actually hinders rather than facilitates the development of an accurate understanding of black male underachievement and the best means of addressing it. It argues that exploring the underachievement of black male students through a sociopolitical lens is a more instructive and better-suited means of understanding this phenomenon.

As Americans, we endow our public schools with the responsibility to teach our youth to become engaged and productive citizens. Schools, then, should be sites of empowerment, places in which students develop an understanding of the world in which they live and acquire the skills and efficacy needed to improve that world. Yet when one examines the educational outcomes of many black males, this is not the picture that is presented. Nearly every metric of academic success ranks black males at the bottom, and every metric of academic failure ranks them at the top. They are the least likely to be in rigorous academic tracks, to pass standardized tests, to graduate from high school, and to attend college (Noguera, 2008). Conversely, they are the most likely to be suspended or expelled, to be labeled as having a learning disability, to skip school or drop out, and to elicit low expectations from teachers (Noguera, 2008). This phenomenon of black students, and particularly black males, diminished academic success relative to their majority counterpart is often referred to as the achievement gap. Understanding its proximate causes is the focus of this article.

Albeit subtly, and possibly unintentionally, social actors within schools can send signals to black males that, for them, achieving success in school is an unlikely and elusive goal. Further, there is ample evidence that schools are hostile, rather than nurturing, environments for many black males (Carter, 2003; Carter, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Ferguson, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Monroe, 2005; Noguera, 2003). And when they are not academically successful, the blame is often placed squarely on the shoulders of black males, their families, and their social environments.

Attributing the academic failure of African-American males solely to the outward manifestation of their familial, community, and cultural backgrounds or their (alleged) genetic deficiencies demonstrates a lack of sincerity, imagination, or both on the part of American society. Research shows that the academic failure of a society's subordinate group(s) is not a uniquely American phenomenon; rather, it exists throughout the world. As R.L. Collins (1993) states, “Parallels to the great struggles over race, identity, and representation that are taking place in the American education system now also exist in other . . . countries,” (as cited in Welch and Hodges, 1997). While this reality does not prove that societal structures of inequality are uniquely responsible for the academic failures of subordinate groups, it does provide powerful evidence that such structures are an essential piece of the puzzle. In a society in which academic success is a necessary ingredient in the life of engaged, empowered, and fulfilled democratic citizens, the systemic academic failure of African-American males is a crisis of civil rights and of justice. The achievement gap is not just an individual problem, a family problem, or a cultural problem; it is a national problem that tests the strength of our moral fabric. The creation of school environments conducive to the achievement motivation of all students has deep implications for the integrity of our national values. If our nation is to sincerely take up the issue of black male underachievement, then we have to move to a more serious investigation of our national complicity in that underachievement.

The “acting-white” hypothesis proposed by Signithia Fordham and John Ogbu (1986) has been a major contributor to current understandings of the achievement gap as the result of the deficiencies of black students and families. This theory argues that black students avoid academic success because they understand it to be the domain of whiteness and view black people who pursue it as race traitors (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). However, the “acting-white” hypothesis and the broader conversation about the achievement gap mask the complicity of schools in the production of black student



underachievement. As a result, the achievement gap is understood as the manifestation of the deficiencies of black males, leading proposed solutions to center on the creation of remedial programs and other policies meant to eliminate these alleged deficiencies. Instead, the focus of the conversation needs to shift to an investigation of how our current system of schooling is perfectly designed to achieve exactly the results we find ourselves facing.

American racial discourse greatly impacts our understanding of the achievement gap that exists between black male students and their nonblack peers. America is a social context in which black males are interchangeably understood as an endangered and a dangerous species. The negative life outcomes that many black males experience are read through a racially discriminatory lens and attributed to the inevitability of the social space black males occupy. Paradoxically, this paradigm for understanding black males constructs the very same entrapment of black males on the margins of society that it criticizes. The inability to see black males as more than disposable, threatening, second-class citizens is a social pathology that prevents a serious investigation of the social ills that disproportionately affect black males, especially the academic achievement gap. Instead, our society is looking for answers in all the wrong places and remains ensnared in tacit theories about how American society operates. As a result, black male students continue to bear an inordinate amount of the responsibility for their lack of academic achievement.

For the last 24 years, both scholarly and popular discourse about the achievement gap has been dominated by the previously mentioned “acting-white hypothesis.” In 1986, Fordham and Ogbu proposed that in order to cope with their historical and contemporary experiences with racism and inequality, the black community has developed an oppositional culture that devalues that which dominant society values highly, including academic achievement. They write:

What appears to have emerged in some segments of the black community is a kind of cultural orientation which defines academic learning in school as ‘acting white,’ and academic success as the prerogative of white Americans. . . . This problem arose partly because white Americans traditionally refused to acknowledge that black Americans are capable of intellectual achievement, and partly because black Americans subsequently began to doubt their own intellectual ability and to discourage their peers, perhaps unconsciously, from emulating white people in academic striving (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986: 177).

