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DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Creating Knowledge

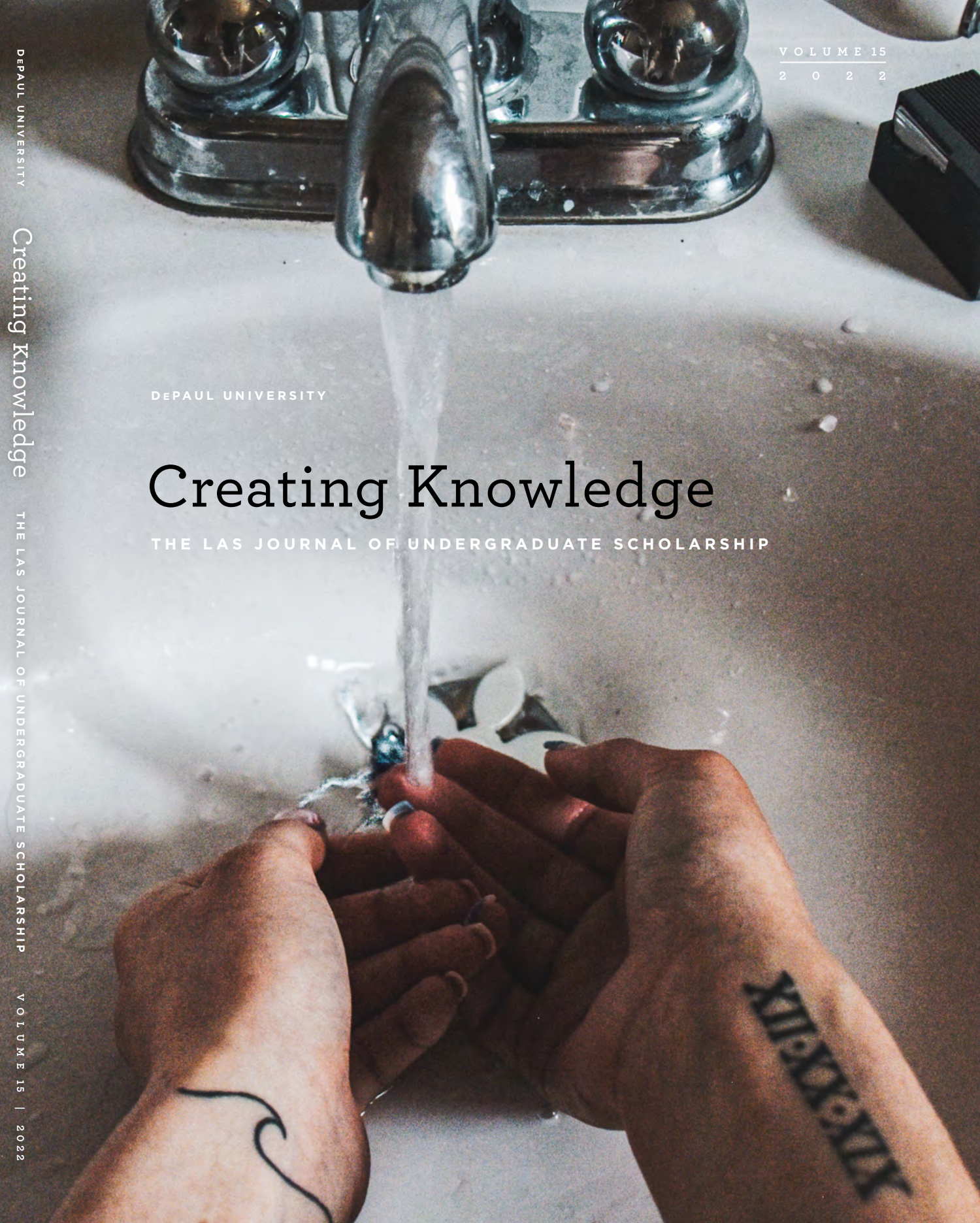
THE LAS JOURNAL OF UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

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VOLUME 15 | 2022



Cover Artwork:

Tessa Hilaire Collins | *Grappling with Change* (detail)

CREATING KNOWLEDGE

The LAS Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship



Tessa Hilaire Collins | *Grappling with Change*

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FOREWORD

DEAR STUDENTS, COLLEAGUES, ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

I always marvel when watching young people discover the world around them. The eagerness in their eyes triggers my sense of hope and feeds my vocation as an educator. I have become addicted to witnessing that moment of discovery when things become apparent, and the next question finds its way into their consciousness. At DePaul, we are a community of perpetual learners. Our endless appetite for learning calls for a culture of seeding the fields in our minds and harvesting knowledge we then consume, apply, and share with others. This truth applies to every member of our community and it is remarkable in our undergraduate students' cases. *Creating Knowledge: The LAS Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship* puts into evidence that culture and the commitment of our undergraduate students to its constant expansion.

Several years ago, we conducted many focus groups with our undergraduate students to capture their identity as learners. The identity that emerged from that study was that our students are INTELLECTUALLY CURIOUS AND ACTIVELY ENGAGED. I think that everyone in LAS shares that identity. We seek an awareness and understanding of our world that goes deeper than a simplistic veneer. The driving force that fuels that commitment to more profound understanding is that we seek to act on it. We strive to be well-informed activists that bring positive change to the world. *Creating Knowledge* continues to serve in published form as a powerful instrument of dissemination that informs our activism.

With this volume, we celebrate the work of our students in 25 different programs. Each of the essays and artworks are a product of advanced coursework during the 2021-2022 Academic Year. Some of the essays presented in this journal have already been recognized through departmental awards and supported by undergraduate research and creative grants. All have been selected by department-based faculty committees as the best of the year's student creative work, and all have been revised for submission under the supervision of faculty. The first footnote to each essay provides information about the class in which it was written and the processes of selection and revision. This volume also includes 17 images of student artwork curated by faculty in The Art School at DePaul. I am particularly impressed by the cover artwork provided this year by Tessa Hilaire Collins entitled *Grappling with Change*.

This is the first issue edited by Associate Professor Jane Eva Baxter, the new editor of *Creating Knowledge*. As with her predecessor, she has engaged our community by calling for submissions, supporting the faculty work of reviewing, selecting, and editing the student essays, curating the student artwork, and finally coordinating the production of the print and digital editions of the journal. I am deeply grateful for her leadership.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to all our faculty and staff who supported, reviewed, selected, and helped edit this extraordinary collection of student work. Thanks are also due to the faculty who served as jurors of the student artwork and the Master's in Writing and Publishing students who proofread the volume. I would like to convey a special thank you to Associate Professor Jessica Larva for her work as art jury coordinator.

With great pride in our students' work, I invite you to enjoy this new issue of *Creating Knowledge: The LAS Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship*.

Sincerely,



GUILLERMO VÁSQUEZ DE VELASCO, PHD
Dean

“SO, YOU’RE PRESCRIBING A WANK?”: AN ANALYSIS OF NETFLIX’S *SEX EDUCATION*

ANYA PALUCH*

American Studies Program

Netflix’s original series *Sex Education* premiered January 2019 and returned for a second season January 2020 and for a third in September 2021. The series is set in the English countryside in the present day, and it is mostly about the sex lives of the students at the local high school. The main character, Otis (Asa Butterfield), has a mother who is a sex therapist, so by virtue of being her son, he has learned a lot of lessons about sex, intimacy, and relationships. When his friend Maeve (Emma Mackey) discovers this, they decide to start a “sex clinic” at their school where students pay Otis and Maeve in order to get advice about sex. Throughout the series, various students in their school (and a few teachers) encounter problems like struggling to make their girlfriend orgasm or struggling to ask out a crush; the students also have questions about masturbation and about not wanting to have sex. The students come to Otis with their problems, and he gives them advice in exchange for money.

In the United States, sexual health is an issue that seems to be constantly under debate. The United States and many other countries have incredibly sexphobic histories, and these histories and attitudes trickle down into the sex education that we teach adolescents. There is a political and cultural need to perform as if teenagers do not, and should not, be having sex despite the fact that many teenagers are interested in sex, if not actively having it.

These extreme attitudes have caused sexual education to be severely lacking in the United States. Sex education is not federally regulated, meaning it varies by state, and it is

only mandated in 29 states as well as Washington DC.¹ Of those 29 states, only 18 require the information presented to teenagers to be medically accurate.² Between 2000 and 2014, the number of schools providing sex education actually declined³ despite 65% of 18-year-olds in 2013 reporting having had sex and 40% of teens aged 15 to 19 reporting having penile-vaginal intercourse from 2015 to 2017.⁴ In 2018, combined cases of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia reached an all-time high in the United States.⁵ Adolescents and young adults in their early 20s make up only one quarter of the sexually active population; however, half of new annual STI cases are from people in this age group.⁶ In this paper, I argue that teenagers need to receive better sexual education, because they deserve better. While I am not a sexual health expert, I believe teenagers are people and have a right to accurate information about their bodies and sex in general. If a teenager chooses to have sex, they should be able to do so with a wide range of knowledge of how to do so safely. Regardless of whether a teen is interested in sex, it is healthy for them to have knowledge about safe sex and healthy relationships. If teenagers are not getting accurate and helpful sexual education from their schools, they need to be getting it from somewhere because knowledge about sex and

1 Guttmacher Institute, “Sex and HIV Education,” last modified July 1, 2022, <https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/sex-and-hiv-education>.

2 Guttmacher Institute, “Sex and HIV Education.”

3 Guttmacher Institute, “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in the United States,” September 2019, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/american-teens-sexual-and-reproductive-health>.

4 Guttmacher Institute, “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health.”

5 Laura D. Lindberg, Lauren Firestein, and Cynthia Beavin, “Trends in U.S. Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Contraceptive Use, 2006-2019,” *Contraception: X 3* (2021): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conx.2021.100064>.

6 Lindberg, Firestein, and Beavin, “Trends in U.S.,” 1-6.

* Written for Allison McCracken’s American Studies Senior Seminar Capstone class, Autumn 2021.

relationships is information they will carry with them into adulthood and will likely use for the rest of their lives.

In this paper, I will be covering what information about sexual health and relationships adolescents absorb from film and television. As an American Studies scholar, I believe popular culture and media are worth studying because of the accessibility it offers and its broad impact; pop culture and media are seen by millions of people and inform how we act and relate to each other. I will be examining what effect these depictions have on how adolescents view their own sex lives, sexual health, and relationships. After reviewing what types of teenage sexual content have been featured on television over roughly the last two decades, I will analyze *Sex Education* as a case study for the kinds of teenage sex narratives on television today. Ultimately, this paper argues that television shows geared toward teenagers, such as *Sex Education*, are incredibly important in the sexual education, health, and development of young adults. When young adults are exposed to accurate, engaging narratives centering topics like sex, contraception, sexualities, abortions, relationships, and the diversity of bodies and identities, they will ultimately have better relationships with themselves, their partners, and the world around them.

Methods and Definitions

Throughout this paper, I will be frequently referring to teenagers, and I define the age of teenagers to be between the ages of 11 and 20. I will be interchangeably using the terms “teenager,” “teen,” “adolescent,” and “young adult” to avoid repetition. In some instances, I will use terms like “healthy,” “normal,” and “natural.” I do this with the understanding that sexual development, sex, and identity can differ wildly and with the understanding that there is no such thing as “normal” in relation to these topics. I will attempt to use the terms sparingly and will attempt to avoid being prescriptive of what is right or wrong for any one person. In some cases, I will use the blanket term “queer” for LGBTQIA+ people.

In this paper, I will use a few different methods of analysis. Overall, I will be analyzing *Sex Education* through an intersectional feminist lens—meaning that I will be analyzing the ways women, People of Color, and queer people are depicted. “Intersectional feminism” is a concept used to explain how identities intersect, specifically the ways “race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics intersect with one another and overlap.”⁷ The term was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw who argued that Black women are excluded from both feminist theory and anti-racist theory “because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender.”⁸ Intersectionality is used to explain how people of multiple marginalized identities—like a gay, Black woman—will experience the world in a different way than a straight, white woman.

In my analysis, I will also be drawing on the concept “queer utopia,” developed by José Esteban Muñoz⁹, and Mary Beltran’s concept of “equitable representation.”¹⁰ “Queer utopia” is the idea of a world where no one has to follow the prescriptions of a performance of gender or sexuality and where one can live in relationship to only their own feelings and pleasures as well as the feelings and pleasure of others. A queer utopia is a place of “joy and fulfillment” and a “liberation from time.”¹¹ It is a place where “queer potentiality”¹² can grow and thrive, and I will be examining a scene from *Sex Education* that exemplifies

7 Jane Coaston, “The Intersectionality Wars,” *Vox*, May 28, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>.

8 Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics.” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no.4 (1989): 140, <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>.

9 José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York University Press, 2009).

10 Mary Beltran, “Meaningful Diversity,” *Flow*, August 27, 2010, <https://www.flowjournal.org/2010/08/meaningful-diversity/>.

11 Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 133.

12 Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 139.

the queer utopia concept. Beltran’s theory of equitable representation asks whether BIPOC characters are fully realized in a particular text, whether we see stories from their perspectives, and whether the level of diversity is natural and makes sense for the setting of the story itself.¹³

What Do We Learn from Media?

All of us gain knowledge, opinions, and thoughts from the media we consume. We are exposed to new people, situations, worlds, and ideologies from media like film and television. The way a show or movie chooses to depict these people and situations impacts how we think about them. For example, in 1988, Harvard’s Center for Health Communication created a plan to use television to introduce the concept of the “designated driver” to Americans. By working with television writers and implementing a few simple lines of dialogue into popular television shows, the designated driver became fully absorbed into American society.¹⁴ Because of this, we know that television can be used to educate Americans on topics directly related to their lives.

The information teens receive from the media they consume varies depending on a multitude of factors. Obviously, the types of media different groups of teenagers consume will vary, but even if all teenagers were watching the exact same shows, the messages teenagers would receive from these shows would vary. Differences in race, gender identity, socioeconomic status, location, age, sexuality, and personal history all play a role in how a person reads and comprehends a media text. Researchers have found that a person’s “engagement with and cognitions about media content affect the degree to which they internalize these messages.”¹⁵ If a person is not

engaged with a particular piece of media, they are much less likely to internalize the implicit or explicit messages contained within. However, if a person is actively engaged and invested in a television show based on identification with storylines, characters, or something else, they are likely internalizing messages and social roles from the show which could be helpful or harmful.

In relation to sexual behavior, researchers have conceptualized such social roles as “sexual scripts” we undertake that define the way we act in sexual situations. These scripts usually fall along binary gendered lines—meaning that we are prescribed ways of acting based on our sex—which is inherently exclusionary of people who do not subscribe to typical gender binaries. According to these scripts, men are expected to be hypersexual and actively seek out sex and women; meanwhile, women are expected to be passive and just exist as objects of male desire rather than exist as people with their own sexual agency and desires.¹⁶ Because of these sexual scripts, women are often forced to be objects, and objects do not have desires; so, we are left with very little actual exploration¹⁷ of female desire in mainstream media. When there are depictions of female desire, it is with a partner and almost always within a heterosexual couple or structure.

Queer sex representation is important in mass media because information about queer identities and queer sex is almost nonexistent in sexual education programs. In seven states in the United States, there are laws colloquially called “no promo homo laws” that prohibit sex educators from “promoting homosexuality” or speaking about queer identities in a positive way.¹⁸ Queer sex is obviously different from heterosexual sex, and there are different ways to practice safe sex depending on the type

13 Beltran, “Meaningful Diversity.”

14 Jane Rosenzweig, “Can TV Improve Us?” *The American Prospect*, November 16, 2001, <https://prospect.org/culture/can-tv-improve-us/>.

15 Rita C. Seabrook et al., “Girl Power or Powerless Girl? Television, Sexual Scripts, and Sexual Agency in Sexually Active Young Women,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 41, no.4 (2017): 242, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316677028>.

16 Seabrook et al., “Girl Power or Powerless Girl?,” 240.

17 Maura Kelly, “Virginity Loss Narratives,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 47, no. 5 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490903132044>.

18 GLSEN, *Laws that Prohibit the “Promotion of Homosexuality”: Impacts and Implications* [Research Brief] (New York: GLSEN, 2018), https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/No_Promo_Homo_2018.pdf.

of sex being practiced. Being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community still carries stigma; despite having the same number of risks as heterosexual sex, schools and parents are uncomfortable teaching students about queer sex because it is viewed as being inherently wrong or deviant compared to heterosexual sex. Since many sex ed programs do not have any content on queer sex, many young adults will learn about queer sex from media like film, TV, and online sources, including, more recently, TikTok.¹⁹

Unfortunately, until more recently, there had been very little representation of queer teenagers in media. Many television shows created by Shonda Rhimes, for example, feature queer characters and queer sex, but despite many teenagers likely watching them, Rhimes's shows are not explicitly for teenagers. Representation of gay, lesbian, and bisexual characters started becoming more common in the 2000s; however, most of the characters' storylines were centered around coming out,²⁰ which is only a part of the LGBTQ+ experience.

Sex Education as a Case Study

Each episode of *Sex Education* typically opens with a scene where a student from the school, or sometimes two students, are engaging in some form of sex when, inevitably, something goes wrong. Sometimes one partner doesn't orgasm or one partner wants to have sex with the lights off while the other one doesn't. The problems vary, but the scene always ends with one or both partners feeling unsatisfied, leading them to seek help from Otis. The structure of the show allows each episode to function as a case study for navigating different challenges that may come up during sex, intimacy, or a relationship. The

format of this case study allows the show to tackle a wide variety of issues that may come up in someone's sex life with themselves or a partner. One of these early case studies features Aimee (Aimee Lou Wood) asking Otis for help figuring out what she wants in bed. Otis tells her she should try masturbating, to which she replies, "so you're prescribing a wank?" Aimee's journey is funny but also shows young women that they are allowed to masturbate and have sexual desires, which is a message that is not often seen in young adult media.

Another one of these situations is covered in season two when Otis throws a party at his house and drunkenly sleeps with popular girl Ruby. The next morning, they are "99% sure" they used a condom, but they can't find it. Later that day, Ruby finds Otis at school because she is now only 96% sure they used a condom, and in this scene, they decide to ditch school and to go purchase the Plan B pill.

This scene is a perfect example of how *Sex Education* can function as a tool for teaching adolescents how to be respectful of your sexual partners and taking responsibility for your sexual actions. Otis accompanies Ruby to the pharmacist, pays for the pill, buys her a soda, and hangs out with her while she takes the pill. In heterosexual contexts, the burden of contraception and safe sex often gets placed on women. Women are expected to take the pill or get an IUD or get a shot while men are just expected to buy condoms. In reality, sex is a two-way street; both sexual partners are responsible for what is exchanged during consensual sex, so both partners should be responsible for safe sex. Scholar Stacey Hust and her colleagues argue that "media characters who model sexual interactions may provide young people with ideas and templates for their own romantic and sexual behavior."²¹ When we see Otis and Ruby buying the Plan B

19 Lilly Quiroz and Audrey Nguyen, "Sex Education Leaves Out Queer People," National Public Radio, April 27, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/22/989826953/sex-ed-often-leaves-out-queer-people-heres-what-to-know>.

20 Melanie L. Duncan, "Media Representations of Sexuality" in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Family Studies*, ed. Constance L. Shehan (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119085621.wbef534>.

21 Stacey J. T. Hust, Jane D. Brown, and Kelly Ladin L'Engle, "Boys Will Be Boys and Girls Better Be Prepared: An Analysis of the Rare Sexual Health Messages in Young Adolescents' Media," *Mass Communication and Society* 11, no. 1 (2008), 5, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430701668139>.

pill together, Otis's character models helpful, respectful behavior for other teenagers who have pregnancy scares.

Ruby also models actions that a teenager could take if they find themselves in her position. Ruby asks Otis for help, whether it's because she's nervous or embarrassed or just wants to get him to buy the pill for her. Ruby shows viewers that it's okay to ask for help in these situations and that you don't have to go through it alone. There is a lot of stigmata surrounding things like contraception and Plan B, and Ruby demonstrates that it is okay to feel nervous and that you don't have to be embarrassed. Stigma operates by keeping people in the dark, so by shining a light on the process of buying Plan B in this scene, the show is attempting to undo some of that stigma.

Queer Utopia

Another significant moment on *Sex Education* occurs in season three. One of the main characters, Eric (Ncuti Gatwa), goes to visit his family in Nigeria for a wedding. In Nigeria, as explained in the show, it is not culturally acceptable to be gay nor anywhere else on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. This is difficult for Eric who "has been out since he was thirteen," is very expressive in his sexuality, and loves to experiment with wearing makeup, bright colors, and more "feminine" clothes. Throughout his time in Nigeria, we see Eric struggling with having to tone down his personality and his appearance in order to hide his identity from both his family and other people in Nigeria. At the wedding, Eric is clocked—which in this context means recognized as gay—by the wedding photographer who is also gay. During the wedding reception, he and Eric strike up a conversation in which Eric learns that the photographer Oba is gay. Oba invites him to an "afterparty," and Eric decides to go with him. When they get to the party, Eric discovers it is actually a hidden club for queer people.

Eric and Oba walk into this darkened, colorful club, and Eric is immediately embraced by the people there. He stands in the middle of the room, just staring and taking in

the whole environment. The lighting is dark but colorful with its dark blues, reds, and purples. The characters dancing around Eric are all wearing bright makeup and colorful clothes that stand out. Eric's dark skin shines in the lights of the club, and the joy on his face is clear. We can tell he has never been in a space like this—not just a space full of Queer People of Color but also a room full of queer Nigerians, people who share his heritage and understand what it is like for him.

This sequence is important because it allows us to glimpse a queer utopia. As Muñoz defines it, a queer utopia is a place that exists outside of white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal, and straight society. The gay club that Oba brings Eric to is full of what Muñoz refers to as "queer aesthetics," which function as a "great refusal"²² of the performances that LGBTQIA+ people are forced to perform on a daily basis. In a queer utopia, queer people can forgo these performances and exist as they truly are. In the Nigerian gay club, no one is performing gender or sexuality, and the characters are reveling in their own feelings and pleasures as well as reveling in the feelings and pleasure of others.

Limitations of the Show

Sex Education contains multitudes, but it is not a perfect show. There are some limitations that need to be addressed. The first is the show's focus on relationships. One of the themes of the show is that you can have sex with whoever you want and that having a lot of sex doesn't make you a slut but is instead empowering. Despite this argument, we rarely see any characters consistently sleeping around with multiple different partners, although there are several minor characters who do. While the focus on relationships goes against the show's ethos at times, it allows viewers to see problems and situations that come up during relationships and see how to work through them. The show likely features relationships because it

²² Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 134.

is more narratively interesting for the viewer to watch a relationship grow and flourish, and viewers love having couples to root for. However, focusing on couples leaves out characters who aren't interested in relationships and characters who practice nonnormative or nontraditional sexual behaviors.

Another limitation is who gets primary screen time. The scene where Eric visits a queer club in Nigeria is roughly only three minutes long while other scenes featuring white characters tend to be longer and more drawn out. In general, *Sex Education* does a relatively good job of including stories like Eric's that are typically sidelined; however, storylines about white characters do seem to get more screen time. The scene with Eric in this club was a pivotal moment for him, and I think it would have been beneficial for viewers to have seen more from that moment and for Eric and other non-white characters to be centered more frequently.

Promotional Messaging

For the last two seasons, the promotional posters for *Sex Education* have featured a wide range of the cast. This is intentional as the cast is quite large, and there are a number of characters who would be deemed important enough to be featured on a poster. The poster for season three features characters that would be familiar to any traditional high school show. The poster features a jock, a popular girl, a nerd, a smart girl, a weird girl, and a class clown.

However, none of these characters actually fit squarely into any of these boxes, and some of the characters on the show don't fit into any boxes at all. This poster demonstrates the show's use of intersectionality; characters are allowed to be themselves, and viewers are shown characters who exist in multiple boxes and have multifaceted, complex identities and social positionings. This is important because it reflects real life—people in real life exist in gray spaces and contain multitudes, just as these characters do. This poster also features botanical

FIGURE 1

Sex Education Season 3 Official Poster. https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/sex_education/s03#&gid=1&pid=0



illustrations and is modeled after a page from a botany textbook. This design, along with the tagline, "growth is a group project," invokes ideas of nature, growth, and change. One of the main themes of the show is that sex and change are natural and ordinary, which is reflected here. Each character is also labeled with a plant name and attributes of that plant. For example, Aimee is a "hardy geranium" with the traits "friendship and protection." Eric is a Protea: "transformation, courage." These traits imply that everyone is unique and that, no matter their identity, everyone has worth and something to contribute.

The show's social media accounts are another important aspect of the promotion of *Sex Education*. The show utilizes Instagram by sharing extra content relating to the show, including behind-the-scenes videos, short clips,

articles, and memes as well as interviews with the cast and other content. Some of this content aims to continue the conversation about sexuality and identity that started in an episode and is continued on another platform. This is an effective form of promotion for the show that also allows viewers who may be unable to access the show the opportunity to obtain some of the sexual health knowledge from within the show itself.

One of these videos features one of the show's writers, Temi Wilkey, breaking down the "Eric in Nigeria" plotline in a segment called "Anatomy of a Queer Scene." Wilkey, a Queer Woman of Color herself, discusses how the scene was developed and mentions that it is based on her real experiences. Wilkey addresses some of the heavier issues, noting that "it isn't always easy or necessary to come out to your extended family." For teenagers trying to navigate their identity and figure out how all aspects of their identity can fit together, Eric's Nigeria storyline along with Wilkey's commentary and writing for the show can help people navigate these different aspects of their own identities.

Reception of *Sex Education*

Since Netflix does not make viewership numbers public, anecdotal evidence from fans and critics is important. The show is clearly reaching a lot of people; the show's Instagram page, their main source of promotion, has 4.1 million followers while videos from the show's YouTube have millions of views each. In an article from the *Guardian* from January 2020, fans expressed what they liked about *Sex Education* and similar shows on Netflix. One teenager said it helped them answer their "weird questions" about sex, and another said that "the complete variety of characters implies that everyone tackles personal issues differently."²³ What *Sex Education* and

shows like it can offer students is a nuanced, less awkward portrayal of sexual topics compared to traditional sex education programs, which are often boring, awkward, and not comprehensive for students. By covering topics that young adults have questions about, this show is respecting and taking young adults seriously as people and giving them frank, candid information that is clearly desired and needed by teenagers.

In season three, *Sex Education* introduced a new nonbinary character, Cal. Dua Saleh who plays Cal is also nonbinary and said that *Sex Education* was "something that [they] would have definitely benefited from when [he] was a child."²⁴ Saleh, along with other creators and fans, has expressed how much the show has taught them, noting that he has gotten many responses from fans who are excited to see that Saleh uses the same binder as them or uses the same pronouns or is also from Sudan.²⁵ When stories about people like Cal are given space in a popular television show, viewers notice and appreciate seeing themselves reflected on screen, especially at a time when nonnormative identities, like queer identities, are being heavily scrutinized in other spaces.

Conclusion

While it is not a perfect show, *Sex Education* is a celebration of sex, sexuality, and the differences between all of us. At the end of season three, the students in *Sex Education* rebel against the sexphobic, anti-individualistic administration through a riotous display of sex and song. The scene is a rebellion against antiquated views about sex and identity; it is also a demand by the students to be respected and taken seriously as well as a celebration of the sex lives and identities of the students at the school. The students are all joyous in expressing themselves, proud of their identities, and proud to take up space in the

23 Polly Smythe, "It Answered My Weird Questions: What do Teens Really Think of Netflix's *Sex Education*?" *The Guardian*, January 22, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2020/jan/22/it-answered-my-weird-sex-questions-what-teens-really-think-of-sex-education-netflix>.

24 Ruth Etiesit Samuel "What 'Sex Education' Gets Right About Black Queer Stories," *Huffpost*, October 7, 2021, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sex-education-dua-saleh-temi-wilkey_n_615b66dee4b008640eb7f8b3.

25 Samuel, "What 'Sex Education' Gets Right About Black Queer Stories."

world. This scene is a rejection of the dominant, sexphobic culture that is pervasive in so many countries around the world, including the United States, and an embrace of a new generation of sexual ideology, one that is joyful and inclusive of everyone.

While we should not stop advocating for comprehensive sexual education, if society continues to limit such

instruction, teenagers are going to have to look elsewhere for accurate, healthy information about sexual health. Like generations before them, this generation (and possibly the next) is going to have to learn about sex from the internet, television, and movies, which does not have to be a bad thing! Shows like *Sex Education* that feature relatable characters, accurate information, and engaging storylines can be a great way to learn about sex and identity.

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HUMAN PLAGUE IN MADAGASCAR

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INTRODUCTION

Plague is best known as the disease that killed at least one third of the population of Europe in the fourteenth century, but it is still very much present in the world today. In the last thirty years, the disease has reemerged in East Africa, particularly in Madagascar. Currently, Madagascar has over 75% of the world's annual plague cases, with an average of 1,000 cases per year. It thus provides the ideal case study on the current nature of plague. After briefly reviewing the biology of plague and its history in Madagascar, this paper will focus on its recent reemergence. A better understanding of the factors that influence plague in Madagascar can help us find solutions to control the disease and prevent further spread.

The Biology of Plague

Plague is caused by the bacterial pathogen *Yersinia pestis*. *Y. pestis* causes five different types of plague in humans, with bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic plague being the most common. Pneumonic plague occurs when *Y. pestis* infects the lungs, either from breathing in the bacteria or from the spread of other types of plague due to a lack of treatment. Septicemic plague also results from untreated plague, occurring when the bacteria enter the blood stream and multiply. The pneumonic and septicemic forms are usually very rare, comprising about 10% of reported cases annually. The most prevalent and well-known form is bubonic plague, which typically results from a flea bite. This form is named for the characteristic buboes (or swollen lymph nodes) that form

in the armpit and groin (Butler, 2009). Other symptoms of bubonic plague include a high fever, chills, pain in the joints, general lethargy, and gangrene. Without treatment, bubonic plague has a fatality rate of 50% to 60%, while pneumonic and septicemic forms are almost 100% fatal (Butler, 2009). Fortunately, all types of plague can be treated with antibiotics, though these must be administered quickly. Death normally occurs within one week of symptom onset for bubonic plague, and in 18 to 24 hours for the pneumonic and septicemic forms (Salam et al., 2020).

Plague is so deadly in humans because it is mainly a disease of wild rodents. In populations where the disease is endemic, infected mammals survive for extended periods of time. Fleas infect rodents with plague and they both become vectors for the disease, passing it back and forth. Occasionally, plague will spread to more vulnerable animals, including humans, causing high mortality (Vallès et al., 2020). Humans most often contract plague through a flea bite, however, contact with infected animals—such as consuming animal meat, being bitten, and handling dead bodies—can also cause transmission (Raoult et al., 2013). Human-to-human spread is rare, but it does happen with pneumonic plague via droplets expelled during a cough or sneeze. Lice could also facilitate human-to-human transmission, with *Y. pestis* observed in body lice on people in the Congo (Barbieri et al., 2021).

The History of Plague in Madagascar

Human plague did not impact Madagascar until the third plague pandemic in the 19th and 20th centuries. It first entered the country through the main harbor of Toamasina in 1898, and Madagascar's harbor cities experienced periodic epidemics until the early 1920s. In

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1921, the disease became endemic in local rat populations above 800 meters, resulting in seasonal outbreaks between October and April in the rural central highlands. In contrast, urban areas remained largely free of the disease until the 1990s (Boisier et al., 2002).

Mahajanga, a large port city, was especially vulnerable, with three devastating outbreaks occurring from 1991 to 1999 (Vogler et al., 2013). The capital city of Antananarivo was also hit badly from 2002 to 2003. Luckily, over 75% of these cases were bubonic and relatively easy to treat with antibiotics (Vogler et al., 2013). However, in 2017, another outbreak started in the city of Toamasina with a thirty-one-year-old man's death from respiratory distress. The disease then spread to Antananarivo. This time, most of the cases were pneumonic and much more challenging to treat (Randremanana et al., 2019). Currently, Madagascar has the most cases of human plague per year, usually about 75% of the world's cases (Andrianaivoarimanana et al., 2019).

The country of Madagascar not only has the most cases yearly but also present many of the main factors contributing to plague's reemergence. Through a thorough study of human plague in this country, we can begin to understand how to control the disease in places where it has already taken hold and hopefully learn how to prevent its spread to other countries.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE SPREAD OF PLAGUE

Several key factors influence the spread of plague in Madagascar and can be divided into two main categories: biological and cultural. Biological factors are characterized by environmental features and evolutionary change, while cultural factors are characterized by human behavior.

Biological Factors

Climate Change

Warm, humid, and rainy weather increases the likelihood of spread of human plague. Most places with endemic plague and consistent plague foci have wet and humid

weather. Researchers estimate that due to climate change, rainfall will increase a little every year. As the ocean becomes warmer, more water will evaporate into the air, creating a storm system (Alderson et al., 2020). Both fleas and rodents thrive in wet and humid weather, with some studies stating that a single degree Celsius increase in the spring could lead to a 50% increase in disease vectors (Stenseth et al., 2008). Spring rainfall causes more food for rodents to be produced, leading to an increase in the rodent population a few years later. Subsequent flooding from rainfall can also push rodents into closer contact with humans. Similarly, the humidity that results from rain promotes flea larval development, increasing the number of fleas (Stenseth et al., 2008).

Another consequence of climate change that can impact plague is the increase in major climate events, specifically the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). ENSO has three states: (1) El Niño, the warming of the ocean and less precipitation, (2) La Niña, a cooling of the ocean and greater than average precipitation, and (3) neutral, in which neither happens (L'Heureux, 2014). ENSO affects the climate of the entire earth. In contrast, the IOD mostly affects countries surrounding or near the Indian Ocean. The IOD oscillates between (1) positive events, which are the warming of the western part of the Indian Ocean and the cooling of the eastern and (2) negative events, which are the opposite. In East Africa and Madagascar, a positive IOD is linked to higher rainfall and warmer sea temperatures, which can lead to an increase in flooding. Scientists estimate that the Western Indian Ocean will warm at higher rates due to global warming, resulting in increased rainfall for Eastern Africa (Cai et al., 2018).

In a study examining the relationship among ENSO, IOD, and plague in Madagascar, researchers found a strong correlation between plague incidence and the increasing intensity of these climate oscillations, especially in the 1990s when plague started to reemerge. In 1995, a positive IOD event and an intense ENSO period were followed

only nine months later by a significant increase in plague cases in Madagascar. Plague cases continued to rise over the next two years as the warm and wet weather continued, bolstering rodent populations (Kreppel et al., 2014).

Resistance

Three types of resistance affect the spread of plague: insecticide resistance in fleas, plague resistance in rats, and antibiotic resistance in the bacteria. Increasing insecticide resistance enables fleas to infect rodent populations at higher rates. These rodent populations are, at the same time, becoming more resistant to plague, living longer, and allowing fleas that bite them to further spread the disease. Moreover, increasing antibiotic resistance in *Y. pestis* makes plague in humans more difficult to treat and control (Alderson et al., 2020).

Insecticides are the most common and cost-effective means that Madagascar uses to control plague. They are usually used within urban areas to reduce the number of fleas, but some species have started to become impervious to these insecticides. Currently *Xenopsylla cheopis*, the tropical rat flea, is resistant to nine types of insecticide, some of which are not even used in Madagascar (Alderson et al., 2020). Two other flea species are also unaffected by at least three different insecticides in both Madagascar and Tanzania. Resistance is thought to be even more widespread, though additional research is needed to verify this (Alderson et al., 2020).

Resistance in rats seems to be less widespread than in fleas, as it depends on their location and species. Most rats in plague-free areas of the country have very low resistance to *Y. pestis* and usually die soon after contracting the disease, therefore contributing little to its spread. However, in urban areas like Antananarivo, most rats are ten to one hundred times more resistant to plague. *Rattus rattus* and *Rattus norvegicus*, the most common rats found in Madagascar, are especially resistant. Instead of dying from plague, they live with it, passing it to fleas

and then humans. It is unknown whether shrews, another main host in urban centers, have developed similar resistance (Rahalison et al., 2004).

Antibiotic-resistant strains of *Y. pestis* are rare, but because such a wide variety of antibiotics are used to treat plague, resistance has become a major concern (Rahalison et al., 2004). Since 1998, three antibiotic-resistant *Y. pestis* strains have been discovered in Madagascar. All were found in different hosts, at different times, and in different places, indicating that plague has the ability to naturally acquire resistance. It is important to monitor the development of antibiotic resistance, as new antibiotic-resistant strains of *Y. pestis* could have devastating consequences (Cabanel et al., 2018).

