



The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2016

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

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2016

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

Preface

We are very pleased to share with you the 2016 edition of the *Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal*.

Earl Lewis, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, stated that “intentional programs designed to promote diversity are needed to maximize the development of talent, encourage full participation, and secure the benefits of democracy. We remain committed to both diversity and democracy.”ⁱ This lofty objective is at the heart of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program, which aims to increase diversity in the faculty of higher education, specifically by supporting students from underrepresented minority groups in their goal of obtaining PhDs.

With the MMUF journal, we further seek to introduce young students to academia through exposure to the publishing experience, a critically important component of higher education. This experience offers an introduction to the journal submission process, including manuscript preparation and editor-guided revision of scholarly work for publication, and provides an audience for student work. For most students, this has been their first experience in publishing a scholarly article.

The twenty-five scholars who contributed to this year’s journal come from seventeen colleges and universities that are part of the program’s member institutions. These students share with us a diverse range of scholarship, including research conducted under the MMUF program, introductions to senior theses, and analytical class essays. The papers presented here represent a wide diversity of subjects, from history to linguistics to gender studies, that reflect the full range of MMUF-supported disciplines.

These authors have done more than just share their scholarship with us. They also challenge us to think critically and to broaden our perspective of the world. Through their work, we must confront challenging questions regarding race, gender and sexuality, patriarchy, and morality, as well as the intersection of these subjects. I have been impressed not only with the authors’ commitment to their academic work, but also by their passionate and fearless willingness to closely examine such challenging and important topics.

It has been a sincere pleasure and opportunity to work with these students to prepare their papers for publication. I hope that they have learned as much from this process as I have. It is with great pride and excitement that we share their work with you.

Elissa Krakauer Jacobs

MMUF Journal Editor-in-Chief
Preceptor in Expository Writing
Harvard University

ⁱ <https://mellon.org/about/mission/>

Editorial Board

Gregory A. Llacer

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

Liza Cariago-Lo

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
Vice President for Academic Development, Diversity, and Inclusion
Brown University

Mary Laurita

MMUF Journal Editorial Board
Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Washington University in St. Louis

Krishna Winston

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

Journal Administration

Margot Hanson Vona

Programs Manager, Research and Fellowships
Harvard University

MMUF Program / Mellon Foundation

Armando Bengochea

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

Lee Bynum

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

Table of Contents

- 3
Ariana Brazier, *Spelman College*
Homelessness in Children's Television: The Necessary Delinquent Sentenced to Social Death
Advisor/Mentor(s): Patricia Ventura, Stephen Knadler
- 7
Krystal Briggs, *Brooklyn College, CUNY*
This Language Still Duh Gwine Down Yuh: TMA Markers and the Creole Origins of AAVE
Advisor/Mentor(s): Dr. Mark Patkowski
- 13
Sydney Brown, *Smith College*
Mass Effect as a Conduit: The Effect of Simulated Realities on Our Perception of Alien Individuals
Advisor/Mentor(s): Professor Floyd Cheung, Provost Katherine Rowe, Professor Naomi Miller, Professor Daphne Lamothe
- 17
Amanda Cabanilla, *Whittier College*
Form, Function, and Structure: Online Dating While Fat
Advisor/Mentor(s): Rebecca Overmyer-Velázquez
- 22
Walter G. Chacón, *Bowdoin College*
A Case Study of the Experiences of Students of Color at a Selective American Prep School
Advisor/Mentor(s): Craig McEwen, Nancy Riley
- 26
Andrea Clark Gómez, *University of Texas at Austin*
"Eso Ya No Se Consigue": The Effects of Economic Shortages on Women's Everyday Lives in Venezuela
Advisor/Mentor(s): Dr. Juliet Hooker, Dr. Jonathan Brown
- 31
Benjamin Diego, *Stanford University*
"Necessary Failures": Reproducing Masculinity, Transgression, and Violence in Late-Medieval Male Pregnancy Narratives
Advisor/Mentor(s): Elaine Treharne, Fiona Griffiths
- 36
Daniel Dominguez, *Stanford University*
What Good Is It, Anyway? Moral Lessons from Literature in Cortázar's *Rayuela*
Advisor/Mentor(s): Professor Vincent Barletta, Professor Joan Ramon Resina, Patricia Valderrama
- 40
Cassandra Flores-Montaño, *Wellesley College*
Mujeres en la Lucha: Health Activism and the Devaluation of Women's Labor in the Brown Berets' Free Clinic
Advisor/Mentor(s): Irene Mata, Maria Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, David Rainbow
- 44
Thomas Ray Garcia, *Princeton University*
Introduction to "The Speculative Fiction of Jack London"
Advisor/Mentor(s): Alfred Bendixen, Sarah Anderson
- 47
Ahmad Greene-Hayes, *Williams College*
Black Women's Legacies and Activisms: Filmic, Visual, and Vocal Anti-Rape Technologies
Advisor/Mentor(s): Rhon Manigault-Bryant, Joy James
- 53
Gualberto (Wally) Guzman, *University of Texas at Austin*
A Survey of Automatic Annotation Methods
Advisor/Mentor(s): Dr. Barbara E. Bullock, Dr. Almeida J. Toribio
- 57
Lovia Gyarkye, *Princeton University*
The Black Cosmopolitan: A Critical Examination of Cosmopolitanism and Exile in Teju Cole's *Open City*
Advisor/Mentor(s): Simon Gikandi, Tracy K. Smith, Judith Weisenfeld, Kristina Gonzalez
- 62
Tomoyo Joshi, *Oberlin College*
A Native Feminist Theory Approach to Patricia Grace's *Tu*: Heteropatriarchy, Nationhood, and the Trauma of Militarized Violence
Advisor/Mentor(s): Jan Cooper, Afia Ofori-Mensa, Frank Kelderman
- 66
Caroline Martínez, *Bowdoin College*
Formation of Female Indigenous Leaders in the Highlands of Ecuador
Advisor/Mentor(s): Ingrid Nelson
- 71
Iman Masmoudi, *Harvard University*
The Secular Speaks to the Sacred: The Challenges of Western-Islamic Communicative Action in *Politics of Piety*
Advisor/Mentor(s): Bonnie Talbert
- 76
Gissell Alexis Montoya, *Bryn Mawr College*
"Denied Their Gender": The Impact of Medical Tourism on Access to Gender Reassignment Surgery by *Kathoey* Communities in Thailand
Advisor/Mentor(s): Carol Schilling, Megan Sands-Lincoln
- 81
Briana Payton, *Princeton University*
The Most Costly Gift: An Exploration of the Potential Risks and Rewards of Double Consciousness and Second Sight in *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois
Advisor/Mentor(s): Judith Weisenfeld, Eddlie Glaude
- 86
Jocelyn Proietti, *Smith College*
Towards a Black Women's Romantic Ideology: Theorizing Black Women's Cultural Production in the 1980s/'90s
Advisor/Mentor(s): Daphne Lamothe, Kevin Quashie
- 90
Lauren Richardson, *University of Chicago*
Moral Dilemmas and Modality in Kratzer's Semantics: Must "Ought" Imply "Can"?
Advisor/Mentor(s): Malte Willer

Table of Contents

95

Melissa Sarmiento, *Cornell University*
John Paul II and Political Catholicism in Chile
Advisor/Mentor(s): Raymond Craib

100

Georgia Soares, *University of Southern California*
To See Is to Feel: Feminist Symbols of Perception in Woolf and Lispector
Advisor/Mentor(s): Elda Maria Roman, Beatrice Bennett

104

Jermaine Stewart Jr./Stewart-Webb, *Grinnell College*
Black Female Sexuality and Gender Subjectivity in Ballroom Culture:
Sexual Expression beyond Respectability Politics
Advisor/Mentor(s): Shanna Greene Benjamin

109

Jiemin Tina Wei, *Princeton University*
Gender in Francis Bacon's Philosophy of Science: Marriage, Procreation,
and Dominion
Advisor/Mentor(s): Daniel Garber

113

Cary Allain Williams, *Harvard University*
On Becoming the Little Allain Girl, Introduction to "At Least We Have
Our Name": Free People of Color and the Struggle to Survive in
Antebellum Louisiana and Mississippi
Advisor/Mentor(s): Timothy Patrick McCarthy, Glenda Carpio, Lynne
Feeley, Emily Owens

Homelessness in Children's Television: The Necessary Delinquent Sentenced to Social Death

Ariana Brazier, *Spelman College*

Ariana Brazier is a 2016 graduate of Spelman College. At Spelman, she studied English and developed an interest in the application of theory to real-world problems. Ariana is a first-year English PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh.

Abstract

This paper analyzes representations of homelessness in children's television in order to discuss the implications of simplistic characterizations of class in children's television. Neoliberal ideology successfully functions in these shows as the homeless are stereotypically depicted as flat characters without depth or purpose. This one-dimensional characterization rooted in the false perception of the undeserving poor allows for the television audience to remain socially and emotionally disconnected from the homeless. I argue that the stereotypical portrayals of homelessness in children's television serve as a site of deployment for neoliberal ideologies that exclude America's homeless on the basis of their socioeconomic and behavioral deviance. Neoliberalism necessitates the social death of the homeless in order to define and maintain the social norm. The homeless are, at best, castigated and at the worst, socially assassinated for the benefit of the controlling neoliberal community. This article is a part of a larger thesis.

Homelessness is a socioeconomic and political issue that is portrayed as an irrational deviation from the middle and upper class socially constructed norms. Adult television portrayals of homelessness are fraught with comical stereotypes of the homeless. There are a few notable exceptions in which the homeless character evokes sympathy as the protagonist such as in *Hancock* and *The Pursuit of Happyness*; nevertheless, these stories are extraordinarily triumphant and not characteristic of the common experience of the chronically homeless in particular. Conceptualizations of homelessness in children's television, on the other hand, have evolved from the romanticized narratives of love and camaraderie depicted in the post-Great Depression-era Disney movies, *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and *The Aristocats* (1970). The homeless cats and dogs of Disney's classic movies were charmingly humanized as they enjoyed the freedom of the open roads, and were the protagonists of narratives containing personal growth and success.

Today, however, the homeless are portrayed stereotypically as isolated, one-dimensional figures that epitomize failure and social deviance. The general disregard for people experiencing homelessness is reflected in children's television as much as any media segment. Children's television is an influential avenue for developing connections with populations and experiences outside of a child's respective socioeconomic class; the homeless and severely impoverished are

two such populations (Power 66). In this paper I analyze Cartoon Network's cartoon series *Adventure Time* (2010–present), *Regular Show* (2010–present), and *The Amazing World of Gumball* (2011–present). These shows have enjoyed long runs on television and have received the highest awards for television programming including Emmys, Peabodys, and Kids' Choice Awards. I have chosen these shows largely because of their popularity amongst elementary-aged children as well as college-aged adults nostalgically reliving their childhoods. Moreover, each of these children's shows contain one or more episodes in which stereotyped caricatures of isolated homeless people are employed to enhance the normalness, morality, and/or heroism of the "housed," middle-class protagonists.

Television portrayals juxtapose the homeless, who appear to be lacking material wealth and social status, against ideal neoliberal citizens, who visibly contribute to their communities through education and labor. Because neoliberalism is both an economic system and an ideology that uses wealth and an economic analysis to determine an individual's social and moral value (Cacho 19), the homeless are deemed valueless because they are not presented as competitors in the global economy, or members of society more broadly. The juxtaposition of the homeless and neoliberal citizens intensifies the dichotomy of causes as structural or individual, as well as the social perception of homeless individuals as either the deserving or undeserving poor. The homeless characters in each of the aforementioned shows become categorized as undeserving, often subhuman creatures, because of their apparent apathy and socioeconomic deviance. Furthermore, the homeless characters' apparent inability to conform to neoliberal self-discipline positions them as a waste of attention and resources. I argue that children's television promotes an understanding of the homeless as dysfunctional and delinquent, which leads to a denial of their humanity and justifies the social death of the homeless. Social death is the negation of the civil rights that provide legal protection against political, social, and physical violence.

Negative stereotypes of the homeless population are lethal to the socioeconomic mobility of all impoverished people. Literally, the homeless exist outside of the home, in a foreign and unprotected world. Not only does their attire signify abandonment, but also their dwelling places against garbage cans, police stations, public parks, alleyways, and beneath bridges signify isolation. The homeless characters become an embodiment of what Philosopher Michel Foucault would call biopolitical delinquents, which are individuals who break social norms rather than the law (*Discipline and Punish* 251–3). The so-called "dysfunctional self" is being blamed for homelessness. As a result of their delinquency, the homeless are seen as physically, socially, politically, and economically impotent because they cannot

be fixed or are deemed unworthy of our attention (Cronley 325). In the children's programs that I analyze, they are called "beggars," "slackers," and, as in *Adventure Time*, "freaks."

Adventure Time is the story of a boy, Finn, and his shape-shifting dog, Jake, who embark on random adventures throughout the fictitious Land of Ooo. The episode entitled "Freak City" is the focus of my study because it is the only episode that centralizes the issue of criminalized homelessness. The episode depicts a colony of abandoned "freaks" whose living situation and social isolation are disturbingly reflective of the criminalization of the poor and homeless. The offensive treatment of the freaks normalizes the eschewing of those presumed to be delinquent because of their differences. The episode begins with a self-identified "beggar" asking for food from Jake and Finn. Finn, believing himself a hero, becomes momentarily conflicted about offering his assistance to the "beggar" when Jake suggests, "maybe feeding a starving homeless guy is the wrong thing to do." In the off chance that the "starving homeless guy" is an elf rewarding helpful passersby, Finn decides to offer him food from his own backpack. Treacherously, the "beggar" reveals himself to be the Magic Man, as he magically transforms Finn into a giant foot. Shortly after, the town's inhabitants, believing Finn to be a freak who must be banished, force him to live beneath a bridge with the other freaks in order to restore the town's safety.

Rotting in shame underneath the bridge is a small group of animated body parts that were also people prior to crossing paths with the Magic Man. The setting, ambiance, and the dialogue that takes place amongst the characters parallel stereotypes of real homeless situations in America. Specifically, the moment Jake and Finn enter the bleak poverty of the colony, Jake immediately begins to romanticize the life of an outcast by asking: "Can we live here in this pile of trash and rats forever?" Satisfied by the affirmative response he receives from the colony members, he plops into the pile and relaxes his body. Meanwhile, Finn is adamantly trying to galvanize the abandoned creatures in a fight against the Magic Man; however, a creature that announces himself as the leader of the colony of freaks asserts: "Oh, he [the Magic Man] can't be caught. He's got magic. Besides we're worthless freaks. We can't ever beat him. So we've gathered here to wallow in our self-pity." This exchange is reflective of the conservative and banal belief that the homeless have abandoned social norms and no longer value personal productivity. The homeless are often understood to be a passive population that solely relies on government welfare, or the labor of productive middle-class citizens. Without agency, the characters are portrayed as victims of their own passivity.

The theme of violence and passivity continues in *Regular Show*, which follows a blue jay named Mordecai and a raccoon named Rigby who work in a public park and find themselves in random, bizarre, and often dangerous situations that are a direct result of their laziness and disobedience on the job. In the episode "Benson Be Gone," Benson, the park manager, is fired. In his unemployment, Benson discovers a new sense of freedom and meets the homeless character Leon who describes the "life of a slacker." Leon has a thick beard, long hair, and is wearing a gray hoodie with a brown knit skullcap as he eats a plain sandwich. The conversation between Benson and Leon becomes controversial when Leon mocks the importance of maintaining a job and receiving an income. Leon even refers to himself as "Upe," which is "short for Utopia" because "[he's] livin' the dream . . .," thus implying that homelessness is a choice of his own free will because he refuses to work. The neoliberal ideology that emphasizes self-reliance and asserts individual failure as the reason for the existence of poverty and unemployment is unabashedly displayed through this interaction between Benson and Leon.

In his book, *Down & Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History*, Kenneth Kusmer recounts the disparaging sentiments towards the homeless throughout American history; these sentiments are intentionally embodied in the seemingly harmless portrayal of Leon. Kusmer asserts, "Attitudes toward work, idleness, inequality, and benevolence have all been connected in some way with the homeless, who in different guises have represented alienation and failure in a society that has long worshiped upward mobility and success" (7). Leon is the failure America irresponsibly seeks to bury by presenting the issue of homelessness as a shameful deviance and a choice inspired by laziness.

Finally, *The Amazing World of Gumball* revolves around the daily lives and adventures of two school-aged brothers and their family. The homeless character in this series is actually a regular character on the show. The character is not listed amongst the supporting characters and remains nameless on television, but the online world has dubbed the creature "Hobo." The homeless character is an obviously abnormal creature that receives virtually no recognition. A further search also reveals that Hobo is an unknown species that appears in multiple episodes in every season of the series to date (Gumball Wiki). Contrastingly, the protagonists are of a stable and respectable socioeconomic class; as a reward for abiding by the social standards that mandate productive contributions to the economy through labor and education, Gumball and Darwin can afford to be devious without fear of becoming the criminalized deviant. For instance, in the episode, "The DVD," the two brothers are frantically attempting to return a badly damaged DVD to the store, Laser Video Rental. Gumball

drags Darwin through a series of failed schemes to collect enough money to cover the cost of the DVD. Gumball decides that panhandling outside a convenience store is the best plan of action. Loitering outside the store, in front of an ATM, Darwin begins to complain, but Gumball retorts: “Less complaining, more begging . . . Now pinch me, we get more when it looks like I’m crying.”

Supposedly a humorous component of the plot, the scene becomes nuanced as the image zooms out and reveals a mysterious character squatting next to Gumball and Darwin. The character, Hobo, is also panhandling; however, he is represented using media codes for homeless people. The character has purple bags beneath his eyes, shaggy brown hair that covers the top half of his eyes, a long brown beard that covers his entire neck, and a thick, bushy tail that peeks out from his brown trench coat and trails on the ground behind him. Hobo engages Gumball and Darwin by caustically asking: “The reason you guys are on the streets is to pay a DVD fine?” Gumball’s privileged response reveals a seriously classist perception of hardship that disallows Gumball the ability to identify with the reality of Hobo’s situation; Gumball complains: “Yeah, I know it’s crazy, right? People don’t understand how hard our life is.” Hobo pauses briefly and quickly swaps his hat with Gumball and Darwin’s hat, which contains approximately \$3. Upset, Darwin exclaims that their money has been stolen. Like the “beggar” in *Adventure Time*, Hobo is represented as a thoughtless criminal. Unsurprisingly, Hobo is predominately a background character whose obvious purpose appears to be comic relief, yet he is a destructive representation of homelessness that ultimately hinders the possibility of a critical discussion of the structural violence of poverty.

Further exacerbating the homeless characters’ social isolation is the socially constructed lens through which viewers read them. The community clearly does not identify with the homeless and as a result, neglects to acknowledge their personhood (Power 68). Hobo shares the experience of being denied his identity with thousands of homeless people across the United States. There are a multitude of factors that contribute to an inability to identify with Hobo. The first factor being that he is categorized online as an “Unidentified Species.” The second factor is that he never exceeds the debilitating parameters of his stereotyped homelessness. Because Hobo acts as a structural opposite to the neoliberal community, the animation and merriment of Gumball and Darwin’s daily lives within a bustling community masks the fact that Hobo is isolated and nobody is invested in him.

Moreover, the stereotypes that plague the homeless characters reinforce their status as delinquent. Any form

of deviance that is deemed threatening to the neoliberal dominance inflicts physical and psychological punishment visible to the public and exploitative of the homeless. To take Foucault’s discourse on biopolitical delinquency even further, the homeless characters embody Lisa Marie Cacho’s analysis of the inescapable violence that is foundational to neoliberal ideology: “Certain vulnerable and impoverished populations . . . are deemed deserving of discipline and punishment but not worthy of protection. They are not merely excluded from legal protection but criminalization as always already the object and target of law, never its authors or addressees” (5). The criminalized homeless character is a necessary outsider for the neoliberal community and is, therefore, ineligible for any form of legal protection from literal and social death. Accordingly, Craig Willse states that “[homeless] programmes serve the economy twice over: first by removing an economic obstacle and then by investing in a growing non-profit industry of population management” (174). In other words, the death of the homeless allows for an increase in economic competition and an efficient reallocation of resources.

Emphatically, the social death of the homeless is evident in each of these three series. For example, *Adventure Time*’s episode “Freak City” illustrates the violent disposal of the deviant, homeless body. When Finn appears before the town’s creatures, the structural factors behind his abnormal appearance and behavior is ignored, and immediately he is devalued and criminalized. The foul treatment of the deformed Finn and the freaks of Freak City illuminate a major component of a neoliberal agenda: Finn’s difference forces him into the category of freak, which effectively deems him delinquent and dangerous to the town. The manner in which the town’s creatures attempt to dump Finn outside the town “with the others” by throwing him over a bridge becomes a literal abuse and othering of the freaks, or homeless characters. The freaks are living in a space unfit for human habitation not only because they have been isolated from society, but also because they are not viewed as humans, but instead, as monsters and delinquents.

The most disturbing example of social death occurs in *Regular Show*. Leon functions as a brazen contrast to the productive members of the local community. The moment Leon informs Benson of his current occupation as a “full-time slacker,” Leon is deemed socially unacceptable and disapproved by normal society. Leon states:

“I used to be park manager and just like you, I gave it up for a life of slacking. Now I don’t worry about silly things like where Leon’s gonna lay his head to sleep tonight. Cushy caress of a garden compost is my pillow. The grease on my face is my shower. Yes sir, can’t beat the life of a slacker. I’m proud to be the one to welcome you to your new life.”

Leon is a manifestation of a conventional understanding of homelessness constructed around the heightened attention on Skid Row communities across the country; Willse explains: “The skid rower does . . . little work of any kind . . . The skid rower does nothing, he just is. He is everything that all the rest of us try not to be” (161). Basically, Leon aligns with the prevailing conceptualization of the homeless as abject and insignificant.

Leon’s delinquency is described as a lifestyle choice. Subsequently, his deviance appears intolerable because his socioeconomic position is a lazy choice. Leon’s explication on the life of a slacker is the catalyst necessary for Benson to seek employment and return to his status as a productive citizen who chooses to contribute his labor and capital to society. Ultimately, Leon kills himself in this episode so that Benson can be restored to his position as park manager. Leon basically asserts that he has no useful function anymore, so he is happy to die because he has lived a life in utopia as a listless slacker. The episode closes with everyone returning to their normal positions with Benson as park manager, and Mordecai and Rigby as employed slackers. Remarkably, there is no acknowledgement of Leon’s self-sacrifice, nor even a mention of his name. No gratitude is owed to Leon. In the final moment, Benson watches Mordecai and Rigby sneak inside to play videogames as he sighs to himself: “Ahh. It’s good to be back.” Decisively, Leon is a literal example of the social death of the homeless. He is valueless until he aids in the restoration of Benson’s socioeconomic value.

Essentially, the violence of these stigmatized representations is justified through the myth of the undeserving poor and the biopolitical delinquent. Any force that causes harm can be understood as violent; hence, the perception of the homeless as the pathologized deviant harms the population physically, socially, legally, and economically. Although the homeless are not often provided the opportunity to exhibit personal agency and correct the discourse that perpetuates their stigmatized characters, violence is exacted upon them in the form of privation, neglect, isolation, and death. Therefore, when we consider these shows together, it is clear that the homeless body is an indication of a larger truth: When we open a discourse on economic equality and homeless rights, we begin the deconstruction of neoliberalism and the violence of homelessness.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Knadler for his guidance and support throughout the duration of my thesis and Spelman experience. A special thank you to Dr. Ventura for her mentorship, constructive criticism, and guidance throughout my Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship experience as well as my time at Spelman.

Works Cited

- Cacho, Lisa Marie. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York: New York UP, 2012. Print.
- Cronley, Courtney. “Unraveling the Social Construction of Homelessness.” *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 20.2 (2010): 319–333. *SocINDEX with Full Text*. Web. 29 July 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage, 1977.
- “Gumball Wiki.” N.p., n.d. Web. 6 June 2016. <<http://theamazingworldofgumball.wikia.com/wiki/Hobo>>.
- Hancock*. Dir. Peter Berg. Perf. Will Smith. Sony, 2008.
- Kusmer, Kenneth L. *Down & out, on the road: the homeless in American history*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Lady and the Tramp*. Dir. Clyde Geronimo, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske. Walt Disney, 1955. DVD.
- Power, Gerald. “Media image and the culture of homelessness: Possibilities for identification.” *Reading the homeless: The media’s image of homeless culture* (1999): 65–83.
- Quintel, J.G. “Benson Be Gone.” *Regular Show*. Cartoon Network. 28 Feb. 2011. Television.
- The Aristocats*. Dir. Wolfgang Reitherman. Walt Disney Productions, 1970. DVD.
- “The DVD.” *The Amazing World of Gumball*. Cartoon Network. CART, Atlanta, GA, 3 May 2011. Television.
- The Pursuit of Happyness*. Dir. Gabriele Muccino. Prod. Todd Black, Jason Blumenthal, Steve Tisch, James Lassiter, and Will Smith. By Steve Conrad. Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2006.
- Ward, Pendleton, and Tom Herpich. “Freak City.” *Adventure Time*. Cartoon Network. CART, Atlanta, GA, 26 July 2010. Television.
- Willse, Craig. “Neo-liberal Biopolitics and the Invention of Chronic Homelessness.” *Economy and Society* 39.2 (2010): 155–84. Web.

This Language Still Duh Gwine Down Yuh: TMA Markers and the Creole Origins of AAVE

Krystal Briggs, *Brooklyn College, CUNY*

Krystal Briggs is an aspiring speech-language pathologist and linguist, double-majoring in speech-language pathology and linguistics at Brooklyn College. She is currently a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow at Brooklyn College's Honors Academy. Krystal is passionate about her academics and is the recipient of the Dorothy Day Lawson Scholarship for academic excellence in her speech-language pathology classes. Her research interests are primarily in linguistically diverse speakers and phonological awareness skills in African American English child speakers. As of fall 2017, she will be applying to both speech-language pathology and linguistic PhD programs.

Abstract

There are two long-standing theories concerning the origins of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). The Creolist Hypothesis holds that AAVE has its roots in a Plantation Creole based on a mix of West African languages and English which arose during slavery. In contrast, the Dialectologist Hypothesis argues that the slaves learned the regional varieties of English spoken by their oppressors directly. My research compares varieties from rural South Carolina in the 1930s spoken by white farmworkers and laborers, African-American farmworkers and laborers, and former slaves. The goal is to determine whether these varieties make use of Creole-like grammatical features. The data are drawn from oral histories, including Slave Narratives, collected under the Federal Writers Project (1936–1940). I analyze verb usage in six speech samples with a focus on Tense-Mood-Aspect (TMA) pre-verbal markers characteristic of Creole grammars. A preliminary examination of the transcripts indicated that at least four TMA-like markers are present: the *zero past* tense marker (e.g., *the house burn down five years ago*); the anterior tense marker *been* (e.g., *in I been walk down in the field*); the future modality marker *gwine* (e.g., *I gwine cook some of dem in dat turnip pot*); the perfective aspect marker *done* (e.g., *Miss Alice done come back to de old place again*). I hypothesized, based on the Creolist theory, that the slave narratives would contain the highest proportion of these markers; that the narratives of the AAVE speakers would contain a significant but lower proportion, and that the narratives from the life histories of white speakers would contain no TMA usage. The findings do suggest a “sharp break” between the white and Black varieties with respect to the four markers that were investigated, consistent with the Creolist but not the Dialectologist Hypothesis.

Introduction

The topic of the linguistic variation termed African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) brings heavy controversy in the media and the education system in the United States. For instance, in 1996 the Oakland school board in California took the initiative to teach lessons in AAVE to child speakers of AAVE as a way to help them learn how to speak and write Standard American English. However, they wrongly claimed AAVE as a different language from Standard American English which ignited racial storms in the media from both white people and middle-class black people who were not speakers of the dialect (Rickford, 1998). The media sparked negative comments about AAVE and, by coining it “Ebonics” (Ebony + Phonics), they only added to the misrepresentation. A study by Winford (2003) on AAVE-speaking boys found that past sociologists in the '60s and '70s wrongly believed that AAVE was a language distinctive from Standard American English and was an intellectually inferior genetic trait found only in African-Americans. Unsurprisingly, no such evidence could be proven to support their claim. A year later, the district in 1997 retracted their statement and said that AAVE does, in fact, have historical value and is traced from West African roots.

Nevertheless, regardless of their statement in the nineties, AAVE is still stereotyped as a “vernacular” form of Standard American English today in New York City Public School curriculums and in videos on social media mislabeling AAVE as “ghetto talk.” Therefore, due to the continuous stigmatizing of this language variation that has both historical and linguistic value, it is imperative to not only examine its linguistic features but also trace its origins to examine how it came to formation. This position is not only being argued to reduce misunderstandings among scholars, educators, and even the ordinary public but it is also used to inform these same individuals that this dialect has its own unique significance apart from Standard American English. Thus this research can be used to further inform educators and clinicians about AAVE and enable them to have a broader understanding towards children who speak and write in the dialect (Dillard, 1972).

There are two long-standing theories concerning the origins African-American Vernacular English (AAVE). The Creolist Hypothesis holds that AAVE has its roots in a Plantation Creole based on a mix of West African languages and English which arose during slavery. The Creolist Hypothesis asserts that AAVE developed from a Creole language, known as Plantation Creole, that resulted from the interactions between Africans and Europeans during the

17th century (Dillard, 1972). The development of “Creole” languages results from the communication between two or more groups who are not familiar with each other’s language (Dillard, 1972). First a “pidgin” emerges. Pidgins have no native speakers and are not fully functioning languages; however, they become functional through the children of the pidgin speakers. The children learn the pidgin from listening to the adult speakers who communicate in it, and as they do so, they instinctively enrich it so that it becomes a fully functioning language, called a Creole.

Dillard (1972) argues that this Creole spread throughout the southern and northern states through the slaves that worked on plantations during the 18th century. At the same time, the household slaves (as opposed to the field slaves) had to speak with their owners in much more standard English (Dillard, 1972). Historical research shows that runaway slaves had in fact typically achieved some mastery of Standard English. Such knowledge was necessary in order to reach their desired destinations and to obtain freedom. Thus, household slaves were the ones who acquired the most Standard English, while the field slaves normally spoke only Creole.

Not only were some slaves able to speak in Standard English, they were also able to read and write in it too. Advertisements regarding runaway slaves in the 1700s often stated that the fugitives could read and write, which clearly implies they had some knowledge of Standard English (Dillard, 1972). These runaway slaves, then, must have been household slaves since there was nothing written for mono-dialectal speakers of Plantation Creole (Dillard, 1972). The field slaves were not exposed to Standard English from their masters as much as the household slaves. Based on these types of evidence, it is generally thought that three varieties of English were therefore used by African-Americans in the thirteen colonies: (1) West African Pidgin English (a Creole which originated, as its name indicates, in West Africa in the 1600s and became fully creolized by the end of that century), spoken by most of the recently imported slaves (while many of the others experienced language-learning difficulties); (2) Plantation Creole (which, as already mentioned, developed on the plantations of the American South), spoken by native-born field workers; (3) Standard English, spoken by slaves who were typically house servants or mechanics that ran errands in the towns. In addition, freed slaves spoke similarly to the household slaves (Dillard, 1972).

In contrast to the Creolist Hypothesis, the Dialectologist Hypothesis argues that the slaves learned the regional varieties of English spoken by their oppressors directly, that is without passing through any pidgin-Creole phases. Dialectologists further argue that AAVE-specific

features result from the retention of older British English features that have not survived in other varieties (Schneider, 1991). In the middle colonies, the number of black slaves was small and black slaves interacted with their white masters communicatively, especially the house servants, who were imported in larger numbers than that field slaves; such a situation would have resulted in the “direct learning” advocated above (Schneider, 1991). The same scenario would seem more unlikely regarding the field slaves, whose numbers are thought to have been much greater. However, Mufwene (1994) argues that even though this might have been so in some locations, such as the coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia where Gullah, or Sea Island Creole, arose, it could have been that elsewhere, for instance on the tobacco and cotton plantations, white Americans were the majority (and the majority of them were farmers and indentured servants), and that the number of slaves per plantation was not nearly as high. In fact, Mufwene (2014) suggests that the divergence between AAVE and AWSE (American White Southern English) didn’t occur until racial segregation was institutionalized under Jim Crow laws in the late nineteenth century, and that antebellum slaves and Southern white indentured servants and farmers spoke essentially alike in the same regions.

As for Gullah, which would be seen as an exception to the above scenario by proponents of the Dialectologist Hypothesis, it was first seriously studied by Lorenzo Turner (1949) who documented its African morphological, syntactic, and lexical roots. Such an analysis is consistent with the Creolist Hypothesis whose proponents suggested that Gullah is actually related to the original Plantation Creole spoken by the first generations of slaves born in North America (Dillard, 1972). As a result, over the years, several researchers have examined AAVE to uncover Creole-like features, most notably with a focus on copula absence (e.g., Rickford, 1998; Winford, 2003).

In an overview of the Creole origins of AAVE, Rickford (1998) suggested that at least seven sources of evidence are available, the sixth type being “differences from other English dialects, especially those spoken by whites” (6). The underlying assumption here is that dialects are on a continuum with other varieties or with earlier stages, while Creoles involve a sharp break or discontinuity. Following this approach, this research will compare three vernacular varieties from rural South Carolina in the 1930s in order to determine which of the following speakers, if any, make use of Creole-like grammatical features: white farm workers and laborers, African-American farm workers and laborers, and former slaves.

Methodology

The data are drawn from manuscripts from the Federal Writers Project (1936–1940) which present, notably, narratives of formerly enslaved African-Americans, but also of ordinary people, including white residents of rural areas in South Carolina. Six transcripts were chosen as follows: two from the Slave Narratives collection, and four from the Life Histories collection, involving two AAVE speakers and two speakers of WVE (White Vernacular English). All the speakers are of lower socioeconomic status, laborers or tenant farmers, and from rural South Carolina. The two speakers from the Slave Narratives, Lizzie and Heddie Davis, were sisters who grew up together on a plantation in rural South Carolina. They shared stories about their experiences working for their masters on the plantation. The four speakers from the Life Histories collection were males. The two African-American speakers, Jim Kelley and Gabriel Washington, were tenant farmers who discussed their family experiences and the challenging labor of working on a farm. Lastly, the two speakers of WVE, Willie Marlowe and George Tanner, were tenant farmers who narrated their interactions with African-Americans, their experiences working as farm laborers, and their personal lives with their spouses. This study analyzed verb usage in the six speech samples with a focus not on the zero copula but on Tense-Mood-Aspect (TMA) pre-verbal markers which characterize the grammar of all Creoles (Bickerton, 2008), including Gullah (Mufwene, 1994).

Procedure

All Creoles are thought to express the following relations through a TMA system of pre-verbal markers rather than through verbal inflection:

- Tense (+/- anterior), which refers to the anteriority of an event relative either to the speech act or to another event. Tense places events on a time line.
- Mood (+/- irrealis), refers the reality or non-reality “irrealis” of events (Bickerton, 2008). Real events are events that have occurred or are currently occurring. Non-real events are events that could hypothetically have occurred (in the past) or might occur (in the future, or conditionally).
- Aspect (+/- nonpunctual), distinguishes between different kinds of events (past, present, or future) that are described by verbs, for example: progressive (ongoing) events, punctual (completed) events, habitual (repeated) events.

Bickerton (2008) gives examples of the TMA verb structure in Guyanese Creole. In *be walk*, the bare verb

walk can mean either he walks (present) or he walked (“bare verb”). In *be bin walk*, the anterior tense marker *bin* is followed by the bare verb. In *be go walk*, the irrealis mood marker *go* is followed by the bare verb. In *be a walk*, the non-punctual aspect marker *a* is also followed by the bare verb. For *be bin go walk*, the tense marker *bin* precedes the mood marker *go*.

A survey of the six transcripts selected for the study revealed that four TMA features appear to have survived the transcription process (which was not carried out by trained linguists but rather by unemployed writers hired under the WPA program):

- The zero past tense marker (\emptyset): e.g., *I watch \emptyset Diana holler* (referring to an event from 6 years earlier). For the \emptyset tense marker to be considered present, the verb must be uninflected and the context must clearly indicate that reference is being made to a past action.
- The anterior tense marker: e.g., *I been walk down in the field*. For the anterior tense pre-verbal marker to be considered present, *been* must be followed by an uninflected verb.
- The future modality marker: e.g., *I gwine cook some of dem in dat turnip pot*. For the future modality marker to be considered present, *gwine* must be followed immediately by an uninflected verb, with no intervening to preposition.
- The perfective aspect marker which emphasizes completion of an event: e.g., *Miss Alice done come back to de old place again*. For the perfective aspect marker to be considered present, *done* must be followed by an uninflected verb.

These features comprise the set of pre-verbal TMA features that were investigated in this study. In keeping with the Creolist Hypothesis, it was hypothesized that the Slave Narratives would contain the highest proportion of TMA-like features, the other African-American narratives would contain a significant but lower proportion of TMA-like features, and the WVE narratives would contain little or no evidence of TMA-like features.

Results and Discussion

Overall, results show that one of the two African-American speakers from the Slave Narratives displayed the most TMA-like Creole features, followed by the other three African-American speakers who also made substantial use of TMA-like Creole. In contrast, the two speakers of WVE displayed no TMA-like Creole features whatsoever. These results are displayed in Figure 1 on the following page.

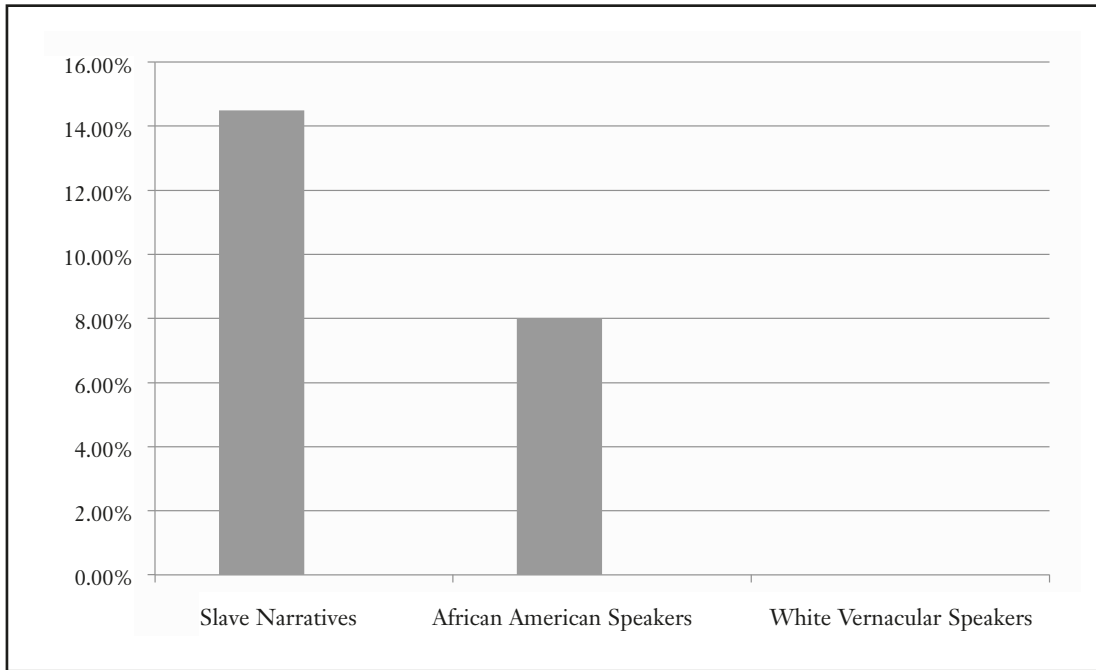


Figure 1. Percentage of verbs with TMA markers (all four types combined)

Speaker	1	2	3	4	5	6
∅ past (e.g., <i>He marry my younger sister</i>)	12	25	7	10	0	0
Been (e.g., <i>I been get home in de evenin</i>)	3	8	3	7	0	0
Done (e.g., <i>I done move dem dere</i>)	0	5	0	0	0	0
Gwine (e.g., <i>I gwine hug your neck</i>)	0	5	4	2	0	0
Total:	15	43	13	14	0	0

Speakers 1-2: Slave Narratives
Speakers 3-4: Other African American Narratives
Speakers 5-6: White Narratives

Table 1. Percentage of verbs with TMA markers (by TMA category)

As can be seen from the graph, over 14% of the finite verb constructions in the Slave Narratives contained TMA-like Markers and exactly 8% of the two other African-American Narratives did so; in stark contrast, there were no instances at all of TMA-like pre-verbal markers in the two white Vernacular Narratives. Table 1 presents the actual frequencies for the four individual TMA Markers.

As can be seen in Table 1, speaker 2 of the Slave Narratives, Heddie Davis had an overwhelmingly high frequency of TMA Markers in relation to her sister, Lizzie Davis (speaker 1) and to the two other African-American subjects (speakers 3 and 4), especially for zero pasts and the Aspect Marker *done*. It is not entirely clear why Heddie's transcript contained more Creole-like features than Lizzie's. However, a possible explanation could be the sibling order

of Heddie and Lizzie. In her transcript, Heddie discusses her relationship with Lizzie and states that she is much older than her younger sister. Therefore, perhaps Heddie had more exposure to Creole features in her parents' speech than did Lizzie. Furthermore, Lizzie may have had more exposure to white speakers than her older sister.

Another finding found in the transcripts was the different ways in which *been* and *done* were used by the White and African-American speakers. For example, when describing his life as a tenant farmer Willie Marlowe used phrases like "I done worked" and "I been coming." It can be noted that in both phrases, Marlowe uses the inflected form of the verbs *worked* and *coming*. As noted earlier in the paper, the inflected form of a verb is a typical grammatical rule for Standard American English but not Creole. In contrast, Jim Kelley, an African-American speaker, used phrases such as "I done come back" and "I been know" without adding inflections to the main verbs *come* and *knows*. Conversely, his consistency of using zero inflections is a typical feature of Creole and not Standard American English.

Despite zero instances of TMA-like Markers in the WVE transcripts, there were some instances of verb usage that, at first sight, might be thought to resemble those of the Creole-like TMA zero past marker. Thus, Willie Marlowe used bare root forms to express the simple past. For example, when describing an earlier evening out with his wife, he said "we come dressed to the Centenary," without inflecting the verb *come*. However, this usage has been noted in American Vernacular varieties as part of a levelling process of the preterite (simple past), past participle, and bare forms of irregular verbs.

For example, Murry and Simon (2008) discuss American Vernacular regional varieties including Southern Vernacular English. In particular, they describe an irregular verb usage in the eastern United States where the bare root form of an irregular verb is used as a simple past, as in "He swim in that river just about every day of his life" and "Why, he give Junior here more for it used than he [Junior] paid for it new" (Schneider, 2008, p. 2). Such forms could easily be mistaken for zero pasts.

However, the main difference between these bare root forms and the TMA zero past marker is that in WVE, as already discussed, the bare root, preterite, and past forms of irregular verbs have largely merged and get used more or less interchangeably. That is WVE continue to use preterite and past forms with irregular verbs, and continue to inflect their regular verbs with -ed to indicate past actions.

Other varieties of verbs "with a Creole flavor" were also found in the Slave Narratives and African-American

Speaker Transcripts. In particular, there were possible instances of serial verbs, a well-documented characteristic of Gullah and other Creoles, such as in the sentence *Four years a fightin en hoped shoot dem old Yankee robbers*. Another interesting finding was the phrase, *you did tief* ("You stole"). Using nouns as verbs is another well documented feature of Creoles. In fact, Bickerton (2008) gave the very same example of the noun *teef* ("thief") transforming into a verb in Guyanese Creole (and then, once *tief* came to mean "to steal," Guyanese needed a new noun for "thief" and came up with *teefman*). In truth, few of these were present in the transcripts, but more transcripts could be examined to determine if these occur on a reasonably regular basis, even if only in small numbers.

The lack of Creole features found in the WVE transcripts as compared to the relative frequency with which these did appear in the African-American transcripts both provides general support for the Creolist hypothesis and demonstrates the usefulness of comparing Black and White transcripts of speakers from similar regions and social backgrounds, as per John Rickford's listing of this approach as one of seven sources of evidence to show that AAVE has Creole origins and is not a "vernacular" of SAE. This position was not only being argued to reduce misunderstandings among scholars, educators, and even the ordinary public but it was also used to inform these same individuals that this dialect has its own unique significance apart from Standard American English. According to the statistics on special education, there is a disproportionate percentage of African-American youth in special education and underrepresentation of them in honors courses (Mufwene, 2014). Most teachers have little, if any, accurate knowledge about Black Language and are likely to harbor negative attitudes about the language and its speakers. The goal of this paper was to address these individuals and provide them with a source about how to use rich and varied linguistic abilities for African-American children to help them become fluent readers and writers. Additionally, the paper can also be used to increase awareness about Black language to educators and clinicians about AAVE and enable them to become less critical towards children who speak and write in the dialect.

References

- Bickerton, D. (2008). *Bastard tongues: A trailblazing linguist finds clues to our common humanity in the world's lowliest languages*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Dillard, J. L. (1972). *Black English: Its history and usage in the United States*. New York: Random House.
- Mufwene, S. S. (1994). On the status of auxiliary verbs in Gullah. *American Speech*, 69(1), 58-70.

- Mufwene, S. S. (2014). The English origins of African American Vernacular English: What Edgar W. Schneider has taught us. In S. Buschfeld, T. Hoffmann, M. Huber and A. Kautzsch (Eds.), *The evolution of Englishes: The dynamic model and beyond* (pp. 349–364). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Rickford, J. R. (1998). *The Creole origins of African American Vernacular English: Evidence from copula absence*. In S. S. Mufwene, J. R. Rickford, G. Bailey & J. Baugh (Eds.), *African American English* (pp. 154–200). London: Routledge.
- Schneider, E. (1983). The diachronic development of the Black English perfective auxiliary phrase. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 16, 55–64.
- Schneider, E. W. (Ed.). (2008). *Varieties of English Z: The Americas and the Caribbean*. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Turner, L. (1949). *Africanisms in the Gullah dialect*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Winford, D. (2003). Another look at the copula in Black English and Caribbean Creoles. *American Speech*, 67, 21–60.

Mass Effect as a Conduit: The Effect of Simulated Realities on Our Perception of Alien Individuals

Sydney Brown, *Smith College*

Sydney Brown graduated from Smith College in 2016, with a degree in English and theatre. Her goal is to continue studying the connections between immersive mediums, our societal structures, and representations of marginalized experiences.

Abstract

By examining a sequence of narrative readings, visual representations, and game procedures of the Bioware videogame series *Mass Effect*, this essay explores the ethical and social realities presented throughout the games. The *Mass Effect* series includes three popular science fiction videogames focusing on the adventures of Commander Shepard, who aims to save the galaxy from an ancient, alien threat called the Reapers. This essay argues that when game developers critically structure videogames and incentivize their audience, they provide players with the potential to experience and understand cultural issues such as alienness distanced from our own lived experiences. Because aliens often stand in for marginalized people in the science fiction tradition, by observing the interaction with aliens we can understand how *Mass Effect* helps shape our interactions with different gender, racial, and sexual identities. Understanding this, we can begin recognizing subversive structures that have devalued marginalized identities in our physical reality.

The story in videogames is not just about what is happening in the game. Instead, these games, no matter how fantastical, are telling us what is happening in our real world. At its best, Bioware's science fiction, role-playing videogame series *Mass Effect* creates an engaging, unique, and fun narrative in which the player is invited to traverse space as the universe's savior. To allow the player the fullest, most individualized experience, the game implements choice into the narrative. However, by attempting to allow the player to fully "play" via choice procedurals, the developers fall short of their potential to create empathetic interactions with aliens, who often stand in for marginalized groups in the science fiction tradition. In *Values at Play*, Nissenbaum and Flanagan explain the nature of *Mass Effect's* play. They observe, "Games like *Mass Effect* equally incentivize "good" and "evil" choice, and they might be considered morally relativistic. It could be that players experience them as a kind of sandbox for moral play, allowing them to explore ethical issues in a setting where real-world consequences do not apply" (21). Although Nissenbaum and Flanagan praise *Mass Effect* for the openness of its moral play, I argue that the unwillingness of the series to support positive ethical interactions causes the game not to reach its progressive capabilities in relation to alienness and, consequently, reinforces negative stereotypes, thereby potentially harming real individuals from marginalized groups.

A key dynamic of *Mass Effect* which produces ethical effects is what I term "emotional tethering." This concept names a crucial link between the emotion of the player and the action of the game through empathy. By implementing choice in a key series of circumstances, the game generates empathetic relationships in which the line between the avatar Shepard and the player becomes structurally blurred. Janice Radway describes a similar process of blurring identities in *Reading the Romance*: "[Dot's customers] willingly acknowledge that what they enjoy most about romance reading is the opportunity to project themselves into the story, to become the heroine, and thus to share her surprise and slowly awakening pleasure at being so closely watched by someone who finds her valuable and worthy of love" (67). Radway suggests that immersion intensifies the relationship between the text and reader. *Mass Effect* similarly engages the audience in the immersive process of emotional tethering. However, it does so by implementing choice in the gameplay, such as in the character creation screen, choice wheel, plot and relationships with NPCs (Non-Player Characters). By receiving the agency of the series, practicing, doing and performing, we—as members of the real world—learn lessons that leave the game with us. Thus, by examining choice we can determine how *Mass Effect* encourages us to interact with aliens.

First Contact

Shepard's initial interaction with aliens begins during the first part of *Mass Effect*. The game immediately contrasts Nihlus, an alien, with his human surroundings through both his dialogue, physical appearance, and coloring. Joker, the pilot, admits his dislike for Nihlus outright by saying, "I hate that guy." Nihlus unsettles and angers members of the crew although none of them know him personally. Although the players take in different views from multiple characters, the players build their own inclination on how to interact with Nihlus. Whether they choose to react politely or rudely to Nihlus through the choice wheel that provides the dialogue and choice options of the game, the plot progresses by teaching a positive lesson about Nihlus. If the player was polite to Nihlus, they are shown the lesson that they were right to look beyond his physical appearance and alienness. If the player was rude, they receive the message of not judging someone solely based on their appearance, race, or someone else's opinion. This is especially important as we consider our individual interactions with prejudice. This is when the game shows its ability to meet its progressive potential. If the game interacted more with the player on this level and reinforced this interaction with repercussions, the experience could actually teach the player an important, relevant lesson about prejudice. The first contact example encourages players to look beyond physical appearance into the substance of an NPC and, consequentially, builds a relationship between the player and the character.

Romancing Jacob: Presenting Racial Stereotypes

Introducing friendship and romantic relationship systems to the core gameplay encourages the player to seek out specific characters and engage with them in a way that uses emotional tethering to learn lessons. However, just as this has the potential to create positive interactions, it also can reaffirm negative stereotypes, as evidenced in the case of Jacob, human bionic and Cerberus operative, in *Mass Effect 2*. The only straight, black, male love interest in the series is an NPC named Jacob, whose romantic plot with a female Shepard depicts negative stereotypes about black men because his content is sexual but not intimate. Although there is an entire mission in which Shepard helps him find his estranged father, the romance is built around the idea of “keeping it light,” as Jacob says, and discussing feelings without being explicit. Jacob’s dialogue mentions at the beginning and end of his romance in *Mass Effect 2* that once their ongoing battle against the Collectors is over he will spend time with Shepard. However, that time never comes because, between the events of *Mass Effect 2* and *Mass Effect 3*, Jacob develops a relationship with another woman and they have a child together by the time of *Mass Effect 3*. Both the dialogue and the plot lines attributed to Jacob act as an amalgam of stereotypes, specifically black men’s oversexed nature and their inability to deal with their emotions. This simulation, if the players chose to get to know Jacob romantically, not only reaffirms negative perceptions that harm black people in our physical reality, but creates one of the few instances in which a romanceable character can betray the players. In this instance, emotional tethering may have the negative effect of enhancing players’ internalization of racial prejudices.

The conceit of *Mass Effect* is that present-day racial constructions should hold little meaning for humans in the future. The problem with this is that when Bioware ignores race or forgets that racial stereotypes exist in our lives, it may thoughtlessly reinforce images that matter in our reality. Having a human character be visibly ethnic allows people of color to be represented among the elite heroes in Shepard’s squad. It is just as important for white players to see people of color existing in a place in which their race is not a negative factor or something to overcome. The effects of representation, positive and negative, have real-world consequences for those interacting with the medium. In Ann Marie Baldanodo’s post “Representation,” she explains the effect of representation: “It cannot be ignored that representations affect the ways in which individuals are perceived. Although many see representations as harmless likenesses, they do have a real effect on the world Since there are so few images, negative ones can have devastating affects [sic] on the real lives of marginalized people.” Bioware introduced a hypothetically perfect world state for

human equality and chose to create a minimally diverse crew. Because of this, Jacob’s presentation and its negative connotations are even more significant.

Objectification or Identification: Romancing the Alien and Gender Biases

The sole romanceable alien in the first game is an NPC named Liara, an Asari scientist.¹ The treatment of Liara as more palatable than alien is an indication of Bioware’s early interests. In *The Art of the Mass Effect Universe*, readers are invited to view the concept of the Asari before the race was finalized. Rather than attempting to diminish the distance between what is alien and “attractive,” Bioware chose designs for the Asari that are just alien enough to be alien and still human enough to be sexy. Bioware states, “To add a familiar element of science-fiction fantasy, we decided one of the main species in *Mass Effect* would be a race of beautiful, blue alien girls. An extensive exploration of the idea led to the Asari appearing exotic and alien while having some human qualities, which allowed them to be desirably as potential love interests” (*The Art of the Mass Effect Universe* 19). From their face to their clothes,² the Asari are an example of how our reality—specifically our objectifying views of women—influenced the game construction. Whereas aliens could have existed proudly in their otherness, Bioware’s assumption that they need to gratify a teenage, male, heteronormative audience made their alienness erasable.

All of Liara’s features are what we might expect to see on any human woman. Her alienness is solely presented by the tentacles on the back of her head and her blue skin. However, the tentacles are styled to appeal to humans. In *The Art of the Mass Effect Universe*, several members of Bioware’s team (executive producer Casey Hudson, art director Derek Watts, and writer Chris Hepler) write, “The original inspiration of the scalp tentacles was to evoke the image of a woman emerging from the water with her hair swept back” (19). Although Liara is alien enough not to be identified as human, the invention of that alienness depends on conventional tropes of late 20th-century Hollywood female sexual attractiveness and availability for the viewer’s gaze. Using Laura Mulvey’s concept of the male gaze, we can understand that this view of women is a part of the cinematic tradition dependent on “straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images” (1). That Liara’s womanness or female appearance defines every aspect of her race and ultimately sexualizes her is only the first part of a problematic assertion of alienness that *Mass Effect* presents in the romance section.

Mass Effect’s game protocols and storylines function in a similar way when it comes to sexuality in that they reaffirm present-day heteronormative standards. The nonexplicit sex

scene at the end of Liara's relationship path (the sequence of procedures and narrative options that a player navigates) remains a small moment in a massive game. Players cannot interact with the scene. Instead, the players have to actively consent and reaffirm interest in Liara to receive the sex scene, an inset video "cut scene" that interrupts the forward narrative. The process of affirmation (renewing interest in Liara and investigating her character) is an example of Bioware effectively using emotional tethering. Procedurally, the players have to make the choice to want Liara and go a step further to prove it. This cut scene highlights the difference between Shepard and Liara and raises the question of whether emotional tethering in this instance causes the player to identify with aliens or objectify them through gameplay.

Moving Forward: *Mass Effect* and Choice

"I don't think we're trying to generate controversy as much as just reflect that this is a real world with similar issues to what you face in real life, so it's familiar and accessible at the same time. It's challenging and interesting on a moral level. We're not trying to make a statement per se, and if we do inadvertently, maybe that's a reflection as games as art as much as anything."

Ray Muzyka, Co-Founder of Bioware

Muzyka's words serve as representation for the entire problem with *Mass Effect*. The work that Bioware does—creating its world and employing emotional tethering—creates a game that has enormous potential to do cultural work on the player. Further, the game is set up to simulate moral play. As Muzyka explains, the issues that the players face within the *Mass Effect* world are similar to those that we face once we "unhook" ourselves from our computers, consoles, cellphones, and experience the world. If players can empathize with aliens who look and act very differently than they do, then they should be able to begin learning how to interact with real-world marginalized groups. When we play, we set up a Pavlovian condition through choice—except instead of hearing a bell ring and expecting food, we see a marginalized individual and react. *Mass Effect* does not explicitly make players respond negatively or positively; however, by implementing choice, players may practice and repeat negative interactions. Choice matters because it makes us practice interacting with aspects outside of our lived experience, such as with aliens. Although the player will never meet Jacob Taylor, players will probably meet black men who do not fit into the stereotypes Bioware places Jacob in. The player will never meet Liara T'soni, 100+-year-old Asari scientist, but I believe the players of *Mass Effect* will meet passionate young women excited to learn something new and share it with the world. Lastly, the players will never be Commander Shepard, Alliance Marine,

Spectre, a possible zombie, or a person with the world in the palm of their hand. However, the players will interact with our world on their own terms.