One major problem with the acting-white hypothesis is that it has been disproven by nearly every study designed to test its validity (Carter, 2005; Ford, Donna Y., and Harris III, 1996; Horvat, McNamara, and O’Connor, 2006; Monroe, 2005; Tyson, 2002; Tyson, 2005). Yet, even in the face of substantial contradicting evidence, this theory continues to dictate the boundaries of conversations about the achievement gap, demanding inordinate amounts of attention from sociologists, educators, policy makers, politicians, and popular media sources. For example, a simple Google Scholar search of the term acting-white yields over 4,260 results. Further, nearly every scholarly article on the black-white achievement gap begins by describing its ideological positioning in relation to the “acting-white” hypothesis. The hyper-vigilance of contemporary researchers in regards to Fordham and Ogbu’s theory serves to control the direction of academic discourse, often to the point of undermining the ability of more recent research to effect positive change. For too long, the framework provided by Fordham and Ogbu has arrested the development of more powerful models for understanding black student achievement.

What makes the societal power of the “acting-white” hypothesis even more troubling is that the study lacks empirical strength and rigor. Fordham interviewed only eight high-achieving students at a single, predominately black, urban high school (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). None of the low-performing students were interviewed in order to understand the meaning making systems used by those who do not navigate school as successfully. Those students who were interviewed reported their experiences with being teased by their less academically successful peers (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). Fordham concluded that, because academically successful students are likely to feel ostracized by their peers, black students understand academic achievement to be in the domain of whiteness (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). To say that the internalization of notions of black intellectual inferiority means that black students understand academic achievement as “the domain of whiteness” is to make an unfounded theoretical leap. In doing so, the “acting-white” hypothesis falls victim to the fallacy of understanding black students’ orientations to school as uniquely “black” in all aspects. There is a tendency to categorize anything that black people do as a “black thing.” Thus, when the high-achieving black students interviewed by Fordham reported being called nerds and otherwise teased, Fordham and Ogbu interpreted that as a negative cultural position of the black community. Yet, high-achieving students of all races and ethnicities are teased by their peers. The terms “nerd” and

“geek” carry with them no racial coding as all academically successful students are susceptible to them. The oppositionality most prevalent among black students is the general oppositionality that adolescents of all races have towards academic rigor. The subject population used in Fordham’s study made it likely that her results would be affected by this fallacy. The school’s predominately black demographic took away the possibility of investigating whether nonblack students similarly disparage their academically successful peers.

Even if one assumes that the “acting-white” hypothesis is a major deterrent to black students, Fordham and Ogbu offer no explanation for the ability of all of the eight black students interviewed to achieve academic success despite it. Further, how can one present a theory about the decision-making process of a population without interviewing those who are presumed to actually employ that theory (i.e., the low-achieving students at the school)? The failure to interview low-achieving students presents a significant challenge to the reliability of this theory.

When this reality is analyzed from a sociopolitical perspective, focusing on the social, political, and power relations that influence the institution of schooling, the “inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance” (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986) that black students feel toward school is understood to result from the conflict between what black students feel themselves capable of and what schools signal as their (in)capability. This is particularly true for black males as they are the most likely to receive negative signals about their abilities. The orientations they develop toward school, then, become necessary self-defense mechanisms that preserve their sense of self. In other words, they become the means of survival in and negotiation of a hostile context. For many black male students, the way that school’s institutional gatekeepers understand them results in treatment that is more likely to damage rather than bolster them. One of the primary needs of adolescents is the need for competence-building experiences (Erikson, 1994). Consequently, they place a high premium on avoiding circumstances that interrupt or contradict this competence-building process. Thus, as Dr. Carolyn Tyson found, black students are actually more concerned with a fear of failure than a fear of success (Tyson, 2005). When presented with the damage that putting forth effort and still failing would have on their sense of self, it is not unreasonable that adolescents might choose to fail because they did not try rather than to risk failing because they are incapable. The guilt of not having tried may be an easier burden to bear than the shame of being academically incapable. If schools have indeed suggested to black male

students that they are indeed incapable or deficient and deprived them of positive educational experiences, this option becomes even more attractive. Further, this type of schooling experience can encourage the creation of meaning making systems in which feelings of competence and self-worth are not connected to school valuation systems at all. If a black male student is concerned with not fulfilling the stereotypes of black academic deficiencies, but also doubts his own intellectual abilities, developing an ambivalent stance toward education can become an appealing choice. This kind of orientation preserves that student’s ability to argue that he could do well if he wanted to. Rather than being an act of defeat, then, choosing to fail due to a lack of trying becomes as much a counterattack to accusations of black intellectual inferiority as being academically successful.