Cultural Factors

Cultivation and Deforestation

Related to these biological factors are human actions that impact the natural habitats of rodent populations. Deforestation and the destruction of natural habitats leads to an increase in plague cases. One of the main rodent vectors of plague in Madagascar, *Rattus rattus*, is often found in rural fields and forests. Over the last 30 years, these areas have been developed into towns and farmland, displacing the native rodent populations and causing them to live in closer proximity to humans (Alderson et al., 2020). This cultivated land also provides more food sources for rodents, increasing their population. Moreover, the people farming this land are often migrants living in rough conditions, where contact with rodent vectors is more likely (Duplantier et al., 2005).

Lack of Surveillance and Adequate Training

For around sixty years, plague was almost non-existent in Madagascar's urban populations, causing surveillance of reservoirs and vectors to focus on the highlands where plague was and continues to be endemic. In 1993, the Plague National Control Program was established to reduce plague mortality, especially from the pneumonic form. The

program's research is done by the Ministry of Health and the Institut Pasteur de Madagascar, which have the only facilities available in Madagascar to test for plague. Thanks to this program, it is mandatory for all health centers to report cases of plague, although cases are still suspected to go widely unreported (Andrianaivoarimanana et al., 2013). These facilities also closely monitor the antibiotics that are administered and the strains of *Y. pestis* that are resistant to antibiotics. Unfortunately, due to financial issues, Antananarivo discontinued plague surveillance from 2006 to 2018, which resulted in a spike in cases in the city (Alderson et al., 2020).

Surveillance programs are extremely important in tracking, treating, and preventing plague. They can help identify hotspots, trace antibiotic-resistant strains of the disease, and create a warning system to alert health officials. Although plague surveillance programs are one of the most important means of controlling the disease, they are often underfunded, especially during political and economic crises. In addition, due to the frequent turnover of health workers mainly in plague endemic areas, many new workers have not been properly trained in plague diagnosis (Andrianaivoarimanana et al., 2019).

A related issue is the lack of adequate testing facilities, as illustrated by the outbreak of pneumonic plague in 2017. The Institut Pasteur de Madagascar was not prepared to test so many pneumonic plague samples, especially since they were accustomed to testing for bubonic cases. Testing is more difficult in pneumonic cases because of the variable quality of the tested mucus (Randremanana et al., 2019). In addition, the rest of the public health system struggled to adapt to the large number of cases, and proper surveillance was lacking throughout the epidemic.

Cultural Practices

A few cultural behaviors also directly affect the spread of plague. The social stigma attached to plague in Madagascar further compromises surveillance and testing.

Many people link plague to rats and thus to dirtiness, poverty, and more disease. The shame associated with plague encourages the sick to hide, further spreading a possible pneumonic variant. The Red Cross has reported that stigmatization prevents contact tracing and that very few people come forward for testing or even treatment (Alderson et al., 2020). The stigma surrounding the disease has made it extremely difficult for health officials to not only establish contacts and trace outbreaks but also to quantify the outbreaks.

The cultural tradition Famadihana, the "turning of the bones" or "dancing with the dead," has also been linked to the spread of the disease. In Famadihana, the dead are exhumed from their graves, wrapped in fresh cloth, and then danced around by family and community members before being reburied (Larson, 2001). If the individual died from pneumonic plague, reopening the grave can expose people to *Y. pestis* bacteria and cause them to contract the disease (Alderson et al., 2020). The government recently recommended waiting seven years before exhumation, but this advice is not always followed. After the 2017 outbreak of pneumonic plague, the World Health Organization and the United Children's Fund worked with local communities to establish safer burial guidelines that still adhere to traditional practices (Heitzinger et al., 2019).

Poverty and Political Unrest

Perhaps the largest factor contributing to the spread of plague in Madagascar is poverty, sometimes exacerbated by political unrest. Between 1983 and 2001, there was a spike in cases in Africa, especially in Mozambique and Madagascar, which were countries experiencing severe political unrest (Duplantier et al., 2005). For Madagascar, this period was characterized by a constantly changing leadership, a disastrous economic situation, an impoverished population, and disorganization of public services in general and health services in particular (including the suspension of insect control campaigns and a reduction in surveillance). This disorganization

compromised both medical care and proper sanitation. At one point, a few cities suspended their trash removal, leading to an increase in rats and fleas (Duplantier et al., 2005).

More generally, the poorer areas of the country are the most affected by plague. These districts are characterized by bad hygiene conditions, unreliable and insufficient water supply, and a lack of roads. Furthermore, many people live in small one-room huts, where rats nesting in the thatched roofs easily come into contact with people sleeping right by their food (Duplantier et al., 2005). Analysis of the 1995 Mahajanga epidemic found that of the four areas studied, the epicenter was the most densely populated with the lowest socioeconomic status. It also contained the city's two largest markets, which produce the city's largest amount of waste (Boisier et al., 2002).

Another consequence of poverty, overcrowding, makes it difficult for people to effectively isolate themselves from plague. This problem has escalated quickly, with the city of Antananarivo growing from 300,000 people in the 1960s to over 1.5 million today (Alderson et al., 2020). Many of the poorer inhabitants are forced into overcrowded homes with very poor sanitary conditions. This overcrowding, especially in the wet and humid lowlands, allows rats and fleas to flourish. The movement of people to urban areas from the rural highlands, where plague is endemic, has also contributed to the spread of the disease (Duplantier et al., 2005).

Controlling the Spread

Examination of the factors contributing to the prevalence of plague in Madagascar suggests several actions that could be taken to mitigate the spread of the disease.

Understanding Host and Vector Control

Lack of knowledge of the different hosts and vectors inhibits the management and prevention of plague. There are thought to be around two hundred mammal hosts and

thirty flea vectors (Alderson et al., 2020). This diversity of hosts and vectors both explains the persistence of *Y. pestis* in the wild and precludes any universal solution for preventing the spread of plague to humans. Even in Madagascar, different areas have different host and vector populations, necessitating different strategies for their control (Andrianaivoarimanana et al., 2013). Pesticides and insecticides are the most common measures used, but these are not great options. Many vectors and hosts are becoming resistant to the chemicals, which could also have a harmful effect on humans. One study even suggests that these control measures could increase the movement of rodents, spreading the disease even further (Vallès et al., 2020). Aside from the use of insecticides and pesticides, some human behaviors could be changed to decrease contact with infected vectors, such as no longer storing crops in the home. The best approach to controlling the vectors and hosts is to study their movements and behaviors in order to develop more targeted measures.

Improved Surveillance and Case Management

Early warning of outbreaks can save lives and help health officials be more prepared. Plague surveillance can be improved through increased community participation. In most surveillance systems in Madagascar, physicians report suspected cases of plague to the Ministry of Health and send biological samples to be tested. However, many people either do not seek treatment at healthcare facilities or experience barriers to treatment. Especially in the rural highlands, communities rely on traditional healers and alternative treatments. Community-based surveillance encourages locals to collect health information and report it for public health surveillance (Technical Contributors, 2019). Such systems decrease the stigma linked to plague because the community has taken surveillance and often treatment of the disease into their own hands. Increased funding for surveillance systems is also vital (Vallès et al., 2020), as many programs have been cut throughout the years due to a lack of funding and are only reinstated after a large outbreak occurs.

Increases in funding would similarly benefit case management, since many regions of Madagascar do not have adequate resources to follow proper protocols. Even in areas with all the necessary resources to fight plague, most health organizations are ill-prepared for an outbreak. In the 2017 Antananarivo outbreak, this lack of preparation led to a large number of missed cases and incorrect diagnoses (Vallès et al., 2020). Madagascar's Ministry of Public Health has since established a better first line of treatment for plague, especially pneumonic cases, but still lacks enough surveillance to determine the actual prevalence of plague in the country each year.

Proper case management is also challenged by the difficulty in diagnosing plague. Laboratory diagnosis requires correct handling of a bacteria culture and takes around four days, so most cases are diagnosed on a symptomatic basis. Because the pneumonic form of plague is much less common than the bubonic form and therefore less well-known, symptomatic diagnosis rarely catches pneumonic outbreaks. In 2002, Madagascar implemented the rapid diagnostic test, which can detect bubonic plague in less than 15 minutes. Unfortunately, this test is expensive and less effective for pneumonic plague (Jullien et al., 2020).

Stronger Healthcare Systems

Many of these interventions highlight Madagascar's need for a stronger health system overall. Madagascar only spends about 3% (52 US dollars per person) of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on healthcare, one of the lowest health expenditures relative to GDP worldwide (Bonds et al., 2018). As a result, while Madagascar's Ministry of Public Health might have strong policies, it lacks the resources to implement them. One main component of the health system that needs to be strengthened is readiness. In regard to plague, the system is considered "ready" when health workers are trained to identify potential patients and can refer them to facilities able to properly diagnose and treat plague (Bonds et al., 2018).

Over 40,000 of Madagascar's health workers are community health workers (CHWs) located throughout the country. Most CHWs are in rural areas with little access to modern medical facilities. CHWs are not trained to treat and diagnose plague, but they play an important role in identifying symptoms and early signs of outbreaks. While CHWs are usually able to follow the emergency protocols, their lack of funding and equipment creates large gaps in their reporting processes (Bertherat, 2015). The resulting disconnect between community and frontline health systems and national surveillance entities often leads to delayed reporting.

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated Madagascar's public health system's already numerous problems. Madagascar is still struggling to control COVID-19 and to obtain vaccines. An additional complication is the similarity of symptoms between COVID-19 and pneumonic plague. Misdiagnosis as COVID-19 is potentially fatal due to the almost 100% fatality rate of untreated pneumonic plague (Aborode et al., 2021). The pandemic has also reduced important healthcare screenings and plague reporting. Many people, especially in the rural areas of Madagascar, have stopped attending healthcare centers, which they view as COVID-19 hotspots. In addition, a 63% decrease in reported plague cases from 2018 to 2020 indicates a decline in plague surveillance, as it is unlikely that case numbers dropped that drastically (Rasoanaivo et al., 2021). While it is imperative to address a worldwide pandemic, other diseases should not be neglected, particularly in terms of research and surveillance.

CONCLUSION

In order to control the spread of plague and increase effective treatments, we need to better understand its main drivers. Factors like climate change, poor surveillance, and poverty are common throughout the world, and can cause outbreaks of plague in endemic regions. Although minimal, research into these factors

has already helped Madagascar become better prepared for plague outbreaks (Vallès et al., 2020). While many of the recommended interventions require funding that Madagascar does not have, some can be implemented without spending a lot of money. Community health workers are one of Madagascar's greatest strengths, yet they are underutilized. It might be more useful to have them work together with community-based plague surveillance teams. Such community engagement is effective in the prevention and management of infectious diseases because treatments can be tailored to specific populations (Questa et al., 2020).

Madagascar is not the only country experiencing plague outbreaks; the disease is endemic in much of Asia, Africa, and the Americas, and kills hundreds of people every year. Since the 1980s, worldwide cases have increased, with the disease now present in over thirty-three countries. Many of these countries, like Tanzania, are dealing with large-scale outbreaks for the first time in a hundred years and lack medical staff properly trained in treating the

plague (Vallès et al., 2020). It is important to control these outbreaks to prevent plague from spreading to even more countries, especially ones with healthcare systems that are not prepared for the disease. Madagascar provides the ideal case study for understanding plague, as it “presents all factors (socio-economical, failure of control strategies, appearance of new variants of the bacteria, new vectors, new reservoirs, ...) that have contributed to the reemergence of human plague in other parts of the world in various environments” (Duplantier et al., 2005, p. 450).

The reemergence of plague in Madagascar is a warning for the world. Factors that increase plague prevalence like climate change, migration, and poverty are global issues that are unlikely to go away, and the 2013 Ebola crisis and current COVID-19 pandemic show how devastating deadly diseases can be (Vallès et al., 2020). We need to pay more attention to the status of plague and invest more effort in helping the people affected and stopping its spread, because the world is completely unprepared for another plague pandemic.

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INNOVATING MODERN BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES: LOOKING TO TRADITIONAL AFRICAN VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE AS INSPIRATION FOR A GREENER FUTURE

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Architecture and Urbanism Minor

Earth's environmental health is declining at a rate that will soon be irreversible, making sustainability an increasingly critical policy objective. From the Industrial Revolution onward, humanity's link to the natural world frayed in favor of and reliance on science, technology, and economic growth. Such modern interventions have become necessary to support a large and growing population. We need to reevaluate many aspects of contemporary life to ease the human impact on the environment. Everyday practices like recycling, using paper instead of plastic bags at the grocery store, or switching to a hybrid car are effective. However, one of the most significant and pervasive features of modern life, which is often—at a structural level—overlooked, concerns housing and the manner of building it. While technologies like solar panels and geothermal systems help soften the blow of humanity on the struggling Earth, they seem to be implemented as an afterthought—especially when considering the environmental impact of the building materials themselves. Instead of developing more products and eco-friendly systems for the construction industry, we can find inspiration for greener architecture in the traditional building practices of pre-colonial Africa.

Much of Africa and the world's architecture is traditionally earth-based. Various techniques have been—and can be—employed in constructing such homes and structures, and not one of them is excessively disruptive to the natural world. In fact, they harness properties of

the natural world to create comfortable and serviceable residences. If we are committed to minimizing our increasingly damaging impact on the Earth, architects and builders should look to the earthen architecture of Africa for inspiration. We can achieve a green future at the symbiotic intersection of vernacular African building techniques and natural technologies with modern design and construction innovations.

While the architectural and planning “Modern” (and postmodern) dominate the built environments of many contemporary cities, it has not always been that way. All regions exhibit a range of traditional architectural forms and modes of building adapted to their particular environmental profile. Similarly, traditional earth-built homes in Africa are in harmony with their surroundings. Mud procured locally and grasses gathered nearby would serve as the primary construction material. There is no aspect of African architecture which is in direct opposition to and defiance of the natural environment. This traditional approach practiced in some African cultural settings is born out of convenience and practicality as reverence for the Earth's sanctity and some cases divinity, and its contributions to human and community vitality. Jean-Paul Bourdier and Trinh Minh-ha explain, “[It] is not just a piece of land to live on, but a being to live with or a sacred mother's womb to live in.”¹ The relationship between traditional cultural practices and construction of buildings is made apparent.

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1 Jean-Paul Bourdier and Trinh Minh-ha, “Koumbili: Semi-Sunken Dwellings in Upper Volta,” *African Arts* 16, no. 4 (Aug. 1983): 43.

Historically disregarded by the West, the building techniques of earthen architecture in Africa are advanced and well-managed. Home construction methods differ to various degrees between regions of the continent but are all united by an appreciation for qualities of the natural world. The most prevalent examples of these techniques include puddled mud (an extrapolation of coiled pottery where mud is built up concentrically to the desired height and dried until stable); sun-dried, hand-molded bricks—perhaps the form most familiar to the Western reader—allowing for more structural variation and therefore architectural innovation; and rammed earth (arguably a predecessor to concrete walls involving molds). In this case, wet earth is compacted and allowed to dry before raising the height of the walls further.² With the proper maintenance, structures built using these methods are quite durable.

Earthen structures have been standing for centuries and do not appear to fade away. The original walls of the ancient city of Marrakesh, Morocco, are a testament to the structural strength traditional African techniques confer on buildings (fig. 1). Built ca. 1120 CE, the city's walls were constructed of rammed earth to stand to this day, nearly a millennium later.³ Static integrity notwithstanding, there are numerous other aspects of traditional African architecture which prove beneficial. For example, a significant advantage of earthen homes is the organic and passive temperature regulation of building interiors. The thick mud walls absorb the day's heat, store it, and then release it during the night.⁴ Utilizing these properties of earth in the proper climate creates buildings that would typically be as environmentally comfortable as a standard Western home. Additionally, earth is non-combustible, making naturally fire-resistant buildings.⁵

FIGURE 1

The Walls of Marrakesh, Morocco. Source: Anthony Stanley (licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license).



While conventional modern materials and climate-control systems regulate temperature and can be fireproof, better alternatives exist. There is an abundant material that achieves the same goal: earth. It needs no manufacture. Importantly, it has none of the noxious properties of conventional materials like asbestos, which damage the environment and our health.

At an environmental level, it is easy to see why earth-based architecture is overwhelmingly more eco-friendly than contemporary building materials:

[earth] is one of the most abundant materials globally, needs no power source for processing, and does not emit pollution or generate waste. It is easy to use to build and repair ... and ... at the end of its life it can be recycled to build new structures of earth, or just go back to nature.⁶

Earth as a material is axiomatically sustainable. Instead of reaping structural materials such as timber and iron ore

2 Labelle Prussin, "Building Technologies in the West African Savannah," *Publications de la Société Française d'Histoire des Outre-Mers* (1981).

3 Marianne Barrucand, "Marrakesh," *Grove Art Online* (2003).

4 Jean-Louis Bourgeois, "Mud Stand Up: Constructing Adobe Architecture," in *Spectacular Vernacular: The Adobe Tradition*, (Aperture, 1996).

5 Mohamed Bedri, "The History and Benefits of Earth Buildings," accessed May 19, 2021, <https://medium.com/asaduru/the-history-and-benefits-of-earth-buildings-b0dc0339cccf>.

6 M. F. Elizondo, L. F. Guerrero, and L. A. Mendoza, "Environmental Impact: Comparison Between Earthen Architecture and Conventional Construction," *Structural Repairs and Maintenance of Heritage Architecture* 12: 483.

from the natural world, earthen architecture rearranges what was already there. Buildings made with traditional African techniques cause little disruption to ecosystems and long-term impacts on the Earth. As Olumuyiwa Adegun observes, “the process involves little or no fossil fuel, [and] up to 30% less water is consumed...compared to other conventional walling materials.”⁷ Contrastingly, “in the Western countries, the construction sector consumes a large volume of natural resources and is responsible for about 50% of wastes production in the European Union.”⁸ In addition to this outsize production of waste, modern construction practices consume significant amounts of energy. Compared to structures built with conventional materials, clay structures consume substantially less energy during the construction process (Table 1).⁹ Concrete, a common building material, consumes almost seventeen times the energy that clay does in production.¹⁰ According to the Environmental Protection Agency, electricity and other types of energy generated for heating homes and businesses are the second and fourth largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions—a significant contributor to Global Warming (Table 2).¹¹ By transitioning to earth-based architecture, the energy consumption associated with both constructing and inhabiting a residence would decrease significantly enough to make a significant positive difference regarding the risk of climate change.

Built with a view to their durability, conventional modern structures tie down land and environmental resources

TABLE 1

Embodied Energy for Different Construction Materials

Source: Djamil Benghida, “Sun-Dried Clay for Sustainable Constructions,” *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research* 11, no. 6 (2016): 4628–33.

Material	Kwh/cubic meter, 0-3500
Clinker brick	1730
Clinker roof tiles	1150
Hollow brick	815
Porous brick	490
Solid brick	1250
Cellular concrete	370
Reinforced concrete	2985
Concrete	500
Expanded clay block	645
Sand-lime blocks	440
Clay, raw earth	30

TABLE 2

Total U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Economic Sector in 2020

Source: “Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” available from <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>; accessed June 9, 2021.

Sector	Percent Emissions
Transportation	27%
Electricity	25%
Industry	24%
Commercial & Residential	13%
Agriculture	11%

for very long periods. Vast amounts of waste associated with the construction and the demolition of conventional structures accumulate in landfills scarring the Earth. However, in Africa, earthen homes experience a natural life cycle: they are built and maintained for as long as needed, and when they are no longer required, the base material is easily and autonomously returned to nature.

In addition to environmental harmlessness, earthen architecture also provides economic benefits. Olumuyiwa Adegun and Yomi Adedeji’s 2017 study found that earthen structures are less expensive. On a material level, earth-based materials were at least 30% and at most 100% cheaper—depending on the region—than conventional, cement-based building materials.¹² Overall, houses built

7 Olumuyiwa Bayode Adegun and Yomi Adedeji, “Review of Economic and Environmental Benefits of Earthen Materials for Housing in Africa,” *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 6, no. 4 (2017): 524.

8 Erwan Hamard, “Rediscovering of Vernacular Adaptative Construction Strategies for Sustainable Modern Building: Application to Cob and Rammed Earth,” University of Lyon, 2017: 17.

9 Benghida Djamil, “Sun-Dried Clay for Sustainable Constructions,” *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research* 11, no. 6 (2016): 4628–33.

10 See Figure 3.

11 United States Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], “Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions,” accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>.

12 Adegun and Adedeji, “Review of Economic and Environmental Benefits.” Regions sampled in this study include Egypt, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Kenya, and Uganda.

with earthen bricks can be 75% less expensive than ones built with conventional masonry.¹³ While scholars base these conclusions on the cost of home data in various regions of Africa, building rammed earth homes in advanced economies could also produce some cost benefits, albeit differently: the United States market economy seeks efficiencies and profit. While recognizing costs associated with removing, storing, and processing earth, how would a house built out of this abundantly available resource benefit our price-tag-sensitive society? Simply put, its “handcrafted aesthetic, rammed earth adds an extra 15% to 20% to construction costs.”¹⁴ Many dismiss earthen architecture as an impractical high-skill construction method that only a few can employ. However, ordinary people used it before either architecture or construction were professional fields.¹⁵ Builders in advanced economies would still benefit financially from earthen architecture’s energy savings despite the higher upfront labor cost. Ultimately, an earthen home would be more affordable than a conventional modern home when accounting for long-term savings from energy efficiency.

It is essential to remember that every structure requires regular maintenance to remain in sound condition. Traditional techniques for building with earth in Africa require regular replastering of walls, typically performed during the dry season. However, many people would do this to reduce time costs and the labor load. The performance of modern adaptations of earthen architecture is understudied, although there is evidence that the maintenance of such homes would be no more costly in time, labor, and capital than a conventional home.¹⁷ Maintaining rammed-earth walls built with

modern methods involves tasks that are already second nature to homeowners: preventing water damage, watching for vegetation overgrowth, and repairing cracks.¹⁸ However, the upkeep of these homes is generally more critical than in a standard build: “absence of regular maintenance can be more damaging in earthen structures than in other building types.”¹⁹

While there is no immediate benefit regarding the maintenance of earthen architecture, reducing energy costs can help offset the cost of maintenance, especially in comparison to a typical modern home, where the average annual home maintenance expenditure in the United States in 2018 was \$16,000.²⁰ Both environmentally and economically, earthen architecture is better in the end.

While widespread adoption of African earthen architecture would be most beneficial in the fight for sustainability, its prospects are neither realistic nor can it be applied to all climatic regions of Europe or North America. A pragmatic approach would involve integrating principles of traditional African architecture into modern architectural design and technological developments in construction. Such interaction of paradigms could produce new, sustainably modern standards of construction. A few contemporary architects and firms— notably Mario Cucinella and Francis Kere—recognize the potential of African vernacular architecture and utilize current technologies to make them viable for the current standard of living and construction.

In Italy, the architecture firm *Mario Cucinella Architects* has epitomized the combination of earthen materials and modern technology with their recent development

13 Adegun and Adedeji, “Review of Economic and Environmental Benefits.”

14 Amy Gamerman, “Rammed-Earth Luxury Homes,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 2, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/rammed-earth-luxury-homes-1427989394>.

15 Gamerman, “Rammed-Earth Luxury Homes.”

16 Bourgeois, “Mud Stand Up.”

17 Vasilios Maniatidis and Peter Walker. *A Review of Rammed Earth Construction for DTi Partners in Innovation Project “Developing Rammed Earth for UK Housing,”* University of Bath, 2003.

18 Maniatidis and Walker, *A Review of Rammed Earth*.

19 Maniatidis and Walker, *A Review of Rammed Earth*, 73.

20 Michele Lerner, “One Way to Estimate Home Maintenance Costs,” *The Washington Post*, August 11, 2018.

FIGURE 2

Mario Cucinella Architects, *TECLA House*, Ravenna, Italy, 2019–2021. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



of TECLA (fig. 2). Boasting nearly zero emissions, this housing model is exemplary of sustainable housing.²¹ With a distinct bulb-like shape that enhances its structural integrity, the TECLA house is 3D-printed. While 3D printing has been gaining attention as a potential solution to housing crises and alternate modes of construction, printed houses are typically made of plastics and other synthetic materials, which are equally polluting as those involved in constructing a conventional home. To counteract this, *MC Architects* printed a house out of clay, mixed with a small amount of cement as a stabilizer, to ensure the structure’s durability. Although it is not pure earth, clay in most forms ensures a method of construction whose carbon footprint is minimal enough to prove beneficial. TECLA also reflects the qualities of earthen architecture I discussed earlier, including temperature regulation and an overall reduction of energy costs and usage—both during use and construction. Using 3D printing to construct in a vernacular material like clay also significantly reduces the time involved in a home’s construction. A conventional modern house takes, on average, six to nine months to construct, and a house

²¹ Mario Cucinella, “TECLA—Technology and Clay,” accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.mcarchitects.it/tecla-2>.

FIGURE 3

Francis Kere, *Naaba Belem Goumma Secondary School*, Gando, Burkina Faso, 2011–current. Source: Wikimedia Commons.



built with African vernacular techniques like “cob” can usually take between three to twenty weeks—depending on drying times.²² With Cucinella’s TECLA, the contractor can complete the entire structure in just 200 hours. In sum, this housing construction model saves energy, materials, the environment, and time. Further, Cucinella posits “transforming this ancient material, [earth], with the technologies we have available today,” suggesting that *MC Architects* presents a realistic solution to the environmental crisis. The outlook appears positive since other architects are looking to traditional earthen architecture for inspiration.

Born in Burkina Faso and educated in Germany, contemporary architect Francis Kere has taken a similar approach to architecture as Mario Cucinella: “informed by tradition, our practice explores new modes of construction for which the foundations have long been laid.”²³ Like *MC Architects*, Kere and his partners create modern buildings using traditional earthen African architecture practices. One of the firm’s ongoing projects is a secondary school in Burkina Faso constructed with an entirely new technique:

²² Seve Kale, “How Long Does It Take to Build a House?,” *New Home Source*, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.newhomesource.com/learn/how-long-does-it-take-to-build-a-house/>; Hamard, “Rediscovering of Vernacular Adaptive,” 78.

²³ Francis Kere, homepage, *Kere Architecture*, accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.kerearchitecture.com>.

in-situ (on-site) cast walls composed of local clay and cement (fig. 3).²⁴ While more environmentally friendly and cheaper to use than concrete, this technique also allows for faster construction than conventional methods. Instead of relying on the mass of the earthen walls to regulate temperature passively (without air conditioning), Kere's design includes a buffer of eucalyptus wood between the primary walls and the exterior to promote natural thermal regulation. This dual façade creates an area of shade that prevents the sun's heat from directly interacting with the clay walls.²⁵ By employing this method of natural temperature regulation instead of relying on thermal mass, Kere can reduce the amount of material used for the clay walls and, in turn, consume even less energy during construction while also creating a more cost-efficient building. In this project and throughout his firm, Francis Kere embodies the principle of combining modern technologies with traditional building techniques to create a new architectural language for a sustainable future.

Notably, sustainable buildings designed with nature in mind are not restricted to residential, small-scale, low and middle-rise projects. Skyscrapers are an architecture and planning form that persists into the twenty-first century. While earthen walls might not be the most effective material for a fifty-story skyscraper, architects can still combine modern technologies with principles of the natural and traditional worlds to achieve a degree of sustainability. Approaches and applications that draw on nature for inspiration to innovate technologies can be defined as "biomimicry." Biomimicry's core principle is "nothing in nature is a waste"²⁶; basic material can be utilized in large-scale projects to negate the impacts of modern construction. The Eastgate Center in Zimbabwe exemplifies this practice (fig. 4). Although this structure

FIGURE 4

Mick Pearce, *The Eastgate Center*, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1996.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



is the country's largest complex of shopping centers and offices, it uses "less than 10% of the energy of a conventional building its size."²⁷ The Eastgate Center regulates its temperature through a unique system of vents modeled after the ventilation system found in termite mounds, thereby making a conventional heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system unnecessary. In the mounds, the termites open and close a series of "vents" at different times during the day to capitalize on the external temperature. Cool air is let in near the mound's base and, after cooling the interiors, it is expelled from openings at the top. In the Eastgate Center, the building's base has fans that draw in cool air that then travels through vents in the ground—just as in the termite mounds—to cool the interiors of the building to be ultimately vented out the top of the building (fig. 5).²⁸ The Center reduces greenhouse emissions and lowers costs without a conventional air conditioning system. As of 2012 and since opening for business in 1996, the building owners estimate the energy cost savings at \$3.5 million. Because of these economic benefits, the tenants' rent is also 20% lower than that of the surrounding buildings.²⁹

24 Francis Kere, "Naaba Belem Gomma Secondary School," accessed June 9, 2021, <https://www.kerearchitecture.com/work/building/naaba-belem-gomma-secondary-school>.

25 Kere, "Naaba Belem."

26 Francis Okeke and Chukwuemerie Ogochukwu, "Biomimicry and Sustainable Architecture: A Review of Existing Literature," *Journal of Environmental Management and Safety* 8, no. 1 (2017): 11–24.

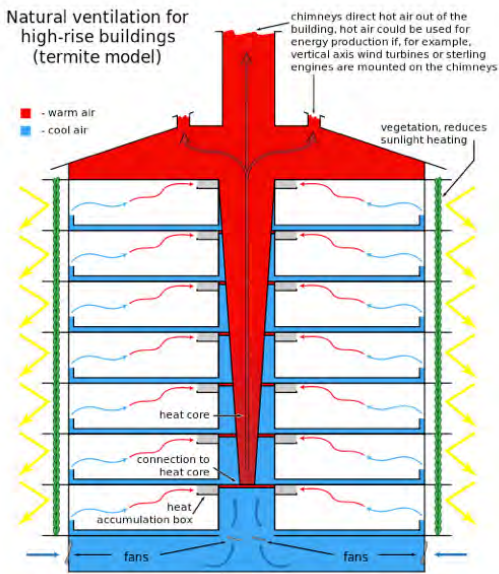
27 Jill Fehrenbacher, "Biomimetic Architecture: Green Building in Zimbabwe Modeled After Termite Mounds," *Inhabitat*, November 29, 2012, <https://inhabitat.com/building-modelled-on-termites-eastgate-centre-in-zimbabwe/>.

28 Fehrenbacher, "Biomimetic Architecture."

29 Fehrenbacher, "Biomimetic Architecture."

FIGURE 5

Diagram of the Eastgate Center's ventilation system.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.



Widely implementing a ventilation system like the Eastgate Center's in large buildings—in climate zones appropriate to it—would provide substantial financial and environmental benefits.

While this ventilation system would not work in a climate like Russia or Canada's, each bioclimatic zone offers inspiration for biomimetic architecture. Therefore, we can tailor biomimetic applications to any climate. If adopted widely, "biomimetic technology would help us overcome environmental issues, such as the greenhouse effect, global warming, or even [repair] the Ozone hole."³⁰ When biomimicry is used in residential construction, as in adopting traditional—especially earth-based—materials, a home is more likely to be free of harmful emissions. When

used in commercial buildings like the Eastgate Center or even apartment complexes, although it would almost be necessary to use conventional materials for the structure itself, this practice would dramatically reduce emissions and energy use associated with large buildings.

As a norm, the Western way of living is either indifferent to the importance of nature or flagrantly exploitative of it. Our construction methods, which consume many natural resources and contribute to a significant portion of global carbon emissions, exemplify this mode. As sustainability becomes an increasingly pressing issue, we can draw on Africa's vernacular earthen architecture paradigms and techniques to reform our construction methods. Moving towards earth-based and nature-focused construction would help manage our carbon footprint and lessen the negative human impact on the Earth by reducing energy and natural resource consumption. In types of structures and climates where earthen architecture is not ideal, biomimicry can help provide similar economic and environmental benefits to consumers. Mario Cucinella with the TECLA house and Francis Kere with his ongoing project in Burkina Faso have successfully demonstrated and modeled this blend of modern technology and traditional building materials. They present compelling alternatives to conventional Western construction methods that promote sustainability and work to solve the climate crisis. Widespread adoption of an architectural language that combines the paradigms and materials of Africa's earthen architecture with twenty-first-century technological advancements would be an overwhelmingly positive step towards sustainability. The consumer's dilemma of either maintaining a high standard of living or being a responsible steward of the natural world has solutions.

³⁰ Okeke and Ogochukwu, "Biomimicry and Sustainable Architecture," 22.

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I WILL: CHICAGO AND THE SHAPING OF THE 28TH EUCHARIST CONGRESS

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"I ask you to accept my most grateful acknowledgement of your generous tribute of respect and esteem not to me but to the one whom I represent, His Holiness, Pius XI, the greatest and most potent spiritual and moral force in all the world."¹ A wave of applause filled the Coliseum audience of twelve thousand at the words of Papal Legate, John Cardinal Bonzano, as he concluded the welcoming ceremony for the 28th Eucharist Congress on June 18, 1926. This Coliseum, however, was neither in Rome nor exclusively attended by Catholics. This Coliseum was in Chicago—an unprecedented undertaking by both the Vatican in its first Eucharistic Congress to be held in America and for America in its grand, civic celebration of the Roman Catholic Church.

The weeklong Congress saw the Chicago Symphony Orchestra play the opening Mass at Holy Name Cathedral and the Chicago Opera Company perform at the welcoming ceremony in the Coliseum. A choir of more than sixty thousand students sang the Mass in Soldier Field. Municipal Pier housed a Catholic art exhibition and docked boats displaying flags from visiting cities.² Three thousand priests were called to hear confessions and 4.5 million hosts were prepared for Masses. On the last day, trains were arriving from Chicago into Mundelein every forty seconds, transporting an estimated 750,000 people

for the closing street procession. Nearly every major civic institution participated in the Catholic celebration.

In its location and scale of grandeur, the Congress held great risks with potential for greater rewards. Roman Catholics in America had continued to face a crisis in identity. Despite its status as the largest American religious denomination as early as 1850, the Church lacked status and respect—too Roman Catholic to be fully American, yet too American to be traditionally Roman Catholic.³ The event happening at all may have been a surprise to many on both sides of the Atlantic, yet forces at work in Chicago from the start of World War I through the opening of the Congress indicate it was a decade in the making. Deep questions of what it meant to be an American and what forces, if any, stood in the way of fully realizing that title repeatedly played out across the city for different groups of citizens during and following America's entry into the war. George Cardinal Mundelein along with prominent civic and business leaders—both Catholic and Protestant—worked to bring shape and definition to this burgeoning identity. Together, they created a platform for its debut onto the international stage, which was a newly crafted American Roman Catholic: outwardly 100 percent American, bolstered in civic pride, yet at its core deeply Catholic.

Still, such a bold flex of Catholic might and support in a Protestant ruled country came with safety concerns.

* This paper was originally written for CTH209/PSC 335 "Theories of the Church" taught in Spring 2021 by Professor Michael L. Budde.

1 New York Times, "Coolidge Greeting Read to Cardinals at Civic Welcome," June 19, 1926, 4.

2 Chicago Catholic, "1926 Eucharistic Congress Brings 'Sense of Wonder,'" September 6, 2017, <https://www.chicagocatholic.com/chicagoland/-/article/2017/09/06/1926-eucharistic-congress-brings-sense-of-wonder>

3 Edward Kantowicz, "Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago and the Shaping of the Twentieth-Century American Catholicism," *The Journal of American History* 68, no. 1 (June 1981): 52, www.jstor.org/stable/1890902.

The International Eucharistic Congress had always culminated in a large street procession. Fear for the safety of those in the procession was the primary reason that the Congress traditionally had been kept out of Protestant lands. The 1908 Congress in London saw the procession banned by local government officials over safety concerns.⁴ Chicago worked through this very real challenge. The private property of University of St. Mary on the Lake in Mundelein, north of the downtown area where most of the events were held, would provide relief from outside interference. The logistical hurdle in transporting approximately 750,000 people to the remote site benefited Samuel Insull and the leadership of the North Shore commuter line, who had just completed the extension of that line past Mundelein. Insull looked forward to the publicity. “In Chicago boosterism and civic pride overcame any non-Catholic fears.”⁵ Perhaps, too, the commercial advantages helped rally the business interests of the city to aid in planning.