Mass Effect, similar to the immersive books of Janice Radway, helps us figure out how we are going to interact with our reality. The *Mass Effect* series has the potential to educate the player about alienness, diversity, racial stereotypes, gender, sexuality, and culture through choices made in the game. Positive outcomes through the choices made in these areas can affect how players will later live in the real world. Bioware had the potential to do interesting, informed cultural work, through emotional tethering and choice, but its commitment to already problematic practices—the sexualization of marginalized bodies and the reassertion of stereotypes against black men—and its overwhelming commitment to making as many choices as possible, without significant repercussions, causes the game to miss its progressive potential.

In *Critical Play*, Flanagan asserts, "As design matures . . . there is a growing need for designers to approach the creative process with increased awareness and responsibility to be inclusive, fair, and cater to a variety of play styles" (251). Bioware's relationship to critical play, especially in relation to aliens, changed significantly over the initial five years since it was released. The course of Bioware's interaction with alien individuals becomes increasingly relevant as veteran and new players anticipate *Mass Effect 4*, which is planned to be released in 2017. With the original series selling over 10 million games, it is not a stretch to anticipate the new game entertaining a similar, sizeable audience this year. If Bioware and the entire videogame industry attempt to bridge the gap between the player and marginalized groups instead of committing themselves to practiced routes that cement those same disparities, our implicit social biases have the potential to be discovered, questioned, and changed. If they continue designing games that perpetuate negative social structures, they are not only denying their potential to teach positive lessons through choice, they are furthering practices that harm real-world people with marginalized identities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Cheung for his unwavering guidance, enthusiasm, support, and patience throughout the past two years. Without him the thesis which this article is based on could not have been created. I would like to thank Provost Rowe for her wisdom, fervor and thoughtful engagement, which made the fruition of this project a professional and personal achievement. In addition, I would like to thank Professor Miller, Professor Lamothe, and the Mellon Mays Foundation for their continued support and

dedication. Lastly, I would like to thank the creators at Bioware for creating such a massive, immersive and engaging story, which has entertained and inspired me for the past two years.

Endnotes

- ⁱ *The Art of the Mass Effect Universe*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse, 2012, 19. Asari are a monogendered, although distinctly female-presenting, race of aliens in the *Mass Effect* universe. Asari attributes include extreme intelligence, incredibly long life spans and the ability to mate with any sex and any species. With regard to their inspiration Bioware states, “To add a familiar element of science-fiction fantasy, we decided one of the main species in *Mass Effect* would be a race of beautiful, blue alien girls. An extensive exploration of the idea led to the Asari appearing exotic and alien while having some human qualities, which allowed them to be desirable as potential love interests.”
- ⁱⁱ *The Art of the Mass Effect Universe*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse, 2012, 17. *The Art of Mass Effect* explains the design intent for Asari clothing: “Asari clothing was to be alluring and sexy but with a sense of class and style—more of a Hollywood red-carpet feel than that of a stripper (except for the Asari who were, in fact, strippers).”
- ⁱⁱⁱ Achievements are badges for completing certain aspects of a game. They are listed on the player’s profile. For certain players, achievements serve as motivation for multiple playthroughs and exploring different choice outcomes. The Paramour achievement is received for completing certain romance subplots throughout the *Mass Effect* series.

Works Cited

- Baldonado, Ann Marie. “Representation.” (Apr. 1996) Scholar Blogs. Online. Postcolonial Studies at Emory Pages. Internet. Spring 2016.
- Flanagan, Mary. *Critical Play*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009. Print.
- Mass Effect*. Bioware, 2007. Videogame.
- Mass Effect 2*. Bioware, 2010. Videogame.
- Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Amelia Jones. London: Routledge, 2003. 44-53. Pdf.
- Nissenbaum, Helen, and Mary Flanagan. *Values at Play in Digital Games*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2014. Print.
- Radway, Janice. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Print.
- Smee, Andrew. “Mass Effect 3 & Beyond.” IGN. Ziff Davis, 7 Feb. 2010. Web. 1 Apr. 2016.
- The Art of the Mass Effect Universe*. Milwaukee: Dark Horse, 2012. Print.

Form, Function, and Structure: Online Dating While Fat

Amanda Cabanilla, *Whittier College*

Amanda Cabanilla is a recent graduate of Whittier College, having graduated summa cum laude and earning her Bachelor's of Arts in sociology with distinction in the major. As a senior, Amanda won the Charles J. Browning Prize in Sociology, which is awarded to outstanding students in the major by the department faculty. Amanda's research focuses on the experiences and identity formation of fat women, particularly in online spaces, through a feminist lens. She is currently applying to PhD programs in sociology and hopes to enter graduate school in the fall of 2017.

Abstract

As fat female bodies continue to garner the attention of scholars, research has primarily focused on the effects of anti-fat biases on the identities and lived experiences of fat women. Additionally, the plethora of social media platforms has spurred academic interest into how social prejudices become digitized and how individuals interact with one another online. However, scholars have yet to combine the physical and the digital in order to examine how niche online dating platforms mediate and limit the online identity creation of fat women. Through an analysis of four niche and two mainstream online dating platforms, this study finds that embedded biases and negative depictions of fat women are amplified on niche dating sites through the deliberate construction of a fat femininity in which fat female bodies are objectified, fetishized, and exploited as soft targets for male user sexual satisfaction. I conclude that without the coalescence of an intersectionally focused fat community, fat women, particularly fat women of color, will continue to have their bodies debased for market consumption.

In contemporary American society, fat activists, bloggers, and ordinary women have taken to the Internet in an effort to redefine fat female bodies as legitimate objects of desire. Simultaneously, online dating has emerged as an increasingly dominant force in our social and romantic lives by providing new spaces for individuals to meet and interact. Within this context, niche online dating platforms have emerged that cater to individuals seeking out "Big Beautiful Women" (BBWs). While the presence of these sites may signal an increased acceptance and/or desire for fat bodies, niche dating sites and apps are further marginalizing and dehumanizing fat women through an apparent lack of resources allocated to the development of welcoming, inclusive, respectful, safe, and open spaces for fat women to find romantic companionship.

Literature Review

Within established feminist discourse there exists tensions between the role of institutionalized structure and personal agency with regards to the portrayal of the female body as an object of sexual consumption by heterosexual men and society at large (LeBesco 2004; Murray 2009; Saguy 2002; Saguy 2013; Snider 2009). Structuralist scholars like Abigail Saguy (2002) and Samantha Murray (2009) argue against the deliberate sexualization of fat female bodies within a patriarchal society aimed at the exploitation of women's bodies. However, others, such as Kathleen LeBesco (2004), critique such structuralist thinking as negating fat women's agency by focusing so heavily on the role of the "alleged monolith" (50) of structural beauty ideals. LeBesco (2004) contends that a post-structuralist recognition and celebration of the socially constructed nature of normative beauty ideals and its antithesis, fat, "[pulls] beauty down from its pedestal" (50) and creates the possibility for liberation by demystifying sacred beauty ideals and bringing them back into the profane world. These ideological tensions in the fat studies literature beg the question as to how much agency (fat) women have over their own bodies and sexualities within a patriarchal structure aimed at the sexual exploitation of their bodies.

Research on online dating websites dealing with the interactions of social structure and personal agency is limited and inconclusive. For instance, Hitsch et al. (2010) suggest online dating users do not utilize what Toma and Hancock (2010) describe as "strategic deception," in which users manipulate their online profiles to seem more appealing, when choosing which profiles to respond to, but the data overwhelmingly disproves this assertion (Toma and Hancock 2010; de Vries and Peter 2013; Rudder 2014; Fry 2015). Furthermore, the rise of the Internet era has also sparked new research into the ways in which social structures are reproduced online and how individuals interact with this new social medium within the structural limitations of digital technologies (de Vries and Peter 2013; Fry 2015; Hogan 2012; Lanier 2011; Nakamura 2006; Rudder 2014; Toma and Hancock 2010; Turkle 1997; Turkle 2011). Specifically, scholars in digital media studies, like Lisa Nakamura (2006), are examining how various racialized and gendered bodies exist in cyber space and how individuals interact with one another online. However, there does not yet exist an analysis of how these digital spaces themselves impact identity formation for fat women. Fat bodies exist online as well, and it is crucial to examine the conditions under which fat women in particular are negotiating these spaces.

Methods

This study employs a mixed methods approach to examine online dating structures catering to fat women and their admirers from the perspective of the central organizing object of these websites: the fat woman. A quantitative analysis of four online dating websites/apps, two niche and two mainstream, was conducted by sampling 15 male and 15 female users' profile data: BBWCupid, OkCupid, WooPlus, and Bumble. Two additional niche dating websites, ChubbyBunnie and BBWlocalhookup, were also analyzed solely for website content. On each dating platform, individual profiles were created, as both a man and a woman, and screenshots of the websites and the profile creation process were also taken.

As a self-identifying fat woman, I engaged my own subjectivity in order to illuminate and unpack how the digitized replications of anti-fat biases impact the construction of a fat female identity online. This subjective engagement is in keeping with feminist scholars such as Abigail Saguy (2013) and Julie Bettie (2003) who directly address and contend with their own positionality in an effort to provide readers with an honest accounting of their own biases and how these biases subsequently influence their work. What's more, Saguy (2013) contends that within the field of fat studies, "one would expect those people who are categorized as obese to produce valuable and new kinds of knowledge" (37), precisely because "fatness is a valued form of bodily capital" (40).

Results/Discussion

Popular depictions of fat female bodies simultaneously frame fat women as both disgusting asexual vessels and hyper-sexualized subjects of deviant male desire. On niche dating sites, the primary mode of this paradoxical characterization of fat women is through the deliberate objectification of their bodies. Rae Langton (2009) identifies three key features of objectification as *reduction to body*, *reduction to appearance*, and *silencing*. For Langton (2009), *reduction to body* implies "that sexual interest in another is not interest in the other as a person, but as a body" (228–229). Furthermore, *reduction to appearance* is to treat a body "primarily in terms of how it looks, or how it appears to the senses" (Langton 2009: 229). Finally, Langton (2009) defines *silencing* as treating another's body as "silent, lacking the capacity to speak" (229). These characteristics are employed through a variety of structural mechanisms throughout the sampled niche dating platforms.

BBWCupid exemplifies all three key characteristics of objectification as laid out by Langton (2009): reduction to body, reduction to appearance, and silencing. First and

foremost, BBWCupid, as all sampled niche dating websites, places the central focus on the user's body simply by existing as a website that caters to a certain body type. Furthermore, the fact that niche sites like BBWCupid ask for physical descriptors before any other personal information simultaneously reduces the user to their body and their appearance. What's more, on both BBWCupid and WooPlus, unlike other sampled sites, you cannot even access other users' profiles without uploading an acceptable profile picture, which further reduces the individual to their body and appearance. Finally, by deemphasizing the user's interests and personality through the sequencing of profile information, BBWCupid actively silences the user's voice.

This manner of silencing is particularly critical because the questions regarding users' personality are among the few within all dating websites, but in particular niche dating sites, that allow users to articulate and identify themselves without having to depend on predetermined response options to site-selected questions. As Langton (2009) notes, "Speech is a distinctive capacity of persons. . . [and] women's subordination is partly constituted by the fact that women have been silenced" (229). Saguy (2002) is justifiably concerned about the unequal power imbalances embroiled between fat women and the men who seek them out because of the emotional and physical jeopardy fat women are potentially subjected to and willing to tolerate in order to have a romantic and/or sexual relationship. Unfortunately, Saguy's (2002) fears are manifesting themselves within the structure of niche dating websites through the overt objectification of users' bodies, but specifically through the sites' deliberate silencing of users' voices. Although this silencing affects both men and women across dating platforms, (fat) women are already at a structural disadvantage, both online and in the physical world. Therefore, (fat) women's inability to actively participate in their online identity creation and match selection through an autonomous expression of their wants, desires, and who they are as individuals, is the ultimate means of online silencing and the continued objectification and subjugation of (fat) women's bodies.

By creating a separate space for fat bodies and through the overt objectification of fat women, niche dating sites depict female fatness as something to be adored or sought after, while erasing or diminishing all other non-physical attributes of the women using the sites and/or apps. This process of fetishization is no more acutely apparent than on BBWlocalhookup. When initially establishing a profile with BBWlocalhookup, users are asked "what" they are looking for, and then to input their sex and the preferred sex of their matches. Users are given three options: male, BBW, or couple. While male users are permitted to identify as such, regardless of their body type, fat women are reduced to nothing more than the amount of fat on their bodies.

Suddenly, the fat on a woman's body is the only thing that matters. This reduction of female users to their fatness reinforces the unequal, heteronormative gendered power imbalances Saguy (2002) warns against. Furthermore, by asking *what* users are looking for, rather than *whom*, and then subsequently reducing female users to the singular category of BBW, BBWlocalhookup depicts male users as fully autonomous subjects, while simultaneously constructing fat women as the objectified Other, thereby removing any capacity for female users to be active agents within the structural confines of the website.

The advertised content on male users' homepages also serves to further fetishize fat women by subordinating fat female bodies to their male counterparts. For instance, one advertisement depicts BBW women as "whores" to be "fuck[ed]" or nothing more than a set of "large breasts." Another shows BBWlocalhookup's "friends" offering opportunities to "stick a horny fat babe" or the availability of "BBW sluts for you!" These ads effectively portray fat women as nothing more than physical vessels for men's pleasure and exploitation. The entirety of BBWlocalhookup's website unequivocally argues that fat women have to make themselves hyper-sexual and subordinate to the desires of men in order to "compensate" for their deficiencies. While BBWlocalhookup is the most explicit and extreme example of the fetishization of fat women, it is by no means alone. The same tools used to objectify fat women on other sites are also employed to fetishize their bodies. Niche dating websites perpetuate fat stereotypes through the overt sexual fetishization of female subscribers, suggesting deliberate efforts to maintain popular images of the paradoxically hyper-sexualized undesirable fat woman waiting to fulfill male fantasies.

Socially constructed power dynamics between men and women are embroiled within the structure of online dating sites *and* their users' profiles. Across sampled dating platforms, users typically display photographs of their faces and upper-torso areas, with only minimal background settings visible. In the sporadic cases in which users provided multiple photographs, additional pictures ranged from users engaging in outdoor activities like hiking or travel, group photos at social gatherings, or more "selfies." Interestingly, men were more likely than women to have photos of themselves engaging in outdoor and/or athletic activities such as rock climbing or mountain biking. While this trend is consistent across all sampled dating platforms, it was most commonly observed on the mainstream sites, namely OkCupid and Bumble. Counterintuitive to Toma and Hancock's (2010) findings that online dating users tend to enhance certain areas of their profiles in order to compensate for perceived deficiencies in other areas, men more consistently highlighted their more masculine attributes on

the mainstream sites than on the niche platforms. Given the social stigma associated with men deliberately seeking out fat women (often referred to as "chubby chasers"), it is possible that men utilizing online dating platforms to connect with these women would feel a need to emphasize their masculinity in order to counteract the emasculation of "going after easy prey." However, this was not necessarily the case.

While there were definitely images of men hiking or playing soccer, this study finds that men on niche sites often only provided standard "selfies." Any additional photographs were often of the men lying in bed with headphones on or in an otherwise relaxed and stationary position. These sedentary and passive photos ironically exemplify the inherent gendered power imbalances at play between men and fat women that Saguy (2002) highlights. Men on niche dating sites are permitted to assume a more relaxed role as a result of the stereotyped assumption that fat women are so desperate for attention and affection, they will settle for mediocrity.ⁱⁱ This reified power imbalance is exemplified when male users on niche sites are contrasted to those on Bumble. As I navigated through the popular dating app, I found that I was much more attracted to an overwhelming majority of the male users on Bumble than on any other dating platform. I attribute this phenomenon to the fact that women must initiate contact on Bumble, thereby forcing men to project the most appealing image of themselves because they are suddenly at the opposite end of the gendered power hierarchy. However, because common perceptions of fat women as undesirable suggest men have to exert significantly less energy in order to gain a fat woman's favor, male users on niche dating sites seem to feel comfortable putting in a minimal amount of effort into their dating profiles, while still apparently expecting to successfully attract a fat woman. The staggering number of male user profiles I skipped while collecting data because they did not meet my selection criteria further supports this assertion. It was not uncommon to disregard a dozen male profiles for every one sampled, further illustrating the lack of time and effort spent in creating their online profiles. The embedded and reified constructions of power within niche dating platforms allow male users to continue to enjoy the fruits of a patriarchal society obsessed with thinness, while simultaneously forcing fat women to comply in their own subjugation by objectifying, fetishizing, and otherwise reminding fat women of their abject inferiority.

Conclusion

So long as websites dictate the terms of one's online existence through the forceful imposition of de-contextualized and de-personalized identity markers, the utopian ideals of an authentic and wholly legitimated self-ascribed digital identity will continue to be subjugated by the same

socially constructed norms that dictate how our individual bodies move through the physical world. The rigidity of the Internet's structural interface limits the transformative potentiality of the Internet as a liberatory space to the individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to reimagine the digital landscape and its meaning-making capacities through software design. However, even radical innovation can only go so far as the technology it is built upon (Lanier 2011). Nevertheless, what is useful and hopeful about online spaces is how malleable they are; Internet-based structures can quickly respond to social pressures, given enough social capital and willingness on the part of the software developer(s).

Despite the many problematic aspects of online dating sites/apps, there is still hope. As fat activists continue to push for increased visibility and discourse surrounding how we understand and talk about fat bodies, there exists the potential for a significant pushback against the demeaning niche online dating market. In order for this to occur, however, a community of fat activists, scholars, and everyday individuals must coalesce, without further marginalizing or silencing the extraordinary diversity of bodies and experiences. Presently, the popular fat acceptance and body positivity movements overwhelmingly favor and feature white/light-skinned, conventionally attractive, straight, cis-gendered, able-bodied women. Not only do we need to create online spaces that give voice and agency to fat women, we also need to take care to include an intersectional understanding of identity when conjuring and erecting these newly re-imagined spaces. Without an intersectional approach, the fat acceptance movement, like many of its predecessors, will fall victim to the homogenizing effects of identity politics that have failed to acknowledge and empower its most marginalized members.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mentor, Professor Rebecca "Becky" Overmyer-Velázquez, for her unyielding guidance, support, encouragement, and love throughout this process. I could not have done this without you, Becky!

Endnotes

ⁱ On BBWCupid and WooPlus, matches are shown on the user's homepage, but without a profile picture, users cannot click on other profiles to access additional information about a particular match. Furthermore, profile pictures are "reviewed" to ensure they meet the respective dating site's policies, but it is unclear who is reviewing these photos.

ⁱⁱ In her response to Erich Goode's (2002) highly problematic ethics and conduct outlined in his ethnography, "Sexual Involvement and Social Research in a Fat Civil Rights Organization," Saguy (2002) highlights that for fat women, there are serious gendered power imbalances at play between them and the men seeking them out: "When you have been told your entire life that you are not worthy of love because of your weight, you are particularly vulnerable to sexual predators" (552). Saguy (2002) cites several members of the National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) as stating that many fat women attend NAAFA events, where Goode (2002) conducts his research, for the sole purposes of finding an intimate partner, whether it be casual sex or a more serious relationship. In this pursuit, fat women "are willing to put up with a lot of abuse to have a boyfriend" (Saguy 2002: 551). Saguy (2002) asserts that while male fat admirers (FAs) may truly want social equality for the fat women they "love and/or desire," there is a serious concern that these men "may even feel they benefit from the power that anti-fat prejudice gives them over fat women" because of less perceived competition from other men and the reduced self-esteem of fat women (555).

References

- BBWCupid. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015 (<http://www.bbwcupid.com>).
- BBWlocalhookup. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015 (<http://www bbwlocalhookup.com>).
- Bettie, Julie. 2003. *Women Without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Bumble. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015 (<https://bumble.com>).
- ChubbyBunnie. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015 (<http://www.chubbybunnie.com>).
- de Vries, Dian A. and Jochen Peter. 2013. "Women on Display: The Effect of Portraying the Self Online on Women's Self-Objectification." *Computers in Human Behavior* 29:1483–1489.
- Fry, Hannah. 2015. *The Mathematics of Love: Patterns, Proofs, and the Search for the Ultimate Equation*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.
- Hitsch, Gunter J., Ali Hortacsu, and Dan Ariely. 2010. "What Makes You Click?—Mate Preferences in Online Dating." *Quantitative Marketing and Economics* 8(4):393–427.
- Hogan, Bernie. 2012. "Pseudonyms and the Rise of the Real-Name Web." Retrieved April 13, 2016 (<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2229365>).
- Lanier, Jaron. 2011. *You Are Not a Gadget*. New York: Vintage Books.
- LeBesco, Kathleen. *Revolting Bodies? The Struggle to Redefine Fat Identity*. 2004. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Murray, Samantha. 2004. "Locating Aesthetics: Sexing the Fat Woman." *Social Semiotics* 14(3):237–247.

- Nakamura, Lisa. 2006. "Cybertyping and the Work of Race in the Age of Digital Reproduction." Pp. 317–333 in *New Media Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*. Edited by W.H.K. Chun and T. Keenan. New York: Routledge.
- OkCupid. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015 (<https://www.okcupid.com>).
- Rudder, Christian. 2014. *Dataclysm: Who We Are* When We Think No One's Looking*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Saguy, Abigail C. 2002. "Sex, Inequality, and Ethnography: Response to Erich Goode." *Qualitative Sociology* 24(4):549–556.
- Saguy, Abigail C. 2013. *What's Wrong With Fat?* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Aaron. 2016. "15% of American Adults Have Used Online Dating Sites or Mobile Dating Apps." *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*. Retrieved March 6, 2016 (<http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/02/11/15-percent-of-american-adults-have-used-online-dating-sites-or-mobile-dating-apps/>).
- Snider, Stefanie. 2009. "Fat Girls and Size Queens: Alternative Publications and the Visualizing of Fat and Queer Erotopolitics in Contemporary American Cultures." Pp. 223–230 in *The Fat Studies Reader*. Edited by Esther Rothblum and Sondra Solovay. New York: New York University Press.
- Toma, Catalina L. and Jeffrey T. Hancock. 2010. "Looks and Lies: The Role of Physical Attractiveness in Online Dating Self-Presentation and Deception." *Communication Research* 37(3):335–351.
- Turkle, Sherry. 1997. *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Turkle, Sherry. 2011. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books.
- WooPlus. 2015. Retrieved Oct. 1, 2015(<http://wooplus.com>).

A Case Study of the Experiences of Students of Color at a Selective American Prep School

Walter G. Chacón, *Bowdoin College*

Walter Chacón is a sociology and education major at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Born to Dominican and Peruvian immigrants, Walter is a first-generation college student interested in race, class, education, and social stratification. Walter hopes to pursue research in education upon graduation before entering graduate school to earn his PhD in sociology.

Abstract

For centuries, prep schools in the United States have catered primarily to white and affluent students, contributing to an organizational habitus informed by the white and wealthy. Though prep schools today are more racially diverse than they have ever been, access to selective prep schools does not guarantee a smooth road to success in school and beyond for students of color who gain admission. Through focus groups comprised of African American and Latino students, this study finds that students of color at a selective prep school in the northeast United States experience feelings of marginalization and alienation on the basis of race. Further, the data demonstrate that prep schools today continue to be sites in which students of color are perceived to be outsiders. By promoting cultural competency among faculty, staff, and students, prep schools can become places in which all students, regardless of race, can not only survive, but thrive.

Introduction

Selective private secondary schools throughout the United States have historically been sites which enable upper class families to maintain their class status and reproduce it across generations. Cookson and Persell (1985) found that the emergence of boarding schools in the northeast United States created means for the upper class to form a collective identity distinctive from other social classes. Boarding schools were places in which children of the most well-off families integrated into a homogenous group, legitimizing their own social status and formalizing their credentials at the top of the social pyramid. And so, boarding schools came to exist as “status seminaries” (Cookson and Persell 1985: 22) that groomed the young elite instead of as educational institutions. By the 1980s, most families who sent students to boarding prep schools were at the top of the income distribution, while a very small minority earned less than the national median income. Parents of boarding school students tended to be highly educated and were more likely to be doctors, attorneys, and bankers than any other profession (Cookson and Persell 1985).

Yet, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, the demographics of elite schools were beginning to change

to incorporate more racial minorities, as ten percent of students in Cookson and Persell’s (1985) study were not white. Today, selective private secondary schools throughout the United States demonstrate an increasing commitment to racial and socioeconomic diversity in their student populations. Devotion to diversity demonstrates a commitment to equity and equality among these schools; it also reflects belief in the many benefits that inclusion of students from a wide array of backgrounds offers. With this diversity presumably comes diversity of thought and experience in academic communities. Diverse communities enhance learning and provide spaces for collaboration across lines of race and class, promoting creativity and innovation. Students in diverse schools learn to function in multiethnic environments, a skill that is becoming increasingly important as our nation becomes increasingly diverse (Page 2008; Denson and Chang 2009; Hyman and Jacobs 2009). Prestigious, predominantly white independent preparatory high schools have offered increased access to non-white students, making efforts to recruit talented African-American, Latino, and Asian students and today, students of color comprise thirty percent or more of the student population at many of the most selective prep schools in the United States.¹

However, increased access to selective prep schools does not guarantee a smooth road to success in school and beyond for the students of color who gain admission. The historical roots of prep schools as places for the white and affluent echo today in the organizational cultures and the students they attract. Previous research suggests that minority students in selective, predominantly white prep schools encounter environments that are not always welcoming. Datnow and Cooper (1997) found that African American students in Baltimore independent schools reported feelings of alienation and lack of belonging in their predominantly white institutions. Borrowing from black feminist author Patricia Hill Collins’s (1968) research, students reported feeling like “outsiders within” the white establishment (Datnow and Cooper 1997: 62). Feeling like outsiders in their own schools prompted some minority students to question whether they deserved to be in the school or if they were admitted as racial tokens. David Addams, Executive Director of the Oliver Scholars Program which seeks to place underprivileged students into private secondary schools in New York, lamented that some students believe that they were only allowed into privileged schools to fill a minority quota (Khalid 2012). For minority students in elite prep schools, earning admission is not enough to make them feel as if they belong. The existing research on students of color in selective prep schools prompts me to ask, how do the historically white and affluent roots of elite prep schools influence the experiences of students of color today? What challenges and obstacles do students of color face as they seek to gain high-quality educations in prep

schools? The answers to these questions will inform our thinking about the state of diversity in prestigious secondary schools throughout the U.S.

Methodology

To investigate the ways students of color navigate the environments of prep schools, I conducted focus groups with African-American and Latino students at a selective, predominantly white, boarding preparatory school in the northeast, which I refer to as Collegiate. The research protocol was created in cooperation with Collegiate's administration and approved by the Bowdoin College Institutional Review Board. All names of individuals involved in my study have been replaced with pseudonyms. I recruited student participants from an organization on campus that matches upperclass minority student mentors with underclass minority student mentees to offer academic, social, and cultural support. Sixteen African American and Latino students from grades nine through twelve participated in this study.

The focus group questions addressed the academic, social, and cultural experiences of African American and Latino students at Collegiate. Topics included why students chose to leave home to attend Collegiate, whether they thought race matters to students and teachers on campus, and student experiences transitioning to and navigating life at Collegiate. Open-ended questions allowed participants to speak about their experiences in their own words. The semi-structured style allowed me to guide the focus group topics while allowing for participants to answer questions how they saw fit and also to speak about important experiences that my questions did not directly address.

The Experiences of Students of Color at Collegiate

African American and Latino students reported facing contradictory expectations in the classroom. Students of color felt that they were expected by their white peers to be the educators when it came to topics of race. A ninth grade female lamented, "When you're in class and there aren't other people of color, teachers look to you expecting to shed light on my experiences in relation to what we're learning about and using me to educate everyone else, which I don't really like." Another female ninth grade student reacted,

"It pisses me off because I'm not god, not the professor, and not going to be able to tell you everything you need to know. No one can know everything but [white students] expect people of color to be able to teach them and that's not why we're here."

Students across the sample expressed similar frustrations with their classes. When the topic of race came up in

their classes, they were, or felt that they were, expected to speak on behalf of people of color.

At the same time, students of color felt that their opinions were invalidated by white students because their opinions stem from their own experiences as people of color. A Mexican American eleventh grader shared his personal experience of feeling that his views were discounted by his peers. He remembered,

"If they mention Mexicans in history class, everyone looks my way. If I give my opinion that is informed by my ethnicity and experiences, people sometimes overtly sometimes not, diminish my opinions because of the fact that they originate from my own experiences through my race. They kind of invalidate that and say that I think [what I think] because I'm Mexican."

Paradoxically, students of color at Collegiate are expected to be the arbiters on topics of race in the classroom, but their views are invalidated because their opinions stem from personal experiences.

When topics in class were not about race, African American and Latino students reported feeling excluded from the conversations. A female junior student contended, "In situations when it's not about race, you don't exist. That's how I feel a lot of the time." One female student suggested that the reason for this may be that white students do not expect her to know as much. She recounted, "When someone has a question in class, they will deliberately go around me and not ask me and that makes me mad because they assume I don't know as much I do." In the classroom, students of color occupy an unusual space in which they are expected to be very knowledgeable about issues of race (although their views are then discounted), but not expected to know about topics not related to race.

African American and Latino students at Collegiate felt that they were always working to prove their merit to their white peers. But, regardless of how they performed at Collegiate, they could never truly prove their ability. When students of color at Collegiate do well, white students often attribute their accomplishments to racial tokenism instead of merit. A senior girl spoke to this issue by noting that the accomplishments of students of color at Collegiate are diminished because the students are non-white. She reported,

"You will do something and there will always be an excuse for why you got it. Like, you got in because you're black. There's always another reason. It couldn't be because I worked hard. I feel like it's sometimes impossible to prove yourself."

Another student felt that she had to “prove that I belong all the time even though I got in just like everyone else did.” A junior recounted hearing, “He only got that position because he’s Mexican and he fills that quota and they’re trying to get students of color in leadership positions.” When it comes to the college application process, racial tokenism becomes an even more salient topic. One student reported that in his experience, when white students became upset about who did and did not get into certain colleges, white students resort to “playing the race card,” stating that students of color got into elite schools to fulfill a diversity quota. In one case, when an African American student earned admission to an Ivy League school, there was widespread talk among white students that he got in because of his race and not because of his merit. When students of color do poorly, however, they perceive that their difficulties are attributed to lack of merit among the entire community of students of color. A junior girl revealed,

“I feel like so much more is expected of me because I have to prove myself. And you’re representing everyone who looks like you. When you mess up, then you’re representing a lot more than yourself.”

A junior African American male reported that when students of color make mistakes in school, it reflects poorly on the entire student of color community. For example, if students of color do not do well in math class, then that may suggest that all students of color are bad at math. In more serious cases, he believes that when students of color are expelled from Collegiate, it reflects badly on the entire community of students of color instead of the individual. As a result, he lamented “We are always under a lens.” When it comes to race at Collegiate, the underlying dynamic suggests that no matter what students of color accomplish, they do not receive individual credit from their white peers.

Discussion

The concept of an organizational habitus is useful in examining the cultures of prep schools and how they can be unwelcoming places for students of color. McDonough (1997) defined the organizational habitus as a set of dispositions and perceptions that is transmitted to individuals in a common organizational culture. The cultures of institutions are informed by qualities of the dominant group of people who have inhabited these institutions. For centuries, white and affluent students have been the dominant group in prep schools and their dispositions and perceptions have shaped the historical organizational habitus of those institutions. Today, as prep schools have increasingly diverse student bodies, they are faced with students whose presence bumps up against the historical organizational habitus and this

tension has important implications for how students of color fare in these institutions.

The historical organizational habitus of prep schools as spaces for the white and affluent has reinforced notions of white privilege and makes clear that white students and students of color alike in these spaces understand the centrality of race to their experiences. The habitus reinforces the perceptions of many majority students that their schools are places for the white and wealthy. The experiences of African American and Latino students at Collegiate demonstrate that when students of color enter selective prep schools they face an organizational habitus that reinforces the notion that they are outsiders. They face contradicting expectations in the classroom as white students do not expect them to be knowledgeable except about issues of race. Moreover, the students who attested that they can never prove their merit to their white peers demonstrate that prep schools continue to be spaces in which students of color feel that they are not perceived to belong in the same way that white students do.

These experiences have important implications for the ways in which African American and Latino students navigate and achieve success in their prep schools. Until the organizational habitus of selective schools shifts towards one that values the merit of each student equally and moves beyond powerful notions of white privilege, prep schools will continue to be sites that allow students of color through their doors, but are not ready to embrace them as equals. If this trend continues, then students of color will continue to be second-class students at their schools. Moreover, prep schools as institutions of education will continue to stand in conflict with the egalitarian goals of education as an institution in American society, denying equal opportunity to youth in America.

Recommendations

For these reasons, it is important to ensure that despite the obstacles students of color face at Collegiate, they can not only survive, but thrive at their school. The most important factor that dictated whether or not support services for students were effective is whether or not the people involved with students on a day-to-day level were culturally competent. Cross et al. (1989) offer a widely used definition of cultural competency as, “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (13). In essence, to be culturally competent is to recognize the ways in which differences in race and culture influence the ways in which white students and students of color navigate spaces and interact with each other within elite educational institutions.

At Collegiate, the Center for Multicultural Life engages students from diverse backgrounds so that students may learn from each other across lines of race. To this end, the Center can provide workshops and trainings to the faculty and students at Collegiate regarding how race influences the experiences of students of color. These practices can bring to the forefront topics relevant to the experiences of students of color at Collegiate so that faculty and student leaders can gain an understanding of how race pervades the experiences of African American and Latino students. By promoting cultural competency among students and faculty, Collegiate can become an institution that is vigilant of the ways in which cultural differences influence the experiences of students of color. In doing so, Collegiate can become a model for other predominantly white institutions that are dedicated to ensuring that all students, regardless of race, feel comfortable and welcome in their environments.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Professor Craig McEwen for his guidance, mentorship, and support throughout this entire study. I could not imagine pushing myself to pursue this project without his unwavering dedication to supporting my undergraduate research. In addition, I would like to thank my academic advisor Professor Nancy Riley for her continued encouragement. I thank Professor Matthew Klinge for the opportunity to work as his research assistant which sparked my interest in academic research. Further, I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and administrators at Collegiate for allowing me to pursue this topic. Last, I would like to thank Rosemary Effiom, the Bowdoin College MMUF coordinator, as well as the MMUF program for the continued support that has enabled me to commit myself to academic research.

Endnote

¹ Information gathered from individual school websites.

References

- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems* 33 (6): 14-32.
- Cookson, Peter W., and Caroline Hodges Persell. 1985. *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Datnow, Amanda, and Robert Cooper. 1997. "Peer Networks of African American Students in Independent Schools: Affirming Academic Success and Racial Identity." *The Journal of Negro Education* 66 (1): 56-72.

Hyman, Jeremy S., and Lynn F. Jacobs. 2009. "Why Does Diversity Matter at College Anyway?" *Professors' Guide*. August 12. <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2009/08/12/why-does-diversity-matter-at-college-anyway>.

Khalid, Kiran. 2012. "Access to Elite Education, but Feelings of Exclusion for Some Students of Color." *In America*. December 4. <http://inamerica.blogs.cnn.com/2012/12/04/access-to-elite-education-but-feelings-of-exclusion-for-some-students-of-color/>.

McDonough, Patricia M. 1997. *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity*. New York, NY: SUNY Press.

Page, Scott E. 2008. *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

“Eso Ya No Se Consigue”: The Effects of Economic Shortages on Women’s Everyday Lives in Venezuela

Andrea Clark Gómez, *University of Texas at Austin*

Andrea Clark is a 2016 graduate of the University of Texas at Austin who double-majored in Latin American studies and history and minored in African and African diaspora studies. Andrea was born in Venezuela and has lived in various places, including Argentina and Saudi Arabia. These transnational experiences sparked her interests in gender and race studies, in particular women’s rights and transnational feminism. Andrea will pursue an MA in Latin American Studies at the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. After completing the MA, Andrea plans to continue her research by completing a doctorate in anthropology or sociology.

Abstract

Studies on Venezuela’s Chávez administration and the media have focused on the country’s political polarization and the visible effects of the economic crisis: long lines outside supermarkets and empty shelves. This paper identifies and clarifies the effects of the economic crisis in general, and the shortages in particular, on women’s practical needs (e.g., tampons, etc.) and strategic gender interests (e.g., organizing to legalize or offer alternatives to abortion). It presents ethnographic work, interviews conducted during the summer of 2015, and non-governmental reports on how women access basic goods and services, how they are organizing, and how shortages affect women’s health. For example, as a result of scarcity, issues such as access to contraceptives, the status of maternal health and teen pregnancy, and the rise of sexually transmitted diseases have become problems that have remained unaddressed by the media. This paper is part of a larger study, an undergraduate thesis, that surveys the debates around women’s reproductive and sexual rights during the Bolivarian Revolution.

Since the end of 2013, the daily life of most Venezuelans involves standing in line for an average of one hour in order to purchase basic goods like harina pan (flour), rice, and sugar. Economic shortages and inflation have troubled Venezuela since the government devalued the currency in 2013 (Corrales). The international media has disseminated images of Venezuelans lining several blocks while waiting outside of supermarkets (Corrales). However, neither the media nor any recent study has analyzed the gendered composition of these lines and the effects of shortages on women’s livelihood (Weisbrot). Most of the Venezuelans standing in line are women, because gender roles continue unchallenged. Even after the Bolivarian Revolution, these traditional roles require women to shop for groceries while men continued their work uninterrupted. While visiting pharmacies and supermarkets, I witnessed the tension and struggle women face as they search for basic goods.

Shortages and Women’s Health: An Overview

This paper explores the effects of the current shortages on women’s reproductive and sexual health. Through my ethnography, I record women’s experiences as they struggle to find items like sanitary pads to birth control pills, and I assess the availability of these items. In addition, I analyze some of the short-term and long-term effects of the shortages in women’s reproductive and sexual lives. As the literature explains, women are political actors that respond to both practical needs (e.g., tampons, etc.) and strategic interests (e.g., organizing to legalize or offer alternatives to abortion) (Fernandes 100). I adopt these concepts not to separate the private from the public sphere but to understand women’s demands and struggles in post-Bolivarian revolution Venezuela. The research question is two-fold: As a result of the shortages, how difficult is it for women to access basic goods necessary for women’s reproductive and sexual life? And what are the short-term and long-term effects of these shortages on women’s ability to exercise a healthy sexual and reproductive life? I argue that the shortages have not only affected women’s practical needs but also their strategic interests.

This paper is part of a larger study that assesses the Bolivarian state policies and institutions and whether or not they improved the status of women’s reproductive and sexual health. The overall argument is that the Chávez’s administration opened spaces for various discussions to take place and initiated programs designed to further women’s strategic interests. At the same time, however, the Revolution has not guaranteed women’s practical and material needs to ensure a healthy reproductive and sexual life. This reality has actually deteriorated women’s efforts to accomplish their strategic interests. In other words, the pro-women ideological rhetoric of the Bolivarian Revolution does not translate and differs substantially from the precarious class-determined status of women in Venezuela.

Literature Review: On the Economic Crisis and Women’s Demands

To understand the shortages, it’s important to acknowledge that the literature on Venezuela’s economy has been politically motivated and polarized. For example, Javier Corrales, a known political scientist and expert on Venezuela, claims that the regime mismanaged the oil boom and is the one to blame for the recession (Corrales). Corrales dismisses external factors like a U.S. conspiracy and internal factors like the Venezuelan elites that, according to the government, are waging “una guerra económica,” an economic war (Corrales). Mark Weisbrot, on the other hand, argues that the Venezuelan government has the resources to weather the economic crisis and resume economic growth

and poverty reduction efforts (Weisbrot). According to Weisbrot, fears of an economic collapse in Venezuela like that of Greece or Spain are not an accurate assessment of the situation and are disseminated by the opposition who seeks to destabilize the government (Weisbrot). Because the phenomenon of inflation and recession that has led to the shortages is recent and constantly changing, this study does not focus on the causes of the economic shortage or those responsible. Instead, this paper tracks how economic problems in general, and the shortages in particular, have affected women's reproductive and sexual health and rights.

Few studies have focused on women's movement and on the issues of women's reproductive and sexual lives. Sujatha Fernandes' work titled "Barrio Women and Popular Politics in Chávez's Venezuela" is one of these ethnographic studies that records women's mobilization in popular politics during the Bolivarian Revolution (Fernandes 102). By providing an ethnography of "lo cotidiano" or the everyday, the author differentiates between elite women and "barrio women" and how these women resist or contribute to popular politics (Fernandes 113). Fernandes proposes women's "practical needs" and "strategic interests" in order to gauge the demands of popular women's movements and how the government has met these demands (Fernandes 99). Practical needs are defined as the "daily struggles over food, shelter and health," so sanitary pads and birth control, which are important to women's reproductive and sexual health, can be added to these needs (Fernandes 99). On the other hand, "strategic gender interests" constitute larger needs that "lead to a growing consciousness and questioning of gender hierarchy" (Fernandes 100). As this study reveals, women's strategic interests have been curtailed, because, instead of focusing on work or participating in grassroots activism, women have to wait in line and confront the burden of the economic crisis on the family. These two concepts allow us to better situate the problems Venezuelan women face as a result of shortages.

Other important studies have foreshadowed several challenges to women's movement and the Bolivarian social programs. The work of Cathy A. Rakowski and Giaconda Espina on women's movements correctly foreshadowed that economic problems could affect government services, especially those catered to women (Rakowski and Espina 267). In effect, scarcity has affected not only the availability of basic goods for women's reproductive and sexual health but also government services for women. Cristobal Valencia's book *We are the State!* highlights the grassroots mobilization of the "Chavistas" in Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution. However, Valencia erroneously concludes that, because the state has transferred power to organized civil society actors, the Chavistas, they will be able to voice and meet their demands through participatory democracy (Valencia 6-7).

Failing to acknowledge the grassroots organization's dependency on the state's monetary support and on a healthy economy, Valencia could not foreshadow how economic problems could hinder women's grassroots organizations; or how the practical needs affect the strategic interests of women's grassroots.

Methodology

During the summer of 2015, I traveled to Maturín and Caracas in Venezuela and conducted research in different sectors of these cities. In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, I visited both predominantly Chavista sectors like Libertador district and opposition sectors like El Hatillo. I also interviewed pro-government and opposition institutions that provide services to women in the area of reproductive and sexual health. In my study, however, I decentralize Venezuelan studies from the capital, where most academic studies take place, and focused most of my ethnography in Maturín (Fernandez; Valencia; Rakowski & Espina).

For my methodology, I conducted ethnographic and archival research. My ethnographic experiences allowed me to obtain information about the current impact that the shortages have on women. More specifically, I chose participant observation, such as standing in line outside pharmacies and talking to women. This method made me a witness to the everyday activities of women and helped me understand the impact of the economic shortages on women's everyday lives. As mentioned previously, I conducted interviews with a variety of actors from different sectors, affiliations, and geographical areas of Venezuela. This allowed me to collect different perspectives about controversial issues, such as government policies, which are often met with polarizing perspectives on the streets. In addition, I reviewed several published materials and government archives to supplement the interviews and my ethnographic encounters with women.

Practical Needs and Strategic Gender Interests: Measuring the Effects

In order to understand how women's practical needs are affected by the crisis, I decided to immerse myself in "lo cotidiano," or women's everyday life. While I stood in line, behind a woman wearing a shirt with the eyes of Chávez ironically gazing over the situation, I listened to women complain about the long wait outside the pharmacy Farmatodo. They protested with "Dios mío, espero que aquí encuentre papel toalet" (Oh my god, I hope that I can find toilet paper here) or "Ya no me queda ni pañales para mi bebe, ni toallitas sanitarias para cuando me llegue la regla" (I don't have any diapers left or any sanitary pads for that time of the month) (Observations 06/29/15). Just like they

couldn't find toilet paper for the household or diapers for the family, they couldn't find sanitary pads to answer their monthly female needs. The women's burden and anger over not finding items for their homes transcended into their own basic material necessity as women. As I finally made it inside Farmatodo, after a record 42 minutes in line, I realized that the shortages were threatening women's accessibility to basic goods on which their sexual and reproductive health depended.

In order to further collect data on women's hygiene products, I visited ten pharmacies throughout Maturín. As a researcher my plan was to enter a pharmacy and ask for items like tampons, condoms, and birth control. Then, I would record the item's prices and availability. I did this in order to gauge the impact of the country's shortage on women's practical needs. Women needed tampons for their reproductive life and condoms to carry out a healthy sexual life. However, most of these were not found or too costly.

affecting women's ability to organize. During my interview with Dra. Alba Carosio from the leading Women's Center at the Central University of Venezuela (UCV-CEM), she told me the story of F.A.L.D.A.S. en Revolución. This organization was part of the larger collective of socialist feminists aligned with the Chávez administration (Carosio). Their main goal was to provide services and counseling for popular women who had unwanted pregnancies. For four to five years, F.A.L.D.A.S. was composed of a group of young women who gave out information and answered a 24-hour Abortion hotline for women (Tinta Violeta 190). Because of the recent economic crisis, the members of F.A.L.D.A.S. had to increase their work hours; some had left the country; and most had to attend to their familial responsibilities (Carosio). Dra. Carosio confessed that the economic crisis had taken a toll not only on F.A.L.D.A.S. but also on the larger collective of socialist-feminists and those involved with initiating a campaign to legalize abortion (Carosio). She stated: "no es fácil que como grupos organizados nosotros encontremos las fuerzas y la energía para llevar adelante [una campaña]."

Items	Pharmacy 1	Pharmacy 2	Pharmacy 3	Pharmacy 4	Pharmacy 5	Pharmacy 6	Pharmacy 7	Pharmacy 8	Pharmacy 9	Pharmacy 10
<i>Contraception</i>	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Condoms</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Sanitary Pads</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Emergency Contraception</i>	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	No	No	Yes
<i>Pregnancy Test</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1: Availability of Items in Pharmacies in Maturín

To summarize, Table 1 shows that, in my visits to the ten pharmacies, I never found sanitary pads. In many of the pharmacies downtown, women lamented the absence of sanitary pads, "eso ya no se consigue" (that is no longer found). However, I was able to find condoms in all the pharmacies, and pregnancy tests were available in most. Birth control and emergency contraception were harder to find, and they were mostly in the pharmacies near the city center of Maturín. In fact, the shortages seemed to be impacting solely women's products (pads and contraception) and not necessarily men's products (condoms). Even though the items were relevant for men and women, the availability of these items were vastly different. Thus, gender affects the availability of these items. Scarcity was an undeniable reality, and tensions were running high even over products often ignored by the media: contraception, sanitary pads, and condoms.

The visits to the pharmacies in Maturín revealed how the shortages were affecting women's accessibility to basic goods. Throughout my interviews, I also identified how women organizers and leaders of women's institutions were experiencing hardships, and how the shortages were

(it's not easy, as organized groups, to find the strength and energy needed to undertake a campaign) (Carosio). Despite Venezuela's economic, revolution, traditional gender roles still require women to maintain the house and family. This increases the many burdens women face and limits their ability to organize. The economic shortages have forced the women to retreat back from the public sphere, and, for the survival of their family, women must assume their primary responsibility: the family. Furthermore, the economic crisis has taken a toll on women's organizations and their strategic gender interests such as providing services for women, legalizing abortion, and dismantling gender hierarchies.

Besides affecting women's practical needs and strategic gender interests, the economic crisis is threatening in very physical and visible ways women's health. In another interview, Deliana Torres Director of the Regional Institute of Women from Miranda (IREMUJERES) explained that women's increasing demand for sterilization is related to the scarcity of contraceptives. Torres explained that in 2009 the women's center provided the free distribution of contraception and conducted no "ligaduras" or tubal sterilization procedures (Torres). However, starting 2014, the demand for sterilization increased, and, by the end of 2015, the center would have conducted 300 to 500 tubal sterilizations

(Torres). Of course, Torres clarified that women were informed about all their options at forums organized by the center, but women were increasingly opting for permanent solutions as a result of scarcity of contraceptives and the economic crisis that endangers their ability to afford other methods.

The effects of the economic crisis may also worsen the state of other intersecting issues on women's health. Dr. Luz Beltran from the Venezuelan Observatory of Women's Human Rights (OVDHM) revealed the precarious status of maternal health and the rise of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). First, Venezuela has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Latin America (72.18 per 100,000) and ranks as the country with the highest levels of teen pregnancy in the region (89.10 per 1,000 between the ages of 15 to 19 years) (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas; Observatorio Venezolano de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres). These worrisome rates are in addition to the rise of STDs; for example, the rise of AIDS with 11,000 new cases of HIV per year and the rise of HPV, making cervical cancer the number one cause of death amongst women, may only worsen in the face of shortages and the larger economic crisis (Observatorio Venezolano de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres). These numbers show the gravity of the situation, and Dr. Beltran foreshadowed an increase in maternal mortality and STDs due to the shortages of medicines and supplies in hospitals and budget cuts of programs focusing on STD prevention (Beltran).

Discussion

The Venezuelan economic crisis is affecting women's reproductive and sexual health. The shortages deny women's access to basic products necessary to their health like sanitary pads and contraceptives. Because women's priorities are to answer their families' and their individual needs, women's practical needs are being jeopardized. Furthermore, the scarcity disproportionately impacts the availability of women's products. Consequently, shortages and the overall economic crisis have led to a decrease in women's mobilization—from women's grassroots organizing to institutions focused on women's issues. Therefore, the situation has made it more difficult for women to further their strategic gender interests. In addition, the consequences on women's health, such as sterilization and maternal mortality rates, are grave and undermining women's health. As part of a more holistic study of women's health, this study concludes that women's practical needs and strategic gender interests are at risk as the economy of the Bolivarian Revolution further crumbles.

My ethnographic work and interviews suggests women's experiences must be further explored in light of the

economic crisis and, specially, how scarcity seems to affect women in particular ways of their everyday lives. This paper focused specifically on the gendered implications of the economic situation, especially as it relates to women's health and ability to organize for the consolidation of their rights. However other analyses, specially an intersectional analysis, on the implications of class, race, and sexuality could yield to other conclusions on how these affect certain women's reproductive and sexual health in specific ways and their ability to organize in order to further their rights.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family in Venezuela who are the true inspiration for any and all of my work. Se lo debo todo a ustedes. Thank you Dr. Juliet Hooker for introducing me to the world of community-informed research and Dr. Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez for giving me the tools to do it. Finally, I am thankful to the women and experts I interviewed in Venezuela and stand in solidarity with all the mujeres que se calan las colas.

Works Cited

- Corrales, Javier. "Don't Blame it on the Oil." *Foreign Policy*, 7 May 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/07/dont-blame-it-on-the-oil-venezuela-caracas-maduro/>. Accessed 10 October 2016.
- Fernandes, Sujatha. "Barrio Women and Popular Politics in Chávez's Venezuela." *Latin American Politics and Society*, vol. 49, no. 3, 2007, pp. 97–127.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE). *Compliendo las Metas del Milenio*. ODM 2012, <http://www.ve.undp.org/content/venezuela/es/home/mdgoverview/overview/mdg5.html>. Accessed 10 October 2016.
- Observatorio Venezolano de los Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres. "Women Beyond 2015: Venezuela is not going to achieve the Millenium Goals." 9 Sept. 2013, <http://observatorioddhhmujeres.org/documentos/women%20beyond%202015%20final%20.pdf>. Accessed 10 October 2016.
- Rakowski, Cathy A. and Giaconda Espina. "Advancing Women's Rights Inside and Outside the Bolivarian Revolution: 1998–2010." *The Revolution in Venezuela*. Edited by Thomas Ponniah and Jonathan Eastwood, Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Tinta Violeta. *La Araña Feminista Opina*. Tinta Violeta, 2014.
- Valencia, Cristobal. *We are the State!: Barrio Activism in Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution*. The University of Arizona Press, 2015.

Weisbrot, Mark. "Sorry, Venezuelan Haters: this economy is not the Greece of Latin America." *The Guardian*, 7 Nov. 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/nov/07/venezuela-not-greece-latin-america-oil-poverty>. Accessed 10 October 2016.

Interviews/Ethnography

Beltrán, Luz, Dr. Personal interview. 7 July 2015.

Carosio, Alba, Dr. Personal Interview. July 7 2015.

Torres, Deliana. Personal interview. 6 July 2015.

“Necessary Failures”: Reproducing Masculinity, Transgression, and Violence in Late-Medieval Male Pregnancy Narratives

Benjamin Diego, *Stanford University*

Benjamin Diego is a recent graduate of Stanford University, where he majored in English and history. His work deals primarily with the art and literature of the early Middle Ages with a focus on depictions of the gendered body and architectural space in early Insular illuminated manuscripts. He is a Beinecke Scholar and recent recipient of the Kennedy Thesis Prize for his “Where the Word Dwells: Architecture and ‘Arbitecture’ in Insular Gospel-Books, 600–900 CE.” He is back home in Phoenix, working, writing, and applying to doctoral programs in art history and medieval studies.

Abstract

A number of medieval tales feature men, some peasants and knights, others kings and monks, who similarly believe that they are pregnant. Many of these tales have been critically examined through the lens of gender theory independent of one another, but have never been analyzed as a corpus organized around a common theme. This paper takes these tales together to reveal the significance of the pregnant man across texts and contexts. It argues that the intratextual pregnant man embodies the failure of able-bodied, able-minded masculinity at various social levels (lay, chivalric, monarchic, monastic), the continuities of which rely on the preservation of male hegemony.

A large corpus of medieval art and literature registers a profound unease with the embodied sexuality of not only “life-giving, lactating, menstruating, polluting” women, but also of men (Murray 18). These men are besieged by unwelcome erections and nocturnal emissions, and vulnerable to mutilation and penetration. In other medieval depictions, impotent kings are blinded and male “sodomites” are violated, skewered through the anus in Hellish torture scenes. These sources reveal where in the body the cultural construct of gender was located in the later Middle Ages, as well as raise questions regarding the relationship between the parts of the sexed body and the gendered whole. They imagine the “compromised,” non-normative male body to betoken transgressive masculinity.

Perhaps no male body challenges normative masculinity more than that of the “pregnant” man. Men who believe that they are pregnant abound in later medieval comic tales—funny, apparently, because they typify what would have been considered an ironic incongruity between cultural expectations of the sexed body and its perceived reality. Gender may be a purely cultural designation, but is nevertheless encoded in and “constructed on the material substrate of the biological body” in the popular imagination (Green 357). In this way, medieval femininity was partly constructed on the painful, dangerous, and often incapacitating experiences of pregnancy and childbirth. Conversely,

masculinity was not: the biological male cannot conceive; bearing children was not gendered masculine. This may seem obvious, but understanding childbirth in women as natural begs the question: what is childbirth in men? Is it queerness? Is it disability?

As Robert McRuer has argued in his recent work, the “queer” (i.e., sexually othered) and the “disabled” (i.e., physically or mentally othered) interpenetrate throughout discourses of identity. His scholarship extends Butlerian gender theory to postulate the “necessary failure” of performing not only heterosexual masculinity, but also able-bodiedness (Wheatley 387). His point is that “ideal able-bodiedness,” like ideal masculinity, “can never, once and for all, be achieved,” since they are essentially conflicted identities, fraught with contradictions and always at risk of being undermined (McRuer 93). Moreover, these unstable identity categories often blur into one another, the successful masculine subject at risk of being “compromised by disability metaphorized as queerness,” and the successful able-bodied subject, “by queerness metaphorized as disability” (94). This consolidation of queerness and disability, McRuer explains,

occurs through complex processes of conflation and stereotype Once these conflations are available in the popular imagination, queer/disabled figures can be tolerated and, in fact, utilized in order to maintain the fiction that able-bodied heterosexuality is not in crisis. (94)

In other words, cultural *processes of conflation and stereotype*—in literature or popular culture, for instance—serve to consolidate and contain threats to hegemonic ideals. In a society that institutes compulsory het-able-bodiedness, disability is queering and queerness is disabling.