The hold that the “acting-white hypothesis” has on conversations about and strategies to address the achievement gap prevents an investigation of the phenomenon in more instructive ways. Black male student underachievement needs to be repositioned in the sociopolitical context in which it is produced in order to better inform policies and practices meant to address this phenomenon. Instead of doing this, the “acting-white” hypothesis situates black male underachievement as a deficiency that schools must help black students overcome. In this way, it masks the complicity of schools in the persistence of the achievement gap—including them as part of the solution, but failing to acknowledge their role in creating the problem. Because educational outcomes are determining factors in the nature and quality of one’s adult life, the harm done by research that does not emphasize the complicity of schools in the creation and perpetuation of the achievement gap can have ripple effects that manifest in the overrepresentation of black males in the burgeoning juvenile justice system, the prison industrial complex, and poverty. In order to seriously address the national injustice that is the achievement gap, there needs to be a movement away from old and ineffectual theories and toward a sociopolitical investigation of the phenomenon. Once we come to understand that this issue is more the result of social processes and relations of power than the failings of individuals, movement towards a more just society can be made.

In order to eradicate the achievement gap, schools cannot continue to operate in the same manner and expect positive change to come. Rather than simply providing remedial programs (i.e., low-level tracking, tutoring, SAT prep programs, etc.) and seemingly neutral zero-tolerance discipline policies, schools will have to fundamentally change the

way they understand and interact with their students. First, both the expectations school staff have of black students and the rigor of the academic experience they provide will have to increase. Teachers will need to be equipped with the ability to use, or at least value, the nondominant capital that black students bring to school (Carter, 2005; Delpit, 1996). That is, the experiences and values black students bring into the classroom must be viewed as legitimate starting points for learning. For example, rather than demeaning the hip hop music to which so many students relate, schools should appreciate what hip hop, at its best, demonstrates about the power of language and creativity to impact people's lives and capture students' attention. Second, teacher-training programs will need to be more intentional and adamant about having teaching candidates evaluate and deconstruct their own biases and stereotypes, especially those about students with a marginalized identity (Delpit, 1996; Howard, 1999). There will need to be intensive modeling of the kinds of situations in which teachers may inadvertently misunderstand or misinterpret their students so that school officials begin their careers with a concrete understanding of how social reproduction is bolstered by day-to-day interactions. Third, teachers and administrators will need professional development in providing for the needs of students of color so that they can meet those needs rather than punishing students for the shortcomings of schools. These steps may allow schools to become places where competence is built up, rather than torn down, for *all* students. Accomplishing these aims may have spillover effects that decrease the extent to which black males find themselves isolated on the margins of society, conjuring images of jail cells rather than classrooms and street corners rather than boardrooms.

Understanding how schools contribute to the academic disillusionment of many black males is a first step that will provide important insight for those seeking to craft positive educational experiences for all schoolchildren. This cannot be done until there is an investigation of the ways in which our current ways of being in schools, intentionally or unintentionally, prevent school from being the social equalizer we profess it to be.

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# The Regulation of Cyclooxygenase-2 by MicroRNA-101 in Prostate Cancer Cells

Britney Wilson, *Barnard College*

*Britney N. Wilson, from Hillside, NJ, is currently a junior at Barnard College majoring in environmental science with a minor in Africana studies. While attending boarding school at Cambridge School of Weston, she developed a great interest in the disparities between suburban and urban educational systems, motivating her to serve as a mentor and do volunteer teaching with children in Newark, NJ. In this work, Britney began noticing how the frequent health issues faced by the children she worked with seemed to be a direct result of their surroundings, motivating her interest in environmental health. After graduation, she intends to pursue an MD/PhD program, focusing on environmental health and oncology, to explore how environmental issues can simultaneously cause and cure cancer.*