The Congress would not be the end of anti-Catholic or nativist sentiment across the nation or within its press. It also wouldn't be entirely inclusive of the full population, as it would simply expand the idea of an “us” while continuing a narrative that excluded “the other.” The Congress would, however, be a public display of unity between Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, who supported the American civic spirit. Scholarship on the nativist movement, such as the American Protective Association (APA) and the prominence of anti-Catholic sentiment in print, highlights strong, occasionally violent fear and mistrust of Catholics in America. Donald Kinzer explores the impact of the APA on the Chicago's World Fair in 1893—which the 28th Congress would rival in attendance and scale—when APA press propagated fears of a “Romanist plot” with a forged letter, in which true patriots would need to once again bring civil war to

challenge the “Romanist conspiracy” in their land.⁶ While no such threats or major incidents occurred in Chicago during the Congress, there were rumors circulating throughout New York City of a papal plot to invade, which were conveyed to Chicago authorities out of an abundance of caution.⁷ Yet, even in these anti Roman appeals, there were Protestant supporters in government and in the press who condemned such ridiculous claims. Justin Nordstrom chronicles the movement among Catholic leadership and press to take a more active approach to critics during the 1910s, suggesting the battle between nativists (who advocated for a restrictive approach to nationalism) and Catholics (who embraced a more liberal, tolerant understanding of Americanism) emphasized how Catholics had made sufficient contributions to the nation's historical development in the past and how they would continue to benefit the nation in the present and future.⁸

The entrance of the United States in WWI would be the opportunity to show loyalty and a spirit of contribution and sacrifice while allowing Catholics in Chicago, including Cardinal Mundelein, to prove themselves to their Protestant neighbors. However, WWI was not only a test for Catholics. Chicago was home to a vast immigrant population that included a great number of individuals with German heritage. Many populations in Chicago would need to prove themselves to be American to overcome prejudices in many forms. For Mundelein, his work towards creating unity within religious identity, “based on cultural homogeneity and centralization of authority” upon arrival to Chicago in 1915 would prove

4 Kantowicz, “Cardinal Mundelein,” 58.

5 Kantowicz, “Cardinal Mundelein,” 58.

6 Donald Kinzer, *An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 96–97.

7 James Gutowski, “The Church Triumphant Rides the Rails: A Short History of the 1926 Cardinals' Special,” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 106, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 1995): 175–196, www.jstor.org/stable/44211218.

8 Justin Nordstrom, *Danger on the Doorstep: Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 2006), 146–47.

to be invaluable to his war efforts and Americanization.⁹ When Mundelein arrived from New York to take up his appointment as archbishop, 118 of the 211 parishes in Chicago were for foreign language congregations.¹⁰ He would be part of a generation of “consolidating bishops” who, “like their counterparts in business, saw the need for more order and efficiency in their bailiwicks,” suggests historian Edward Kantowicz. Yet, the Chicago press was quick to highlight the American spirit of all its citizens despite their diversity in language. It was this spirit which pushed the work involved in shaping a new identity mirroring the sentiment that Chicago was still a city “in the making.”

The Tribune extolled Mundelein’s new flock as people, “typically American.”¹¹ Chicago’s youth, the paper explained, created the environment for this Americanism. It is an idea which would be echoed again at the opening ceremony of the Congress eleven years later by Samuel Insull. “The people of this city are not bound by the traditions that have clung so steadfast to eastern cities . . . under these conditions men become Americans in the west more rapidly than in any other part of our country.” It is the city’s very lack of history which allows it the freedom to define, and redefine, its collective identity. “Chicago,” the Tribune proclaimed, “is the most American of cities.”¹² Chicago, in its civic pride, desperately wanted to prove it was a legitimate force against its pedigreed Eastern sisters. Immigrants in the city needed to prove loyalty to the land of their adoption, rather than the land of their birth. Roman Catholics had the chance to show loyalty to leadership outside of Rome. There could no longer be a hyphen in the words “German-Americans” or “Catholic-Americans.” Now was a time to be nothing other than 100 percent American, prompting Chicago to begin its work on Americanization. Mundelein, for his part,

would play mediator. He would try to explain his Church to non-Catholic America and America to his charges.¹³ Yet, his motivations were not purely patriotic. At his core, Mundelein was deeply committed to the mission of the Church and his ultimate goal was to make Chicago a vital center of Catholicity and to reap a golden harvest of souls.¹⁴

Mundelein understood his need to lead by example in modeling American, patriotic behavior during the war and accepted membership on the Illinois State Council of Defense to demonstrate Catholic involvement. In 1918, he was appointed Chairman of the Home and Foreign Missions of the National Catholic War Council.¹⁵ Protestant leaders were taking an active role in the war effort, and in the spirit of contribution to the nation, Catholics had to be equally involved if they were going to earn the title of American. Mundelein would be remembered for his great business acumen, which helped fund many successful endeavors. His involvement with the war committees introduced him to the most prominent and influential businessmen in Chicago, including Samuel Insull and J. Ogden Armour. Insull, Chairman of the State Council of Defense and head of nearly every public utility in the city ultimately became deeply involved in the logistics of the Congress. Armour, also on the Council, would later be helpful in financial favors for the building of his seminary. In June of 1917 when the first liberty loan was issued, the Chicago archbishop announced he would personally purchase \$10,000 worth of bonds. When the third wave of liberty loans were sold, Mundelein made sure they were being sold in church vestibules like they had been in Protestant churches.

Mundelein also proved to be skilled at raising money for the pope. At the turn of the century, the American church had donated \$80,000 to the pope in Peter’s Pence offerings. By 1920, Chicago had sent a total of more than

9 Charles Shanabruach, *Chicago’s Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame Press, 1981), 173–74.

10 Shanabruach, *Chicago’s Catholics*, 181.

11 *Ibid.*, 175.

12 *Ibid.*, 176.

13 *Ibid.*, 177.

14 *Ibid.*, 165.

15 *Ibid.*, 164.

\$120,000. "I had not been in Rome for 15 years. Then we were looked upon as a nation of dollar-makers and dollar-seekers. Now the attitude was changed. We had shown that when it was a question of human lives . . . we threw our dollars away for this purpose even quicker than we made them. The attitude was now one of respect."¹⁶ The American Church now came with money. Chicago papers suggested it was this increase in donation that earned Mundelein his cardinal's red hat in 1924.

At the conclusion of the war, the Catholic contribution to the nation was celebrated by the Catholic press. "Although Catholics comprised but 18 percent of the nation's population, they contributed 35 percent of the volunteers; the first gunner to fire upon German trenches was a Catholic; the first Chicagoan to give his life for the country was a Catholic."¹⁷ Catholics had martyred themselves not for their faith, but as one editorial commented, "Their blood flowed as freely as that of fellow citizens of other beliefs."¹⁸ By the 1920 census, Chicago was no longer the immigrant population it once was, partially due to immigration restrictions brought by the war. More than two-thirds of the persons listed as English, Irish, and German were second generation. Nearly half of the Czech, Pole, and Italian population was native born.¹⁹ This period allowed for those working on Americanization and consolidation within the Church to move beyond basic concerns of language and begin looking for an outlet to show their progress. The opportunity to host the Congress would be the culmination of work both within the Chicago archdiocese and throughout the broader community in building networks of support politically, financially, and culturally. Mundelein and his colleagues helped foster the capacity for Catholics to be their own brand of American Roman Catholics (certainly not to be confused with the hyphenated Catholic-American).

16 Kantowicz, "Cardinal Mundelein," 60.

17 Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, 197.

18 Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, 197.

19 Shanabruch, *Chicago's Catholics*, 166.

At the welcome ceremony on June 18 before the start of the official Congress, it was the American representatives' turn to present their case for the compatibility of Americanism with the Church. The lasting effects of Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of a doctrine he called "Americanism" rooted in materialism and modernism were apparent in Protestant speeches. President Calvin Coolidge, unable to attend in person, sent his message which was read aloud for the audience. "Our country has long been under the imputation of putting too much emphasis on material things," a criticism the president suggested was due more with the nation's greater success at prosperity over others than any great interest in the material. President Coolidge added, "Material prosperity cannot be secured unless it rests on spiritual realities . . . if the requirements of character be withdrawn from our business structure the whole fabric would collapse. It is for these reasons that the religious life of the nation is so important."²⁰ Samuel Insull, speaking on behalf of the Protestant population, praised the nature of the city which allowed for such a gathering to occur, calling it a "challenge to our hospitality. By reason of its youth, its situation, and the special character of its development, our city especially typifies the purely commercial and industrial forces that now play such a large part in human affairs."²¹ There is a particular Chicago ethos in Insull's celebration of commerce as a great equalizer because it was not concerned about background, but rather ability. It is an idea heavily influenced by his own status as an Americanized immigrant who came from an unfavorable religious class in London decades earlier. "It is a Christian people that inhabit this inland empire," Insull reflected, "of which Chicago is the visible expression . . . We who have to do with affairs outside of his ecclesiastical sphere may see more clearly than his associates the significance of what he has done . . . We thank him for giving our city an opportunity to rise to a great occasion."²²

20 New York Times, "Coolidge Greeting," 4.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

Chicago's Mayor William Emmett Dever spoke next: "the reign of law, the maintenance of order, the control of crime, and even temporal progress, are all due in largest part to application of Christian principles." Christian, not Catholic or Protestant, but a Christian contribution remained a highlight of the civic celebration, again echoing a collectivism still rooted in exclusion of non-Christian peoples. "We often hear it said in America that the present age is one of unbridled materialism and worldliness. This gathering is a demonstration that the light of faith that burned so bright in the Middle Ages is still burning with no diminution of its luster."²³ Once the defense of the American dollar was firmly established, the staple measure of American patriotism came to the platform. Mayor Dever continued, "In every field of battle in which America has engaged they have shed their blood on behalf of the land of their birth or their adoption. The patriotism of our Catholic citizens is not open to dispute. If there is any prejudice against Catholics in America, it comes from persons who make a specialty of prejudice, and, like all other countries, we have a few who do."²⁴ John Cardinal Bonzano, the pope's representative, captured the spirit of his host city in his reply, which affords a hint of a "warming up" of Rome's opinion of its American faithful.

You can best appreciate the importance of this Congress yourselves by the fact that for the past year the people of your city have been deeply stirred in preparation for it. To this I can add that not only have people of Chicago and America experienced an overpowering sentiment stimulating their hearts, but the whole Christian world has experienced a like thrill and urge. They seem to have caught something of the "I will" spirit of Chicago, which has prompted her citizens to plan every detail for the most stupendous religious gathering this Western World ever has known. This remarkable output of dynamic endeavor is only in keeping with Chicago's record of growth and

development . . . but it likewise includes the realization in a very high degree of intellectual and cultural aims.²⁵

Beyond business interests involved and the education push within the Church to drive Americanization and ideological cohesion was evidence of a deeply curious public. Even the most devout Catholics had never seen anything like this in America (and not all Catholics would agree with the ostentatious, deeply American nature of the Congress). For non-Catholics, this public display of practices typically experienced behind closed doors would be a mix of emotions from confusing, to fascinating, to concerning. The *Tribune* assigned a team of dedicated journalists to the Congress.²⁶ Some reported on events, wrote interviews and reflection pieces for Catholic readers, or dedicated column space to explaining the various events, persons, and terms to non-Catholics which included reflections on the deep emotional connection of Catholics to their faith. Newspaper columns the week of the Congress are a visual reflection of Mundelein's perceived role as mediator upon arriving to Chicago to teach non-Catholics about Catholicism and Roman Catholics about America. The Chicago Archdiocese even commissioned a film of the Congress with Fox Films, which ran for two weeks at the Illinois Theater months after the event with proceeds going to Chicago Catholic charities.²⁷

In 1930, Samuel Insull traveled to Rome for an hour-long audience with Pope Pius XI. The pope asked about Chicago and the Eucharistic Congress. He marveled, Insull remembered, at the accomplishment of transporting 750,000 people from Chicago to Mundelein and back:

He thanked me for placing my country home at the disposal of the Archbishop of Paris. He seemed to get a non-Catholic point of view as to the position of the Catholic Church in the community, and it afforded me

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "To Report the Eucharistic Congress," *Chicago Tribune*, June 14, 1926, 17.

²⁷ "Eucharist Film to be Shown Here," *Chicago Tribune*, November 17, 1926.

very great pleasure to pay my tribute to the marvelous organization of the Chicago Diocese and the wonderful work done by the distinguished prelate—His Eminence George Cardinal Mundelein.²⁸

The Congress would serve as a debut for a new brand of Catholicism in America, formed over a decade of Americanization pressures thrust upon multiple communities, that would be a public coming together of Catholic and Protestant institutions. The unique,

commercially driven spirit of Chicago may have served as a vital component to fostering the conditions that led efforts of Mundelein and his consolidating bishops to successfully stage the first Eucharist Congress in America. In this regard, Mundelein's business acumen and ability to adapt and thrive in Chicago's financial and political landscape is perhaps one of the most significant highlights of the Americanization of Catholic identity in the United States.

²⁸ Samuel Insull, *The Memoirs of Samuel Insull* (Polo, Illinois: Transportation Trails, 1992), 132-33.

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Jack Kennedy | *Eclipse of the Club*



Caitlin Meskill | *Amber*

ADAM SMITH: THE PURSUIT OF VIRTUE

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How does an individual attain virtue? For Adam Smith, the attainment of virtue for an individual is an evolutionary process in which moral sentiments are acquired over the course of a lifetime. I concur with this testament that individual attainment of virtue is an evolving process of establishing moral judgements over time. The reason for this, I argue, is that an individual's development of virtue originates from their innate desire to acquire mutual sympathy of sentiments, and it is then cultivated through their experiences of interacting with others and eventually through their own perception of being judged themselves. To defend this argument, I will respond to the objection that virtue is not founded on mutual sentiments between people, but established by the objective, absolute, and external moral laws of the universe. According to Darwin, morality is a product of a man's evolving nature as social animals and not of an external divine law. I argue that according to Smith's view, individual attainment of virtue is an evolving process that involves understanding mutual sympathies between people and reflecting on the perceived judging of oneself.

My first argument is that the evolving process of attaining virtue derives from an individual's natural desire to develop mutual sympathies of sentiments. Humans have a natural longing to perceive their own sentiments and judgments reflected in other people. When an individual realizes that other people share the same judgments on certain behaviors and actions, it provides an individual with a

feeling of pleasure. While the individual feels a sense of displeasure when differentiation exists in the judgements with others, the sense of pleasure or displeasure acquired provides an individual with positive feedback on which behaviors are accepted by the community. Hence, the initial moral behaviors people develop are formed from the mutual sympathies with others.

I defend my previous argument with an analogy used by Smith; when someone says a joke and the people around them laugh, at that moment they share the same sentiment on the funniness of the joke. The mutual sentiment between them gives the person pleasure, and that response provides the person with valuable feedback to continue making similar jokes. In the words of Smith:

A man is mortified when, after having endeavored to divert the company, he looks around and sees that nobody laughs at his jests but himself. On the contrary, the mirth of the company is highly agreeable to him, and he regards this correspondence of their sentiments with his own as his greatest applause. (Smith and Stewart 10)

In both cases, the feedback received develops the individual's standards of propriety regarding joke telling. Hence, the more mutual sympathies acquired during joke telling, the more his behavior will evolve and develop. The mutual sympathy of sentiments between two people and the pleasure gained from these sentiments are important to the development of behavioral standards.

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My second argument is that the evolutionary process of attaining virtue depends on the nature of various interactions with others. Smith supports this argument through his thought experiment of “the man in solitary.” According to Smith, if a person grows up outside of society without human contact, that person will not develop any moral sentiments. Additionally, the person might develop preferences but can’t cultivate any notions on propriety. The reasoning for this is because the person never received any feedback from the judgments of others. Due to the lack of human interaction, the person never activated any mutual sympathy of sentiments, which means they never had the opportunity to cultivate any moral judgements. Hence, Smith states that human interaction is necessary to develop virtue:

Bring him into society, and all his own passions will immediately become the causes of new passions. He will observe that mankind approves of some of them and are disgusted by others. He will be elevated in the one case, and cast down in the other; his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, will now often become the causes of new desires and new aversions, new joys and new sorrows: they will now, therefore, interest him deeply, and often call upon his most attentive consideration. (Smith and Stewart 162-63)

Once the person in solitude is brought into a community, the individual will begin the process that most people begin in their childhood: “the great school of self-command” (204). The process of an individual consciously directing their own behaviors is according to the moral sentiments of the community. The school of self-command is brought upon through being judged by other people and experiencing the pleasant and unpleasant feelings of engaging in mutual sympathies with others. Hence, when an individual starts to engage in interactions with other people, the individual gradually changes their habits, standards of behavior, and eventually their own judgements on morality. They start to take “command” and “control” over their actions and consciously decide to

conduct their behaviors, according to the expectations and moral judgements of the community. In sum, continuous interaction with others is necessary because it enables people to become virtuous.

My third argument is that the process of attaining virtue gives rise to the final standard of moral judgment: the impartial spectator. The impartial spectator, according to Smith, is an imaginary and idealized perspective that individuals of moral maturity use to judge themselves and others. In other words, the impartial spectator is the encapsulation of an individual’s experiences of judgements during their lifetime. Smith elaborates on the transition between initially judging one’s actions based on their sympathies with other people to now evaluating their actions, according to a higher standard based on their sympathies with their implicit spectator.

But though man has, in this manner, been rendered the immediate judge of mankind, he has been rendered so only in the first instance; and an appeal lies from his sentence to a much higher tribunal, to the tribunal of their own consciences, to that of the supposed impartial and well-informed spectator, to that of the man within the breast, the great judge and arbiter of their conduct. The jurisdiction of those two tribunals are founded upon principles which, though in some respects resembling and akin, are, however, in reality different and distinct. (Smith and Stewart 185-86).

When a man sees how people judge other peoples’ behavior and his own, and when he sees how he judges other peoples’ behavior and his own, this collection of experiences is the foundation on which the man is gradually developing his implicit spectator. Over time, the man cultivates a set of principles that he relies on to judge himself and others. As the man grows, these principles slowly turn into an increasingly visible image of good and evil, of propriety and impropriety. This growing virtuous perspective becomes the standard on which we evaluate human behavior. When a man uses this developed

perspective to judge his own actions, it is considered what Smith calls the implicit spectator, which is more well-known as the conscience.

For Smith, the ability to judge oneself by this impartial perspective will give oneself more dependable guidance. The thinking process of the impartial spectator becomes how an individual can more accurately evaluate his own actions and utilize it whenever he makes a decision (Smith and Stewart 162–63). In practice, a person can engage in this process by asking themselves what a fully informed, but impartial person, would say about his actions. If that person approves his actions, then the individual will continue with the same actions; if he disapproves, then the individual will stop. If a person imagines the judgements by the impartial spectator, then that person will feel a certain satisfaction founded on the imagined sympathy between his own moral sentiments and the impartial spectator's imagined moral sentiments. This pleasure fortifies an individual's behavior and assists in cultivating his moral judgements. In contrast, if an individual acts against his impartial spectator's judgement, then he will feel guilt based on the lack of sympathy between his sentiments and those of the impartial spectator. This produces a disincentive for that behavior and helps develop his judgement properly.

An objection to my previous arguments is that virtue is not an evolutionary process founded on mutual sentiments between people; rather, virtue is a never-changing standard of conduct based on objective, absolute, and external moral laws of the universe. A strong proponent of this view is Francis Ellingwood Abbot, a Unitarian minister in the late 1800s, who actively advocated that moral laws are absolute and are applied universally. In his words:

Ethics treat of rights and duties among all moral beings, as objective and universal facts...These obligations are not accidental or fortuitous; they are not one thing here and another thing there...The relation of mutual Moral

Obligation among all moral beings is just as objective as universal, just as necessary as the relation between the double triangles of the square. (Priest 590)

According to Abbot, there exist absolute moral standards that individuals use to judge their conduct. These standards do not evolve nor change over time, but are divine statues used by all people from every community.

My first response to this objection is that individuals have certain moral judgements because they are social animals with mental faculties, which developed over time to the point where a moral conscience evolved. Hence, the acquisition of moral values cannot be justified by recourse to any absolute or divine external principle: "But within and for a community of organisms with a common evolutionary history, moral judgements can be and are made and can be and are considered valid" (Priest 588).

According to Darwin, humans are social animals that desire to interact and live with others in a community, such as ants and bees residing in a colony. Hence, humans share the same social instincts as animals. By social instincts, Darwin means the innate propensity to take pleasure in interactions with others in the same community. As animals engage in interactions with each other to satisfy these social instincts, they develop their intelligence and mental capacities. Then, from this development of mental capacities, Darwin believes morality will grow:

The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable—namely, that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man. (Priest 586–87)

Darwin emphasizes the innate evolution of morality. All social animals are born with social instincts that help them evolve their mental capacity and moral judgements.

Therefore, morals cannot be attributed to any external or absolute source, but are established in humanity's innate desire for sympathy and processed through the faculty of reflective reason. Hence, whatever man holds to be virtuous is the product of whatever that lineage of animals has evolved to consider virtuous.

In addition, my second response to the objection is that morality cannot be objective, since each community differentiates what they hold to be virtuous. According to Darwin, evolution does not occur in a fixed condition, but under varying environments of life. Darwin points out that the physical attributes of men differentiate due to their development in varying geographical locations and communities. This also applies to the mental faculties, instincts and ultimately the moral conscience too. For Darwin, particular virtues can only be valid for certain communities evolved under their unique condition of life. Hence, while all social animals (humans) have well-cultivated mental faculties and therefore are destined to acquire a moral sense, they are not destined to cultivate the same moral sense. Darwin provides an example to explain his theory:

If, for instance, to take an extreme case, men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. (Priest 589)

Darwin is conveying, in an extreme manner, the significance of the environment's impact in formulating the moral code of a species. In sum, the objectivity of morals is not possible because the physical and social conditions of every species is different, resulting in the type of morals of each species evolving in divergent directions.

My third response to the objection is that God did not give humanity moral laws but rather made humanity with imperative psychological tools—specifically, the innate inclination for mutual sympathy of sentiments—that would lead humanity to cultivate mutually harmonious communities of prosperity and virtue. All of this would happen jointly and cooperatively, but without divine intervention. According to Smith, human virtue is a social system that arises—like ecosystems, languages, and markets—on the foundation of many individual choices, interactions, and actions, but without any universal plan and without an overall designer.

For example, economic markets arise in a community just like morality does. According to Smith, individuals in economic markets have the intention to “better their own conditions” but they do not have the larger goal of establishing an overall market system. These individuals just want to better themselves by cooperating with other individuals. However, their attempt to achieve their economic goals inadvertently leads to the development of behavior patterns that can appear as if some wise economist designed the whole market order.

In all these cases social benefit and economic order are the result of the self-interested actions of individuals rather than the consequences of some formal plan. The famous doctrine of the invisible hand was designed to show that the individual, in pursuing his own objectives, contributions to the public benefits, thereby promoting an end which was no part of intention. (Smith et al. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes*, 34-35)

Similar to the development of virtue in a community, it might seem that a divine creator established moral laws. However, in reality it was the individuals trying to better their own condition by satisfying their mutual sympathies that inadvertently created moral behavioral standards in the community.

In sum, Smith provides a revolutionary account on the morality of humanity. Humans are not born with moral sentiments, nor do they receive these sentiments all at once, but instead they develop them over time. At the individual level, they cultivate their sentiments and judgements from their interactions with others and feedback they receive from other peoples' judgements. This feedback has an influence on individuals because of the pleasure one acquires from developing mutual sympathy of sentiments and the displeasure one receives from experiencing the lack of mutual sympathy with others. Thus, one is encouraged to discover and obey the standards of behaviors they have come to see as acceptable, which unintentionally gives rise to a common system of morality in any given community.

Although the writings of Darwin and Smith are historic, their theories are applicable today. One current problem that has arisen from COVID-19 is how children are not interacting enough with each other. Children are not satisfying these mutual sympathies necessary for their behavioral growth. COVID-19 has created a society where individuals are living more isolated, especially for children who attend online school or go to a school where they cannot interact with their classmates. They are not receiving feedback on what actions are acceptable and not acceptable in society. Thus, children are not cultivating a proper moral conscious, and these consequences are visible today. School districts in Illinois have seen an increase in fights among students this year. For instance,

Metea Valley high school alone had 28 fights this past fall quarter, while only two years ago it had six fights for the whole year (Davids). *Peoria News* reported multiple fights in their school alone in the month of September (Danesh). The consequences of the lack of human interaction are visible in the behavior of the current children in society. In an extreme comparison, this situation is like Adam Smith's thought experiment on the man who grows up in solitude. An individual who grows up isolated has no knowledge of what is right or wrong because he never engaged in interactions with others. Thus, Smith conveys the crucialness of children undergoing a process of constant interaction to properly develop society's standards of behaviors.

In essence, I argue that virtue on Smith's account is an earthly and evolutionary affair. An individual's development of virtue originates from their innate desire to acquire mutual sympathy of sentiments, which is cultivated through their experiences of interacting with others and eventually through their own perception of being judged themselves. The building block of this moral anthropology is the innate want for mutual sympathy of sentiments which acts like a unifying force, bringing everyone into a community. Thus, the desire for mutual sympathy and the pleasure received from it, according to Smith, is the glue that keeps society together. Without it, there would be no community and therefore no morality; with it, both community and common moral standards are enabled.

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“LEND ME THY HAND, AND I WILL GIVE THEE MINE”: DISABILITY AND REVENGE IN *TITUS ANDRONICUS*

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The course of violence and revenge in William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* carries the dismemberment, disablement, and mutilation of bodies along with it. While many characters are beheaded and stabbed, Titus and his daughter, Lavinia, are the only two characters who suffer bodily mutilation and live with the aftereffects before their deaths in the final act. The audience gets to see the ways they cope with their newfound disabilities. Titus and Lavinia’s roles as disabled characters can be seen in scenes of accommodation and violence; when these scenes are tracked and examined, they reveal the play’s unstoppable propellor of revenge. Their bodies become disabled through violence meant to pay for the life of Alarbus, Tamora’s sacrificed son, leading Titus and Lavinia to discover alternative, joint routes to agency by embracing the disabled body as a site for enacting and receiving revenge while also revealing the play’s false sense of justice and Shakespeare’s awareness of toxic Roman masculinity. Viewing *Titus* through a lens of disability makes moments of ability and agency much more apparent by contrast and exposes that while Titus and Lavinia are put on a level playing field on account of losing their hands, this equity does not serve to protect either person because the murderous revenge is ultimately fueled by Shakespeare’s construction of a violent Roman patriarchy.

The Compensatory Body

Disabled bodies originate in *Titus* as various payments for death. That is, Titus and Lavinia are violently punished as revenge for Titus killing Tamora’s son. In Act 2, Lavinia’s offstage rape and mutilation is the first move in the retaliation against the Andronici, led by Tamora’s lover Aaron. Lavinia endures gendered violence that no other character experiences, likely because she is the only woman among the remaining Andronici. In reference to Lavinia, Titus’s only daughter, Aaron proclaims that “Philomel must lose her tongue today” (2.2.43–45). By rendering Lavinia literally speechless, Aaron is stripping her of her agency and scorning her identity. Her rape and mutilation also signal the intrinsic belief that Lavinia deserves this violent treatment. Chiron chides, “She is a woman, therefore may be won; / She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved” (2.1.87–88). Here, the word “must” creates an inherent link between Lavinia’s gender and what Chiron believes to be the right to have sex with her. This mentality explains how they arrive at a plan for vengeance. Instead of killing Lavinia like they do Bassianus, the Goths and Aaron opt for a specific act of violence that aims to destroy the things that make Lavinia of value. As Marcus later recounts, they target the following things: Lavinia’s “lily hands” that she used to play the flute and lyre; her “sweet tongue,” which made “heavenly harmony”; and her sexual purity (2.4.44–49). Lavinia’s body thus unfairly pays the price for Titus’s display of power in executing Tamora’s son in Act 1.

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Titus's entrance into the role of disabled revenger is slightly different than Lavinia's. In 3.1, Aaron tells Titus, Marcus, and Lucius that one of them should "chop off [their] hand / And send it to the King" in exchange for Titus's sons, Martius and Quintus, whom Saturninus thinks killed his brother, Bassianus (3.1.155-56)—an exchange that Aaron knows will never happen. Aaron has found the perfect opportunity to effortlessly add needless violence into his revenge waged on the Adronici. The hand is an oddly specific choice for a fake ransom payment. Katherine A. Rowe tracks the "discursive and iconographic traditions" of the symbol of the hand and its various meanings, emphasizing it as "the preeminent sign for political and personal agency" (280). What seems to Titus like an act of retributive justice on Saturninus's part is actually Aaron's villainous trick; Aaron aims to hinder Titus's physical power and thus symbolically his political power as well. As an honorable Roman father, Titus willingly offers up his hand in an attempt to save his sons. However, Titus becomes anything but powerless after the loss of his hand, committing more acts of violence on stage over the remainder of the play than at any point before this in the narrative. Titus's willingness to cut off his own hand reveals his belief in a skewed sense of justice; Titus sees his sons' lives "as jewels purchased at an easy price, / And yet dear, too, because [he] bought [his] own" (3.1.201-02). Here, Titus boasts his patriarchal pride and duty in the aftermath of his own dismemberment by calling this price "easy," but he also acknowledges the difficulty of this price being at his own physical expense. Later, it is revealed that Saturninus has killed Quintus and Martius anyway, and the requirement of the hand is just Aaron's tax on the revenge receipt. The proposed exchange is imbalanced and isn't an exchange at all—Titus gives his hand and loses his sons, with nothing in return—and Aaron doesn't face the consequences of these actions until his confession in 5.1. The revenge plot leads to Titus's and Lavinia's mutilations but stops just before killing them so that they can take a role in enacting more revenge. Essentially, the play needs them to carry

out the broken justice of the plot, where murders are motivated by vengeance rather than the original source of violence: Titus being stopped from the beginning by whatever means necessary. Both Titus and Lavinia become mutilated through Aaron and Tamora's schemes, which sweeps the father-daughter duo into taking part in the vengeful continuation of the plot itself and ultimately leads to their deaths.

The unrelenting cycle of revenge leads to Titus's and Lavinia's deaths. Titus dies in the rapid-fire domino effect of murders in Act 5 because he kills Tamora. His death makes sense and is, to an extent, expected. However, Lavinia, victim as she is, dies much more unexpectedly. Titus proclaims, "Die, die, Lavinia, and thy shame with thee. / And with thy shame thy father's sorrow die" (5.3.46-47). What is the source of Lavinia's shame that Titus refers to? Titus claims that he has "a thousand times more cause" to kill Lavinia rather than Virginius, who killed his own daughter, "because she was enforced, stained, and deflowered" (5.3.51, 38). The difference between Lavinia herself and Virginius's raped daughter is that in addition to being raped Lavinia also lost her hands and tongue. The implied shame might then stem *both* from her status as a sexual assault survivor *and* as a disabled person. Her status as a victim of gendered violence is visible on her body in a way that cannot be ignored. Titus thus must sacrifice her to defend the Andronici name. These lines perhaps imply that her mutilation is a source of shame, and although Titus attributes the shame to Lavinia, it seems like a projection of his own discomfort and "sorrow" (5.3.47). The implication that Lavinia is better off dead exposes the play's discomfort with a victim of assault *surviving* with visible evidence of violence on her body.

Quoting Katherine Eisaman Maus, Caroline Lamb provides an alternative explanation for their deaths: "Titus and Lavinia die not because the new Rome cannot tolerate their physical difference, but because 'the death of the revenger is a virtually unbreakable rule in English

Renaissance revenge plays” (54–55). Lamb claims that the deaths of Titus and Lavinia are necessary to fulfill a genre trope of this era where revengers must be punished as payment for the lives they have taken. This again suggests the disabled body is used as currency or payment to balance a debt: Titus and Lavinia must die because they exacted their revenge through murder. However, it’s difficult to classify Lavinia as a revenger—her death is a troublesome wrench in the play’s logic of making killers die. And it’s true that the surviving characters, Marcus and Lucius, don’t have any blood on their hands. But blood never directly falls on Lavinia’s “hands” but rather her stumps are used to collect it in a basin in 5.2. Lavinia’s status as an accomplice to Chiron and Demetrius’s murder isn’t equal to that of Titus, who kills six characters throughout the play and arguably incites the revenge plot by sacrificing Tamora’s son. Believing that Titus’s and Lavinia’s deaths complete the expectations of the genre doesn’t entirely explain Titus’s reasoning for Lavinia’s death. Lavinia’s experience of justice, if it can be called that, is short-lived, and in the end, she isn’t given any opportunity to amount to more than an accomplice and victim of her father’s greed for vengeance and political dominance. While hands and lives are used to pay for murder, the debt repeatedly comes out over- or underpaid. It is then more compelling to read Lavinia’s death as a demonstration of Titus’s power and discomfort with her survival rather than as a condemnation of her as an accomplice to two murders.

Alternative and Joint Routes to Agency

Titus’s power over Lavinia is revealed through an examination of how each comes into their disability. Titus willingly cuts off his own hand while Lavinia’s mutilation is forced upon her in an ultimate state of helplessness. Recognizing Lavinia’s lack of agency in the way she becomes disabled could make the way she later finds communication that much more empowering, or it could reflect her troubled status as a woman caught in the thick of a bloody revenge plot. Reading Lavinia as the latter, a pawn in the play’s political warfare, lends itself to

explaining her death better than the former. Comparing the ways that Lavinia and Titus lose hands not only makes it clear that Titus held more power—cutting off his hand was his *choice*, something entirely out of Lavinia’s reach in her dismemberment—but that he also dismembered himself as a demonstration of his power as a Roman patriarch. These differences in levels of agency are quite static for the rest of the play despite the ways both Titus and Lavinia create ability through accommodation. Titus wields more agency in his own dismemberment and in this state of disability takes Lavinia’s life in Act 5, proving his excess power over her.

But before the eventual filicide, Lavinia and Titus are partners in revenge crimes and partners in surprising the audience and fellow characters by wielding joint agency. Their link as a tandem vehicle for revenge is established after Titus’s hand is cut off in 3.1; when his hand is returned, he instructs Lavinia: “Bear thou my hand, sweet wench, between thy / teeth” (3.1.287–88). Rowe’s acknowledgement of the symbolism in the hand, traditionally seen as a signifier of agency and power, becomes complicated here. If a hand is powerful, then what is a severed hand in Shakespeare’s text? Rowe argues that “in its vulnerability to loss and theft, its mobility onstage, the dead hand in Shakespeare’s play paradoxically exemplifies the contingent and supplementary *condition* of agency” (286). Thus, it matters where agency is located among these vengeful characters, and a physical hand acts as a visual representation of this mobile agency. Titus’s dismemberment allows for some of his agency to be transferred to Lavinia. Through handing off his hand, Titus symbolically divides his agency so that each of them can wield a single hand, emphasizing their shared possession of agency rather than their shared lack of hands. Rowe claims that the placement of Titus’s hand in Lavinia’s mouth “symbolizes her instrumentality as the vehicle and emblem of *his* efficacious action” (296). In this moment, both Titus’s patriarchal power and Lavinia’s ability to be “employed in these arms” are showcased (3.1.286). Nicola M. Imbrascio also calls attention to this

symbolic moment, saying, “This misapplication of the hand in place of the tongue signifies Lavinia’s active participation in the revenge plot from this point forward in the play” (296). The passing of the hand from Titus to Lavinia shows how neither actually loses power in their dismemberment; instead, they combine their remaining agencies and subvert the “expectations of not only their enemies but of the audience as well” (296). We don’t expect mutilated bodies to exact such a violent revenge two acts later. The revenge on Chiron and Demetrius in 5.2 is successful because the brothers are unsuspecting of their handless captor, Titus. The surprise of agency is a tool in committing successful murder.

The agentic connection between Titus and Lavinia established in 3.1 is then put to work in 4.1, where Lavinia reveals the truth of her rape and mutilation. Though Lavinia has lost her “lily hands” and “sweet tongue,” she isn’t worthless (2.4.44-49). Act 4, scene 1 involves both reading and writing from Titus and Lavinia. Beyond their shared knowledge of reading Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Lavinia creates writing for Titus to read. Lavinia wields a staff to communicate the trauma she has experienced, showcasing the possibility for a tongueless person to create words (4.1.77-78). As Fawcett claims, “her mutilation makes her write” (266). She uses the staff as a tool and extension of herself to accommodate for her lack of hands and tongue. This is a moment of accommodation where she creates ability from disability. However, Lavinia needs Titus to translate her story and understand her meaning. Fawcett argues that in this scene, “one person becomes the text for another’s explication, a challenge for interpretation” (263). While Marcus proposes the solution for writing with the staff in Lavinia’s mouth, it is Titus who reads what she has written: “*Stuprum*. Chiron, Demetrius” (4.1.79). Titus’s interpretation of Lavinia’s writing involves reading her body and letters as a text and synthesizing her meaning into his own new speech. This moment signals back to 3.2, when he says that he “can interpret all her martyred signs” and that he will “learn to know [Lavinia’s] meaning” (3.2.36, 45). Imbrascio claims

that Titus can understand tongueless Lavinia because, as the two mutilated bodies that survive until the last act, they “share a communicative bond that Marcus—as able-bodied—cannot comprehend” (297). Lavinia’s ability to express meaning depends on Titus’s ability to translate. Thus, they partner in exposing and committing revenge.