In this way, medieval male pregnancy narratives treat disability and queerness as what Edward Wheatley calls “paired manifestations of disempowerment” (388). Their “pregnant” protagonists are depicted as being short of breath and confined to the childbed, impaired and unable to perform the “masculine” tasks expected of them; yet the parturience that marks their “disability” is women’s expression of able-bodiedness. Medieval male “pregnancy” stories construct a view of embodied masculinity that runs contrary to embodied femininity—a man *cannot* and *is not allowed* to become pregnant “like a woman.” In thinking that he has conceived, the “pregnant” man expresses a queer desire to transgress the limits of the sexed body, and thereby jeopardizes his male gender identity, his authority, and his mental and physical ability.

The Pregnant Man in Late-Medieval Literature

This paper analyzes the image of the pregnant man in four popular tales of diverse origins and genres, arguing that in each instance it pushes the boundaries of gendered discourse only to reinforce them. The German *mare* “The Monk’s Predicament,” Marie de France’s *fabliau* “The Peasant and the Beetle,” the Old French *chanteefable* *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and Jacobus de Voragine’s *The Golden Legend*—all of these feature men, some peasants and knights, others kings and monks, who similarly believe that they are pregnant. The tales have yet to receive the scholarly attention they deserve, especially as a corpus organized around common themes and concerns. Taking the tales together reveals the significance of the “pregnant” man across texts and contexts. I argue that this intratextual pregnant man embodies the failure of able-bodied, able-minded masculinity at various social levels, the continuities of which rely on the preservation of male hegemony. And rather than subvert this social system, he (re) produces it, ultimately forsaking or facing punishment for his queered, disabled transgressions.

The early fourteenth century “The Monk’s Predicament” follows this pattern, highlighting the tensions among divergent masculinities, ultimately advocating one which, as Olga Trokhimenko has argued, privileges sexual skill, virility, and aggression and punishes the queer/disabled body. The eponymous monk finds himself in lust at the beginning of the story, yet fails utterly to perform sexual intercourse when given the chance. Misconceiving the workings of his own body, the naïve monk worries that he is pregnant. Desperate to conceal and terminate his “pregnancy,” which could jeopardize his position in the monastery, the monk summons a servant, called “the widow’s son” by the narrator (v. 309), and entreats him to beat him like the cow the widow’s son caused to miscarry. But when the servant obliges, the monk only retreats farther from honor, and indeed, from his humanity: bloodied and broken, the cleric lurches about like “a rabid dog” (v. 409), searching for a passing-by rabbit which he believes to be his aborted child. In the end, the “insane” (v. 435) monk is captured and returned to the monastery. There, he endures a beating and weeks of punitive privation before being readmitted into his community.

The monk undergoes a series of transformations (or perhaps devolutions?) over the course of the tale, which concatenate to queer and disable him. The most obvious of these is what Trokhimenko calls his “grotesque feminization” through pregnancy (126). The monk’s transition to a feminine role is not only indicated by what he believes is happening to his sexualized body, but also by his social and sexual subordination. When the monk seeks help from the servant—his inferior—he assumes a submissive role. He trails behind “the servant [who] always [rides] ahead” (v. 71),

and offers his body to him to be beaten like a domestic animal. A number of insinuations by the author suggest a link between the monk’s social passivity and a feminized sexual passivity. The monk again takes on a subordinate role—that of “the one on the bottom” (v. 263)—with the prostitute whom he sexually disappoints, and also, the author implies, with his brethren. When the monk reveals his pregnancy to the servant, the latter wonders if the prior is the father, or perhaps the abbot or cellarer. In actuality, the monk never engages in intercourse with any of his brethren, much less any man. Nevertheless, the servant’s implication of sodomy suggests the monk’s readiness to dispense with his vows, his social position, and his masculinity.

The monk’s willingness to believe he is pregnant, and later, that he has miscarried a live rabbit, reflects the deficiency of his ability to reason—to see how things are beyond how they literally appear. Trokhimenko, citing Wheeler, explains how medieval monks, who did not engage with masculinity in its dominant mode of virile aggression, constructed for themselves an alternative form of masculine expression that privileged intellectual over physical strength (125). The protagonist of “The Monk’s Predicament” lacks any such intellectual might; the workings of intercourse, conception, and abortion elude him entirely. So, when the narrator insinuates the monk’s passivity and sexual inexperience; or characterizes him as a woman or animal; or repeatedly labels him a kid (vv. 9, 19, 534) and a fool (vv. 145, 403)—and even a madman—he draws attention to the failings of the protagonist’s rational masculinity.

Ultimately, Trokhimenko argues that “The Monk’s Predicament” uses the figure of the “pregnant” monk—queered by his passivity and disabled by his ignorance—to signal the foundering of monastic manhood and endorse instead a masculinity of virile aggression associated with the laity. Indeed, the abbot in the story resorts to violence when he corrects the young protagonist at the tale’s end, suggesting that monastic pacifism only works up to a point. And viewed through the lens of queer/disabled intersectional theory, the recourse to violence is significant: it beats into conformity the “grotesque” body, into which the tale has consolidated threats to masculinity (e.g., femininity, animality, and irrationality) through McRuer’s “complex processes of conflation and stereotype” (94). So, the failure of the “pregnant” protagonist of “The Monk’s Predicament” not only reinforces the hegemony of masculinity over femininity, but also of male aggression over monastic male passivity.

A number of the elements introduced in “The Monk’s Predicament” carry into other medieval male pregnancy narratives: the implication of sodomy, the animal “child,” and the ultimate restoration of normativity through violence or stereotype, to name a few. Marie de France’s short *fabliau*

“The Peasant and the Beetle” transposes these motifs from the context of the monastery to that of the lay village, but sustains the hegemony of able-bodied masculinity.

The *fabliau* tells the story of an unwitting peasant, whose exposed anus is besieged by a beetle. In pain and desperate for relief, the peasant totters to the doctor, only to be convinced he is pregnant. The people in his village fear him when they learn of his “condition,” convinced that his purported pregnancy is an ill omen. Half-repulsed, half-fascinated by his affliction, the villagers monitor the “pregnant” peasant “to see [from] where the baby [might] emerge” (125). When a mere beetle exits the peasant’s bowels, he and the townsfolk recognize their folly, leaving the author to point out the credulity of those who believe “that which cannot be” (125).

Like “The Monk’s Predicament,” the fable stresses the importance of behaving rationally. The masculinity of the peasant does not come into question until he abandons reason and “really believes” that he is pregnant. Doing so sexualizes his penetration by the beetle, reconstructing it as a sort of parodic intercourse or insemination that carries with it connotations of bestiality and sodomy. The peasant’s apparent conception by the bowel-beetle is surely intended as a scathing burlesque of his inability to masculinely defend his body and mind from violating forces, be they perverted insects or irrational superstitions. But the peasant’s confidence in his pregnancy does not only disrupt his own body, but also that of his community. On one hand, the townsfolk are repulsed by what they see as a violation of nature—as a consolidation of the queer and disabled into an abject body. But on another level, they are just as culpable as the peasant in accepting the pregnancy, demonstrating for instance an abiding interest in where the baby will emerge. They differ from the monastic community in “The Monk’s Trouble,” which did not accept, but rather violently deny the young monk’s irrational, impossible pregnancy. It seems, then, that the “The Peasant and the Beetle” does not just reflect on an individual’s failure to perform able-bodied and able-minded masculinity, but also on the failure of an entire community to correct that individual. That responsibility is left to the author, who adds an austere admonition against foolishness and subversion at the end of her fable.

A male pregnancy episode in the French romance *Aucassin and Nicolette* elevates this theme of community disempowerment: it focuses on the jeopardization of an entire kingdom under the rule of a “foolish” and feminized king, and its salvation through the punitive actions of the overtly virile knight, Aucassin. The bungling monarch, convinced he is pregnant, has traded places with his wife—has sent her into battle as he himself writhes with pain in the throes of “labor” on a childbed. When Aucassin confronts him,

demanding to know why he is in bed when his nation is at war, the king replies, “I’m a mother [. . .] / When my month is gone at length, / And I come to health and strength, / Then I shall hear Mass once more / As my fathers did before, / Arm me lightly. . . .” Here, the king imagines a slippage between motherhood and fatherhood, femininity and masculinity. When he has borne out his time on the childbed, then he will simply return to acting as his fathers did before him, attending mass and charging into battle.

The King’s gender fluidity, which has not only upset the foundations of his own nation, but also challenged the rigidity of Aucassin’s own chivalric masculinity, causes Aucassin great alarm. Disgusted by the monarch, the knight grabs a nearby staff and beats him mercilessly, threatening to do worse should he ever “lie in childbed” again. Aucassin’s sadism comes somewhat by surprise in the story, but mostly falls in line with the corrective violence that permeates male pregnancy narratives. A unique addition to this motif is the staff—suggestive in its phallicism as the object with which Aucassin asserts the dominance of his own able-bodied masculinity over that of the queer, bed-ridden king, which has weakened an entire nation.

The story of Nero’s pregnancy in Jacobus de Voragine’s widely read thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* similarly reflects how the non-normative male body signals a failure of power and masculinity. In the legend, Nero, called to task for killing, dissecting, and inspecting the womb of his mother “who gave birth to him with such pain,” exhorts his physicians to impregnate him, so that he might understand just “how much pain it cost [his] mother.” Following orders, the doctors concoct a potion that deposits a frog into the emperor’s stomach. As the frog grows larger, so does Nero’s belly, such that he thinks he is with child. Swollen, short of breath, and desperate for relief, Nero orders the doctors to “hasten [his] delivery,” leading to what may be best described as a parodic birth scene: Nero vomits up “a frog horrible to see, full of vile humors and covered with blood” and shrinks away, horrified to think that he might have produced something so awful. The doctors explain that the fetus is just “deformed” because the emperor did not allow it to gestate for a full term. Finally, Nero asks if that was what he looked like when he was born; the doctors respond affirmatively, and Nero orders that his fetal “likeness” be cared for and housed in a stone chamber. Later, when Nero is deposed, the citizens of Rome cast the frog from its nest and burn it, presumably to rid the city of any trace of the emperor’s legacy, as well to posthumously correct the transgressions of his pregnancy. The tale appears between other accounts of Nero’s frivolity and wickedness as a ruler. Here, Nero’s inability to rule Rome is linked to his incapacity to rule—or even fathom—his own body.

Nero's maternal impulses threaten his authority as a ruler for a number of reasons. First, they reflect a desire to embody femininity—a desire at odds with Nero's imperative to lead. Tania Colwell has written on the link between gender and kingship in medieval discourse, arguing that normatively masculine qualities—physical strength, rationality, temperance—were also the qualities of an effective leader. Nero loses these male qualities when he becomes “pregnant”—his breathing grows labored, his body weak, his demands increasingly “contrary to nature”—and thus jeopardizes his kingly authority. Nero's feminized body disempowers him, conflating once more the queer and the disabled. Moreover, it disempowers his community—his subjects hate him and his advisors live in fear. Tania Colwell has shown the compromised body of the king to represent not only a failure of individual leadership, but also of social order: the non-normative male body physically disrupts the social fabric that prescribes what it *should* be.

But Nero is not only feminized in the tale, but also bestialized, similar to the protagonists of “The Monk's Trouble” and “The Peasant and the Beetle.” His “pregnancy” involves nurturing in his belly—and eating the diet of—an animal that he later comes to recognize as a sort of younger version of himself: “Is this what I looked like when I came out from my mother's womb?” The story only reinforces this connection between the emperor and the frog when it adds that both live in palatial domed chambers, and later meet their demise at the hands of an angry Roman mob. By transgressing the limits of his gendered body, Nero steps not into the realm of the feminine, but into that of the unnatural, the inhuman, the beastly.

Biofuturity and the Pregnant Man

The image of the “unnatural” pregnant man has borne itself into the popular tales of the present day, signaling a continuity of preoccupations with anatomical sex, gender identity, gender performance, and ability. An interesting case is the 1994 movie *Junior*, which stars the uber-male body-builder Arnold Schwarzenegger as Alex Hesse, a dour genetic scientist who volunteers for his own in vitro fertilization experiment and ends up pregnant. He initially plans to terminate the pregnancy in the first trimester, keeping the fetus just long enough to demonstrate the success of the growth hormone he and his partner Larry Arbogast have invented. But when the time comes for Hesse to abort, he cannot; he has become attached to his future baby, if not to the trials of morning sickness and hormone imbalance. Moreover, he likes the way that carrying a child has softened his sharper edges. As Michael Davidson puts it, “The joke involves seeing Mr. America become Mrs. America” (Davidson 207). But for all its farcicality, *Junior* poses a question that may become more viable in bio-futurity:

What would it mean for a “masculine” man to give birth? The movie's answer is largely ambivalent—Hesse becomes “a more sensitive male” (208). Still, the way the movie draws comedic content from the ironic disjuncture between Hesse's pseudo-feminized body and his masculine gender identity, suggests another, less compassionate answer: that Hesse is, in Arbogast's words, “a freak!”

To be sure, at least two men have already actually given birth—Thomas Beatie in 2008 and Evan Hempel in 2016. Beatie offers an answer to the above question in an article he wrote for the *Advocate* while pregnant, stating: “Despite the fact that my belly is growing with a new life inside me, I am stable and confident being the man that I am. In a technical sense I see myself as my own surrogate, though my gender identity as male is constant” (Beatie). Yet, despite Beatie's repeated attempts to normalize his desire to give birth as a man in articles and highly publicized interviews, his pregnancy nevertheless generated controversy, many seeing the actual pregnant man as the “freak” that Arbogast fears Hesse may be in *Junior*.

Though the medieval tales discussed in this essay lack the bio-futurist spin of these modern stories—with their hormone treatments, sex-reassignment technologies, and *actual* male pregnancies—they nevertheless share with them an interest in and discomfort with the cultural implications of male reproduction. Each of the stories discussed above reaffirms a series of categorical assumptions that limit the ways normative intersectional masculinity and femininity can be embodied. Their means of doing so involves consolidating threats to the hegemony of het-able-bodied masculinity into a transgressive male corpus—queer, disabled, irrational, pregnant—at which it can then direct verbal and physical violence. The success of the masculine subject relies on such violence—on the destruction, rather than creation of new bodies.

In spite of its perennial suppression, the image of the pregnant man nevertheless endures in the imagination, and now the real world, as a symbol of a new era—of generation rather than violence, of inclusion rather than exclusion. The intratextual pregnant man, loosed from any particular context of violence, embodies not the norm, but what Butler calls a “necessary failure” of that norm that promises inclusivity (Butler 32). As she explains: “This failure to fill the place [. . .] is precisely the futural promise of universality, its status as a limitless and unconditional feature of all political articulation” (32). The “necessary failure” of the pregnant man represents the promise of universality—of a world less afflicted by the violence of categorical assumptions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Fiona Griffith for her advice and guidance through the preparation of this paper, as well as Professors Elaine Treharne and Beatrice Kitzinger for their continued support and mentorship.

Works Cited

Aucassin and Nicolette. "Excerpt." Translated by Eugene Mason. Cambridge, Ontario: In Parentheses Publications, 2001.

Beatie, Thomas. "Labor of Love: Is Society Ready for This Pregnant Husband?" *The Advocate*. N.p., 23 Apr. 2008. Web. 16 Feb. 2016.

Butler, Judith. "Restaging the Universal: Hegemony and the Limits of Formalism" in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, eds. Judith Butler, E. Laclau, S. Žižek (London: Verso, 2000).

Colwell, Tania. "Medieval Masculinities: Transgressions and Transformations." *Our Medieval Heritage: Essays in Honour of John Tillotson for his 60th Birthday*. Eds. Linda Rasmussen, Valerie Spear, and Diane Tillotson. Cardiff: Merton Priory Press, 2002.

Davidson, Michael. "Pregnant Men: Modernism, Disability, and Biofuturity in Djuna Barnes." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 43.2 (2010): 207–26. Web.

De France, Marie. "The Peasant and the Beetle." In *The Fables*. Edited and translated by Mary Lou Martin. Birmingham, AL: Summa Publications, 1984.

De Voragine, Jacobus. *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*. Translated by William Granger Ryan. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2012: 347.

Green, Monica H. "Caring for Gendered Bodies." *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*. Eds. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.

McRuer, Robert. "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence." *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*. Eds. Sharon L. Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggeman, and Rosemarie Garland Thompson. New York: Modern Language Association, 2002.

Murray, Jacqueline. "The Law of Sin That Is in My Members: The Problem of Male Embodiment." *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women, and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*. Eds. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Trokhimenko, Olga V. "'Believing That Which Cannot Be': (De)Constructing Medieval Clerical Masculinity in 'Des münches not.'" *German Quarterly* 85:2 (2012): 121–136. Web.

Wheatley, Edward. "A River Runs Through It: Disability, Homosexuality, Queered/Disabled Discourse, and the Isle of Blandie in Bérinus." *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19:3 (2007).

What Good Is It, Anyway? Moral Lessons from Literature in Cortázar's *Rayuela*

Daniel Dominguez, *Stanford University*

Daniel Dominguez holds a Bachelor of Arts with honors in comparative literature from Stanford University. His honors thesis, "Oh, What Fun! The Ludic and Ergodic in Cortázar and Percec," focused on ergodic and ludic conceptualizations of literature as a game in order to explore the highly complex and often adversarial relationships between authors and readers in La vie mode d'emploi (1978) by Georges Perec and Rayuela (1963) by Julio Cortázar. He was awarded the 2016 Top Honors Thesis Award in the Division of Languages, Cultures, and Literature. His current research interests include the 20th- to 21st-century Latin-American novel, experimental literature, and reader-response theory. He is currently examining the novels of Chilean writer Alejandro Zambra and how they deal with the memory of the Pinochet dictatorship. He is currently applying to doctoral programs in Romance languages and comparative literature. He resides in Las Vegas.

Abstract

In this article I investigate how *Rayuela* (1963) by Julio Cortázar presents a complex, reader-centered narrative that allows readers to develop a set of critical skills they can use to critique both fiction and society. In doing so, I engage with Espen J. Aarseth's theory of "ergodic" literature and theories of the ludic aspect of society. After describing how the book's reading instructions are paradoxical and purposively misleading, I offer an explanation for why Cortázar may have chosen to deliberately mislead his readers. Drawing on Joshua Landy's theory of formative fictions, I argue that these texts draw the reader into a paradox that readers themselves must resolve. In doing so, they force the reader to develop critical reading skills that can be used to critique not only literature, but society and societal constructs as well.

What good does literature do? The simple answer, the one that authors themselves seem to be most fond of, is enjoyment. While literature is certainly enjoyable and, in this sense, positive, it also contains a long list of other qualities nowhere near as laudable. If literature is sheer entertainment, then why did Socrates ban it in the *Republic*? Don Quixote's brain was famously withered by chivalric romances just as Emma Bovary's tragedy was begotten by her infatuation with romances of the sentimental variety. Schools have lists of banned books and even Walmart meticulously chooses which books occupy its shelves. Yet, despite all this, people read. This must mean that large swaths of society consistently find something good enough about literature to continue consuming it.

What then is this good we should be seeking? Joshua Landy, who wrote an entire book on the uses of literature, concluded that literature serves the important function of

acting as a training ground for the mental capacities necessary for moral introspection (Landy 12). Literature may not make us better, but it does give us the tools to examine our own actions. The examples cited to support this view are typically morally ambiguous moments in literature where readers are forced to see how a character reacts and, consequently, reflect on how they themselves would react in the same situation. While these examples are certainly the most accessible to readers, given that most books contain such deliberative moments, the focus on them has meant that lessons lying at the structural level have been overlooked.

One of the works that best highlights how literature can develop critical faculties on the *structural* level is Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*), which recounts the adventures of Horacio Oliveira as he lives out his *vie bohème* phase in Paris, and his subsequent return to Buenos Aires. While the book's whimsical episodes and deep meditations on life provide plenty of examples of morally ambiguous situations, its usefulness rests doubly on its plot as it does on its highly complex narrative structure, which will be the focus of this discussion. The book opens with a "Table of Instructions" that tells readers that the book can be read several ways, but principally two. The "normal" path through the book involves reading chapters 1–6 linearly, after which "reader[s] may ignore what follows with a clean conscience" (*Hopscotch* v). However, what follows is an additional 99 chapters. If readers wish to engage with these chapters then they must follow the second prescribed path which begins with chapter 73 and ends with chapter 131, with readers "hopscotching" from chapter to chapter non-linearly in a pre-arranged sequence. In short, the text undermines the very action of reading itself and the idea that the author has full authority over the text. I argue that it is precisely this introspection that provides a series of moments in the novel that forces readers to reflect on and begin to question the many rules and customs surrounding reading they take as given. Through repeated readings these critiques extend beyond the book itself and allows readers to develop analytical skills that can be transferred to the world at large.

Because of its unique structure, *Rayuela* has garnered a great deal of critical attention, with many calling it a "hypertext" (Sánchez 1–2), a classification that reflects the book's ability to create various branching narratives à la Borges, similar to the ways websites' hyperlinks allow for highly idiosyncratic paths through the internet. At the center of the book is a requirement that readers "navigate" their way through the text. To use a term coined by Espen J. Aarseth, they are examples of "ergodic" literature, in which "nontrivial effort is required to . . . traverse the text" (1–2). In ergodic texts, readers must make a choice in order to propel the plot forward. What, however, constitutes a decision to keep going? At any moment while reading a book, readers

could decide to slam it shut to keep the plot from moving forward, pausing its plot until they return to it. However, in ergodic texts the plot itself exists only *as a result* of a decision made by readers. At the end of every chapter in *Rayuela*, readers are forced to decide as to which chapter to read next, lest the narrative end there. In a non-ergodic text, readers know instinctively to move on to the next chapter in a linear sequence: the decision is a trivial one precisely because it is too familiar for readers to notice *and* because the unfolding of the plot will not change as a result of this action. By forcing this choice upon his readers, Cortázar forces them to be aware of the very act of narrative navigation itself.

To illustrate this latter point, and highlight exactly how ergodic texts require a higher level of engagement from readers, I'll use a brief hypothetical. Imagine reading *The Great Gatsby* as a continuous scroll of text on a screen instead of from a book. If the scroll was synchronized to the number of words that readers could read per minute then readers would need no physical engagement with the text other than moving their eyes along the screen. This ocular scrolling certainly qualifies as purely *trivial* effort on the reader's part since their main focus would be comprehending the twists and turns of the plot, not the navigation or traversal of the text itself. Contrast this with a scroll setup for *Rayuela*. Readers would immediately need to pause the scrolling to decide whether or not to take the first linear path through the novel or the second nonlinear, or "hopscotch," path. Having chosen, readers would then either have to stop the scroll at the end of chapter 56 (when the linear sequence ends) or, more interestingly, watch the scroll eternally in accordance with the endless loop that Cortázar tacked onto the end of the sequence. The antepenultimate chapter in the sequence is chapter 131, which then directs the reader to chapter 58, which in turn sends the reader back to 131. Readers, if they follow the rules of navigation laid out for them, are stuck in an unceasing circular paradox. They will endlessly oscillate between the two chapters, not knowing when or how to escape the instructions they've been given. Therefore, readers will never finish the text if they only passively read the book or even if they passively follow Cortázar's instructions. Similar to the original choice of how to begin the text, they are also forced to choose how, and if, they want to end the text. In order to break out of the cycle they are tricked into by the "Table of Instructions," they must break the rules of the game they initially, and perhaps unknowingly, agreed to follow. They must cheat.

Cheating, however, is a rather interesting phenomenon, since games only technically exist for as long as everyone involved is following the rules. Games therefore end when even just one player ceases to obey the rules. As Roger Caillois notes however, the game is only temporarily over:

The cheat is still inside the universe of play. If he violates the rules of the game, he at least pretends to respect them. He tries to influence them. He is dishonest, but hypocritical. He thus, by his attitude, safeguards and proclaims the validity of the conventions he violates, because he is dependent upon others obeying the rules. If he is caught, he is thrown out. The universe of play remains intact. (Caillois 45)

Phrased differently, if I, while playing basketball, grab the ball and start sprinting away with it towards the hoop, I've entered into one of two scenarios. In the first, I am breaking the rules and will be castigated appropriately, i.e., I'll be given a foul and be allowed to return to the game. However, this scenario works only if my lapse from the rules is temporary. All involved players entered the game by agreeing to the rules. I exited the game by traveling with the ball, and then reentered the game when I accepted a foul that allowed me to continue playing. However, if I run off with the ball, refusing to give it back, then I have left the game. It cannot be said that I have broken a rule, since such a statement can only be made retroactively once I have reentered the game. By simply ignoring the rules, however, I have instead done something even more dangerous:

The spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world [and] robs play of its illusion Therefore he must be cast out for he threatens the existence of the play community. (Huizinga 11)

Games can deal well with cheaters and indeed often have complex mechanisms by which to handle them. What they cannot handle are anarchists who prove that the rules are arbitrary and, perhaps most threateningly, meaningless.

Cortázar is aware of this anarchic necessity and programs an error into his initial rules that forces his readers to question the very game in which they are involved. He designs the instructions of his novel so that readers must necessarily destroy them in order to fully comprehend the text. "Sus tesis anarquizantes plantean como primer paso de la creación artística la destrucción de todo aquello que llegue hasta nosotros prefabricado"¹ (Juan-Navarro 243). In other words, the formal structure is only important in serving as the norm from which readers must deviate in order to truly engage with the book (Heise 100). As we have noted earlier, the second reading sequence ends in an infinite loop that forces readers to alternate between chapters 131 and 58. A strict adherence to these rules then is only possible if they spend the rest of their lives switching back and forth between the two chapters. They are trapped within the confines of the book and its rules. Ironically, some critics argue that the only way to truly "win" *Rayuela* is to follow the first

linear sequence since that is the only prescribed path that lets the reader exit the game (Hardin). However, this is not a cheater's exit nor an anarchist's destruction of the game, but instead the typical arc of games in which the player follows the rules. "Play begins" Johan Huizinga notes "and then at a certain moment it is over. It plays itself to an end" (9). If one has chosen the second path and dutifully followed it, this final trick is a betrayal. Readers agreed to follow the rules with the assumption that the game would play itself out and finish, i.e., that the book would end as most books do. Instead they are forced into a corner from which they must escape in order to read the text. Consequently, the text forces them to step beyond the confines of the rules in order to carry on with their lives outside of the text.

This, however, causes a conflict of intentions in the readers, since they may very well want to stay well within the rules, but are forced out of them by the very author who created those rules. They cannot necessarily be labeled a cheat, since doing so would require them to have stayed within the realm of the rules, which is an impossibility given that the rules are exactly that from which they are trying to escape. Furthermore, since Cortázar never outlines a system of punishment for deviant readers, readers are unclear as to what such cheating would even resemble. One might then postulate that, since Cortázar installs no reprimands for his readers, he implicitly condones the sidestepping of the rules and primes the reader to rebel against them. Faced with the fact that they are trapped and that the rules leave them no option, the readers are forced into being "nihilist[s] who denounce the rules as absurd . . . [and] who refuse to play because the game is meaningless" (Caillois 7). Having denounced the rules and exited the pre-existing structure, however, readers are left with another choice, one that Cortázar has no say in. If they want to now re-engage with the text, then they must figure out where to begin. Does the reader return first to those chapters they found confusing? Do they go immediately to chapter 55, which provides crucial plot points but is intentionally skipped in the hopscotch sequence? Or do they simply pick a chapter at random and read at whim? It is at this moment that readers can exercise their full range of freedom in the text, no longer constrained by either the societal construct of linear reading embodied in the first sequence or by the arbitrary rules of Cortázar's second sequence. Carlos Fuentes noted this, writing that the second reading opened up not only possibilities for a third reading leading to a fourth, but opened up the very act of reading itself. Cortázar's goal, he notes, is to turn life itself into a grand exercise in reading in all its various forms (Fuentes 3). He traps his readers in a seemingly insurmountable maze, only so that the reader then finds an exit leading out onto the real world.

Cortázar not only wants his readers to deviate from the path that he has prepared for them, but also postulates that the book might very well become perfect as a result. His motivation for forcing his readers out of the play-space is two-fold. The selfless reason is to have the reader exercise the freedom that the play-space of reading usually limits via its rules. The selfish reason is that his book might become perfect by being read in a random way. In *Rayuela*, Morelli, an author and *mise-en-abyme* of Cortázar himself, hands off the manuscript of his own *Rayuela*-esque work to Oliveira, who is worried that that the chapters might end up in the wrong order. Brushing his worries aside, Morelli responds, "Ninguna importancia . . . Mi libro se puede leer como a uno le dé la gana . . . Lo más que hago es ponerlo como a mí me gustaría releerlo. Y en el peor de los casos, si se equivoca, a la mejor queda perfecto"ⁱⁱⁱ (*Rayuela* 590). It could be said that Cortázar wants a co-author for his text, but not in the way he claims to want one. He doesn't need a co-author within the play-space he has created: he needs one beyond it. Only cooperatively can both reader and author escape from the maze of the text.

Returning finally to the initial question of what good literature can do for us, we can see how the readers' critical and analytical skill development occurs with each subsequent rereading of the novel. The first reading of the hopscotch sequence leaves readers questioning the initial trust they gave the author who tricked them at the end. It also draws attention to how quickly readers fell into a habit of following rules immediately after accepting new rules of engagement from the author. They followed the second hopscotch sequence just as easily as they would have followed a traditional narrative and doing so led them to a dead end. Authoritarian systems often rely on their subjects blindly following orders without questioning them. In this case, the reader is forced to question not only the legitimacy that they automatically confer onto certain figures, like the author, but also their own proclivity towards blindly following orders. Therefore, during the second reading they will be conscious of these two ideas and actively make sure to not fall into a similar method of unquestioningly following the instructions of the author. Even if they reattempt one of the two prescribed reading methods, they will do so with the lessons of their first readings fresh in mind.

Rayuela trains readers to be critical of the authority of authors themselves—an almost universally unquestioned authority. Cortázar forces readers to reflect on their own lectoral complicity in the construction of the text. In a book crafted by an author who saw the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century craft multiple genocides that relied to a large degree on complacency, the question of complicity is crucial. *Rayuela* may not uniformly make its audience better, but it does develop a set of critical skills in readers that apply

not only to literature, but also to the self and society. The work begins by undermining the very act of reading linearly, a societally conditioned action derived from humanist reading habits that arose after the decline of scholastic habits (Grafton 184). After this, the novel diminishes the importance of the author by forcing the readers to act as co-creators and by leading the readers to question the author who led them to a dead end. Readers leave the text critical of the many assumptions with which they entered the book and those they developed along the way. In this way, it develops the capacity of the reader to critique not only literature, but society as it exists all around them. As they continue to reengage with both the text and the world outside of it, this skill continues to develop, allowing readers to be more critical of authority in both spheres. Literature may not make us uniformly better, but it can certainly allow us to perceive our imperfections. It allows us to see ourselves as the flawed primates that we are. Critiques of society, that global conglomeration of flawed primates, follow not too far behind.

Acknowledgements

This article is excerpted from my senior honors thesis. I would like to thank Professor Joan Ramon Resina and Professor Vincent Barletta for advising me through the process and for their continued support of my academic pursuits. I would also like to thank Stanford Mellon coordinators Laura Selznick and Dayo Mitchell for making sure my time in the program ran smoothly and allotting me the best the fellowship had to offer. Furthermore, I'd like to thank Patricia Valderrama for advising our Mellon cohort so well about the graduate school application process and making the process infinitely more bearable. Additionally, I'd like to thank Alyssa Vann for meticulously reading various drafts of both this article and the thesis it came from. Finally, I'd like to thank my friends and family who supported me throughout my undergraduate studies and who continue to help me now.

Endnotes

- ⁱ "The first step to artistic creation in his anarchist worldview is the destruction of everything that arrived prefabricated." My translation.
- ⁱⁱ "Who cares . . . You can read my book any way you want to . . . The most I do is set it up the way I would like to reread it. And in the worst of cases, if they do make a mistake, it might just turn out perfect." (*Hopscotch*, 556).

Works Cited

Aarseth, Espen J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997. Print.

Caillois, Roger. *Man, Play, and Games*. Trans. Meyer Barash. Urbana: U of Illinois, 2001. Print.

Cortázar, Julio. *Hopscotch*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. New York: Pantheon, 1966. Print.

Cortázar, Julio. *Rayuela*. Buenos Aires: Alfaguara, 2013. Print.

Fuentes, Carlos. "Rayuela, La Novela Como Caja De Pandora." *Rayuela*. By Julio Cortázar. Ed. Julio Ortega and Saúl Yurkiévich. Nanterre, France: ALLCA XX, 1996. 703–05. Print.

Grafton, Anthony. "The Humanist as Reader." *A History of Reading in the West*. By Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier. Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane. Amherst: U of Massachusetts, 1999. 179–212. Print.

Hardin, Micheal. "Seducing the Male-Reader: Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch* and the Pleasure of Losing." *International Fiction Review* 25.1–2 (1998): n. pag. *International Fiction Review*. Web. 24 Mar. 2016.

Heise, Ursula K. *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. Print.

Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Juan-Navarro, Santiago. "Un Tal Morelli: Teoría Y Práctica De La Lectura En Rayuela, De Julio Cortázar." *Revista Canadiense De Estudios Hispánicos* 16.2 (1992): 235–52. Print.

Landy, Joshua. *How to Do Things with Fictions*. New York: Oxford UP, 2012. Print.

Sánchez, Pablo Martin. "Hypertextualité et Pseudo-hypertextualité Dans L'œuvre De Georges Perec." *Le Cabinet D'amateur. Revue D'études Perecquiennes* (2011): 1–12. *Le Cabinet D'amateur*. Association Georges Perec. Web. 14 Feb. 2016.

Mujeres en la Lucha: Health Activism and the Devaluation of Women's Labor in the Brown Berets' Free Clinic

Cassandra Flores-Montaña, *Wellesley College*

Cassandra is a recent graduate from Wellesley College. She majored in women's and gender studies with a concentration in Chicana/Latina studies. Her research interests include social movements, gender, and sexuality. She's interested in archival research and conducting oral histories. She is currently at Wellesley working in the Office of Intercultural Education. She assists in the programming for students of Latina, African, and Asian descent and LGBTQ students.

Abstract

The Brown Berets are a para-military organization which serves Chicano community interests. They have chapters nationwide in the United States, and the first chapter was established in East Los Angeles in 1967. For the purposes of this paper, I focus exclusively on the health activism of the Brown Beret chapter in East L.A. from the late 1960s until the early 1970s. In 1969 the organization opened a free clinic in collaboration with politically left medical professionals in L.A. The clinic was immensely successful in its goal of providing adequate medical services to the Chicano community. I argue that this positive stride for the Chicano people came at both a great cost and benefit to the women of the Brown Berets.

Introduction

The Brown Berets are a para-military organization which serves Chicano community interests.ⁱ They have chapters nationwide in the United States, and the first chapter was established in East Los Angeles in 1967. During that time, the Brown Berets identified police brutality, education, housing, the war in Vietnam, and a lack of adequate medical services as the most pressing issues affecting the Chicano community. Their motto, “‘to serve, observe, and protect’ stressed that [their] role was to serve [their] community, to observe conditions in the community such as police abuse and lack of social services, and, finally, to protect [their] community against the police and, in a larger sense, against racism.”ⁱⁱ After experiencing and observing the social conditions in which Chicanos in East L.A. lived, they mobilized a militant group of Chicanos to address these concerns.ⁱⁱⁱ For the purposes of this paper, I will focus exclusively on the health activism of the Brown Beret chapter in East L.A. from the late 1960s until the early 1970s.

In 1969 the organization opened a free clinic in collaboration with politically left medical professionals in L.A.^{iv} The clinic was immensely successful in its goal of providing adequate medical services to the Chicano community. I argue that this positive stride for the Chicano people came at both a great cost and benefit to the women of the Brown Berets. Although women's labor ensured that the Brown

Berets could be identified as guardians of community health, the women themselves were undervalued as members of the organization.

Establishing the Free Clinic in East L.A.

The opening of the clinic involved several parties, many of which were medical professionals in the area. They included individuals from such organizations as the L.A. chapters of Physicians for Social Responsibility, L.A. Psychologists for Social Action, the Medical Committee for Human Rights, University of Southern California County Hospital, the County Health Department, and members of the Brown Berets and the greater Chicano community.^v The involvement of these professionals gave the clinic access to funds that would have otherwise been nearly impossible for the clinic to receive. Establishing a board of directors, comprised almost exclusively of these professionals, added greater weight to grant proposals that may have not been considered had they been signed off by the Brown Berets.^{vi} Additionally, the willingness of these professionals to share their knowledge and make resources accessible, further legitimized that Brown Berets' claim that services were lacking in their community.^{vii}

Together, they were able to provide a great wealth of services to an underserved and marginalized community. At the time, the existing medical services were inadequate; Gloria Arellanes, the former Minister of Correspondence and Finance and co-director of the clinic, remembers going to public hospitals and seeing patients go unattended for hours. These facilities were often overcrowded and lacked resources.^{viii} Service also remained mostly inaccessible to those who spoke Spanish, because bilingual services were often not provided. Undocumented people were afraid of using existing facilities and their services for fear of deportation.^{ix} Overall, there were major gaps between the services provided and the services that were needed by Chicano communities in East L.A.

As co-directors of the clinic and members of the Brown Berets, Gloria Arellanes and Andrea Sanchez made a steadfast commitment to protect their community's privacy. They rejected federal funds that would require them to release information about their patients.^x Taking and releasing information in order to receive medical care would have compromised their ability to reach and serve undocumented people. Despite the board of directors' constant urging for the acceptance of federal funds, Arellanes and Sanchez navigated and found a path within the U.S. health system in order to best serve the needs of their community. Because the U.S. health system is financed by various institutions which include government, private businesses, and non-profits, the clinic had multiple pools of funds to draw from.^{xi}

The Importance of the Free Clinic

The clinic and its volunteers also aided in filling an educational gap regarding sexual and reproductive health.^{xii} Brown Berets and other clinic volunteers distributed flyers to high school students as they exited their campuses. The academic curriculum and culture of silence within families regarding sexual health kept young people ignorant about safe sex practices, what to do in case of an unwanted pregnancy, and how to handle emotional and physical abuse.^{xiii} The clinic provided counseling for people of all ages regarding these topics.^{xiv} One of the most important services that the clinic offered reveals a commitment to protecting women's reproductive health. Their comprehensive family planning services included access to various methods of birth control, adoption, abortion, etc. The Chicana women running the clinic were mostly from a Catholic background, but had no qualms providing these services.^{xv} Even when the Catholic Church rescinded their funding upon finding out about the counseling services, the women did not change the way that they operated the clinic.^{xvi} This once again revealed the fierceness with which they were committed to guarding Chicano community needs.

The clinic worked to maximize the accessibility of its services. They would organize immunization drives and go into communities rather than requiring that people come to them.^{xvii} They maximized convenience in terms of travel, cost, and time by remaining open as late as 10PM, in addition to making appointments for those who could not make it to regular clinic hours. Most importantly, these and the other services were accessible to Spanish-speakers. The success with which the clinic was able to serve a community that remained largely inaccessible or poorly served by established medical institutions, enabled the securing of material support from the County Health Department. Arellanes recalls that she was guaranteed resources with one phone call.^{xviii} For example, county personnel would pick up blood samples from the clinic, process the results, and promptly return information to the clinic.^{xix}

The existence of the clinic and the provision of services was rather remarkable considering that the Vietnam War served as the political backdrop to the time. Cynthia Enloe discusses the ways in which war colors social realities on the home front, "there are those people, largely women, who are most hurt when social programs (health, transportation, education, social security) are cut back in order to satisfy the alleged needs of the military and its industrial suppliers."^{xx} Jenna Loyd argues that Chicana women, specifically "welfare mothers," were linking military spending to a lack of social services.^{xxi} The fact that multiple institutions were investing into this project is quite striking. These

services were fulfilling the Brown Beret motto to "observe, serve, and protect" their community. The clinic and its services were part of the battle they fought against the systematic oppression of Chicano people.

The Brown Beret fight for community health was as militant as their structure. In an attempt to increase knowledge about the clinic, they entered a "float," for a Mexican Independence Day parade in L.A., as an advertisement for the clinic. Arellanes went to an army base and sweet-talked her way into borrowing an army tank.^{xxii} The people at the base not only gave her a tank, they also provided her with a driver, and a flat-bed truck to carry the tank. Arellanes and the other women of the Brown Berets began the parade by riding the tank wearing rebozos. The rebozo functioned as the quintessential marker of Mexican femininity and a disguise for their militancy. Some of them tore off the rebozo and put on their bush jackets and berets, while carrying signs like "War on Disease."^{xxiii}

Tensions Based on Gender Manifest in the Clinic

An aspect of the clinic which requires critical examination is the way that it served as a site of contestation between Chicano men and Chicana women. There was a clear divide based on gender in the Brown Berets and this divide manifested itself in the day-to-day operation of the clinic. From the beginning, David Sanchez, the Prime minister of the Brown Berets, assigned the task of running of the clinic to a reluctant Gloria Arellanes. She was not interested in working with upper-middle class professionals, but took it on after Sanchez's insistence.^{xxiv} This serves as an example of the ways in which the male leadership would make decisions about the future of the organization and have women carry out the ideas.^{xxv} As the only female minister, Arellanes was expected to lead the women in the Berets; thus as she became co-director of the clinic, the rank-and-file women in the organization took on the task of running the clinic.

Gloria Arellanes emphasizes the lack of male participation in this important endeavor as one of the most disappointing realities of working as a Brown Beret. She discusses that while the Brown Berets emphasized self-discipline, the ministers and rank-and-file men did not have the discipline to regularly contribute to the clinic.^{xxvi} Despite their lack of contribution and effort, men would readily accept credit for the clinic as a Brown Beret project. Tension escalated further as the men began to use the clinic as a recreational space. Over a period of several months the Brown Beret men would make a mess of the space and the women would clean up after them. Arellanes shared that they could not afford janitorial services, so the women who ran the clinic carried the burden of upkeep. The continual use of the space for

meetings or parties was infuriating as Arellanes described, “I go home and clean my house and then come here and clean their mess, no thank you!”^{xxvii} The division of labor and lack of respect for the women’s efforts, led to a turning point for the organization.

Not only did Arellanes take her concerns up with leadership of the Berets, she also sought support from the board of directors. Her desire for keeping the clinic clean was not met. The board refused to get involved in what they understood to be internal Beret conflict. Although, when she threatened to leave the clinic if changes were not made, she was told by one of the directors that she was, “not indispensable.”^{xxviii} The devaluation of her and the women’s work led to a collective decision to leave the organization. Arellanes and the women of Brown Berets went on to create an own autonomous women’s organization called Las Adelitas de Aztlan. Once they left, the clinic immediately shut down, as none of the remaining members (men) knew how to run the clinic.^{xxix}

Part of the reason for the lack of the men’s involvement in the clinic was that it came to be understood as a feminized space.^{xxx} The ministers and rank-and-file members were not able to see beyond their prescribed understandings of gender roles. The men who would devote time to the clinic were either very young rank-and-file male berets or college-age “long-haired” Chicanos who were not affiliated with the Berets. The “long-haired” Chicanos were looked down upon because they did not fulfill the hypermasculine militant aesthetic expected of the Brown Beret men.^{xxxi} The organization was fueled by cultural nationalism, which Laura Pulido argues, “enforced rigid notions of the family and patriarchal control.”^{xxxii} Arguably, the politics which shaped expectations for their members made it unlikely that the organization’s men would transgress the line between acceptable femininity and masculinity. This would also have influenced their decision to uphold unequal distributions of labor in the organization.

The Collective Power of Chicana Women

While the clinic was a space in which conflict based on gender would manifest, it also functioned a space for the development of Chicana women’s empowerment. Dionne Espinoza argues that the division of labor based on gender led to the women identifying their collective power. In an interview, Arellanes reflected on the relationships between the women in the Brown Berets, “One of the most important aspects of my role in the Berets had to do with the deep friendships and solidarity between the women. We supported one another, especially against the machismo of the men,” and she confidently concluded that they were,

“women warriors.”^{xxxiii} Although the women were not always supported, they carved out their space for activism within the organization. As the women worked independently from the men, they forged strong political bonds with one another.

The operations of the clinic were marked by a communal decision making process, through which everyone had a say, had their voice heard, and learned from each other.^{xxxiv} I argue that the fact that women ran the clinic strongly influenced their decisions about the services that the clinic offered in regards to sexual and reproductive health. Would a mixed-gender or predominantly male leadership of the clinic have protected the reproductive health of women in their community? This remains unclear, but based on the tensions which I previously described, I would argue that it would not have been a priority.^{xxxv} The budding growth of Chicana feminist politics can be seen through this commitment to women’s reproductive health.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the free clinic functioned as a historically important site for health activism in the Chicano community. The day-to-day operations of the clinic reveal the tensions based on gender within the Brown Berets, in addition to the potential for women’s empowerment. The services that they were able to provide had a tangible effect on the surrounding community, Arellanes argues that, “without question, the most significant contribution of the East L.A. Brown Berets was the establishment of what we call El Barrio Free Clinic. . . the clinic was a direct intervention into the community with real and practical results.”^{xxxvi} Considering that the women of the organization almost exclusively ran the clinic, I argue that they served as true guardians of Chicano community health.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Irene Mata and Dr. Tracey Cameron for their continuous support for my research throughout the years! I would also like to extend a warm thank you to staff at the Undergraduate Summer Research Program at the NYU Center for the Humanities. I truly appreciate Professor Saldaña for helping me gain access to the archives necessary for this project and Professor Rainbow for facilitating my intellectual growth.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Chicano is a term referring to politically active Mexican-Americans.
- ⁱⁱ Mario T. García, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 196; Dionne Espinoza, “Revolutionary Sisters: Women’s Solidarity and Collective Identification among Chicana Brown Berets in East Los Angeles, 1967–1970,” *Aztlan* 26 (1), Spring 2001: 18.

- iii Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 116. They identified themselves as a community-defense unit; one aspect of the protection they provided was taking the brunt of police brutality during events such as the East L.A. high school walkouts and the Chicano Moratorium marches, all of which were heavily policed. These events had some extremely brutal instances of police brutality. The violence that took place in the Chicano Moratorium of August 1970, broke the spirit of many committed organizers and supporters of the Chicano movement.
- iv Gloria Arellanes, interview from *Chicana por mi Raza: Uncovering the Hidden History of Chicana Feminism (1965–1985)*, part 1, video recording.
- v García, *The Chicano Generation*, 258.
- vi Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3. I will detail the challenges that followed by having only one non-professional representative on the board of directors later.
- vii Levitsky, *Social Movements and the Transformation of American Health Care*, 8.
- viii Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 4.
- ix Ibid.
- x García, *The Chicano Generation*, 267; Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3.
- xi Ibid., 8.
- xii García, *The Chicano Generation*, 262; Espinoza, “Revolutionary Sisters,” 35.
- xiii Espinoza, “Revolutionary Sisters,” 35.
- xiv Ibid. Gloria Arellanes also made appearances on local radio stations in order to discuss these issues and raise awareness of the clinic and the services provided.
- xv Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 2.
- xvi Ibid.
- xvii García, *The Chicano Generation*, 269.
- xviii Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3.
- xix García, *The Chicano Generation*, 269.
- xx Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. (London: Pluto Press, 1983), 207.
- xxi Loyd, *Health Rights Are Civil Rights*, 10.
- xxii Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3.
- xxiii García, *The Chicano Generation*, 215; Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 5.
- xxiv Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3.
- xxv Espinoza, “Revolutionary Sisters,” 33.
- xxvi Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3; García, *The Chicano Generation*, 273.
- xxvii Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 3.
- xxviii García, *The Chicano Generation*, 190; Espinoza, “Revolutionary Sisters,” 37.
- xxix Arellanes, *Chicana por mi Raza*, part 5.
- xxx García, *The Chicano Generation*, 273.
- xxxi Ibid., 143.
- xxxii Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left*, 117.
- xxxiii García, *The Chicano Generation*, 231.
- xxxiv Ibid., 263.

xxxv Chávez, “*¡Mi Raza Primero!*,” 58.

Male leadership of the Berets was more focused on recruiting the “vatos locos” or “crazy dudes” in their community to the organization. They saw the Berets as a way to clean up the acts of people who used drugs or consumed alcohol. Had the men been in charge of the clinic, we might have seen an emphasis for drug abuse counseling or more aggressive anti-drug programming.

xxxvi García, *The Chicano Generation*, 255.

Works Cited

- Arellanes, Gloria. Interview from *Chicana por mi Raza: Uncovering the Hidden History of Chicana Feminism (1965–1985)*.
- Chávez, Ernesto. *¡Mi Raza Primero!: Nationalism, Identity, and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- Enloe, Cynthia. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*. (London: Pluto Press, 1983).
- Espinoza, Dionne. “Revolutionary Sisters: Women's Solidarity and Collective Identification among Chicana Brown Berets in East Los Angeles, 1967–1970,” *Aztlan* 26 (1), Spring 2001: 18.
- García, Mario T. *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).
- Levitsky, Sandra and Jane Banaszak-Holl, Introduction to *Social Movements and the Transformation of American Health Care*, ed. Jane Banaszak-Holl, Sandra R. Levitsky, and Mayer N. Zald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- Loyd, Jenna M. *Health Rights Are Civil Rights: Peace and Justice Activism in Los Angeles, 1963–1978* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
- Pulido, Laura. *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Introduction to “The Speculative Fiction of Jack London”

Thomas Ray Garcia, *Princeton University*

Thomas Ray Garcia graduated with an English degree from Princeton University in 2016. His current research involves constructing a counter-history to the American literary tradition which involves writers spanning from the Beat Generation to Chicano/a Literature. He is currently teaching college access and leading K-12 education initiatives in his hometown of Pharr, Texas, writing novels and poems, and applying to English PhD programs.

Abstract

Jack London, an early 20th-century American writer renowned for his survival and adventure stories, has received insufficient attention for his speculative fiction. This introduction to a 90-page senior thesis argues that studying London’s speculative fiction expands our understanding of *self-preservation*, or living beyond a textual legacy. Speculative fiction’s unconventional form and subject matter enabled London to transcend traditional methods of storytelling which resulted in a highly literary yet deeply personal journey for the solution to his own mortality.

Introduction to “The Speculative Fiction of Jack London”

Before Jack London came into prominence as an American writer at the turn of the 20th century, he seemed to have already lived multiple lives, including, but not limited to: An oyster pirate, a fish patrolman, a Pacific Ocean sailor, a cross-country tramp, a socialist advocate, and a Klondike adventurer (Labor xi). After the success of *The Call of the Wild* in 1903, London added the distinction of “most popular and highest-paid author in America” to that list (Kingman 12). His output as a writer proved prodigious, resulting in the production of fifty volumes before his death in 1916. However, one century later, his contributions to literature have not yet been fully appreciated. Instead, London has been victimized as the literary equivalent of a one-hit wonder. Most scholars still confine London’s significance to his “adventure and animal stories” while dismissing much of his other output as hackwork (Hodson and Reesman 4). In addition, recent scholarship has been preoccupied with his non-literary work. For instance, Cecelia Tichi, in her book, *Jack London: Klondike A Writer’s Fight for a Better America* (2014), argues that we should not simply define London as a writer of adventure stories, but also value his role as a public intellectual (13). In 2010, Sue Hodson, Jeanne Campbell Reesman, and Philip Adam produced *Jack London: Photographer*, highlighting another unexplored aspect of London’s life. But despite these books, few frameworks have been established for academic inquiry into London’s creative capabilities, which are exemplified most prominently in his unjustly neglected speculative fiction.

Speculative fiction encompasses the fantasy, science fiction, and horror genres. Essentially, the term refers to fictional works that are “speculative” in nature which usually rely on plots probing into the fantastical, improbable, and unknown. Speculative fiction thus differs radically from the naturalism and realism that marked London’s early works by insisting on freeing both the writer and the reader from most of the restrictions and limitations that mark other literary forms and the conventional human experience of time and space. To be clear, London never considered himself a writer of speculative fiction. In fact, by the time London became an internationally acclaimed author, speculative fiction was just beginning to emerge. Until 1926, the fantasy and science fiction genres had not yet been defined or given a generic name, which underscores the fact that earlier speculative fiction functioned as an emerging mode still striving for development and realization (Stableford 31). Before the publication of magazines such as *Weird Tales*, *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Stories*, and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, the forerunners of what we now call speculative fiction were often distinguished by an affinity for supernatural and fantastical events. In London’s time, the success of his contemporaries, such as H.G. Wells and Jules Verne who popularized speculative fiction with their stories of aliens, time travel, and adventure, proved that stories set apart from conventional reality could function as literary works as well as attract wide readership. Furthermore, speculative fiction enabled writers to move beyond the limits of realistic modes of writing and revel in flights of the imagination, and the pioneers of this new mode, including London, embraced these opportunities all while working in genres that had not yet been clearly defined.

My research explores London’s speculative fiction as literary works that provide crucial insights into his wide-ranging imagination. Doing so draws attention away from the biographical mythos, which asserts that London’s adventures produced his best writing, and shifts our focus toward the workings of his mind and his literary artistry. Whether it depicts prehistoric, dystopian, or historical worlds, his speculative fiction transcends conventional modes of storytelling, allowing London to flex his creative muscles and find meaning in the extraordinary rather than the ordinary. If we consider London a pioneer in the establishment of modern speculative fiction, then we can see why he chose this burgeoning literary form to investigate new methods of what I call *self-preservation*. The necessity for this umbrella term stems from the constantly evolving motifs, from racial memories to storytelling to the human spirit, contained in London’s speculative fiction. Through these motifs, London’s speculative fiction attempts to represent the undying and resilient nature of the self, which provided London a new, perhaps more complex way to extract personal significance from his life experiences and express it

in literature. In other words, through speculative fiction, London attempted to accomplish the seemingly impossible: investigate the nature of immortality.

Although London's longer works of speculative fiction differ widely in their subject matter, analyzing them in conjunction with one another reveals a decade-long effort to discover new methods of *self-preservation*. Beginning with *Before Adam* (1907), London attempted to create a story fundamentally different from *The Call of the Wild* by writing about a primordial ancestor living in the Mid-Pleistocene, a time period accessed through the narrator's racial memories, his first method of *self-preservation*. These racial memories serve as the link between the narrator and his ancestor and explore the implications of reliving a primordial existence disconnected from the present. In his next two works, *The Iron Heel* (1908) and *The Scarlet Plague* (1912), he investigates the feasibility of living after death through storytelling. *The Iron Heel's* vision of a dystopian future ravaged by capitalism is presented in the form of a recovered manuscript which affirms the possibility of metaphorically surviving through the written word. However, by describing the demise of humanity in *The Scarlet Plague*, London offers an alternate vision of the future reverted to primitivism after a deadly plague. The failure of the generation born after the plague to learn from the mistakes of the past demonstrates the shortcomings of storytelling as a means of preserving memories, history, and ultimately one's own life. Furthermore, *The Star Rover* (1915) directly addresses the issue of mortality by using its narrator, Darrell Standing, as a case study of how torture can enable the spirit to leave the body and experience past lives. More explicitly, analyzing London's evolving methods of *self-preservation* provides a framework that illuminates his taking advantage of speculative fiction's experimental narrative form and unconventional subject matter. Doing so allowed him to explore a variety of literary modes while also escaping conventional methods of storytelling, commenting on political and social issues, and speculating on the possibility of living after death.

London's concern with death was not limited merely to motifs in his fiction, but extended to his personal convictions as a man concerned with living forever. As he grew older, he often endured physical sicknesses, which escalated in severity during his voyage in the South Seas on the *Snark* (Labor 211). Near the age of forty, he suffered from "cramping of [the] muscles and rheumatism" (Joan London 371). Less than a year before his death, he exhibited numerous ailments, including "agonies of kidney stones . . . [h]is body filling with poison from pyorrhea . . ." The days of cross-country tramping, sea excursions, and Klondike expeditions were now in the past, and "[h]e had grown old and tired" (Kingman 267). During this period of decline, the reality of aging and his weakening state may have motivated

him to explore methods of preserving himself in ways he knew his body could not.