## Abstract

Prostate cancer is the most common type of cancer found in African-American men. There is a strong association between chronic inflammation and prostate cancer. Cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2), a key mediator in proinflammatory responses, promotes the breakdown of arachidonic acid to produce a series of prostaglandins. MicroRNAs regulate protein expression at the posttranscriptional level by degrading or blocking target messenger RNAs. It was predicted that miRNA-101 binds to the 3' end of COX-2 mRNA, thus down-regulating COX-2 protein expression and inhibiting cell growth and proliferation *in vivo* and *in vitro*. I generated a stable over-expression of miRNA 101 BPH1-C1 cell line and a vector control BPH1-C1 cell line. The miRNA effects on cell viability were tested using MTT assay. The COX-2 expression in gene and protein level between BPH1C1-V and BPH1C1-miR101 was observed using Quantitative Real-time PCR and Western Blotting Immunology. It was found that the cell viability in BPH1C1-miR101 was reduced in comparison to BPH1C1-V after seeding plates for three days, that miRNA-101 does not affect COX-2 expression in gene levels, and that COX-2 expression in protein decreased in BPH1C1-mR101 cells. These results suggest that miRNA-101 does down-regulate COX-2 expression in prostate cancer cells and inhibit prostate cancer cell growth. Thus, miRNA-101 can be a potential target for cancer treatment and diagnosis.

Prostate cancer accounts for approximately one in four newly diagnosed cancers each year for American men [1]. In 2009, 192,280 new cases of prostate cancer developed and 27,360 men died from this disease in the United States [1]. One in every six men will get prostate cancer during his

lifetime and one in every 35 men will die from this horrific disease. The five-year survival rate is nearly 100% for men who are diagnosed with prostate cancer in the earlier local and regional stages [1]. However, men who are diagnosed with the disease during the later stages when the cancer is metastatic will die within 22 months after diagnosis and only 32% of these men will reach the five-year survival mark [1]. African-American men, who make up the largest percentage of prostate cancer patients, are also more likely to receive diagnosis during the later stages of cancer and thus are more likely to die from this disease.

Despite the number of projects focused on prostate cancer research, the exact cause of the disease is unknown. The disease, however, is preventable. Different risks factors, including age, race, and obesity, have been linked to the disease. Chronic inflammation of the prostate glands, prostatitis, is another risk factor that researchers have begun to associate with the development of prostate cancer. Inflammation is often associated with various forms of cancer; about 25% of all human cancers are caused by chronic infection or chronic inflammatory states [2]. Thus it is appealing to research new strategies that can be used to help prevent or inhibit inflammation of prostate cells as a way to reduce the instances of prostate cancer in the United States.

Although inflammation is an attempt to heal from an injurious stimulus, inadequate resolution of inflammatory responses often leads to various chronic ailments such as a cancer [3]. Previous research has linked an overexpression of cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) to cancer and inflammation [4]. Multiple forms of evidence from laboratory and population-based studies suggest that inflammation of the lung, bladder, and intestines has often led to lung cancer, bladder cancer, and colorectal cancer respectively [3]. COX-2 serves as an interface between inflammation and cancer. COX-2 promotes the breakdown of arachidonic acid to produce a series of prostaglandins that serve as proinflammatory mediators. Extremely high concentration of COX-2 in the cells can cause the promotion of cellular proliferation, suppression of apoptosis, enhancement of angiogenesis, and invasiveness [4]. Each of these outcomes, resulting from an overexpression of COX-2, helps to explain its oncogenic function.

MicroRNA (miRNA) is short, 22 nucleotides long, non-coding RNAs that regulate protein expression at the posttranscriptional level by degrading or blocking target messenger RNAs. MiRNAs reduce translation by binding to complimentary sequences in the 3' UTR of target



messenger RNAs. MiRNA has the potential to control many target genes in humans. The expression of miRNAs is altered in many cancers. An overexpression of oncogenic miRNA can reduce tumor suppressor proteins while an underexpression in tumor suppressor miRNA can lead to an increase in oncogenic protein [5].

One example of a miRNA that serves as a tumor suppressor is miRNA-101. If miRNA-101 sequence sufficiently matches with 3' end of COX-2 mRNA sequence, it may be able to down-regulate COX-2 protein expression in prostate cancer cells and inhibit prostate cancer cell growth. This leads to my hypothesis that miRNA-101 sequence sufficiently matches with the 3' end of COX-2 messengerRNA sequence; thus, it is able to down-regulate COX-2 protein expression in prostate cancer cells and inhibit prostate cancer cell growth.

To test my hypothesis I generated a stable overexpression of a BPH1C1-miR101 (C1-101) cell line and a vector control BPH1-C1 (C1-vector) cell line. Both C1-101 and C1 are cancer cell lines. However, cell line C1-101 has been transected with miRNA-101. The miRNA effects on cell viability were tested using MTT assay. The COX-2 expression in protein level between C1-vector and C1-101 was observed using Western Blotting Immunology. The results found from these test support my hypothesis and will be discussed next.

The microRNA-101 expression was measured in each cell line using Quantitative Real Time PCR. The results (Figure 1) illustrate the successful transfection of microRNA-101 into the C1. These results confirm that a stable overexpression C1-101 and C1-vector was generated.