Ability continues to sprout from Titus and Lavinia’s partnership in 5.2 when they fulfill their revenge on Chiron and Demetrius. Lavinia needs Titus’s remaining hand to slit the throats of her assailants, and Titus needs Lavinia to bear the basin that receives their blood (5.3.200-01). Imbrascio claims that in this double homicide Lavinia and Titus are “reconstructing the disabled body as the capable body” (298). Imbrascio’s insight points to the disabled body as a tool for deception, understanding, and ultimately an advantage in seeking revenge on unsuspecting enemies. Her argument expands on Fawcett’s claims about Lavinia finding capability in disability by including Titus as well. These readings point to a framework that Susan Wendell explores in her chapter on “The Social Construction of Disability” from her 1996 book, *The Rejected Body*. Wendell argues that “a great deal of disability can be prevented . . . by relatively minor changes in the built environment that provide accessibility to people with a wide range of physical characteristics and abilities” (62). She advocates for viewing disability as something contingent on the societal factors that construct and deconstruct it. When this framework is applied to *Titus Andronicus*, it explains Lavinia’s ability to communicate and the success in her and her father’s revenge. Lavinia can write because she finds a tool that accommodates her disability, and she is able to help Titus exact a surprising revenge because the other characters expect their incapacitation and fail to see that as a pair they are stronger together than apart.

In the next and final scene, Titus's and Lavinia's agencies come to an end through their deaths, and their partnership faces a bloody fallout. It can't be ignored though that when Titus kills Lavinia, he demonstrates how he has had the upper hand—more agency than she had—for the entire play. Perhaps it is not agency as much as it is *power*—the difference can be seen through how they become disabled: targeted rape versus voluntary dismemberment. Rowe argues that Lavinia's death "reinvests [Titus] with 'mighty, strong and *effectual*' agency. . . . Serving this function, Lavinia appears in Act 5 as a kind of embodied emblem of Titus's claim to justice" (296; Rowe's emphasis). The power that Titus lent in passing his hand to Lavinia is reconsolidated in this moment of filicide. Titus is driven to this horrible, and arguably illogical, act in order to defend the Andronici name. Titus's resolution to carry out the murder of his own daughter shows he is willing to preserve the Roman patriarchy at all costs. Once the meat pies have been served, Lavinia becomes useless to him after she assists in avenging her assailants; her employment has been terminated. Her death renders the ability Lavinia created in Act 4 futile and unsatisfying and reveals her role as a tool for showcasing Titus's own power and ability.

Unsatisfying Revenge

Lavinia's death specifically exposes the play's sexist logic and helps reveal this unsatisfying cycle of revenge. When Titus asks Saturninus, "Was it well done of rash Virginius / To slay his daughter with his own right hand," he promptly responds, "It was, Andronicus" (5.3.36–39). Saturninus explains that the reason is "because the girl should not survive her shame, / And by her presence still renew [her father's] sorrows" (5.3.41–42). This is an admission of a Roman value that Shakespeare has chosen to include just before Lavinia's death. While it has been established that Titus might also be uncomfortable with Lavinia's disability, this moment also points to the ways that Lavinia's agency deteriorates in her final moments as her borrowed agency is returned to her father. The audience never gets to know her feelings about her mutilation. While the problem of

speech is overcome in 4.1 when Lavinia communicates her rape, it isn't used to explore her internal feelings. Rather, Titus and Marcus lament for her, and she is "condemned to watch others fumble toward her truth" (Fawcett 265–66). Here, in 5.3, Titus and Saturninus assign shame to Lavinia and seal her fate. Shakespeare doesn't include any stage direction for Lavinia during this exchange. Perhaps in stage productions she frantically protests while they discuss her supposed shame outright, but on the page, she is noticeably absent from the text. While Lavinia has a veil over her face, possibly a sign that Titus has dressed her for death, this death is not her choice since Lavinia has no tongue with which to defend herself; a staff could barely begin to scrawl in the sand the complex trauma with which she is coping, and no opportunity is made for her to do this (5.3 stage directions). The play and its characters refuse to grapple with the complicated emotions and harm rape leaves behind and opt for murder and silence instead. It's not that Shakespeare isn't aware of the mental effects rape can have on a person—he explores this at length in *The Rape of Lucrece*. This exchange between Saturninus and Titus reveals a Roman cultural refusal of feminine agency and discomfort with the survival of victims of sexual violence.

Whether the fulfillment of a genre trope, a condemnation of visible disability and victimhood, an expression of a cultural fear of resilient women, or Titus taking back his loaned agency, Lavinia's death is a product of the punitive justice found within the revenge plot of *Titus Andronicus* that contributes to a cycle of violence. Since the play opens with Titus sacrificing Alarbus as a mere demonstration of political dominance, every act of mutilation and murder that follows attempts to prove the political dominance of the perpetrator, until only pacifists are left on stage. The play must deal in a "life for a life" philosophy to propel the plot, but the sweet revenge that Tamora seeks can't be satisfied with a single life taken for Alarbus's life. Rather, she wants "to massacre them all / And raze their faction and family" (1.1.459–60). She wants Titus to know her suffering not just by losing a son but, much more

intensely, by killing him and his entire bloodline off. This need for revenge spurs the rest of the violence in the play, and when “solicit[ing] heaven . . . / To send down Justice” doesn’t procure the right results, Titus and Lavinia must take matters into their own “hands” (4.3.53–54). Though the murders of Chiron and Demetrius avenge Lavinia’s rape, it isn’t remotely satisfying since Lavinia herself is killed in the following scene. The revenge on Chiron and Demetrius is then more of a display of domination on Titus’s part rather than a father empowering his daughter in bloody, cathartic revenge. Titus is killed immediately after he reveals that Tamora’s sons are in the meat pies and stabs her (5.3.64–66). No one gets to live long enough to relish their righted wrongs. Reviewing who lives and who dies and *how* they die in *Titus* reveals how revenge-fueled justice doesn’t honor or avenge the lives of the dead but seeks to prove the political superiority of the still-living. For Titus, representing the Romans, this means killing his own daughter once she is no longer useful to him and her remaining bodily trauma is too much to handle. From Act 3 to 5.2, Titus and Lavinia are bonded through their disability, but it isn’t a bond that lasts. In the end, Titus represents the Roman patriarchy, and the murders he commits are driven by protecting his allegiance through targeting Tamora, her sons, and his own daughter.

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Titus Andronicus shows the possibility for agency and ability despite dismemberment, but through its unequal charge of violence, the agency is rendered disempowering since it is used solely for fulfilling an unsatisfying revenge. The disabled body is not rendered to one use or meaning but rather can be—and has been—read as a site of violence and regeneration. Lavinia’s ability to create handless writing is awe-inspiring but avoids being classified as empowering because even when her newfound sense of ability is used to slay her assailants, it is on Titus’s terms and in the end for his glory. When a disabled female character only shows post-assault resilience through violent outlets and is condemned to silence and death, it is problematic to read her as empowering. Instead, she should be read as a product of the Roman culture of retributive justice depicted by Shakespeare where the punishment often exceeds the crime. Disability is not the central problem of the play but rather is a lens through which the play’s absurd patriarchal violence and sexism becomes clear. Reading where and how Titus’s and Lavinia’s bodies encounter harm and interact throughout this play exposes the futile nature of the revenge plot, thus revealing Shakespeare’s interpretation and indictment of violent Roman patriarchy.

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LA RECONSTRUCTION DU SYSTÈME SANITAIRE APRÈS LE GÉNOCIDE RWANDAIS CONTRIBUE À UNE MEILLEURE RÉPONSE PANDÉMIQUE: UNE COMPARAISON ENTRE LA RÉPONSE RWANDAISE AU SIDA ET AU COVID-19

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ABSTRACT This study examines how the development of medical infrastructure after the Rwandan genocide and HIV epidemic contributed to a faster response to COVID-19. In comparing Rwanda's response to the HIV and COVID-19 outbreaks, this study will disprove the null hypothesis that there is not a positive correspondence between the number of medical resources available and the efficacy of the response to COVID-19. To compare both the medical infrastructure available and the speed and efficacy of Rwanda's response to each pandemic, this study analyzes data from the World Bank, Rwanda's demographic and health survey, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and Reuters.

The findings indicate that during the HIV epidemic Rwanda's health system had been largely destroyed due to the Rwandan genocide, and this lack of resources corresponded with a high rate of uncertainty regarding the exact number of those affected by HIV and AIDS. Today, Rwanda benefits from a greater number of resources—including more doctors and international aid—which correlates with a faster and more precise response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These results suggest that the improvement of health systems, greater foreign aid, and more political stability contribute to a faster response to public health crises.

INTRODUCTION

La prévalence du SIDA en Afrique a contribué à une inquiétude mondiale concernant le danger du Covid pour les pays africains. Le Covid est une nouvelle maladie qui touche le monde entier, alors il est important d'examiner ses impacts et comment les pays avec moins de ressources peuvent répondre plus efficacement. Face à cette nouvelle pandémie, on n'étudie pas suffisamment

l'état des communautés touchées à la fois par le SIDA et par le COVID-19. Le SIDA et le Covid restent encore des problèmes mondiaux, alors il est pertinent d'étudier comment la réponse à l'un affecte l'autre.

Le Rwanda a du succès dans sa lutte contre le SIDA et le COVID-19. Même si le pays a eu 129 895 cas et 1 459 décès à cause du COVID-19, ce n'est que 0,91% de la population totale, et le taux de mortalité équivaut à 11 décès pour 100 000 personnes (Reuters, « Rwanda » ; La Banque mondiale, « Rwanda »). En comparaison, 43% de la population en France est tombée malade, et 218 pour 100 000 personnes sont décédées (Reuters, « France » ; La

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Banque mondiale, « Population »). Le monde peut en tirer bénéfice en apprenant comment les investissements et les améliorations du système de santé face à une pandémie peuvent protéger la population contre une deuxième. On peut examiner comment la technologie scientifique et les investissements infrastructurels utilisés pour le SIDA sont toujours utiles pour le COVID-19. Grâce à cette étude, on peut mieux comprendre comment une forte réponse contre le SIDA aide un pays et ses citoyens à être mieux préparés pour les autres pandémies.

L'essai qui suit pose donc la question : comment l'infrastructure rwandaise déjà développée pendant la lutte contre le SIDA aide-t-elle le pays à répondre rapidement à la pandémie du COVID-19 ?

Les pays africains sont souvent vulnérables aux épidémies à cause des systèmes sanitaires moins développés et des taux de pauvreté plus élevés. Quand le monde a pris conscience de la menace du COVID, il y a eu des membres de la communauté scientifique pour croire que les pays africains n'avaient pas les ressources nécessaires pour combattre cette pandémie. Dr Papy Lamé, une chercheuse scientifique d'ALIMA (organisation partenaire de la Fondation Bill & Melinda Gates), a dit, « Les systèmes de santé des pays africains sont fragiles et ne sont pas prêts à faire face à cette épidémie de COVID-19 ». Même si le Rwanda et d'autres pays africains n'ont pas autant de ressources que les pays plus développés, on a encore des systèmes en place grâce à l'expérience acquise grâce à la lutte contre d'autres pandémies comme celle du VIH. Cette analyse réfute donc l'hypothèse nulle selon laquelle, si on compare la réponse pandémique au VIH et la réponse au COVID-19, il n'y aura pas de corrélation entre l'amélioration des systèmes sanitaires et la vitesse à réduire le nombre de cas. En réfutant cette hypothèse nulle, on peut montrer l'importance d'investir de l'argent dans les ressources sanitaires pour chaque communauté. On verra que les stratégies, les leçons, et les ressources pour une pandémie peuvent aider un pays à combattre d'autres pandémies. Après le génocide rwandais, il y a

eu une augmentation du SIDA et une perte du nombre de médecins (Institut National de la Statistique et al.). Toutefois, le gouvernement a travaillé à reconstruire le système sanitaire, et maintenant on a réussi à diminuer le nombre de cas de SIDA. Les données de cet essai peuvent encourager des gouvernements à investir plus de ressources pour combattre le SIDA et d'autres pandémies afin de protéger les gens contre les futures maladies. C'est plus difficile de construire une réponse pandémique à partir de zéro, et les gouvernements peuvent économiser des moyens en sachant que les ressources pour une pandémie en retrait peuvent s'appliquer aux autres risques. Même si une réponse forte à la pandémie du SIDA a réussi à réduire le danger, on doit garder les systèmes mis en place à cette occasion pour être prêt pour la prochaine pandémie.

MÉTHODES

Cette étude concerne le peuple du Rwanda. L'étude examine comment un investissement dans les ressources sociales et médicales pour relier les malades aux informations et ressources peut améliorer la vitesse avec laquelle on réduit le danger d'une pandémie. Nous y comparons la réponse au SIDA alors que l'infrastructure médicale avait été largement détruite pendant le génocide rwandais à aujourd'hui quand le pays a plus de ressources pour combattre la pandémie du COVID-19.

Les sources

Pour rassembler des informations, nous avons examiné les bases de données de l'ONU, de la Banque mondiale, de Reuters, et de l'Institut National de la Statistique au Rwanda. La Banque mondiale offre des informations sur l'infrastructure, les investissements internationaux, les maladies comme le SIDA, et comment ceux-ci ont changé au fil du temps. Cette étude examine les données sur le SIDA de l'ONUSIDA et des documents gouvernementaux du Rwanda. Par ailleurs, Reuters a des articles que nous avons également consultés sur la réponse pandémique au COVID au Rwanda.

Les différences

Le SIDA et le COVID sont des maladies différentes, mais chacune a un grand impact sur le pays. Le VIH/SIDA est parmi les dix principales causes de décès au Rwanda, et la pandémie du COVID-19 a entraîné des confinements et fermetures qui ont touché tout le pays (CDC, « Santé mondiale - Rwanda » ; Reuters, « Rwanda »). Le but de cette étude est de comparer si un système stable et bien soutenu peut mieux combattre une pandémie et si les investissements pour combattre le SIDA peuvent encore être utiles pour les autres pandémies.

Reconnaître les autres influences

Pour reconnaître les autres influences sur les réponses au SIDA et au COVID, nous examinons combien d'aide internationale le Rwanda a reçu pour chaque pandémie. Pour une comparaison quantitative, nous comparons la valeur monétaire des contributions internationales à chaque réponse pandémique.

Si la valeur monétaire des contributions est environ la même pour chaque pandémie, on peut simplement examiner comment l'infrastructure déjà en place réduit la gravité d'une pandémie. Toutefois, si la valeur est différente, il nous faut examiner comment l'infrastructure change à cause de cet investissement, et si les ressources qui viennent de la réponse internationale au SIDA réduisent le besoin d'aide pour la pandémie du COVID.

Prouver l'hypothèse

Tout d'abord, cette étude identifie si le Rwanda utilise encore l'infrastructure qui combat le SIDA pour combattre le COVID. Après cela, nous examinerons l'impact de ces ressources sur la vitesse de la réponse pandémique et les facteurs qui aident ou n'aident pas à combattre la pandémie. Finalement, nous notons le temps qu'il a fallu pour contrôler le SIDA au Rwanda et le comparons au COVID.

Si les ressources déjà en place pour combattre le SIDA réduisent le temps pour identifier, traiter, et contrôler le COVID, l'hypothèse nulle sera réfutée.

RÉSULTATS

L'infrastructure médicale

Selon l'enquête de 2007 réalisée par le gouvernement rwandais, « [l]e développement du système de santé a été complètement démantelé au moment du génocide de 1994. La plupart des infrastructures, des équipements, du personnel et du système de santé lui-même ont été détruits » (Institut National de la Statistique et al.). À cause de ça, il était difficile d'identifier les gens qui étaient séropositifs (Gotanegre 234). Toutefois, en février 1995, le gouvernement a créé une politique pour reconstruire le système de santé (Institut National de la Statistique et al.).

Même si l'infrastructure médicale manque encore, il y a eu des améliorations. Dans une étude de 2007, l'Institut National de la Statistique au Rwanda a déterminé que 46% des établissements médicaux peuvent effectuer un test et vérifier si quelqu'un a le SIDA. C'est une amélioration considérable par rapport à 1994 où l'infrastructure médicale avait été décimée par le génocide.

On peut voir une autre amélioration en regardant le nombre de médecins par rapport à la population (voir fig. 1).

FIGURE 1

On voit une tendance à la hausse du nombre de médecins par rapport à la population. Les données ne commencent qu'en 2002. Ça suggère une absence de ressources pour ramasser l'information nécessaire à l'avance.

Source: La Banque Mondiale : Médecins (pour 1000 personnes) - Rwanda : Organisation mondiale de la santé <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/SH.MED.PHYS.ZS?locations=RW>.

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En 2002, il y avait 0,019 médecins pour mille personnes. En comparaison, la France avait 6,57 médecins pour mille personnes en 2002 et 6,53 médecins en 2018 (La Banque mondiale, « Médecins - France »). En 2019 au Rwanda, le nombre de médecins atteint 0,1 pour mille personnes, une augmentation de 621% depuis 2002 (La Banque mondiale, « Médecins - Rwanda »).

Vitesse de réponse au SIDA

Le premier cas de SIDA au Rwanda a été identifié en 1983, deux années après la première identification de cette maladie dans le monde (Commission nationale de lutte contre le SIDA).

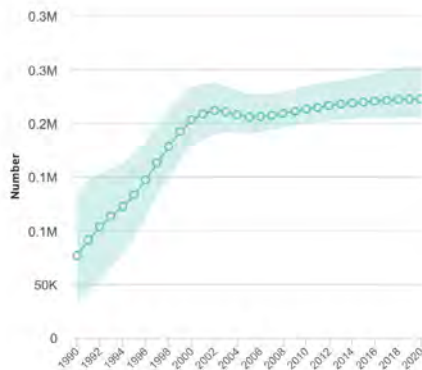
L'épidémie du SIDA a progressé de 91% par an entre 1983 et 1990. En 1989, le SIDA est la cinquième cause de décès au Rwanda (Gotanegre 233-34). Le nombre de personnes vivant avec VIH a continué à augmenter fortement après 1990, et la propagation n'a ralenti que vers 2002 (voir fig. 2).

FIGURE 2

Entre 1990 et 2002, chaque année voyait une augmentation moyenne de 11 000 personnes vivant avec VIH. Après 2002, l'augmentation ralentit considérablement. Entre 2002 et 2020, le nombre de personnes vivant avec VIH n'a augmenté que de 10 000 en total.

Source: ONUSIDA. «People living with HIV (all ages). [Personnes vivant avec le VIH (tous âges)]». Les estimations épidémiologiques de l'ONUSIDA, 2022. <https://www.unaids.org/fr/regionscountries/countries/rwanda>.

People living with HIV (all ages)



Si on considère que le premier cas du VIH est arrivé en 1983, il a fallu 19 ans avant de voir une baisse significative des nouveaux cas. Cette baisse s'est produite en 2002, quand le déclin des nouveaux cas est passé de -1 000 cas par an à -3 000 cas par an (voir fig. 3).

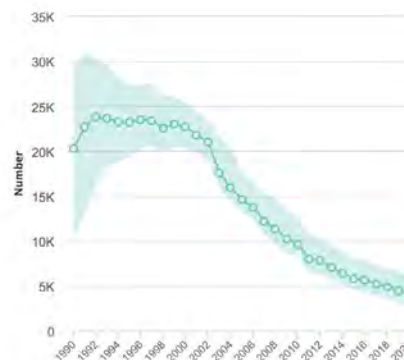
En plus, l'ampleur d'estimation a diminué aussi. Selon l'ONUSIDA (voir fig. 3), en 1994, l'année du génocide rwandais, il y avait environ 23 000 nouveaux cas, et la différence entre les extrêmes d'estimation était 9 000. En 2020, il y avait environ 4 200 nouveaux cas de VIH. L'estimation la plus élevée était 6 300, et la plus basse était 3 000. La différence entre ces deux extrêmes était 3 300.

FIGURE 3

Le bleu indique l'ampleur des estimations possibles. Après 2000, celle pour les nouveaux cas est dramatiquement plus petite, indiquant un système plus précis.

Source: ONUSIDA. «New HIV infections (all ages). [Nouvelles infections par le VIH (tous âges)]». Les estimations épidémiologiques de l'ONUSIDA, 2022. <https://www.unaids.org/fr/regionscountries/countries/rwanda>.

New HIV infections (all ages)



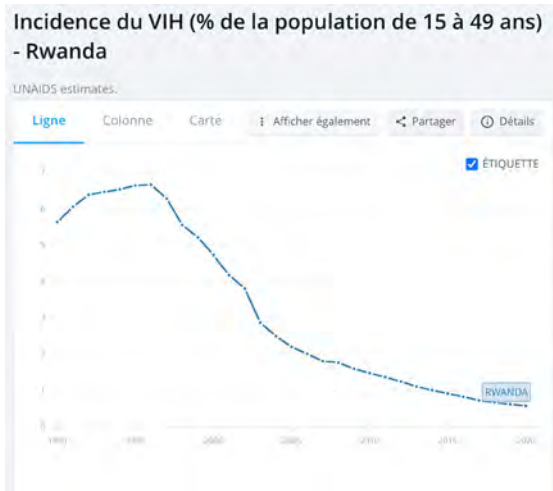
Les données de la Banque mondiale compliquent la situation. La chute des incidences du VIH se produit plus tôt que celle des nouveaux cas (voir fig. 4). Cette chute correspond à la fin du génocide rwandais et au début des travaux de stabilisation du pays.

FIGURE 4

Le pic d'incidence du VIH est arrivé en 1996, deux ans après le génocide rwandais. Le pic a atteint 6,7 % de la population de 15 à 49 ans. En 2020, le pourcentage n'est que de 0,6% de la population, alors l'incidence a diminué par 91%.

Source : La Banque mondiale : Incidence du VIH (% de la population de 15 à 49 ans) - Rwanda : Les estimations épistémologiques de l'ONUSIDA, 2022.

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C'est important de comprendre que le taux des nouveaux cas et le taux d'incidence ne sont pas les mêmes. Les nouveaux cas d'infection indiquent l'année où les malades reçoivent leur diagnostic, mais ils peuvent avoir attrapé le virus plusieurs années auparavant (Sidaction). Donc, la différence entre le moment où les incidences et les nouveaux cas chutent indique un retard dans les tests et l'identification des cas. À cause de cela, on verra une chute des incidences plus tôt qu'une chute des nouveaux cas.

Les graphiques des figures 5 et 6 indiquent qu'une réponse efficace au SIDA n'a commencé que vers 2000. La précision des données augmente en même temps que les décès et les nouveaux cas commencent à diminuer rapidement.

FIGURE 5

Le nombre de morts à cause du SIDA chute rapidement après 2004. Pour les décès et les nouveaux cas, on peut voir que l'étendue des estimations est plus grande avant 2000, indiquant les limites des systèmes d'identification à ce moment-là.

Source : ONUSIDA. «AIDS-related deaths (all ages) [Décès liés au SIDA (tous âges)]». Les estimations épistémologiques de l'ONUSIDA, 2022. <https://www.unaids.org/fr/regionscountries/countries/rwanda>.

AIDS-related deaths (all ages)

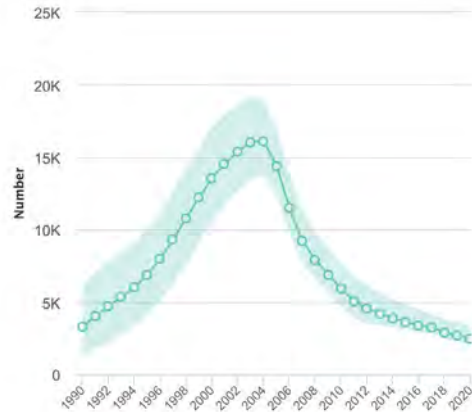
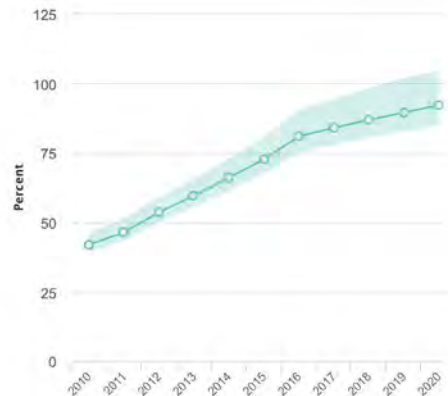


FIGURE 6

En 2010, environ 42% des personnes vivant avec le VIH reçoivent le traitement antirétroviral qui réduit le danger du VIH. Ce pourcentage augmente rapidement entre 2010 et 2016 pour atteindre 79%, et le pourcentage continue d'augmenter mais plus lentement. Plus récemment, en 2019, le pourcentage est de 87% (ONUSIDA, «Rwanda»).

Source : ONUSIDA. «Coverage of people receiving ART (all ages) [Couverture des personnes bénéficiant d'un TAR]». Les estimations épistémologiques de l'ONUSIDA, 2022. <https://www.unaids.org/fr/regionscountries/countries/rwanda>.

Coverage of people receiving ART (all ages)



Vitesse de la réponse au COVID

En comparaison, on peut observer la vitesse et la précision de la réponse pandémique en consultant les données de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé et de Reuters. Le Rwanda a commencé à se préparer en février 2020, bien à l'avance de son premier cas le 14 mars (Organisation mondiale de la santé, Rwanda ; Gdabamassi). Après avoir identifié le premier cas de COVID-19, on a introduit les confinements recommandés le jour même, bientôt suivis de confinements nécessaires. Le gouvernement ferme les écoles le 16 mars, deux jours plus tard (Reuters, « Rwanda »). Même s'il n'y aura jamais cent pour cent de certitude concernant le nombre de cas, on ne voit pas une ampleur aussi sévère que celle provoquée par le VIH. Chaque pic de contamination a été rapidement contrôlé avec des mesures strictes et rapides. Le pays a répondu au pic d'hiver 2020 en fermant des écoles et exigeant des confinements des travailleurs pas essentiels dans les régions les plus affectées (Reuters, « Rwanda »). À cause de ces mesures, le pays a réduit le nombre de nouveaux cas de 328 par jour le 24 janvier à 118 le 24 février (Reuters, « Rwanda »).

Temps avant de traitement

Le temps avant de traiter le COVID et le VIH pour chaque pic n'est pas comparable parce que les traitements et les ressources qui sont nécessaires pour développer les traitements sont entièrement différents. Les gens qui ont un cas grave de COVID ont surtout besoin de respirateurs et d'autres machines tandis que les malades de SIDA ont besoin d'une thérapie antirétrovirale (ONUSIDA).

Aide internationale

En regardant figure 7, le graphique indique que la quantité d'aide monétaire provenant de la Banque Mondiale augmente pendant le génocide et la pandémie du SIDA. Le pic en 2004 à 1,02 milliard de dollars correspond à la chute des décès et la précision améliorée pour le diagnostic des malades du SIDA. En comparaison, quand la pandémie du COVID-19 arrive en 2020, le Rwanda a déjà beaucoup d'aide internationale, avec 1,9 milliard de dollars en 2019 et 2,43 milliards en 2020. Avec cet argent,

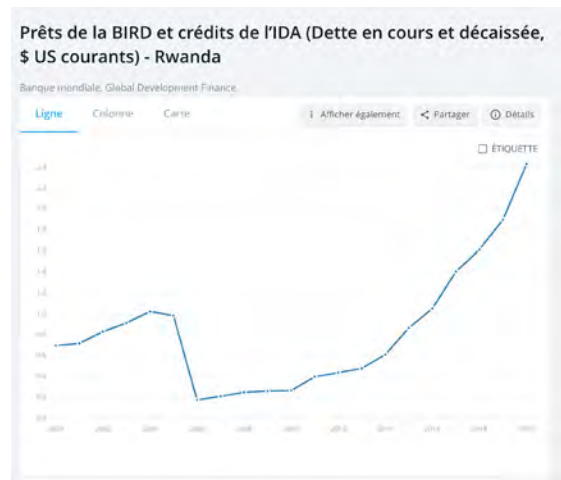
le Rwanda est mieux préparé et mieux financé pour la pandémie du COVID en comparaison à la pandémie du SIDA.

FIGURE 7

Même si le pays doit rembourser les dettes, les prêts peuvent aider le pays à financer les améliorations infrastructurelles.

Source : La Banque mondiale : Prêts de la BIRD et crédits de l'IDA - Rwanda : La Banque mondiale et le financement global du développement, 2022.

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CONCLUSION

Au début de la pandémie du SIDA, il y a eu une absence de ressources, de médecins, et l'aide internationale n'était pas encore très élevée. Ces défis correspondent avec un délai à contrôler le VIH au Rwanda, et il y a presque vingt ans entre l'identification du premier cas et le début de données indiquant le succès de la réduction du VIH. L'ampleur des estimations au début de la pandémie du VIH était jusqu'à trois fois la taille d'aujourd'hui (ONUSIDA). Ce n'est que plusieurs années après le génocide rwandais qu'on peut voir l'évidence des efforts plus ciblés à réduire le nombre de cas.

Même si les deux pandémies ont des différences, on peut voir que le Rwanda a plus de ressources cette fois, et il peut en consacrer à lutter contre cette pandémie. À cause

de cela, le Rwanda réagit rapidement aux données et contrôle effectivement les pics.

Les graphiques ci-dessus indiquent que l'hypothèse nulle est erronée. Au contraire, les systèmes déjà en place aident à réduire l'impact de COVID-19 par rapport aux réponses pandémiques qui ont suivi le génocide rwandais et la perte des ressources sanitaires.

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DIE VERBINDUNGSLUST DES ALLTÄGLICHEN GESELLSCHAFTSLÖWES

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ABSTRACT In his letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, German playwright, poet, philosopher and critic Friedrich Schiller takes a deep, psychological dive into how human beings are constituted while also reacting to the current events of his time, most notably the French Revolution and its aftermath. Joe Chapman follows suit by considering the constitution of the human being as it becomes evident in the era of COVID, finding in part that the drive for social connection to others had to satisfy itself through a new connection to oneself (or one's self).

I

Während der COVID-Zeit erfuhr der Mensch zum ersten Mal sein Selbst. Als man im Frühling 2020 allein in der Wohnung saß, konnte einer nur merken, dass er plötzlich aus dem Alltagsleben entzogen wurde. Urplötzlich erfuhr man keine regelmäßigen sozialen Interaktionen; man beschäftigte sich nur mit der Abwesenheit dieser täglichen Interaktionen. Das Alleinsein läßt sich neu verstanden als ein notwendiges Übel, denn Social Distancing beraubt den Menschen der gesellschaftlichen Verbindungen und auch schützt dem Menschen gegen COVID; die Lust an Verbindung aber kocht im Herzen des sozialen Menschen.

Die Verbindungslust stellt sich gegen die neu gelernte Furcht an COVIDträger, die vielleicht irgendjemand sein könnte. Obwohl man verlässt sich an den Anderen, um die Verbindungslust zu befriedigen, schafft die Nähe an den Andern ein intrusives Unbehagen. Diese gegeneinander gesetzten Triebe fordern ein wechselndes inneres Übergewicht des Willens, mit dem der Mensch

keine vorkommende Erfahrung in dem gesellschaftlichen Leben hatte. Normalerweise, d.h. außerhalb der COVID-Zeit, mischt sich der Mensch gerne mit den Leuten unbegrenzt; statt dieser Verbindungsfreiheit erzeugt das Social Distancing kein Zugehörigkeitsgefühl, denn die soziale Umgebung ist eine Gefahrzone geworden. Die Gefahrzone wird Kriegsgebiet, wenn der Mensch sozial in der Zeit Coronas sein will, weil die Verbindungslust kämpfen muss, um zufriedenstellen zu sein.

II

Der Mensch enthält immer einen unbezähmbaren Trieb an Verbindung, von dem unsere Gesellschaft geformt wurde. Um ein voller Gesellschaftsmitglied zu sein, muss der Mensch vor allem sozial sein, wofür der Mensch natürlich den anderen Menschen braucht. Die Gesellschaft ist davon abhängig, denn die gesamten Verbindungen ermöglichen die Innovation, die Erfindungen und die persönliche Erfüllung des Menschseins. Die Verbindungslust unterstreicht jeden Beweggrund für die staatlichen Erfahrungen, egal ob man etwas sucht, bezahlt oder verkauft; die menschlichen Beziehungen sind notwendig für den eigenen Erfolg.

* This paper was prepared for GER 302 (Play, Personality, and Politics in Schiller's Letters on Art), taught in the Autumn Quarter of the 2021-22 academic year by Eugene Sampson who also selected the paper. It was revised under the guidance of Dr. Anna Souchuk.

Heute leidet der Staat unter der Abwesenheit der Beziehungen. Obwohl geimpfte Menschen wieder in die Gesellschaft treten dürfen, würde es kein bedeutungsvolles Einkommen. Die Furcht an den COVID-Trägern überschattet den innerlichen Sozialtrieb, weil das Social Distancing primär im Kopf steht. Es schafft die kognitive Dissonanz, weil der Mensch sich nach den menschlichen Beziehungen sehnt und sich gleichzeitig vor den gleichen Geliebten schützen muss. In der Zeit Coronas distanziert der Mensch sich von dem Andern, er trägt Maske und Gesichtsschirme, weil er sich auf keiner wegen der eigenen Gesundheitsvorsichtigkeit verlassen kann. Der Staat leidet auch unter diesem gegenseitigen Misstrauen, deswegen wurden die einzelnen Möglichkeiten fürs Zusammenkommen zerstört.

Der Mensch wurde noch weiter von der COVID-Zeit verwirren, denn die eigenen Erfahrungen mit den zwei Trieben passen nicht zueinander. Die bleibenden Möglichkeiten, das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl zu erreichen, lassen sich in zwei Formen verstehen. Die erste Form heißt die "Social Distancing" Versammlung, die selbst ein Oxymoron ist. Die Verbindungslust ist davon nicht völlig befriedigt, sondern sie sehnt sich nach einem tieferen Zusammenkommen ohne die physischen und geistigen Begrenzungen, die sich verstehen lassen als die physische Distanz und das innerliche Misstrauen. Die zweite Form geschieht in dem virtuellen Raum, d.h. im Internet, auf Zoom-Calls und so weiter. Diese Art der Verbindung überkommt die Behinderungen des physischen Zusammenseins, denn der Mensch darf sich im Gemeinschaftsleben ohne Furcht an COVID mischen; doch das Virtuelle befriedigt die menschliche Verbindungslust nicht, weil die Nähe notwendig für das Zugehörigkeitsgefühl ist, um das Sicherheitsgefühl zu erreichen. Deswegen hat der Mensch scheinbar keinen offenbaren Ausweg, beide die Furcht an COVID überzukommen und die grundlegenden menschlichen Verbindungen zu sichern.

III

Das Social Distancing wird nicht dauern. Das ist einfach zu sagen, weil wir schon gesehen haben, dass die Verbindungslust darunter leidet, weil der Mensch im Prinzip ein soziales Wesen ist, der sich nicht ewig zurückhalten kann. Während der Quarantäne gab es immer noch Partys, Versammlungen und Reisen als Beispiele davon, dass der intelligente mit COVID-Gefahr gut bekannte Mensch den Trieb nicht regulieren kann oder will, egal was; notwendig ist es nur, er will sich nicht abgrenzen.

Um nicht dafür zu sorgen, muss der Mensch zuerst das Misstrauen ablehnen. Es ist einfacher, wenn man nicht für die Gesundheit der Anderen nicht sorgt, aber was für ein Mensch, der nach Verbindung sehnt, aber die Sicherheit beachtet? Es bleibt übrig das Selbst. Die Selbstverbindung ist die einzige lebenslängliche Beziehung, die wir alle als Individuen erschaffen, aber vor März 2020 hat die Mehrheit sich vielleicht nie wirklich allein gefühlt, sondern man konnte sich auf den Anderen verlassen. Als das nicht verfügbar wurde, fand man einen eigenen innerlichen Ersatz.

Im Alltagsleben lernt der Mensch, inwiefern er sich besser an den Anderen beziehen kann, um die soziale Stellung immer zu verbessern. Selten wurde dem Mensch beigebracht, die eigene Beziehung zu sich selbst sei genauso wichtig wie die mit den Anderen. Insgesamt basiert das gesellschaftliche Leben auf die Fähigkeit, das Selbst darzustellen, d.h. der Mensch muss die Vertraulichkeit mit seinem selbst erreichen. Wenn man eine gute Selbstkenntnis hätte, würde man genauer wissen, was man von den Anderen braucht, damit die Verbindungslust befriedigt wird. Ohne das Social Distancing zu zerstören, muss der Mensch eine tiefere Beziehung mit dem Selbst fassen, z.B. der Mensch macht allein seine Liebhaberei. Obwohl die Selbstverbindung die Nähe an den anderen nicht ersetzt, fordert sie eine unterschiedliche Art der geistigen Nähe, wobei der Mensch zum ersten Mal die Vertraulichkeit ohne Furcht erlebt, bis die Pandemie mindestens zu Ende kommt.

FROM CONNECTIONS TO BARRIERS: HOW THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM BOTH CONNECTED AND SEGREGATED COMMUNITIES

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After the creation of the Interstate Highway System in 1956, numerous freeways began to be planned and constructed across the United States. While heralded as a solution for the poor conditions of interstate rural roads, as well as the traffic jams and general disarray of urban areas, interstate highways became an integral tool in helping to segregate Black and white communities as a physical barrier, in addition to dividing neighborhoods and destroying many homes in the process. In this paper, I will analyze the oft intentional utility highway development to the project of urban renewal patterns and how they have combined to shape racial geographies of housing and segregation. Using case studies of multiple US cities, I will explore how historical highway construction displaced, marginalized, and continues to marginalize minority residents and communities while simultaneously maintaining the status quo that white politicians had established at their expense.