As a writer who knew the meaning of living multiple lives, London ultimately resisted the finality of death not by his grandiose adventures or triumphs of the body, but through his words. The fact that he wrote his first major work of speculative fiction in 1906, ten years away from his untimely death, coincides with this view. Through writing, he wanted to cement his place in time as his body broke down, his health declined, and his youth waned. Undoubtedly, he could not foresee his premature death, but his speculative fiction written in "the last decade of his life," during which Lawrence Berkove claims he "rethought many of his ideas, modified some of them, and even reversed others," nonetheless suggests a move toward preserving an aging and increasingly fragile self (15). In *Before Adam*, for example, his recreation of a "Younger World" in which characters survive by virtue of their physical strength reveals London's interest in exalting youth over old age. This concept is further developed in *The Star Rover*, in which London rejects the body and affirms the human spirit, the essence of life itself, as the tool to achieving an immortal existence. Although London wrote several shorter works of speculative fiction before 1906, the year nonetheless marks a greater interest in and commitment to writing stories that are speculative and fantastical in nature to gain a greater understanding of how to live beyond death (Hodson and Reesman 61).

Unfortunately for London's textual legacy, relatively little academic attention has been given to his speculative fiction. Although it would be unjust to disregard the literary merit of London's "animal and adventure stories," focusing solely on a small number of these acclaimed and anthologized texts paints an incomplete and false portrait of London as a man who could write only about his adventurous life. As a result, London has been branded with the adventure man-turned-writer persona that has prevented further exploration of his worth as an imaginative writer who worked successfully in a variety of literary modes. Interestingly, Jack London scholars are the primary perpetrators of this limiting perspective. Scholars such as Franklin Walker frequently claim that London wrote best when he wrote about "what he had seen or done" (15). This notion is also reflected in Alfred Kazin's renowned quote, "[t]he best story Jack London ever wrote was the one he lived," which suggests that London's real-life travails trump his creative talents (111). Unfortunately, statements like these both simplify London's complex literary scope and undermine his imaginative prowess. While his naturalist stories often involve characters attempting to survive in the face of death, his speculative fiction explores a variety of ways of surviving beyond death. *Before Adam* and *The Scarlet Plague* preserve worlds and lives lost to time, whereas *The Iron Heel*

and *The Star Rover* confirm the possibilities of living after death through memory and London's unique affirmation of the immortality of the human spirit.

More than simply wanting to be read beyond his lifetime, London sought the solution to his mortality. London's significance within speculative fiction and American Literature studies is founded not only on his ability to expand the boundaries of his fictional landscape through experimentation with form and subject matter, but also his capacity to use his imagination as a method of *self-preservation*. Readers and writers of all backgrounds can appreciate and learn from his relentless quest to answer the question: how can writing change lives? Trapped within the confines of his aching body and hindered by the limiting nature of time, his attitude toward life is reflected in the final sentences of his credo: "I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them. I shall use my time" (Labor 373).

Often ignored as a major American writer, London should be known for his multi-faceted approach to storytelling as well as his ability to produce literature that successfully engages with both the realistic and the fantastical. In order to truly understand his creative capabilities, particularly his ability to extract deeply personal meaning from highly literary endeavors, *Before Adam*, *The Iron Heel*, *The Scarlet Plague*, and *The Star Rover* must be read with attention to how form influences their subject matter. In doing so, we can track London's representation of *self-preservation* as it transforms from story to story. Whether writing about prehistoric ancestors, socialist revolutionaries, plague survivors, or prisoners, London strove to understand how to best preserve his own self, physically and otherwise. Granting scholarly attention to his speculative fiction will ensure that his memory will not be forgotten, and his goal of living forever can be realized in the annals of American Literature. With 2016 marking the centennial of his death, it is up to scholars, students, and readers from all backgrounds to ensure the spirit of Jack London never dies.

Acknowledgements

I thank: Alfred Bendixen, my senior thesis adviser, for igniting my passion for American literature; Sarah Anderson, my academic adviser and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship mentor, for offering sincere, compassionate, and uplifting mentorship throughout my Princeton career; the Jack London State Historic Park, for allowing me to discover the spirit of Jack London; the Princeton University Office of Undergraduate Research (ODOC), for funding my research trip to the Huntington Library; and the Huntington Library, for granting me access to the Jack London Collection.

Works Cited

- Beauchamp, Gormon. *Jack London*. Washington: Starmount House, 1984. Print.
- Berkove, Lawrence. *Jack London: One Hundred Years a Writer*. California: Huntington Library Press, 2002. Print.
- Hodson, Sara S. and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, *Jack London: One Hundred Years a Writer*. California: Huntington Library Press, 2002. Print.
- Kazin, Alfred. *On Native Grounds*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1942. Print.
- Kingman, Russ. *A Pictorial Biography of Jack London*. Czech Republic: Triality, 1979. Print.
- Labor, Earle. *Jack London: An American Life*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014. Print.
- London, Joan. *Jack London and His Times: An Unconventional Biography*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974. Print.
- Stableford, Brian. "Science fiction before the genre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Tichi, Cecelia. *Jack London: A Writer's Fight for a Better America*. North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Print.
- Walker, Franklin W. *Jack London & the Klondike*. California: The Huntington Library, 1972. Print.

Black Women's Legacies and Activisms: Filmic, Visual, and Vocal Anti-Rape Technologies

Ahmad Greene-Hayes, *Williams College*

Ahmad Greene-Hayes is a PhD student in the Department of Religion at Princeton University, where he is also pursuing graduate certificates in African American studies and gender and sexuality studies. In June 2016, he graduated from Williams College with a degree in history and departmental honors in Africana studies. His work examines Black Pentecostalism, 19th- to 20th-century African American religious history, and gender, sexuality, and sexual violence in Black churches.

Abstract

Black feminist/womanist technologies of resistance sit at the crux of the anti-rape movement in Black communities, and they were instrumental in the planning and execution of the Black Women's Blueprint: Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The usage of traditional film alongside and in conversation with contemporary iterations of filmic texts, albeit through social media, oral histories, or the literal/figurative recording of anti-rape conversation, led to what was a successful and groundbreaking event in the history of Black America. This paper examines filmic, visual and vocal anti-rape technologies that Black women anti-rape activists use to forge resistance, healing, and accountability in the fight for justice, and argues that anti-rape activists re-imagine "filmic texts."

Introduction: The Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission

From Thursday, April 28 to May 1, 2016, Black women and their allies joined together in New York City to bear witness to the narratives of Black women and girl survivors of sexual violence, as part of the Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (BWTRC). "The BWTRC is an independent body led by and comprised of civil society, which examines the history, context, causes, chronology, and consequence of rape/sexual assault on women of African descent."ⁱ The opening plenaries were held at the Riverside Church in Harlem, New York, and other sessions were held at the Auburn Theological Seminary, the Ford Foundation, and most notably, at the United Nations. Never before in the history of the United States, have Black communities—led by Black women—openly discussed the pervasive reality of rape. This tribunal, as it was also called, was historic and cutting edge. Black Women's Blueprint (BWB) designed, cultivated, and carved intentional space for Black women and girl survivors of rape to find some semblance of justice.

Much of what took place the entire weekend at the UN and at other TRC locations was shaped and informed by technology. Everything from videos displayed, tweets and social media posts curated, and the photographic and filmic recordings by attendees, volunteers, and hired staff

embodied what Black feminist scholar Tamara Lomax calls, "the technologies of Black women's lives," or the strategies that Black women and girls deploy to "loose" themselves from "vapid feminine technology and bigotry, which stifle radical imagination."ⁱⁱ The Black feminist/womanist technologies that were both proffered and utilized during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are not only befitting of critical scholarly engagement, but they are also indicative of the various healing and liberatory technologies that anti-rape activists use as they culturally and strategically dismantle anti-black and anti-woman systems of domination.

Black Women's Anti-Rape Technologies of Resistance

This paper situates the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into historical context, and analyzes three technologies that were used during the TRC: (1) *The Womanhood or Woman-Hurt Project*, (2) the Black Women's Oral History Project, and (3) the filmic recording of a conversation with Black men, co-facilitated by myself and Quentin Walcott (CONNECT NYC), at Twins Barbershop in Brooklyn, New York, in which we discussed patriarchy, toxic masculinity, rape, and violence against women. To be clear, all of these interventions against sexual violence are not "filmic," but in the age of social media they function as filmic texts, changing the way Black women and girl survivors are seen and regarded in a society that valorizes rapists, rape culture, and rape itself. Indeed, Black feminist anti-rape activists who use contemporary technologies of resistance do so in the spirit of African foremothers—enslaved and free—even as those women did not have access to film, high-tech recording devices, text messages and chats, or even social media.

My understanding of the power of film and/or other technologies of resistance builds on Jacqueline Bobo's words in *Black Women's Films: Genesis of a Tradition*, where she states:

Mainstream cultural forms are replete with devastating representations of Black women as victims, as pawns of systemic oppressive forces, lacking the will or agency to resist. [F]ilms are instrumental in the effort by Black women filmmakers to erase destructive ideologies affecting Black women. With their body of socially conscious work, the filmmakers form an integral component of a cultural movement, a configuration of activists that seeks to transform the status of Black women in popular imagination and in the minds of Black women themselves. Through meticulous concentration on Black women's history, faithfully representing their lives, Black women's films magnify female viewers' perception of their material circumstances, motivating them toward activism, thereby strengthening their viability as a potent social force.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2006, Aishah Shahidah Simmons released her groundbreaking feature-length film *NO! The Rape Documentary*, which included a myriad of Black voices speaking to the pervasive reality of rape and sexual violence in Black communities from the plantation to the present day. Ten years after its world premiere at the Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles, California, it remains a black feminist filmic and technological tool utilized in churches, on college campuses, and across the globe in the fight against rape and all forms of violence against women. It is no surprise, then, that many of the survivors who testified and/or were involved with the TRC paid homage to the film and its director. *NO!* paved the way for the raw truth-telling that the TRC fostered, and it also opened doors for many survivors to feel comfortable speaking of the horrors of sexual violence that they had experienced. Such a groundbreaking body of work was the first to unapologetically detail the victimization that Black women and girls are subject to by both the State and by kin.

NO!'s filmic intervention was pivotal. A post-Civil Rights racial justice movement could not exist, nor could it be successful, if African American leaders continued to perpetuate the violences, erasures, and silences around rape and sexual assault that was all too common in previous iterations of the Black Liberation Movement. It was not until Aishah Shahidah Simmons turned on her camera and recorded what Black women had been saying for centuries, that Black men and everyone else gained a greater understanding of the impact of rape and sexual violence in Black women's lives. It was film—moving images and words from Black women—that pierced hearts and minds.

Fast-forward ten years, and there have been other films and documentaries that have highlighted rape in Black communities, such as Tina Mabry's *Mississippi Damned* (2009) and Kellee Terrell's *Blame* (2014). However, in a contemporary political moment, both fueled and shaped by the Black Lives Matter movement, it is important to tease out the ways "filmic" activism has evolved. The onset of Instagram, Vine, Twitter, and Facebook among many other new medias has made film accessible to individuals who otherwise would not be able to record. Take for instance, the initial video postings of Ferguson activists on August 9, 2014 that lead to the Mike Brown Rebellion and the subsequent Black Lives Matter Freedom Rides to Ferguson. For many, seeing recordings of Mike's mom, Lesley McSpadden, crying near the site of her son's dead body ignited revolution.

Without question, these political mobilizations were the result of new-age "filmic" technologies that transcended the bounds of Hollywood, similar to the ways self-identified and award winning Black women filmmakers and cultural workers have used actual "films" to document and push back

against racist and sexist depictions of Black womanhood. Much of what currently exists in the realm of pro-Black anti-rape activism is a symbiosis of the Black women's filmmaker legacy and Black women's contemporary engagements with social media to publicize, educate, and intervene against racial-sexual and gender-based violence. Take, for example, Feminista Jones' #YouOkSis, which detailed rape and street harassment, Beverly Gooden's #WhyIStayed, which discussed intimate partner and domestic violence, along with Wagatwe Wanjuki's #SurvivorPrivilege, which shed light on campus rape and sexual assault. All of these online conversations and movements utilized Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other social media sites to publicize Black women's experience with violence.^v The videos, tweets, blog posts, and other materials that emerged from these hashtags are "filmic," in that they graphically and intentionally shift cultural images concerning Black women's lack of safety in Black communities.

The hashtag for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, #BWTRC, also bears witness to how those who participated in and/or watched the TRC via livestream were affected or pushed to action by Black women's anti-rape technologies of resistance. For example, the recording of the rape testimonies that were read outside of the United Nations—because the UN did not want Black women to speak candidly about rape—not only affected those in the space or walking by the park, but have also been digitized and spread across the internet into the homes and offices of those who would otherwise not hear.^v "We convene this tribunal squarely within the International Decade for People of African Descent," declared one of the Black women readers.^{vi} The crowd grew and grew as Black women took the stage and spoke of the violations that they had experienced both as girls and as women. The words they spoke decoded centuries of racial-sexual terrorism and recoded pathways to healing, justice, and reconciliation on their own terms. "This tribunal is not vested with the powers, privileges, and rights of the highest court," said one of the readers.^{vii} Indeed, the Black feminist/womanist technologies in place were built on archives of racial-sexual violence, rendering all stories bare, and envisioning a Black future where "the highest court"—with its anti-Black sentiments—could not determine the legitimacy of Black women's cries of rape and assault.

Ancestresses and Foremothers: Historicizing Contemporary Anti-Rape Activisms

Even as this contemporary moment presents new Black feminist/womanist technologies of resistance, evident in the usage of social media platforms, we must contextualize these technologies historically. The widely known story of Celia, a slave, killing Robert Newsom with a

club—materially—represents anti-rape technology.^{viii} Ida B. Wells-Barnett's anti-lynching campaign and revolutionary pen was also an anti-rape technology.^{ix} Rosa Parks, Recy Taylor, JoAnn Little, and other Black women from the long Civil Rights Movement who protested the brutal rapes of Black women at the hands of police officers and other state entities embodied anti-rape technology.^x Assata Shakur, too, told of the gendered/sexual violence present in the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army and presented a Black Nationalist anti-rape technology of resistance that prioritized Black women's safety in the midst of a pro-Black, anti-woman movement.^{xi} Among these famed activists are also the lesser known Sojourners for Truth and Justice, a Black left feminist human rights organization of the early 1950s that fought during the Cold War and the global struggle for civil rights in the spirit of Sojourner Truth, and called for "the immediate freedom of Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram, sentenced to life imprisonment for defending the honor of all womanhood," by killing her neighbor who sexually assaulted her and attacked her sons who came to her defense.^{xii} Black Women's Blueprint builds on these legacies and activism. Farah Tánis, the executive director, stated at the United Nations, "This event for us is at the center of a Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The creation of this space for us means the creation of critical spaces of engagement and healing for Black women in the global movement for recognition, justice, and development for people of African descent. That cannot be overstated."^{xiii}

Womanhood or Woman's-Hurt?

On Friday, April 29, at the Riverside Church of New York, Black Women's Blueprint screened the trailer for a forthcoming documentary entitled *Womanhood or Woman's-Hurt?*, which depicts the survivor story of Frances Bradley, a visual and performing artist, who was raped at the age of 18. In the opening montage, Bradley's words fill the screen: "It's so hard for me to grasp the whole idea that I was raped on Friday morning at 3:30. The devil slipped into my body and snatched my soul away (stated on August 18, 2003)."^{xiv} Right after finishing a successful year of college, Bradley was raped by someone she knew and trusted. Her harm-doer was an older, married man, a mentor and someone who she looked up to, and deeply admired. Feelings of betrayal, deep hurt, and the dread of violation sent Frances into a spiral of fear and depression. Her first experience with sex was nonconsensual, and in an effort to reclaim sex for herself, she used daily journaling and visual reflections, all of which culminate in her forthcoming documentary project.

Within the film, Bradley visualizes her own healing, in conversation with other women in her family. One of her sisters confesses that she, too, is a survivor. The intergenerational impact of sexual violence is palpable as each of the

women discusses how Frances' experience was much like their own experiences with sex and sexual violence more specifically. "What is womanhood?" asks Frances, "Because so many of the women that I have spoken to have had the same experience."^{xv}

The visual images, the music, and the poetry interwoven in the trailer "give name to the nameless."^{xvi} Rape is all too often thrown under the rug, but as one of the women featured in the trailer states, "the more you keep putting stuff under the rug, in a minute the rug is gonna be like this (*lifts hand to show a mountain*)."^{xvii} Bradley's filmic, visual, and artistic intervention against sexual violence names the evil that altered her life and the lives of so many other women. In many ways, it builds on films like *NO!* and merges a multiplicity of art forms to represent pain and healing.

The BWTRC and Black Women's Oral Histories of Rape

Filmic power is present in the melodic ways that Black women claim survivorship even when the world around them demands their individual and collective silence. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave Black women and girls the space to tell their own stories. Imagine walking down the stairs of the historic Riverside Church of New York City, into the basement where there is a gym, a large kitchen, tons of storage closets, and a large dining hall with a stage. At the base of the stage there are stations with media devices and headphones. Inside of those headphones are the oral histories of Black women who have survived everything from molestation and incest to domestic violence and gang rape. Their stories permeate your ears as you listen and listen. You may begin to cry, feel triggered, or the psychic remembering of your own violations and traumas may arise in ways that you did not plan for or could even imagine. These oral histories are being spoken over and over into your ear and in the ears of so many others sitting next to you. You are intimately communing with a Black woman's story of rape, and you are being called to action to fight with dedication and fervor against sexual violence in all its forms. This is what the Black Women's Oral History station was like at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and there were activists who expressed righteous indignation after listening to such horrific crimes against humanity.

Seeing these artistic and visual representations of Black women's survivorship—absent of the white gaze and the colonized media industry—provided an unparalleled and uncensored display of the pervasive reality of rape. Moreover, the oral histories showed how "Black women across the diaspora [. . .] can continue to hone, in their own localities, specific techniques and technologies which promote safety, healing, narrative sharing and preservation, and justice."^{xviii} If we take cultural worker and filmmaker Toni Cade Bambara's

words seriously, “the tools of my trade are colonized [and] the creative imagination has been colonized,” we will see the power in oral histories and testimonies that celebrate the imaginative capacity for survivors to step foot back into hell’s door and come back out with new visions for the truth, justice, healing and reconciliation they desire.^{xix}

The absence of censorship and/or colonized media constraints allowed Black women the space to tell their whole stories, even if their stories would tell truths that an anti-black and anti-woman world refuses to confront. This is the power of Black feminist/womanist technologies of resistance—in film and off screen, too—in that they push beyond “the master’s tools” and create spaces and places for communal accountability to exist despite unrelenting oppression.^{xx} Having these oral histories present in a historic church also “technically” held the church responsible for the rapes of Black women and girls on its watch. The decoding of theological hermeneutics that have traditionally upheld rape culture led to the recoding of survivor theologies, giving grace and hope to those harmed and the option for accountability and healing for harm-doers. Loretta Ross, during her testimony at Riverside, stated, “when the church made me apologize for becoming pregnant after having been raped, I decided it was time to leave the church.” Indeed, the church with its heterosexist, patriarchal, and rape apologist leanings has harmed more than it has helped, and it, like so many other Black institutions, was pushed towards true righteousness and justice by survivors who dared to speak out—even if only through a recording in a listener’s ear in a church basement.^{xxi}

Emerging Sons on Film: Wrestling with Rape Culture

As part of the TRC, there was also an intentional space created for Black male-identified individuals to critically engage issues of toxic masculinity, rape, and patriarchy at the Twins Barbershop in Brooklyn, New York. About twenty or more Black (and Latino) men, along with about 5–10 Black women, gathered inside of the barbershop and participated in a conversation co-facilitated by Quentin Walcott and myself. The three-hour session was eye opening, challenging, and in some moments, baffling. As Nathan McCall has previously written, “I’ve heard all the macho men’s-room talk, and I’d say the number of boys and men who harbor blurry notions about the liberties they can rightfully take with a female is nothing less than mind-boggling. If the truth be told, on some level of awareness or another, most men don’t get it.”^{xxii} There were men present who believed in gender roles; in the necessity of female submission to male counterparts; in heteropatriarchal notions of relationship, parenting, and kinship; and also in sexism, misogyny, and rape culture. These ideologies, among many others, are common in Black barbershops as they are in

a host of other Black cultural institutions (i.e., HBCUs, churches, etc.).

Having this conversation in the barbershop, however, was a Black feminist/womanist technology of resistance. In fact, Black women suggested that this be the place where two Black men (myself and Quentin) lead the conversation. Certainly, the Black barbershop has historically and contemporaneously functioned as the space where “men” can come together, talk and decompress absent of “women,” and also get advice on how to deal with day-to-day issues from their barbers and other men. By utilizing that space, and taking the ears of those in the shop—whether they knew why we were there or not—each person left that day having talked about rape and consent. All twenty or more individuals had detailed and comprehensive conversation about how toxic masculinity, rape, and patriarchy dehumanize and oppress Black women. The discussion was also intergenerational. There were elders in the room who talked about their personal experiences with rape and/or anti-rape activism, such as the brother of Recy Taylor, Robert Corbitt. There were also Black women survivors in the room who asked the question, “do Black men care about Black women?” A question that generated intense dialogue about the ways Black men do not show up for Black women in the home, in our churches, in our schools, in our communities, and even in our movements. These Black women openly confessed when they were triggered by the things Black men were saying, and on several incidences, some of the Black men in the room had to admit when, as McCall says, “they just didn’t get it.”^{xxiii} Their ability to admit that they were wrong or that they did not understand was a tremendous step. It is not typical for Black men—in such a hypermasculine space as a Black barbershop—to admit their flaws and/or their lack of understanding.

Nonetheless what was most noteworthy about the barbershop conversation was that it was entirely recorded by an up-and-coming Black woman filmmaker. The footage will be later used in *Emerging Sons* programming at Black Women’s Blueprint, and perhaps, as part of that filmmaker’s future work. The footage will do the work of diverting the gaze and shifting the focus of the Black men and boys who watch its content. The hope is that those who watch the footage will be able to wrestle with how they conceptualize their masculinity in light of patriarchy’s debilitating effect on the livelihood of Black women and girls. It is also the hope that Black men and boys will feel compelled to lead their lives as anti-rape activists after hearing the testimonies of Black women survivors of rape, alongside and in conversation with their own statements during the Black barbershop talk. As bell hooks has said, “We need to hear from black males who have turned their gaze away from the colonizer’s face and are able to look at gender and race with new eyes.”^{xxiv}

Conclusion

Black feminist/womanist technologies of resistance sit at the crux of the anti-rape movement in Black communities and they were also instrumental in the planning and execution of the Black Women's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The usage of traditional film alongside and in conversation with contemporary iterations of "filmic" texts—albeit through social media, oral histories, or the literal/figurative recording of anti-rape conversation, led to what was a successful and groundbreaking event in the history of Black America. As Toni Cade Bambara has written, "There is no American cinema; there are American cinemas."^{xv} Black women's utilization of technology in the literal sense, and "the technologies of their lives," that being, the underpinnings, secrets, and details of their inner selves—in public and digital spaces—challenges what Darlene Clark Hine called "the culture of dissemblance" and what Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham defined as "the politics of respectability."^{xvi} Contemporary (and past) anti-rape activists bring to light the issues that have been sequestered in the closets of Black life—that being, racial-sexual violence—and they are conjuring transformative and restorative justice for all those committed to black women and girls' livelihoods. The commitment "to the folk," to borrow Alice Walker's words, deepens the reach and effect of the technologies deployed and engaged.^{xvii} There is no truth or reconciliation if Black women and girls are not affirmed as the coders, designers, and techies of the Black liberation movement and the Black future collectively hoped for, dreamed about, and imagined.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply inspired by and called to action by the freedom fighters, sages, and healerwomen at Black Women's Blueprint who make known the realities of racial-sexual violence and are creating pathways to justice, healing, accountability and liberation in black communities.

Endnotes

- ⁱ BWTRC program, "About the BWTRC" (in author's possession).
- ⁱⁱ Tamara A. Lomax, "'Technology of Living' Toward a Black Feminist Religious Thought." *The Black Scholar*.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Jacqueline Bobo, "Black Women's Films: Genesis of a Tradition." In Bobo, Jacqueline, ed. *Black Women Film and Video Artists* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 19.
- ^{iv} For more on #YouOkSis, please see Demetria Irwin, "#YouOkSis: Online Movement Launches to Stop Street Harrassment," *TheGrio.com*, August 2, 2014; for more on #WhyIStayed, please see Nina Bahadur, "#WhyIStayed Stories Reveal Why Domestic Violence Survivors Can't 'Just Leave,'" Huffington Post, September 9, 2014; and for more on #SurvivorPrivilege, please see: Tyler Kingkade, "The Woman Who Started #SurvivorPrivilege Was Kicked Out Of School After Being Raped," Huffington Post, June 12, 2014.

- ^v Please see hashtag #BWTRC, then click "videos" on Twitter.
- ^{vi} Black Women's Blueprint, Twitter post, April 29, 2016, 3:17pm, <https://twitter.com/BlackWomensBP/status/726128363660840960>.
- ^{vii} Ibid.
- ^{viii} See Chapter Three, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," in Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 79–114.
- ^{ix} See Crystal Nicole Feimster, *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Harvard University Press, 2009).
- ^x See Danielle L. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* (Vintage, 2011).
- ^{xi} See Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Zed Books, 1987).
- ^{xii} See Eric McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism* (Duke University Press, 2011), 160–192; and for primary source materials on the Sojourners: "Proclamation of the Sojourners for Truth and Justice." Louise Thompson Patterson Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
- ^{xiii} "Recognition, justice and development: Women of African descent— at the intersection of race and gender" on the occasion of the International Decade for People of African Descent," *United Nations Webcast*, April 29, 2016. <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/conferencessummits/high-level-signature-ceremony-for-the-paris-agreement-22-april-2016-new-york/watch/women-of-african-descent-at-the-intersection-of-race-and-gender/870747324001#full-text>.
- ^{xiv} *Womanhood or Woman's-Hurt?* <http://womanhoodorwomanshurt.com/short-documentary/>.
- ^{xv} Ibid.
- ^{xvi} Audre Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," *Sister Outsider* (The Crossing Press, 1984), 37.
- ^{xvii} *Womanhood or Woman's-Hurt?*
- ^{xviii} BWTRC program, page 2 (in author's possession).
- ^{xix} Toni Cade Bambara, "Language and the Writer," in Toni Cade Bambara, *Deep Sightings & Rescue Missions: Fiction, Essays, and Conversations* (Vintage, 2009), 139–140.
- ^{xx} Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), 110–114.
- ^{xxi} See Monica A. Coleman, *The Dinah Project: A Handbook for Congregational Response to Sexual Violence*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010.
- ^{xxii} Nathan McCall, "Men: We Just Don't Get It." In Rudolph P. Byrd and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, eds. *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality* (Indiana University Press, 2001), 195.
- ^{xxiii} Ibid.
- ^{xxiv} bell hooks, *Killing Rage: Ending Racism* (Macmillan, 1996), 96.
- ^{xxv} Toni Cade Bambara, "Language and the Writer," 140.
- ^{xxvi} See Hine, Darlene Clark. "Rape and the inner lives of Black women in the Middle West." *SignsRighteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- ^{xxvii} See Alice Walker, "Womanist," in Layli Phillips, ed. *The Womanist Reader* (Routledge, 2006), 19.

Bibliography

- Bambara, Toni Cade. *Deep Sightings & Rescue Missions: Fiction, Essays, and Conversations*, Vintage, 2009.
- Black Women's Blueprint. www.blackwomensblueprint.org.
- Bobo, Jacqueline, ed. *Black Women Film and Video Artists*, New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Byrd, Rudolph P. and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, eds. *Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality*, Indiana University Press, 2001.
- Feimster, Crystal N. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*, Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- hooks, bell. *Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, Macmillan, 1996.
- Lomax, Tamara A. "Technology of Living' Toward a Black Feminist Religious Thought." *The Black Scholar*.
- Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984.
- McDuffie, Erik S. *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*, Duke University Press, 2011.
- McGuire, Danielle L. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*, Vintage, 2011.
- Phillips, Layli, ed. *The Womanist Reader*, Routledge, 2006.
- "Recognition, justice and development: Women of African descent—at the intersection of race and gender" on the occasion of the International Decade for People of African Descent," *United Nations Webcast*, April 29, 2016. <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/conferencessummits/high-level-signature-ceremony-for-the-paris-agreement-22-april-2016-new-york/watch/women-of-african-descent-at-the-intersection-of-race-and-gender/4870747324001#full-text>.
- Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography*, Zed Books, 1987.
- Simmons, Aishah Shahidah. *NO! The Rape Documentary*. DVD. U.S.A: AFROLEZ Productions, 2006.
- Sojourners for Truth and Justice. Louise Thompson Patterson Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University. <http://womanhoodorwomanshurt.com/short-documentary/>.

A Survey of Automatic Annotation Methods

Gualberto (Wally) Guzman, *University of Texas at Austin*

Gualberto Guzman is a senior, double-majoring in computer science and electrical engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. His research interests focus on the applications of machine learning and artificial intelligence to corpus linguistics. He is currently working with Dr. Barbara Bullock and Dr. Almeida Toribio as part of the Bilingual Annotation TaskS Force (BATS) to develop and improve automatic annotation tools for dealing with mixed-language data. He plans to pursue a PhD in computer science to expand his research of computational linguistics and artificial intelligence.

Abstract

Linguistic scholars are increasingly interested in studying the linguistic features of multi-lingual texts through Part-Of-Speech (POS) tagging, code-switch identification, or other levels of classification. However, aside from hand annotation, the current tools for annotation and textual analysis are highly limited. In the past, hand annotation by experts was the only way to tag a mixed language text, but it is slow, inefficient, and tedious to verify. Today, there are other approaches to annotation including crowd sourcing, combining inexpert annotations, and an array of machine learning approaches that teach computers to annotate for us. In this work, I will discuss the benefits, drawbacks, and success of each of these methods and argue that the best approach is automatic annotation through machine learning. I claim that relying on hand annotation is inferior to using current machine learning tools. As an example, I briefly discuss the results of my team's work in automatic annotation and compare with previous work, which approach 100% accuracy. In summary, I submit that machine learning presents the best alternative to hand annotation due to its speed, low cost, and ease of use.

Introduction

In recent years, the number of non-English and multilingual documents available in digital formats has spiked dramatically. However, linguists studying features of these documents, such as Part-of-Speech (POS) or degree of language mixing, have few tools for doing so. As a result, the annotation of linguistic features such as code-switching, where speakers change languages in a single utterance, has previously been done by hand. This method is costly, requiring extensive training, time, and attention depending on the level of detail desired. Furthermore, existing automatic tools for multiple languages are restricted to a small subset of language pairings such as Hindi and English and demand a high level of maintenance (LIPPS Group, 2000). As a result, there are few options for researchers wishing to work with large-scale multilingual documents. In an effort to overcome

the slow and expensive nature of hand annotation, scholars have turned to other approaches. These include joining inexpert annotations (Diab & Kamboj, 2011; Snow et al., 2008), combining expert annotations (Raykar et al., 2009), and creating machine learning models to annotate for us. In all of the aforementioned cases, automatic methods outperform the results of hand annotation in terms of time, effort, and cost.

This paper claims that relying on automatic annotation through machine learning poses no threat and frees researchers to perform actual linguistic analysis rather than devoting a significant portion of their time to hand annotation. I will begin with a short definition of annotation in corpus linguistics. Then, I move on to discuss the benefits, drawbacks, and successes of previous methods and argue that the best approach to annotation is through machine learning. I demonstrate that relying on hand annotation is inferior to employing the current machine learning tools, drawing examples from current work carried out with my research team, the Bilingual Annotation TaskS Force (BATS) at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition, I discuss the results of my research with BATS in automatic annotation and compare it to related work.

Defining Annotation

Before moving forward, it is necessary to describe what annotation means in corpus linguistics. It is simply the labeling or tagging of every token in a text based on the object of study, where a token is usually a space-separated word. Take, for example, the sentence "The big dog ran quickly," which has five tokens. In this case, it is not useful to tag for language, but it might be worthwhile to tag for POS. We would then see "the" tagged as a determiner, "big" tagged as an adjective, "dog" tagged as a noun, and so on until we have consumed all of the tokens. Verifying the validity of a tagged text, or corpus, is carried out with a gold standard, which is an expert annotation of a small fraction of the original text. Comparing the tags in the corpus against the gold standard allows researchers to determine the accuracy rating over that fraction and extrapolate to the rest of the text. While our small, one-sentence example is relatively useless, a corpus composed of thousands of sentences with tens of thousands of tokens or more serves multiple ends. With that much data or more, linguists can break down how natural languages work much faster by examining more instances of usage in speakers across regions, cultures, or dialects.

In the case of multilingual texts, annotation is essential to discovering the interactions between languages, as they can reveal detail about the underlying structure of all languages (Léglise & Alby, 2013). However, it becomes

unfeasible to annotate by hand at that scale. For example, annotating a fifty-thousand-word text at a rate of one word per second takes almost fourteen hours. Clearly, a researcher's time is much better spent analyzing an already annotated corpus rather than producing one. There are tools available to annotate for us, but only a handful of them work with languages other than English, such as TreeTagger, and even fewer work with languages that are not widely spoken, necessitating new methods of annotation.

Crowdsourced Annotations

One approach to the annotation process, used by Diab and Kamboj (2011), relies on the fact that it is easier to divide a text into overlapping chunks, annotate them individually, and combine the results, than it is to annotate an entire document. Their text consisted of 10,500 words in Hinglish, a mixture of Hindi and English. In an effort to spare linguists the difficulty of manual annotation, the authors used an Internet marketplace known as the Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) to gather answers for small sets of sentence-level tags by enlisting the help of Internet users, a practice known as crowdsourcing. Since they were working with a bilingual corpus, they tagged for language (Hindi or English), proper nouns (foreign or native), and for unknown tokens. The authors chose the tag set with the highest number of votes and avoided the issue of dialectical variation and human error, which is an issue in hand annotation. While the majority of respondents agreed on Hindi tags (98.1%), the same was not true for other tags. For English tags, the agreement was 79.63% and for the Proper Noun tags, it was lower still at 66%.

Despite differences in the accuracy of tagging across different levels of classification, there are two benefits to this approach. First, it does not require trained experts. Therefore, anyone can contribute and the entire process is relatively inexpensive and quick. Second, it is simple to implement and can be applied to any text. Nonetheless, there are several drawbacks. Although their approach does not require trained experts, it does demand a minimum level of knowledge for accurate tagging. The study required participants to tag according to language, which arguably demands a lower level of grammatical sophistication than tagging for POS. Thus, it may be harder to use crowdsourcing with other forms of annotation. In addition, unless there is a gold standard or an expertly tagged section of the text with which to compare performance, there is no way to accurately verify the validity or guarantee the correctness of the tags once the entire corpus is complete. All that can be verified is the degree to which speakers of Hindi and English agree on specific tags.

Snow et al. (2008) followed the same approach, using the AMT to gather non-expert tags and determine level of agreement on five language tasks. However, their aim was to determine how non-experts fared compared to experts in annotation. They found that, on average, it takes four non-experts to equal the performance of one expert. As before, the benefits of this approach remain the same; it is simple to implement and does not require trained experts. Although the authors demonstrate the versatility of the crowdsourcing method, the previous drawbacks still apply. This method is prone to disagreement across respondents and cannot be easily verified. Unlike the Diab and Kamboj (2011) study, however, the participants in this study were trained beforehand to annotate according to the language task, which represents an additional significant cost of time and effort.

Combining Expert Annotations

Raykar et al. (2009) elected to combine the results of various expert-level annotators to increase accuracy rather than using non-experts, in line with work by Sheng et al. (2008). In contrast to the previously mentioned studies, Raykar et al. (2009) studied the annotation of medical images to determine whether experts thought a patient had cancer, their opinion of the degree of malignancy of a cancer, or their assessment of the location of a specific cancer nodule. The authors used a probabilistic framework to weigh the annotation of each expert and return the most likely correct one based on previous success in the case of disagreement. In this way, the experts that were right more of the time had greater influence on the final result, unlike the previous studies where the outcome was strictly majoritarian and independent of past performance. In all cases, the most probable choice was more often correct, by 3–5%, compared to the majority choice. This method of combining and weighting expert annotations, which is shared with the work of Sheng et al. (2008), suffers from the same drawbacks as crowdsourcing as well as the additional cost and investment of multiple experts.

Annotation Using Machine Learning

Machine learning differs from the previous approaches in that it does not require significant human intervention. In the work of Gwayali et al. (2013), word-level and letter-level machine learning models were trained on examples of native and learner models of English in order to capture specific features such as spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, or stylistic differences among second-language speakers of English. The authors used two N-Gram models, which are probabilistic language models that predict the next tag based on existing collections of tags in the training examples both at the letter and word level. Using these models, the authors

were able to correctly predict the source language of the author of a text with a 74.8% accuracy rating. In the task of language identification, King and Abney (2013) compared the performance of several machine learning models and found that a more complex type of N-Gram model, known as a Conditional Random Field Model, was 80% accurate across several languages. Solorio and Liu (2008) compared several algorithms on the task of POS-tagging mixed English-Spanish texts and found they could combine the results of independent English and Spanish taggers to reach an accuracy of 93%. Finally, Solorio et al. (2014) determined that it was much easier to identify languages that are written in different scripts automatically as is case with Nepali and English, reaching an accuracy of 90%.

Through the Bilingual Annotations TaskS Force (BATS), I have been developing a new, open-source method based on machine learning to automatically annotate multilingual datasets, which we have applied to two corpora. Our model is composed of two parts: an N-Gram model and a Markov Chain. The first determines the probability of a language tag for a given word based on the spelling of words in the same language. The second uses the languages tags of previous words as context for ambiguous cases. For examples, given the two training words “dog” and “perro” (dog) in English and Spanish, the N-gram model will posit that the new word “carro” (car) is more likely to be Spanish than English based on the “-o” ending and the “rr” it shares with “perro.” However, the N-gram model alone does not handle ambiguities. If we consider the sentence, “I realized que nunca **me** llamaron” (I realized that they never called me) we see that the word “me” could be in either language based on spelling alone. However, given that the previous word is in Spanish, the Markov model assigns a high probability that “me” should also be tagged as Spanish.

The first corpus on which we applied our algorithm was the book *Killer Crónicas: Bilingual Memories*, an English-Spanish work of fiction by Susana Chávez Silverman. The second was the movie script for the film *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*, a bilingual French-English film directed by Eric Canuel. We fed our model millions of words in the form of large collections of monolingual text, or training corpora, so that it could learn to recognize what each language looks like at the level of spelling and context using the N-Gram and Markov models. Using small gold standards from each corpus, we evaluated the total performance by looking at the total number of times the model correctly identified the language in the test corpus as well as what the model predicted for the ambiguous cases. For the first corpus, we achieved an accuracy of 96% for language identification. For the second, we achieved 97%. Not only are our results higher than those reported in previous related work, they are also very close to the accuracy of hand annotation.

Of course, compared to the work of a human expert, machine learning lags slightly behind. It is hard to develop, requires a trained programmer, and is only as good as the available training data, which is sparse in languages other than English. However, it is much faster, more adaptable, and more accurate than relying on non-experts. Training and running the algorithms takes a few hours at most, which is much faster than what one would expect for the hand annotation. Additionally, machine learning methods perform equally well across multiple languages, requiring no more than different training corpora to achieve similar levels of accuracy. They clearly surpass the accuracy of non-machine learning methods without experts.

Conclusion

In summary, machine learning presents the best alternative to hand annotation due to its speed, low cost, and ease of use. It is much faster and much easier to retrain an algorithm on a new language and run it on a different dataset than it would be to enlist the help of expert annotators to perform slow hand annotation. It is also much more cost-effective to develop a single algorithm than to enlist help, combine answers, and account for discrepancy. In all of the studies mentioned, the machine learning approach outperformed the results of non-experts by at least 10%, representing a significant gain in time, effort, and accuracy. Unlike hand annotation, automatic annotation machine learning is highly adaptable to changes in language task, level of detail, and language variation. I submit that hand annotation cannot compete with new machine learning models, which approach an accuracy of 100%. While these methods directly compete with expert labor, advancement in automatic annotation frees researchers to perform more valuable work resulting from its results without restricting them to carrying out the annotation themselves. As an example, the BATS team plans to apply our algorithm to a broader range of documents involving more languages and casual speech in order to test linguistic hypotheses about language interaction among multilinguals. We expect to facilitate access and improve the documentation of our current method so that other researchers with interests in multilingualism can employ it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Prof. Barbara E. Bullock and Prof. Almeida J. Toribio for supporting and guiding me during this project. I would also like to thank Dr. Nicole Guidotti-Hernández and Chinwe Oriji for their assistance. This research was made possible by the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship.

Works Cited

- Diab, M. & A. Kamboj. 2011. Feasibility of leveraging crowd sourcing for the creation of a large scale annotated resource for Hindi English code switched data: a pilot annotation. In *Proceedings of the 9th Workshop on Asian Language Resources, IJCNLP 2011*, 36–40. Chiang Mai, Thailand. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Gyawali, B., G. Ramirez & T. Solorio. 2013. Native language identification: a simple n-gram based approach. In *Proceedings of the 8th Workshop on Innovative Use of NLP for Building Educational Applications*, 224–231. Atlanta, Georgia. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- King, B. & S. Abney. 2013. Labeling the languages of words in mixed-language documents using weakly supervised methods. In *Proceedings of the 2013 Conference of the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics: Human Language Technologies*, 1110–1119. Atlanta, Georgia. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Léglise, I. & S. Alby, 2013. Les corpus plurilingües, entre linguistique de corpus et de contact. (Multilingual corpora, between corpus linguistics and contact.) *Faits de Langues* 41. 95–122.
- LIPPS Group. 2000. The LIDES coding manual: A document for preparing and analyzing language interaction data. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 4. 131–270.
- Raykar, V. C., S. Yu, L. H. Zhao, A. Jerebko, C. Florin, G. H. Valadez, L. Bogoni, L. Moy. 2009. Supervised learning from multiple experts: Whom to trust when everyone lies a bit. In *Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on Machine Learning, ICML 2009*, 889–896. Montreal, Canada. Association for Computing Machinery.
- Sheng, V. S., F. Provost, P. G. Ipeirotis. 2008. Get Another Label? Improving Data Quality and Data Mining Using Multiple, Noisy Labelers. In *Proceedings of the 14th ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining, KDD 2008*, 614–622. Las Vegas, NV. Association for Computing Machinery.
- Snow, R., B. O’Conner, D. Jurafsky, A. Y. Ng. 2008. Cheap and Fast—But Is It Good? Evaluating Non-Expert Annotations for Natural Language Tasks. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing, EMNLP 2008*, 254–263. Honolulu, HI. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Solorio, T., E. Blair, S. Maharjan, S. Bethard, M. Diab, M. Gohneim, A. Hawwari, F. AlGhamdi, J. Hirschberg, A. Chang & P. Fung. 2014. Overview for the first shared task on language identification in code-switched data. In *Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Computational Approaches to Code Switching, EMNLP 2014*, 62–72. Doha, Qatar. Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Solorio, T. & Y. Liu. 2008. Part-of-speech tagging for English-Spanish code-switched text. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing, EMNLP 2008*, 1051–1060. Honolulu, HI. Association for Computational Linguistics.

The Black Cosmopolitan: A Critical Examination of Cosmopolitanism and Exile in Teju Cole's *Open City*

Lovia Gyarkye, *Princeton University*

Lovia Gyarkye recently graduated from Princeton University, where she completed a degree in English with certificates in African and African-American studies. She is currently a reporter-researcher at the New Republic magazine. Her current research interests focus on how black women complicate the contemporary cosmopolitan identity.

Abstract

The recent popularity of the term cosmopolitan and its frequent application to postcolonial diaspora literature demands critical consideration. A seemingly 21st reincarnation of Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur* figure, the cosmopolitan moves between various spaces with an ease that reflects their simultaneous detachment and belonging to multiple states. Cosmopolitanism not only becomes a physical state of being but an existential one. In this paper, I read Teju Cole's *Open City* as an interrogation of our contemporary notions of a cosmopolitan. By analyzing the tension between Julius' attempts to be cosmopolitan and his constant feelings of displacement, I explore how the Afropolitan identity provides a more useful framework for understanding our main character and Coles' text. Unlike the racially modified "black cosmopolitan," Afropolitanism acknowledges the fluid nature of being black in an increasingly globalized world.

I

Teju Cole's debut novel *Open City* is best described as a complicated piece of modernist writing. Set in post 9/11 New York, Cole's novel follows the physical and mental wanderings of Julius, a Nigerian-German man who moved from Lagos to America to attend Maxwell College on a full scholarship. With the sentence: "And so when I began to go on evening walks last fall," we embark on a journey with Julius, taking us through the streets of Manhattan, Brussels, and a past Lagos.ⁱ Julius's musings and Cole's Sebaldian-esque writing style have led critics and scholars alike to hail both our hero and the author as exemplar cosmopolitans. However, throughout the narrative we realize that Julius's identity in relation to cosmopolitanism is much more complicated than that of 19th-century *flâneur* figure. In an interview with *Post45*, Cole comments on how *Open City* "is a narrative troubled from beginning to end by Julius's origin in Africa."ⁱⁱ Julius spends a majority of the novel embodying the qualities that would make one a traditional *flâneur*. He wanders through the streets of different cities connecting his quotidian observations to his extensive cultural cache. However, each interaction feels unnatural and tense.

While at times our hero falls into the category of an exile, there are instances when he attempts to search for a

middle ground—an alternate mode of being to counter the strict categorization of "cosmopolitan" and "exile." Cole's comments, coupled with these tensions, foreground the questions raised about *Open City*'s role as an interrogation of contemporary cosmopolitanism. The tension between Julius's attempts to be cosmopolitan and his constant feelings of displacement signals the need for a more nuanced discussion of the black cosmopolitan identity.

I will argue that, unlike the racially modified "black cosmopolitan," Afropolitanism (and the Afropolitan identity) acknowledges the fluid nature of being black in an increasingly globalized world. It abandons the exclusionary European aesthetic of traditional cosmopolitanism in favor of understanding the complexity of global associations, thus making it a more useful framework for understanding our main character and Coles' text.

II

While the idea of cosmopolitanism itself extends further back in history, I begin with the definition introduced by 19th-century French poet Charles Baudelaire in "The Painter of Modern Life." In this essay, Baudelaire introduces Monsieur G., a man he believes perfectly embodies the characteristics of a cosmopolitan. While Baudelaire does not explicitly use the word, his definition of the *flâneur* bears similarity to contemporary definitions of a cosmopolitan. Monsieur G. is a man of the world—a *flâneur*—which in Baudelairean terms is to

Be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.ⁱⁱⁱ

The *flâneur* finds joy in the everyday object, task, and person because they believe they are surrounded by "eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of life."^{iv}

Taking Baudelaire's image of the *flâneur* as a foundation, we can now turn to philosopher and cultural theorist Kwame Anthony Appiah's definition of a cosmopolitan for a more comprehensive image of the figure that Julius attempts to embody. In *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Appiah grounds his exploration of the term in its original meaning. He writes, "Talk of cosmopolitanism originally signaled a rejection of the conventional view that every civilized person belonged to a community among communities."^v While contemporary notions of cosmopolitanism are rooted in the idea of the *flâneur*, the original concept is less about the aesthetics of walking through the crowd and more about rejecting national belonging. Appiah's definition builds on the 19th-century figure by attributing the

cosmopolitan interest in manners of the everyday to a lack of community-specific allegiance.

Combining the aesthetics of Baudelaire with the ethics of Appiah, we can see why Julius's cosmopolitanism fits like an uncomfortably oversized coat. At the beginning of the novel, Julius reveals his motivation for taking long walks through the city. For him:

The streets served as a welcome opposite [to routine]. Every decision—where to turn left, how long to remain lost in thought in front of an abandoned building, whether to watch the sunset over New Jersey, or to lope in the shadows of the East side looking across to Queens—was inconsequential, and for that reason a reminder of freedom.^{vi}

Julius seeks out the part of cosmopolitanism—the rejection of national belonging—that Appiah's definition leans heavily upon. However, to reject national belonging requires one to be in a position where their nationhood can be taken for granted. Appiah uses Richard Burton, a Victorian adventurer, to aptly illustrate such a character. Burton serves as a solid caricature for the individual who, due to their privileged position, can embody cosmopolitanism. Burton can travel to different countries, speak several languages, and be open to the world in a manner, which as Appiah writes, “is perfectly consistent with picking and choosing amongst the options you find in your search.”^{vii} But what happens if you are rejected by certain parts of society? Surely, that would limit the individual in many ways as well as strip them of an important aspect of cosmopolitanism?

Julius faces this predicament throughout the novel. While he wants to abandon the idea of national affiliation, his race troubles his interactions and attempts so that he cannot seem to escape. After a day at the museum, Julius struggles to hail a cab. When he finally finds one, he says few words to the African driver beyond his address and a belated, “So, how are you doing my brother?” The driver, clearly irritated, retorts that he is not good. “You know,” he said. “The way you came into my car without saying hello, this is bad. Hey, I am African just like you, why do you do this?”^{viii} Julius offers a weak apology before retreating into his own thoughts where he expresses his frustration. He thinks, “I wasn't sorry at all. I was in no mood for people who tried to lay claims on me.”^{ix} This cab driver's attempt to “lay claims” on Julius's identity cuts his cosmopolitan performance short. Because of the expectations surrounding his Nigerian origins, Julius does not have the ability to act with the same freedom as a traditional cosmopolitan. Instead, he follows the unspoken rules of blackness that link him to this man.^x

There are instances when Julius understands the function of race in compromising his ability to embrace

cosmopolitanism. During his visit to Brussels, Julius participates in a series of conversations with Farouq, a Moroccan man who works at the local Internet café. After their first conversation, Julius mediates on his position as a black man in Brussels. He resolves to “cut down on the length of [his] late night walks” and “to no longer visit all-white bars or family restaurants in the quieter neighborhoods.”^{xi} Julius is aware that he cannot really be “without a state” because his skin color brands him as an “other” in most situations. To be an “other” means that he cannot seamlessly weave through the crowd, claiming invisibility. Instead, he is forced to edit his routes and consider external receptions of his wanderings. In an attempt to work around these factors, Julius overcompensates his half embodiment of cosmopolitanism by accessing various cultural and aesthetic facts about particular objects or situations. Just before getting into the cab with the African man, Julius spends the afternoon at the American Folk Art Museum observing paintings by John Brewster Jr., an 18th-century deaf itinerant painter. Standing in front of Brewster's portraits, Julius “contemplated the silent world” before him and “thought of the many romantic ideas attached to blindness.”^{xii} From there he proceeds to weave an impressive number of references from the prophetic blindness of Homer to the spiritual blind wandering bard in the Lagos market of his childhood. While Julius's ability to draw associations between his many global experiences aligns with the cosmopolitanism of Monsieur G, these moments are not without the ghost of his blackness reminding him of his half involvement in this European tradition.

III

Haunted by the specter of race, Julius is unable to comfortably nor effortlessly inhabit the role of a cosmopolitan. He clumsily shifts his behavior, often displaying characteristics associated with both traditional and intellectual exiles. However, his eventual exodus from Lagos coupled with his melancholic solitude in Brussels ultimately disqualifies him from this definition, affirming his position as neither exile nor cosmopolitan.

The most appropriate definition of exile—as it pertains to Julius's behavior—begins with Edward Said's “Reflection on Exile.” In this essay, Said defines the condition of exile as an “unsealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home.”^{xiii} The condition of exile is haunted by the idea of something lost. Like Appiah with cosmopolitanism, Said situates his definition of exile in opposition to the idea of nationalism. He writes that while nationalism is about groups, “exile is a solitude experience outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation.”^{xiv} As a result of their outsider status “exiles feel . . . an urgent need

to reconstitute their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people.”^{xv} In Nigeria, Julius fulfills the first part of this definition. As a light-skinned half-Nigerian, half-German boy with the name Julius, there remains a stark difference between himself and those around him.

However, he is never forced out the city; instead, he chooses to leave. After being accepted to Maxwell, Julius buys “a ticket to New York to begin life in the new country, fully on [his] own terms.”^{xvi} This voluntary exodus from Lagos precludes Julius from being a traditional exile.

However, incompatibility with one category does not mean complete exclusion from the exilic label. In fact, Julius’s restlessness qualifies him to be considered an intellectual exile—an individual who merely chooses to remain an outsider. In his lecture turned essay, “Intellectual Exile,” Said expands the definition of exile beyond the physical and into the existential. He writes, “Exile for the intellectual in this metaphysical sense is restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others.”^{xvii} A three-week vacation in Brussels nudges Julius into this metaphysical exilic state. In this city, “the days went by slowly, and [his] sense of being entirely alone in the city intensified. Most of the days [he] stayed indoors, reading, but [he] read without pleasure.”^{xviii} Julius’s solitude in Brussels carries with it a sharp sense of isolation. He begins to wander aimlessly, embodying the restless attitude of an exile. However, by not taking pleasure in being alone—both physically and mentally—Julius opposes Said’s complete definition of an intellectual exile. In the same essay, Said argues what makes an intellectual exile unique is that they tend “to be happy with the idea of unhappiness.”^{xix}

For Said, the intellectual exile differs from both the traditional exile and a cosmopolitan because they do not rescind their nationhood. They exist in “the median state, neither completely at one with the new setting nor fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept *mici* or a secret outcast on another.”^{xx} By interlacing his diary like present-day prose with memories from Nigeria, Cole makes it clear that Julius is not fully separate from his Nigerian past. However, Julius does not see his half-involvement as advantageous; in fact, when thoughts of his grandmother float to him, he actively rejects the potential double vision. Calling these memories “nostalgic wish-fulfillment fantasy at work.”^{xxi} Julius wants to dismiss these feelings of connection and fully embody a cosmopolitan attitude toward Brussels—disassociated from his past. However, because of his “other” status, Nigeria still haunts him and his attempts to be a cosmopolitan. While Julius’s origins coupled with his position as an “other” pulls him

toward the role of intellectual exile, he consistently refuses this category and therefore does not qualify to be defined under its terms.

IV

Julius is neither fully a cosmopolitan nor an exile. His voluntary and involuntary adoption of these labels fit awkwardly, and the resulting inbetweenness creates an unresolved tension. The question becomes, does an alternate mode of being exist for those who, like Julius, want to be a “Black cosmopolitan?” While no definitive conclusions can be drawn or an enthusiastic “yes” exclaimed, the concept of “Afropolitanism” offers itself up as an alternative.

In 2005, Taiye Selasi, author of *Ghana Must Go*, wrote an essay entitled “Bye-Bye Babar” which redefined Achille Mbembe’s concept of the Afropolitan identity. The most referenced part of the essay paints a picture of a group of young, hip Africans dancing in a bar in London. Selasi writes:

“Home” for this lot is many things: where their parents are from; where they go for vacation; where they went to school; where they see old friends; where they live (or live this year). Like so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many.^{xxii}

Afropolitanism emerges as an alternative to traditional cosmopolitanism and alleviates the nervous conditions associated with attempting to be both African and cosmopolitan. These individuals embody the intersection of their global associations. As Selasi writes, “they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many.”^{xxiii} In the Foreword to *Negotiating Afropolitanism*, Simon Gikandi writes that Afropolitanism has “been prompted by the desire to think of African identities as both rooted in specific local geographies but also transcendental of them.”^{xxiv} Afropolitanism gives these young people a way to acknowledge their African past—frequently rooted in journeys—as well as recreate and reimagine their present-day wanderings. As Gikandi puts it in the same essay, “To be Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages, and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity—to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time.”^{xxv} With this understanding of Afropolitanism, we can turn to the text to consider if Julius’s attempts to be cosmopolitan are representative of an Afropolitan in the making or if they merely reflect the impossibility of being both cosmopolitan and black.

We begin with Julius in Brussels and consider if the city contributes to his engagement with the concept of

Afropolitanism. At the beginning of his three-week stay, Julius observes all of the people “who gave the impression of having just arrived from a sun-suffused elsewhere.”^{xxvi} Though Brussels does not have as strong a colonial past as France or Britain, it still reflects the same “European reality, in which borders were flexible.”^{xxvii} Julius also observes that large numbers of people seemed to be from some part of Africa and that on the trams he quickly discovered “whites were a tiny minority.”^{xxviii} From the fact that minorities are not exclusively relegated to the peripheral to his personal connection, Brussels becomes a more comfortable space than either Lagos or New York and appears to be a city where Afropolitanism can be performed.