Cell viability of C1-101 and C1-vector was assessed with MTT Assay. The cell viability was significantly less in the C1-101 cell lines (Figure 2). C1-vector and C1-101 cell cultures were also assessed for a nine-day period. After this nine-day period the number of C1-101 cells was visibly less than the number of C1-vector cells (Figure 3). These results suggest that miRNA-101 inhibits cell proliferation and viability in the C1-101 cell lines.

The COX-2 expression in proteins was observed using Western Blotting Immunology. These results (Figure 4) show that there was an overexpression of COX-2 in the C1-vector cell line but not in the C1-101 cell line. These results prove the miRNA-101 has the ability to inhibit COX-2 protein expression.

The results from my research combined prove my hypothesis that the miRNA-101 sequence sufficiently matches with the 3' end of COX-2 messengerRNA sequence; thus, it is able to down-regulate COX-2 protein expression in prostate cancer cells and inhibit prostate cancer cell growth. In the future I would like to further my research by testing my hypothesis *in vivo*. If further research shows that miRNA-101 can regulate COX-2 expression *in vivo*, it may become the next chemopreventive agent. With a successful chemopreventive agent like miRNA-101, health care providers can prevent the death of 27,360 American men a year and fix the disparity in the cancer mortality rate among African-American and other races.

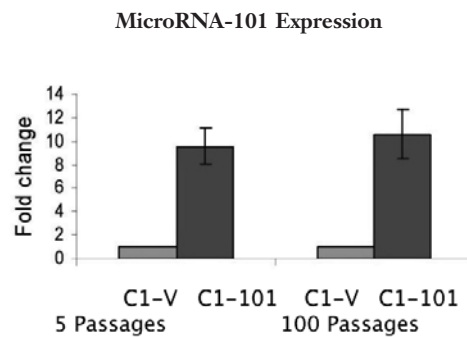


Figure 1. This figure shows that there was an overexpression of microRNA-101 in the C1-101 cell line after the cells were trypsinized both 5 and 100 times.

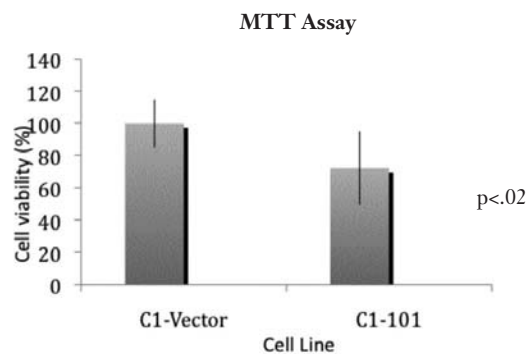


Figure 2. This figure shows that after a two-day period, the number of cells in C1-101 cell line decreased. The p value for this assay is 0.012, which means that there is a significant difference between the cell viability in the C1-vector and C1-101 cell lines.



### Cell Proliferation

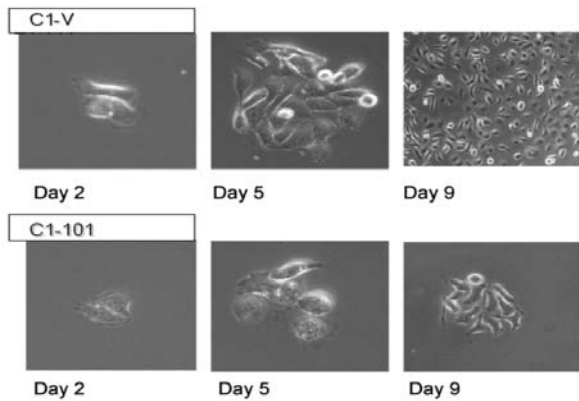


Figure 3. This image shows cell proliferation of a period of nine days. By day 9 there were visibly more C1 cells than C1-101 cells.

### Western Blotting Immunology Results

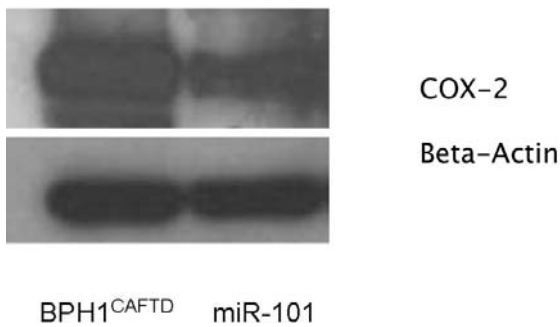


Figure 4. The Western Blot image above shows that there was an overexpression of COX-2 in the C1 cell line but not the C1-101 cell line.

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