While initially based around the idea of connecting major metropolitan areas and facilitating transportation between different regions of the United States—hence the term *interstate*—the governments of major cities, such as New York City and Chicago, soon realized the potential for connecting their Central Business Districts (CBDs) with the new and emerging suburban population centers that were popping up on the edges of their metropolitan

areas. To accomplish this, however, cities understood that the sheer size and location of these new freeways made it so large swaths within urban areas would need to be demolished in favor of automobile transportation. Big city political leaders like Chicago’s Mayor Richard J. Daley, New York City’s Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, and the early American urban planner Harland Bartholomew soon discovered that they could “kill two birds with one stone”; by routing these new freeways through minority communities and other “blighted” neighborhoods, urban renewal in the form of slum clearance could be easily achieved with (at the time) virtually no political or social backlash (Brown, 2005, p. 4; Dewey, 2020, p. 2; Archer, 2021, p. 1276). This idea, most infamously implemented by Robert Moses, became a well-known planning tool for clearing urban areas of minority inhabitants. As historian Deborah Archer (2021) writes, “Moses became a leading advocate for displacing Black communities to build the highway system, and his ideas were widely adopted around the country” (p. 1278). With devastating and far-reaching consequences that continue to the present day, numerous interstates were constructed across the United States in this manner.

In her article “Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities,” Archer (2021) explains historian Manning Marable’s “theory of undevelopment” in racialized terms, writing that America’s democracy and capitalism are “structured deliberately and specifically to maximize Black oppression” (p. 2130).

* This paper was initially written for GEO 205 (Race, Justice, and the Urban Environment), taught by Dr. Alec Brownlow in Winter Quarter of 2022.

This theory can be easily visualized by the planning and layouts of urban interstates across the United States; these highways were constructed to facilitate transportation between the majority-white suburbs and the majority-white working CBDs while being routed through low-income Black neighborhoods in the inner city. I explore several examples of this phenomenon below: from the construction of Interstate 4 in Orlando, Florida—which separated a Black neighborhood on the city’s West Side from the majority-white East Side and the CBD—to Interstate 81 in Syracuse, New York, which separated the affluent University Hill neighborhood from low-income neighborhoods in the vicinity (Archer, 2021, pp. 2136, 2143). The construction of these highways resulted in an “other side of the tracks” urban geography, creating physical barriers between people of different races and socioeconomic statuses in cities across the country.

Frequently, the displacement of Black people from “blighted” neighborhoods resulted in the redistribution of poverty elsewhere, typically in areas farther away from the city center and more isolated from the main economic opportunities found in many urban areas (Rothstein, 2017, p. 126). In his 1983 book, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*, Arnold Hirsch argues that mid-twentieth-century urban renewal and highway construction projects in Chicago destroyed Black neighborhoods and displaced their residents, further concentrating the city’s Black population into emerging low-income, high-poverty public housing developments—the so-called second ghetto. Historian Raymond Mohl (2003) brings Hirsch’s concept of the “second ghetto” to Miami, Florida’s Overtown neighborhood, a historic African American community demolished when Interstate 95 was run through it. Overtown was a thriving Black community, sitting adjacent to Miami’s CBD, when much of it was slated for demolition to make way for Interstate 95’s construction. Although Mohl notes that there was initially an alternative plan for the highway using an abandoned railroad right-of-way, a route through Overtown was preferred by city leaders and planners as

it provided “ample room for the future expansion of the Central Business District in a westerly direction” (pp. 247–248). This resulted in the destruction of the homes of approximately ten thousand people with Archer (2020) noting that “one massive highway interchange alone took up 40 square blocks” (pp. 1278–1280); Archer (2021) also states that “by the late 1960s, Overtown was dominated by the highway” (p. 2136). The ten thousand people displaced by Interstate 95’s construction through Overtown are a fraction of those displaced and “second ghettoed” by highway construction; former US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx estimates that construction displaced over a million people across the country in the first twenty years of the Interstate Highway System, many of whom were Black and lived in dense urban settings (Dewey, 2020, p. 2). Miami’s “second ghetto” was then created in a small corner of Dade County, Florida as the displaced had to find new homes in different neighborhoods or in public housing, which was purposely placed far from the CBD (Mohl, pp. 249–250). Rebecca Retzlaff, working in Montgomery, Alabama, tells a similar history. She writes, “Highways not only removed African American neighborhoods but also created physical barriers to prevent African Americans from moving into White neighborhoods” (Retzlaff, 2019, p. 932). Significantly—as Hirsch first demonstrated in Chicago—prior to the 1960s, those displaced by freeway construction were not guaranteed just compensation or government assistance to locate a new place to live; rather, assistance was offered only to those families who agreed to relocate into public housing, a relatively new concept at the time.

Planning history encouraged this method of urban renewal via highway construction as, in the first half of the twentieth century, Harland Bartholomew—one of the most important urban planners in US history—and Robert Moses—the infamous architect of New York City’s urban renewal program in the mid-twentieth century—both pioneered and established the precedent modern American freeway construction in the pursuit of slum clearance and urban renewal. In his article “A Tale of

Two Visions,” Jeffrey Brown (2005) writes that “planners and engineers usually ignored the negative effects of their proposals on African American and other minority communities” (pp. 8–9). This ignorance, coupled with the racism prevalent in historic urban planning, has resulted in the destruction of numerous homes, communities, and neighborhoods—with African Americans being left to pick up the pieces.

A second extremely influential case study can be found in the urban renewal projects created under Mayor Richard J. Daley in mid-century Chicago—a city that saw some of the largest scale urban construction projects of the time with the construction of the Eisenhower, Stevenson, Congress, and Dan Ryan Expressways, all of which collectively form a half-beltway around Chicago’s CBD, colloquially known as the Loop. In their 2019 article “Arthur Rubloff and the Grinding Politics of Renewal in Chicago, 1947 to 1986,” Mark Rose and Roger Biles explain the influence that Arthur Rubloff—a prominent real estate speculator during the urban renewal period—had on the construction and layout of planned interstate highways directed through Chicago’s city center. Plans for freeway construction and large-scale urban renewal projects had been in the works in Chicago since at least 1944 when the Congress Expressway (now named the Ida B. Wells Expressway) was first formally proposed (though its informal predecessor was first mentioned in Daniel Burnham’s 1909 *Plan of Chicago*). In 1955, Mayor Daley started to endorse constructing these urban freeways in an effort to connect the new, outlying suburbs and white neighborhoods to the Loop (Rose & Biles, p. 1347). The politically connected Rubloff—who was, in his opinion, single-handedly responsible for the development of the Magnificent Mile—succeeded in rerouting a proposed interstate highway away from the affluent stretch of North Michigan Avenue. Nonetheless, he understood the economic benefit of having such connectivity with the growing white suburbs to his Michigan Avenue development (Rose & Biles, p. 1347). It was believed that increased highway mileage and connection to the new suburbs would curb the loss

of downtown businesses and their profit, keeping money within the city center instead of losing it to suburbia (Rose & Biles, p. 1346).

At the same time that these plans were canceled, Chicago’s modern expressways were being constructed—a system of highways which would soon encircle downtown, destroy “decaying” and “blighted” (and increasingly African American) neighborhoods on the South and West Sides, and provide a quick ride to center city stores for wealthy (white) shoppers who had moved to outlying parts of the city and increasingly distant suburbs (Rose & Biles, 2019). Interstate construction—while improving mobility—made an area significantly less desirable to homeowners and businesses, for both economic (e.g., declines in housing value) and environmental (e.g., noise, emission pollution) reasons. While businessmen and city officials understood this reality when it came to luxury shopping districts and high-end, largely white neighborhoods—such as the Magnificent Mile on the city’s North Side—they were largely indifferent when it came to the sacrifice of numerous Black neighborhoods. Highway development schemes physically divided the Chicago Loop from the majority-minority South and West Sides, and Rubloff sought to keep the racialized definition of “blight,” and therefore African Americans, as far away as possible from the Magnificent Mile and other parts of downtown (Rothstein, 2017, p. 126).

Rubloff’s success in keeping the encroaching freeways away from his Michigan Avenue development translated to the city’s well-connected Catholic clergy as well as movements to reroute the Dan Ryan Expressway to avoid the demolition of South Side Catholic churches and the division of parishes, which were ultimately successful. Nicole Garnett’s (2006) article “The Neglected Political Economy of Eminent Domain” anecdotally regards the rerouting of Chicago’s expressways to avoid Catholic churches along the initially planned routes. Garnett writes that Chicago’s Catholics mostly supported urban renewal projects at first as they would rid areas of the significant

difficulties of overcrowding, but their support waned once it was realized that these projects would destroy and divide certain Catholic neighborhoods and interfere with parish boundaries (p. 112). At least three examples of Chicago freeways being rerouted to avoid Catholic parishes can be found in this period, and “perhaps not surprisingly, all [of the clergymen who were successful in rerouting the highways] served on the Archdiocese’s steering committee for ‘neighborhood conservation’” (Garnett, p. 115). The church’s successes in highway rerouting include “Gallery Bend,” a bend on the Dan Ryan Expressway created to spare Father Gallery’s church from demolition. Clergymen were politically connected to Chicago’s Catholic Mayor Daley, and cardinals and priests used those connections to intervene in the planning of highways in order to avoid losing their parish and, thus, maintain their influence. Illinois Governor William Stratton “claimed that he personally made the decision to spare the church” (Garnett, p. 114). In the late 1950s, Father Gallery had even authored a letter to other priests in Chicago, stating that “[a] little ‘muscle’ on the right person has always gotten more results than headlines in the paper” (Garnett, p. 115).

Highways rerouted to avoid Catholic churches and parish boundaries were constructed through Black neighborhoods, implying racial as well as political connections to the city’s political leadership as the white Catholic clergy had significantly more political influence than Black community leaders and succeeded in swaying highway development plans so as to not interrupt and divide their parishes. Garnett (2006) addresses the infamous case of Mayor Daley’s move to reroute the Dan Ryan Expressway out of his home neighborhood of Bridgeport to become a dividing line between the Irish Catholic neighborhood and Bronzeville, still referred to then as the Black Belt:

In Chicago, it is widely believed that Mayor Richard Daley gerrymandered the path of the Dan Ryan Expressway to protect South Side Catholic

neighborhoods from the city’s expanding “black belt.” Daley biographers Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor recount that the initial plans called for a more direct route. But when the “final plans were announced, the Dan Ryan had been ‘realigned’ several blocks eastward . . . along Wentworth Avenue”—the city’s traditional, and increasingly porous, racial dividing line: “It was a less direct route, and it required the road to make two sharp curves in a short space, but the new route turned the Dan Ryan into a classic racial barrier between the black and white South Sides.” (pp. 120–121)

The development of highways and expressways as physical barriers between Black and white neighborhoods was increasingly common in large US cities during this period. Similar patterns can be seen in the case study of Interstate 565 through Huntsville, Alabama, as described by Joshua Cannon (2012) in “Huntsville, the Highway, and Urban Redevelopment.” In the article, Cannon details the story of the interstate’s development and how, even after numerous studies and decades of planning, the interstate still contributed to the significant displacement of African Americans and low-income residents. When the Interstate Highway System was first created in 1956, Huntsville had a relatively small population—which boomed in the following decades due to NASA’s location of the US Space and Rocket Center—and it saw the city’s population grow to approximately one hundred and forty thousand. At the same time, Huntsville was looking for ways to revitalize its inner city—one of which was to construct a freeway through it, which (as we have seen) was a common aspect of urban renewal projects at the time (Brown, 2005). With the proposed route of the interstate, many locals—including city council members and professors at the nearby and historically Black Alabama A&M University—feared that the interstate would “divide the town along racial and class lines, or at least further reinforce divisions already facilitated by years of suburbanization, urban renewal projects, and housing assistance policies” (Cannon, p. 29). The fear was further confirmed by studies, including an Environmental Impact Statement, which

stated that “one of the primary objectives of the Interstate Spur into Huntsville is to provide service to the Central Business District, through an area where the majority of the houses which would be relocated are blighted and/or substandard” (Cannon, p. 38). As Cannon concludes, Interstate 565 was ultimately successful in “complet[ing] the segregation of Southeast Huntsville” (p. 38).

Much like Huntsville, to its north Black communities in Montgomery, Alabama experienced and resisted similar attempts by white city officials to divide that city via the construction of Interstate 85. Though in this case the racial and racist motives involved in the planning of the road were significantly more overt and intentional. As detailed by Retzlaff in her 2019 article, “Interstate Highways and the Civil Rights Movement,” the highway was planned and constructed through a thriving Black neighborhood near Montgomery’s Oak Park, the home of many of Montgomery’s Black civil rights leaders. Ultimately, the highway’s construction was successful in the destruction of the neighborhood and the displacement of its African American residents. The main distinction between the cases of Huntsville and Montgomery is that in Huntsville segregation was *de facto* with Black residents “conveniently” separated from white neighborhoods after the construction of Interstate 565. In contrast, segregation in Montgomery was *de jure* and deliberate. In other words, in Montgomery Interstate 85 was purposely planned and routed to divide the races while in Huntsville that same division was a byproduct of Interstate 565’s construction.

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In Montgomery, the proposed route of Interstate 85 “roughly followed the lines of the 1937 redlining map for the city and went near the edge of the middle-class African American neighborhood near Oak Park,” which served to benefit the racial hierarchy in the city as the route would go on to destroy the African American neighborhood and force Black residents to move outside of city limits as well as disrupt the civil rights stronghold and isolate the historically Black Alabama State University (Retzlaff, pp. 936, 938).

The numerous examples examined in the preceding pages tell one story over and over: that of the loss of vibrant neighborhoods, economic prosperity, and communities of those without white political power. While freeway revolts became common in the 1960s and were responsible for preventing many damaging projects to America’s urban areas as in the aforementioned case studies, these revolts came too late after the damage had already been done. As urban expressways are being torn down—such as San Francisco’s Embarcadero—or buried underground, such as Boston’s Big Dig project, past racist planning practices and urban renewal mistakes are being rectified or, at least, hidden. However, at the same time, many people must live with the destruction caused at the hands of an attempt to revive downtown areas. While some highways are removed and areas revitalized in the modern-day, highways in the studied urban areas continue to serve as a stark reminder of the inhumane and unjust segregation policies of America’s past.

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ANTONIO BERTHIOLI'S *IDEA THERIACAE ET MITHRIDATII* AND MEDICAL EXPERIMENTATION IN THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

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Introduction

The history of medicine, specifically that of pharmaceuticals, is not a simple, clean, or pretty one. Oftentimes the past is overly simplified as a backwards era, where people filled themselves with poisons labeled as panaceas or when testing and innovation was nonexistent or moving at a glacial pace. David L. Sackett, the lead author of “Evidence Based Medicine: What It Is and What It Isn’t,” stated that real medicine only began in the nineteenth century.¹ However, while there were periods of limited evolution in the field, the development of medicine was never completely stagnant. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the Italian Renaissance. While the period is most often lauded for its advancements in the arts, the sciences (then called “natural philosophy”) also developed rapidly. However, instead of inventing new medicines whole cloth, many physicians and apothecaries turned to the past to find their innovations. At the beginning of the Renaissance, there was a large influx of rediscovered medical texts, which resulted in a boom of new medicines as these sources were evaluated and their recipes implemented.²

This process was not merely a blind following of ancient instruction. The reintroduction of these ancient sources was paired with a growing culture of experimentation in the medical field, which synthesized theories of Antiquity and philosophy of the contemporary humanist movement. One notable medical practitioner of this era who reflected this synthesis was Antonio Berthioli, a Mantuan apothecary in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His most relevant work is *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*, a text which discusses the ancient medicine theriac and analyzes its ingredients. Berthioli’s Renaissance take on a recipe from Antiquity displays a quintessential medical humanist lens, especially in his thoughts on the ingredients involved. Berthioli’s work shows how the medical humanist philosophy of experimentation in the Renaissance resulted in innovation on medicine recipes from Antiquity through its discussion of the ingredients in theriac, both in attempting to clarify true versions of ancient ingredients and searching for effective substitutions. This paper will begin with a brief discussion of Berthioli and *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* before moving on to a history of theriac itself. Then, it will explore medical experimentation and humanism in the Italian Renaissance, before analyzing passages of *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* to show how they connect to all the previous points.

The Author and the Text

Antonio Berthioli’s birth and death dates are unknown, but he was active at least from 1585 to 1608. He was the master

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1 David L. Sackett, William M.C. Rosenberg, J.A. Muir Gray, R. Brian Haynes, and W. Scott Richardson, “Evidence Based Medicine: What It Is and What It Isn’t,” *British Medical Journal* 312 (1996), 71.

2 Michael McVaugh, “The “Experience-Based Medicine” of the Thirteenth Century,” *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 1 (2009): 108.

apothecary to the Duchy of Mantua and was employed by both Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga (reigned 1550-1587) and his son, Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga (reigned 1587-1612).³ *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* was first published in Venice in 1601, then re-published in Mantua in 1604, attesting to the work's popularity. Additionally, this republication contains odes in praise of the Duke, implying his hand in either requesting or funding the new edition.⁴ Gonzaga held a strong interest in pharmaceutical innovation. Famously, he sent another apothecary on an expedition to the Americas in order to discover new specimens with aphrodisiac properties.⁵ Thus, Berthioli was employed by a patron who encouraged innovation and experimentation in the field of medicine. *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* was, furthermore, not Berthioli's first time writing about theriac. In his commentary, *Delle Considerationi... sopra l'olio di scorpioni dell'eccellentissimo Matthioli*, he discussed Pietro Andrea Mattioli's "scorpion oil," a recipe which combined theriac, mithridatium, and a three-hundred live scorpions drowned in oil.⁶ All these points combined show that Berthioli was an experienced author on medicine, writing under the employ of a Duke who bore an interest in the same, which gives more weight to his discussions in *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*. As the text is written in Latin, which was the language of academia at the time, it can be inferred that Berthioli intended for his text to be circulated among other physicians and scholars, rather than amongst the public. His work placed itself into a long continuum of works regarding theriac, which consisted of over a millennium of writings at the time of his publication.

The History of Theriac

Theriac is a venom antidote first developed in Antiquity.⁷ While there is no exact date for its creation, it pre-dated the prominent Greek physician Galen (129-c. 216 C.E) who remarked upon earlier recipes in his own work *On Theriac to Piso*. Modern historians accept that theriac was derived from an earlier antidote, Mithridatium, named for and allegedly created by the Pontic King Mithridates VI.⁸ Galen's writings on theriac and mithridatium favor the recipes of two physicians: Servilius Damocrates and Andromachus the Elder, both active during the first century, C.E.⁹ The former developed an improvement on the lost original recipe by Mithridates, while the latter is credited with the first theriac recipe, made by replacing the skink flesh in Mithridatium with viper flesh.¹⁰ Many historians believe the two recipes influenced each other directly, with Andromachus altering Damocrates' recipe in order to create his theriac. In "The Rise and Fall of Mithridatium and Theriac in Pharmaceutical Texts," Patrizia Catellani and Renzo Console, two scholars of historical medications, found the recipes have a similar amount of ingredients and share 70 percent of them. They conclude it is "statistically nearly impossible" for the two recipes not to be connected.¹¹

Over time, however, theriac came to be perceived as a panacea.¹² Christiane Nockels Fabbri, a specialist on medieval and early modern medical history, states that by the Renaissance, theriac "was said to cure fevers, prevent internal swellings and blockages, alleviate heart problems, treat epilepsy and palsy, induce sleep, improve digestion, strengthen limbs, heal wounds, and protect against the

3 Antonio Berthioli, *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii...* (Mantua: Francesco Osanna, 1604), 48.

4 Berthioli, 49.

5 Valeria Finucci, *The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 122.

6 Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 269.

7 Demetrios Karaberopoulos, Marianna Karamanou, and George Androutsos, "The Art of Medicine: The Theriac in Antiquity," *The Lancet (British edition)* 379, no. 9830 (2012): 1942.

8 Patrizia Catellani and Renzo Console, "The Rise and Fall of Mithridatium and Theriac in Pharmaceutical Texts," *Pharmaceutical Historian* 37, no. 1 (2007): 2.

9 Catellani and Console, 5.

10 Catellani and Console, 2.

11 Catellani and Console, 4.

12 Christiane Nockels Fabbri, "Treating Medieval Plague: The Wonderful Virtues of Theriac," *Early Science and Medicine* 12, no. 3 (2007): 252.

bite of snakes, scorpions, and other venomous insects, also against the bite of rabid dogs and poisons of all sorts. It could even prevent and cure the plague.”¹³ This latter benefit greatly increased the medicine’s popularity in the fourteenth century, as the Black Death ravaged Europe.¹⁴ Theriac became almost mythical in its healing omnipotence, even as the recipe itself spread and changed. When Berthioli wrote *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*, it had long been established as a panacea.

Early Modern Medical Experimentation

While some historians argue Italian Renaissance scientific innovations were due to the resurgence of texts from Antiquity, others note that while thinkers like Berthioli greatly valued ancient sources, they did not follow them without question. As the Renaissance began and progressed, physicians increasingly utilized empirical observation. Michael McVaugh, a medieval and early Renaissance medical historian, states in “The Experience-Based Medicine of the Thirteenth Century” that “the new Greco-Arabic literature had brought to [medieval academia’s] attention a number of new drugs that they might be able to use in their practice, as well as new uses for familiar drugs.”¹⁵ Scholars after McVaugh published his work and built off his ideas, extending them beyond the thirteenth century and through the Renaissance. Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, in “Testing Drugs and Trying Cures: Experiment and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” divide this experimentation into the eponymous “testing” and “trying” categories. “Testing” was undertaken by academics and medical professionals and focused on content and ingredients, as well as connecting new concoctions to the greater medical literature. “Trying,” by contrast, was performed widely by all involved in medicine, and involved noting the effects of medicines directly from the people taking them.¹⁶

These forms of Renaissance medical experimentation found a dramatic implementation in the poison trial. The concept of the poison trial predates the Renaissance by centuries; one of the earliest versions comes from *On Theriac to Piso*, which suggested taking roosters, feeding one theriac, and locking them in a room filled with snakes and similar beasts. If the one who took the theriac lives, then the batch is deemed effective.¹⁷ However, Rankin states in “On Anecdote and Antidotes: Poison Trials in Sixteenth-Century Europe” that the majority of these were pure thought experiments and likely not carried out by their authors.¹⁸ Sixteenth-century Italy saw the practical implementation of these trials. These involved both animal and human subjects, the latter of which involved condemned criminals promised freedom if they survived.¹⁹ While these trials were not heavily regulated affairs of modern medical testing, they show hints of the future by including control groups and attempts to limit variables. In a poison trial ordered by Pope Clement VII in 1524 to test a new oil purported to “drive out all poisons and also cure plague,” two men were given wolfsbane (aconite), and only one was given the oil once the poison began taking effect, similarly to the previously mentioned theriac trial.²⁰ A later series of trials, conducted in 1563 by Claudius Richardus with the same poison, limited food intake three days prior to the trial. While this was to make certain that the poison would take effect quickly, it inadvertently served to regulate the impact of the poison and improve the accuracy of results.²¹ These poison trials show a preoccupation with antidotes, as well as a culture in which these antidotes will be tested at the cost of human lives. Thus, it can be assumed that theriac, as an antidote used around this time, would be subject to the same scrutiny and culture of analysis.

13 Fabbri, 254.

14 Fabbri, 262.

15 McVaugh, 108.

16 Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, “Testing Drugs and Trying Cures: Experiment and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” *Bulletin of the history of medicine* 91, no. 2 (2017): 159.

17 Alisha Rankin, “On Anecdote and Antidotes: Poison Trials in Sixteenth-Century Europe,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 91, no. 2 (2017): 285.
18 Rankin, 282.

19 Rankin, 287.

20 Rankin, 288.

21 Rankin, 293.

A Historiography of Medical Humanism in the Renaissance

The aforementioned medicine trials fit neatly into the field of medical humanism, which itself is an extension of the Renaissance humanist movement. The definition of humanism is highly contested one; however, the humanistic influence in Mantua is addressed by Erni Gustafson in “Vittorino da Feltre: Humanistic Pedagogy in Italy during the Early Renaissance.” Gustafson discusses the teachings of Vittorino da Feltre, a professor at a Mantuan school, and defines his version of humanism as focusing on “the studies of Roman (later even Greek) Antiquity.”²² Furthermore, the school in which Vittorino da Feltre worked was funded by the Marquis Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, the first ruling ancestor of the Gonzaga family whom Berthioli worked for. Vittorino da Feltre also taught the Marquis’ children, which suggests that his influence would be passed down generationally.²³ Therefore, it is reasonable to believe this definition of humanism would be the closest to that practiced by Berthioli.

While the impact of the humanist movement is clearer in the humanities, some historians argue that it had a non-negligible impact on natural philosophy as well.²⁴ Historian Brian Coperhaver discusses the studies of the humanist and natural philosopher Pierre Gassendi: “[he] knew that Epicurus and others had written natural philosophy in Antiquity, so he looked in the ancient tradition for texts to be edited, ideas to be reborn, heroes to be emulated.”²⁵ In *Medical Humanism and Natural Philosophy: Renaissance Debates on Matter, Life and the Soul*, Hiro Hirai argues that physicians of the Renaissance contributed to the field of humanism, both through the reintroduction and examination of ancient sources,

and through the utilization of that examination to build a culture of debate and comparison around different medical philosophies.²⁶ These medical humanists brought their work into the field of academia and active medical practice, implementing them into the evolving world of physicians and apothecaries.

The manifestation of this medical humanism most relevant to Berthioli’s work is a strong push to more accurately identify ingredients, both in Antiquity and in contemporary medicines. Medical historian Alain Touwaide discusses this at length in his article “Foreign vs. Local New Horizons, and Ancient Dilemmas and Strategies?” He writes that in 1492, the humanist and physician Niccolò Ferrara Leonicensi (1428-1524) published *De plinii et aliorum in medicina erroribus*, which declared the long chain of interpretation and translations of ancient recipes had led to ingredients being misinterpreted to a potentially lethal degree. He argued that pharmacists should work directly from the old sources, and only utilize the ancient terminology for ingredients, to avoid confusion.²⁷ In “Medicating With or Without ‘Scruples’: The ‘Professionalization’ of the Apothecary in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” Michelle Laughran states there was also a growing concern with the veracity of ingredients, even if their ancient equivalent was certain. As the medical field shifted from domestic practitioners into the hands of academic physicians, there was a growing distrust and disapproval of the non-academic pharmacist, who might be viewed as incompetent at best and deliberately defrauding their customers at worst.²⁸ However, this does not mean changing medicines was taboo. In “Pharmacy, Testing, and the Language of Truth in Renaissance Italy,” Pugliano suggests that medicines of the Renaissance were changed

22 Erni Gustafson, “Vittorino da Feltre: Humanistic Pedagogy in Italy during the Early Renaissance,” *Nordic Studies in Education* 33 (2012): 156.

23 Gustafson, 159.

24 Hiro Hirai, *Medical Humanism and Natural Philosophy: Renaissance Debates on Matter, Life and the Soul* (Leiden: BRILL, 2011): 2.

25 Brian P. Coperhaver, “Did Science Have a Renaissance?” *Isis* 83, no. 3 (1992): 387.

26 Hirai, 11.

27 Alain Touwaide, “Foreign vs. Local New Horizons, and Ancient Dilemmas and Strategies?” *Early Science and Medicine* 14, no. 6 (2009): 767.

28 Michelle A. Laughran, “Medicating With or Without ‘Scruples’: The ‘Professionalization’ of the Apothecary in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” *Pharmacy in History* 45, no. 3 (2003): 103.

slowly over time, or “tweaked,” from the ancient varieties to create new varieties.²⁹ She remarks their alterations “reflected a different kind of deep chronology that apothecaries imagined for their art: one in dialogue with the past rather than the future; one that saw advancement as restoration, rather than novelty production.”³⁰ Berthioli, as an Italian Renaissance apothecary, would have taken part in this continuity. It is likely he was influenced by it and the medical humanist focus on ingredients when he wrote *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*.

Berthioli’s *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*

The chapters of *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii*, which this paper will be focusing on, are chapters three, seventeen, and twenty-three. Additionally, it will touch upon the “attestations” on the veracity of balsamum, which are a series of letters transcribed at the end of the work. The first chapter discussed is Berthioli’s analysis of the views on theriac’s recipe in Antiquity, where he drew from ancient sources to show the recipe can evolve and be changed without impacting the final effect of the medicine. After this, the paper will discuss the attestations on balsam, which supports the importance he placed in personal experimentation by discussing questions he asked a fellow medical thinker about a sample he acquired. The other two chapters focused on two specific ingredients of theriac, balsam and rhubarb. In these chapters, Berthioli analyzed the specific ingredients and provided viable substitutions for them, which further displays his willingness to experiment with ingredients and his potential experience in performing these experiments. There will also be a discussion of the apparent contradiction in these two goals (finding the true, original version of something and being willing to substitute), and an argument as to why they fit into the greater scheme of medical humanism.

29 Valentina Pugliano, “Pharmacy, Testing, and the Language of Truth in Renaissance Italy,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 91, no. 2 (2017): 238.
30 Pugliano, “Pharmacy, Testing, and the Language of Truth in Renaissance Italy,” 273.

“Whether there is One Theriac”

The third chapter of *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* is entitled “Num Theriaca una sit, unica constans forma” (Whether there is one Theriac, in a single constant form). Berthioli quickly establishes his pedigree as a medical humanist thinker and begins the discussion by summarizing opinions of multiple ancient thinkers on the subject. Throughout the chapter, he references numerous historical figures, including Galen, Epicurus, Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and Avicenna (not an ancient figure, but a noted medieval Islamic scholar with access to ancient sources then unavailable to Christian Europe). Thus, he represented a continuation of ancient medical tradition. Berthioli explained how both Galen and Avicenna agreed that, although there were multiple theriac recipes with different types and amounts of ingredients, these different variants were capable of producing the same effects.³¹ This serves as a justification for any alteration to and innovation in the recipes. Berthioli placed this chapter third in the entire book, directly before he began to describe the ingredients of theriac. By doing this, he set up a precedent for flexibility in the exact contents of the medicine, opening the minds of readers to the possibility of innovations in the formulae.

The Attestation Letters

One of the numerous theriac ingredients Berthioli discussed, which prominently displays his interest in medical experimentation, is *balsamum*. The balsam tree, now identified as the plant *Commiphora gileadensis*, is a plant which has been used throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa for millenia.³² Each part of the tree bears a different name in Latin: *xylobalsamum* for the wood, *carpobalsamum* for the fruit, and *opobalsamum* for the coveted resin that gave the plant its name.³³ The paragraph-long full title of *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* ends with the statement that it is “with added attestation

31 Berthioli, 5.

32 Elly R. Truitt, “The Virtues of Balm in Late Medieval Literature,” *Early science and medicine*. 14, no. 6 (2009): 714.

33 Truitt, 719.

concerning the resin of the true balm.”³⁴ The attestations come in the form of letters between Berthioli and multiple contemporary medical figures, transcribed in Italian after the core of the text. One of the people he corresponded with was Prospero Alpini (1553–1617).³⁵ Alpini, the author of *De Balsamo Dialogus*, claimed to have retrieved an authentic sample of the balsam tree from Cairo.³⁶ Berthioli sent him an entire list of questions about the sample of balm he (Berthioli) obtained.³⁷ This list of questions, as well as the importance which Berthioli places on the letters and the veracity of the balsam, show a dedication to utilizing the most accurate versions of ancient sources, very similar to what Ferrara Leoniceno advocates. However, most relevant is the fourth question: if real balsam does not stain wool cloth and curdles any milk it is added to.³⁸ By asking this, Berthioli requested a confirmable test that he can use in his own experiments to verify his balsam. As the final line of the title emphasizes the validity of the attestations, it can be assumed he performed the recommended experiments and proved the veracity of his sample.

Balsam

While these attestations come after the main chapters and dedications of the text, Berthioli also dedicated one of the longer ingredient chapters to the balsam tree. Although the title (“*De Opobalsamo*”) refers to only the resin, more of the text is dedicated to carpobalsamum. Berthioli referenced a debate between the botanist and once-physician to the Duke of Mantua Bartolomeo Maranta (1500–1571) and the Venetian physician Oddus de Oddis (1478–1558), as to whether cubeb (the fruit of *piper cubeba*) could be substituted for carpobalsamum.³⁹ Maranta was

in favor of the substitution, while Oddus was opposed. However, Berthioli favored Maranta’s argument, stating, “Therefore [cubeb is] a suitable substitute of the fruit of balsam in state and in potential, since they have each other evident sympathies from smell and taste...”⁴⁰ Here, it is clear that Berthioli has performed his own analysis of cubeb and carpobalsamum, as he utilizes sensory information from both ingredients to make an informed decision about cubeb’s worthiness as a substitute.

Berthioli’s willingness to accept a substitute, when previously he had gone to great lengths to verify his sample of opobalsamum, seems contradictory. However, both opinions derive from the same experimental spirit. With opobalsamum, Berthioli desired the specific effect of the resin, and thus was searching for a way to test the purity and veracity of the product. Instead of accepting labeling and the translations of ancient sources, he sought out someone who had himself interacted with “true balsam” for advice and resources. Conversely, with the cubeb, the observation and experimentation is done in the opposite order. Berthioli’s statement that the cubeb is similar “*posse esse*” to carpobalsamum conveys a sentiment of whole-hearted replacement, rather than merely superficial substitutions. The idea that cubeb is “in essence” usable implies there was a testing of this replacement prior to the writing of the text. Therefore, his decision on cubeb is already informed, unlike with balsam, where he sought out information which he did not currently have himself.

Rhubarb

The twenty-third chapter similarly discusses another ingredient, “Rhabarbarum” (rhubarb), and its potential substitutions. Berthioli identified “Rhapontico” (most likely *rheum rhaponticum*, also known as false rhubarb) as the “true” version of the rhubarb discussed in ancient texts.⁴¹ This is a surprisingly controversial

34 “...Adiunctis de vero opobalsamo attestationibus”: Berthioli, i.

35 Berthioli, 54.

36 Sonja Brentes, “The Interests of the Republic of Letters in the Middle East, 1550–1700,” *Science in Context* 12, no. 3 (1999): 445.

37 Berthioli, 53.

38 Valentina Pugliano, “La Route des Succédanés: Les Remèdes Exotiques, l’Innovation Médicale des Substituts au XVI Siècle,” *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* (2019), 12.

39 Berthioli, 38.

40 “...Ideo idoneum Carpobalsami esse posse succedaneum, quoniam ex odore, ac sapote evidentem habent invicem simpathya”: Berthioli, 38.

41 Berthioli, 44.

topic in Renaissance Italy. In “Problems with Rhubarb: Accommodating Experience in Aristotelian Theories of Science,” Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter discusses the uncertainty surrounding the true nature of the plant in the Renaissance. He notes how even Pietro Andrea Matthioli, whose *I Discorsi* was considered one of the most thorough explorations of ancient botany, remained uncertain as to the true rhubarb.⁴² However, Berthioli supported his stance on the true rhubarb later by analyzing texts of the past and comparing the ancient meanings of words to the modern days. When discussing rhabarbarum, he points out the original definition of “barbarian” in Antiquity was any region which did not speak Greek.⁴³ This means that, although modern Italians would not consider the Pontic region from which “rhaponticum” comes barbaric today, the ancient Greeks would have, thus making it a likely candidate for “the true rhubarb.” By reviving ancient points of view, Berthioli was better able to argue for the accuracy of his ingredient choices in the present.

Like carpobalsamum, Berthioli also suggested a potential substitution for rhubarb in the form of “agaricum” (assumed to be a mushroom in the genus *Agaricus*). He emphasized an intense affinity between the two plants, asserting confidently that “Rhaponticum and Agaric are siblings.”⁴⁴ He listed the similarities between the two: they are effective “especially with the same diseases which are to be cured, [with] the same straightforward quantity.”⁴⁵ Additionally, he extolled the powers of both in “loosening the stomach.” Here, Berthioli moved far beyond comparing the physical similarities of two ingredients, and instead accepted a replacement that is almost wholly physically dissimilar. Berthioli focused on the actual bodily effect both ingredients have on their subject. He claimed that “loosening of the stomach” (assumed to be laxative properties) provided by rhubarb and agaricum

is of a similar strength in similar amounts, a statement which implies that he has either witnessed an actual test of both’s properties, or has performed one himself.