Farouq also plays a significant role in Julius’s ability to reimagine the tension he feels. As noted earlier, Farouq is a Moroccan-Belgian man who works in an Internet café. Farouq’s occupation illustrates the inbetweenness that characterizes migrants of the diaspora. He works in a space that allows people, including himself, to switch identities vis-à-vis language. In a conversation with Julius, Farouq admits that he enjoys working at the shop because “it is a test case of what [he believes]; people can live together but still keep their own values intact.”^{xxix} Farouq’s sentiments are cosmopolitan in their own right. Both characters find joy in thinking about and being in the presence of different types of people. Just as the city of Brussels allows Julius to access memories of his grandmother and Nigeria, Farouq’s presence also induces uncharacteristic behavior. For example, as Julius leaves the shop, he surprises himself by asking for Farouq’s name. He “introduced [himself], shaking his hand, and added: How are you doing, my brother?”^{xxx} Out in the street, Julius wonders how this “aggressive familiarity” struck Farouq and why he had said it.^{xxxi} While this moment seems similar to the earlier scene with the African cab driver, it differs in that Julius initiates this interaction immediately and without obligation. Willing to make this connection with another African man catapults Julius into this Afropolitan category. If these interactions occurred in New York, Julius would most likely avoid them. However, a combination of the city of Brussels, Farouq’s knowledge, and ease with slipping in and out of several identities (through language), intrigues and, dare I say, comforts our hero.

V

Stemming from a long history of attempts to reconfigure the black identity into the molds of modernity, the concept of an Afropolitan identity remains far from perfect. However, it emerges as an attractive alternative because it conveniently serves as a middle ground between the strict categorizations presented by labels such as cosmopolitan and exile. Cole’s text illustrates the incompatibility of being both black and cosmopolitan, for the contemporary flâneur

does not acknowledge racial realities. To read *Open City* within the context of Afropolitanism provides an opportunity to shift the image of a cosmopolitan away from tradition and reimagine what it means to be black and global.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Professor Simon Gikandi for advising early iterations of this paper, inspiring this topic, and supporting my continued interest in this field of study. Thank you to Khristina Gonzalez and Judith Weisenfeld for their continued support, encouragement, terrific leadership, and kind words. And finally, thank you to my fellow Mellons at Princeton for constantly reminding me about the necessity of community in scholarship.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Teju Cole, *Open City* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2011), 1.
- ⁱⁱ Aaron Bady, “Interview: Teju Cole,” *Post45: African Writers in a New World*, 2015.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life.pdf,” in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, ed. John Mayne, 1964, 9.
- ^{iv} *Ibid.*, 11.
- ^v Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), xiv.
- ^{vi} Cole, *Open City*, 7.
- ^{vii} Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, 5.
- ^{viii} Cole, *Open City*, 40.
- ^{ix} *Ibid.*
- ^x While beyond the scope of this paper, it is necessary to consider Julius’s gender in this conversation. While his blackness limits his mobility, he is still more mobile than a black female who attempts to embrace a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Future research could explore the limits of a black female cosmopolitan.
- ^{xi} *Ibid.*
- ^{xii} *Ibid.*, 37.
- ^{xiii} Edward W. Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Reflections on Exile: And Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001), 137.
- ^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 140.
- ^{xv} Said, “Reflections on Exile, 140-141.”
- ^{xvi} Cole, *Open City*, 85.
- ^{xvii} Edward Said, “Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals,” *Grand Street* 47, no. 47 (1993): 2.
- ^{xviii} Cole, *Open City*, 108.
- ^{xix} Said, “Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals, 3.”
- ^{xx} *Ibid.*, 1.
- ^{xxi} Cole, *Open City*, 115.
- ^{xxii} Taiye Selasi, “Bye-Bye Babar,” *The LIP Magazine*, March 2005, <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>.
- ^{xxiii} *Ibid.*

^{xxiv} Simon Gikandi, "Foreword: On Afropolitanism," in *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2005), 9.

^{xxv} Ibid.

^{xxvi} Cole, *Open City*, 97.

^{xxvii} Ibid.

^{xxviii} Ibid.

^{xxix} Ibid., 112.

^{xxx} Ibid., 102.

^{xxxi} Ibid.

Bibliography

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Bady, Aaron. "Interview: Teju Cole." *Post45: African Writers in a New World*, 2015.

Baudelaire, Charles. "The Painter of Modern Life.pdf." In *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, edited by John Mayne, 1–20, 1964.

Cole, Teju. *Open City*. New York City: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2011.

Gikandi, Simon. "Foreword: On Afropolitanism." In *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on Borders and Spaces in Contemporary African Literature and Folklore*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2005.

Hallemeier, Katherine. "Literary Cosmopolitanism in Teju Cole's *Every Day Is for the Thief* and *Open City*." *A Review of International English Literature*, 2015.

"New Fiction: Bird's Eye View." *The Economist*, June 2011. <http://www.economist.com/node/21524803>. Poe, Edgar Allen. "The Man in the Crowd." In *Collected Works of Edgar Allen Poe*, edited by Thomas Ollive Mabbot, 506–515. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.

Said, Edward. "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals." *Grand Street* 47, no. 47 (1993): 112–124.

Said, Edward W. "Reflections on Exile." In *Reflections on Exile: And Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, 136–149. London: Granta Books, 2001.

Selasi, Taiye. "Bye-Bye Babar." *The LIP Magazine*, March 2005. <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76>.

Syjuco, Miguel. "These Crowded Streets." *The New York Times*, February 25, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/books/review/Syjuco-t.html>.

Vermeulen, Pieter. "Flights of Memory: Teju Cole's *Open City* and the Limits of Aesthetic Cosmopolitanism." *Journal of Modern Literature* 37, no. 1 (2014): 40–57.

A Native Feminist Theory Approach to Patricia Grace's *Tu*: Heteropatriarchy, Nationhood, and the Trauma of Militarized Violence

Tomoyo Joshi, *Oberlin College*

Tomoyo is a 1.5-generation Japanese American born in Kyoto, Japan, and raised in the Bay Area. She graduated from Oberlin College in May 2016 with a BA in gender, sexuality, and feminist studies. At Oberlin College, her honors thesis, "Managing Racist Past: the Black Justice League's Demand for Inclusion and Its Challenge to the Promise of Diversity at Princeton University," examined the discourse of diversity in Princeton's online diversity initiative page "Many Voices, One Future," and how Black student activism challenged the rhetoric of inclusion that the administration embodied. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, her research interests have included Asian and Asian American studies, critical ethnic studies, the politics of knowledge production, feminist and queer studies, settler colonial studies and affect studies. Tomoyo currently attends the doctoral program in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Riverside.

Abstract

In the novel *Tu* by Patricia Grace, the protagonist, Tu, joins the Maori Battalion with excitement and eagerness to fight in battle. The novel follows the story of three brothers, Pita, Rangi and Tu, who all join the Maori Battalion, at different times and for different reasons. In this paper, I read the novel *Tu* from a Native feminist theory approach. A Native feminist theory approach is useful because it illuminates the manifestation and impact of heteropatriarchy in Maori families as depicted in *Tu*. I discuss how the Native feminist theory framework allows a reading of *Tu* that creates discursive space to critique the role of heteropatriarchy within settler colonial contexts by acknowledging the intersections of masculinity, nationalisms, and indigeneity. Ultimately, I argue that it is simultaneously possible to acknowledge the trauma that Pita and Tu face as Maori men fighting in war and also see how they are affected by and complicit in heteropatriarchy.

In the novel *Tu* by Patricia Grace, the protagonist, Tu, believes that his decision to enlist in the Maori Battalion will prepare him for the "biggest adventure of [his] life."ⁱ The novel follows the story of three brothers, Pita, Rangi and Tu, who all join the Maori Battalion, at different times and for different reasons. Donna Coates, writing about traumatized soldiers in *Tu*, demonstrates that the narratives of the three brothers reflect not only how the three characters have been personally shaped by the war, but its societal ramifications and political consequences of violence and trauma.ⁱⁱ Some scholars, like Erin Suzuki, interpret Grace's work as "assert[ing] a genealogically based paradigm for transnational and transcultural exchange," by focusing on how patterns of migration ordered by globalization and modernization create "new forms of cultural exchange, contact, and hybridity."ⁱⁱⁱ

While Coates and Suzuki contribute to the different possible readings of *Tu*, neither of them have an *explicit* and *intentional* examination of heteropatriarchy in relation to the settler colonial power structures that are pervasive in the novel. Therefore, I read *Tu* from a Native feminist theory framework, which, according to Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill, consists of theories that "make substantial advances in understandings of the connections between settler colonialism and both heteropatriarchy and heteropaternalism [by] focus[ing] on compound issues of gender, sexuality, race, indigeneity, and nation."^{iv} In the context of this paper, I use Arvin, Tuck and Morrill's definition of heteropatriarchy, which is defined as the "social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent."^v A Native feminist theory approach is useful because it illuminates the manifestation and impact of heteropatriarchy in Maori families as depicted in *Tu*. I argue that a Native feminist theory framework allows a reading of *Tu* that creates discursive space to critique the role of heteropatriarchy within settler colonial contexts by acknowledging the intersections of masculinity, nationalisms, and indigeneity.

Most of the inspiration for *Tu* came from the diary of Grace's father, though she also used memoirs, letters, photographs, state archives, military reports and interviews for her research. The novel begins with Tu's "letter" to his niece and nephew, Rimini and Benedict, to whom he gives his wartime diary. Thereafter, Grace employs a variety of narrative styles, ranging from Tu's first person voice, to Rangi's letters sent home, and to Pita's third person perspective as told by Tu. The different sources Grace utilized for her research in addition to the variety of narrative voice contribute to a novel that refuses to be contained in a singular or monolithic narrative.

For instance, it is easy to characterize Pita as "stubborn" or "traditional" in the moment when he rejects Jess, a beautiful Pakeha woman whom he is in love with, on the basis that she is not Maori nor Catholic. After this encounter with Jess, Pita "crossed himself with holy water, genuflected and went to sit in a side pew under the eyes of the Mother of God."^{vi} Pita feels a need to pray because Jess epitomizes a desire which he must not have, the embodiment of sin. In contrast to Ani Rose, the Catholic Maori woman Pita ends up marrying, Jess uses makeup, which Pita refers to as a "painted face."^{vii} Jess, understanding Pita's perceptions of her, questions him explicitly, "Did [your brother, Rangi] ever think that I might do wrong to the good Catholic boy, that I might get my piano hands on the Maori boy, the painted claws, into the glossy skin?"^{viii} This quote by Jess represents, self-referentially, her awareness of Pita and/or his brothers casting her in the role of the femme fatale in the

novel. The femme fatale is an archetype in which a female character, usually mysterious and alluring, brings tragedy and disaster upon a male protagonist.^x Considering the settler colonial relationship in this situation, Pita becomes the oppressed, the Maori man on the verge of being tainted by the evil of whiteness, as represented by Jess.

A Native feminist theory can add to this simplified dichotomous interpretation of their relationship (indigenous and therefore oppressed, or white and therefore privileged) by asserting the need to locate heteropatriarchy within the situation. Renya K. Ramirez argues that Native women are often encouraged to “defend tribal nationalism that ignores sexism as part of [their] very survival as women as well as [their] liberation from colonization.”^x In response, a Native feminist approach understands that aims for decolonization cannot separate or dismiss gender injustice. A Native feminist reading therefore allows a recognition of Pita’s emotions as not simply being a reflection of his “traditional” views—this idea being hinged upon our reading of Pita as “authentic” based on his romantic partner choices—but a recognition that his actions are informed by heteropatriarchy. The construction of Jess as a femme fatale, construed *both* by Pita and Jess, is a function of heteropatriarchy because Jess as a character does not have space for nuance other than what she is labeled to be: a character deemed malevolent in relation to Pita, who can thus be constructed as the innocent hero unaware of women’s evil. It is important to name Pita’s sexism towards Jess because the acknowledgement of gender injustice within indigenous communities is one step towards a collective “liberation from colonization.”

Pita and Jess’s relationship is implicated within the relocation of the Maori population from largely agricultural areas to urban centers. It is this urban migration that unsettles racial tensions. According to Michael King, in 1939, only eleven percent of the Maori population resided in urban areas; by 1943, this number had increased to nineteen percent.^{xi} The movement from rural to urban cities during this time is spurred by the surge in demand for jobs in wartime industries.^{xii} This migration reflects a larger shift of modernization in New Zealand culture that places Maori and Pakeha in more contact. For instance, Pita repeatedly struggles with ideas of belonging and identity at Wellington, the city his family moves to. Though his abusive father, also a traumatized soldier of the war, is no longer a physical threat to Pita’s family, Pita continues to feel displaced in Wellington and becomes increasingly sensitive to feelings of racial inferiority. Referring to the spatial-temporal location of his family’s past lifestyle as “backhome,” Pita notes that “[i]t was backhome that kept his eyes switching from side to side on city streets because he didn’t want not to give recognition to those coming towards him. It was backhome that

made him fearful of putting himself somewhere where he could be watched by a thousand eyes.”^{xiii} Pita’s observations reveal that his emotional turmoil follows him as he migrates to a different place, and his repression of trauma, from witnessing abusive episodes of his father, is exacerbated by the “thousand eyes.” The “thousand eyes” that Pita writes about represent the feeling of surveillance and Pita’s heightened awareness as a colonial subject. It was a “thousand eyes that made the colour of his skin shame,” Pita writes.^{xiv} Pita’s experiences of racism and feelings of racial inferiority highlight more broadly the context of settler colonialism that necessitates Maori populations to feel displaced and unwelcome in their own land.

Consequently, Pita attempts to quell his feelings of displacement by enforcing gendered expectations in his domestic life, expectations that are established by heteropatriarchy. Because his brother Rangī had enlisted in the army, Pita’s sisters, Sophie and Moana, express their desire to find a job to supplement their family’s income. Despite this fact, Pita “believed [Sophie and Moana] were needed at home, even though Ma had pointed out that it wasn’t like back-home where there are always so much to do, growing food, getting wood, carrying water, and where there was no paid work anyway. Here in the city it was money they needed. Still he didn’t approve. It wasn’t right.”^{xv} Pita’s emphasis on “money” indicates that the spatial relocation from “back-home” to the city shifts the Maori’s relationship to society, to one that is ordered by a dependency on capitalist structures to sustain a living. Moreover, Pita believes that *he*, as the “Little Father” of the family, has the responsibility to be the sole breadwinner. The expansion of women’s waged labor through the increase of jobs in wartime industries reconfigures gender roles that disrupt Pita’s views of family and work. Writing about the intersections of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, Arvin, Tuck and Morrill assert that the “management of Indigenous peoples’ gender roles and sexuality was . . . key in remaking Indigenous peoples into settler state citizens.”^{xvi} While I am not arguing that Pita is the embodiment of the settler state in his attempt to “manage” his sisters’ gender roles, Pita is one example of how settler ideologies of gender roles can be enacted by indigenous peoples. In other words, the fact that he is Maori does not absolve Pita’s participation—willing or not—in perpetuating heteropatriarchal thought that naturalizes what women’s (and in heteropatriarchal logic, “female”) gender roles are. Arvin, Tuck and Morrill’s comments therefore challenge the limits of identity politics by creating the space to identify multiple intersecting oppressions. Pita’s attitudes towards his sister and his “difficult[y] know[ing] what was in his sisters’ minds” are informed by the emotional and mental effects of childhood trauma instilled in him by his father that are further aggravated by the physical displacement his family experiences.^{xvii}

Though my analysis has mainly focused on Pita, he is not the only character in *Tu* to struggle with competing ideas of masculinity and indigeneity against the backdrop of war: Tu, the protagonist of the novel, desires to participate in the nation-state's vision of masculinity through his interactions with the Maori Battalion. As previously stated in the introduction, Tu begins believing that he will be off to the "biggest adventure" of his life by being a member of the Maori Battalion.^{xviii} He remains steadfast in his belief that he "made the right decision" even as the number of casualties that the Battalion endures are deeply unnerving.^{xix} It is only when his brother Rangi injures him intentionally that Tu's pride and ego is wounded: "I envy the true wounds of the men around me, most of which are much worse than my own," Tu writes.^{xx} The phrase "true wounds" indicates Tu's belief that physical injury obtained in battle from the enemy is what constitutes, authenticates and legitimizes membership in the Battalion. In contrast, Tu feels like an "imposter" because he has "dishonest wounds."^{xxi} If the word "imposter" implies a sense of non-belonging, of fakeness or of fraud, then Tu's conceptualization of belonging is premised upon the definitions of valor and courageousness, which are determined by state-sanctioned codes of behavior.

This idea of belonging that Tu aspires to—the inclusion into what the Maori Battalion symbolizes, the valiant and courageous warrior—is also tied to his desire to participate in a militarized form of masculinity. "How can I ever face the people at home if they come to know these wounds were inflicted, not in battle against an enemy, but by brothers who decided *I was not man enough* to withstand the consequences of where I had placed myself—brothers who had made themselves my keepers," Tu wonders.^{xxii} That Tu interprets Rangi's attack as an attack on (or invalidation of) his masculinity emphasizes how the military reconstitutes definitions of masculinity to mean participation in violence. Regardless of how courageous and admirable the Maori Battalion may be, or other minority groups mobilized by state power in times of need (for instance, the 442nd Regiment Combat Team composed of Japanese Americans during WWII), it is a fact that being a member of such groups necessitates acts of violence, acts which are required by and often in accordance to the interests of the state. In this case, the "state" must also be recognized as a settler state. Tu's aspirations to participate in the Maori Battalion as a full-member, not as an "imposter" reveals his desire to be included, as a Maori man, within the settler state as an "equal citizen." However, Tu's desires for inclusion engage in a politics of representation that requires recognition of membership from nation-states. Andrea Smith questions such acts of recognition because it reinstates the nation-state as the guarantee of who is seen as a legitimate member of the national body.^{xxiii} If we consider the dangers of the inclusion into the nation-state, then it is also possible to see Rangi's

act of injuring Tu as an act of interruption. In this narrative, Rangi interrupts Tu's vision of imaginary inclusion into the nation-state by reminding him, though Tu does not realize it at this time, that *his life is more valuable* than giving it away as part of a national discourse of heroism that seeks to utilize Maori men merely for their manpower. Smith asserts the need to challenge the "presumed heteronormativity of national belonging because it demonstrates that the presumption behind a heteronormative nation is a relationship to land as commodity that must then rely on boundaries to include and exclude."^{xxiv} In that way, Rangi disturbs Tu's definitions of masculinity which adhere to the national and militaristic definitions that are predicated upon the justification of violence for the right to control land.

A Native feminist theory approach creates a new perspective to reading Patricia Grace's *Tu* that locates heteropatriarchy as pervasive as and working in conjunction with both white supremacy and settler colonialism. The mobilization of Maori men in the Maori Battalion, coupled with the discourses of heroic patriotism and loyalty are beneficial to the settler state of New Zealand because it gives the illusion of inclusion which work to justify and naturalize the violence that must be enacted as the "price" of receiving membership into the nation. The "price," of course, is unquantifiable: it is death and cycles of trauma, depression and substance abuse that pervade decades after the physical wounds are healed. The intergenerational impacts of trauma are a cycle Tu himself is implicated in, namely through his father and Pita. It is simultaneously possible to acknowledge the trauma that Pita and Tu face and also see how they are affected by heteropatriarchy. Though my discussion of the impact of heteropatriarchy in *Tu* is specific and context-based within a fictional account, it is critical to realize that collective aims for decolonization cannot be achieved without a serious consideration of heteropatriarchy and its manifestations.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my mentor, Professor Jan Cooper, who has generously supported me throughout this paper. I am also grateful to Professor Afia Ofori-Mensa for her encouragement, wisdom, and insight throughout my time at Oberlin College. Thank you to Professor Kelderman for providing me with guidance and feedback in the early stages of my paper.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Patricia Grace, *Tu*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004) 34.
- ⁱⁱ Donna Coates, "'When the World is Free': Traumatized Soldiers in Patricia Grace's Second World War Novel *Tu*" in *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond* ed. by Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011) 29–55.

- iii Erin Suzuki, "Genealogy and Geography in Patricia Grace's *Tu*," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 58 (2012): 112–127. Accessed May 10, 2016, <https://muse.jhu.edu/>
- iv Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25 (2013): 11.
- v Arvin, Tuck and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism," 13.
- vi Grace, *Tu*, 172.
- vii Grace, *Tu*, 171.
- viii Grace, *Tu*, 172.
- ix Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, "femme fatale," in *Dictionary of Film Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2012, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199587261.001.0001/acref-9780199587261-e-0266>
- x Renya K. Ramirez, "Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 7 (2007): 22.
- xi Michael King, "Between Two Worlds" in *Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed by W. H. Oliver & B. R. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 289, quoted in Donna Coates, "'When the World is Free': Traumatized Soldiers in Patricia Grace's Second World War Novel *Tu*" in *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond* ed by Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 37.
- xii Suzuki, "Genealogy and Geography," 114.
- xiii Grace, *Tu*, 139.
- xiv Grace, *Tu*, 140.
- xv Grace, *Tu*, 99.
- xvi Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism," 15.
- xvii Grace, *Tu*, 100.
- xviii Grace, *Tu*, 34.
- xix Grace, *Tu*, 35.
- xx Grace, *Tu*, 237.
- xxi Grace, *Tu*, 237.
- xxii Grace, *Tu*, 237, emphasis mine.
- xxiii Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (2010): 63.
- xxiv Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies," 63.
- King, Michael. "Between Two Worlds" in *Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed by W. H. Oliver & B. R. Williams (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 289. Quoted in Donna Coates, "'When the World is Free': Traumatized Soldiers in Patricia Grace's Second World War Novel *Tu*" in *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond* ed. by Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011, 37.
- Kuhn, Annette, and Guy Westwell. "femme fatale." In *A Dictionary of Film Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2012. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199587261.001.0001/acref-9780199587261-e-0266>
- Ramirez, Renya K. "Race, Tribal Nation, and Gender: A Native Feminist Approach to Belonging." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 7 (2007): 22–40.
- Smith, Andrea. "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16 (2010): 42–68.
- Suzuki, Erin. "Genealogy and Geography in Patricia Grace's *Tu*." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 58, no. 1 (2012): 112–127. Accessed May 10, 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>

Works Cited

- Arvin, Maile, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25 (2013): 8–34.
- Coates, Donna. "'When the World is Free': Traumatized Soldiers in Patricia Grace's Second World War Novel *Tu*." In *The Splintered Glass: Facets of Trauma in the Post-Colony and Beyond*. Edited by Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allué. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2011. 29–55.
- Grace, Patricia. *Tu*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Formation of Female Indigenous Leaders in the Highlands of Ecuador

Caroline Martínez, *Bowdoin College*

Caroline Martínez is a recent alumna at Bowdoin College where she majored in sociology and gender and women's studies and minored in Latin American studies. Her research focuses on indigenous female leaders in ECUARUNARI, the Confederation of Peoples of the Kichwa Nationality of Ecuador, and how they are able to become agents of change despite the marginalization they face. Martínez is interested in exploring the conditions that are necessary for social change to take place and on the tools different communities use to gain greater rights. After graduating from Bowdoin College, Martínez developed a series of leadership workshops with the Council of Women of ECUARUNARI through the Davis Projects for Peace. Currently Martínez is working as a domestic and family violence advocate caseworker at Victim Services in the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, Missouri.

Abstract

Indigenous women in the highlands of Ecuador have played a crucial role in indigenous movements and national politics, but the challenges they face as agents of change and the routes they have taken to occupy important leadership roles have often gone unnoticed. This paper focuses on how female indigenous leaders in the highland organization ECUARUNARI attain leadership positions and the obstacles they face in doing so. It's based on ten in-depth interviews of female Kichwa leaders conducted over a period of two months in seven different provinces in the highlands of Ecuador. Family, community, and formal organizations both supported and undermined indigenous women's leadership in ECUARUNARI. The government's repression and the economic hardship present in their lives were additional obstacles they faced. Indigenous women in ECUARUNARI and across Latin America are leading the struggle to find a way to have justice and equality for indigenous people, women, farmers, and the lower class, while addressing issues of environmental destruction. It is crucial that the routes these women have taken to become leaders and the networks they have, which encourage and undermine their leadership, be understood in all their complexity.

Introduction

Indigenous women in the highlands of Ecuador have played a crucial role in indigenous movements and national politics, but the challenges they face as agents of change and the routes they have taken to occupy important leadership roles have received little attention. While some scholars have focused on the history of indigenous movements and female indigenous leadership in Ecuador, and others have looked at the multiple oppressions indigenous women face and domestic violence towards indigenous women, there has not

been an overarching study that shows how these oppressions affect indigenous women's leadership. This paper focuses on both the sources of support and obstacles indigenous female leaders face in ECUARUNARI, the highland branch of Ecuador's largest indigenous organization. It argues that their leadership is both undermined and supported by their organization, community, and family, and that government repression and economic hardship play a negative role. This paper is based on ten in-depth interviews conducted over a period of two months in the summer of 2015 with Kichwa women from seven different provinces in the highlands of Ecuador.

Theoretical Framework

Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality and Brett Stockdill's (2001) theory of multidimensional oppositional consciousness will be used in this paper in order to understand the complex networks the respondents of this study navigate, which both strengthen and hinder their leadership. Crenshaw's theory highlights the multiple ways in which race and gender oppression are experienced, which Carmen Blanco Valer (2009) calls the triple oppression indigenous women face: as indigenous, lower class, and female. Crenshaw argued that because black women are seen as neither women nor black people, the oppression they experience as both black people and women often gets ignored. Like Julieta Paredes (2008), Crenshaw calls into question the idea of labeling women into simply one category and ignoring the influence that their race has in their lives. Stockdill's (2001) theory focuses on people who experience multiple forms of oppression and is centered on the intersections of these oppressions. His work looks at AIDS activism in the U.S. and activists who fight against racism, sexism, and homophobia within movements. Stockdill writes about the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and the internal struggle people of color, prisoners, and other groups in this movement against AIDS had in getting rid of different forms of oppression. The female indigenous leaders in ECUARUNARI had a similar struggle that both Crenshaw and Stockdill deal with: how do groups that are marginalized within an already marginalized group attain greater rights? Crenshaw and Stockdill's theory will be used in order to better understand how the respondents in this study were able to get their oppression as *indigenous women* recognized and addressed within their organization, ECUARUNARI, and the opposition and support they had in doing so.

Methodology

During the summer of 2015, I conducted ten in-depth interviews over a period of two months with women from seven different provinces in the highlands of Ecuador:

Imbabura, Pichincha, Chimborazo, Bolívar, Cañar, Azuay, and Loja. The interviews ranged in length from forty-five minutes to two hours, and the respondents were recruited through snowball sampling. All of the respondents were current or past members of ECUARUNARI. The women whom I interviewed were Saraguro, Puruha, Kayambi, Cañar, and Otavalo people, and all were part of the Kichwa nationality. Each interview was conducted according to a semi-structured protocol, including questions about the area the respondents were raised in, their initial involvement with indigenous organizations, and the functions they performed in their leadership roles. The respondents' age ranged between forty-three to sixty-six years old. This research project went through the International Review Board process at Bowdoin College and all the respondents gave permission to have their real names used.

Results

Family, community, formal organizations, government repression, and economic hardship emerged as significant themes that affected the respondents' leadership.

Family

Family members were a source of inspiration and support for the respondents and were often their first point of contact with indigenous struggles. Five out of the ten respondents had family members who were community leaders. These family members were fathers, uncles, and aunts who occupied various leadership positions from presidents of their communes to ECUARUNARI's regional leaders. Family members verbally encouraged women to become involved in organizing, to speak up, and to further their education. Baleriana Anaguarqui, a Puruha Kichwa leader from Chimborazo who cofounded the Organization of Women Lorenza Abimañay and ECUARUNARI, credits her father for her dedication to indigenous struggles in Ecuador. In the following passage she describes a conversation with her mother who wanted her to leave indigenous organizations because of the danger she faced:

"I am fighting because I have children. That's why I'm fighting so my children don't have to live under the conditions that I lived in. And that's what my dad said and I am doing it, fulfilling what my dad said. I can't let my children live how I lived, herding pigs, herding calves of the *hacendados* and without having a shoe to wear." I [Anaguarqui] told her, "No, mom. I'm not going to do that [leave the struggle]. . . . I am going to be in the organization." So my mom gave me her blessing and said, "When are you coming back?" I told her, "When the struggle ends."

Family, however, could also be a source of violence and verbal abuse, constraining the respondents to traditionally female spaces and limiting their leadership. Violence against the respondents discouraged them from becoming leaders, threatening their physical integrity, creating fear, and perpetuating a role of submission to their husbands and male family members. Five out of the ten women interviewed reported experiencing physical abuse from their husbands or male family members. None said they had been attacked by a woman in their family, but some did talk about women, like mothers, condoning the violence that was perpetrated against them. The following saying recounted by a respondent describes the situation of disempowerment many women felt: "Aunque mate, aunque pegue, marido es," meaning, "Even if he kills, even if he hits, he is the husband" (Guacho, 2015).

Community

The community the respondents were a part of offered them resources, a connection to their indigenous culture and identity, and important mentors. By community I mean a physical location with a set of structures that enforced rules, regulated the behaviors of individuals, created activities and provided resources for people living in the same geographical area. For the women in this study this meant the indigenous commune where they grew up and all the people who belonged to it. Receiving assistance from the community was particularly important for the respondents who did not receive it from family members or other people and institutions. Carmen Lozano, the current Leader of Women in ECUARUNARI, claimed an elder man in her community was the most influential person in her life. She described one of her interactions with him as follows:

"You have to guide this community, the people of San Lucas, with the values that are ours. We are already old and you that are young must follow this path." So he'say, "The word has worth and is sacred." So that was instilled in me. That is why I always remember them. They helped us start a path. (Lozano, 2015)

This elder man encouraged Lozano to be a leader and had faith in her capacity to guide her community. Having someone who wanted her to be a leader and trusted her allowed Lozano to have more confidence and to continue doing community organizing.

Community, however, also provided barriers for the respondents because it could be a source of sexism, mistreatment, and humiliation. Some women were discriminated against, silenced, disrespected and forced to conform to certain norms of oppression. Guacho, who cofounded several indigenous organizations in the country including

the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, has not returned to her community in decades because it prohibited her from divorcing her abusive husband (whom she was forced to marry when she was sixteen years old). In a community meeting Guacho was publicly shamed and accused of being a bad wife (Guacho, 2015). Although Guacho's marriage was eventually annulled with the support of priest Monseñor Leonidas Proaño, her community's condemnation of her divorce—and its failure to oppose her forced marriage and the abuse she endured—shows that community was not always a source of support and could greatly limit the respondents' leadership and safety.

Organizations

Formal organizations, like ECUARUNARI, gave the respondents an opportunity to become involved in community organizing and gain new leadership skills. Even though sexism exists in these organizations, women were crucial to their survival, which meant that within the organizations women had more negotiating power and could gain a higher degree of agency than they could in the rest of Ecuadorian society. Organizations created activities, conferences and workshops where women advocated for their rights as indigenous people and as women. The respondents created spaces for themselves that allowed them to have greater authority in their organizations and be connected to other women who were struggling with similar experiences of oppression. The *Escuela Dolores Cacuango*, a school for the political formation of female indigenous leaders in Ecuador, is an example of how the respondents used the organization they were in and the tools they gained from organizing to further improve indigenous and women's rights and their own autonomy. María Tenesaca (2015), the former Leader of Women in ECUARUNARI, recounts her experience as a member of the *Escuela Dolores Cacuango*: "I used to not say anything, nothing. When there'd be questions [at meetings] I'd lower my head, but when I entered the *Escuela Dolores Cacuango* I started learning, gaining knowledge and knowing how to dialogue. Before I felt embarrassed." Five of the ten respondents went to the *Escuela Dolores Cacuango* and became leaders in ECUARUNARI, advocating for indigenous and women's rights.

Formal indigenous organizations, however, also provided obstacles for the respondents. Leaders often were sexist men who disrespected or outright abused women. Focusing on women's issues was often regarded as a divisive move. Women were expected not to question the organization and its internal structure. During the summer of 2015, Carmen Lozano and a group of women who had been involved in community organizing for decades wrote a proposal to create a Council of Women in ECUARUNARI. This council would increase women's participation, address

their particular concerns, and give them more negotiating power in ECUARUNARI. It was poorly received by members of ECUARUNARI who spoke against it at the annual conference of this organization. There were a few men who supported this initiative like Carlos Perez, the current president of ECUARUNARI, but most men and even some women opposed its creation. Some accused the women of wanting to divide ECUARUNARI, of wasting time and of not focusing on more important issues.

Government

The respondents spoke at length about the challenges they faced with Ecuador's government which oppresses them in multiple ways. Ecuador's government has practically eliminated the intercultural bilingual indigenous system of education, which helped indigenous people to maintain their culture and pass it on to their children, to become educated and to have steady jobs as educators. The repression of Ecuador's government was also evident in the police's physical attacks of indigenous women in the country's national strike in August 2015 and by the racial slurs and sexist language President Rafael Correa uses in his *Sabatinas*, President Correa's address to the country every Saturday, and Twitter account. Ecuador's President has told prominent female political figures to concern themselves with makeup and not the economy (El Universo, 2016), and to "shut up" (Ecuador News, 2008).

Lozano and Josefina Lema, the former Leader of Women of ECUARUNARI, were particularly concerned by the targeted violence indigenous women had to endure in the national strike. According to Lozano, "They [the soldiers] carried out a massacre. In Saraguro they savagely dragged people out of their homes hitting them with billy clubs, and they didn't care that they were dragging pregnant women and old men" (Martínez, 2015). Lema, also expressed concern about the violence she was witnessing, "We have participated since the 1990s and this is the first time that we have been treated so terribly. They [the military and police] are repressing us more than they did under the government of Febres Cordero [president of Ecuador from 1984-1988] or any other right wing government" (Martínez, 2015). This type of physical repressions shows Ecuador's government is yet another obstacle the respondents had to confront.

Economic Hardship

Economic hardship greatly limited the respondents' leadership opportunities because it restricted their educational options and involvement in organizing efforts. Some respondents had to leave their organization for a period of time because their full time positions as organizers did not include a salary, and they needed a source of income to meet their needs. Eight out of the ten respondents worked

in agriculture; and the constant travelling they had to do as community leaders conflicted with their work that bound them to the land.

Baleriana Anaguarqui's story shows that poverty was a real obstacle for respondents who wanted to be involved in community organizing. Despite the fact that she was an extremely successful leader who cofounded ECUARUNARI, she was forced to decrease her involvement with organizations of indigenous resistance because she had to meet her family's basic needs. According to Anaguarqui (2015):

We [Anaguarqui and her husband] had to start and work for the family because really there were days when we didn't have anything to eat because we were always involved in the organization, in the struggles, so we had left our children unattended. We were so poor and that was what forced us . . . to leave a social activity that I loved so much, that I had done so much for.

Anaguarqui's comments show that there was pain and regret in leaving the struggles in which she had been so heavily invested in for years and illustrates the great economic challenges the respondents faced.

Conclusion

This research describes how family, community, and organizations encouraged and discouraged indigenous women in ECUARUNARI to become leaders and to be active political agents and the constant obstacles they faced from government repression and economic hardship. The results of this study show that the respondents do have a multidimensional oppositional consciousness that allows them to support ECUARUNARI while challenging it from within to make it be more just for women. Crenshaw (1989) and Stockdill's (2001) theories were useful for this study because they tackled the complexity of the multiple oppression the respondents faced. The respondents were conscious of the multiple levels of oppression they faced, which Carmen Blanco Valer (2009) points out as the triple oppression indigenous women face due to gender, race, and economic disparity, and worked to eliminate them within their organization and country. They did this by creating forms of resistance within that would allow their voices as indigenous women to be heard. Two examples of this are the *Escuela Dolores Cacuango*, which trained indigenous women to be active political agents of change, and the eventual creation of the Committee of Women of ECUARUNARI, which allowed women in ECUARUNARI to be more involved in decision making processes and organize around issues that affected indigenous women. The respondents constantly tried to address the particular concerns they had as indigenous women, which encompassed all the types of

oppressions they were simultaneously experiencing. They were very aware of the intersectionality of oppression they faced, but their challenge was to have their organization and Ecuadorian society see it and work to eliminate it as well.

Crenshaw and Stockdill's theories, however, do not address the particular problems indigenous women in this study experienced. They do not deal with the battle indigenous women in this study faced in trying to maintain their culture and ethnic identity, which was constantly threatened by Ecuador's government and private sectors, while challenging the movement that supported their ethnic and class struggle but undermined their quest for equality and leadership as women. The respondents were constantly pushing their organization to meet their rights and working with this same organization to engage in continuous forms of resistance at a national level. ECUARUNARI gave the respondents a unique opportunity to gain greater agency and address their concerns as indigenous women, but it also provided barriers and further marginalized them from within.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mom, brothers, and host parents, Doug Bates and Lynn Kay, for their support and interest in my education and research. I would also like to thank Professor Ingrid Nelson, who was my advisor and helped me improve my research and present it in the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies' annual conference, 2016. This research project would not have been possible without the support of Professor Susan Faludi, Nadia Celis, and Kristen Ghodsee. Professor Susan Faludi helped me edit my research countless times and challenged me to think of ways to reach out to a non-scholarly audience. While conducting an independent study with Professor Nadia Celis, I realized that I was in awe of indigenous women's resilience in Latin America and their ability to connect various struggles, and thus decided to embark on this research project. Professor Kristen Ghodsee's office hours are one of the main reasons I decided to graduate from college, go to graduate school, and learn how to be a researcher and change maker at the same time. Miguel Áviles, my best friend, helped me stay focused on the goal of my project and gave me hope and motivation when they ran dry.

References

- Ana María Guacho, personal interview, July 14, 2015, Riobamba, Ecuador.
- Baleriana Anaguarqui, personal interview, June 26, 2015, Riobamba, Ecuador.

- Blanco Valer, Carmen. 2009. *Las Hijas de la Pachamama*. Lima, Perú: Ediciones Luchaindígena.
- Carmen Lozano, personal interview, June 10, 2015, ECUARUNARI office, Quito, Ecuador.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A BlackFeminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989, Iss. 1, Article 8, 139–167.
- Ecuador News. 2008. "No seas majadera, cállate." Ecuador: Ecuador News.
- El Universo. 2016. *Rafael Correa dice que Cynthia Viteri debería "hablar de maquillaje," no de economía*. Ecuador: El Universo.
- Martínez, Caroline. 2015. "Correa's Regime Challenged." *Change Magazine*. Retrieved 2015.
- Paredes, Julieta. 2008. *Hilando desde el feminismo comunitario*. Bolivia: Lesbianas independientes feministas socialistas.
- Stockdill, Brett C. 2001. "Forging a Multidimensional Oppositional Consciousness: Lessons from Community-Based AIDS Activism," in J.J. Mansbridge and A.D. Morris, eds., *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Tenesaka, María, personal interview, June 25, 2015, Cañar, Ecuador.

The Secular Speaks to the Sacred: The Challenges of Western-Islamic Communicative Action in *Politics of Piety*

Iman Masmoudi, *Harvard University*

Iman Masmoudi studies social studies at Harvard College. Her focus field is on theories of Islamic authority in modernity, and she is interested in the effect of changes in religious pedagogy on modern forms of religious practice. She is highly involved in the Harvard Islamic Society and the Phillips Brooks House Association for Public Service. She hopes to study legal theory both within and without the field of Islamic thought in post-graduate programs.

Abstract

Some have challenged the German sociologist Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action on the basis of its infeasibility, while others have challenged it with post-modernist accounts of power relations, such as Foucault's. This paper, however, argues that a serious—perhaps more serious—challenge can be found in the actual lifeworld that Habermas is so concerned with preserving. It is the question: how can secular and religious people communicate? On what foundation can they reach Habermas's standard of mutual understanding? Habermas attempts to outline the necessary theoretical foundations of such a conversation, yet questions remain as to its practical applications. Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety*, an ethnography on women's religious practice in Egypt, is a particularly useful text for this discussion given that conversation between secular-liberal Western individuals and Muslims is among the most significant challenges of the modern era. An examination of this text, which exemplifies such secular-religious communicative action, shows that Habermas's theoretical conditions for such a discourse ultimately contribute to its practical shortcomings. To make this argument using *Politics of Piety*, this paper will do three things. First, it will outline Habermas's theory of communicative action and specify his vision for religious-secular dialogue. Then, it will illustrate how Mahmood's exploration and methodology constitute a Habermasian discourse between religious and secular people. Finally, by using Mahmood's study of Egyptian Muslim women as a case study of Habermasian discourse, this paper will illustrate precisely how certain conditions of Habermas's theory of theocentric-anthropocentric communicative action ultimately lead to its failure to achieve his standard of mutual understanding. Overall, this paper hopes, through identifying these challenges, to provoke further consideration and propose possible premises for secular-religious dialogue and understanding in the future.

Some have challenged the German sociologist Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action on the basis of its infeasibility, while others have challenged it with post-modernist accounts of power relations, such as Foucault's. This paper, however, argues that a serious—perhaps more

serious—challenge can be found in the actual lifeworld that Habermas is so concerned with preserving. It is the question: how can secular and religious people communicate? On what foundation can they reach Habermas's standard of mutual understanding? Habermas attempts to outline the necessary theoretical foundations of such a conversation, yet questions remain as to its practical applications.

Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety*, an ethnography on women's religious practice in Egypt, is a particularly useful text for this discussion given that conversation between secular-liberal Western individuals and Muslims is among the most significant challenges of the modern era. An examination of this text, which exemplifies such secular-religious communicative action, shows that Habermas's theoretical conditions for such a discourse ultimately contribute to its practical shortcomings. To make this argument using *Politics of Piety*, this paper will do three things. First, it will outline Habermas's theory of communicative action and specify his vision for religious-secular dialogue. Then, it will illustrate how Mahmood's exploration and methodology constitute a Habermasian discourse between religious and secular people. Finally, by using Mahmood's study of Egyptian Muslim women as a case study of Habermasian discourse, this paper will illustrate precisely how certain conditions of Habermas's theory of theocentric-anthropocentric communicative action ultimately lead to its failure to achieve his standard of mutual understanding. Overall, this paper hopes, through identifying these challenges, to provoke further consideration and propose possible premises for secular-religious dialogue and understanding in the future.

The Theory of Communicative Action on Religion in Modernity

Habermas frames his theory of communicative action as a redeeming project for modernity, rationalism, and Enlightenment ideals. He recommends a "redirection" rather than an abandonment of these ideals and outlines the means by which to assess the benefits and shortcomings of rationality and, subsequently, pivot towards a new understanding of modernity and progress. The foundational assumption of Habermas's new rationality is that the ultimate aim of language is mutual understanding, and that communicative action, unlike purposive rational action or strategic action, aims towards achieving this understanding between subjects. As such, speech acts have three possible valid outcomes: moral truths, subjective truths, and truths about the objective world.ⁱ

Habermas's emphasis on dialogue is different from past thinkers in two important ways. First, he places little weight on the importance of communicative action for

arriving at greater truths, unlike Mill and others, whose arguments for free speech largely rest on a belief in its power to upend dogma and create self-corrective knowledge.ⁱⁱ In contrast, Habermas seeks rational discourse that leads to agreement or mutual understanding, and not necessarily sustained challenges to accepted beliefs for the sake of progress. Second, Habermas stresses the importance of the inclusion and recognition of marginalized voices in communicative action, setting himself apart from those who discount power relations in speech, but also from the post-structuralists, as he still advocates for an ideal speech situation that can account for all voices.ⁱⁱⁱ

Stemming from this theory of communicative action, Habermas has recently begun engaging in deeper explorations of the role of religion in modernity and the application of his rationalization theory of communicative action to religious-secular communication. In his work *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, he writes, “We should not try to dodge the alternative between an anthropocentric orientation and the view from afar of theocentric or cosmocentric thinking. However, it makes a difference whether we speak with one another or merely about one another.”^{iv} Thus, he goes on to outline a set of necessary conditions for true anthropocentric-theocentric conversations to occur. For religious subjects, these conditions are to “accept the authority” of Western reason, sciences, and universalist morality.^v Meanwhile, for secular subjects, the conditions are to not judge “truths of faith,” but at the same time to reject anything that cannot be translated into secular language, which is “in principle universally accessible.”^{vi}

Politics of Piety as Habermasian Discourse

Politics of Piety is an ethnographic exploration of the modern “piety movement” in Egypt. The author, Saba Mahmood, spent two years in Cairo attending mosque meetings, learning about women’s Islamic education, and interviewing participants of the mosque movement and outsiders alike. Her conversations with religious subjects centered on the fundamental assumption of Habermas’s communicative action theory: the telos of mutual understanding at the core of language. Because of this, it is a useful example for analyzing the practical applications of Habermas’s theory of secular-religious communication.

Mahmood’s conversations with Egyptian women clearly fall outside the range of “strategic action,” as she did not intend, by her conversations, to persuade, barter, or manipulate the women’s thoughts. At the core of her ethnographic methodology is observation and conversation centered on achieving greater understanding of the piety movement’s participants, which aligns very closely with Habermas’s ideal. Mahmood constitutes the secular side of

this religious-secular dialogue because, by her own admission, she comes from and writes in the Western secular-liberal tradition, despite her Muslim heritage. And for their part, the Muslim women she interviews also engage directly in a dialogue with Mahmood and attempt to help her understand them. They address her directly in some cases, even relating to her personal experiences or mutually recognized symbols, as Habermas suggests, in order to achieve understanding. For example, Mahmood recounts how one woman whom she interviewed on issues of secularization and resistance in Egypt said: “When you [here she addressed me directly] as a foreigner look at society right now and see all these women wearing the hijab, you must remember that a lot of them wear it as a custom, rather than a religious duty that also entails other responsibilities.”^{vii} Here we see one of the mosque movement participants, Hajja Fatma, communicating with Mahmood directly and pointing to the hijab as a mutually recognized external symbol to help Mahmood understand her point about culture and religion.

An objection to understanding *Politics of Piety* as a Habermasian secular-religious dialogue may point to Habermas’s intended scope, which appears at first, in *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, to be communicative action between religious and secular citizens within the same state. He mentions that this communicative action may help to determine how the secular state should treat its religious citizens, as well as the role of religious citizens in the national discourse.^{viii} Thus, it may be argued that *Politics of Piety*, being a discourse between the American Mahmood and Egyptian women, does not exemplify the intra-state scope of Habermasian discourse. However, if we look closer, we can also see that Habermas is equally concerned with global questions that arise from the role of religion in modernity. As he outlines:

“[Liberal/Secular-Religious dialogue] touches on conflicts which are currently being triggered around the world by the unexpected spiritual renewal and by the *unsettling* political role of religious communities . . . the [Muslims] are extending from the Middle East both into sub-Saharan Africa and into Southeast Asia . . . This resurgence is going hand-in-hand with an increase in the frequency of conflicts between different religious groups and denominations . . . Since September 11, 2001, *the main issue has been the political instrumentalization of Islam.*”^{ix}

Setting aside the historical inaccuracy of claiming that Islam is currently “extending” into sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, as opposed to its having arrived in those regions centuries ago, this excerpt indicates that while Habermas recognizes that the secular state and liberal thought would benefit from dialogue with religion, he is also

concerned with the trajectory of global religious revival and “politicization.” He argues that the importance of anthropocentric-theocentric discourse, because of the pressing global questions to which he alludes, is useful outside of the public sphere of any one particular state. A secular-religious discourse that is inter-state and centers on Islam is directly relevant to his purpose in setting up conditions for religious-secular dialogue. Thus, while *Politics of Piety* does not directly fit the mold of secular-religious dialogue—it is not a direct transcription of such a dialogue—the author’s methodology encompasses all of Habermas’s requisite conditions, and the book is a collection of those secular-religious conversations interspersed with their subsequent “translation” to secular Western audiences in the form of Mahmood’s analysis and commentary.

Mahmood, Muslim Women, and Habermas’s Secular Universality

Mahmood appears aware of the political and potentially Eurocentric undertones of a Western academic study of Islamism, particularly of Muslim women. She rightly highlights that “current scholarly concern surrounding Islam centers on this tradition’s (potentially dangerous) divergence from the perceived norms of a secular-liberal polity.”^x Indeed, her exploration is powerfully aimed at prompting reexamination of not only external projections of Western norms and standards, but also internal meanings and assumptions. She introduces the text by saying:

“If academic knowledge production aims to be something more than an exercise in denunciation and judgement, it must surely think beyond its own naturalized conceptions in order to grasp what other notions of criticism, evaluation, and reasoned deliberation operate in the world. This in turn requires opening up a comparative (and dare I say critical?) study of different forms of subjectivity and concomitant disciplines of ethical self-formation.”^{xi}

Mahmood’s central question seeks not to evaluate why “patriarchal” structures surrounding the Egyptian women in the piety movement exist, but rather how the women navigate and uphold that space and cultivate themselves while maintaining fidelity to its standards. In this exploration, she examines the trends in thought, argumentation, resistance, and submission pertaining to a variety of issues that these women face, including questions about leading other women in prayer, veiling, interacting in public with male non-family members, marriage, the obligations of prayer, conflicting scholarly interpretations, resisting a secular outlook—in a phrase, cultivating piety amidst modern challenges. The women are constantly seeking their own self-improvement and cultivation through the knowledge

gleaned from discourse, engagement with sources, and learning from their female teachers.

The book is, in many ways, a paradigm-shifting moment in postcolonial and feminist studies. Mahmood’s uplifting of Muslim women’s voices and her transcription of their objectives and challenges is too often absent from Western feminist discourse. Her deep knowledge of the potentially problematic politics of such a West-to-East examination are commendable. All of this, however, makes the ultimate inability of the text to bridge the gap in secular and religious mutual understanding all the more disappointing.

Ultimately, Mahmood’s exploration, while it successfully challenges some fundamental assumptions of Western liberalism, is limited precisely by its fidelity to the requirements that Habermas sets out for secular-religious discourse: namely, the need to translate the experiences of the Egyptian women in the piety movement into a “universally accessible” secular language. While this process allows Mahmood to open up new definitions of agency and subjectivity in the Western tradition, it also strips the original acts of their essential meaning. The women’s behaviors are secularized, and therefore not just translated, but reconstituted with a new and alien meaning. Consider how not one of the Egyptian women involved with the piety movement ever makes reference to agency, resistance, or other Western feminist concerns, and yet despite this, Mahmood’s central framework is a reexamination of forms of agency and an expansion of the feminist project. This concept of agency runs counter to a theocentric worldview—it centers the human being as the agent and sets up their agency as the ultimate goal, rather than the theocentric ideal of complete surrender in obedience to God.

Thus, Mahmood first removes what was at the very heart of the women’s mosque movement, self-improvement and obedience to the interpreted will of God, and then seeks to make these actions intelligible to the secular-liberal narrative of “human flourishing.” One central concern that this process overlooks is that secular-religious dialogue will necessarily fail if the search for secular justifications for religiously motivated behaviors and ideas is unsuccessful. What happens when a secularized meaning can’t be derived for a particular religious truth, act, or ideal? Then that action, no matter how central to the religious person’s worldview or self-constitution, falls outside of the realm of potential mutual understanding since, according to Habermas, the secular subject must reject any religious truth that cannot be translated into “universally accessible” secular terms.

Here, the matter of “universal accessibility” becomes the fundamentally flawed assumption of Habermas’s

conditions. To say that secular discourse is universally accessible is to imply its innateness—that all of us are born able to accept secular discourse, and that some individuals additionally gain access to religious discourse. This is itself a reversal of the belief within many monotheistic faiths, particularly Islam, which see belief in the Divine as man’s innate predisposition. Habermas’s assumption leads to the conclusion that only religious discourse comes with extra “baggage” that makes it incomprehensible in its own terms to secular people, but that secular discourse comes with no such “baggage,” ensuring its universal accessibility. Yet Habermas’s own work has delineated a genealogy of secular morality, implying that the historical development of secular and modern ideas can be traced and are therefore not merely natural impulses. To claim that they are universally accessible is to contradict himself and ignore the historically contingent assumptions that underlie both the ideas themselves and the language used to express them.

Secular-religious dialogue between Islam and the West is one of the most sought after, but difficult, conversations of our time. On the one hand, Islam sometimes appears particularly averse to influence by Western assumptions and ideals, and on the other, particularly reliant on a fundamental core, or set of reference points at the heart of its tradition, for its language and normativity.^{xii} Consider Mahmood’s repeated observation that even while some of the members of the piety movement would frequently debate or adopt different opinions that in effect would appear liberating to women by Western standards, they would always be motivated by a fidelity to the juristic discourse and core texts of Islam as both their method and their ultimate goal. This impermeability and indigenous reliance make it difficult to translate Islam into the presumed universalist secular language that Habermas sets as a condition for such a dialogue. Meanwhile, the West is unable to step out of conversation with Islam, whether for practical reasons such as post-colonial immigration, foreign policy objectives, and rising security concerns, or out of its own commitment, in principle though not always in practice, to “universalist egalitarian law and morality”^{xiii} accompanied by a universalizing mission that requires intervention and interaction with others.

This tendency to assume the universality of Western ideas and terms is indicative of the power imbalance that characterizes the academic relationship between the West and Islam. Mahmood recognizes this imbalance herself when she says, “No study of Islamist politics situated within the Western academy can avoid engaging with the contemporary critique of Islamic ethical and political behavior, and with the secular-liberal assumptions that animate this critique.”^{xiv} However, the Habermasian condition that all must be rejected which cannot be “translated” opens Islam

up once again to “judgement” and “denunciation” by secular-liberal norms, the very practice which Mahmood herself criticizes.^{xv} Despite her best efforts, Mahmood’s act of translation and projection of new meaning, exemplified by her emphasis on agency and human freedom despite her subjects’ true concerns, upholds this very system. Thus, at the end of the attempts towards mutual understanding and communicative action, Islam is still at the mercy of its Western secular translators—“a secular-liberal inquisition before which Islam must be made to confess”—whose particular skills in translation and secular justification of religious ideas are the ultimate determinants of Islam’s place in the “court of international public opinion.”^{xvi} Here, Mahmood’s own words describe aptly the result of this project in mutual understanding.

Conclusion

This paper argues, through an exploration of Saba Mahmood’s *Politics of Piety*, that the Habermasian account of secular-religious dialogue is both impractical and problematic, as it depends entirely on the “translation” skills of the secular subjects and upholds the West as the universal standard against which religious traditions are judged. However, to avoid the pessimism of thought that Habermas’s work is primarily directed against, it may be useful to briefly examine the broad challenges facing dialogue between Islam and the West, Habermas’s view on the usefulness of such discourse, and the possibilities that remain open for religious-secular dialogue.

Habermas believes that the potential contribution of religious discourse to the minds of secular subjects is a sense of collective moral responsibility. He argues that moral philosophy needed to be developed after the Enlightenment in order to provide more insight into “the decision to engage in action based on solidarity.”^{xvii} This, he believes, was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s purpose in establishing his *categorical imperative*, which remains the foundation for modern human rights philosophy and universal moral principles.^{xviii} However, Habermas believes that this rationalized morality leaves out one important feature that is found in religions: “the images, preserved by religion, of the moral whole—of the Kingdom of God on earth—as collectively binding ideals.”^{xix} While religion preserves these images, rational morality fails to “awaken, and to keep awake, in the minds of secular subjects, an awareness of the violations of solidarity throughout the world, an awareness of what is missing.”^{xx}

This paper suggests that such moral philosophy could be drawn from a balance between Kant and the French-Genevan political theorist Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These thinkers exemplified precisely the difficulty that Habermas

is identifying. While Kant’s moral philosophy was fully rationalized, it lacked Rousseau’s powerfully binding General Will, which compelled every individual member of the collective to defer to its common good and moral judgement.”^{xxi} Famously, Rousseau declared that the General Will can never be in error, but rather compliance with it was both required and constituted a moral good. There are striking similarities between Rousseau’s General Will and the will of a sovereign Divine being. Both are binding, indivisible, and infallible. Both require obedience even over the subjective disagreements of individuals in the collective. Importantly, both maintain the sense of moral responsibility and duty to the collective that Habermas believes lies at the heart of “what is missing.”

Thus, this exploration suggests an alternative course to the conditions that Habermas previously laid out for religious-secular communicative action. Perhaps a return to Rousseau’s social contract, with its emphasis on collective moral responsibility, and its similarities to a theocentric view of the polity, can establish a new foundation upon which religious-secular discourse can be based—a foundation that does not privilege or falsely universalize one tradition over another, but rather makes possible Habermas’s aim of mutual understanding and, ultimately, agreement. This requires more work, of course, but has the potential to create a foundation for the structure of society that is understandable in both secular and religious discourse, namely collective fealty to a higher will outside of the individual.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. I. Boston: Beacon, 1984. Print.
- ⁱⁱ Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. London: Longmans, Green, 1867. Print.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Habermas, Jürgen, Ciaran Cronin, and Pablo De Greiff. “A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality.” *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1998. N. 42. Print.
- ^{iv} Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, Josef Schmidt, and Ciaran Cronin. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print. 16.
- ^v Ibid.
- ^{vi} Ibid.
- ^{vii} Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005. Print, 50.
- ^{viii} Habermas, *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, 21.
- ^{ix} Ibid., 19–20, emphasis added.
- ^x Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 189.
- ^{xi} Ibid., preface to 2012, xii.

- ^{xii} This is not to suggest that Islam has not, over its long history, learned from and engaged with other traditions, nor to imply that the tradition itself is unchanging or unadaptable. Rather, it is merely to point out that the change has thus far largely been justified through the language, systems, and symbols of Islam itself. For further exploration of these concepts, see Talal Asad’s *Formations of the Secular* and Intisar Rabb’s *Doubt in Islamic Law*.
- ^{xiii} Habermas, *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, 16.
- ^{xiv} Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 189.
- ^{xv} Ibid.
- ^{xvi} Ibid.
- ^{xvii} Habermas, *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, 18.
- ^{xviii} Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990. Print, 89.
- ^{xix} Habermas, *An Awareness of What Is Missing*, 19.
- ^{xx} Ibid.
- ^{xxi} Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*. London: W. Owen, 1751. “Chapter 3: Whether the General Will Is Fallible.”

Works Cited

- Habermas, Jürgen, Ciaran Cronin, and Pablo De Greiff. “A Genealogical Analysis of the Cognitive Content of Morality.” *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1998. N. pag. Print.
- Habermas, Jürgen, Michael Reder, Josef Schmidt, and Ciaran Cronin. *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*. Cambridge, U.K.: Polity, 2010. Print.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1990.
- . *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. I. Boston: Beacon, 1984. Print.
- Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005. Print.
- Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. London: Longmans, Green, 1867. Print.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract*. London: W. Owen, 1751.

“Denied Their Gender”: The Impact of Medical Tourism on Access to Gender Reassignment Surgery by *Kathoei* Communities in Thailand

Gissell Alexis Montoya, *Bryn Mawr College*

Originally from a loving Mexican migrant community in Houston, Texas, Gissell is a Mellon Mays Fellow and a Posse Scholar. She is currently a senior at Bryn Mawr College pursuing a major in international studies with a minor in health studies and is interested in researching how globalization impacts health care delivery. After she graduates, she plans to complete a fellowship program before going on to pursue a PhD in medical sociology to continue researching globalization, health, and inequality. She is currently a research intern at a public health corporation in Philadelphia.

Abstract

This research aims to problematize the gender reassignment medical tourism industry in Thailand. Using descriptive statistics and previous literature, this preliminary study explores the ways in which the gender reassignment medical tourism industry has reduced access to male-to-female (MTF) gender reassignment surgery (GRS) for *kathoei* communities in Bangkok, Thailand. I argue that the transformation of MTF GRS from a medicalized, Thai-exclusive procedure, to one that is globalized and fueled by foreign exchange, has rebranded MTF GRS as a costly procedure accessible mainly by international elite trans women—making MTF GRS nearly inaccessible by Thailand’s own low- and middle-income *kathoei* communities. This paper hopes to shed light on this important issue in Thailand today as well as highlight the need for further research on the negative effects medical tourism can pose for destination country nationals.

Introduction

Thailand has been dubbed the “mecca of transsexual body modification” and has gained international acclaim for its gender reassignment surgeries (GRS), specifically male-to-female (MTF) (vaginoplasty) GRS (Aizura, 2010, p. 425). Not surprisingly, transgender communities worldwide flock to major cities in Thailand like Bangkok to receive state-of-the-art gender reassignment surgeries (Wilson, 2011). This growing phenomenon resulted from Thailand’s desire to medicalize “transsexuality” within its local *kathoei* communities (Aizura, 2010, p. 430; Aizura, 2011, p. 149; “Male-to-Female Sex Reassignment Surgery”). FTM GRS is relatively uncommon and therefore the market for it is small in Thailand. It is for this reason that I will aim to focus exclusively on MTF populations and MTF gender reassignment surgery. The popularity of MTF GRS amongst *kathoei* communities in Thailand quickly bred a demand for GRS overseas, especially among Westerners. Thus, GRS found its way into the market of medical tourism in Thailand and now caters to a largely foreign clientele. The transformation

of MTF GRS from a medicalized, Thai-exclusive procedure, to one that is globalized and fueled by foreign exchange, has rebranded MTF GRS as a costly procedure accessible mainly by international elite trans women—making MTF GRS inaccessible by Thailand’s own low- and middle-income *kathoei* communities.

Background

Considering how relatively understudied and potentiallyⁱ large the trans community is in Thailand, it is vital to understand the importance of the *kathoei* community to the success of the GRS medical tourism industry that exists in Thailand today. GRS resulted from the heavy medicalization of transgender communities in Thailand and was devised as a “corrective” surgery to accompany “gender identity disorders” (Aizura, 2010, p. 430; Zucker and Lawrence, 2009, p. 9). GRS is regarded as one of the earliest forms of medical tourism in Thailand predating the boom of the medical tourism industry in 2000 (Aizura, 2010). Two decades after the first MTF GRS was performed in 1975, Thailand saw a sizeable increase in foreign clientele seeking MTF GRS (Aizura, 2010; Chokrungravanont et al., 2014). This demand was largely fueled by the lack of availability of MTF GRS in other countries (as in the case of Japan and Korea) as well as the rumored skill and innovation believed to be possessed by Thai surgeons (Bookman, 2007). As a result, Thailand garnered an international reputation amongst transgender communities worldwide as a destination country for MTF gender reassignment surgery, but this success has been met with great disparity. Thailand’s success is speculated to be having an effect on its most marginalized population *kathoei* communities.

The *Kathoei* of Thailand

The transgender community in Thailand has had a significant impact on Thailand’s culture, tourism and GRS industry, especially the MTF *kathoei* community. Although there are currently no formal, peer-reviewed studies that report statistics of Thailand’s transgender community, unpublished studies report an estimated prevalence of 10,000 to 300,000 MTF individuals in Thailand as of 2002 (Ehrlich, 1996; Winter, 2002a; Winter, 2002b). As of 2002, the population in Thailand was about 64 million (“The World Bank”), which, in ratio terms, puts the range of estimated MTF prevalence in Thailand from 1:6,700 to 1:223. One study by Matzner (1999) reports a “sorority” of over 100 MTF students at a Thai university with a population of 15,000 students. That’s about 1 in every 150 students. Even the lowest prevalence estimate puts Thailand at a much higher rate than is found in other parts of the world. For example in the Netherlands in 1990, the estimated prevalence of MTF was calculated to range from 1:45,000 to

1:11,900 (Bakker et al., 1993). In the United States, Harris (2015, p. 16) reported a figure of 19,019 to 32,027 for MTF in 2010 indicating a prevalence of 1:16,263 to 1:9657. And a 2011 study by Winter cited a reported figure of 1:13,000 MTF for Iran in 2010. These comparisons demonstrate a significant difference in prevalence, although it is important to note that these figures are estimates and cannot be guaranteed with accuracy. In an effort to help demystify prevalence figures of *kathoey* in Thailand, one of Thailand's major research universities, Chulalongkorn University, is currently gathering prevalence data on "transsexualism" throughout Thailand (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014).

Most of the *kathoey* who have undergone or are undergoing GRS are trans women who have received MTF GRS. *Kathoey* usually undergo GRS in their 20s, with the mean age being 27 years old (17–50) in one study (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014), and 24.1 years in another (Winter, 2006). According to a study by Winter (2006), over half of trans women reported growing up in cities,ⁱⁱⁱ most reported being of ethnic Thai or mixed Thai/Chinese heritage, 89.6% reported being of average income, 46.1% reported having completed secondary school, and 23.3% reported having completed college (Winter, 2006). Because most *kathoey* start hormonal treatment at a very young age, (it is common to start as young as 10 years old) by the time they reach the age of consent in Thailand (18 years old), it is relatively easy to obtain approval by medical professionals (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014).

The Foreigner Undergoing GRS

Despite this, most of the individuals receiving MTF GRS in Thailand are not in fact Thai, but rather foreign nationals from other countries. In the years between 1985–1990, 95% of the patients receiving MTF GRS were Thai with only 5% being foreigners. Two decades later, in 2010–2012, there is a complete reversal with foreigners outnumbering Thai patients 10:1, meaning only 10% of patients undergoing MTF GRS are Thai with the latter 90% of MTF GRS surgeries being performed on foreigners (see Table 1) (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014). Currently, the only hospital in Thailand that exclusively services Thais is Chulalongkorn University Hospital. This is mostly due to the fact that the majority of the operations tend to be for educational purposes (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014). The large majority of foreign nationals that undergo GRS in Thailand receive MTF GRS with the mean age being 46 years old, ranging from 16–72 years old (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014). The average age is significantly higher than that of Thai patients undergoing MTF GRS in Thailand (27 years old) (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014). The majority of foreigners coming to Thailand for MTF GRS are non-Thais from Europe, North America and other countries

outside Asia, with Japan providing the largest customer base from Asia (Aizura, 2010). It also comes as no surprise that foreign patients tend to have higher levels of education and work as doctors, engineers, lawyers, and police officers in their respective countries; implying that they are better able to afford such procedures abroad (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014).

Currently, there are about 20 Thai surgeons that are licensed to perform GRS in Thailand with the bulk of the procedures being conducted by 6 major urban hospitals: PAI (Preecha's Aesthetic Institute) (Bangkok), Suporn Hospital (Pataya, Chonburee), Chettawut Hospital (Bangkok), Kamol Hospital (Bangkok), Sanguan Hospital (Phuket), and Yanhee International Hospital (Bangkok) (Winter, 2014).

The medical tourism industry poses a big problem for the *kathoey* community in Thailand. The recent boom of the industry and increase in foreign clientele for GRS in Thailand has transformed MTF GRS from a highly medicalized procedure created exclusively for Thailand's *kathoey*, to one that is now largely exclusive to elite international trans women. Thailand's thirst for foreign exchange has put its most marginalized community, the *kathoey*, at risk for reduced access to GRS. One study by Winter (2006) that surveyed a sample *kathoey* population in Thailand revealed that 48.2% of those surveyed have not undergone MTF GRS, but would like to. The issue at hand presents itself as a problem of access to care, specifically *kathoey* access to MTF GRS in Thailand. Realizing that foreigners are willing to pay higher prices for GRS in Thailand, surgeons have amplified prices—with one clinic in particular raising its prices from U.S. \$2,000 in 2001 to U.S. \$15,000 in 2006 (Aizura, 2009, Aizura, 2010). That's nearly an 8-fold increase in only 4 years. If MTF GRS surgery was barely affordable for many Thais in 2000, then it unquestionably has become inaccessible for many Thai *kathoey* from low and average income brackets. In addition, because nearly all of the MTF GRS surgical procedures are performed in the private sector, access to these procedures is made even more difficult. Reduced access to MTF GRS to *kathoey* populations is expressed in their desire to undergo GRS and therefore barriers to going through with the procedure most likely relate to issues of access and cost of MTF GRS.

Furthermore, there is additional speculation that substantial price increases in MTF GRS could be leading *kathoey* communities to seek MTF GRS elsewhere, more specifically, in "underground" clinics where most surgeons are unlicensed and not fully trained to perform MTF GRS. There have been several reported instances of "castrations" performed by non-urologists and non-plastic surgeons in Thailand (Chokrungruanont et al., 2014). There are currently no known statistics reporting unlicensed GRS

procedures, and this is likely due to the “underground” nature of these performed procedures; there is no way to accurately quantify procedures obtained through a black market. Some of the health risks of receiving GRS from an untrained professional can include inflammation, discoloration of genital skin, silicone-induced pulmonary embolism, as well as decreased sexual functioning (Hage et al., 2001; Zucker, 2009).

Risk Factors

Predictors of decreased access to MTF GRS in Thailand identified in this paper include: being Thai, identifying as *kathoey*, and coming from any income bracket that isn't high income. Thai individuals that identify as *kathoey* and come from a lower-income bracket are significantly more likely to experience reduced access to MTF GRS. Access to MTF GRS would have been likely higher in the late '90s to early 2000s, before the boom of the medical tourism industry and when MTF GRS was more exclusive to the people of Thailand. The risk differential between Thais and foreigners is significant. One's chances of receiving MTF GRS are much higher if one is a foreign trans woman with a high-earning profession. Because MTF GRS is largely restricted to the private sector, I speculate that living in a rural area of Thailand would further restrict access. In rural areas, access to healthcare is dependent on the public sector but because GRS is generally performed in private hospitals (usually in cities), living in a rural area would greatly decrease access to MTF GRS.

Psychosocial Impacts of Being Denied GRS

Kathoey individuals remain a largely understudied population in Thailand so the effects of being denied GRS are not well understood. With this being said, there are a select number of Western studies that have researched the psychosocial impact on MTF transgender individuals that have been allowed or denied GRS. In a 2001 study that measured psychosocial functioning (postoperative gender dysphoria, feelings of regret, gender role behavior, psychological, social and sexual functioning) in transgender individuals who received or were denied GRS, it was discovered that transgender adolescents who were denied GRS experienced a worse level of functioning than those that were allowed treatment (Smith et al., 2001). An earlier study from 1997 even found that receiving GRS before adulthood resulted in more “favorable postoperative functioning” compared to individuals who received GRS later into adulthood (Cohen-Kettenis and Goozen, 1997, p. 263). This could be due to the fact that adolescents, getting treated so young, can go on to live more fulfilling lives in their newly acquired gender role within society—free from gender dysphoria anxieties. “They can catch up with their

peers and devote their attention to friendships, partnership, and career,” whereas those who are well into adulthood are more likely to possess roles in society to which they have stronger gendered ties (i.e., father, partner, colleague) (Cohen-Kettenis and Goozen, 1997, p. 270). Moreover, a study by Brummelhuis (1999) adds that this “fulfilled” feeling is strongly tied to Thai daily life and society. In this study, *Naa*, a self-identified *kathoey*, explains, “I will ask my friend whether he intends me to undergo a sex operation. If he wants it, I am prepared to do it” (Brummelhuis, 1999, p. 135). If *kathoey* feel the pressure to undergo GRS whether that pressure be by family, friends, or colleagues, they will feel less fulfilled in life if they could not undergo GRS. Overall, it is evident that receiving MTF GRS is vital to living a “fulfilled” life for many *kathoey* individuals. Patients that were allowed treatment reported GRS as being “therapeutic and beneficial” to their general wellbeing, whereas those who were denied treatment evidently would continue to live unfulfilled lives (Brummelhuis, 1999; Smith et al., 2001; Cohen-Kettenis and Goozen, 1997, p. 269).

Limitations

Currently the bulk of the research on transgender communities and GRS in Thailand come in the form of narratives and qualitative studies. Few studies lean towards more quantitative work, although it is apparent that the field is growing. Because formal epidemiological studies on the prevalence of MTF individuals in Thailand are lacking, no strong conclusion can be drawn. The large majority of the quantitative evidence used throughout this paper came from non peer-reviewed, unpublished articles, although several articles indicated that large-scale studies were currently under way by Thai universities to help gain better insight into the MTF transsexual prevalence throughout Thailand (Ocha, 2013; Winter, 2002a; Winter, 2002b; Winter, 2002c; Winter, 2006). The majority of the research articles used for this paper contained internal validity, that is, they only possessed validity within their own study claims, and could not be generalized to the rest of the *kathoey* community in Thailand because most studies were urban-biased. Most of the studies took place in large cities, such as Bangkok, and are not fully representative of the other regions of Thailand.

Preventative Interventions

There currently are no large trials looking at how to improve access to MTF GRS in Thailand because medical tourism is at a very early stage in not only Thailand but also across major medical tourism hubs around the world. Due to its early stage, the effects of medical tourism have not been fully realized (Pocock and Phua, 2011). Research in this area of study remains largely anecdotal as opposed to statistical in nature and therefore at this point, only educated

speculations can be made, although, a good amount of literature recognizing medical tourism's effect on the destination country have begun to surface. These studies contemplate potential implications for the health care systems of destination countries and draw links between institutions of medical tourism and their current state of health. Just a few of the proposed solutions to these negative spillovers include incorporating governmental regulation into the medical tourism industry and establishing international collaboration between the destination and home countries (Chen & Flood, 2013). One intervention that I propose to increase *katboey* access to MTF GRS in Thailand is to impose a tax on GRS procedures undergone by international health tourists and ensuring these fiscal benefits are reinvested to partially subsidize GRS as a means to make the procedure more affordable to local *katboey*. It is important to put policies in effect to ensure that there are no negative spillovers inflicted on already marginalized communities in Thailand.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Sands-Lincoln for her fantastic class on Epidemiology and Global Health that inspired the creation of this paper; Dr. Carol Schilling, for being a wonderful Mellon Mays mentor; Vanessa Christman, my Mellon Mays Coordinator, for her encouragement to submit this paper for publication; Victoria Cubillos-Canon, for her invaluable comments during the drafting process; and, finally, my family, for their love and support.

Endnotes

- ⁱ *Katboey*, meaning "ladyboy," is a term commonly used in Thai that most recently has been used to refer to male-to-female transgender individuals.
- ⁱⁱ I say potentially because studies have not been able to accurately quantify the size of the transgender community in Thailand, but considering how big of a role *katboey* communities play in Thai culture, it is projected that the population is potentially large.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Bias may be present, as the study was conducted in the central provinces of Thailand, where the largest cities reside.

Works Cited

Aizura, A. Z. (2009). Where Health and Beauty Meet: Femininity and Racialisation in Thai Cosmetic Surgery Clinics. *Medical Anthropology*, 33(3), 303–317.

Aizura, A. Z. (2010). Feminine Transformations: Gender Reassignment Surgical Tourism in Thailand. *Medical Anthropology*, 29(4), 424–443.

Aizura, A. Z. (2011). The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel "Race," Labour, and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics. In P. A. Jackson (Ed.), *Queer Bangkok: 21st Century Markets, Media, and Rights* (pp. 143–162). Hong Kong University Press.

Bakker, A., Kesteren, P. J. M., Gooren, L. J. G., Bezemer, P. D. (1993). The Prevalence of transsexualism in the Netherlands. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 87(4), 237–238.

Bookman, M. Z., & Bookman, K. R. (2007). *Medical tourism in developing countries*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Chen, Y. B., & Flood, C. M. (2013). Medical Tourism's Impact on Health Care Equity and Access in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Making the Case for Regulation. *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 41(1), 286–300.

Chokrungravanont, P., Selvaggi, G., Jindarak, S., Angspatt, A., Pungrasmi, P., Suwajo, P. and Tiewtranon, P. (2014). The Development of Sex Reassignment Surgery in Thailand: A Social Perspective. *The Scientific World Journal*, 182981, 1–5. Web. March 2016.

Cohen-Kettenis, P. T., & Goozen, S. H. (1997). Sex Reassignment of Adolescent Transsexuals: A Follow-up Study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36(2), 263–271.

Connell, J. (2011). A new inequality? Privatisation, urban bias, migration and medical tourism. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 52(3), 260–271.

Ehrlich, R. (1996). Thailand's Secret Sex. *Elle Magazine UK*, June: 42–48.

Finch, S. (2013). Medical Tourism Driving Health Care Disparity in Thailand. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 186(1): E11.

Hage, J. J., Kanhai, R. C., Oen, A. L., van Diest, P. J., Karim, R. B. (2001) The devastating outcome of massive subcutaneous injection of highly viscous fluids in male-to-female transsexuals. *Plastic Reconstruction Surgery* 107: 734–41.

Harris, B. C. (2015). Likely Transgender Individuals in U.S. Federal Administrative Records and the 2010 Census. *Center for Administrative Records Research and Applications U.S. Census Bureau*, 1–37. Retrieved December 5, 2016, from https://www.census.gov/srd/carra/15_03_Likely_Transgender_Individuals_in_ARs_and_2010Census.pdf

Male-to-Female Sex Reassignment Surgery. Retrieved May 7, 2016, from <http://www.yanhee.net/treatment-procedure/srt-mtf>

Matzner, A. (1999). *Roses of the North: The Katoey of Chiang Mai University*. Retrieved May 2016, from www.transgenderasia.org/TGinThailandRosepaper.htm

Ocha, W., and Earth, B. (2013). Identity Diversification among Transgender Sex Workers in Thailand's Sex Tourism Industry. *Sexualities* 16(1–2), 195–216.

- Pocock, N. S., & Phua, K. H. (2011). Medical tourism and policy implications for health systems: A conceptual framework from a comparative study of Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. *Globalization and Health Global Health*, 7(1), 12.
- Smith, Y. L., Goozen, S. H., & Cohen-Kettenis, P. T. (2001). Adolescents with Gender Identity Disorder Who Were Accepted or Rejected for Sex Reassignment Surgery: A Prospective Follow-up Study. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(4), 472–481.
- ten Brummelhuis, H. (1999). Transformations of Transgender: The Case of the Thai Kathoey. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 9(2–3), 121–139.
- van Kesteren, P. J., Gooren, L. J., and Megens, J. A. (1996). An Epidemiological and Demographic Study of Transsexuals in the Netherlands. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 25(6), 589–600. Web. May 2016.
- Wilson, A. (2011). Foreign Bodies and National Scales: Medical Tourism in Thailand. *Body & Society*, 17(2–3), 121–137.
- Winter, S. (2002a). “Counting Kathoey.” http://web.hky.hk/~sjwinter/TransgenderASIA/paper_counting.htm
- Winter, S. (2002b) “Country Report: Thailand.” http://www.transgenderasia.org/country_report_thailand.htm
- Winter, S. (2002c). “Why are there so many kathoey in Thailand?” http://www.transgenderasia.org/paper_why_are_there_so_many_kathoey.htm
- Winter, S. (2006) “Thai Transgenders in Focus: Demographics, Transitions and Identities.” *International Journal of Transgenderism* 9.1, 15–27. Web. May 2016.
- Winter, S. (2011) “How many trans* people are there? A 2011 update incorporating new data.” <http://www.transgenderasia.org/paper-how-many-trans-people-are-there.htm>
- The World Bank. “Thailand/Population.” *Data | The World Bank*. Web. May 2016.
- The World Bank. “United States/Population.” *Data | The World Bank*. Web. Dec. 2016
- Zucker, K. J, Lawrence, A. A. (2009). Epidemiology of Gender Identity Disorder: Recommendations for the Standards of Care of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. *International Journal of Transgenderism*, 11, 8–18.

Table 1. Ratio of the Thai/foreign MTF transsexual patients operated on in Thailand

Periods	Thai/foreigners
1985–1990	95%/5%
1991–1995	90%/10%
1996–2000	75%/25%
2001–2005	50%/50%
2006–2010	30%/70%
2006–2010	30%/70%
2010–2012	10%/90%

Source: Chokrungravanont et al. 2014. Division of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand.

The Most Costly Gift: An Exploration of the Potential Risks and Rewards of Double Consciousness and Second Sight in *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois

Briana Payton, *Princeton University*

Briana Payton is a senior at Princeton pursuing a major in sociology and minors in African American studies, American studies, and Spanish language and culture. She is interested in critical examinations of race, class, and gender inequalities, especially as they pertain to education, criminal justice, and identity. Her inaugural independent research project focused on racial identity formation in second-generation Black migrants, and her senior thesis will explore racial identity and talented tenth ideologies among Black students at elite universities. After graduation, she plans to work at a nonprofit before applying to graduate school.

Abstract

In his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois makes a famous assertion that Black people in America navigate society behind a “Veil” that gives them both “double consciousness” and “second sight.” The Veil represents the racism that excludes Black Americans from full participation in society, double consciousness represents Black Americans’ awareness of racist views that white onlookers hold toward them, and second sight represents their ability to see the flawed nature of racism and America’s need for change. Through textual analysis of these concepts and related characters and claims in *The Souls of Black Folk*, this essay explores the myriad of ways that individuals might respond to these phenomena (the veil, double consciousness, and second sight) in their lives. The author posits that certain responses constitute risks and others embody possible rewards for African Americans in their fight to live freely in America. Some risks include that of adopting the anti-Black worldview of white Americans, deciding not to resist discrimination even if they do reject racist beliefs, and becoming discouraged to the point of giving up if their attempts at taking action do not lead to progress. Potential rewards include rejecting anti-Black views and embracing self-love, taking action in pursuit of justice, successfully achieving social change, and maintaining hope and joy even when progress is slow. Rather than apply Du Bois’ concepts broadly to all Black people, this exploration highlights the diversity of decisions and outcomes represented among African Americans in their individual and collective quest to thrive in a society built on their oppression. It highlights the mysterious co-existence of hope and unhelpfulness, repression and resilience, and strength and struggle in the souls of Black folks.

Introduction

In his 1903 sociological work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois introduces the idea that African Americans are “born with a veil . . . in this American World.”ⁱ The veil

is a metaphor for African Americans’ experience of existing in a society where they are excluded on many fronts due to anti-Black racism. This veil, according to Du Bois, endows African Americans with a “double consciousness” and a “gift” of “second sight,”ⁱⁱ both of which I will argue present potential risks and rewards to the souls of Black folks. Du Bois defines “double consciousness” as “looking at oneself through the eyes of others.”ⁱⁱⁱ Double-consciousness causes Black people to be acutely aware of the “contempt and pity”^{iv} with which their fellow white citizens see them. This constant awareness affords them “no true self-consciousness.”^v Double consciousness is awakened and progressively sharpened by the presence of “the Veil.” The Veil (when capitalized in Du Bois’ book) refers to the manifestation of anti-Black discrimination. Du Bois gives the Veil a quasi-physical characterization throughout the book, as he often describes the way that it casts a shadow over African Americans’ existence. While life behind this Veil in the state of double consciousness might appear grim, Du Bois ventures to say that African Americans have access to a special gift. He calls the gift “second sight,”^{vi} and it represents the ability that Black people have to clearly see America’s deepest flaw. From their uniquely disadvantaged position, they can see that they are the exception to America’s creed of liberty and equality. They are privy to America’s hypocrisy and her need for change. It is through second sight that African Americans can gain the awareness necessary to become agents of change in their society, and this, I argue, is the most costly yet worthy gift.

However, this gift is only valuable when it is fully unwrapped. While the rewards of recognizing the need for change and becoming an agent of change can be substantial, I argue that those are potential rather than guaranteed outcomes. Risks of adverse consequences accompany these possible rewards of second sight, and through analysis of characters and claims put forth in *The Souls of Black Folk*, I will explore how each African American’s life follows a unique trajectory based on whether they incur risks or reap rewards in their responses to double consciousness and second sight. Among potential responses, there is a risk of having double consciousness without unwrapping second sight. A person’s double consciousness may make them aware of racism, but only second sight can show them that racism is the problem, rather than the Black community on which it casts contempt. By gaining second sight, one becomes not only aware of racism but also aware of its falsehood. Once unwrapped, the gift of second sight may still incur significant costs. These include the risk of knowledge without action, action without results, and the loss of hope because of little progress in the struggle for social change. On the other side of the risks are the potential rewards of knowing the truth about racism, acting on that knowledge, and successfully producing change through individual and collective

action. Therefore, double consciousness is a curse without second sight, and second sight is only a gift to the extent that a person can unlock its potential rewards.

Foregrounding this discussion of the various risks, rewards, and the diversity of Black people's responses to their particular encounters with the Veil allows for greater appreciation of the complexity of Black humanity, individuality, and agency. This type of analysis protects against the risk of applying the concepts of double consciousness and second sight simplistically to the Black community as though they represent the group's unilateral response to a singular encounter with racism. Navigating the risks and rewards of double consciousness and second sight is a process so unique to each individual and their circumstances that identifying why a person takes one trajectory over another would go beyond the scope of this paper. This paper will simply explore in detail the aforementioned potential types of risks and rewards of double consciousness and second sight, using illustrations from Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Revelation of the Other World

Du Bois describes double consciousness as only being allowed to see oneself "through the revelation of the other world," or that of white prejudiced Americans.^{vii} For an African American, double consciousness entails being intimately aware of an ideology founded on Black inferiority. It means knowing that white onlookers see Black people as different and less valuable than themselves. Viewing oneself according to such a "revelation" introduces the first and greatest risk of double consciousness: accepting the ideology of this "other world" as though it were true, and thereby losing confidence in one's own worth. Du Bois describes the risk of affirming their bigotry when he says they (whites) "call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defense of . . . the 'higher' against the 'lower races.' To which the Negro cries 'Amen!'"^{viii} Du Bois is sympathetic to some Black Americans' tragic acquiescence to racist ideology, as he reasons, "facing so vast a prejudice could not but bring the inevitable self-questioning, self-disparagement, and lowering of ideals."^{ix} In this, Du Bois acknowledges that it is difficult to be bombarded with so many subliminal and explicit suggestions that one is inferior without beginning to believe them. Nonetheless, the reasonableness of this reaction does little to help the fact that it undermines the potential for the second sight to function as a gift, and instead allows double consciousness to reign as a curse in the lives of many African Americans.

According to Du Bois, one man who embodied double consciousness and the risk of adopting (at least in part) the ideology of the other world was Booker T. Washington. This prominent African American leader became nationally

recognized for his work in founding the Tuskegee Institute for industrial and agricultural training of African Americans, yet Du Bois criticized him heavily in *The Souls of Black Folk* for his famous Atlanta Exposition address. In this speech directed at a white audience, Washington recognized the need for racial progress, but appeared to conceptualize progress within the other world's ideology of Black inferiority. He acceded to the idea that Black people were not inherently worthy of social equality, or integration and mutual respect. Instead, he posited that Black people ought to labor diligently in order to accumulate wealth and by their decorum earn white people's approval. I argue that Washington's speech reflected a combination of what Du Bois called "an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group," and "a determined effort at self-realization despite environing opinion."^x His ideas expose the important truth that African Americans can respond to "the Veil" and double consciousness in varying gradients along a spectrum or even adopt a combination of risk and reward based responses. On one hand, Washington resisted the idea that Black people ought not advance in society, but on the other, he thought they should accept the lowest-ranked jobs and forego the dignity of equal treatment (at least temporarily). His double consciousness distorted his view so much so that he seemed unable to rightly divide the (racist) "revelation of the other world" with the truth; he mixed them to the point that Du Bois called him a "compromiser"^{xi} between the two races. Unfortunately, in the African American fight for racial justice, to compromise often means to sacrifice some aspect of what society rightfully owes its Black citizens. Washington and many others like him serve as proof that simply being born as a Black American with double consciousness, or "revelation of the other world," is not enough to fight against White Supremacy. Those with double consciousness risk varying degrees of concession to the racist beliefs of the other world.

Second Sight: A Higher Revelation

While double consciousness opens the risk of accepting false racist beliefs, it also opens the door to the potential reward of rejecting those falsehoods and holding fast to the truth of racial equality. This comes from the higher revelation, or second sight, which lets one know that the other world is fallible and African American inferiority is a lie. Du Bois' messages in *The Souls of Black Folks* reflect the way that double consciousness, or awareness of racism can be used to strengthen one's second sight, or discernment of American hypocrisy and the virtue of racial justice. For example, Du Bois wrote about how America's racial ideology made it incompatible to be both "American" and "Negro." However, Du Bois' second sight allowed him to reconcile those two "un-reconciled strivings."^{xii} Although Du Bois refers to the concept of an American and a Negro

as “warring ideals,”^{xiii} he shows that in actuality that they are perfectly compatible. He does this by claiming, “The Negro problem is a concrete test of underlying principles of the great republic.”^{xiv} Du Bois’ second sight showed him that Black people are true Americans and as long as America does not recognize this, she is not true to herself or her own principles. In expressing this belief, Du Bois serves as an example of how second sight can yield a deeper conviction of one’s American identity and right to be included in society. While “revelation of the other world” calls the Negro an exception to American ideals and ties whiteness to American-ness, Du Bois attains second sight, sees through that lie, and boldly asserts otherwise. In a sense, the African American’s plight of being made a “stranger in his own house”^{xv} (or country) causes him to look more closely at the house for evidence that it indeed belongs to him. In contrast, white Americans have no double consciousness, assume they belong in the house, and blissfully live there with no valid title deed. A presumptuous claim to identity is a weak one, but Du Bois shows that having two warring ideals in one body causes the Black American citizen to develop a “dogged strength” in his identity that “kept him from being ‘torn asunder.’”^{xvi} While double consciousness can cause a Black person to initially question their rightful place in America, the potential reward is that this questioning can lead to discovery of true belonging through second sight.

Higher Revelation against Reality

Although second sight offers the reward of coming into knowledge of truth, this knowledge does not eliminate the subsequent risk of inaction. This is because to have second sight and see that racism is wrong does not protect one from the power of the Veil (manifest racism) in American society. For example, Du Bois writes in *The Souls of Black Folk* that he secured a teaching job in Tennessee and went to eat at the local commissioner’s house. He describes the way that racism intruded on the celebratory occasion: “‘Oh,’ thought I, ‘this is lucky’”; but even then fell the awful shadow of the Veil, for they ate first, then I—alone.”^{xvii} Although Du Bois is college educated by this juncture in his career, he is relegated to eating alone after his equal eats first. That he knows this white man is his equal does not in this situation move him to action or protest, but rather to somber recognition of the Veil under which he lives. This example represents the risk of knowledge without action. It is worth noting that the response to the Veil in one instance does not necessarily characterize a person’s response throughout their entire life, although it can. Du Bois surely led a life of fighting racism on many fronts, but in this particular instance, he chose to respond with inaction. This may also point to the impracticality of fighting racism in situations in which one is isolated as its target, and that perhaps collective action offers a more

promising response in certain cases. Therefore, second sight does not guarantee that a person will always act on what they see (individually or in collaboration with others), nor does it guarantee that they will always be able to act without it proving injurious to their own welfare. Therefore, Black people must decide each day and in every case of discrimination how they will respond: with resistance or compliance, action or inaction, or some combination of the two.

Just as second sight opens the risk of inaction, it also clears the way for the potential reward of taking action in pursuit of the equal society one envisions. Second sight can be a powerful springboard for working toward change, which is why Du Bois calls it a gift. The gift may not be fully unwrapped if one never fights the racism they face, but when it is utilized in full, second sight can produce the vision that drives Black people to radical resistance. At the same time, every action has a reaction, and on the other side of the potential reward of activism is the potential risk of retaliation, defeat and subsequent despair because of the prevalence of the Veil (racism) in American society. Under conditions of persistent inequality, seeing Black people’s right to justice through second sight could be compared to rooting for the underdog in a game, but constantly watching them get cheated. Second sight may allow a person to see that African Americans are not truly inferior, but in the face of the Veil, under the shadow of which they are treated as such, there festers a bitter indignation. Second sight may even allow one to see one’s own anger as righteous, but Du Bois poignantly notes, “knowing the bitterness is justifiable only makes it more maddening.”^{xviii} Therefore a potential risk of spirited action is inner turmoil that comes from trying and failing to dismantle the Veil of racism.

One character in *The Souls of Black Folk* who embodies this risk is John Jones. A young southern boy who was generally jovial and satisfied with life went north for school and encountered the Veil there. After being refused seating near his white childhood friend in a theater and riding in Jim Crow cars, he gained double consciousness, suddenly realizing how those of “the other world” saw him. However, he had also received the second sight, and knew that the inequality was wrong, so he returned to his hometown as a teacher with a determination to empower his fellow African Americans with knowledge. He taught children about equality in his local school and thereby embodied the reward of becoming an agent for change, but as soon as word got around to the local judge, that judge shut down John’s school.^{xix} His second sight allowed him to see his school as a site of resistance to injustice, but the Veil quickly came down and transformed it into a site of defeat. It was at that point he gave up on fighting for change in his community through education and decided to just defend his survival by going north to find work and sending money home.^{xx} His double

consciousness and second sight did not shield him from the retaliation that often ensues when an African American with righteous ideals tried to fight injustice. In the moment that this African American's eyes were opened to second sight, the Veil was waiting to throw its shadow over his face—to dub his “ideas insolence” and his “ambitions unattainable.”^{xxi}

Second sight draws one to the hope for change, and even to the active pursuit of it, but it does not guarantee that one will ever see victory. This perpetually unfulfilled longing for progress can cause severe injury to the souls of Black folk. Du Bois communicates this final risk near the end of his book as he discusses the temptations Black Americans face to succumb to hate, despair and doubt.^{xxii} He explores how Alexander Crummel, a clergyman who aimed to serve African Americans, did not see the success nor results that he wanted in ministry (often due to racism), faced these temptations. He describes in vivid terms the depth of pain he imagined Crummel must have felt, and it represents the pain any African American risks encountering when they decide to fight for virtue in the face of surrounding vice.

So deep is this pain that Du Bois ventures to imply that his son who died just after birth was better off in death than those African Americans who lived to see racial injustice prevail. However, hidden in his musing on the passing of his first-born is reference to a final reward that remains available to Black people in the face of this risk. Reflecting on what his son's life could have been, Du Bois said “A perfect life was his, all joy and love, with tears to make it brighter.”^{xxiii} Du Bois here implies that while life may tempt Black people to fall into hate, despair, and doubt, there is a beautiful possibility for them to taste joy that is sweetened by their experience of sorrow, to know love that is deepened by their faceoff with hatred, and to have hope in their hearts that unleashes radical light in their dark circumstances. Du Bois wrote that even in infancy his son clung with his tiny hand to a “hope not hopeless but unhelpful.”^{xxiv} In these sayings, Du Bois admits that those born Black in America may face suffering that seems worse than death, and yet he holds that the souls of those very Black folk can flourish in spite of it all. Therefore, the final reward available to African Americans through second sight is that they can have lives full of vitality and vivacity even under the shadow of the Veil—for nothing can dim the light that shines from within.

Conclusion

The coexisting possibilities of defeat and triumph in the lives of African Americans beg the question of whether the risks of pain are worth the possible rewards of prosperity. Members of the group can either be crushed under the burden of double consciousness, awakened to activism through the gift of second sight, or experience some combination

of these and other responses. This exploration of risk and reward in Black people's journeys reveals that each person may exhibit divergent and layered responses to double consciousness and second sight, for better or for worse. Further research could explore how various factors including (but not limited to) a person's class, education, gender, and other experiences of privilege and/or marginalization shape these responses. Though more work can be done to understand the varied responses that Black people may have to double consciousness, it is clear that from the time of *The Souls of Black Folk* to the present day, African American second sight has birthed a powerful struggle for freedom in the hearts of many. These individual narratives come together powerfully in a mural of sorts—one that portrays the image of a people who cling desperately to a “hope not hopeless but unhelpful,”^{xxv} and by their clinging forge changes in their nation that would have never been possible had they not resolved that the rewards were worth the risks.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Professor Eddie Glaude, who introduced me to Du Bois' incredible work, presented me with his own compelling analysis, and gave me the opportunity to write this piece as my first African American studies paper. Thanks also for his valuable feedback on my rewrites. Thank you to Professor Weisenfeld, who helped me revise and update the paper to clarify my argument and scholarly contribution for this journal submission. Thank you to my colleague, Khallid Love, who provided thoughtful suggestions on the draft along the way.

Endnotes

- i W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994), 2.
- ii Ibid., 2.
- iii Ibid., 2.
- iv Ibid., 2.
- v Ibid., 2.
- vi Ibid., 2.
- vii Ibid., 2.
- viii Ibid., 6.
- ix Ibid., 6.
- x Ibid., 28.
- xi Ibid., 30.
- xiii Ibid., 2.
- xiii Ibid., 2.
- xiv Ibid., 2.
- xv Ibid., 2.
- xvi Ibid., 2.

^{xvii} Ibid., 39.

^{xviii} Ibid., 124.

^{xix} Ibid., 147.

^{xx} Ibid., 152.

^{xxi} Ibid., 152.

^{xx} Ibid., 134.

^{xxiii} Ibid., 152

^{xxiv} Ibid., 128

^{xxv} Ibid., 128.

Bibliography

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover Publications, 1903).

Towards a Black Women's Romantic Ideology: Theorizing Black Women's Cultural Production in the 1980s/'90s

Jocelyn Proietti, *Smith College*

Jocelyn Proietti graduated Smith College in 2016 with a degree in Africana studies and English language and literature. Her Mellon Mays undergraduate research focuses on black women's cultural production in the 1980s and 1990s in America. Although she is originally from the Bronx, she currently serves as a Massachusetts Promise Fellow in Boston. Next year, Jocelyn looks forward to applying to PhD programs in American studies.

Abstract

A culmination of two years of MMUF research, this essay is an excerpt from the introduction to my undergraduate honors thesis. My project puts forth the original theory of a Black Women's Romantic Ideology as an interpretive practice for studying black women's cultural production. Through a close examination of black women's art during the 1980s/'90s, my theory concludes black women artists have consciously imagined new forms of being and selfhood, creating worlds that extend far beyond the structures and boundaries of late capitalist modernity.

Introduction

"Let's face it. I am a marked woman, but not everybody knows my name. 'Peaches' and 'Brown Sugar,' 'Sapphire' and 'Earth Mother,' 'Aunty,' 'Granny,' 'God's Holy Fool,' a 'Miss Ebony First,' or 'Black Woman at the Podium': I describe a locus of confounded identities, a meeting ground of investments and privations in the national treasury of rhetorical wealth. My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented."

—Hortense Spillers

"Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe:
An American Grammar," 1987

"The absence of models, in literature as in life, to say nothing of painting, is an occupational hazard for the artist, simply because models in art, in behavior, in growth of spirit and intellect—even if rejected—enrich and enlarge one's view of existence."

—Alice Walker

Modern Language Association
"Saving the Life That Is Your Own," 1975

I begin with two conversations in American cultural history happening almost a decade apart. One opens Hortense Spillers' seminal text "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar." The other is an essay adaptation of Alice Walker's 1975 speech to the Modern Language Association on her excavation of Zora Neale Hurston's work. These epigraphs, and their historical context, offer a window into the unique dispossession that characterized black women's experience at the end of the 20th century.

Spillers' series of ever-evolving terms for the black and feminized subject sets up the violent public inscription of race and gender as it manifested in the American 1980s/'90s. She concisely renders the national expectation that black women must eternally serve as the ultimate abject other. Equally misnamed and unaccounted for, Walker speaks to the hazardous position of the black women artists creating art in the 1970s. She reminds the reader that a history of art is a record of humanity, and for black women the archive remains incomplete. Together Walker and Spillers highlight a paradoxical tension between the hypervisibility of pathologized black womanhood and the absence of black women's recorded history (be it intellectual or artistic). Everywhere there was a clamor or silence about the black woman. How then, did black women create art? And how does one account for the noticeable outpouring of black women's art and literature during the period of the 1980s and 1990s in America?²¹

Though Spiller's critical notice is important, Walker's privileging of art lies at the heart of my work. I am interested in black women's art-making as a form of, and reflection on, self. Put differently, I am curious to know the how and why of black women's creative praxis and the ontological truths such questions reveal. My theory of a Black Women's Romantic Ideology is a method of reading that centers the importance of self-making in creating alternate forms of being. I contend that black women's artistic imagination eliminates the idea of self as a unitary site (de-racialized, ungendered, and therefore equal) and creates instead new modes of existence that are elsewhere impossible. Black women's desire to recover and (re)make self allows for humanity in an othered existence, even as the components of that existence (life, self, and humanity) have been made violent through Enlightenment modernity.

In order to speak to this configuration, I must first acknowledge that America was always an Enlightenment project. That is to say, it was founded upon notions of opportunity, progress, and property. These Enlightenment-born discourses enabled an emerging nation to reconcile the diametrically opposed concepts of liberty and enslavement, all the while claiming supremacy on the basis of "democracy." In *The Politics of Enchantment: Romanticism, Media, and Cultural Studies*, J. David Black defines the Enlightenment as:

The period dating roughly from the 1710s to the revolutionary year of 1789, when the acknowledged philosophical tenets of the social sciences were founded. (. . .) Their heavy equipment was impressive: reason, above all; the formal equality of individuals and the rule of law, both indebted to

an emergent liberalism (. . .); the intellectual and political priority of order, consensus, and progress; a utopian belief in human betterment against the pessimistic anti-humanism of the medieval Church; and lastly, among other features, the power of both natural and social science to support social reform. (21)

These ideologies constituted the fabric of American culture. Privileged knowledge-systems (law, social and natural science, humanism) created a convoluted logic whereby the idea of “reason” obliterated all other ways of knowing. Indeed, the social construction of blackness in America was only made possible, as Robin D.G. Kelley explicates in his work on the Enlightenment’s relationship to race, through “the racialism of the West, slavery, imperialism, the destruction of indigenous cultures in the name of ‘progress’” (106). In other words, the Enlightenment put forth a necessary logic in so far as it supposed “reasonableness” in the arbitrary degradation of racialized black individuals. Likewise, it fostered the emergence of capital and the arrangement of a gender binary as cooperative processes in defining personhood, and used the linearity of time to make the atrocities by which an individual was categorized as non-human (slavery, trauma, etc.) untouchable to them. Nowhere is this more evident than in the incontestable category of human itself, which even now may only be defined by those imbued with humanity.ⁱⁱ These constructions compounded to obscure black women’s access to humanness, forcing them to explore and create new ways of being in the modern world. My theory argues that this is primarily done through the praxis, and product, of black women’s art.

In their reflections on black women’s subjecthood, Walker and Spillers interrogate the ways in which a supposedly rational and working society comfortably and forcibly sustains black women’s subjugation. As Walker’s epigraph demonstrates, the absence of models, myths, language, and stories of, and for, black women was a haunting reminder that equality was elusive as ever. Spillers affirms this notion in her phrase, “national treasury of Rhetorical Wealth” (65), which enforces the constitutive relationship between racialized, gendered, and sexual oppression and its persistence as an uncomfortable yet salient feature of American society. Walker and Spillers outline how contemporary conversations of, and about, black women always begin—strained beneath the weight of an embattled public present and grappling with an effaced national past. However, I foreground Walker’s lone notice of the “occupational hazard,” which poses the inability to ignore, confer, resist, or subscribe to an ongoing publicly held discussion of art, as both site of absence and a place of ingenuity. As scholar Caroline A. Brown notes: “In the era of post-1960s U.S. culture, political and socioeconomic power and conflict are increasingly waged within the culture-language zone” (29). It is clear

from Walker’s statement that black women made art for themselves, and this centering of self created a place to contest and create culture. What emerges forth is a critique not merely of 20th-century American society, but of the intractable concepts that inform it.

Although I have identified the Enlightenment as an enemy of black women’s art-making, I would now like to propose Romanticism as an oppositional frame for reading black women’s cultural production. I understand Romanticism as one of the first schools of thought to argue for the importance of art as a social enterprise in modernity. In fact, Romanticism’s most pervasive feature and greatest strength is its belief in the totalizing power of art. As J. David Black argues, “The romantic revolution in culture was not about artistic self-indulgence. Art was life because culture was the means to directly fashion a conscious world within which one lived. The romantic subject was often represented as a poet-magician conjuring new realities through discourse” (27). This idea of a romantic subject points to questions of ontology in modernity that I see operating in black women’s work. This is not to say that black women of the 1980s/90s consciously engage with the Romantics, nor suggest that Romanticism should be read into the works of black women. Rather, I wish to showcase how the philosophy of Romanticism elucidates my own theoretical claims about the function of selfhood within black women’s art-making. Namely, how black women artists emphasize the concept of self in their work and, by doing so, effectively re-fashion their material conditions. Ultimately, my analysis has little to do with Romanticism and its traditional 18th-century antecedent, and more to do with a fluid version of the concept. My concept of a Black Women’s Romantic Ideology takes Romanticism and repurposes its core contributions to the history of ideas in order to theoretically engage the philosophical dimensions of black women’s desire to make art. I consider how black women make clear their unapologetic rejection of Western co-authorizing ideologies (capitalism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism to name a few) especially, on the basis of their Enlightenment claims to “reason” and “rationalism” respectively. Moreover, I demonstrate how such a paradigm operates in the 1980s/1990s, an era in which black women were seemingly being invented by everyone but themselves. Facing a society which perpetually devalues their efforts and achievements, black women have largely been barred access to normative trajectories of progress as well as excluded from art as a traditional practice of resistance.

This is the culture that the artists treated by my study (Erykah Badu, Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, and Lorna Simpson) are creating within and responding to. Looking at the 1980s/90s as an important period in black women’s cultural history, I offer my theory of a Black Women’s

Romantic Ideology as a method by which we may examine understudied dimensions of black women's art-making—namely, selfhood, interiority, and multiplicity. I define a Black Women's Romantic Ideology as an ethic that gives supremacy to art's transformative ability, a politic that resists stringent categorization of bodies but also of humanness, and a philosophy that thoughtfully centers but does not calcify the existence of a self. It notices black women's artistic mastery in mobilizing the idea of "self" as multiplicitous, and demonstrates how black women pose the self's interior against the false correlations and violent images created from America's Enlightenment laden discourse. Moreover, my theory reveals the concept of a racialized and gendered self as reflexively refusing the relationship between race, the modern world, and the "reasonableness" of an American project. Finally, it positions black women as the ultimate advocates for, and evidence of, their existence, utilizing the discursivity of Romanticism as a place to study the tenuous and fluctuating nature of black women's subjecthood in the 21st century.

Part 1 of my project works to establish my analysis, while Part 2 shifts focus to my primary texts. I examine Erykah Badu's "Certainly" (1997), Audre Lorde's *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) as well as Lorna Simpson's photographs *Waterbearer* (1986) and *She* (1992). Moving across various media, I interpose scholars who reinforce my theoretical work. These texts demonstrate how black women use art to reorient the discursive processes that pathologize both their labor and their bodies, resisting racist, sexist, and heterosexist notions of self and subject. All deal explicitly with black female subjectivity through the gaze of the black woman artist, and showcase how black women consciously create and make space for their own existence. By reading these works through a Black Women's Romantic Ideology, I am uniquely able to see their focus on alternate histories and myths, their rejection of normative practices of categorization, and their (re)structuring of artistic and bodily boundaries, as organized behind the idea of a "self."

Black women's experience during the two final decades of the 20th century might best be summed up in the title of Walker's MLA speech, "Saving the Life That I's Your Own." Indeed, my focus on black women artists in the 1980s and '90s, starts with a recognition of the impossible position they are asked to occupy in late capitalist modernity. It is clear that you cannot discuss the advent and promises of modernity without the construction of black womanhood. Nowhere is this more vehemently the case than in the American context, where black women, enslaved or free, have always been the material by which our society crafts a superlative alterity. The subject position of the artist however, is compelling for nearly opposite reasons. Indeed,

art is by definition never alterity, it is the belonging to, and through, a self. From this statement I do not wish to imply that art cannot consider notions of outsidership, alienation, or subjugation (this is clearly untrue); I merely mean making art centers being present—a *hereness*—and by virtue of this fact mandates the existence of selfhood. Linking an artist subjectivity to the location of black women in America begs the question: What happens to black women as contested public figures when they notice and revel in their interiority? For black women to consider the act of saving their life important, essential, perhaps the only act worth doing, is to play with boundaries of what it means to be human in the modern world.

What a Black Women's Romantic Ideology attempts to name is my own theory of Black women's art making practices in the 1980s/'90s. It consists of a small experiment which attempts to piece together a few critical thematics. It results from my own interest in black women, the history of ideas, and the otherworldly qualities of art. My linking of the Enlightenment to the hyperactive neoliberalism emerging in the 1980s/'90s clarifies how black women artists of the period came to grapple with a "common sense" construction of knowledge that acutely perpetuated racist and sexist ideologies against them. By scaffolding how the Enlightenment extends forth to encompass both the logic of the late-capitalist state as well as fundamental ideas of linear time, trauma, trajectories of progress, I identify a compounding of oppressive but often unnoticed forces. I land on Romanticism in part for its history of unveiling these standards, and in part for its capacious nature. In many ways it acts as a placeholder for otherwise disorienting ideals (truth, self, art). However, as much as it's a concept I am invested in, it takes second place to the primacy I wish to give art and my own discussions of black womanhood. In my work black people are not just anti-Enlightenment; stating this shifts the world back into Enlightenment terms. Instead I treat them as visionaries able to see past what is pervasive and into what might come.

In a "Black Women's Romantic Ideology," I tracked black women's impulse to document and create from a space of self. Oftentimes philosophical and cultural definitions of self rely on the language of universality. The governing idea is: equality is achievable, humanness accessible, and racism undoable, because everyone possesses a self. However, this offering of self becomes another means of inscribing normative identities into interior and public spaces. It operates under the assumption that selfhood is untouched by concepts of race and gender. Resultantly, it enforces race and gender as deviant and undesirable categories for arranging and thinking about the world. A Black Women's Romantic Ideology proposes a raced, gendered, and sexualized notion of self, as it has been appeared in black women's own

artistic renderings. In order to read using a Black Women's Romantic Ideology one must first think:

- Self is claimable, collective, and multiplicitous.
- Self can be futurity, retrograde, timeless, and present.
- It is deeply touched by trauma but not incapacitated by it.
- Self creates.

These are dynamic conversations which black women creators have centered in their work. Though my project employs methods of close reading, socio-historical analysis, and cultural studies theory to draw connections to outside thinkers, I also read these authors as theorists in their own right. Ultimately, their theorizing allows me to read the period of the 1980s/'90s as a revolutionary moment for black women and weave together a Black Women's Romantic Ideology that transformative, radically self-reflexive, liberatory, and highly concerned with new modes of being. Black women are knowledge creators, world makers, and prophets who are able to imagine a world in which they are possible.

Acknowledgements

Though this work is the product of many people, I would like to give special thanks to Professor Lamothe, Professor Quashie, and Professor Miller for their fantastic feedback and encouragement. Of course, nothing I do would be possible without my mother, Marian Proietti; her kindness and patience has taught me a great deal.

Endnotes

- ⁱ What I mean by outpouring here is the proliferation of published and publicly available works by black women and women of color. Some examples include Pulitzer Prize-winning novels such as *The Color Purple* (1982), *Jazz* (1992), scholarly anthologies such as *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (1982), the popularization of visual artists such as Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems, as well as the emerging work of Gloria Naylor, Ntozake Shange, and the later works of Toni Cade Bambara, amongst others.
- ⁱⁱ In his chapter "Looking Extremely Backward: Why the Enlightenment Will Only Lead Us into the Dark," Robin D.G. Kelley states: "Enlightenment thought not only opened the door for future arguments about the inherent inferiority of different 'races,' but also sharply limited the definition of humanity. Thus, at the very moment when a discourse of universal humanism was finding voice (...) colored people and Europeans rendered marginal to civilization (such as Jews and Irish) were being written out of the family of 'Man'" (108). Kelley demarcates the American culture wars of the 1980s/'90s as a time when people of color were pushing back against Enlightenment discourses that sought to silence the movement toward identity politics. I note that this pushback was a part of a larger fight for black people to be recognized as human.

Works Cited

- Badu, Erykah. *Baduizm*. Kedar, Universal, 1997. CD.
- Black, J. David. *The Politics of Enchantment: Romanticism, Media, and Cultural Studies*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2002. Print.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*. Boston: Beacon, 1997. Print.
- Loorde, Audre. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Berkeley, CA: Crossing, 1982. Print.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved: A Novel*. New York: Vintage International, 2004. Print.
- Simpson, Lorna, Okwui Enwezor, Helaine Posner, and Hilton Als. *Lorna Simpson*. New York: Abrams, in Association with the American Federation of Arts, 2006. Print.
- . *She*. 1992. 4 Polaroid prints, 1 engraved plastic plaque 29 x 85¼ inches. 37. Print.
- . *Waterbearer*. 1986. Gelatin silver print, vinyl lettering, photograph 45 x 77 inches overall. 14–15. Print.
- Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 17.2 (1987): 65–81. *MLA International Bibliography*. Web. 15 Apr. 2016.
- Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. Print.

Moral Dilemmas and Modality in Kratzer's Semantics: Must "Ought" Imply "Can"?

Lauren Richardson, *University of Chicago*

Lauren Richardson is a junior at the University of Chicago, where she is pursuing a degree in philosophy. Her most recent interests lie in philosophy of language, mind, and logic, and she completed a research project this past summer on the the logical foundations of ethics. Lauren is currently studying abroad at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, after which she hopes to return to Chicago and apply to graduate school.

Abstract

Angelika Kratzer's possible worlds semantics for modals such as "ought," "must," "might," "can," etc. offers a unique set of tools for evaluating everyday expressions like "It might rain tomorrow" or "You ought to visit your grandmother." In particular, Kratzer's analysis of the deontic "ought" gives us a plausible account of the truth conditions for a statement "ought ϕ ." However, Kratzer's account faces troubles when a *moral dilemma* is introduced: that is, when an agent faces conflicting obligations. This paper will first show that Kratzer's analysis of "ought" is not sensitive to whether an agent is actually *able* to fulfill her obligation(s). Second, it will explore why, at face value, this treatment may seem problematic: for anyone who would like to uphold some form of the Kantian dictum that "ought" implies "can," Kratzer's semantics seems unsatisfying. Finally, it will offer a novel solution: namely, that the relation between "ought" and "can" must only hold at the time t when the obligation is first imposed, and that at time t' the obligation can still hold even if the agent has been rendered incapable of carrying it out. Thus, on this analysis, moral dilemmas consist in choosing between two incomparably sub-ideal courses of action.