Conclusion

Antonio Berthioli’s discussion of the ingredients in theriac, both as a group of different things which may result in the same effect, and individually in the forms of balsam and rhubarb, shows a strong medical humanist sentiment and reflects the landscape of experimentation in Italian Renaissance medicine. He began his work with an assertion that there are multiple ways to achieve the final version of theriac, which primes the reader to be accepting of innovations on the theriac recipe. Furthermore, he used the words of ancient sources to support his arguments on multiple occasions, prominently displaying his humanist education. When he obtained a sample of an ingredient described in Antiquity, rather than simply taking it at face value, he sought the opinions of someone with first-hand experience with it, as well as the instructions to perform his own experiments. When discussing substitutions for carpobalsamum and rhubarb, he relied on observation and experimentation to prove that alternative ingredients could provide the same effects as the originals.

There is very limited scholarship on Berthioli and his works. With the paltry amount of information known about him, it is difficult to verify exactly where he stood in the Italian Renaissance medical canon, as well as how reflective he was of his contemporaries. However, taken in comparison with the historiography of the medical world of Renaissance Italy, as well as that of medical humanism, he seems to embody both concepts on at least a partial level. His work provides an insight into the apothecaries and physicians of Late-Renaissance, upper-class Mantua, which may be (hesitantly, and with much evaluation) applied to other Italian states of his time. While *Idea Theriacae et Mithridatii* may not be universally relevant to the medical world of the time, it serves as a comprehensive reflection of a profession that constantly sought to improve by looking backwards and forward.

42 Stefan Heßbrüggen-Walter, “Problems with Rhubarb: Accommodating Experience in Aristotelian Theories of Science,” *Early Science and Medicine* 19, no. 4 (2014): 318.

43 “...barbara omnis regio erat, quae Graeca non erat”: Berthioli, 45.

44 “Rhaponticum[que] Agarico cognatum sit”: Berthioli, 45.

45 “...eisdem morbis curandis eadem prorsus quantitate...”: Berthioli, 45.

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NONBINARY ARTISTS COMBATING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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Trigger Warning: mentions sexual assault

Every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted.¹ The stereotypical rape narrative assumes that a woman (usually white) is walking alone outside at night in an unsafe area and is then raped by an armed stranger; she rushes to the police immediately after the assault, and they catch the bad guy.² But, in fact, people are assaulted regardless of gender; most survivors know their aggressors, and local authorities often do little to help. Moreover, assault likely occurs even more frequently than every 68 seconds as many queer people are not included in these surveys or do not feel safe reporting. This paper discusses political and activist artworks that disrupt the standard rape narrative and create alternative communities for survivors who are not fully represented in media or in recorded statistics. I examine photography, book art, and endurance performance pieces by nonbinary artists Zanele Muholi (b. 1972), Mirabelle Jones (b. 1984), and Emma Sulkowicz (b. 1992).

Each of these artists I discuss disrupt normative viewpoints regarding rape in different ways. Muholi builds a platform for “other” voices, bringing attention to survivors within their own queer community. Jones

disrupts the standard rape narrative by including many, often anonymous, peoples’ stories of sexual violence in their artwork. Sulkowicz’s artwork breaks the silence that sexual violence often perpetuates. As nonbinary individuals, these artists are accustomed to cycles of disruption and creation. Queerness disrupts heteronormative society, but more importantly, queerness creates an alternative worldview that is inclusive and community oriented. These nonbinary artists are not only disrupting standard sexual violence narratives but also creating spaces where sexual violence can be openly discussed. Previous scholarship—or the lack thereof—has not acknowledged the queer existence of these artists nor been conducive to their community building.

Although nonbinary people have always existed, they are given limited consideration in art historical scholarship. In her article, Surya Monro states, “The term ‘genderqueer’ emerged in the 1990s,”³ but there is evidence of genders outside of the binary dating back to 2000 BCE. Individuals identifying as “Two-Spirited” also have a long history in Indigenous cultures.⁴ However, art historical scholarship has failed to fully consider the histories of these individuals. When discussing artworks about sexual violence, art historians tend to focus exclusively on cisgendered women artists. Three of the most notable recent books on art addressing sexual assault—*Against Our*

* This paper was first written for Joanna Gardner-Huggett’s HAA 366 (Topics on Women and Art), Winter Quarter 2021 and revised for Mark Pohlard’s HAA 390 (Senior Capstone), Winter Quarter 2022.

1 “Scope of the Problem: Statistics,” RAINN, accessed July 29, 2022, <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/scope-problem>.
2 Lynn Hecht Schafraan, “Barriers to Credibility: Understanding and Countering Rape Myths,” (Reading 2.2, New York: National Judicial Education Program Legal Momentum, 2005), 1-2, https://www.nationalguard.mil/Portals/31/Documents/J1/SAPR/SARCVATraining/Barriers_to_Credibility.pdf.

3 Surya Monro, “Non-binary and genderqueer: An overview of the field,” *The International Journal of Transgenderism* 20, no. 2-3 (January 2019): 126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15532739.2018.1538841>.

4 CV Viverito, *Nonbinary Gender Identities: A Diverse Global History* (Oakland: Out & Equal Workplace Advocates, 2021), 3, <https://outandequal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Nonbinary-History.pdf>.

Will: Sexual Trauma in American Art Since 1970 by Vivian Green Fryd, *Unspeakable Acts: Women Art and Sexual Violence in the 1970s* by Nancy Princenthal, and *The Un-Heroic Act: Representations of Rape in Contemporary Women's Art in the U.S.* by Monika Fabijanska—primarily include the perspectives of ciswomen, most of whom are straight. Although these works are incredibly important, there are limited discussions of queer individuals' artworks happening at the same level. This exclusion maintains the common assumption that only women are sexually assaulted. According to the National Center for Transgender Equality's *Report of the 2015 Transgender Survey*, 55 percent of nonbinary people have been sexually assaulted in their lifetime.⁵ Gender nonconforming narratives are often ignored or erased, and this is perpetuated by authors misgendering artists. By examining these nonbinary artists, I am proposing a need for an art history that can more effectively include them.

Muholi (they/them) is a South African visual activist artist widely known for their photography; they also create films, clips, installations, beadwork, and other media.⁶ They began photography as a self-healing process for personal troubles—which they don't share the nature of—and discovered “photography was a means of articulation.”⁷ They learned that they could use photography as an outlet to share Black LGBTQ+ experiences in South Africa. Muholi's work creates community engagement and documents those who are excluded from heteronormative society. In 2006, Muholi founded the online initiative *Inkanyiso* and registered the organization with Department

of Social Services in 2009.⁸ *Inkanyiso* is a collective organization that produces visual histories and offers artistic trainings by and for LGBTQ+ people and artists. Through the activities surrounding this project, “Muholi has used their visual practice to develop a community of Black South African queers.”⁹ Muholi stresses the term “participant” in their artwork, insisting on a collaborative process. As stand-alone photography viewers may not understand the collaborative nature of the images, Muholi provides information on their process through wall labels, exhibition essays, or by having the narrator present. Many writers minimize the collective nature of Muholi's artistic practice. However, Muholi is committed to including their participants in storytelling, involving them in every aspect of the photographic process.

In 2002, Muholi began documenting survivors of hate crimes and recording their stories in the series *Only Half the Picture*.¹⁰ Muholi describes,

Of the 47 women I have interviewed so far, 20 were raped explicitly because of their sexual and gender non-conformity, 4 experienced attempted rape, 17 were physically assaulted . . . 8 were verbally abused, and 2 were abducted. Twenty-nine women knew their attackers and only 16 survivors reported these hate crimes to the police. Many of these women experienced these hate crimes more than once.¹¹

As part of their process Muholi has taken survivors stories and documented how many people in their community

5 Sandy E. James et al., *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey* (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016), 205, <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>.

6 Antje Schuhmann, “Shooting Violence and Trauma: Traversing Visual and Social Topographies in Zanele Muholi's Work,” in *Gaze Regimes: Film and Feminisms in Africa*, eds. Antje Schuhmann and Jyoti Mistry (Johannesburg, SA: Wits University Press, 2015), 55, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.18772/22015068561.11>.

7 Sean O'Hagan, “Zanele Muholi's Queer South Africa: 'I Do Not Dare Shoot at Night. It Is Not Safe,’” *The Guardian*, November 2, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/nov/02/zanele-muholi-interview-queer-photographer-lgbtq-south-africa-tate>.

8 Zanele Muholi, “About,” *Inkanyiso*, accessed August 5, 2022, <https://inkanyiso.org/about/>; Tessa Lewin, “Queer Visual Activism in South Africa,” in *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*, eds. Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen, and Umut Korkut (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 42, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvswx8bm.7>.

9 Lewin, “Queer Visual Activism in South Africa,” 42.

10 Part of the *Only Half the Picture* series. Zanele Muholi, *Aftermath*, 2004, silver gelatin print, 600 x 395 mm, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, SA, <http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/aftermath.htm>.

11 Zanele Muholi, “Thinking through Lesbian Rape,” *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 61 (2004): 118, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4066614>.

have been assaulted. The numbers Muholi cites are only a small proportion of sexual assaults reported in South Africa. A report released by ActionAid notes, “There are an estimated 500,000 rapes, hundreds of murders and countless beatings carried out every year. Shockingly, it is estimated that almost half of all South African women will be raped during their lifetime.”¹² Many members of Muholi’s community are survivors of “corrective rape,” the homophobic-targeted rape of lesbian women, in which rapists believe they are turning the person heterosexual or enforcing conformity to gender stereotypes.¹³ Muholi’s series is intimate, creating space for healing. The series shares close-up views of survivors’ bodies, including their scars, as well as comforting moments and moments of tenderness. There is no solution or fix to undo the wrongs that a survivor of assault has experienced, but the creation of safe spaces and documentation of survivors’ bodies can aid in the reclamation of oneself.

Muholi began an ongoing series, *Faces and Phases*, in 2006 that has more than two hundred portraits of lesbians, gender nonconforming people, and trans men. Unlike *Only Half the Picture*, participants of *Faces and Phases* look directly into the camera. As Schuhmann states, “[Muholi’s] artistic exploration of body politics produces a voice that articulates a community’s condition into the collective silence.”¹⁴ Muholi started this series to create a visual history of those often marginalized in South Africa. In Muholi’s words: “We deserve recognition, respect, validation, and to have publications that mark and trace our existence.”¹⁵ As noted above, many of these participants are survivors of “corrective rape” and share their personal stories in Muholi’s exhibition. One of the participants, Lungile Cleo Dladla who uses she/

her pronouns, shared her testimony *I am Not a Victim but a Victor* in the *Faces and Phases* exhibition essay catalogue.¹⁶ Dladla recounts her and a friend’s “corrective rape” by a stranger. Following their assaults, the local police failed to conduct a proper investigation. O’Hagan writes: “A year later, when the suspect was finally arrested, he was charged with 17 cases of rape. Soon afterwards, Dladla was diagnosed HIV-positive and hospitalized for two months with a near-fatal bout of pneumonia.”¹⁷ Dladla concludes, “my inner self is strong, I am going to beat this. HIV is not my life, I’m not going to let it get to me. I am not a victim but a victor.”¹⁸ Muholi photographs Dladla standing strong and looking straight into the camera, reclaiming her story. Muholi works to create a positive visual narrative of their community, building awareness and initiating conversations through images.

Jones (they/them) is a transdisciplinary artist whose artistic approach takes multiple dimensions, sometimes as collaborative and at other times as solo performances. Jones established Art Against Assault in 2011 after being sexually assaulted in graduate school. According to the website’s “About” page, “Art Against Assault is a grassroots organization established to grant survivors a platform for creating artwork which speaks out against sexual assault and domestic violence and to raise awareness and funds for survivor resources.”¹⁹ This collaborative organization creates a safe online space and network, allowing survivors of sexual violence a space to share their voices. The limited past scholarship on Jones speaks to the erasure that many nonbinary people experience. Jones’s website contains a list of news articles discussing them and their work; many of these articles point to dead links, and the articles available for

12 Andrew Martin et al., *Hate crimes: The rise of ‘corrective rape’ in South Africa* (London: ActionAid, 2009), 5.

13 Martin et al., *Hate crimes*, 3.

14 Schuhmann, “Shooting Violence and Trauma,” 55.

15 Zanele Muholi and Deborah Willis, “Zanele Muholi Faces & Phases: Conversation with Deborah Willis,” *Aperture* no. 218 (Spring 2015): 59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24475138>.

16 Part of *Faces and Phases* series. Zanele Muholi, *Lungile Cleo Dladla, KwaThema Community Hall, Springs, Johannesburg, 2011*, silver gelatin print, 76.5 x 50.5 cm, Stevenson Gallery, Johannesburg, SA, <http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/muholi/documenta/faces142.html>.

17 O’Hagan, “Zanele Muholi’s Queer South Africa.”

18 O’Hagan, “Zanele Muholi’s Queer South Africa.”

19 “About” Art Against Assault, accessed July 29, 2022, www.artagainstassault.com.

examination misgender them.²⁰ Because Jones receives less publicity, they encounter more difficulties reaching a wider audience. However, by displaying art on the smaller, more local scale—making books for library collections and performing in local gallery windows—Jones can reach everyday passersby to share various survivors' accounts.

In 2014, Jones created *Jarring III: Artists' Books to Break the Silence*, a set of three handmade books that share the stories of twenty-two sexual assault and rape survivors. The goal of the project is to:

- 1) Promote discourse and awareness about sexual assault in our communities.
- 2) Speak out about sexual assault by sharing the experiences of sexual assault survivors.
- 3) Create a publicly accessible archive of survivor experiences for research and therapeutic use.
- 4) Raise funds for Rape Crisis Centers (RCCs) and survivor resources through book sales and donations.²¹

They dedicated considerable time to physically creating each book themselves, promoting the books, obtaining funding, and both communicating with and involving rape crisis centers. Jones started the project in 2011 by gathering anonymous sexual assault stories submitted through Art Against Assault. They began this project by cutting out the accounts and sorting them into three jars representative of how the incident began, short words or phrases concerning the assault, and reflections on the assault. Because each jar was a different portion of the narrative, Jones decided to make the books into different forms with each book resembling an aspect of a jar.²² An image of a jar is printed on each page of the first book, the second book resembles broken glass in both subject

and form, and the third book incorporates glass in its materials. The books progress from a jar to shattered glass before it is finally healed into a new form, never returning to its original whole form. This evolution is suggestive of a survivor's relationships with sex and themselves. When someone is assaulted, they can never return to the person they were before the assault, but overtime they heal and develop into a new version of themselves.

FIGURE 1

Mirabelle Jones, *Jarring Book I: Artists' Books to Break the Silence*, 2014, letterpress-printed, laser cut accordion artists' book, approximately 6" x 9." Courtesy of Mirabelle Jones.



Jones created the first book during their residency at the Women's Studio Workshop in New York. The first book is a structural foundation of the assault, both in its narrative and physical appearance (figure 1). In this book, each survivor tells the origin of their sexual assault experience in their own words. Jones utilized different fonts to represent different voices. The book has an accordion fold and was laser cut to create the illusion of paper slips filling the jar. The second book appears more violent

²⁰ Mirabelle Jones, Jones's website homepage, accessed August 5, 2022, <https://www.mirabellejones.com/>.

²¹ Mirabelle Jones, "JARRING III: Artists' Books to Break the Silence," accessed August 5, 2022, <https://www.mirabellejones.com/jarring-a-book-arts-campaign-for-social-change/>.

²² Mirabelle Jones, interview by Susan Mills, *Bookbinding Now*, February 4, 2014, audio, 22:59, <http://www.bookbindingnow.com/search/label/Mirabelle%20Jones>.

FIGURE 2

Mirabelle Jones, *Jarring Book II: Artists' Books to Break the Silence*, 2014, flag book structure with translucent photo papers embodying transparent text and imagery of a broken jar, and a hard cover of Asahi book cloth covered boards, approximately 6" x 9." Courtesy of Mirabelle Jones.

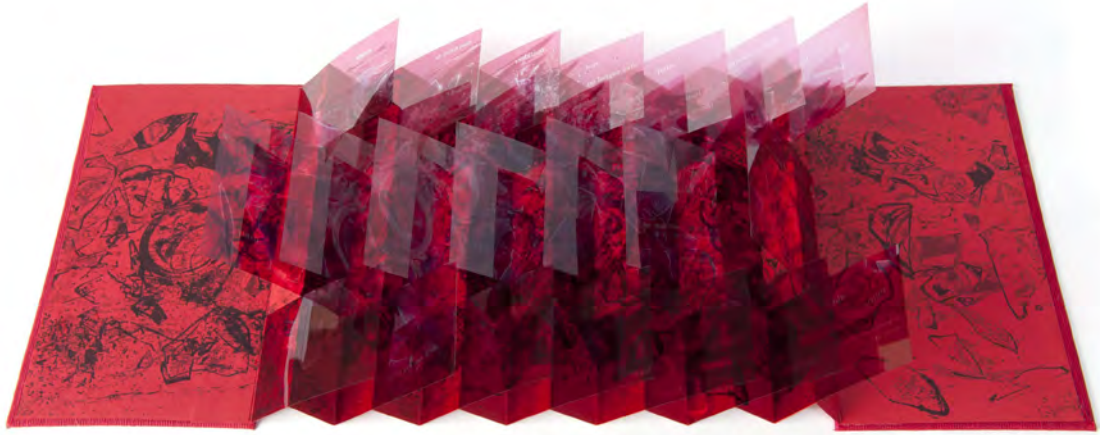
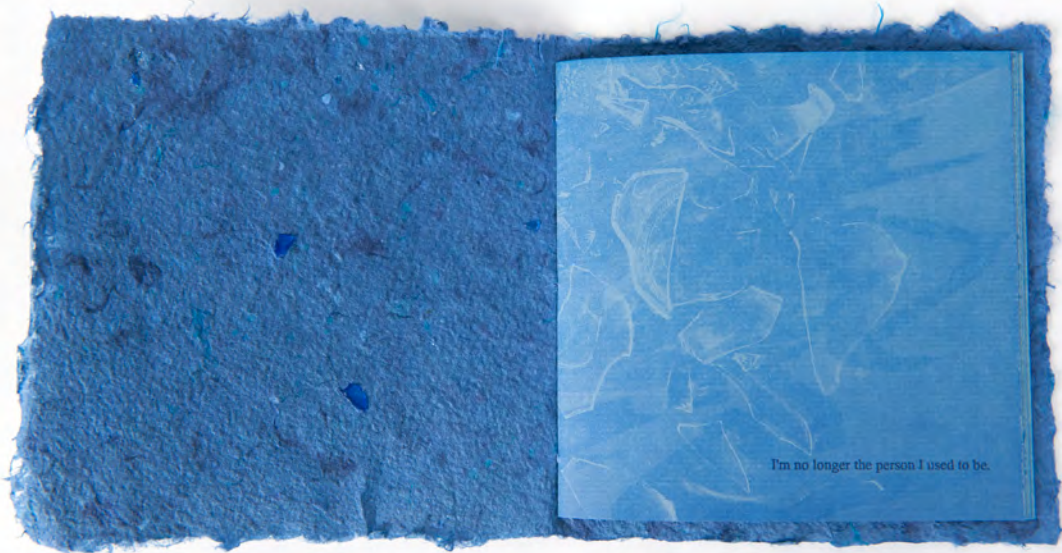


FIGURE 3

Mirabelle Jones, *Jarring Book III: Artists' Books to Break the Silence*, 2014, codex hand-bound book with a handmade paper cover containing raw silk and blue glass inclusions, approximately 6" x 9." Courtesy of Mirabelle Jones.



as it contains words or phrases describing the assault (figure 2). The flag book structure creates a natural tension and the small slips of transparent papers emulate imagery

of a broken jar. The third book is the lightest and is made from handmade paper containing raw silk and blue glass (figure 3). It expresses each survivor's thoughts and

FIGURE 4

Mirabelle Jones, *109 Seconds: Invisible Weight*, 2016, 6-hour durational performance, ATA Gallery, San Francisco, photograph by Julia O. Test. Courtesy of Mirabelle Jones.



reflections at the time they submitted their narratives. The last page of every book is left blank for readers to leave their own stories or responses. Jones wanted to make the set of books an archival source accessible to the public. They created fifty books, and one book was donated to a rape crisis center for each one sold. Making archival resources engaged with social organizations allowed Jones to solidify these narratives in historic records and share them with people who really need it.

In 2016, Jones executed an endurance performance, *109 Seconds: Invisible Weight*, in which every 109 seconds a stone would be hung on them (figure 4). The title references the outdated statistic that every 109 seconds someone in the United States will be assaulted. During the performance, the accounts of 165 sexual assault survivors

played over the speakers. People who were assaulted as children, queer individuals, and people of color shared stories of their assaults and ended with words of strength for other survivors. No two stories shared were the same and most did not fit the narrative accepted by society. The stories are complicated and rarely end with justice for the survivor.²³ Jones later explained that the emotional pain of the survivors' stories began to outweigh the physical toll of the rocks hanging from their body:

With each story I was reminded of what we all share—the weight of having to carry those stories inside of us at all times and the stress and vulnerability that comes

²³ Mirabelle Jones, “109 Seconds: Invisible Weight,” accessed August 5, 2022, <https://www.mirabellejones.com/109-seconds/>.

when we attempt to air them. I was reminded of the work that comes with having to justify your trauma as real. The uncertainty as to what good it'll even do in a society so quick to interrogate survivors instead of confronting abusers. Those stories, all 165 of them, wore heavy on me. And I still had an hour to go.²⁴

The performance was carried out in the window of the ATA Gallery in San Francisco for over six hours until Jones collapsed from the weight of the stones. Jones displayed the emotional toll of assault and how it crushes survivors. Carrying the weight of sexual assault stories showed that no one person can carry that weight alone. Jones included a handmade notebook so viewers could leave any thoughts on the performance, just as they left space for viewers to contribute and comment in their *Jarring* series. At the end of the performance, they read through the journal. One page read:

My girlfriend was assaulted last month and I've been trying to support her. She blames herself for what happened even though I tell her over and over again it's not her fault. She says I should leave her because of what happened but I won't do that. It's devastating she has to feel this way. What you're doing is needed so people like her know they aren't alone and they aren't to blame. Thank you.²⁵

By sharing a variety of accounts Jones demonstrates that all survivors' narratives are valid and need to be seen as well as heard.

Sulkowicz (she/they) is also a performance artist and anti-rape activist. They created the highly publicized endurance piece *Mattress Performance (Carry That Weight)* as their senior thesis at Columbia University, after the institution's mishandling of their sexual assault claim (figure 5). Out of all the artists, Sulkowicz's

²⁴ Jones, "109 Seconds."

²⁵ Jones, "109 Seconds."

FIGURE 5

Emma Sulkowicz, *Emma Sulkowicz and the rules of engagement of Mattress Performance: Carry That Weight* (2014–2015). Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mattress_Performance_rules_of_engagement.jpg



FIGURE 6

Adam Sherman, *Emma Sulkowicz (centre) with Mattress Performance at her graduation, Columbia University, May 19, 2015*. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Emma_Sulkowicz#/media/File:Emma_Sulkowicz,_Mattress_Performance,_19_May_2015.JPG



performance is the most personal, conceptualized through her relationship with two other students who were raped by the same alleged perpetrator. Sulkowicz prepared to carry a dorm mattress around Columbia's New York City campus every day until their rapist was expelled from school. But he was never expelled, and Sulkowicz carried the mattress through graduation (figure 6). As Elliot James

notes, “Witnessing Sulkowicz muster the strength to carry the mattress day after day made it much more difficult not to believe her.”²⁶ Sulkowicz chose to use a dorm twin mattress, like the one they were raped on, because it was easy enough to carry throughout the day but heavy enough to continuously struggle with—representing the everyday burden survivors of sexual assault are forced to carry. Fryd adds to the conversation through the following statement: “This radical and tangible visibility is helping to shatter the invisibility and stigmatization so often faced by survivors of sexual violence.”²⁷ By publicizing her sexual assault, Sulkowicz simultaneously broke the silence on a universal issue.

Due to the public nature of performance art, Sulkowicz’s project organically grew into a collective process. Students noticed Sulkowicz struggling with the mattress daily and would help them carry it to their next destination. *Carry That Weight* inspired another Columbia student to create *Carrying the Weight Together*, a collective community that works to bear the weight of Sulkowicz’s burden as well as providing other survivors of sexual assault with a symbol of support. On September 16, 2014, *Carrying the Weight Together* also organized an anti-rape rally that hundreds of Columbia students participated in. Sulkowicz never expected her performance to become a campus-wide movement or to receive national attention. At the 2014 Democratic National Committee’s Leadership Conference, Hillary Clinton commented “that image should haunt all of us.”²⁸

Because of the publicity, Sulkowicz became known as the “Mattress Girl.” Although Sulkowicz’s pronouns are she/they, most scholars have ignored the “they.” For example,

26 Elliot James, “Screwing the Assembly Line: Queerness, Art-Making and Mandela’s Mercedes-Benz,” *Kronos* no. 42 (November 2016): 58, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44176042>.

27 Vivien Green Fryd, “Mapping and Chronicling the Anti-rape and Anti-incest Cycle into the Twenty-First Century,” in *Against Our Will: Sexual Trauma in American Art Since 1970* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 282.

28 Fryd, “Mapping and Chronicling,” 283.

Fryd and Princenthal mention Sulkowicz toward the end of their books, but the authors misgender them. Both books were both published in 2019, long after Sulkowicz had come out. One of the only writers to use “they” was a student journalist from American University.²⁹ In a 2018 interview, Sulkowicz described how being sexual assaulted caused them to realize they were gender nonconforming.³⁰ Seeing themselves depicted in newspapers, Sulkowicz witnessed themselves being turned into an object. This caused them to reflect on the previous times men had seen them as nothing more than an object for sexual gratification. In the interview, Sulkowicz states, “Sometimes that feeling of being objectified happens through acts of violence. ‘They’ is about reclaiming that feeling and turning it into something powerful and politically important.”³¹ To Sulkowicz, discovering their nonbinary identity was a form of healing. In addition to erasing Sulkowicz’s gender, the queerness of the other survivors of the same perpetrator has been ignored. Sulkowicz elaborates,

Another victim of my attacker identifies as transfeminine. I remember when they were going through their sexual assault hearings that one of my rapist’s defenses was, “I’m not gay, I would never sexually assault this man.” It completely obliterated the victim’s gender identity and denied any queerness on the attacker’s part.³²

In this case the perpetrator used heteronormative assumptions to absolve himself from the rape claims. Sulkowicz also remarks that “society has a lot of difficult believing that queer people can be victims, but it also

29 Abbie Veitch, “Emma Sulkowicz Discusses Art and Activism on College Campuses,” *The Eagle*, April 27, 2018, <https://www.theeagleonline.com/article/2018/04/emma-sulkowicz-discusses-art-and-activism-on-college-campuses>.

30 Zachary Small, “Queer Identity in the MeToo Movement: A Conversation with Emma Sulkowicz,” *Hyperallergic*, August 31, 2018, <https://hyperallergic.com/458257/conversation-with-emma-sulkowicz/>.

31 Small, “Queer Identity in the MeToo Movement.”

32 Small, “Queer Identity in the MeToo Movement.”

cannot believe that queer people can be assailants.”³³ Sexual violence is not unique to any one gender and assuming so invalidates survivors’ experiences. The art historical literature has also erased the impact the two other survivors had on Sulkowicz’s performance. Art history tends to only accommodate singular artists; in this case, the art historical record has positioned Sulkowicz’s artwork as a solely individual project. Although Sulkowicz’s intentions may have been personal, *Carry That Weight* had the biggest impact because of the nationwide activism it inspired.

These artists have expanded the dialogue on sexual violence and their deeply personal work brings attention to their communities. Jones’s and Sulkowicz’s willingness to endure pain makes visible the weight that so many people are forced to carry. Jones and Muholi have both created archival resources and public initiatives to support their community, and Sulkowicz’s work inspired the creation of a collective community. The emphasis on these works and initiatives being accessible creates inclusion for survivors who are typically left out from discussions of sexual violence. These artists have not been provided support, but they are building inclusive communities to assist others.

So, it is time for art historians to assist them. The art history community must denote greater attention to

nonbinary artists, and more careful attention to their gender identities, in order to represent their work more accurately. This includes systematic use of pronouns regardless of an artist’s gender. The correct use of pronouns for gender nonconforming artists is a basic sign of respect—acknowledging the ownership these artists have fostered over themselves—and is necessary to accurately communicate interpretations of artistic meaning. Scholars should also address pronouns of cisgender artists in order to stop “othering” gender nonconforming people and perpetuating the idea that cisgender is a “normal” benchmark.

Correct terms and language are only a start; David Getsy and Che Gossett provide more resources for making art history more inclusive in their “Syllabus on Transgender and Nonbinary Methods for Art and Art History.”³⁴ Getsy and Gossett examine ways for applying themes from transgender studies to art history. They emphasize the importance of language and representation and propose methodologies, such as decolonization and feminism, as models for expanding conversations on nonbinary and trans artworks. As we learn and teach art history, we must be questioning how values are assigned to objects and be actively dismantling the canon which has rarely included queer individuals.

33 Small, “Queer Identity in the MeToo Movement.”

34 David J. Getsy and Che Gossett, “A Syllabus on Transgender and Nonbinary Methods for Art and Art History,” *Art Journal* 80, no. 4 (December 2021): 100–115, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2021.194771>.

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THE GIRLFRIEND SHOP: MASCULINITY, DESIRE, AND COMMODIFYING INTIMACY IN US STRIP CLUBS

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Introduction

In the late 1970s, the United States experienced a major social and economic reconfiguration. In particular, the deindustrialization of the Northeast and Midwest regions brought massive job losses alongside the decline of union power, the relocating of manufacturing jobs away from industrial centers, and the end of the family wage (Harvey, 2020, p. 129). Paradoxically, while the demand for commercial sex was growing, prostitution was becoming less profitable because of social and policy changes targeting sex workers (Bernstein, 2001, p. 391). Many men began spending money at a new type of venue, one that offered a different kind of intimacy: the strip club. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of strip clubs in the United States grew from an estimated 2,500 to 3,000 (Frank, 1999, p. 3). In time, some clubs considered local “dives” would rebrand themselves as “gentleman’s clubs” in order to appeal to a more affluent clientele of businessmen and white-collar workers.

This paper examines how ongoing instability in the global capitalist system relates to changes in the scale and form of strip clubs, which occurred in the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. I conducted personal interviews with five exotic dancers working in rural and urban clubs in Illinois during Spring 2021. To protect the dancers’ privacy, all names used in this paper are pseudonyms. The interviews suggest that strip clubs

gained popularity in response to the economic stress many men experienced stemming from neoliberal restructuring of social and economic life. The strip club emerged as a space where men could recuperate from a deflated sense of masculinity by seeking comfort in commodified forms of personal attention and intimacy. This paper helps to flesh out the economic motivations driving the burgeoning strip club industry in the United States, beginning in the mid-1970s. In so doing, it contributes to a broader literature about the sexed alienation associated with economic precarity and how men sought to remedy it through commoditized forms of intimacy, attention, and comfort.

Commercial Sex in the United States

Exotic dance first emerged in the United States in the 1920s following the Progressive movement. Christian reformers, fearful that any form of sexual deviancy would spill over into “respectable” society, compelled Congress to criminalize brothels and shut down red-light districts (Lucas, 1995, p. 58). Entrepreneurs circumvented these regulations by offering a new form of entertainment: the striptease, a type of show that combined partial nudity, singing, dancing, and posing (Shteir 2004, 2). From the onset, the striptease was distinct from prostitution. In a 2001 ethnography of sex workers, Elizabeth Bernstein observed that many career prostitutes maintain strict boundaries between personal and physical and will refuse any acts which evoke emotional intimacy (Bernstein 2001). One worker says, “I am simply selling the man his orgasm” (Bernstein 2010, 153).

In contrast, strip clubs promoted shows with the promise

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of an intimate experience. Their advertisements often utilized words like “intimate” and “relax” and featured the names and photos of dancers, indicating that earlier clubs attracted their audience through a perceived personal connection with dancers. The dancers I spoke with highlighted the importance of playing along with clients’ girlfriend fantasies; one told me that “a lot of these guys won’t bother buying a dance if they don’t think we have a connection.” Thus, intimacy effected through emotional labor is not only foundational to the work of exotic dancers but also quite often the commodity that is constructed, sold, and consumed.

Starting in the 1950s, the number of strip clubs in the United States declined, only to start rising again toward the end of the twentieth century (Shteir, 2004). Starting in the new millennium, clubs became more immensely profitable with industry profits rivaling those of Major League Baseball (Brown, 2022). I explore the social and cultural dynamics of modern strip clubs and provide layered insights into these changes from the perspective of exotic dancers.

Interviews

I interviewed five women with club experience across four Illinois locations: one rural, two urban, and one in a large metropolitan area. Interviews occurred in the spring of 2021 and took place over the phone and in person; the interviews were loosely structured and often took on the tone of casual conversation. Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed with the permission of interlocutors. The women I interviewed were carefully chosen based on my geographic location, permission to access the establishments, and the consent of my interlocutors. I am aware of the limitations of my data to speak to larger national trends regarding the experiences of exotic dancers and their clientele. My interviewees spoke about the specific dynamic of the clubs where they worked. Nevertheless, these women disclosed comparable experiences and observed similar patterns of behavior among clients. This, taken in conjunction with statistical

data and previous ethnographic research, suggests the likelihood of wider trends across the Midwest, and perhaps the nation.

Demographically, my interviewees reflected a small—though moderately diverse—sample; their ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven. Ethnically, two are Hispanic, two are white, and one is Asian. The women maintained robust social lives outside of the club: they had additional jobs; went to school; and had boyfriends, husbands, or children.

Setting

For those unfamiliar with the innerworkings of a strip club, the typical layout is such: a bouncer greets guests at the door, checks IDs, collects cover fees, and enforces whatever dress code the club might have. The inside is similar to many other bars; it includes a bar, pool tables, and seating throughout. The music is loud, though not so much to drown out conversation. Seating is positioned around a platformed stage, or in some cases multiple stages, where a woman—usually sporting six-inch heels—dances erotically around a pole while removing her clothes. Her set lasts a few songs, after which a new girl takes the floor as the DJ introduces her to the patrons. If the patrons enjoy the dance or would like the dancer to approach them later, they throw bills on stage at any point during the set.

The stage is not the only, nor the most lucrative, way dancers make money. The girls who are not on stage are either “working the floor” or giving private dances. While on the floor, dancers have their clothes back on, rotate between tables, converse with patrons, and attempt to persuade them into purchasing private dances. A patron might buy her a drink, and it is typical for her to sit at the table as she drinks. When a patron purchases a dance, the dancer escorts him to a designated area of the club for the private meeting where she may remove her clothes and dance with the man, though this is not always the case. Dances last the length of a song (around three minutes)

and rates range from fifteen to twenty-five dollars, though other clubs may charge more or less depending on the perceived “classiness” of the establishment. Clients are strongly encouraged to tip at the end of the dance or dances. All the women I spoke with indicated that most of their nightly earnings come from private dances and tips. Some clubs take a portion of their dancers’ earnings or require girls “tip out” other staff at the end of the night. In the clubs discussed in my interviews, tipping out entirely depends on how the club is structured. One of the clubs has been owned by the same family for over twenty years, with most of their dancers working under the table; as a result, the dancers are only required to pay a flat rate cover charge for each night they work. Another is owned by a large corporation and requires fingerprint scans to clock in and has a specified number of dances a girl is required to perform during her shift. Most clubs had “house moms” who served as an intermediary between dancers and management. Thus, ownership and management can create a hierarchical structure within a club that affects its internal dynamics—a subject worthy of further research. The amount of money a dancer makes in a night is highly contingent upon several factors—including how busy the club is, the number of other girls working, whether her clients are stingy or generous, and popularity of the individual dancer.

Out of the Factory, into the Clubs

I first went to the strip club with this research project in mind. It was in a rural town, about a fifteen-minute drive from the city center. It was a weekday and still early in the night, so I knew not to expect dense crowds and bachelor parties stumbling out with pockets suspiciously lighter than when they went in. Still, I was surprised by my initial impression of the club; contrary to the loud and frenetic atmosphere portrayed in pop culture, this place was fairly laid back. There was a good number of people, the patrons were all men, primarily white. Three dancers sat at different tables conversing with the men, some of whom were positioned with their backs to the stage and were seemingly more interested in the conversation than the

performance. On stage, a tall blonde woman wore spiked heels, a G-string, and nothing else. She danced on the pole to the tune of Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” I sat down at the closest empty table and watched a man toss a few singles on stage as the song ended.

It was fitting that my first impression of the club should be set to the tune of Bruce Springsteen, a man *The Economist* (2016) once called “the bard of deindustrialization.” Many of these clubs were located either in or on the outskirts of former Illinois industrial centers. These areas flourished in the 1960s, opening major manufacturing plants, primarily in the food and automotive sectors. Despite the exploitative and alienating nature of factory work, until the neoliberal reforms beginning in the 1980s, companies like Ford encouraged cooperation in factories, creating a sense of importance among workers (Harvey 2020, 202). Similarly, Heidi Nast (2015) contends that well-paid and stable manufacturing jobs stabilized the ego of industrial workers while strong trade unions provided workers with economic security, community, and status which allowed the white working class to adopt a gendered and racially privileged identity. With the decline of unions since the 1980s, companies hired lower-paid racial minorities, industrial wages began to stagnate, and the notion of white male exceptionalism collapsed (Nast, 2015, p. 782).

As well-paid and unionized manufacturing jobs in the Rust Belt declined, more men had to work increasingly precarious and lower-paying jobs in the growing service sector. After 1970, more women entered the labor market to recoup lost family wages. By 2003, more than half of US families were reliant on women as the sole, equal, or primary provider (Ehrenreich et al. 2003, p. 531). The American workday averaged longer hours in 1990 than in 1970, particularly for women. The notion of the nuclear family based on the male breadwinner collapsed as males were no longer the sole provider and many women had less time for the services typical of housewives, such as childcare, homemaking, sex, and emotional support (Ehrenreich et al., p. 535). David Harvey (2020) draws a

connection between how livelihoods and working lives are organized at the point of production with how wants, needs, and desires are shaped (p. 134).

Deindustrialization initiated a massive reorganization of US production with massive redundancies of skilled and unionized workers now only partially employed in low-paid, low-skilled, and precarious service sector jobs. Noticeably, these trends coincided with the relative decline of prostitution on the one hand and a surging strip club industry on the other, signaling a shift in men's wants, needs, and desires. A search for intimacy and escape from a sense of worthlessness and social alienation during these precarious times, rather than mere sexual release, seems to be the main factor that explains the rise of strip clubs.

During my own interviews, Jamie, a twenty-two-year-old, asserted that most of her clients do not try to be sexual. Many of my other interviewees made similar claims, stating that a lot of their clients did not request they remove clothing during private dances. Additionally, the club rules assert that during dances, patrons can neither touch the girls' stomachs, arms, or legs nor can they sexually touch themselves. Anyone in violation of these rules would be kicked out, if not permanently banned. Managers monitor cameras present in private dance rooms to encourage patrons' compliance with the rules. Thus, anyone that chooses to return to a club does so with the knowledge that sexual release is not a part of the experience for clients.

Patrons across the clubs shared many characteristics. The racial makeup was primarily white with the next most common ethnicity being Hispanic. Attendance among African American and Asian men was infrequent; due to the small sample size, this breakdown is likely influenced by local demographics. When asked the age range of their clients, interviewees answered with a range anywhere from teenage boys that slipped in using fake IDs to a man in his late seventies who needed a cane to walk. The ages

of most patrons ranged from their thirties to fifties. In terms of work and social status, they significantly varied from unemployed men and hourly workers to successful doctors and even a corporate CEO. One club located in a metropolitan area did attract a notably wealthier clientele, a point of note that will be further explored when discussing the twenty-first century's changes in form. Additionally, most patrons were solitary men, and groups are uncommon as they are much less likely to purchase private dances. A dancer explained, "When it's a regular, I like that because I can give six dances and make money. With parties, it feels like customer roulette. They all really only want one dance."

A patron is unlikely to explicitly state his reasons for attending clubs; motivations are taken as implied through behaviors and attitudes. As most of a dancer's money is earned through tips and private dances, not stage performances, her income depends on how well she can entice men into purchasing time with her. An important part of her job is the ability to read the customer and anticipate his wants and desires. This ability makes the dancers' personal reflections on their clients' motivations a particularly useful source.

By considering the women's lived experience in relation to Heidi Nast's (2017) research in locating men's desires in the mounting instability related to capitalist production (p. 3), I identified two distinct typologies of club patrons through conscious and unconscious desires observed in clubs. One is a nonsexual form of comfort, such as talk and play, while the other supports desires for heteronormative gender roles, even as these become increasingly archaic elsewhere. Hence the former is infantile, and the latter is oedipal (sexual).

These roles are most obviously observed among clientele whom the girls call "regulars," that is, patrons who come multiple times a week, if not every day. Regulars visit during day shifts, or early in the night. Though there are fewer girls during slow hours and thus less opportunity for

visual stimulation, the club is less crowded; this creates a more intimate atmosphere and allows more opportunities for individualized attention. These behaviors indicate that the motivation of the regulars' visits is not the mere pursuit of sexual stimulation but rather the company that dancers provide. They more often visit clubs in pursuit of attention, conversation, and companionship than for any other reason. For example, one man paid a dancer \$200 only to take her in the back and request she hug him for twenty minutes, while another dancer was asked to move in with her client.

Here, I provide a cursory list of examples and general behaviors typical to dancers' interactions with regulars drawing upon my personal interviews with dancers:

- These customers strongly focus on constructing a more "real" interaction than other clients. Some will have a specific girl they come to see and buy dances from. They will beg for a dancer's real name, offer to take her out on a date, and in some cases, become frustrated and jealous when a girl does not freely choose to dedicate time to him, indicating that he feels more deserving of that dancer's attention than other patrons. One dancer told me a client asking her to move in with him after a few weeks of knowing her. Another, who had recently moved to town, said he thought the club was the only place he could make friends. Jamie, who had stopped dancing by the time of this writing, said one of her regulars was still texting her daily.
- Most women I spoke with articulated similar impacts that regulars had on their body image. They explained that dancing helped them feel more comfortable in their appearance as regulars are extremely attentive, and men will overwhelmingly and positively comment on a dancer's body. Often, they will single out features like small breasts, extra weight, little makeup, subtle perfume, and comment that they love when girls are more "real."
- Regulars are primarily focused on their personal connection with a dancer. They buy dances based not on how attractive they think a woman is but on how well she can form a seemingly genuine connection with him. It was not uncommon for a man to decline for a dancer to take her top off and just want to talk, touch the dancer (not necessarily sexual in nature), or be held. A few girls mentioned instances where they comforted crying patrons during private dances.
- The most common articulated reasons for men's visits related to a desire to "blow off steam," following either stressful or boring work lives. "You'd think talking about your kids would be the last thing you want to do at a strip club," Jamie laughed. "But no, it's pretty common. A lot of these men are very lonely. They just want to feel like someone hears them."
- They will spend significant amounts of money relative to their income on dancers, either for dances, to tip, or to buy them drinks. One woman surmised that a lot of regulars may spend half, if not all, their paycheck in the club. Ella, one of the younger dancers I spoke with, mentioned a Walmart employee that visits every week after payday. "He's always an easy forty dollars," another dancer chimes in. In this sense, the club allows men to imagine their role as a provider. Clients have offered the girls jobs, career advice, and housing assistance, most of which are unsolicited.

While dancers understand their interactions with regulars as purely transactional, they note that it is important to act *as if* they are genuinely interested in a relationship, otherwise clients will spend money on other dancers who do. One girl explained, "some of these men have a very hard time understanding the fine line of reality and fantasy. Obviously, when you go to a [strip club] a lot of those women, we are there for the whole fantasy aspect. We are there to indulge in what you aren't receiving outside of the club environment . . . I feel like in some respects you don't

have to be naked; some of these men just want some sort of feminine company.” The comfort that dancers provide their clients is complex and helps to shed light on why strip clubs have become more popular at times when men are under personal, social, and economic positions of stress.

A second, though less common, motivation that draws men to clubs is the performance of heteronormative gender roles. These serve to redress men’s anxieties over masculinity in an environment where he does not need to worry about rejection. The male/female interactions in clubs qualitatively diverge from interactions outside. The power dynamics are inherently skewed in favor of the man; dancers are there to dedicate 100 percent of their attention to patrons that purchase a dance. Across the clubs, only the women are allowed to approach the men, therefore allowing patrons to feel a sense of attractiveness and desirability. The act of physically throwing money on stage is a demonstration of financial prowess. It was common for patrons to talk about buying dances in terms of “supporting” the women, thus the patron casts himself in the traditionally male role of provider, if only temporarily.

As opposed to infantile interactions, this second version of behavior can involve a sexual component. It often consists of rowdy and aggressive behavior; this consists of men that will use vulgar language, aggressively touch the dancers, and become belligerent if the bouncer tries to remove them. It is typical alpha male behavior, yet one woman explains that these men rarely act like this elsewhere. She believes these men have a lack of control in their personal lives, and thus try to act tough and controlling in clubs. In allowing patrons to purchase time with girls, men can feel a sense of control through the “ownable” dynamic between themselves and the dancer. These types of interactions described above are not mutually exclusive but tend to work in conjunction to attract a frequent and profitable client base.

The New Face of Insecurity

The financial and economic crises of the twenty-first century have produced further anxieties for male identities and status, though this time among employees in the more lucrative business and financial sectors. The impetus of clubs to rebrand themselves as “classy” and luxury places of business stems from a recognition that their consumer base has expanded to include a wealthier clientele, and business models have similarly shifted to target services toward attracting more of this demographic.

Increasingly, workers in the financial sector are visiting clubs. Alden Cass, a psychologist treating Wall Street executives writes about burnout among workers in the financial sector. His clients claim dancers provide them with more comfort and control than they feel with their wives. In an interview for *USA Today* Cass says, “The allure is, ‘Someone is going to listen to me on my terms’” (O’Donnell, 2006). Cass’s statement is suggestive that even financially successful workers are seeking out both the infantile and oedipal comforts of clubs.

Perhaps the most detrimental shift in people’s sense of personal and economic insecurity in the 2000s was that the system of finance capital was revealed as precarious and unviable (Harvey, 2020, p. 18). In 2007 and 2008, after the housing market crash and the near-collapse of the financial system in the United States, Harvey estimates that seven million households in the United States lost their homes. Rather than placing blame on the political and economic configuration that allowed banks to engage in risky behaviors, the distinctly neoliberal US culture of individualism took hold and people blamed themselves and internalized resultant traumas. Since 2008, only the top 1 percent has increased its wealth while the rest of the country has either stagnated or lost money and economic security. Like the industrial workers in the 1980s, this financial and social stagnation alienated workers and unseated their sense of material security.

The material and psychological effects of financial crises appear to resonate more among men than women. Mortality among white, middle-aged men in the United States rose an unprecedented rate between 1999 and 2013, an increase not replicated by other races or in other countries (Case & Deaton, 2015, p. 15078). Case and Deaton largely attribute this increase to “deaths of despair”: drugs, suicide, and liver disease (p. 15080). Even before the 2008 crash, more than one in five men in their late thirties still lived with their parents, a rate twice that of females (Barber, 2008, p. 8). By 2012, 20 percent of millennial males ages twenty-five to thirty-one lived at home compared to 12 percent of females (Fry, 2013, p. 9).

These structural shifts closely correlate with the changing business model of strip clubs. By 2019, the number of strip clubs in the United States had increased by 30 percent since the 1990s, from three thousand to nearly four thousand (Frank, 1999, p. 3; IBISWorld, 2021), collectively generating roughly \$9 billion in revenue, a figure that rivaled the roughly \$10 billion revenue generated by Major League Baseball that same year (IBISWorld). Though the rate of growth has slowed since the 1990s, the clubs themselves have become more profitable. Investors have recognized the potential for higher profits in clubs and have begun to buy into the industry, transforming seedy, disreputable neighborhood clubs into high-end venues that cater to wealthier clients. Even smaller, independently-owned clubs have a vested interest in upscaling their establishments.

This is not to say that small, “seedier” clubs do not still exist. One club I observed has been open for over thirty-five years, and during that time has been owned and operated by the same man. A few years ago, the club sold only beer and pizza. Now it offers a wide selection of hard liquors, cocktails, and local craft beers. The owner purchased a vacant lot next door and promised to transform it into a family-friendly restaurant and retail space. This pattern of projecting a classier, more respectable image is consistent across the clubs I observed. Two clubs enforced dress codes

where men were required to wear jeans or dress pants, and DJs are instructed not to play any music with vulgar or violent overtones. The metropolitan club offers free food during lunch hours and one-dollar shots and beers Monday through Friday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. This intentionally aims to recruit local businessmen during their lunch break and once they get off work. Other clubs offer luxury amenities like VIP lounges, valets, and gourmet food.

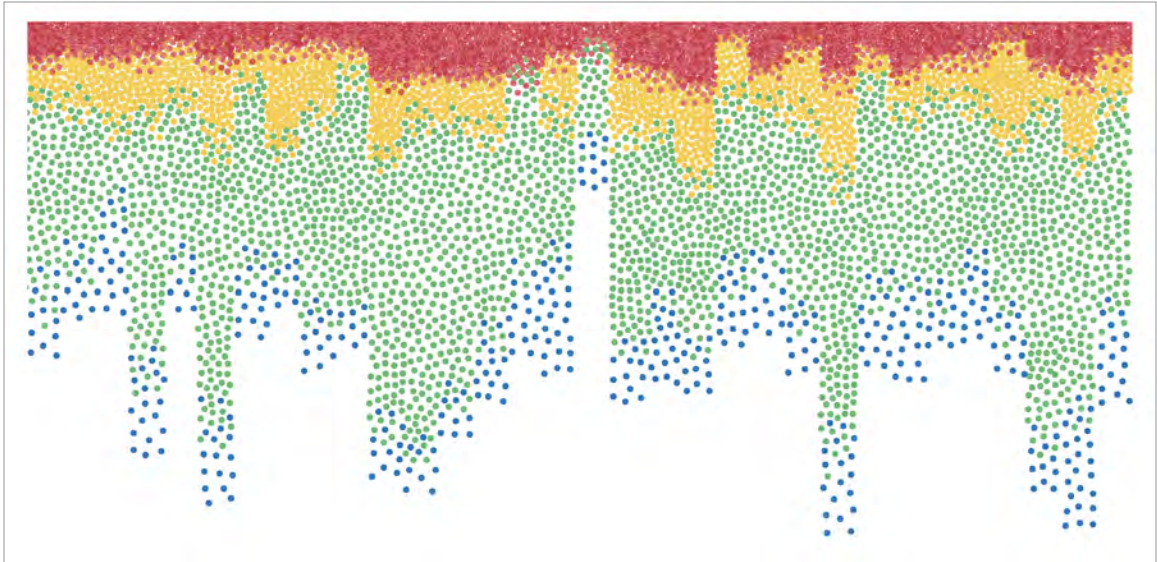
The twenty-first-century transformation of the strip club business model suggests a few things. First, it corroborates Barber’s theory that consumers in the twenty-first century have an underdeveloped capacity for deferred gratification; strip clubs allow men intimacy and choice without further attachment. Additionally, it suggests that the working-class male—once the typical picture of social dislocation and alienation—is no longer alone, and even men making steady or lucrative wages are now seeking out the infantile but transactionally immediate comforts of strip clubs in an increasingly precarious economy.

Conclusion

The commercial sex industry in the United States is by no means a modern phenomenon. What is notable, however, are the distinct changes in the form, scale, and the motivations driving its consumption. The rise in popularity and profitability of strip clubs is noteworthy because rather than attracting customers solely based upon physical gratification, the clubs are increasingly focused on selling the phantasy of “authentic” interactions and relationships with dancers in addition to other forms of comfort. In positioning strip clubs in relation to masculine traumas of livelihood and identity, the interpersonal interactions within the clubs become reflective of broader shifts in men’s conscious and subconscious desires. As dating shows, hookup apps, and services like OnlyFans spark discussions over real versus commoditized relationships. This multiscale analysis of strip clubs as a site of intimacy can speak to—and suggest a trajectory for—the burgeoning market of transactional intimacy in the United States in the post-industrial era.

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Jaxanna Fink | *How (not) To Sleep*



Angelina Cortez | *Through the Canopy*

GHOSTLINESS, TRADITION, AND THE UNCANNY IN MCPHERSON'S *THE WEIR*

MACRINA FOREST*

Irish Studies Program

Conor McPherson's *The Weir* was first performed in 1997 and is set within Ireland's rural northwest. Taking place in contemporary times, the play features local men Jack, Jim, Finbar, and Brendan as well as Valerie, a newcomer from Dublin, all of whom have gathered in Brendan's pub for an evening of drinks. Friendly introductions are exchanged as the men banter with each other and acquaint Valerie with the area and its history; the dialogue eventually becomes interwoven with ghost stories told by each character: from a tale about the Nealon home that Valerie is moving into to ghost stories involving the Walsh family and local churchyard. These stories eventually culminate into Valerie's own tragic recollection of the recent loss of her daughter at a swimming pool on a school trip.

Throughout *The Weir*, the panorama of rural Ireland is both a backdrop of comfortable familiarity for its inhabitants and a source of unease. Within this setting, ghostliness takes on varied forms from the remnants and tales of an older, traditional Ireland to the ghosts that manifest themselves in the fears found in daily living. Though the remoteness of the countryside has historically contributed to its otherworldly ambience, the landscape itself is steeped in impermanence and change, brewing a liminal space with hazy boundaries between the home and the Freudian uncanny. In funerals, weddings, and other encounters, the supernatural within these characters' monologues complements and contrasts

with non-supernatural mentions of life, death, and experiences throughout the play, ultimately suggesting that ghostliness—visible and unseen—echoes the human experience of impermanence and uncertainty in daily living, emotions, and dreams.

For centuries, people throughout Ireland and Great Britain have passed down folktales and fairy stories in which “those elfin inhabitants of earth and air, occasionally condescend to interfere with mortals, either in mirth or in malice, [a belief that] still lingers among the peasantry” (Gott). Finbar prefaces his story about the “fairy road” by mentioning that “the area's steeped in old folklore” (McPherson 29). “Thomas Rhymer” and “Tam Lin” are two ballads that tell of the “trickster” and the almost sinister nature of fairies found in many tales. In “Thomas Rhymer,” the Queen of Elfland—appearing as “a ferlie . . . lady bright”—abducts the ballad's titular protagonist on her milk-white steed and takes him down the bonny road to her kingdom, showing him the path of righteousness and the path of wickedness, which respectively lead to heaven and hell (MacColl 6; “Thomas the Rhymer”). Though Thomas willingly goes, she warns him of the danger of their destination: “if you speak word in Elfyn land / Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie” (MacColl 6; “Thomas the Rhymer”). Despite this warning, she forces him to speak by offering him an apple in the fairyland that “will gi' [him] the tongue that can never lie,” and upon protesting, Thomas—having spoken—is forced to stay with the queen “till seven years were gane and past.” In “Tam Lin,” Young Tambling is caught by the Queen of Elfland after falling from his horse and is placed under an

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enchantment to dwell in a green hill near which the fairy queen changes him into many forms in an attempt to keep him for herself and frighten away the mortal woman who alone can break the enchantment.

In both stories, deceptive fairies—alluring and dangerous—ride down tangible roads, ensnaring human beings along the way. In other folklore, these fairies become even more uncanny, appearing as miniature human beings. In these unsettling contexts, it is of small wonder why Maura Nealon's mother, Bridie Nealon, in *The Weir* is petrified at the prospect of encountering the source of the “knocking . . . very low down on the door” and on the windows of her home, which had been built on the legendary fairy road (McPherson 32–33). It is possible that such stories in remote places personify the perception that human beings are at the mercy of unpredictable and ever-shifting forces, from visible natural elements to the intangible uncertainties that accompany change. The fairies also wanted to come through the home decades later when the weir was going up, perhaps indicative of the alterations shaping the physical landscape and bringing electricity to the area for the first time (33).

Throughout *The Weir*, the supernatural continues to be found in tradition, superstition, and the workings of a ghost story, connecting the present countryside to its past. In a few of the ghost stories, priests not only maintain their traditional role in dispelling ghosts, but their presence is also indicative of their proximity to the spiritual supernatural and unseen mysteries within religion. When “a priest came and blessed the doors and windows” of Maura's home, “there was no more knocking then,” and in this same spirit of enduring beliefs, Father Donal is called to bless the Walsh home (32, 39). Continuing this theme of Ireland's Catholic past, upon Valerie's examination of a photograph of the abbey beside the one of the weir, Brendan comments that “a synod of bishops all came and met” in the area in “fifteen something,” and Jim tells her that “[t]his townland used to be quite important a few hundred years ago” (29). The ghosts themselves have

much to do with traditional religious ideas of the afterlife as well, and in Jim's graveyard story, the church remains relevant to the setting as both a backdrop and a place to “la[y] out” the body of the dead man (46). With the narrative taking place in an Ireland where religion is less significant than it had historically been, the inclusion of these religious men and spaces not only befits a traditional ghost story but also reminds audiences that Ireland itself contains ghosts of its past that remain in the lifestyles and landscapes of its inhabitants.

The context of the Nealon home being built on former so-called fairy property also introduces the concept of home ownership and the home as a liminal or transient space. Liminal spaces are places of transition, often evoking in recent times images of empty hallways, shopping malls, or rooms with old furnishings (Hicks). These often have comfortable, nostalgic connotations due to their vague familiarity (e.g., such images from the 1990s and early 2000s may solicit childhood memories for contemporary internet audiences), but their dated quality and absence of people often makes them disquiet, particularly as they represent places to pass through; one cannot stay forever in these spaces (Hicks). Similar environments appear throughout *The Weir* since places of even current comfort do not really belong to its inhabitants. The pub becomes a temporary sort of refuge for the small “family” of friends throughout the play, but for the so-called German tourists (called such to represent European tourists of unknown origins), this locality is merely a place to stay for a while before moving on. The room rented by Jack's girlfriend in Dublin is also only a temporary shelter as she works in the city, becoming a place of waiting that is visited by Jack at short intervals (McPherson 64). Like ghosts, Jim recalls how the scent of the sheep lingers long after they have left the car of a local farmer (45). Though comfortable and happy with her parents and grandmother, Valerie's daughter is disturbed at night without these familial figures nearby and constantly sees “people at the window . . . people in the attic . . . someone coming up the stairs . . . children knocking, in the wall . . . [a]nd . . . always a

man standing across the road” (54). In this passage, it is suggested that these strangers had also once inhabited the house before moving on and that this transitional space may have become a permanent one after death. The transformation of the home into a transitional space is exemplified by the fairy road in Jack’s first tale of the evening as it is literally a space once passed over that the fairies want to travel upon again, as they had done many times before. Once Valerie’s home no longer feels like one—after her daughter’s death and husband’s growing estrangement—she, too, moves away as the Walsh family had done after their mounting discomfort in their domestic space. The entire countryside at large becomes a transitional space with people moving in and out of rural areas as well as living and dying. Such spaces do not feel particularly liminal when one feels comfortable and welcome, but when they fail to provide this temporary security, they become foreign and isolating, infiltrated by the uncanny and the “un-homely.”

Sigmund Freud’s interpretation of “*unheimlich*” (literally, “un-homely”) reflects an understanding of the uncanny as a twisted sense of familiarity not only in relation to once-familiar locations but also in connection to figures that are not quite—or no longer—human, though they may often appear so at first impression (Freud 220, 226, 241). The uncanny also becomes apparent when distant things—physical, or of the intangible past—become unexpectedly present. Therefore, an uncanniness occurs when these “distant” things are brought into a modern setting, especially the home and other familiar places. Valerie’s daughter, Niamh Walsh embodies this sense of distance as she is always hearing intangible things through walls and being physically separated from the horrors outside her window by the pane of glass or the line of the street. She later uses the telephone—a modern convenience—from beyond the grave, accentuating the distance between herself and her mother across phone lines and whatever plane she has found herself on. Furthermore, her bedroom becomes an especially uncanny place after death when the man she had always seen across the street finally

crosses to it, intent on entirely removing this former distance (McPherson 57). Though once representing progress, the weir itself is a relic of time and memories gone by, representing those who are gone or aged and memorialized in the old black-and-white photograph on the wall of the pub, next to which is a depiction of the ruined abbey (7). The historic practice of burning peat in the pub has also drifted into modern times, bringing the distant past into the present once again. Even the foreboding wind outside—separated from the characters by the walls of the pub (similar to the wind outside of the shebeen, a rural Irish pub, in J.M. Synge’s *Playboy of the Western World*) blowing on the night of Kate Cassidy’s wake—is unwelcome and promotes unease, as if threatening to come inside. Jim mentions that to combat the isolation of this lonely place, “[y]ou can put the radio on” (a reference to McPherson’s own anecdote in the Author’s Note); however, even this could be unsettling, bringing the disembodied voices of intangible strangers into the privacy of the home (41). In all these things, physical, sensory, and temporal boundaries that have naturally existed in mundane living are breached by the uncanny, ensuring that figures and old folktales that once existed are not actually dead.

Continuing the associations between tradition and the supernatural, a connection between the supernatural and individual daily experiences is also implied at times throughout the play. Finbar’s own “[l]ittle superstition” makes an appearance in his ritual to do the stock each morning (43). Finbar mocks Jack’s gambling at the horse races and asks if he “lash[es] a few quick Hail Marys out” before betting (25). There is also a premonition or harbinger of doom in each of the supernatural stories: there is nobody there when Bridie opens the door of the Nealon home; the Walsh girl forebodingly tampers with the Ouija board; Jim thinks that it is funny to have no one there for the wake of a man who’s not an old man; and after arriving unexpectedly late to her daughter’s swim, Valerie is greeted by crying teachers and children (46, 55). Valerie’s story receives additional foreshadowing

as her assurance to Niamh that she would come and get her if Niamh calls her becomes a point of anguish when Valerie is later unable to fulfill this promise (54-55). These disturbing premonitions are not only elements of traditional supernatural storytelling, but they also correspond with very real human fears and instincts surrounding fate, hinting at a connection between the unseen supernatural and the unseen—and equally uncontrollable—events of day-to-day life.

McPherson continues exploring the relationship between the supernatural and the real world throughout the play, and life and death outside of the supernatural both contradict and complement the ghost stories shared by the characters. The play contains non-supernatural mentions of death with the familiar dead not appearing as frightening ghosts but rather affectionately remembered: Big Finbar is lauded as a pillar of the community whom “[n]o one had anything against,” Jack remembers his friend Declan as a “[l]ovely fella,” and the men agree that Maura was “a grand . . . spritely kind of woman till the end” (28, 36, 30). Jim’s aging mammy, or mother, who is closer to death than the other characters is not considered in proximity to the supernatural despite being very sick and [f]ading fast (63). Unlike the fairies and ghosts in the stories beforehand, audiences also receive a glimpse of Valerie’s daughter before and after death, placing her—physically and figuratively—at the crossroads of the supernatural and the tangible world. Valerie describes Niamh as “a bright, outgoing, happy girl” who was full of life and “[l]oved the water” (54). Her death is a great and sudden tragedy, and she remains unaltered after death, behaving not in a threatening or ambiguous way as the other ghosts do but rather reverting to the same behaviors she had exhibited in life.

Through this narrative, Valerie becomes the central character of the play, and all of its conflict is within her (Hornby 466). Her story is not told for frightening effect but as a sort of closure for Valerie, and in “combin[ing] elements from all the first three, seemingly unrelated,

tales[,] . . . [i]ts emotional rawness acts as a corrective to the more conventional and slight stories told by the men” (Longhorn 86). At the center of the play, Valerie’s daughter is comparable to—and foreshadowed by—the little girl in Jim’s story as they are both in vulnerable places after death and, as “little innocents,” must be protected (McPherson 61). The recurrence of the name Niamh in Jack’s story—though unintentional—also foreshadows this as do the woman on the stairs, Finbar’s fairies at the window, the pervert in Jim’s story, and the children crying at the pool. All these are echoed in what Valerie’s daughter repeatedly sees and hears in her bedroom, from “the people at the window” and “someone coming up the stairs” to the “man standing across the road” and the “children . . . in the wall” (Kerrane 27; McPherson 32, 38, 48, 54-55). Valerie’s story, more than the previous ones, embodies natural fears of loss and helplessness, which are reflected in the non-supernatural ghosts of the other characters.

Unknown and fearful things in the dark—seen or perceived—defamiliarize once-familiar settings, and this sense of “helpless[ly] . . . wandering about” within these changed spaces of “silence, darkness and solitude” contributes to the aspects of uncanniness woven throughout the play (Freud 237, 246). At night, Bridie refuses to look at the fairies or even let [Maura] go over by the window to look for herself; the bedroom of Valerie’s daughter becomes nightmarish, and Finbar—with his “back to . . . the stairs”—finds that he “[can’t] turn around” for fear of seeing the supposed specter on the stairs and must wait “until it [gets] bright . . . in case something saw [him]” (McPherson 32, 34). Similarly, the lights of the town represent a refuge from the dark isolation, and Brendan puts on the outdoor lights for Valerie as she travels to the house after hearing the ghost stories (40, 49). Just as these moments revolve around the fear of seeing something in the darkness, they also complement the play’s metaphorical instances of being in the dark, such as Valerie’s growing unease soon after arriving at the pool and Jack’s fears of both leaving the countryside and growing old within it. In these passages, the uncertainty

of the unknown and a growing sense of helplessness destabilizes formerly comfortable surroundings.

Throughout *The Weir*, McPherson causes audiences to question each storyteller's experiences with the supernatural, providing contradictory information as to the credibility of their ghostly encounters. On one hand, despite being nearly ninety, Maura was "on the ball" and swore that her story was legitimate (30). Niamh's sighting is perhaps validated by the phone call that her former babysitter had been found dead at the bottom of the stairs, as is Jim's realization that the man on the obituary page is not a brother or a relative of the deceased but the man himself (39, 47). If Valerie's call with her daughter had been a wrong number or something wrong with the phone, then she likely "wouldn't [have] hear[d] someone's voice" on the line (58). On the other hand, Finbar later reminds his companions that Maura was an alcoholic and suggests that Niamh "was after taking drugs or drink" (38, 59). Jim—though repeatedly insisting during his story that he was dying with the flu—defensively asserts that he "had a right temperature" when discredited by Finbar near the end of the play (46, 58). Valerie—vulnerable and devastated after her daughter's sudden death—could have had a hallucination, brought on by her overwrought state (56; Hornby 466). Furthermore, "[i]n each case alcohol is invoked as a possible explanation for the weird phenomenon" as each character has had a few drinks by the end of the play (Longhorn 86). Ultimately, however, "a McPherson play may well convey a rational air; it may delve perspicaciously into a range of pressing and complex questions about human beings; but it does not seem inclined, in the process, to disown its ghosts" (Wolfe 208). Whether supernatural ghosts exist or not, in the end, remains unanswered and as a mere conduit for revealing everyday ghosts; the existence of the supernatural does not matter one way or another (Hornby 466).

Through Jack's final story, grief, loneliness, and aging are highlighted as the underlying phantoms of the play, voicing the frustrations of the other men who are similarly drifting further from their prime. McPherson's plays "often

feature one or more male characters dealing with loss and loneliness" as conveyed in Jack's fifth monologue, which provide[s] a coda for the previous overtly ghostly monologues (Longhorn 85). In this way, "[s]pecters operate 'to reveal something of the enigma of everyday life,'" which "can no longer be taken as straightforward . . . and is itself beset by ghosts" in the form of "the loss and loneliness that eventually haunt every life" (qtd. in Wolfe 190, 188–89). Finbar describes aging bachelors, such as Jack and Jim, as "desperate men . . . living in two rooms all [their lives]" with "[t]hirty years of old newspapers and cheap thrillers, all lying there in the damp since their mummies died and that was the last bit of cleaning went on in the place" (McPherson 44). Jack laments that when "you get older and look back at why you did things, you see that a lot of the time, there wasn't a reason" but that "[y]ou do a lot of things out of pure cussedness" (65). At his former girlfriend's wedding, he recalls being struck with the realization that "the future was all ahead of [him] . . . [y]ears and years of it . . . all by [him]self" (66). Even Brendan, still in his thirties, fears that there is nothing for [him] to do in life "except pull a few pints and watch the shadow from the Knock moving along the floor" in a literal, and figurative, sunset (70). In their own vulnerability, the men sense early on that [t]here's something obviously going on with Valerie in her life (50–51). Ultimately, "*The Weir* offer[s] ghost stories as ways for people to communicate mysterious—and perhaps unbearable—truths about life and death," and additional connections can be made between the supernatural and these "truths" (Longhorn 88). Jack, like Valerie's daughter, finds himself in a dark place after his ex-girlfriend's wedding, from the dark day itself to the pub that he wanders into (McPherson 66). He recalls that he had been like a little boy lost in a labyrinth of streets with nothing familiar or comforting (66). However, unlike Valerie's lost little girl, he is comforted by a kind barman who carefully makes him a sandwich; "[s]uch a small thing . . . [b]ut a huge thing in [his] condition" (McPherson 66). Despite loss and loneliness in life, there are still pockets of hope: the Germans return faithfully to the area every summer, and "[s]omething about [Valerie's] company" is "[i]nspiring" (67). Though Valerie and the

men are haunted by regrets, guilt, and (in the latter case) encroaching age, McPherson depicts how life does not necessarily mirror the dismal endings of the ghost stories; however, though its meaning is equally uncertain at times, its outcome can still be manipulated by positive outside influences for a more hopeful conclusion.

The dead in *The Weir* frequently turn to familiar places, people, and habits with their desires often complementing and reflecting the desires of the living throughout the play, and once more provide a connection between the two types of ghosts in the narrative. After dying, Valerie's daughter seems to be calling from her old bedroom for Valerie to come and get her; the woman who used to mind Niamh "just look[s] at [her]" as if she has returned to watch over her again; the pervert in the graveyard "wanted to go down in the grave with the . . . little girl"; and the fairies try to travel through Maura's home as if the location was still part of the fairy road (57, 38–39, 48). Just as the supernatural seems to embody the sense of repetition of life and past behaviors, it not only symbolizes how life can be a stagnant cycle but also hints that this can lead to unfulfilling desires. An irrational fear to maintain familiarity keeps Jack in the countryside, and there is an assumption at the end of the play that Valerie, only

ten minutes away, will be part of the group every night (41, 70). Such stagnancy, despite moments of community and fellowship between the characters, is nonetheless predictable and binds the townspeople to the area, its history, and its traditions.

For Valerie, sharing the story of her daughter's life, death, and ghost becomes "a kind of alternative therapy—[a] healing through an acknowledgement of common ghosts, a shared confrontation with the inexplicable" (Wolfe 194). Thus, "[h]er monologue can be seen as more than just a sad little tale, but as a means of releasing her from torment," and in this way, "the play is an exorcism ritual in which all are partaking, including the audience" (Hornby 466). Invoking this sense of exorcism also links these monologues back to the previous theme of traditional Irish Catholics and the removal of evil spirits by a priest, and the purging of past and present takes place for the other characters as well. By the end of *The Weir*, the theme of supernatural uncanniness within the Irish countryside is ultimately transcended by the human connection and vulnerability established between this group of friends, which becomes essential for navigating—with or without understanding—a world beset by ghosts.

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MALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY: ARTISTIC CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO POLITICAL SITUATIONS

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The Malian capital of Bamako is one of the fastest growing cities in Africa and has been a cultural epicenter on the continent for decades. It is currently host to the longest running African photography event and is home to many leaders of contemporary photography. The medium was first introduced by the French with regional colonial conquest taking place in the late nineteenth century.¹ Bamako was then transformed from a small market town into a regional economic power and the capital of colonial governance for the French Sudan (the modern Republic of Mali).² The colonial state controlled the dissemination of cameras and production of photographs while severely limiting artistic and political output throughout its existence. With photography being an expensive, technical, and creatively-undeveloped field, it was chiefly used by the French for governmental, anthropological, and other non-art-oriented purposes.

It was not until the 1930s that small groups of local Malians took up photography to cater to the needs of an increasingly urban population. The practice was still restricted to the upper-class of French Sudanese society, but it began to develop rapidly. Political independence in 1960 brought forth the necessity of picture IDs and a

wellspring of artistic content without French oversight or restriction. With political change and technological advancement in the field of photography, studios began to form and portrait photography grew rapidly in popularity. Artists like Seydou Keïta and Malick Sidibé worked throughout the 40s, 50s, and 60s to create the foundations of popular West African portrait photography, a style that remains massively popular and influential to contemporary Malian artists.³

This style, and artists like Keïta and Sidibé, gained global acclaim in the 1990s that sparked a rise in support for art photography. This sudden market growth paired with a period of democratization and cultural investment, all supported by then President Alpha Oumare Konare, resulted in the creation of a continent-wide contemporary photography exhibition founded by independent art professionals.⁴ It was titled the Bamako Encounters-African Biennial of Photography in 1994. However, contemporary Malian politics, along with the now long-standing tradition of Malian art photography, has spurred a change as artists work to come to terms with their Malian identity within an increasingly globalized art world. Portrait photography has lost a great deal of its popularity in Mali because contemporary political situations, such as democratization in the 1990s, multiple coup-d'etats, the growth of global markets, and the creation of Bamako Encounters in 1994, have steered regional themes and

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1 Érika Nimis, "Mali's Photographic Memory: From Outsider Readings to National Reclaiming," *Visual Anthropology* 27, no. 4 (2014): 394-95.

2 Allison Moore, *Embodying Relation: Art Photography in Mali* (Duke University Press, 2020), 145-48.

3 Franziska Jenni, "Through the Lens: In Bamako, a Group of Young Photographers Engage a Changing City," *Aperture*, no. 227 (2017): 34-37.