Kratzer's semantic analysis of the deontic "ought" proves tricky in circumstances that present agents with moral dilemmas. Imagine the following scenario:

Maria has promised to meet Patti for lunch and Quentin for coffee. Unexpectedly her car broke down this morning, and now she cannot meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee, plus there is no way for her to reach them and cancel.

Assuming that we accept the moral principle that one ought to keep one's promises and the classic Kantian dictum that "ought" implies "can,"ⁱ we are left with a problem: it seems that Maria ought to meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee, but she cannot do both. A standard Kratzer analysis does not appear to adequately account for Maria's predicament, because the truth-value of an "ought" statement is insensitive to changes in an agent's abilities. In this paper, I will first explore a fairly intuitive potential solution: that we should ensure that "ought" implies "can"

by restricting the modal base $f(w)$ such that the only possible worlds under consideration are ones in which Maria can meet both Patti and Quentin at time t of evaluation of the "ought" statement. Second, I will show that this attempt at a simple fix entails the conclusion that neither $\llbracket \Box_D p \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ (Maria ought to meet Patti) *nor* $\llbracket \Box_D q \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ (Maria ought to meet Quentin) is true, which is an unacceptable result because it relieves Maria of *both* her obligations. As such, I will proceed to argue that restricting $f(w)$ such that we only consider worlds in which Maria is able to meet both Patti and Quentin *at time t when the obligation is first imposed* is a preferable way to integrate Kant's dictum into Kratzer's semantic analysis of "ought," and, accordingly, that the moral dilemma Maria is facing is simply the unfortunate task of choosing between two incomparably sub-ideal possible courses of action.

In order to bring Maria's problem more precisely into view, let us break down the scenario as follows:

- (1) Maria ought to meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee. ("ought p " and "ought q ")
- (2) Maria cannot meet both Patti for lunch and Quentin for coffee. ("cannot ($p \ \& \ q$)")

Following an orthodox Kratzer analysis, (1) gives us $\llbracket (\Box_D p) \ \& \ (\Box_D q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$, from which $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ follows, and (2) leaves us with $\llbracket \sim \Diamond_A (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$, from which $\llbracket \Box_A \sim (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ follows.ⁱⁱ Thus, (1) requires that the best possible worlds with respect to the *deontic* ordering source $g_1(w)$ ⁱⁱⁱ are such that for all $w \in \cap f_1(w)$, w is among the best worlds just in case $w \in (p \ \& \ q)$. In other words, the most deontically ideal worlds are worlds in which Maria meets both Patti and Quentin. And, from (2), we know that the best possible worlds with respect to the ability ordering source $g_2(w)$ ^{iv} are such that for all $w \in \cap f_2(w)$, w is among the best worlds just in case $w \in \sim (p \ \& \ q)$.^v To put it otherwise, there are *no* worlds among the possible worlds that most accurately reflect Maria's abilities in which she can meet both Patti and Quentin. Maria is in a quandary: the best possible worlds with respect to deontic ideals are incompatible with the best possible worlds with respect to her abilities. She knows that she *ought* to meet both Patti and Quentin, but also that she simply *cannot*. There is just no way that Maria can fulfill her obligations, but a standard Kratzer analysis is insensitive to this fact, and imposes an impossible standard of behavior on Maria.

One way we might show more sympathy for Maria's dilemma is to incorporate Kant's dictum that "ought" implies "can" into Kratzer's analysis of "ought." If we can somehow ensure that "ought" statements are only true in scenarios in which the agent *can* behave in accordance with the obligation at hand, then we will no longer be left in

the undesirable position of holding agents accountable for actions that they are incapable of taking (or of not taking). Take the statement “ought ϕ ,” some obligation ϕ imposed on a random agent in the actual world (or world of utterance), w_a . In order to guarantee that “ought” implies “can,” we must evaluate $\llbracket \Box_D \phi \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ (“ought ϕ ”) with a restricted modal base $f'(w)$ such that for all $w \in W$, $w \in \cap f'(w)$ just in case one’s abilities at w are the same as one’s abilities at w_a at the time t of evaluation of “ought ϕ .” Thus, everything that one can do at w can also be done at w_a , and everything that one can do at w_a can also be done at w . Importantly, this restriction means that the *only* possible worlds under consideration are worlds that accurately reflect one’s abilities, which will affect the truth-value of “ought” statements uttered in the actual world. In Maria’s case, $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ is true if and only if “ \Box_D ” quantifies over the best possible worlds such that $\{w: \text{Best}(f'(w), g(w)) \subseteq \llbracket (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}\}$. In other words, the statement “Maria ought to meet Patti and Quentin” is true here just in case the most ideal possible worlds in our new, restricted modal base are ones in which Maria meets both Patti and Quentin. However, we already know that Maria is incapable of visiting both Patti and Quentin, and so there are *no* possible worlds in our new modal base in which Maria meets both Patti and Quentin ($\{w: \llbracket (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g} = \Box\}$). Accordingly, since we are dealing with a non-empty modal base—because, by definition, $f'(w)$ includes *at least* the world of utterance w_a — $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g} = 0$, and the “ought” statement is false. The best possible worlds with respect to our newly restricted modal base $f'(w)$ and our original deontic ordering source $g(w)$ are *not* $(p \ \& \ q)$ -worlds, and so it is *not* the case the Maria ought to visit both Patti and Quentin.

This solution may seem appealing at first glance, because it allows us to capture the intuition that Maria should not be held responsible for events that are outside of her control. This interpretation also explains the fact that it *was* true at some point that Maria ought to have met both Patti and Quentin. Presumably, when Maria scheduled her lunch and coffee meetings at time t , she *was* capable of keeping both promises, in some metaphysical sense.^{vi} Thus, the best possible worlds at time t were $(p \ \& \ q)$ -worlds, and the “ought” statement $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ evaluated at time t was true. Now, though, at the time of evaluation t' , Maria’s abilities have changed, and $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ is rendered false. Unfortunately, though, this simple solution is not without its own problems, because it forces us to concede that neither $\llbracket \Box_D p \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ *nor* $\llbracket \Box_D q \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ is true—we must admit that it is not the case that Maria ought to meet Patti *and* that it is not the case that Maria ought to meet Quentin. We already know that $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g} = 0$, and for any world $w \in \cap f'(w)$, it must be the case that either $w \notin p$, $w \notin q$, or both. Thus, for any world under consideration, Maria will either fail to meet Patti, fail to meet Quentin, or fail to

meet either. The next natural step would be to assert that the best possible worlds in our restricted modal base are worlds such that either $w \in p$ *or* $w \in q$. Naturally, we do not want to say that just because Maria cannot meet *both* Patti and Quentin that she is relieved of her duty to keep her promise to *either* of them. On the contrary, it is still true that Maria ought to keep one of her promises. And, importantly, it does not seem to matter *which* of the promises she keeps; neither Patti nor Quentin is given priority in this scenario.

On this account, some world w is among the best worlds if and only if either $w \in p$ or $w \in q$ (i.e., if and only if it is a world in which Maria meets either Patti or Quentin). However, we already know that for any world $w \in \cap f'(w)$, if $w \in p$, then $w \notin q$, and if $w \in q$, then $w \notin p$. Thus, worlds in which Maria meets Patti are incomparable^{vii} with worlds in which she meets Quentin, which proves problematic for our “ought” statements. Since the worlds are incomparable, it is not the case that a world in which Maria meets Patti is deontically preferable to a world in which she meets Quentin, or vice versa. As such, we do not want the statement “Maria ought to meet Patti” ($\llbracket \Box_D p \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$) to overrule the statement “Maria ought to meet Quentin” ($\llbracket \Box_D q \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$), or vice versa. But in order for $\llbracket \Box_D p \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ to hold, *all* best possible worlds in $f'(w)$ must be worlds in which Maria meets Patti for lunch.^{viii} Thus, if “Maria ought to meet Patti” is true, then it could *not* be the case that Maria ought to meet Quentin, because if Maria ought to meet Quentin, then all deontically ideal possible worlds are worlds in which Maria does *not* meet Patti. A parallel result arises when we consider the statement “Maria ought to meet Quentin”: if Maria ought to meet Quentin, then it follows that it is *not* the case that she ought to meet Patti. Unfortunately, given (i) that the worlds in which Maria meets Patti (p -worlds) are incomparable with the worlds in which she meets Quentin (q -worlds), and thus cannot be ordered in relation to each other, and (ii) that the truth of either “ought” statement would require that we impose a deontic ordering on the p - and q -worlds together, we are left in a position in which we can assert neither “Maria ought to meet Patti” nor “Maria ought to meet Quentin.” But this result is entirely untenable—Maria is *not* relieved of *all* of her duties just because her car broke down. After all, it is still within her abilities to keep one of her promises. If we were to use this simple solution, Maria would not be facing any moral dilemma at all, because it would not be true that she ought to keep either of her promises. Maria could guiltlessly relax for the rest of the day, resting assured that she no longer has any lunch or coffee meeting obligations to fulfill.

Clearly, this conclusion is not what we were after when we originally restricted our modal base. We were aiming for an analysis of “ought ϕ ” that would enable us to incorporate Kant’s dictum that “ought” implies “can” into

Kratzer's semantics for "ought," but we did not want an analysis that would show that if it is not the case the Maria ought to meet *both* Patti and Quentin, then it follows that it is not the case that she ought to meet Quentin *and* it is not the case that she ought to meet Patti ($\sim[\Box_D (\phi \ \& \ \psi)] \models \sim[\Box_D \phi] \ \& \ \sim[\Box_D \psi]$). Unfortunately, there is no getting around this result if we work within Kratzer's semantics and restrict the modal base in the way that we did. Of course, we could maintain the fact that Maria ought to meet *either* Patti or Quentin ($[\Box_D (\phi \vee \psi)] \models_{w,f,g} 1$), but we would still be forced to conclude that neither "Maria ought to meet Patti" nor "Maria ought to meet Quentin" follows from this fact ($[\Box_D (\phi \vee \psi)] \not\models [\Box_D \phi] \vee [\Box_D \psi]$), which is unappealing. After all, it seems fairly intuitive that in our everyday deontic reasoning we *are* justified in concluding either "ought ϕ " or "ought ψ " from "ought $(\phi \vee \psi)$." Imagine a scenario in which we *must* block this inference: an agent might then be rationally justified in evading obligations that really *do* hold. Say, for example, that a super-rational agent, Kit, walks by the scene of a murder in progress. The murder scene is only a few hundred meters from the police station, so Kit concludes that she ought to either run to alert the police *or* intervene herself ($[\Box_D (r \vee i)]$). However, she does neither and instead stands by, paralyzed by indecision.^{ix} Later, while being questioned by the police as an accessory to the crime, Kit informs them she was not justified in concluding that she ought to run to inform them ($[\Box_D r]$), nor was she justified in concluding that she ought to intervene ($[\Box_D i]$), leaving her hopelessly confused as to which action to take. And, being the perfectly rational creature that Kit is, she opted to take *neither* action since she was not able to conclude that she ought to do *either*. This course of reasoning seems patently absurd, but it is a conceivable result if we block the inference of either "ought ϕ " or "ought ψ " from "ought $(\phi \vee \psi)$." Of course, this example may seem to involve a bit of sleight of hand; it assumes a direct link between theoretical and practical reasoning. I am counting on there being a great *practical* difference between the theoretical conclusions (i) "ought ϕ " \vee "ought ψ " and (ii) "ought $(\phi \vee \psi)$," since in (i) the "ought" operators each have narrow scope, whereas in (ii) the "ought" operator takes wide scope over the disjunction. The myriad issues surrounding theoretical and practical reasoning extend far beyond what I can address in this paper, but I hope that the spirit of this dilemma is clear: blocking the dissolution of a disjunctive "ought" statement gets us into murky waters when it comes to practical reasoning.

Back to our original problem: it seems that we must find a *new* way of integrating "ought" with "can" that will enable us to uphold the intuition that either "Maria ought to meet Patti" or "Maria ought to meet Quentin" remains true, despite Maria's car troubles. To accomplish this, let us mirror our analysis of "ought ϕ " with what I proposed earlier, but include one adjustment. In order to guarantee

that "ought" implies "can," we must evaluate "ought ϕ " ($[\Box_D \phi] \models_{w,f,g}$) with a restricted modal base $f'(w)$ such that for all $w \in W$, $w \in \cap f'(w)$ if and only if one's abilities at w are the same as one's abilities at w_a at time t when the obligation "ought ϕ " is first imposed. Obviously, this new analysis does not guarantee that "ought" implies "can" *simpliciter*. Rather, it guarantees that "ought ϕ " first uttered at time t implies "can ϕ " at time t , and that "ought ϕ " *evaluated at time t'* is true just in case "ought ϕ " initially imposed at time t implied "can ϕ " at time t . Each "ought" statement is indexed to some time of utterance t , and its truth-conditions are sensitive to the agent's abilities at t . This analysis does not come without its own complications, but it is still far preferable to our previous attempt at a simple fix.

Let us look at some implications of applying our new analysis to various "ought" statements. As desired, we can use this adjusted interpretation to deny outright the truth of "ought" statements that impose metaphysically impossible obligations at the time of utterance. We can also use this adjusted interpretation to deny *current* obligations that rely on abilities that we do not yet possess: I can, for example, deny a current obligation to prove Gödel's first incompleteness theorem, even though I might possess the ability to do so at some point in the future. Of course, there are scenarios that make this result seem counterintuitive:

Professor: You ought to turn in your completed homework. ("ought h")

Student: That can't be true, because I haven't even completed the homework yet.

Professor: Well, you can complete it later today, so the obligation I'm imposing now still holds. If you refuse, you will lose homework points.

In this case, "ought h" seems plainly *true*, even though it is not within the student's abilities at the time t of imposition. To make sense of this, we must be precise when considering what, exactly, the professor is stipulating: she does not mean that the student should turn in his homework *now*, but that he should turn in his homework *once it is completed*. Thus, from the professor's point of view, "ought h" is clearly justified; "ought h" is true ($[\Box_D h] \models_{w,f,g} 1$) if and only if for every world $w \in \cap f'(w)$, w is among the best possible worlds just in case w is a world in which the student turns in his homework when it is completed. And there is certainly some metaphysically possible world w in which the student *can* do just that. Accordingly, the disagreement between the professor and her student is due to a miscommunication, and not due to an error in our interpretation of "ought" statements.

We also must be careful not to assume that true "ought" statements—especially those containing indexicals like "now"—impose *eternal* obligations just because the

statements remain true eternally. Consider the following, uttered at time t :

Hannah ought to go water the flowers right now.
 (“ought f ”)

Supposing that this statement is true, the best worlds in our adjusted modal base $f(w)$ are worlds in which Hannah goes and waters the flowers at time t , or at some time shortly after time t . If we were to unpack the sentence in scrupulous detail, it would really say something like this: “Hannah ought to go water the flowers immediately after I finish making this statement—say, sometime between t and t_{+1} —and she ought to water them once.” Even at a subsequent time of evaluation, say at time t_{+2} , “ought f ” *remains* true, because at time t the best possible worlds *were* worlds in which Hannah watered the flowers between time t and time t_{+1} . But the truth of “ought f ” does *not* require that Hannah ought to water the flowers at time t_{+2} . In cases like these, when the time for completion of the obligation has passed, we might adjust the tense and say “ought to have ϕ ” rather than “ought ϕ .” Nevertheless, “ought ϕ ,” when indexed to time t when the obligation is first imposed, is still true.

Finally, we can use this adjusted interpretation to explain the intuition that “ought” statements remain true when an agent renders herself incapable of fulfilling her obligation. Consider a scenario in which I promise at time t to drive my brother to work (from which we derive “ought d ”), but then, at time t' , I slash the car’s tires in a passionate burst of sibling rivalry so that my brother will have to take the bus. At time t I was fully capable of driving my brother to work; the best because I have sabotaged my own efforts to fulfill my obligation.

The question remains as to what consequences this new analysis brings to our understanding of Maria’s original moral dilemma. When Maria promised to meet Patti and promised to meet Quentin (say for simplicity’s sake that she made both of her promises at time t), she committed herself to the truth of the statement “Maria ought to meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee” ($\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$). Since our restricted modal base $f(w)$ includes all the possible worlds that accurately reflect Maria’s abilities at time t , and at time t Maria *was* capable of keeping her promises to Patti and Quentin, it is true that for any world $w \in \cap f(w)$, w is among the best worlds if and only if $w \in (p \ \& \ q)$. At time t' , Maria realizes that her car has broken down and she is no longer capable of keeping both of her promises. So, at t' , there is no longer a possible world w in which Maria can meet Patti and Quentin. But Maria’s abilities at t' are immaterial for the truth of the original “ought” statement $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$. In fact, “Maria ought to meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee” *remains* true at time t' , which is *precisely why* Maria feels herself to be in a moral dilemma.

Because $\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket^{w, f, g}$ is still true, Maria knows that the best worlds are worlds in which she meets both Patti and Quentin. But Maria cannot fulfill both her obligations, and thus is left with the options of meeting Patti but not Quentin ($(p \ \& \ \sim q)$ -worlds), meeting Quentin but not Patti ($(\sim p \ \& \ q)$ -worlds), or meeting neither ($(\sim p \ \& \ \sim q)$ -worlds).

Maria knows that the $(p \ \& \ \sim q)$ -worlds and $(\sim p \ \& \ q)$ -worlds are preferable to the $(\sim p \ \& \ \sim q)$ -worlds, and now must choose whether to meet Patti or meet Quentin. But as we already know, p -worlds and q -worlds are *incomparable*, and thus Maria has no metric by which she can decide which course of action to take. She cannot reach Patti or Quentin to undo one of her promises, and she is now stuck in a situation where she is forced to choose between two equally (but distinctively) unattractive possibilities. This conundrum is the heart of Maria’s moral dilemma—it is not that Maria ought to keep only *one* of her promises but she does not know which, or, as the simple fix would entail, that Maria feels herself puzzlingly relieved of the duty to keep *either* promise. Really, Maria knows that she *ought* to keep *both* promises, and to keep only one will invariably result in a sub-ideal situation. Even if Maria now tells herself that she ought to visit *either* Patti or Quentin, Maria is not actually negating “ought $(p \ \& \ q)$ ” and replacing it with “ought $(p \vee q)$.” Rather, she is accepting the fact that she now only has metaphysical access to sub-ideal possible worlds, and is attempting to make the best of her situation by turning to the possibilities available to her.

This result may seem problematic when considering the assignment of blame or responsibility; it seems counter-intuitive to *blame* Maria for her inevitable failure to meet both Patti and Quentin. After all, it is not Maria’s fault that her car broke down, and it seems a bit unfair to hold Maria responsible when she inevitably fails to show up at either her lunch or coffee meeting. And this might seem to be the unavoidable conclusion if we maintain the truth of our deontic “ought” statement without adjusting the interpretation to account for Maria’s abilities. However, this is too simplistic a view. In actuality, we take many factors into account when assigning blame—our learning of “ought ϕ ” and “ $\sim \phi$ ” is not always immediate grounds for condemnation or punishment. Instead, we might seek an explanation for *why* “ $\sim \phi$ ” is true. It is in seeking this explanation that we would likely take an agent’s ability (or lack thereof) into account, and there is no *prima facie* reason that the statement “ought ϕ ” should have *every* intricacy of our reasoning about guilt, blameworthiness, moral responsibility, etc. built into its truth conditions. Of course, we do want the truth-value of “ought ϕ ” to reflect at least *some* reasonable assumptions about the relationship between “ought” and “can,” which our adjusted interpretation ensures. Thus, the best way to incorporate Kant’s dictum that “ought” implies “can” into

Kratzer's semantics is to properly account for an agent's abilities at the initial imposition of "ought ϕ ," *not* at some subsequent evaluation of "ought ϕ ." The fact that this interpretation of "ought" is insensitive to Maria's inability to fulfill her duties is *exactly* what we need in order to explain our intuition that Maria is facing a moral dilemma, and we should therefore maintain the truth of "Maria ought to meet Patti for lunch and meet Quentin for coffee" ($\llbracket \Box_D (p \ \& \ q) \rrbracket_{w, f, g}$) in Maria's scenario.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Malte Willer for his help with this paper, and to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship for its continued support.

Endnotes

ⁱ Stern, R. (2004). Does "ought" imply "can"? And did Kant think it does? (1), 42–61.

The principle that "ought" implies "can" (traditionally understood to relieve us of obligations that are impossible to fulfill) is traditionally ascribed to Kant, but there is debate as to the exact attribution. See Stern for further discussion.

ⁱⁱ Kratzer, A. (1991). Modality. *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, , 639–650.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kratzer, A. (1981). The Notional Category of Modality. *Words, Worlds, and Contexts: New Approaches to Word Semantics*, 38–74.

The deontic ordering source is derived from the set of ethical norms that governs behavior in world (in this case, is the actual world). The deontic ordering source determines an ordering of possible worlds according to which the best, or most ideal, worlds are those in which agents always behave in accordance with every moral rule. Presumably, the actual world is the most deontically ideal world. See Kratzer for further discussion.

^{iv} Kratzer, A. (1981). The Notional Category of Modality. *Words, Worlds, and Contexts: New Approaches to Word Semantics*, 38–74.

The ability ordering source is derived from the set of metaphysical possibilities available to agents in world w (again, w is the actual world here). Thus, the ability ordering source determines an ordering of possible worlds according to which the best or closest worlds are those in which agents' abilities match their abilities in the actual world. Thus, the actual world is the closest world with respect to the ability ordering source (unlike the deontic ordering source). See Kratzer for further discussion.

^v Kratzer, A. (1991). Modality. *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, 639–650.

^{vi} I am setting aside the possibility of determinism. I also think that there may be some interesting questions to be asked about whether we should consider implicit *epistemic* interpretations of ability modals when interpreting "ought" (i.e., "was capable for all X knows"), but for present purposes I will consider "was (is) capable" to be purely metaphysical.

^{vii} Presumably, two possible worlds could be *identical* with respect to agents' ethical behavior *except* that in one world Maria meets Patti and in the other world Maria meets Quentin. Since this action is the *only* differentiating factor and we have already decided that meeting Patti is no better or worse than meeting Quentin, we cannot determine which world is deontically preferable to the other.

^{viii} Kratzer, A. (1991). Modality. *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, 639–650.

^{ix} We could understand this example as paralleling the paradox of Buridan's ass: a poor donkey is equally hungry and thirsty, and he is equidistant from a bale of hay and bucket of water (say that the donkey knows "ought (eat \vee drink).") Since the donkey will always go to whichever is closer, he fails to go to either and subsequently dies (he fails to derive either "ought eat" or "ought drink" from his knowledge of the initial disjunctive ought statement).

Works Cited

Kratzer, A. (1981). The Notional Category of Modality. *Words, Worlds, and Contexts: New Approaches to Word Semantics*, 38–74.

Kratzer, A. (1991). Modality. *Semantics: An International Handbook of Contemporary Research*, 639–650.

Stern, R. (2004). Does "ought" imply "can"? And did Kant think it does? *Utilitas*, 16(1), 42–61.

John Paul II and Political Catholicism in Chile

Melissa Sarmiento, *Cornell University*

Melissa graduated from Cornell University in May 2016 with a major in history and minors in German and Latin American studies. Her research interests include modern and colonial Latin America, and analyzing how film redefines our understanding of historical events. She currently lives in Tokyo, Japan.

Abstract

In this excerpt of my Mellon Mays essay, *Political Catholicism and Chile's Path Toward Human Rights* during the Pinochet Regime, I explore how John Paul II influenced Chilean politics by advocating for conservative human rights ideology and rejecting liberation theology. General Augusto Pinochet held power in Chile from 1973–1990. Among other things, the Pinochet administration was responsible for egregious human rights violations and a rise in poverty levels. John Paul II visited the country in 1987. During his visit he delivered a series of addresses that both defended human rights and attacked the government for violating them. In this excerpt, I analyze these speeches closely and demonstrate that though the Pope claimed that the Catholic Church was a politically neutral institution, his visit to Chile proved that in reality it functioned as a powerful, conservative political entity.

In this excerpt of my Mellon Mays essay,ⁱ I use Chile as a case study to analyze the political involvement of the Catholic Church during the papacy of John Paul II (1978–2005). John Paul II rejected liberation theology—the idea that the Catholic Church had an obligation to help those living in poverty overcome socioeconomic inequality—in support of human rights. During the late twentieth century, human rights were still a nascent, undefined political ideology. The Pope used this to his advantage to cement the position of the Catholic Church by linking conservatism to human rights discourse, a sharp turn from the socialism that was associated with liberation theology.

During the Pinochet administration (1973–1990), high poverty levels and egregious human rights violations plagued Chile. John Paul II visited the country on April 1987. The visitation, masked as a religious undertaking to bring the word of God to the country, was a testament to the conservatism of the Church and human rights ideology, and the Church's rejection of liberation theology. While in Chile, the Pope delivered a series of addresses that focused on the importance of human rights, the cessation of violence, and helping the poor improve their socioeconomic status through work. Despite the Pope's claims of political neutrality, his addresses in Chile were an example of the Catholic Church pursuing its own political agenda.

On the Cessation of Violence

The Pope's visit to Chile marked the first time since General Augusto Pinochet assumed power in 1973 that mass gatherings were permitted in the country.ⁱⁱ By 1987, Brazil and Argentina had, for the most part, completed the transition from right-wing military dictatorships to democratically elected governments, ending the Dirty Wars that were responsible for the deaths and disappearances of thousands. These transitions meant that Chile was politically isolated in the region, as it was the only country in the Southern Cone that was still ruled by an oppressive regime whose anti-communist excuse was becoming increasingly irrelevant as Cold War tensions and fears waned.ⁱⁱⁱ Thus, although John Paul II visited Argentina and Uruguay on the same trip to Latin America, his presence in Chile had much more political significance because his pro-human rights message—and its implications—directly targeted Pinochet and other military dictatorships that still ruled in Central America.

For Pinochet, the Pope's visit was all about the possibility of gaining political leverage in the eyes of the Vatican. In preparation for the Pontiff's visit, the Regime conducted several random searches and increased police presence throughout Chilean cities. The government actively tried to create a façade that depicted an idyllic Chile with happy, working people.^{iv} Yet, despite the efforts to fabricate a positive image of Chile, the reality soon surfaced during the Pope's visit. As he spoke with individuals from various social strata, John Paul II began to receive complaints about the atrocities of the regime and the poor working conditions that people faced.^v Matters became worse during the address at O'Higgins Park on April 3, 1987: more than 600,000 people had gathered to hear the Pope speak, but violence erupted among the masses, giving the Pope's call for the cessation of violence immediate importance.^{vi}

At O'Higgins Park, the Pope condemned political violence and showed solidarity toward political subversives by alluding to the Vicariate of Solidarity (known as the *Vicaría de la Solidaridad* in Spanish, from here on referred to as Vicariate)—an organization founded by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez in 1976 that functioned as a safe haven for intellectuals to discuss political instability in Chile.^{vii} John Paul II's recognition of the work of the Vicariate in front of hundreds of thousands of people, including government figures, was significant because it was a public acknowledgement that as Pope, he was aware of the dangerous mission that the organization had undertaken to defend human rights and combat economic and political oppression in Chile. The address at O'Higgins Park was essentially a papal endorsement that not only helped establish the Vicariate as a champion of human rights; it also legitimized its political

and religious advocacy in the eyes of the Vatican, and therefore the world. By endorsing the Vicariate, a religious organization with a firm stance against the government, the Pope confirmed that the human rights violations in the country were, indeed, concerning, and that the dictatorship was to blame for most, if not all, of Chile's problems.^{viii}

In addition to defending the Vicariate, John Paul II said that it was in everyone's best interest to build an environment where dialogue between political parties was possible, adding that dialogue amongst dissenting opinions "was not foreign to the recognized democratic tradition of the Chilean people."^{ix} With these words, the Pope alluded to Chile's democratic past, which was thwarted by the coup.^x At O'Higgins Park, the Pope further argued for the reconciliation of the government and political subversives, saying that "reconciliation is expressed in the convergence of people's will to achieve the common good, this high objective that bestows its purpose to the functions of the political community."^{xi} Through these words, John Paul II emphasized that politics were a result of the will of the people and that a government should always respond to this will because a ruling party only existed as long as the people allowed it to do so. Since the Regime was no longer defending the interests of the majority of the population—and it arguably never did—the Pope's words were a direct attack on the Pinochet administration.

In criticizing the regime, the Pope emphasized that Chile must say no to violence because "reconciliation, as it is seen by the Church, is the genuine path to Christian liberation . . . Chile cannot progress by heightening divisions. It is time for forgiveness and for reconciliation."^{xii} Although the Pope suggested that reconciliation was needed for divine purposes, this statement was clearly political. In this case, reconciliation meant the end of the military dictatorship and the democratization of the country, two goals that the Church supported in order to bring political and economic stability to Chile and to advance its pro-human rights agenda. This strong emphasis on reconciliation also showed that the Pope was against radical change—a political tactic to which some leftist liberation theologians subscribed—and that, instead, he favored peace under an established system of government.^{xiii} Thus, the call to end violence was applicable not just to the government, but to political opponents as well.

On Chile's Economy and the Right to Work

One of the focuses of the Pope's visit to Chile was the country's economy and its egregious poverty levels. In an address to the Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, from here on referred to as CEPAL) John

Paul II discussed Chile's slow economic progress and called for public and private economic institutions, as well as the developed nations, to fund programs that would aid the socioeconomic liberation of Chileans who were living in "an intolerable economic, social, and political oppression."^{xiv} The Pope cautioned, however, that

“. . . the state must not replace the initiative and responsibility that individuals and social minorities are capable of assuming in their respective fields. On the contrary, it [the state] must actively favor these areas of liberty, but, at the same time, it should organize its performance and guard its adequate incorporation in the common good."^{xv}

By outlining the role of the state in helping people achieve economic freedom, the Pope was making a reference to the high unemployment rates in the country, and claiming that although the government was not responsible for whether or not an individual was willing to work, it was responsible for creating jobs and other activities that allowed people to earn a living, something that was not happening in Chile; in 1987, even though the economy was showing signs of recovery after its crash five years earlier, over two fifths of Chilean families remained poor.^{xvi} Even if the Regime wanted the Pope to believe that the economy was recovering and that working conditions were great, the high poverty rates proved otherwise.^{xvii}

In order to emphasize how the state should not attempt to keep the poor from engaging in their own economic salvation, John Paul II warned the CEPAL against welfare, saying that while subsidizing housing, nutrition, and health was necessary for the poor to survive, these actions were not laudable because they were not as useful to the poor as offering them work. "Work," the Pope said, is the way that ". . . a worker takes control of his destiny, integrates himself into society as a whole, and even obtains help [welfare] not as charity, but, in a way, as the personal and material fruit of his efforts."^{xviii} In this context, of course, what was *useful* to the poor was highly subjective, and these words revealed how economically conservative the Pope was: he condemned welfare because it was preventing the poor from attaining divine salvation. As the Pope saw it, salvation was reserved for those who actively tried to partake in the global order by earning a living. Seemingly, he ignored how difficult it could be for the poor to partake in an economic system that had ignored them for decades.

John Paul II's speech to the CEPAL assembly was a clear rejection of liberation theology: although the Pope agreed that certain economic practices of developed nations were largely responsible for underdevelopment in Latin America, he also stressed that the poor were, to a certain extent, to blame for their own situation because they were

not *trying* to contribute to the economy and were instead hoping for the state to grant them socioeconomic relief. This was a significant break from liberation theologians that saw the poor as victims of the developed world and its economic ambitions. They did not really believe that working would help improve the living conditions of the poor because it would not change the fact that their oppression was an insult to human dignity.^{xix} Through the CEPAL address, John Paul II expressed disagreement with this socialist stance, suggesting instead that the poor could actually change their socioeconomic status and contribute to their own progress—and that of their country—if they worked.^{xx} The Pope concluded the CEPAL address by saying that “we [Chile] should not rest until we have not made it possible, for every inhabitant of the region, to access that unique right . . . the right to work.”^{xxi} He approached his stance toward the poor from a human rights perspective, yet he claimed that *everyone*, and not just the poor, deserved access to work. Once again, this was a clear division from many liberation theologians that believed that only the poor needed help, as they were the ones that, historically, had been at an economic disadvantage. By suggesting that the country help the poor through work and not by granting them welfare benefits, John Paul II offered an alternative to the socialism that characterized liberationist thought.^{xxii} Additionally, the Pope showed that he supported human rights because unlike liberation theology, these were easily malleable and allowed him to be politically conservative without explicitly rejecting the class struggles of the poor. Specifically, John Paul II’s call for work to be the method to relieve poverty showed that he did not believe that the Church had any specific duty to help the poor in their class struggle; rather it needed to help them overcome socioeconomic adversity by guiding them to find their rightful place in society within the established governments.

On the Church’s Political Involvement

John Paul II’s speeches in Chile were disguised as the Church’s divine mission to foster peace and promulgate the values of the Gospel amongst its constituents. The Pope explained that the Church was encouraging human rights ideology not because of any political affiliations, but because human rights were a mandate of God, and therefore should be respected as such. This was clearly illustrated by the address to Chilean politicians, given on April 3, 1987:

“The Church . . . does not identify itself in any way with the political community, nor is it attached to any political system. However, it is also true that the Church, as part of the mission it has been given by Jesus Christ, must spread the light of the Gospel over current realities, including political activity, so that ethics and morals that highlight the transcendental character of the *individual* and the need

to protect his human rights are increasingly more prominent in society . . . The political community is a function of the human being and must serve him.”^{xxiii}

In this speech, John Paul II underscored the Church’s political neutrality, but he also stressed that should any political activity contradict the mission that God has given the Church to advocate for the common good and salvation from sin, it *must* interfere in order to steer nations in the correct path. Since the audience of this particular address consisted exclusively of politicians, the Pope’s words in this case could be interpreted as a justification for Catholic involvement in Chile. John Paul II was operating under the technicality that the Church was not a political entity, but when innocent individuals were being harmed, as was the case in Chile, it was the Church’s *duty* to ameliorate political differences, attenuate violence, and instill peace. The pope’s reference to ethics, morals and inalienable rights had a dual meaning: not only did it reiterate John Paul II’s support for human rights in a country that very obviously did not respect them, but it also showed that as pontiff, it was his responsibility to try to appeal to the governments that were perpetuating their violation. The CEPAL address revealed how as Pope, John Paul II was able to discredit liberationist thought and its emphasis on the poor, and, instead, claim that economic conservatism and governmental democracy were the Vatican-approved methods to obtain salvation. Under the excuse that the Church could only involve itself in politics when governments were not following the correct path to salvation, the Pope established the Vatican as a whole and Jesus himself to be both democratic and conservative.

Conclusion

The Pope’s visit had an unquestionable impact on Chile. In June 1987, two months after the Pontiff left the country, bishops began to encourage voter registration in hopes that if citizens voted, they would be able to bring the dictatorship to an end. Their efforts were rewarded when Chile voted Pinochet out of office through the 1988 plebiscite, where over fifty percent of those who participated chose to end a regime that had been in power for fifteen years.^{xxiv}

In analyzing the changes that the papal visit caused within Chile, it is important to understand the conditions that allowed for these changes to occur. First, the Pope went to Chile at a time when many people, including Conservative Catholics who had once supported the dictatorship, were disillusioned with its human rights violations and its ailing economy.^{xxv} By 1987, the people of Chile were ready to hear the Pope’s message because the dictatorship had been losing support for several years. Second, the Pope

represented the Vatican, and this gave him an international authority that local organizations like the Vicariate would never have. It was easier for the Pope to speak against the regime because unlike the clergy and the lay Catholics that were living in the country, he did not fear any retaliation from the government.

Using Chile as an example reveals that John Paul II criticized liberation theology not because it was too political, but because it associated itself with the wrong political ideologies. The Catholic Church perceived liberation theology to be Marxist and socialist, and while this may have been true when the ideology first gained political momentum, the reality was that liberation theology involved the Church in a class struggle with the lower classes in which the Pope did not want to partake. Liberation theology was actually rejected because John Paul II was a staunch conservative, and because he, not God, was against radicalism and socialism. The Pope always claimed that he—and the Church as a whole—was only a messenger of God, but his speeches and actions proved otherwise: they were powerful political moves that unquestionably changed the history of Chile by outlining the difference between what was right and what was wrong in the eyes of the Catholic Church. It is ironic, then, that John Paul II attacked liberation theology for being too focused on politics and not on divinity when neither liberation theology nor human rights were really ever about religion. Instead, both were political ideologies that used Catholicism as a medium to facilitate involvement in global affairs, and they must be recognized as such.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship at Cornell University for helping me navigate the realm of academia and for providing a space where the fellows could let their independent research projects bloom. In addition, thank you to Professor Martin Geyer at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München for introducing me to the topic of this essay and helping me solidify my research interests. To the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal staff, thank you for providing a platform where I could share my research. Finally, I would especially like to thank Professor Raymond Craib at Cornell University for supporting and encouraging my research from the very beginning. Whether we were discussing Latin American history, writing techniques, or simply talking about life in general, your guidance was an invaluable part of this essay, and, more importantly, my academic career as a whole. Thank you.

Endnotes

- ⁱ This essay references and cites works in Spanish. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.
- ⁱⁱ Lake Sagaris, “Chile prepares for Pope’s visit,” *Times* (London, England) Apr. 1, 1987. Accessed on July 1, 2015 on <http://bit.ly/1VtrpcF>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Stern, Steve J., *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973–1988* (United States of America: Duke University Press, 2006), 354.
- ^{iv} *Ibid.*, 338.
- ^v *Ibid.*
- ^{vi} This proved to be a disturbance of the crowd staged by the Regime in an attempt to show that its practices were valid because political insurgents were violent. See Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*.
- ^{vii} Founded in 1976 by Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, the Vicariate helped raise awareness of human rights violations in Chile at a time when human rights discourse was gaining political momentum in discussions against military dictatorships. It also functioned as a safe space for political subversives to share their ideas and to express solidarity towards one another, and as a place where people could organize to discuss strategies against the Regime. Because the Vicariate was established as an official ministry of the Archdiocese of Santiago, it was difficult for the government to silence it; any action taken against the Vicariate was an action against the Catholic Church as a whole. In 1983 Juan Francisco Fresno replaced Cardinal Silva as the Archbishop of Santiago. Although his conservative political views vastly differed from his liberal predecessor’s, Cardinal Fresno continued to support many of the programs that Cardinal Silva had initiated, including the Vicariate. See Michael Fleet and Brian H. Smith, *The Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996).
- ^{viii} Papa Juan Pablo II “Discurso del Papa en el Parque O’Higgins” *Seis discursos del Papa Juan Pablo II en Chile (textos íntegros)* (Santiago, Chile: Centro de Estudios Públicos, 1987). Accessed July 6, 2015 on <http://vp5qw4uf5x.search.serialssolutions.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu>. Professor Raymond Craib from Cornell University suggested that the Vicariate was not necessarily “subversive.” However, I have chosen to refer to it as such because I believe that their political activities were problematic for the Regime. Pinochet was unable to attack the Vicariate directly because it was protected by the Vatican, but this did not mean that he did not try to coerce it into closing down. See Fleet and Smith, *The Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*.
The political activities of the Latin American Church posed a great danger for dictatorships because the continent was overwhelmingly Catholic, and the people were therefore persuaded by what the clergy did. This was demonstrated by the assassination of Archbishop Romero in 1980. To this, the Pope responded by showing solidarity toward the people of El Salvador who were being persecuted by a right-wing military regime. The Pope said that the Archbishop’s death was the result of “criminal actions” that were hindering the process of political reconciliation in the country. See: Papa Juan Pablo II, *Carta del Santo Padre al Episcopado de El Salvador* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 1980). Also: Papa Juan Pablo II, *Audiencia General* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980). The first document is a letter that the Pope wrote to the Episcopate of El Salvador in response to Romero’s assassination, and the second one is a General Audience where the Pope addressed the event and its significance.
- ^{ix} Papa Juan Pablo II, “Discurso del Papa en el Parque O’Higgins.”
- ^x A right-wing military coup overthrew Salvador Allende’s government in 1973. Allende, who had been democratically elected, was leftist. After the coup, Pinochet assumed power in Chile and ruled along with a military junta. See Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*.
- ^{xi} Papa Juan Pablo II, “Discurso del Papa en el Parque O’Higgins.”

- xii Papa Juan Pablo II, "Discurso del Papa en la Cepal" *Seis discursos del Papa Juan Pablo II en Chile (textos íntegros)* (Santiago, Chile: Centro de Estudios Públicos, 1987). Accessed July 6, 2015 on <http://vp5qw4uf5x.search.serialssolutions.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu>.
- xiii Many liberation theologians believed that only radical change would have an impact on the socioeconomic status of the poor. Notably, Gustavo Gutiérrez's early writings focused strongly on the need for a social revolution. Gutiérrez was one of the most influential voices of Latin American liberation theology. See Gutiérrez, Gustavo *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas* 8a. edición (Centro de estudios y publicaciones: Lima, Perú, 1991).
- xiv Papa Juan Pablo II, "Discurso del Papa en la Cepal."
- xv Ibid.
- xvi Between 1977 and 1980, the Chilean economy witnessed a boost due to imports, easy credit from international institutions, and a stable currency exchange rate. This economic "miracle," however, was not to last, because it concentrated the wealth within a few local institutions that assumed that these would always be able to count on international loans to maintain their stability. This model was unsustainable, and by 1982, Chile's economy began to suffer. See Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*.
- xvii Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 350.
- xviii Papa Juan Pablo II, "Discurso del Papa en la Cepal."
- xix A key aspect of liberation theology in the twentieth century was dependency theory, or the idea that Latin America was exploited by developed nations in an attempt to fuel capitalism and their own material gain. In doing so, they were also creating inequality throughout Latin America. See Boff, Leonardo, *Iglesia: carisma y poder: ensayos de teología militante* (Bogotá, Colombia: Indo-American Press Service, 1985), 37. Also: Paul E. Sigmund, "Gustavo Gutiérrez (b. 1928): Commentary" in *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism on Law, Politics, and Human Nature*, eds. John Witte Jr. and Frank S. Alexander (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007).
- xx Edward Barrett, *Persons and Liberal Democracy: The Ethical and Political Thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 94.
- xxi Papa Juan Pablo II, "Discurso del Papa en la Cepal."
- xxii It is important to note that while some branches of liberation theology were indeed Marxist, this was not always the case. Many liberation theologians emphasized change through established institutions of power rather than social revolutions. The Vatican attacked liberation theology because it was Marxist, but this was not necessarily well-deserved criticism considering the various aspects of liberation theology. See Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Instruction on certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"* (Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984), preface.
- xxiii Papa Juan Pablo II, "Discurso del Papa a los Políticos." *Seis discursos del Papa Juan Pablo II en Chile (textos íntegros)* (Santiago, Chile: Centro de Estudios Públicos, 1987). Accessed July 6, 2015 on <http://vp5qw4uf5x.search.serialssolutions.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu>. Emphasis added.
- xxiv Although the majority of those who participated on the plebiscite voted to end Pinochet's Regime, a solid forty-three percent voted for the dictator to continue his rule in Chile. This shows that while a sizable majority of people opposed the Regime, not everyone in Chile was against the dictator's policies. See: Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*.
- xxv When Pinochet first ascended to power, he had a lot of support, particularly from the middle- and land-owning classes who disliked Allende's leftist politics. See Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*.

Works Cited

- Barrett, Edward. *Persons and Liberal Democracy: The Ethical and Political Thought of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Iglesia, Carisma y Poder: Ensayos De Eclesiología Militante*. Bogotá: Indo-American Press Service, 1985.
- Fleet, Michael, and Smith, Brian H. *The Catholic Church and Democracy in Chile and Peru*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *Teología De La Liberación: Perspectivas*. 8. ed., según la 6. ed., rev. y corr. Lima, Perú: Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1991.
- Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation."* Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1984.
- Papa Juan Pablo II, *Audiencia General*. Vatican City, Italy: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1980.
- Papa Juan Pablo II. *Carta del Santo Padre al Episcopado de El Salvador*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana: 1980.
- Papa Juan Pablo II. *Seis discursos del Papa Juan Pablo II en Chile (textos íntegros)*. Santiago, Chile: Centro de Estudios Públicos, 1987.
- Sagaris, Lake. "Chile prepares for Pope's visit," *Times*. London, England, Apr. 1, 1987.
- Stern, Steve J. *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggles in Pinochet's Chile, 1973-1988*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Witte, John, and Alexander, Frank S. *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism on Law, Politics, and Human Nature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

To See Is to Feel: Feminist Symbols of Perception in Woolf and Lispector

Georgia Soares, *University of Southern California*

Georgia Soares graduated in May 2016 from the University of Southern California with a major in English (concentration in creative writing) and a double minor in French and comparative literature. She is interested in the intersection of arts and culture, education, and human rights. Georgia spent the summer in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Humanity in Action fellowship, and is currently working as an English teacher in Nice, France under the French Ministry of Education's TAPIF program.

Abstract

This article is the introduction to a thesis that examines the symbolism of windows in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* and what they reveal about women's position in society. In both novels, the window symbolizes a limited mode of perception imposed upon women by patriarchal society, which creates an oppositional separation between male and female spaces in the narratives. This analysis also particularly examines Hélène Cixous' theory of *écriture féminine* with respect to Lispector and Woolf's novels.

Myopia was her fault, her lead, her imperceptible native veil. Strange: she could see that she could not see, but she could not see clearly. Every day there was refusal, but who could say where the refusal came from: who was refusing, the world, or she?

—Hélène Cixous, *Veils*

Introduction

In a Brazilian newspaper column written in 1952, Clarice Lispector reacts to Virginia Woolf's fictional story of Judith Shakespeare narrated in *A Room of One's Own*. Lispector calls Judith "the other Shakespeare" and declares that the only difference between her and her brother William is that, "because of nature's kind fate, she would wear skirts" (*Correio Feminino* 125). Lispector identifies Judith as a victim of a socially constructed gender difference which robs the woman of her ability to pursue a writing career. Like Woolf, Lispector discusses in her article the consequences that this gender difference would cause on Judith's destiny: the girl would not have access to education, to books, or any prospect of pursuing a career because her worth was inherently and exclusively tied to her marriageability. Lispector then quotes Woolf's famous observation: "Who shall measure the heat and violence of the poet's heart when caught and tangled in a woman's body?" and closes the column by emphasizing that Judith's story is one that never existed (1). Writing on this topic, both Lispector and Woolf express their interest in engaging with the following question: what

happens when one tries to see life from the position of a woman, as informed by herself and her society?

This is one of the rare, direct links that exist between writers Clarice Lispector and Virginia Woolf. It is also an overt expression of feminist critique rarely found in Lispector's writings. Although separated by a hemisphere, an ocean, and a generation, Lispector and Woolf's works have been in conversation with each other since Lispector's debut as a literary writer in 1943. American translator Gregory Rabassa remarked that Lispector "looked like Marlene Dietrich and wrote like Virginia Woolf" (70), while Brazilian critic Lêdo Ivo recounted that, "under the impact of her book, [he] felt that [he] was standing before Virginia Woolf" (161). Yet, it remains uncommon that readers of Woolf know of Lispector, and vice versa, in part because Lispector's oeuvre has remained little studied in the United States and England.

Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* (1943) are remarkable examples of these authors' literary achievements in using the power of language to construct complex social critiques. In both novels, each writer explores and questions modes of seeing and perceiving life for a woman in the first half of the twentieth century as a way to create awareness about the social constrictions women faced in their time periods. *Near to the Wild Heart* is an atypical bildungsroman that recounts the story of Joana's decision to relinquish participating in her society in the name of self-liberation. The fragmentation of her character presents her as existing within society only insofar as she is obliged to, preferring most of the time to believe herself an independent, wild entity of unconstrained, "pure life." Joana is a major contrast to the middle-aged Clarissa Dalloway, who Woolf chooses to present also as a character fragmented between her past and present, but one who ultimately accepts society's impositions upon her self-definition, and strives to retain an outward appearance of composure so as not to give away her fragmented self. Each novel makes a distinct statement about the stage in which women find themselves in their fight for liberation, and a comparative study of these two novels helps to better understand the reasons for Woolf's historical, realistic vision and Lispector's utopian envisioning.

Despite the fact that Virginia Woolf and Clarice Lispector come from disparate socio-historical and cultural backgrounds, there exist similarities between their novels and in their struggles as women writers. Woolf is a canonical figure in the English-speaking world and a major feminist figure from the first half of the twentieth century. Born in the Victorian period in 1882, Woolf grew up in a society that sustained a deep divide between the sexes: while her

brothers were educated at Cambridge, Woolf and her sisters were lucky enough to be homeschooled, and grew up with a sharp awareness of the expectations of marriage and motherhood imposed upon them (Harris 46). In a diary entry, Virginia Woolf admitted that, had her father lived longer, she would have been unable to write books because of his moral and intellectual Victorian judgments that limited women to domestic lives (*A Writer's Diary* 138). Although part of a more modern generation, Lispector also faced a variety of challenges for being a woman (and) writer in society. Born in 1920 in Tchetchnik, Ukraine, Lispector would immigrate with her Jewish parents to Brazil as a baby and by the end of her life would be considered the best woman writer Brazil had ever produced. As a young adult, Lispector sacrificed the debut of her writing career by marrying Maury Gurgel Valente, a Brazilian diplomat and ambassador, immediately after publishing *Near to the Wild Heart*. For many years she dedicated herself to playing the role of an ambassador, entertaining Valente's diplomatic circles much like Clarissa entertains Richard Dalloway's political circles. Despite the financial comfort and social status that came with being Valente's wife, she eventually divorced and returned to Brazil as a single mother of two boys, with the goal of pursuing her writing career full time. From then on she perpetually suffered financial difficulties, being constantly cheated by her publishers, and never able to make a living as a fiction writer despite having been published in several languages and achieving canonical status even before her death.

Unlike *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Near to the Wild Heart* remains little studied even by major critics like Hélène Cixous, the most pivotal figure in the study of Lispector's literature to date, possibly because it is the least indicative of Lispector's more prominent postmodernist texts that come to define the ensemble of her work later in her career. Studies of Lispector's works have been particularly scarce within American criticism likely as a consequence of scant translation, and little representation of non-Hispanic authors from Latin America. It was not until 2012 that all of Lispector's works gained a complete series of translation in the English language, an endeavor pioneered by her American biographer Benjamin Moser. Earl Fitz is another notable example of a contemporary American critic who has written extensively on Lispector, including *Sexuality and Being in the Poststructuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector: The Différance of Desire* (2001), and dozens of articles and book chapters. Most of the scholarship on Lispector is based on the frameworks of structuralism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, existential philosophy, and feminist theories. Prior to the 1970s, most criticism revolved around existential thematics and issues of artistic representation (Lindstrom 43). The emergence of a feminist dimension to Lispector's works then followed as a reaction to the new feminist theories in

France and the United States, notably under the influence of Hélène Cixous.

It goes without saying that Virginia Woolf has been exponentially more studied in American criticism (and beyond) than Lispector. This research aims to fill part of a lacuna in the literary studies of both authors by offering an in-depth analysis of a symbol that has not yet been examined at length (in contrast to the symbolism of the sea, for instance), and what it reveals about social issues related to gender inequality. In the vast world of Woolfian criticism, I position this analysis at the intersection of works like Claudia Olk's *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*, which provides an in-depth analysis of windows, mirrors and veils, in the works of Woolf, and Jean Wyatt's "Avoiding Self-Definition: In Defense of Women's Right to Merge (Julia Kristeva and Mrs Dalloway)," which traces the feminist, psychoanalytical aspects of *Mrs. Dalloway*. My objective is also to revive and expand the dialogue between Lispector and Woolf's novels. Although Lispector was often compared to Virginia Woolf in her lifetime (Lindstrom 44), comparative analyses between the two are scarce. The few available have examined issues of otherness, silence, the literary epiphany, *écriture féminine*, and the relationship between their works and European art. My contribution is to offer a new assessment of *écriture féminine* in the works of both writers, while also examining the aesthetics of vision and issues of androgyny in both novels.

Cixous was the first critic to introduce Lispector to a French audience, and a major driving force behind the discovery of Lispector's literature in the United States and elsewhere in Europe. She has presented Lispector as the emblem of *écriture féminine*, and provided a major overview of Lispector's literature in *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (1990), *To Live the Orange* (1979), and "Coming to Writing" and *Other Essays* (1991), among other titles, even before translations were widely available in English. Cixous' tracing of *écriture féminine* in Lispector's works serves as an important feminist approach to understanding gender issues present in Lispector's oeuvre. First it is important to understand what *écriture féminine* entails. According to Cixous, Western thought practices have perpetuated a systematic repression of women's experience by shutting down access to and engagement with the unconscious in masculinist society. Male-centric systems legitimize only the rationalization that originates from the male conscious. Cixous defines the conscious as male and unconscious as female according to Freudian psychoanalysis (Blyth, Sellers 25). Cixous then offers *écriture féminine* as a practice that emblemizes feminine expression free of any male-imposed oppression. Verena Conley defines *écriture féminine* as:

a working term referring less to a writing practiced mainly by women than, in a broader logical category, to textual ways of spending. It suggests a writing, based on an encounter with another—be it a body, a piece of writing, a social dilemma, a moment of passion, that leads to an undoing of hierarchies and oppositions that determine the limits of most conscious life. By virtue of its poetry that comes from the rapport of the body to the social world, *écriture féminine* disrupts social practices in the ways it both discerns and literally rewrites them. (vii–viii)

By rejecting a systematized use of linear, coherent argumentation and realist narrative techniques reflective of a masculine style, *l'écriture féminine* invites the practice of a fragmented, poetic, nonlinear style open to the expression of the unconscious and the subjective. In this way, Cixous connects the repression of women's bodies and desires with the repression of women's language; her proposed solution is to call for a practice of *écriture féminine* as a means of allowing women and men to access language from the unconscious, feminine source. In Cixous' model, if women regain access to their desire and to language, this return of the repressed will challenge and restructure phallogocentric society.

Near to the Wild Heart and *Mrs. Dalloway* use the window as a symbol for the imposition of a patriarchal mode of perception that dictates the ways in which women may interpret their role in society, and by extension themselves, much like Cixous argues that masculinist language is imposed upon women. Part I of this thesis, "Windows in *Mrs. Dalloway*," examines how the window frames and limits Clarissa's ability to perceive and examine the inner workings of her society, and how it creates a separation between male/active and female/passive spaces as an opposition to each other. Throughout this section I also trace Woolf's use of *écriture féminine*, and argue that she deliberately engages in and resists this practice as a way of punctuating the impossibility of achieving a true sense of liberation in patriarchal society. Part II of my thesis offers a parallel analysis of the windows as symbols in Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*, with a focus on examining how Joana achieves liberation from this mode of perception. I analyze the differences between Clarissa and Joana's relationship with the window, examining the issue of intergenerational changes in both novels. Finally, Part III, "Windows and Androgynous Perception," addresses the role of the male protagonist in each novel, and their own relation to the window. I show that both Woolf and Lispector were interested in examining the interplay of masculine and feminine attributes in male and female characters, and link this to Woolf's concept of the androgynous mind. In my conclusion, I challenge the gender dichotomy that *écriture féminine* might perpetuate,

and raise the following questions: how may we move towards a greater acceptance of gender fluidity, and how do Woolf and Lispector address this concern?

Through their practice of *écriture féminine*, both Woolf and Lispector exemplify the ways in which women can liberate themselves through language, but these texts also offer a nuanced challenge of Cixous' theory, as they emphasize not the feminine writing's relation to the female body but rather employ a more humanistic approach to allowing a fuller expression of both masculine and feminine attributes in men and women. This comparative analysis between Woolf and Lispector's works puts two feminist, modernist writers in dialogue with each other, reinforcing the universal nature of the issues that these two works illuminate. Comparing and contrasting two novels that reflect realities of different countries and generations helps to elucidate the differences in possibilities and obstacles that Clarissa and Joana face in their respective narratives. It is in Joana's fearless embrace of an independent search for freedom that we better understand Clarissa's struggle to rise above the social constrictions that her society imposes on her, each character being a product of their particular environment. Whereas Joana lives in Brazil, a new country still open to the formation of its national identity, Clarissa is part of a centuries-old tradition of social order and customs that define British society. This research aims to delineate this sociocultural bridge that exists between these two disparate but essentially connected worlds.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Elda Maria Roman and Beatrice Bennett, my thesis advisors, for mentoring me throughout the development of this project, and Dr. George Sanchez, U.S.C.'s MMUF co-coordinator, for supporting me in all my research endeavors.

Works Cited

- Blyth, Ian, and Susan Sellers. *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*. New York; London: Continuum, 2004. Print.
- Cixous, Hélène, and Deborah Jenson. "Coming to Writing" and *Other Essays*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991. Print.
- . *Reading with Clarice Lispector*. Ed. Verena Andermatt Conley. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1990. Print.
- . *Vivre L'orange*. Paris: Des Femmes, 1979. Print.
- Conley, Verena Andermatt. *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. Print.

- Fitz, Earl E. *Sexuality and Being in the Poststructuralist Universe of Clarice Lispector: The Différance of Desire*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. Web.
- Harris, Alexandra. *Virginia Woolf*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011. Print.
- Ivo, Lêdo. *Melhores Crônicas de Lêdo Ivo*. Ed. Gilberto Mendonça Teles. São Paulo: Global Editora, 2004. Print.
- Lindstrom, Naomi. "Clarice Lispector: Articulating Woman's Experience." *Chasqui* 8.1 (1978): 43–52. Web.
- Lispector, Clarice. *Near to the Wild Heart*. Trans. Alison Entrekin. New York: New Directions, 2012. Print.
- . *Correio Feminino*. Comp. Aparecida Maria Nunes. Rio de Janeiro: Rocco, 2006. Print.
- Moser, Benjamin. *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- Olk, Claudia. *Virginia Woolf and the Aesthetics of Vision*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2014. Print.
- Rabassa, Gregory. *If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Dyscontents: A Memoir*. New York: New Directions, 2005. Print.
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. London: Vintage, 2004. Print.
- . *A Writer's Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*. London: Hogarth Press, 1953. Web.
- Wyatt, Jean. "Avoiding Self-definition: In Defense of Women's Right to Merge (Julia Kristeva and Mrs Dalloway)." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13.1–2 (1986): 115–26. Web.

Black Female Sexuality and Gender Subjectivity in Ballroom Culture: Sexual Expression beyond Respectability Politics

Jermaine Stewart Jr./Stewart-Webb, *Grinnell College*

Jermaine Andrew Stewart Jr./Stewart-Webb is an alum of Grinnell College who majored in English and French. He aspires to get his master's in English literature and his PhD in English with a focus in African American literature and/or African American studies. He would like to eventually become a tenured professor within this field, all while pursuing other academic and general interests. He is also a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow.

Abstract

In the late 1900s, Ballroom subculture emerged as a transgressive space for queer and gender non-conforming people of color to escape racist white spaces as well as heteronormative ones. Because the gender system of this underground subculture does not reinforce the societal gender binary, participants within the scene do not have to adhere to notions of traditional black respectability politics that permeate the public sphere and the black American psyche. While in the public sphere black women are constantly under the surveillance of others vis-à-vis their physical bodies and are haunted by historical stereotypes that paint them as either hypersexual or asexual. Through critical analysis of documentary and extensive ethnographic research with members within the Ballroom scenes both in the U.S. and overseas, I have come to the conclusion that black women can temporarily escape the violence of public spaces through participation in this contemporary subculture. The Ballroom scene also allows black women to perform their sexuality and gender in a commemorative way.

From as early as the nineteenth century, images and representations of black female sexuality and gender have depicted black women as immoral, hypersexual, and asexual. To push against these ideals, progressive black Baptist women of the 1900s and 1920s created a mode of self-representation, deemed the “politics of respectability,” a term coined by historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, to counter the demonizing white supremacist representations that permeated popular culture and the American psyche (Higginbotham 185–187). Through their respectability politics, black Baptist women reinforced dominant white Victorian values of self-help in order to prove to their white counterparts that they were morally superior. Implicit within respectability politics, however, is the idea that black women need to uphold respectable behavior and a respectable self-image in order to alter the structure of American systematic race relations. This idea compelled both black men and women to police the sexuality of black people, specifically black women, in order to show white people that their stereotypes were wrong. Consequently, many black women upheld the very same respectable behaviors

and values that white supremacy had used to exclude them. In this sense, the politics of respectability upholds heteronormative, white, and Victorian ideals of respectable behavior and morality that are reinforced by black people themselves. Needless to say, black women who chose to transgress norms of sexuality and gender imposed by both white and black people were ostracized as pathological and accused of being a disgrace to their race.

This notion of black respectability remains a concern well into the twenty-first century, especially for black feminist scholars. For example, in *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy*, Candice Jenkins coins “the salvific wish” to capture the way black people, especially black women, regulate their actions and modes of presentation in public spaces to create an “inviolable black respectability” (Jenkins 12) that provides black people as a group with a collective morality to counter the negative racist ideals that are propagandized in American society and culture (Jenkins 14). Jenkins’ term underscores how black women have historically had to deal with being the embodiment of black familial pathology, while at the same time trying to keep a personal sense of civility or modesty. As Higginbotham and Jenkins illustrate, black women who wish to express sexual freedom receive pushback, particularly from black communities. Where, then, can black women begin to be their full selves, especially their sexual selves, without policing from members within their own community?

Having roots that date back to 1920s Harlem, Ballroom culture emerged as a transgressive space for black gay men to escape both heteronormative black spaces and racist homosexual white ones, while at the same time allowing its members to create “families” beyond blood relationships. These families served as safe spaces for gay black men. Reaching its peak in the 1980s the Ballroom scene, along with its gay male members, was featured in Jennie Livingston’s documentary *Paris Is Burning* (1990), which gave mainstream attention to this underground subculture. Marlon Bailey’s seminal *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit*, provides a nuanced overview of how the Ballroom scene is constituted by detailing how LGBTQ individuals within the scene dress, vogue, and compete with each other. Members of the Ballroom scene create self-made and transgressive spaces that allow them to perform their sexuality and gender the way they see fit, not as a response to American racial relations or other oppressive spaces. As Bailey states, there are:

Six gender (and sexual) categories within the scene: Butch Queens (gay men), Butches (female-to-male [FTM] transgender), Femme Queens (male-to-female [MTF] transgender), Butch Queens Up in Drag, Men, and Women. The Women category is

a gender identity and represents, in many respects, a contrast to the other categories, for it is the only category exclusively for female-bodied (cisgender) women who live as and, at the very least appear as, women. (33)

The fluid gender system of both men and women that constitutes the Ballroom scene affords all black women to live out their full selves without negative scrutiny. By all black women, I mean that the contemporary Ballroom scene offers cis, trans, lesbian, and straight black women with a place where they can come to understand who they are on a variety of levels without feeling negatively investigated or scrutinized.

In my essay, I argue that the contemporary Ballroom scene serves as a celebratory space for black women, including heterosexual and cisgender black women, to perform and construct their sexuality and gender in ways not predicated on being viewed as hypersexual by a white heteronormative audience, or demonizing and degrading black ones. By examining documentaries and using interviews that I conducted with prominent members of both the New York and Parisian scene, I demonstrate how the Ballroom scene functions as a temporary environment that allows black women to be their full selves without having to adhere to respectability politics or withstand the scrutinizing gaze of sexual policing that has historically been the case in American history and continues to be so in our current geopolitical landscape.

The Functionality of the Ballroom Scene in Real Life— An Inclusive Ethos

As the contemporary Ballroom scene has gained mainstream attention, it has also become an international phenomenon. My research looks at both the U.S. and Parisian Ballroom scenes as specific sites wherein black women have the opportunity to express their sexual selves. By portraying black women performing their gender and sexuality in ways that give them confidence not to worry about how others view them, Daniel Peddle's documentary *The Aggressives* (2005) offers a necessary theoretical framework for understanding how Ballroom culture grants black women a celebratory space to express themselves sexually. In the documentary there are specific scenes where black women perform while being revered, honored, and praised.

To date, scholarship about *The Aggressives*, and the Ballroom scene more generally, has focused on how the gender and sexuality of black women within the Ballroom scene can be read as nonnormative and difficult to label or process. In their piece titled "Nontraditional, Nonconforming, and Transgressive Gender Expression and Relationship Modalities in Black Communities," Layli Phillips and Marla

Stewart argue that, "Because gender and sexuality are intertwined in nontraditional, nonconforming, and even transgressive ways [in *The Aggressives* (2005)], others may have difficulty processing or labeling [the gender or sexuality of Marquise and other black women in the documentary]" (25). In sum, the Ballroom scene serves as a sex-positive and celebratory space for black women who may need to be reminded that their sexuality and gender should not be predicated on white or black heteronormative audiences that value respectability or the policing of the black female body.

Here, by sex-positive and celebratory, I mean that the Ballroom space allows black women to exercise their sexuality in ways not demonized by others in the scene; instead, they are encouraged to be a part of the community even if those outside it may see their performance as risqué. The physical space that Ballroom members create results from community organizing and planning that gives its members the chance to come into themselves the way they wish, in a way not predicated on the outside heteronormative and violent world. As a result, black women gain the ability to carve out for themselves a personal understanding of what their sexuality and gender looks like. As argued by Bailey, "Ballroom itself is a result of the collective efforts of its members to create a minoritarian sphere for those who are excluded from or marginalized within the majoritarian society" (47). Overall, "this minoritarian sphere enables individuals, houses, and sectors of the community to undertake a process of identity making and remaking, against pervasive notions of identity that are fixed and permanent" (Bailey 47–48). The liminality of the Ballroom space makes it an ideal site for black women to explore the fluidity of their sexuality.

Because the Ballroom scene is not a permanent space, but rather one constructed by members within the scene at venues that constantly change, black women can choose to associate themselves with people who understand the scene and view the performances of their bodies as a celebratory performance rather than a degradation to their race. Black women are constantly under surveillance by the physical gaze of both white and black people in public spaces. In contrast, the Ballroom scene does not function as a completely public space. Rather, the Ballroom scene is public in that the general public knows it exists, but it is private in that only members within the scene really know where balls take place.

Make no mistake, at times the power dynamics between houses within the scene bring about verbal altercations, but for the most part, competition is meant to allow members the opportunity to showcase their talents and skills in a commemorative way. By commemorative, I mean that members support one another in competition because they

understand that the scene would not be as transgressive or liberating without such support. Also, most of the power dynamics within the scene are “negotiable and relational,” so black women are neither disregarded nor demonized for not winning a category; rather they are encouraged, honored, and celebrated for simply participating (Bailey 150). Thus, although the Ballroom scene is a competitive environment, black women are able to compete with one another in a way that affirms their sexual selves and offers them a sense of inclusion in a world that constantly excludes.

Ethnographic Interview, The Parisian Scene, and Reimagining Space for Black Women

The Ballroom scene has become such a mainstream phenomenon that it has reached shores outside of the United States of America. Paris, France is one location where the Ballroom scene has taken flight. During my time abroad in France, I interviewed the founder of the Parisian scene, Lasseindra Ninja. Lasseindra gave me incredible insight into how to think about the ways in which the Ballroom scene on a global scale functions as a transgressive, celebratory, and liberatory space for black people, especially black women.

Interviewing Lasseindra, who is the founder of the scene, gives perspective on how the Parisian scene functions as a space for black women to perform their sexuality and gender in various ways that do not tend to be limiting or restricting, but rather celebratory and liberating. Black women in Paris come from all different types of ethnicities and backgrounds. Some are Algerian, African, Caribbean and more. The Ballroom scene in Paris is another domain and world entirely. It functions as a place of escape for the Parisian vogueur. Everything and everyone outside the Ballroom scene stays outside and does not penetrate the constructed family and space that is the scene. Part of the creation of the scene is so that members do not have to deal with feelings of exclusion due to racism and oppression that exists in general life, much like the scene in America. (Lasseindra). Lasseindra mentions that there are many ways one can perform masculinity and femininity within the Ballroom scene. The Ballroom scene provides black women, heterosexual, cisgender, and otherwise to present their sexuality and gender in a liberating manner because there are many ways one can present themselves (Lasseindra). She argues that there is a “panel of women,” which is to say that there are many ways to perform a femininity that challenges how one thinks about the notions of womanhood, sexuality, and gender should be viewed. On a deeper level, the Parisian ballroom scene allows its members to perform a transgressive and celebratory sense of femininity or masculinity because they do not have to adhere to generalized

and limiting views of gender and sexuality presentation that poison everyday life.

In my interview with Alex Mugler, I was able to get an inside perspective on how another Parisian vogueur talked about the Ballroom scene serving as a transgressive and liberating environment for black women. When I posed the question of whether or not the Ballroom scene can serve as a transgressive and celebratory space for black women, the automatic answer that I received from Alex was: Yes, definitely so. He states,

I get hired sometimes to teach [female artists] how to be more feminine and explore their sexuality. Nowadays, there are so many women that are coming in. Before, there was like very little women; now there are a lot of women. A lot of women. They are infatuated with the culture, and they take the time and they try to understand where it's from, and how it started and all this stuff. (Alex)

Here, Alex draws the distinction between how previously, the ballroom scene was more of an exclusive scene for gay and trans women, but it has now developed to become an environment where biologically born women can understand who they are as sexual and feminine beings. His reflections reveal how the contemporary ballroom scene functions as a space in which black women can come to explore their sexuality and gender in a new and innovative way.

Additionally, Alex answered another question pertaining to my question about why there is such a huge influx of black women in the scene now as opposed to before. His response gives me the insight to conclude that the scene is in fact a liberatory space for black women. He states,

I believe it's being more known now. It's being more accepted. Before, as you go back within time, it's less and less accepted. I think nowadays it's more and more accepted, so I feel like [women] think it's okay to go and find some of the things that they don't possess . . . Yeah, I think [women] get infatuated, and now it's more acceptable to talk gay, and be sexual and free with your identity and your gender and everything. I think [women] find this a gold mine to do that, to reach an outlet where they can be more womanly, more feminine, [and] more creative. (Alex)

Alex touches on an important aspect of the Ballroom scene's inclusive ethos. Women who are a part of the scene begin to pick up on the lingo and way of speaking that gay men utilize within the scene, all the while having the confidence to express their identity and sense of self as a female bodied individual, in a more celebratory, sensual, and expressive manner. The Ballroom scene serves as a space where they can effectively release the pressure of everyday

life and also express or explore their imaginative side of femininity.

From these interviews, one can deduce that the Ballroom scene functions as an environment for women, especially black women, to not have to adhere to normative ideals about how their sexuality should be performed. However, the ballroom scene provides its members with the opportunity to express themselves beyond the constraining and limiting views of society and general everyday life. These interviews show that the Parisian Ballroom scene is currently becoming a space where black women can honor their sexuality and gender expression; all the while they learn to be more feminine and fierce for themselves.

A Conclusion: Looking Forward and Imagining Beyond

By looking into what other scholars write about the Ballroom scene, we see other candid conversations and interviews about how this space serves as a liberatory space for black women to perform their gender and sexuality beyond societal expectations or representations. For example, in *Voguing and the House Ballroom Scene of New York City*, an interview with Danny Chisom, the House Mother of Mugler, gives readers a clear understanding of how the Ballroom scene categories are constructed. He states, “Also, drags became another gender. You always had the butch queens and the femme queens categories, and you had biological women and butch categories” (87). This quote explains how the gender categories of the Ballroom scene are set up and one can deduce that black women, both heterosexual/cisgender and homosexual/transgender, are celebrated within the scene and deemed as integral and important to the scene as their black gay male counterparts.

The Ballroom scene not only functions as a liberatory environment for black women, but it has historically been documented that this kind of scene functions as a space of re-imagining and creativity for those who participate in it and it is completely embraced by participants and black women more specifically. In comparison to more professional or work environments, the Ballroom scene is a socially constructed place of possibility that ranges from being catty or cliquish to friendly and competitive among its members. Unfortunately, due to the reality and history of institutionalized racism in America, there are a limited amount of spaces where black women can be their whole selves without being stereotyped or strictly scrutinized. The Ballroom scene, however, and the documentaries *Paris Is Burning* and *The Aggressives* provide and demonstrate how black women have a temporal escape and location wherein they can continue to explore who they are and desire to become. What we’ve learned is that through interview and documentary, black women have the potential to garner a

more expansive understanding of self through participation in the Ballroom scene. Not only do they have a chance to understand who they are beyond the confines of American society in general life, but they also get a chance to create and be a part of a community of individuals that value their blackness and femaleness through affirmative and communal competition.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Associate Professor of English Shanna Greene Benjamin for helping guide me throughout my research process on this project and also for being both my English Advisor and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Faculty mentor. I would like to thank both Lasseindra Ninja from the House of Ninja in Paris, France, and Alex Mugler from the House of Mugler in Paris, France, for allowing me to interview them when I did a while back. I appreciate them taking time out of their busy schedules and life to even entertain the idea of being interviewed by a curious queer scholar, artist, and dancer such as myself. I would also like to thank DJ Mike Q and all of the Ballroom legends, stars, kids, and members around the world for holding it down and revolutionizing society’s understanding of gender, sexuality, performance, acceptance, and love in general. And lastly, I would like to thank my Mellon Mays cohort for helping me stick through pretty arduous and demanding work.

Works Cited

- Bailey, Marlon M. *Butch Queens Up in Pumps: Gender, Performance, and Ballroom Culture in Detroit*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2013. Print.
- Fleetwood, Nicole R. “Excess Flesh: Black Women Performing Hypervisibility.” *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 2011. 105–45. Print.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. “The Politics of Respectability.” *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993. 185–295. Print.
- Jenkins, Candice Marie. “Introduction: Vulnerable Subjects.” *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy*. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota, 2007. 1–35. Print.
- Mugler, Alex. Personal interview. April/May 2015. Rev.com.
- Ninja, Lasseindra. Personal interview. April/May 2015. Rev.com.
- Paris Is Burning*. Dir. Jennie Livingston. Perf. Carmen and Brooke, André Christian, Dorian Corey. Academy Entertainment Off White Productions, 1990. Netflix.
- Peddle, Daniel. “The Aggressives.” *Hulu*. N.p., 01 Dec. 2011. Web. 02 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.hulu.com/watch/331822>>.

Phillips, Layli, and Marla R. Stewart. "Nontraditional, Nonconforming, and Transgressive Gender Expression and Relationship Modalities in Black Communities." *Black Sexualities: Probing Powers, Passions, Practices, and Policies*. Ed. Juan Battle and Sandra L. Barnes. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2010. 17–36. Print.

Regnault, Chantal, Stuart Baker, and Tim Lawrence. "Anonymous: Femme Queen." *Voguing and the House Ballroom Scene of New York City 1989–92*. London: Soul Jazz, 2011. 176–79. Print.

Regnault, Chantal, Stuart Baker, and Tim Lawrence. "Danny Chislom: House of Mugler."

Voguing and the House Ballroom Scene of New York City 1989–92. London: Soul Jazz, 2011. 86–88. Print.

Gender in Francis Bacon's Philosophy of Science: Marriage, Procreation, and Dominion

Jiemin Tina Wei, *Princeton University*

Jiemin Tina Wei is a recent 2016 graduate from Princeton University, majoring in philosophy and earning certificates in Hellenic studies and values and public life. Focused on the fields of history of philosophy, history of ideas, and intellectual history, her scholarship seeks new ways to think about the relationship between identities, race, gender, and canonicity. Upon graduating, Tina worked as a teaching assistant and camp counselor at an alternative-learning summer program for high school juniors. Starting this past fall, she has been working full-time in People Operations at Google, Inc. In the future, she hopes to pursue graduate study in philosophy.

Abstract

Francis Bacon, the Renaissance statesman, lawyer, philosopher, and essayist, is sometimes referred to as the “father of modern science.” The renown he enjoys results perhaps most notably from his writings which detail the proper approach (or method) a scientist ought to take in the study of nature. Gendered descriptions, sometimes shockingly explicit and graphic, appear throughout Bacon's writings. The status of this trope is heavily contested, and yet, a great mystery remains: What accounts for Bacon's (often) explicit, sometimes strange language about women? How would this (virtually) undeniably gendered language aid him in communicating his new science? The gendered nature of the text focuses on marriage, procreation, and dominion. In this paper, I pay close attention to the rhetorical work of Bacon's text, to illustrate how he uses gender tropes and implicit notions of gender difference to articulate his new program for science. That Bacon drew so heavily on conceptions of gender in his formulation of ideals for science is significant, showing that his philosophy of science is not neutral, pure, or separate from his social context—gendered thinking was central to his understanding of science.

Francis Bacon, the Renaissance statesman, lawyer, philosopher, and essayist, is sometimes referred to as the ‘father of modern science’ (Rossi xii, ix–xv; Jalobeanu 10, 17–19). His renown perhaps derives most notably from his writings which detail the proper approach (or method) a scientist should take in the study of nature. Such writings famously served as a key source of inspiration for the founding of the British Royal Society, featuring iconic figures of the so-called Scientific Revolution such as Robert Hooke and Robert Boyle (Iliffe 430). Although Bacon's writings gave rise to a phase of rapid development in science that may seem very familiar to us, he himself was writing in a Renaissance milieu and employing rhetorical practices alien to most scientific or science-related writings today. Bacon's corpus may be at its most opaque when he slips into metaphorical or visually descriptive language. Arguably, the most opaque and frequently occurring trope¹ is his trope

of gender, by which I mean a reliance on notions of sexual difference that sometimes include gendered violence, hierarchy, and domination.

The status of the gender trope in Bacon studies is heavily contested. Gendered descriptions, sometimes shockingly explicit and graphic, appear throughout Bacon's writings, including his *New Organo*, *Great Instauration*, *Valerius Terminus*, *The Masculine Birth of Time*, and the *Description of the Intellectual Globe*. The fraught nature of some of these passages was memorably illuminated by Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature*, which presents feminist criticisms of figures of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scientific revolution—among them Francis Bacon, whom she interprets as employing rape and torture imagery and metaphors (164–190). The response from early modern historians has been almost unanimously negative, on account of the supposedly anachronistic nature of applying contemporary feminist criticism to an early modern discourse (Soble 212). And yet, a great mystery remains: What accounts for Bacon's (often) explicit, sometimes strange language about women? How would this (virtually) undeniably gendered language aid him in communicating his new science?

On both sides of the debate, the dominant mode of discourse primarily concerns the question of blame—to what extent are we justified in *blaming* Bacon for his use of rape or torture imagery? In the following, contrary to this practice, I intend to take seriously the rhetorical *work* that these tropes do in the text. In interpreting these key tropes, I seek to uncover Bacon's underlying philosophy of science. The text, I argue, is undeniably *gendered*, in that it depends upon implicit notions of sexual difference. The gendered nature of the text focuses, as I will discuss in order, on marriage, procreation, and dominion. Bacon proposes his methodology for science in fundamentally relational terms—the proper relationship between the scientist and nature is likened to the disciplined, orderly relationship between a man and wife in a chaste *marriage*. Such a relationship is *procreative*, yielding the fruits of science. In such a relationship, the scientist establishes a *dominion* or control over nature, as the man would over his kingdom.

The first component of Bacon's gender trope has to do with marriage. To see where this trope fits into Bacon's writings about his new science, we must turn to his *Description of the Intellectual Globe*. He explains that natural history, which is the study of particular, observational claims about nature (which, in part, gives rise to contemporary science), is in part concerned with studying “Nature *Constrained*” (Spedding V:505–506). When nature is constrained, sheⁱⁱ is “moulded, translated, and made as it were new by art and the hand of man; as in things artificial” (Spedding V:505–506). In this area of natural history, the scientist is constraining, molding,

and making nature anew via experiments, thereby entering into a relationship with nature. It is precisely the contours of this relationship that Bacon seeks to articulate via his gender trope.

Bacon models the relationship between the scientist and nature after the chaste marriage between man and wife. For instance, in the *Masculine Birth of Time*, Bacon describes his goal as “unit[ing]” his reader, the potential scientist, “with *things themselves* in a chaste, holy, and legal wedlock” (Farrington 72). Similarly, in *The Refutation of Philosophies*, he writes, “[l]et us establish a chaste and lawful marriage between Mind and Nature” (Farrington 131). Bacon then seeks to establish the foundations for his new science by, in the terms of this metaphor, joining the scientist and nature in a chaste marriage. He explains in works such as the *Great Instauration*, that when the scientist’s relation to nature becomes perverse or unchaste, their relationship becomes instead an “unkind and ill-starred divorce and separation” (Spedding IV:19). In contrast to the propriety of the former marriage, the latter perverse relationship is disorderly, throwing “all the affairs of human family” “into confusion” (Spedding IV:19). The key is to emphasize the *appropriateness* with which a man should behave towards a woman. Such *propriety* results in a chaste marriage.

The second component of Bacon’s gender trope has to do with procreation. Central to Bacon’s notions of good and bad (natural) philosophy is the notion of a fruitful versus barren science. He introduces these ideas in seemingly non-gendered ways in some passages, but then extends the notions to women’s bodies and wombs. For instance, in *The Refutation of Philosophies*, he states that there are “signs” that a philosophy is good. Just as the “signs” of faith are demonstrated “by works,” he argues, when we may apply a “test to philosophy,” we see that “[t]here is no ‘sign’ more certain and more noble than that from fruits” (Farrington 123–124). The “fruits” or “works” of a science become indicators of the status of a philosophy. If a philosophy lacks fruits and is “barren,” then it has no merits. In some cases, not only is the philosophy “barren,” but it “bear[s] the thistles and thorns of dispute and contentions” (Farrington 123–124). If a philosophy were fruitful, in this analogy, it would bear “the fruits of grape or olive” (Farrington 123–124). At this point, Bacon is comparing productive science to a kind of metaphorical procreation—with the fruits of science being the progeny of plants, such as grape or olive.

However, in the same passage, Bacon then translates this distinction between a fruitful and barren plant to a fruitful and barren (woman’s) womb. He makes this transition by citing two quotes from Vergil. From the *Georgics*, he cites, “Th[e] cursed darnel and barren oat prevail” (qtd. in Farrington 124). From the *Aeneid*, he cites “[a]nd girl were

her white loins with yelping dogs,” which refers to Scylla (qtd. in Farrington 124). He tells us what seems to be an allegorical story about how one might come across such a barren and monstrous womb as Scylla’s. Conforming to the tradition of Greek myths, in which Scylla is described as a monster found on the side of a water channel, Bacon describes the reader sailing towards Scylla’s womb. He writes, “from afar” and “[a]t a cursory glance,” “your philosophy seems a comely maid” and “is not without charm or allure” (Farrington 124). However, he encourages us to “come to a more nice survey” and “consider the belly and the womb and the hope of fruit thereof” (Farrington 124). In the belly and the womb, where we might “hope” to find “those works and that power of action which are the worthy and legitimate fruit of mental endeavour,” we instead find “those howling, barking mouths” (Farrington 124). We come to realize that our cursory impression of Scylla as a “comely maid” was only true of “the upper half” of her body (the part of her body above her belly and womb). Scylla’s deception lies in the gap between her appearance as a “comely maid” that promises procreative potential and her real existence as a monstrous, barren womb. Such deception, Bacon informs us, has thus been “made notorious by the shipwreck of so many intellects” (Farrington 124).ⁱⁱⁱ

In employing the concept of Scylla, Bacon presents and juxtaposes the notion of the fruitful, procreative, comely womb with the barren, monstrous, deceptive womb.^{iv} His claims about Scylla’s status as a woman and womb parallel his claims about science. The fruits that the traveler would “hope” Scylla’s womb will produce are described as “those works and that power of action which are the worthy and legitimate fruit of *mental* endeavour [emphasis added].” Similarly, the scientist may *hope* that, due to his mental endeavors, his science will produce fruits. Yet, Bacon attributes Scylla’s notoriety not to the *travelers’* shipwrecks that she has caused (as is told in the traditional Greek myth) but to the “shipwreck of *so many intellects* [emphasis added].” The human intellect meets its shipwreck in this intellectual terrain when it is lured into danger by a science that *appears* to possess procreative potential but is in actuality barren and monstrous. The agent who travels is the scientist. The object he seeks is a *productive* science, but the object that he actually comes to is a *barren* science.

Attesting to the expansiveness of Bacon’s use of the gender trope, the contrast between barren and fruitful science appears elsewhere. For example, in the preface to the *Great Instauration*, Bacon uses the contrast between barrenness and fruitfulness to explain the contrast between the immature boy who is (sexually) *incapable* of procreating with nature and the man who is (sexually) capable. He tells us that the “wisdom which we have derived principally from the Greeks is but like the boyhood of knowledge, and has

the characteristic property of boys: it can talk, but it cannot generate; for it is fruitful of controversies but barren of works” (Spedding IV:14). Thus, *through* the language of the gender trope, Bacon argues that his contemporaries should abandon the approach to knowledge and science that they have inherited from the Greeks. This type of knowledge he likens to boyhood. While the proper scientist’s science is a fruitful womb and produces fruits, the metaphorical boy is *sexually immature* because he “cannot generate,” and is thus “barren of works.” One may argue that when Bacon evokes the contrast between non-productive boys and productive men, he may be referencing the other ways—ways that don’t have to do with reproduction—in which boys are unproductive, i.e., that they cannot accomplish things and can only talk. However, as we see here, at least one important aspect of the unproductiveness of boys has to do with reproduction.

The third component of Bacon’s gender trope has to do with dominion. To understand the rhetorical work that the gender trope accomplishes here, we must first contextualize the notion of dominion via Bacon’s other works. He writes often about the notion of man’s dominion over nature, often in language that is not obviously gendered. For instance, in his *Masculine Birth of Time*, he informs the reader that “my only earthly wish” is “to stretch the deplorably narrow limits of man’s dominion over the universe to their promised bounds.” He hopes to “succeed” in this “wish” by “prolonged examination both of the state of nature and the state of the human mind, by the most legitimate method,” which is the method for his new science that he communicates to his reader (Farrington 62). Thus, a proper kind of science is the means by which man can achieve a dominion over nature.^v

The dominion over nature appears often throughout Bacon’s works in language that is *not* obviously gendered—just as it does in the above example. However, even in this very passage, as he does elsewhere, he paraphrases, augments, or embellishes this non-gendered conception of dominion over nature in gendered terms. This text, the *Masculine Birth of Time*, appears to take the form of a speech that an old man gives to young boys or students about the proper method by which to pursue science. The subheading that Bacon gives to this work is “The Legitimate Mode of handing on the Torch of Science.” Throughout the text, the speaker consistently addresses the audience (the reader) as “my sons”—presumably the people to whom he seeks to pass the Torch. The speaker’s non-gendered language about dominion over nature becomes more clearly gendered when, in addressing his “sons,” he says, “I am come in very truth leading to you Nature with all her children to bind her to your service and make her your slave” (Farrington 61–62). The relationship conveyed by this language confirms the use of the gender trope that we have examined thus far. Nature is depicted as a woman. For the scientist to

achieve dominion over her would involve—in this gendered embellishment of the same concept—nature being bound to the scientist’s service, i.e., nature being made his slave. In addition, the language of procreation is present here, too. Not only is nature being put under the scientist’s control, but so are nature’s fruits, which in this passage are described as “all her children.” Thus, we see that the notion of obtaining dominion over nature through science and the notion of producing fruits of nature via science are closely linked.^{vi}

If this key text of Bacon’s methodology of science is indeed, as Bacon describes it, an act of “handing on the Torch of Science,” then part of the act of passing the torch from the older, knowledgeable generation of men to the younger generation of boys involves passing on the control of nature, their slave (Farrington 61–62). It is perhaps in this contrast between the man who is a scientist and the boy who has the potential to become a scientist that we see most clearly the emergence of the character of the scientist. The process of shaping the character of the next generation of scientists becomes a process, in the language of the metaphor, of turning boys to men. Only when the boy becomes a man, husband, and scientist will he finally be able to properly know, constrain, and achieve dominion over his nature, his wife.

Although the heated debates in the secondary scholarship about the proper critical attitude to take towards Bacon and his works emphasize important questions, they are more closely concerned with our contemporary normative ideals than those at play in Bacon’s writings. In this paper, I have attempted to pay close attention to the rhetorical work of Bacon’s text, to illustrate how he uses gender tropes and implicit notions of gender difference to articulate his new program for science. As I have sought to illustrate, engaging in this kind of analysis reveals how one prominent philosopher found it possible to think about gender in the seventeenth century. That Bacon drew so heavily on conceptions of gender in his formulation of ideals for science is significant, showing that his philosophy of science is not neutral, pure, or separate from his social context—gendered thinking was central to his understanding of science.

Bacon is an important case to study because, in the key writings I focused on in this paper, Bacon saw his key task as that of heralding a new age for science. However, as we see from the preceding analysis, even calls to overturn traditional practices may be deeply undergirded by and may perpetuate other ingrained attitudes and frameworks. Bacon teaches us a paradoxical lesson: that familiar traditional attitudes are sometimes the most useful rhetorical strategies for launching revolutions. The scholarly approach I took in this paper is to settle these textual questions without settling the larger normative questions of whether to condemn Bacon and his ideas.

Acknowledgements

This paper is an excerpt from my senior thesis, a project that would not have been possible without extensive financial, intellectual, and moral support from more sources than I have space to thank here. Most importantly, I would like to express sincere gratitude to Princeton University, for providing the generous travel and research scholarships; Professor Quentin Skinner, for hosting and mentoring me while I conducted research in London; and Professor Daniel Garber, for his guidance throughout what became an unforgettable intellectual journey.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Here, I use the term “trope” to refer to literary tropes; i.e., words, symbols, motifs, themes, and metaphors that recur within a text.
- ⁱⁱ The importance of the grammatical gender of the Latin word *natura*, which is female, is heavily contested in the secondary scholarship. In this paper, I will leave this debate aside and focus on the non-grammatically dependent aspects of Bacon’s gendered language.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Scylla appears in other writings of this period. For instance, an almost identical imagery of Scylla appears in Sin’s iconic speech in *Paradise Lost* (Milton II: 791–802).
- ^{iv} One may note that the object that the metaphor of the woman is supposed to represent has shifted slightly. In the marriage analogy, the woman represents nature (while the man represents the scientist). By contrast, in this procreation and womb metaphor, the woman appears to represent natural philosophy (or science). Thus, Bacon writes that “*your philosophy seems a comely maid* [emphasis added].”
- ^v Bacon’s notion of dominion heavily employs Biblical connotations (Briggs; Warhaft).
- ^{vi} Scholars have debated the normativity of the scientist’s dominion over nature that Bacon promotes—whether it is a negative act of oppressing nature or a positive act of perfecting nature. In this paper, I seek not to settle this normative question, but seek only to illuminate how the idea of dominion depends implicitly on notions of sexual difference.

Works Cited

- Briggs, John C. *Francis Bacon and the Rhetoric of Nature*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989. Print.
- Farrington, Benjamin. *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*. London: Liverpool University Press, 1964. Print.
- Iliffe, Rob. “The Masculine Birth of Time: Temporal Frameworks of Early Modern Natural Philosophy.” *The British Journal for the History of Science* 33.4 (2000): 427–453. Web.
- Jalobeanu, Dana. *The Art of Experimental Natural History: Francis Bacon in Context*. Bucharest: Zeta Books, 2015. Print.
- Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980. Print.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Thomas Luxon. The Milton Reading Room, 2016. Web. 12 Mar. 2016.
- Rossi, Paolo. *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science*. Trans. Sacha Rabinovitch. New York: Routledge, 1968. Print.
- Soble, Alan. “In Defense of Bacon.” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 25.2 (1995): 192–215. Web.
- Spedding, James, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, eds. *The Works of Francis Bacon*. 14 vols. London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1857. Print.
- Warhaft, Sidney. “The Providential Order in Bacon’s New Philosophy.” *Francis Bacon’s Legacy of Texts*. Ed. William A. Sessions. New York: AMS Press, 1990. 151–167. Print.

On Becoming the Little Allain Girl, Introduction to “At Least We Have Our Name”: Free People of Color and the Struggle to Survive in Antebellum Louisiana and Mississippi

Cary Allain Williams, *Harvard University*

Cary Williams is a recently graduate of Harvard College, cum laude. She concentrated in history and literature in the America field, and focused on studying slavery, geography, and resistance in the 19th-century American South. Beyond her scholarly pursuits, she is a published author of short fiction. For her thesis, of which this piece is the introduction, she was honored with three awards from Harvard University, including the esteemed Bowdoin Undergraduate Prize for an Essay in the English Language.

Abstract

This project studies the boundaries and limitations of freedom for free people of color in antebellum Louisiana and Mississippi. I examine their daily experiences of freedom alongside the challenges and threats that made them vulnerable to racial terror. This paper argues that although free people of color were free in name, their freedom was, in reality, so unstable and incomplete that we must revise our definitions of freedom and unfreedom in the context of antebellum life. Using sources from many different textual genres, this project destabilizes freedom as a clear category and examines how corporeal, gendered, psychological, and property-related violence limited their liberty and social power. In discussing the plantation management strategies, movement patterns, and gender-specific experiences of free people of color, it articulates the tension between their empowerment and their struggle for respect, safety, and survival. Because freedom was a category that contained such a wide range of experiences, this paper argues that historians must interrogate the terms and categories they use when assessing the lives and writings of free people of color. In this way, this project argues for a fundamental revision of the historiography of their freedom in the antebellum South.

My story began in my grandmother’s closet. I was in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, visiting her in the spring of 2014, and she showed me binders full of newspaper clippings, scans of manumission papers and marriage certificates, and lists of slave sales, all of which referenced our ancestors who were free people of color in Louisiana. Many last names mentioned in those documents had become either the first or middle name of someone in my extended family, paying homage to those who came before us. My grandmother, Gloria Ricard Kennedy, whom I call Mama Glo, kept this unlikely archive in the closet of the bedroom where her mother, my great-grandmother, lived when she moved in with her as she grew older. My great-grandmother, Eunice Allain Ricard, whom I call Mama Eunice, was born in 1893. I was born in 1993, a full century after her, so my parents gave me “Allain” as my middle name. Mama Eunice lived until she was 102 years old, and she held me in her arms,

with my grandmother’s help, quite a few times before she passed away. When she wanted to see me she would say, “Where’s my little Allain girl?” How fitting it is that it was in the closet of the woman I am named after that I found my first archive for this project: the archive of my family.

This project is the story of how my family became Allains. It is about the hours I have spent with Mama Glo at the kitchen table hearing tales about our ancestors’ lives in “The Country” and her telling me, “That world you just couldn’t hardly believe.” It is the story of growing up in a family that cooks with Creole seasonings instead of salt and pepper. Of calling our aunts and uncles “Tant” and “Nonc,” variations of their French roots. This project is the story of how I got my middle name, of how I became the Little Allain Girl.

I am concerned with refining an understanding of the realities of freedom for free people of color in four communities in the Lower Mississippi Valley—Natchez, MS; Natchitoches, LA; New Orleans, LA; and Pointe Coupee, LA—from the late 18th century through the antebellum period (see Figure 1).ⁱ Nearly all of my maternal ancestors who lived during the period that this project covers resided in Pointe Coupee Parish, LA. The lives of free people of color in this region were fraught with contradictions; at once free and unfree, empowered and vulnerable, respected and undermined, they lived within poorly defined and disorienting categories that could not adequately be captured by the rigid black-white dichotomy and ensuing racial hierarchy that organized Southern society at the time.

My central aim in this research is to find the boundaries and limitations to the freedom of free people of color and challenge the notion that they were, in fact, completely free. I argue that their freedom was so highly qualified and unstable that it was, instead, a *vulnerable freedom*.ⁱⁱ This vulnerability meant that they were routinely exposed to subjugation, threats, and attacks against their personhood. While their economic prosperity may suggest that they enjoyed unprecedented opportunity and access to power, I argue that even the wealthiest of free people of color were vulnerable to degradation and punishment. No amount of money or status could protect them from racial terror, and this research explores the limits of their power and the strategies and networks they developed to escape threats of corporeal, psychological, and property-related violence. Free people of color, a uniquely empowered class of people, lived lives focused on mitigating tremendous risk.

By examining the lives of free people of color without assuming their “freedom” as a given, I do the work of this paper at the margin of their power. I read the archived papers attesting to their wealth and look to the margins of

these documents, to things said vaguely or left unsaid that reveal a collapse in that power. Historians have written about the free people of color who owned one hundred slaves, such as the Metoyer family that historian Gary Mills rigorously studied, but I am more interested, for example, in the moment of a sale when that master of color admitted that he was illiterate and unable to read the document that recognized him as an owner.ⁱⁱⁱ Instead of spending time in the elegant setting of quadroom balls, I turn to the more quotidian experiences of free women of color, finding meaning in their daily struggle to survive and raise families and create a legacy. My goal in this project is to enter into the lives of free people of color by gaining access at some of their most vulnerable points. In this way, my work does not focus on their extraordinary moments of achievement but instead tries to understand the complexities of daily life and how they managed those challenges. They created free spaces within, to invoke Ira Berlin's term, "slave societies."^{iv} The study of these free spaces in a world entrenched in slavery will deepen our understanding of the social history of slavery and the task of the free African-descended person to fashion his or her identity in a space, time, and social context that was constantly in flux.

It is important to be clear about how I define "free people of color." For me, the term "free people of color" is synonymous with what some other scholars call "Creoles of color."^{vi} However, I choose to refer to them as free people of color because in a project so dedicated to defining freedom—and tracing its limits and contradictions—it is important to continue to use the term "free" in their name. It was also the way in which they were referenced in my legal archive, so "free people of color" is more consistent with their legal category of personhood.

Since geography is central to each chapter, another aim of this project is to understand the literal and symbolic meanings of land and land ownership to this community. Located in and around New Orleans, each respective community became a site that was influenced by Louisiana's precarious place in the North American landscape. After 1803, New Orleans was at once part of the United States and dislocated from it as a cultural "other," tied to its strong French heritage, and perhaps figuring more neatly into the Caribbean landscape as its northernmost port city. The literary scholar Connie Eble argues that, historically, "When movement of people and goods by water was the norm, Louisiana and the Gulf Coast were oriented south and were culturally and economically linked to the Caribbean."^{vi} Fitting well into neither the landscape and culture of the American North nor the American South, New Orleans and its people carved out their own identity in the Atlantic world.

My sources are primarily legal archives about specific cases in the first half of the nineteenth century. By studying a limited archive, my analysis constructs a "micro-history" of the individuals I study, and the claims I make hold in tension the patterns I can glean from this limited archive with the specificity of the cases themselves. As free people of color lived between racial and national categories, they can be difficult to find in the archive. As the historian Shirley Thompson argues, "Their in-between-ness often rendered them a disappearing people, making them difficult to track as they moved into and out of the racial, cultural, and national designations that increasingly mattered."^{vii} Their elusiveness and the limitations to this archive call to mind literary scholar Saidiya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts," which speaks to the archive's capacity for violence in the way that it silences and erases some voices and allows stories and people to get lost.^{viii} The majority of archival sources upon which I draw are legal documents such as bills of sale, land grants, and manumission papers. These documents were often drawn up with certain conventions that scripted much of the text. In reading those conventions, I argue that the genre of legal writing incorporated affective elements that reflected emotions, anxieties, and social dynamics of the time as part of the backbone structure for the language of the law.

My final source is my mind, for it is an archive unto itself. It holds twenty-two years of conversations with my mother and my grandmother about our family's at once empowered and vulnerable existence on this continent.

My research enters into conversation with historians of antebellum Louisiana, of the dynamics of slavery and geography, and of free people of color. My major analytical points of dialogue center on antebellum plantation order and control, movement patterns of antebellum enslaved and free people, and gender and sexuality in slave societies.

In Chapter 1, I will examine the ways in which free masters of color expressed anxiety in their role at the helm of a plantation and the ensuing ways in which they sought to exert control and establish order. Their form of discipline, I argue, reflected a sense of *unsettled mastery*, which revolved around their need to overcome their vulnerabilities and prove that they could effectively manage social and intimate boundaries and enact discipline. At the core of this anxiety is the complexity of intimate contact between masters and enslaved people, so I will examine the ways in which white masters and free masters of color differed in the space they made between themselves and their slaves. Finally, I will examine patterns of punishment enacted by masters of color against the people they enslaved as mechanisms of exerting control, tempering their own anxiety, and publicly establishing their reputations as competent owners.

The stakes of ownership and the possibilities to fail were different and riskier for masters of color, for they had to prove their ability to control and to assert their superiority through mechanisms that necessarily relied on something other than racial difference, all the while evading their vulnerability to being kidnapped into slavery. The historian Walter Johnson, in *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*, explains slaveholders' processes of self-making through their use of slaves. I posit that free people of color who owned slaves engaged in similar processes of self-making, although the particular anxieties and challenges they faced were markedly different because of the intraracial nature of their plantations.^{ix}

In Chapter 2, I explore the movement and stillness of free people of color through analyzing what I have named their *geographies of dignity*, i.e., the spaces in which they felt safe, empowered, cared for, and able to move without risking their status and lives. They sought out these geographies of dignity as refuges from vulnerability. By contrasting geographies of dignity with the varied geographies across which fugitive slaves traveled, I argue that free people of color had a far more constricted area they could traverse without making themselves vulnerable to insurmountable risk. As a result, they settled and stayed quite still in the spaces that they built into family networks. I will analyze the ways in which those communities of family networks functioned, focusing particularly on how they protected and sustained themselves within a limited space. I will interrogate the counterintuitive and seemingly paradoxical relationship between freedom and stillness to reveal how the framework of a geography of dignity can challenge and reorient our conception of freedom over one's body and movement as a free person of color.

While scholars of the antebellum period have rigorously studied the movement patterns of enslaved people, both captive and fugitive, I engage with that tradition of geographic analysis of the black body's movement by asking where and how free people of color were moving at the same moment. I am in dialogue with historians of the Middle Passage such as Marcus Rediker and Stephanie Smallwood, as well as historians interested in following the varied movement patterns of individuals and families over many journeys, both coerced and voluntary, such as Rebecca Scott.^x In entering into conversation with scholars of movement in slavery and freedom, I seek to articulate the vast differences in free people of color's ability to move because of the limited geographies, the *geographies of dignity*, in which they were most safe.

In Chapter 3, I will offer a different way of reading the bodies and experiences of free women of color by redirecting our attention from the sensational to the ordinary. Instead of seeking to understand these women through

extraordinary life moments, such as attending a lavish ball or independently completing a record-breaking purchase of slaves, I will shift our focus to the quotidian challenges they faced. I will expose their status of freedom not only as a *vulnerable freedom*, but also as a *burdened freedom*. They were weighed down by the vestiges of slavery, routine challenges, and normalized patterns of subjugation and exclusion, especially from full participation in legal action in which they had a stake. This departure from the sensational is a move to avoid spectacularizing free women of color as a singular historical phenomenon and instead to introduce them as people to study in their unique historical context. The ordinary, I argue, reveals their routine of struggle, a struggle so dismissed and obscured by the ways in which they are sensorially distorted in the historiography that their struggle is seldom adequately articulated or addressed.

"Freedom" is a word so central to the history of the antebellum period, and I seek to examine and challenge the limits of that term for free people of color. Throughout the aforementioned chapters, I find that their freedom was highly qualified, and that many caveats and instabilities were often attached to their condition of freedom. Sometimes transient, and at others quite lasting, freedom was almost always under threat. My work focuses on resisting to accept "freedom" as a secure definition of free people of color's being in the world, and instead seeks to understand what pressures threatened to collapse and undermine their freedom. Consequently, free people of color preoccupied themselves with carving out their own free existences in spite of the historical, geographic, legal, and spatial limitations to that liberty.

I approach the work of this project as a descendant of the people about whom I am writing. As such, this project is deeply personal, and I have an intimate stake in it in addition to my commitment to it as a scholar. In the larger thesis from which this introduction is drawn, I frame each chapter with an opening vignette that offers a story of my particular connection to this history. These interludes invite readers to engage with this project from both an academic and personal perspective, as that duality has shaped my experience of writing it. The core evidence for each chapter is archival material, but in the interludes, I seek to fill in some of the silences in the archive with my anecdotal knowledge of my own people, gesturing to the personal and creative modes of telling history demonstrated by Hartman in *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*, Aaron Sachs in "Letters to a tenured historian: imagining history as creative nonfiction—or maybe even poetry," and Carol Hanisch's foundational feminist essay "The Personal is Political."^{xi} In my exploration of the geopolitical spaces of the antebellum Deep South, I am, in a sense, surveying my homeland.

Finally, I offer a note on the title of this thesis: “At Least We Have Our Name.” Some years ago, in one of those moments I wish I’d had a notepad on me to record the conversation, Mama Glo mentioned that no matter what our family endured during the antebellum period and the years following, at least we would always have our name. She framed our family’s names as those signifiers of freedom that never could be stolen or degraded. And although that freedom was wrought with tension and struggle, our names, she believed, were symbolic of a legacy and a power to endure. This is that story.

Acknowledgements

First, I thank the Harvard Mellon Mays cohort for building a supportive and rich academic community that was so central to my undergraduate years. I thank the Williams Research Center at the Historic New Orleans Collection, the Hill Memorial Library at Louisiana State University, the Louisiana Research Collection at Tulane University, and the Earl K. Long Library at the University of New Orleans. I would like to extend my deepest and warmest thanks to my advisors and mentors, Glenda Carpio, Lynne Feeley, Timothy Patrick McCarthy, and Emily Owens. Finally, I thank my closest family and friends, and especially Mama Glo.

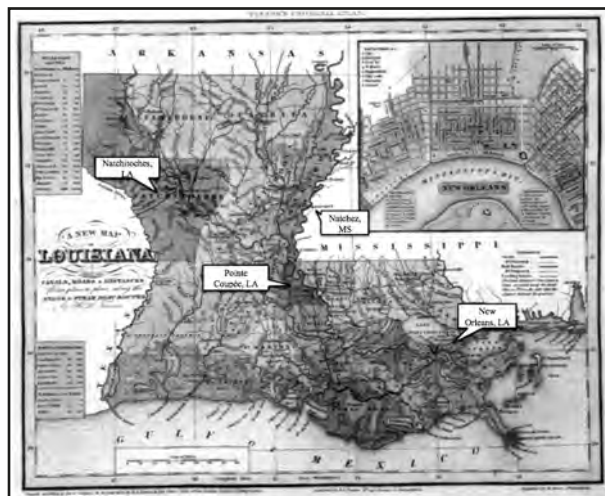


Figure 1. Major cities included in this thesis rendered in an 1836 map by Henry S. Tanner

Endnotes

- ⁱ Henry S. Tanner, “New Map of Louisiana,” 1836.
- ⁱⁱ In articulating my own version of the precarity of freedom for free African-descended people, I found the historian Erica Armstrong Dunbar’s *A Fragile Freedom* to be useful. In her introduction, Dunbar sketches out the parameters of freedom for free women of color in the antebellum North, primarily Philadelphia. See also the historian Jim Downs’s *Sick from Freedom* for an account of the challenges free people of color faced in the Civil War Era.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Here, I enter into conversation with historians such as Gary Mills, whose *The Forgotten People* was a foundational text in the study of Louisiana’s free people of color. Mills focused on the prosperous Metoyer family and tells their story with a focus on their extreme wealth and power. In explaining the subversive nature of the Metoyer family’s power, I wonder if the struggles they endured risk being consequently obscured. Michael P. Johnson and James L. Roark’s *Black Masters* opens with, “This book aspires to be a history of a remarkable man named William Ellison” (xi). While the authors do go on to qualify his “remarkability,” the intention of that historical project was to reveal what was remarkable about him. I am interested in what was remarkable, but am equally invested in what was hard, what was deadly, what almost fell apart.
- ^{iv} Drawn from Ira Berlin, “Prologue: Making Slavery, Making Race” in *Many Thousands Gone*.
- ^v Identifying one’s self as Creole often signified a certain lineage, racial history, and claim of natal country. See Alice Dunbar Nelson’s discussion of competing definitions of “Creole” among white and non-white Louisianans in Alice Dunbar Nelson, “People of Color in Louisiana.” In his study, Mills refers to the people, at their request, as Creole, because “Negro” indicated that one was of wholly African heritage, and “mulatto” was a pejorative term (xiii, xix). The term Creole also implied Louisiana, particularly New Orleans, as the place of origin. In his essay “Light, Bright, Damn Near White,” literary scholar Anthony Barthelemy posits: “Regardless of skin color, Creoles fused African and French culture, language, and customs to create an amalgamation that was uniquely New World and singularly New Orleanian” (257). As the title of Barthelemy’s essay suggests, to be Creole was to exist at the edges of known categories of race and belonging.
- ^{vi} Connie Eble, “Creole in Louisiana,” 39.
- ^{vii} Shirley Elizabeth Thompson, *Exiles at Home*, 14.
- ^{viii} Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts.”
- ^{ix} Walter Johnson’s discussion of “self-making” in “Chapter Seven: Life in the Shadow of the Slave Market” in *Soul by Soul* lays out the process to which I allude. Throughout this thesis, in both the body and the footnotes, I will refer to Walter Johnson by his full name to distinguish him from William Johnson, a free man of color who is a central historical figure throughout this project. For more on the anxieties related to power and the creation of hierarchies, though through a gendered lens, see Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*.
- ^x See Rediker, *The Slave Ship*; Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*; Scott, *Freedom Papers*.
- ^{xi} Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*; Aaron Sachs, “Letters to a Tenured Historian”; Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political.”

Bibliography

- Barthelemy, Anthony. “Light, Bright, Damn Near White.” In *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana’s Free People of Color*, edited by Sybil Kein, 252–75. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000.
- Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

- Brown, Kathleen M. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Downs, Jim. *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering During the Civil War and Reconstruction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Eble, Connie. "Creole in Louisiana." *South Atlantic Review* 73, no. 2 (2008): 39–53.
- Hanisch, Carol. "The Personal Is Political." In *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists*, edited by Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, 76–78, 1970.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007.
- . "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14.
- Johnson, Michael P., and James L. Roark. *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984.
- Johnson, Walter. *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Mills, Gary. *The Forgotten People: Cane River's Creoles of Color*. Edited by Elizabeth Shown Mills. Rev. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013.
- Nelson, Alice Dunbar. "People of Color in Louisiana." In *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana's Free People of Color*, edited by Sybil Kein, 3–41. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000.
- Rediker, Marcus. *The Slave Ship: A Human History*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- Sachs, Aaron. "Letters to a Tenured Historian: Imaging History as Creative Nonfiction—or Maybe Even Poetry." *Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice* 14, no. 1 (2010): 5–38.
- Smallwood, Stephanie. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from African to American Diaspora*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Tanner, Henry S. "New Map of Louisiana," 1836. David Rumsey Map Collection. http://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~557~60195:New-Map-Of-Louisiana?sort=Pub_Date%2CPub_List_No_InitialSort&qvq=q:List_No%3D%270977.021%27%22%2B;sort:Pub_Date%2CPub_List_No_InitialSort;lc:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=0&trs=1#.
- Thompson, Shirley Elizabeth. *Exiles at Home: The Struggle to Become American in Creole New Orleans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Journal 2016

Barnard College
Bowdoin College
Brooklyn College (CUNY)
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
California Institute of Technology
Carleton College
City College of New York (CUNY)
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Duke University
Emory University
Grinnell College
Harvard University
Haverford College
Heritage University
Hunter College (CUNY)
Macalester College
Northwestern University
Oberlin College
Princeton University
Queens College (CUNY)
Rice University

Smith College
Stanford University
Swarthmore College
University of California at Berkeley
University of California at Los Angeles
University of California at Riverside
University of Cape Town
University of Chicago
University of New Mexico
University of Pennsylvania
University of Puerto Rico
University of Southern California
University of Texas at Austin
University of the Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand
Washington University
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University
Whitter College
Williams College
Yale University

Claremont Colleges Consortium
Claremont McKenna College
Pitzer College
Pomona College
Scripps College

United Negro College Fund Participants
Allen University
Benedict College
Bennett College
Bethune-Cookman University
Claflin University
Clark Atlanta University
Dillard University
Edward Waters College
Fisk University
Florida Memorial University
Hampton University
Huston-Tillotson University
Interdenominational Theological Center
Jarvis Christian College
Johnson C. Smith University
Lane College

LeMoyne-Owen College
Livingstone College
Miles College
Morehouse College
Morris College
Oakwood College
Paine College
Paul Quinn College
Philander Smith College
Rust College
Saint Augustine's College
Shaw University
Spelman College
Stillman College
Talladega College
Texas College
Tougaloo College
Tuskegee University
Virginia Union University
Voorhees College
Wilberforce University
Wiley College
Xavier University