4 Bisi Silva, "Bamako Revisited: In Africa's Capital of Photography, the Influence of an Essential Biennial," *Aperture*, no. 227 (2017): 27-29.

techniques away from the internationally beloved tradition of portraiture to a wide range of genres and styles motivated by politics.

To understand the changes in contemporary Malian photography and its political aspects, one must first be familiar with the tradition of portrait photography. Relying solely on the patronage of clients, artists began building commercial studios throughout the 40s, 50s, and 60s in Bamako to appeal to the new urban market.⁵ Keïta and Sidibé are the most notable of these pioneers and are known today as the masters of Malian studio photography. However, before their meteoric rise in fame in the 90s, both artists garnered little fame on a national level. None of these early works were considered “art photography” at the time, as most were either commercial personal portraits or a photographer’s individual project. As a result, photographs of this period are largely untitled and figures largely anonymous.⁶

Keïta’s portraits are stellar examples of the overall tradition of Malian portrait photography. His photos represent a rapidly modernizing urban culture with distinct local cultural elements and designs. The use of patterned cloth backgrounds throughout almost all his work was a staple of the early Malian style, connecting to a continued tradition of textile production in West Africa. At the same time, the latest technology and clothing, fit for a chic, globally connected society, blended seamlessly alongside older elements that were pictured. Keïta’s studio was a collaborative space where clients worked alongside the photographer to develop a highly personal portrait, visually capturing the energy and culture of Bamako residents.⁷ The studio space had suits, local attire, radios, televisions, jewelry, purses, and more. Using props, Keïta and his clients created unique visual representations of personalities, and their combined work embodied a

society with great ambition, one eye on the future and one on the past. Keïta only ran his studio from approximately 1948 to 1964, but during that time he captured the images of thousands of Malians.

Sidibé’s portrait photography captures this same energy of change, but where Keïta’s portraits are strictly staged, Sidibé’s portraits are either staged studio portraiture or impromptu street portraiture. Sidibé was an active photographic reporter who traveled Bamako (mainly the Bagadadji neighborhood) along with his apprentices in search of nightlife, weddings, surprise parties, and any event where one could find Malians together celebrating.⁸ His dynamic images capture the energy and modernity of a young Malian nation, as party goers are often depicted celebrating a vibrant culture of global influences and local styles. Like Keïta, Sidibé displays a city eager for the future and ready to make its impact on the world.

In the works of Keïta and Sidibé, one realizes that Malian photography has always dealt with contemporary matters such as technological advancement, cultural change, urbanization, and the aspirations of a young nation. These themes are carried through to the contemporary practice of photography in Mali and help explain the roots of the now highly political nature of the medium. Both artists began to experience international recognition in the early 1990s when Western art dealers and researchers became aware of the now decades old Bamako tradition. Although, along with this fame came exploitation and the market driven restriction of Malian photographic practices.⁹ This eventful, Western “discovery” of Keïta and Sidibé ultimately reinvigorated art photography in Mali and inspired artists to break away from Western market control.

5 Elizabeth Bigham, “Issues of Authorship in the Portrait Photographs of Seydou Keïta,” *African Arts* 32, no. 1 (1999): 56.

6 *Ibid.*, 56–59.

7 *Ibid.*, 60–61.

8 A. Chab Touré and Caroline Hancock, “Midnight in Bamako,” *Aperture*, no. 224 (2016): 89–90.

9 Candace M. Keller, “Framed and Hidden Histories: West African Photography from Local to Global Contexts,” *African Arts* 47, no. 4 (2014): 36–38.

The 1991 exhibition “Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art,” held jointly at the Center for African Art and the New Museum in New York City, was the first time Malian photography found itself in an international spotlight. It was here where Malian photographers began catching the attention of prominent European art dealers. Keïta was one of the represented artists who was noticed by Jean Pigozzi and André Magnin, European art dealers and collectors.¹⁰ Looking for similar works to sell, Pigozzi and Magnin sought to represent more Malian photographers, eventually becoming Sidibé’s agents as well. With a virtual monopoly in the global art market, Pigozzi and Magnin launched the international success of Malian photography.¹¹ It is within this European-led framework that problematic market practice began to affect the artistic output of Malian photographers. As Pigozzi and Magnin promoted black-and-white portrait photographs, such as the works of Keïta and Sidibé, they discouraged any dissent from this style and controlled what reached the international market. Cases of studio theft and foreign sales without permission have skyrocketed since the 1990s, as many art market professionals follow in the footsteps of Pigozzi and Magnin. Additionally, non-portrait photography was ignored by dealers as the popular portrait style was commercialized more and more in accord with Western aesthetics. Even scholarship on Malian photography has revolved almost entirely around portraiture, leaving alternative photographic practices largely ignored.¹² Issues of exploitation and cultural ownership have continued to be a major problem for Malian photographers, but the great political changes in the 90s allowed great changes in the nation’s artistic practice and in artists’ artistic output.

The 1990s saw the rise of a new democratic government led by President Alpha Oumare Konare, who supported

an explosion of cultural projects and artistic development.¹³ Decades of authoritarian rule by Moussa Traore ended as he was ousted from government. In his place, the academic scholar and cultural worker Konare won the first democratic election in the nation’s history. Both as a response to the economic advantages of a developed art scene and to forge a unified Malian identity, Konare supported the efforts of local artists and the French government to create the Bamako Encounters-African Biennial of Photography in 1994.

This collaboration between French and Malian art workers led to an increase in art infrastructure and education, as they attempted to end overt cultural exploitation and revive local photography.¹⁴ Bamako had for years been a tourist and travel hub as the city contained a large airport and allowed easy access to Djenné, Timbuktu, Gao, and other significant Malian heritage sites.¹⁵ The infrastructure around Bamako was relatively new, the population was booming, and the economy was growing. This made it the perfect location for Africa’s first permanent, international photography biennial. However, the old vestiges of colonial power were still present in Bamako as the biennial could, and still can, only function with French government support and a Western market. A positive aspect of the biennial, present since its inception, is that while it is supported by the government, the event itself is not controlled by any state organization. This has resulted in a great deal of autonomy along with increased freedom of speech, and the lack of geographic limitations has allowed the whole of Africa and the African diaspora to participate.¹⁶ The event has been, and continues to be, both a great opportunity and a great frustration for Malian photographers as they compete against other Africans for international recognition in a Western controlled art market. The old foundations of colonial power are present

10 Moore, *Embodying Relation*, 27–32.

11 Keller, “Framed and Hidden Histories,” 36.

12 Carol Magee, “Spatial Stories:1 Photographic Practices and Urban Belonging,” *Africa Today* 54, no. 2 (2007): 109–11.

13 Silva, “Bamako Revisited,” 27–29.

14 Jennifer Bajorek and Erin Haney, “Eye on Bamako,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 27, no. 7/8 (2010): 266–80, doi:10.1177/0263276410383718.

15 Moore, *Embodying Relation*, 145–48.

16 Silva, “Bamako Revisited,” 29–33.

in Mali, with a heavily Western influenced economy affecting the artistic output of photographers, even as contemporary political realities have pushed Malian photography away from passive portraiture and toward societal critique and political activism.

Érika Nimis has argued that 2010, the 50th “Golden Jubilee” anniversary of Mali’s independence, marked a significant turning point in Malian photography. At this time, the government began to support new photographic methods and encouraged the recognition of photographers other than Keïta and Sidibé.¹⁷ The government-led initiatives looked to preserve rapidly degrading negatives and financially supported many Bamako institutions, raising awareness of artists outside of a Western art market approved canon. As a result, older photographers like Abdourahmane Sakaly and newer ones like Alioune Bâ garnered more attention throughout the continent. Sakaly’s success throughout the 1960s and 1970s eclipsed that of Keïta and Sidibé. His portraits captured the vibrant, modernizing public of a recently independent Mali, inspiring the presence of urban, modern elements throughout Malian portraiture.¹⁸ The democratic government of Mali hoped to draw upon the dynamic, ambitious energy of early independence, as support of older artists like Sakaly was part of a drive to whip up popular support (and economic growth) using cultural products. This was essentially the political motivation behind the “Golden Jubilee” initiatives. However, it is within the more recent works of Bâ that one can see Malian art develop past the motivations of politicians, moving beyond the passive observation of 20-century portrait photographers toward politically divisive work.

Bâ’s more abstract works also gained popularity during the 50th anniversary “Golden Jubilee” period, when he was recognized as an innovator whose career, together with events like Bamako Encounters in the 1990s and

17 Nimis, “Mali’s Photographic Memory,” 402–409.

18 Ibid., 408–409.

FIGURE 1

Alioune Bâ, *Architecture Without an Architect*, 2007, photography, Mali

Image Credit: courtesy of the artist



2000s, influenced contemporary artists.¹⁹ His works speak to the conflicts between urban and rural life, the visual identity of Mali, and societal concerns. In a 2011 interview, Bâ expressed his efforts to work directly with local communities to promote the craft of photography, a highly communicative medium for a largely illiterate population.²⁰ His work *Architecture Without an Architect* (2007) is a representation of his unique look at Malian culture and society (fig. 1). The black-and-white style

19 Magee, “Spatial Stories,” 113–18.

20 Alioune Bâ, “Interview with Alioune Bâ in Bamako, 2011,” 2011, video, 7:13.

is associated with Malian portraiture, but he avoids a human subject, instead selecting a mosque, a staple of Mali's cultural heritage. The pictured mosque recalls the Great Mosque of Djenne—one of Mali's most famous sites. It had gone through multiple stages of construction and destruction since the 13th century before its current iteration was built in 1907 when the country was under colonial rule. French officials and European commentators, such as French journalist Felix Dubois and English traveler A. Henry Savage, had for years celebrated France's central role in the mosque's refurbishment. Recently, however, scholarship has debunked such colonial propaganda, revealing French fiscal support for the structure to be minimal. Instead, local leaders and artisans had pushed for its reconstruction and, moreover, had directed the entire refurbishment project.²¹ Individual architects typically do not take singular credit for the creation of Malian mosques, unlike those involved in the creation of French religious structures. Thus, Bâ's *Architecture Without an Architect* celebrates local architectural practices over those imposed by or appropriated from the French. Artists like Bâ departed from Keïta and Sidibé's traditional portraiture in order to develop the political potential of photography.²²

In 2012, Mali was thrown into a political crisis as issues of sovereignty, Islamic extremism, and political instability resulted in the Azawad uprising and the coup d'état against President Amadou Toumani Touré.²³ To briefly summarize the event in relation to its effect on Mali's art world, insurgent groups of mainly Tuareg Islamic extremists led a rebellion against Touré's government.²⁴ Malian forces suffered a number of defeats, which led to a request for French military intervention to contain the rebels. The military presence of the locally unpopular

French was enough justification for a faction within the military to blame past defeats on the Touré government. Touré was subsequently ousted by these forces and an interim government was established. Due to this period of instability, the Bamako Encounters-African Biennial of Photography was inactive for four years. Mali had just experienced the most traumatic political event in the young nation's history. It appeared that democratic governance was lost and the progressive ambitions of many young artists were hindered. However, open elections were held in 2013 and Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta was elected President. By 2015, the biennial was reopened. The event, titled *Telling Time*, was the 10th anniversary of the biennial and it manifested a dramatic change in Malian photography.²⁵

Political change had once again come to Mali, and with it came a desire to revitalize the cultural landscape and strengthen the country's fragile democracy. Bisi Silva of Nigeria was chosen as the biennial's first lead curator from West Africa. She decided to further support Malian artists, especially those who broke the Malian mold of portrait photography. This push for better representation of Malians and for the diversification of genre was an inherently political decision as curators, chiefly Bisi Silva, wished to thereby broaden the themes included in the biennial and, thus, engage local populations with local societal concerns.²⁶ These efforts showed Malian photography to be more relevant to everyday Malians than to the international art market.

Aboubacar Traore's *Inchallah* (2015) was one work exhibited at the biennial that encapsulated the event's radical diversification of genres and themes (fig. 2). The arrangement of the figures in this photograph is reminiscent of pupils learning from a Quaranic school teacher, and the title *Inchallah* references the popular, and highly interpretable, Islamic phrase meaning "God

21 Jean-Louis Bourgeois, "The History of the Great Mosques of Djenné," *African Arts* 20, no. 3 (1987): 57–62.

22 Magee, "Spatial Stories," 113–18.

23 Silva, "Bamako Revisited," 27–28.

24 Ashley S. Boyle, "Mali: A Timeline & Factsheet," American Security Project, 2012.

25 Silva, "Bamako Revisited," 27.

26 *Ibid.*, 32–33.

FIGURE 2

Aboubacar Traore, *Inchallah*, 2015, photography, Mali. Image Credit: courtesy of the artist



willing.” *Inchallah* rejects the faces of its figures in favor of deep black orbs, a comment on Mali’s love of figurative portraiture despite Islam’s aversion to figurative art. An almost entirely Islamic nation, extremist threats (often originating from Mali’s north) pose a real danger to rural communities and to the progressive, political nature of Malian photography. The work deals with contemporary political issues of Islamic radicalization in Mali, issues that had culminated in the Azawad uprising. While such contemporary conservative sects denounce figurative imagery, portraits of the Prophet Muhammad are historically numerous throughout the Islamic world—his head normally concealed by flame or veil.²⁷ Figures within

Inchallah can therefore be seen as reverent followers of the Prophet’s traditions, leading their communities. Building on Bâ’s turn toward rural imagery, Malian artists like Traore are looking outside of Bamako for inspiration. *Inchallah*’s Retrofuturist-like helmets are a product of this as recent Biennials, such as the ones Traore has participated in, show a consistent growth of Afrofuturist and Retrofuturist references. Through speculative fiction and technology, Afrofuturism is often used to represent the hope for a bright African future. For *Inchallah*, it represents a spiritually bright African future as well. Artists like Traore, along with Bâ, who also took part in the 2015 biennial, represent the challenges and modifications to the Malian photographic tradition. Viewing *Inchallah* shows that, like Keïta and Sidibé, Malian photographers are still interested in the contemporary and the future,

²⁷ Christiane Gruber, “Between Logos (KALIMA) and Light (NŪR): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting,” *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 229–54.

but that they take a far more political and far less passive approach towards the photographic medium.²⁸

After *Telling Time* came 2017's *Afrotopia*. These two biennials were politically charged events held during unstable times, yet *Afrotopia* did not dull *Telling Time*'s political edge—it sharpened it. For example, *Afrotopia*'s exhibition catalog is separated into thematic categories such as “Independence Remixed,” “Recent Histories: Deconstructed Spaces,” “Surveyed Memories,” and “Afrofuturism: Transhumans Imagining a New Vision for Africa.”²⁹ Each of these sections are filled with politically charged statements and images that showcase a dynamic African art landscape. The preface and forward by Pierre Buhler (Executive Chairman of the Institut Français) are similarly politically charged, directly calling out religious extremism and corruption as contemporary roadblocks for nations like Mali.³⁰ The politicization of the biennial is most clear when comparing *Afrotopia*'s catalog to 2007's *In the City and Beyond*. Artists are simply listed by nationality and there is no push from the biennial of 2007 to encourage political or alternative artists.³¹ *Telling Time*'s shift towards political themes has continued up to the current time, a clear indication of Malian photography's intrinsically close relation to Mali's politics.

Indeed, later biennials and regional exhibitions showcased artists with increasingly alternative approaches to photography. Amsatou Diallo, who heads the Association of Women Photographers of Mali, is one of these participating innovative artists. Her work *An elderly woman crossing the street in Bamako* (2016) acts as a modern counterpart to Sidibé in terms of location and the embrace of candid portraiture (fig. 3).³² Her work often depicts active street scenes containing detail such as political posters, religious buildings, modern technology, and traditional

28 Silva, “Bamako Revisited,” 33.

29 *Afrotopia* (Paris: Éditions Dilecta, 2017), 1–33.

30 Ibid.

31 *Bamako 2007: Dans la Ville et Au-Delà* (Paris: Marval, 2007), 1–9.

32 Jenni, “Through the Lens,” 36.

FIGURE 3

Amsatou Diallo, *An elderly woman crossing the street in Bamako*, 2016, photography, Mali

Image Credit: courtesy of the artist



clothing. This visual cacophony presents viewers with a multifaceted city as dynamic as ever and growing day to day. Outside her work, Diallo's presence in Mali as an important female photographer reflects a progressive, nationwide trend of growing female representation.

The national legislature of Mali enacted a law in 2015 requiring that thirty percent of its national assembly be composed of women. Artists like Bâ also made a concerted effort to help female photographers break into the male dominated field.³³ Art education has become a cornerstone

33 Moore, *Embodying Relation*, 164–170.

FIGURE 4

Seydou Camara, *One of the sons of the late El Hadji Soufi Adama Yalcouye receives a worshiper in their mosque, which was built in the midst of the Niger's riverbed*, 2016, photography, Mali

Image Credit: courtesy of the artist



of the Malian photographic community (encouraged by the government since the creation of the biennial), and many prominent locals have made it clear that female representation is a top priority in Malian art and politics. The Promo-femme: Center for Audiovisual Education for Young Women is another institution that has pushed for the art education of Mali's young female population. The center has gained so much popularity, in fact, that Diallo's association and the biennial have worked closely with them.³⁴

Seydou Camara is another artist whose work deals with political and spiritual aspects of Malian society. *One of the*

sons of the late El Hadji Soufi Adama Yalcouye receives a worshiper in their mosque, which was built in the midst of the Niger's riverbed (2016) explores Sufi Islamic practices and the multifaceted aspects of Islam in Africa, a powerful image and message after long periods of conflict in the region brought about in part by religious violence (fig. 4).³⁵ In an article on Bamako photographers Franziska Jenni comments, "Camara's work delivered a careful and nuanced picture of Islam, with emphasis on the religion's peaceful aspects."³⁶ The tradition of portraiture can once again be seen in this work as framed persons dressed in bright, patterned fabrics interact with objects in a

³⁴ Ibid., 135-37.

³⁵ Jenni, "Through the Lens," 36-37.

³⁶ Ibid., 37.

contemporary environment. The man on the left holds the flag of Mali, pointing both to the nation's Islamic heritage and the nationality of the photographer—possibly even celebrating the photographic heritage of the nation. Though not all photographs in these biennials are explicitly political, the presence of political themes is due to radical changes in Mali's government and in internal security. With an increase in political awareness, the politicization of photography by many local artists continues to gain popularity.

Another significant political turning point in Malian history came in 2020 when one coup d'état overthrew the government of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and another removed Interim President Bah Ndaw. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the world and the renewed political instability of the nation, the Bamako Encounters-

African Biennial of Photography 2021 was postponed until 2022 and most likely will be postponed again. Photographers in Mali have yet another political situation they must come to terms with that will influence their art in new ways. The enduring legacy of both traditional Malian photography and the biennial have survived by evolving into contemporarily significant enterprises that actively influence Mali. Accordingly, the medium is sure to evolve again in new ways as it responds to the new junta government of Colonel Assimi Goïta. The examination of contemporary events such as democratization, military conflicts and coups, the development of the art market in Mali, and the creation of the Bamako Encounters-African Biennial of Photography reveal how this evolution has progressed thus far. As a result of this progression, Mali has become the center of African photography and a nation of world-class, politically active artists.

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Tessa Hilaire Collins | *a drunk man's sorrows*

GENTEFIED: A NEW WAVE OF GENTRIFICATION

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A growing number of upwardly mobile Latinxs return to the neighborhood they grew up in with college degrees or professional skills or both and seek to improve the area via businesses, or they may have never left (Noe-Bustamante). Regardless, the process of seeking to improve the neighborhood through businesses often coupled with already-present threats of gentrification contribute to the phenomenon of “gentefication,” an idea recognizing Latinxs as being gentrifiers. One Netflix show, titled *Gentefied*, portrays this process and through its storyline offers a representation of who “gentefiers” are, how it happens, and the effects of it. Through reflecting on *Gentefied* and using it as a springboard for understanding gentefication while also looking at Pilsen, Chicago, I argue that gentefication causes more harm than good. On the one hand, it can be a form of survival amid a changing landscape as rent continues to increase and consumer bases change; on the other hand, it is a process that ultimately leads to the displacement of long-time residents while at the same time perpetuating white supremacy through ideas of business and status.

I use a mixed-methods approach including content analysis, survey, and personal observation to examine gentefication and its effects in Pilsen. I merge ideas from the content analysis of the Netflix series *Gentefied*

with findings from my other methods, which include a survey of Pilsen neighborhood residents and my observations of ongoing change in Pilsen’s businesses. Once I identified specific businesses, I made an outline of some of the characteristics that set them apart from long-term businesses and the effects those newer businesses have on long-term residents and businesses. In order to understand the perspective of these residents, I surveyed three Pilsen residents in early May of 2022. The participants were found through social media and by asking people who I know live in these neighborhoods. Some of the questions asked include “How do you see gentefication in your neighborhood?” and “What do you hope you see as the future of your neighborhood?” as well as a couple of other questions that seek to grasp how newer businesses have affected these residents and how they see these businesses affecting the neighborhood. In addition, I include my own observations of Latinx-owned businesses that may contribute to gentrification and discuss what it is about these businesses that makes them likely to contribute to gentrification. I look at aspects like aesthetics and prices—which have been discussed on online platforms, such as Yelp. Returning to the show *Gentefied*, I find that the portrayal in *Gentefied* closely mirrors Pilsen’s reality where some of the tactics employed include hiking up prices and engaging aesthetics that cater to younger and typically whiter audiences.

This research study of Latinx-led gentrification in Pilsen highlights the causes of gentefication and its effects on

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long-term residents. As many families enter their third and fourth generation in the United States and education has become more accessible to people of color, social mobility is increasingly attainable for Latinxs. Since there is an increasing number of Latinxs finding their way into the middle class, there is a need to identify what that middle class looks like. Therefore, this research on gentefication looks at those Latinxs who use their socioeconomic privilege to open businesses in the neighborhoods they grew up in, such as Pilsen. This neighborhood has been chosen due to its history of being a low-income, working-class Latinx neighborhood and the relatively newer threats of gentrification it is experiencing. Being able to understand the interaction between upwardly mobile and low-income Latinxs can help us identify who is and is not being served by new Latinx-owned businesses and can help pinpoint newer causes of gentrification and displacement in an area. Finally, by outlining the effects of gentefication, we can see the ways that race solidarity does not tend to transcend class differences in Pilsen's case.

It is important to understand the complexity of gentrification and the controversy that often accompanies it. Mareike Ahrens in "Gentrify? No! Gentefy? Sí!: Urban Redevelopment and Ethnic Gentrification in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles" defines gentrification as a process "often framed as urban renewal or revitalization, [which] exacerbates social inequalities in society, which find spatial manifestations in the increasing physical segregation of income groups" (10). While Ahrens notes some of the positive outcomes of gentefication within the neoliberal landscape, such as the "recodification of race," it is worth noting that gentefication is still a form of gentrification, a mode of displacement that typically happens through businesses, real estate, and urban planning policies and carries a mixed meaning for different people (20). For some, gentrification is welcomed as neighborhood roads begin to get fixed, violence declines, surveillance increases, and greenspaces are abundant. For others, gentrification's negative impacts stand out more as displacement increases, rent increases,

and policing increases. It is important to truly understand the racial aspect of gentrification, as a study by Carolina Sternberg and Jesse Mumm points out; value is not necessarily attached to material conditions but rather whiteness (27). In other words, when gentrification brings whiteness to an area, higher value is assigned to the properties of the area. This begs the question, what happens when those behind new businesses aren't white? Or, what if those who open the businesses that bring white people to an area—and therefore contributing to the increase in the cost of living—are people who identify with the ethnic majority of the neighborhood pregentrification?

Before we can attempt to answer those questions, we must first take a look at the neighborhood of focus: Pilsen in Chicago, Illinois. Pilsen is a neighborhood on the west side of downtown. It is an area that has historically been a shifting neighborhood as it transformed from a neighborhood populated by German and Irish immigrants to a predominately Eastern European neighborhood following the Great Chicago Fire of October 1871 (*Preliminary Summary of Information* 10). Pilsen stayed a predominately Eastern European neighborhood until the urban renewal era, when redevelopment projects like the Stevenson Expressway began ("History of Pilsen"). The projects led to the displacement of Mexican families in the Near North Side, and instead families found a home in Pilsen. Pilsen then became a majority Mexican American community with the population in 1990 being 88.1 percent Hispanic or Latino. Due to the still large Latinx population, Pilsen is recognized as a historic district by the city, and its rich Mexican heritage can be appreciated throughout the neighborhood murals, businesses, and architecture, like at the National Museum of Mexican Art. However, since the 2000s, Pilsen has increasingly become a site for gentrification with long-standing buildings getting demolished and replaced with higher-priced luxury condos and the Latino population in the most heavily gentrified areas is decreasing (Mumm and Sternberg 9). Despite Pilsen having a majority Latino population, there has been a decrease in the Latino population as more than

ten thousand families have left the area since 2000 (Lulay). Between 2015 and 2019, 70.3 percent of the population identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race while 20.9 percent identified as white, 3.4 percent identified as Black, and 4.0 percent identified as Asian (Community Data Snapshots).

“Real Mexicans Don’t Charge \$1.99 for Chips and Salsa”

Considering gentrification in the present day brings us to the Netflix series, *Gentefied*. *Gentefied* is set in Boyle Heights and helps us understand Latinx-driven gentrification as the show follows the stories of three Mexican American characters who are all cousins. These characters—Chris, Ana, and Erik Morales—are all in pursuit of their own aspirations; however, some of these dreams seem to pose a threat to either their neighborhood or family or, at times, to both. The trio’s grandfather, Casimiro Morales—or “Pop”—is struggling to run his taco shop, Mama Fina’s, amid increasing rent. This serves as a catalyst for which the three cousins seek to help Pop. Their conflicting efforts to help Pop strain their relationships and take place under threats of gentrification. Looking at the show, survey responses, and an analysis of gentefication helps bring to life what is at stake for Latinxs who are grappling with remaining in the neighborhood and building capital while at the same time possibly contributing to some of the conditions that lead to increasing rent and newcomers.

In order to understand the effects of gentefication, we must first understand the causes, starting with identifying who a gentefier is. Some portrayals can be found in *Gentefied*. In the show, Chris returns to his neighborhood of Boyle Heights after working as a chef and receiving a business degree in college. Upon returning, he wants to make changes to the restaurant to make the atmosphere “hip” and the food more modern in order to help his grandfather keep the business alive. Pop even enlists Chris for help because of his education and refers to him as a “Güero”—a slang term for a white person. Chris returning to Boyle Heights and not only seeking these changes but also being

asked for help by his grandfather point to the ways that the professional skills of some young Latinxs play a role in the power and impact one can have on the neighborhood they live in because they are seen as “middle-class role models to their low-income counterparts” (Londoño 185). With the relationship between Pop and Chris taking on this dynamic, it is clear that education or professionalism qualifies Latinxs to make these changes, changes which then go on to serve a whiter demographic. This is especially highlighted when Pop, Erik, and Chris speak of making changes to the restaurant after they receive eviction threats from their landlord. Chris comes up with ideas like “artisanal everything” and “extra charges” (“The Mural” 6:02, 6:12) As Chris shares these strategies, Erik conflates him with whiteness, referring to him as a “coconut” and when it comes time to try out adding charges, a Mariachi customer throws chips in Chris’s face and proclaims that “real Mexicans don’t charge \$1.99 for [obscurity] chips and salsa, [obscurity]! What’s next, you greedy jerks?” (“The Mural” subtitles 6:20–28). This scene displays an aspect of gentefication where Latinx-owned businesses employ a series of strategies to increase profits amid rising rents.

Looking at the ways that Chris seeks to change his family’s business, it is clear how existing Latinx-owned businesses might shift in the face of gentrification; while the gentefication of existing business in order to stay afloat may not be a main force of gentefication, as is the case of Mama Fina’s in *Gentefied*, the newer Latinx-owned businesses can be seen as a larger part of the issue as they typically tend to the needs of newcomers rather than long-term residents. Businesses playing a large role in gentrification and gentefication can even be understood “in terms of consumption and production attracting the middle and upper-middle classes” (Hwang and Sampson 727). This is due to businesses attracting people into a gentrifying area; in large cities, geographical proximity to these businesses is valued as many rental websites, such as Zillow, feature a walkability/transit score for apartment hunters looking at prospective homes, which

further brings new and upwardly mobile people into the neighborhood as landlords and developers capitalize off of locations through raised rents. With that said, new businesses are crucial when it comes to gentrification and when newer Latinx-owned businesses open, they are often contributing to the shifting “business landscape, since it is a function of local demand” (Glaeser et al. 77). If what Glaeser et al. suggest is true, then the demand of younger and/or white people from outside of the neighborhood will cause businesses to cater to that crowd, especially since their middle- to upper-class status can keep up with the increasing prices of goods.

As with many newer Latinx-owned businesses, prices for products are considerably higher than businesses that have existed long before gentrification; additionally, their businesses tend to the demands of young white gentrifiers and non-white newcomers. For example, My Place Tattoo is one of those businesses that might not be needed by long-term residents. My Place is a tattoo parlor that was opened in 2021 by a younger resident of Pilsen who grew up in the neighborhood. Their younger clientele could be seen through their social media, which shares images of the tattoos done at the location as well as aesthetically pleasing graphics, which may also attract newcomers. Not only did My Place appear to serve a clientele that was not necessarily representative of the long-term Pilsen population, but establishments such as My Place may be seen as not needed by long-term residents. A Pilsen resident noted in their survey response that “stationary stores, bars, etc. . . . are not a necessity in communities where our clinics were shut down, our schools are underfunded, and the list goes on.” This theme was echoed by others’ survey responses—a pattern that could be seen as consistent with the idea that these newer businesses are not made for the long-term residents but rather for newcomers with higher and disposable income to buy things, such as houseplants, stationary, and other goods.

The idea that gentefying businesses tend to cater to newcomers is also suggested in pricing. When looking

at the prices of a long-term Latinx-owned business and a newer Latinx-owned business, the price differences are clear. These trends exist in Pilsen. One new Latinx-owned cafe, The Frida Room, charges \$5 for a latte while long-term business Cafe Jumping Bean, which opened in 1994, charges \$3.25 for a similar drink. These excerpts from surveys and price observations point to the ways that newer businesses might not be helping long-term residents stay in place as the former instead caters to a different population with a higher income. In 2013, the white population in Pilsen made over \$10,000 more a year than their Latinx counterparts (“Pilsen Develops New Tools”). In addition to this, the opening of the new businesses is consistent with the rise of gentrification in the area—for example, The Frida Room opened in 2015. In Pilsen the white population rose by 22 percent from 2000 to 2013 (Lulay). This relationship helps illustrate who these businesses might cater to, when concurrently looking at location, time, and pricing, as with the example of The Frida Room.

Perhaps prices alone would not contribute to gentrification to the extent they do, if not for the aesthetics that these new businesses take on as art and artists are also seen as to blame for gentrification when art gets conflated with and tied to hipsters. The relationship between hipsters, Latinxs, and gentefication through art is another topic covered by *Gentefied* as Ana is commissioned by Tim, a white developer, to paint the side of a convenience store owned by an older Mexican woman named Ofelia. The mural Ana paints is of two luchadores in an embrace kissing; upon completion of the mural, Ofelia is outraged that the mural was painted without permission, and other residents also take issue with the subject matter. After some days of losing business, Ofelia enlists one of her employees to paint over the mural and before he can begin to cover it, Tim and Ana beg him to stop. After an argument, Tim forces Ofelia to not paint over it, and he and Ana walk off to have a conversation about the dispute. When asked why he forced Ofelia to have the mural when she was not okay with it, Tim responds, “Because

she doesn't know what's good for her. . . . when I'm done, her store is gonna be poppin' with tourists" ("The Mural" 16:53-17:01). Ana is clearly conflicted as she struggles as an artist to find paid work yet gets tied to gentrification. This truth transcends the screen into reality with residents taking notice of the ways that art has become a point of attraction for outsiders. A Pilsen resident shares via survey, "I can see why [art] attracts outside people because of the beauty of our culture. We bring color to our neighborhoods." Although Latinx artists themselves may not be seen as to blame by these comments, it is worth acknowledging the ways that art and culture are noticeable traits that can appeal to tourists and other newcomers.

"Familiar Latino Warmth"

Since art gets tied to tourism, it is worth examining Latinx businesses as a larger picture as well as how they utilize art and aesthetics to pander to the white gaze and outsiders. In the chapter "Boulevard Transition, Hipster Aesthetics, and Anti-Gentrification Struggles in Los Angeles," Jan Lin investigates the role that aesthetics play in gentrification as counterculture and ethnic aesthetics are appropriated by hipster entrepreneurs. On the topic of the aesthetics of gentrification in Los Angeles, Lin states, "The Northeast L.A. authentic urbanism of the 'indie hipster' cultural scene helps satisfy a white middle-class consumer demand for the experience of 'living on the edge'. . . . Gentrification in Northeast L.A. also has a Latin edge"; she then identifies "Latinxs [as] being agents as well as victims of gentrification" (205-6). Lin names an authentic urbanism which can be found in neighborhoods like Pilsen where working-class lifestyles are exciting and often appropriated by those in the middle class, particularly white people; this can be observed in the popularity of "vintage" reselling—consisting of selling thrifted goods at an upper-middle-class price point—as seen at Pilsen Vintage, a business on 18th Street in Pilsen. The marriage between modern urbanism and Latin aesthetics is present in businesses like Semillas Plant Studio in Pilsen where gray hues and sleek, modern interiors adorn the Spanish

named business in an "urbanesque" theme while the font is proximate to urbanity and cholo subculture. The cleansing of urban aesthetics into modernity creates this sense of urbanism that is "safe" for outsiders to consume. While the use of the font could be seen as an attempt to establish a sense of belonging, others may argue that this is an attempt to repackage the established culture of a community for the consumption of newcomers, an idea that is supported by the prices that longtime residents may not be able to afford on a daily basis. This concept of using culture for business is highlighted by University of Illinois—Chicago professors of Urban Planning and Urban Affairs Janet L. Smith and John J. Betancur in their article on gentrification titled "Recasting Race and Ethnicity: The Gentrification of Bronzeville and Pilsen." In reference to Pilsen, they note:

Culture also played a major role in the representation dynamics, especially in making the transition from perceptions of slum and blight to that of excitement and valorization . . . omnipresent Mexican signs and colors and symbols was then appropriated to attract and sell Pilsen to others. And as the image of an exotic Mexican village that included street art, ethnic food, art galleries, and studios . . . took over, the Pilsen of struggling low-income Mexicans has for the most part been removed from view. (Betancur and Smith 22)

Betancur and Smith's comments on Pilsen capture the image Semillas depicts—that is, Latinx-owned businesses using a combination of culture and modern aesthetics to attract younger, whiter tourists and new residents. In this way, new gentefied businesses act as a cultural tour guide as they invite outsiders into the neighborhood and offer pieces of culture in exchange for capital. These pieces of culture oftentimes are not seen as authentic or sufficient by long-term residents; for example, The Frida Room offering a menu that has majority American-style foods like burgers and sandwiches yet marketing their restaurant as having "familiar Latino warmth" (The Frida Room). Beyond menus, Semillas reproduces sterilized

iconography of urban culture in their logos and sells merchandise sporting their logo. When looking at these seemingly separate businesses together, one thing stands out: the use of common perceptions of Latinxs or mainstream Mexican culture and iconography as a selling point. These types of businesses contrast with long-term businesses where employees are more likely to only speak Spanish and exteriors are less iconographic and modern to someone looking for a tourist destination or new neighborhood.

The Real Price of Gentrification

In some instances, gentrification is an older business trying to adapt to the changes of gentrification; in others, it is yet another form of displacement of older residents or lower-income residents through creating inaccessible businesses not catered to the needs of the community. In either case, the surveys from Pilsen residents outline the effects of gentrification as felt by those who grew up in the area. A Pilsen resident shares that “white people and newcomers, which is usually the same thing, have more reasons to come here” and goes on to note the ways that they notice younger Latinxs buying into gentrification, while older Latinxs are less likely to buy into it and more likely to feel alienated. All these effects translate to the long-term residents not having their needs met and an investment not being made in the long-term residents, older residents, or poorer residents but rather the typically white newcomers with socioeconomic privilege.

Gentrification not only affects businesses and people on a physical level, but these processes also perpetuate ideas that uphold white supremacist ways of thinking. By looking to middle-class Latinxs with an education or professional skills to “lead” the neighborhood through change, gentrification suggests that those with proximity to white institutions are qualified to make decisions, which leaves out a majority of the long-term residents in Latinx neighborhoods who have not had the access to these institutions. This upholds bell hooks’s idea that “white supremacist thinking and practice informs some aspect

of our lives irrespective of skin color” (5). When Latinxs feed into ideas of professionalism and status, power stays with those who have access to institutions dominated and controlled by whiteness, which contributes to the disempowerment and infantilization of Latinxs without institutional education as they are seen as incapable of improving the neighborhood. Gentrification also contributes to white supremacist projects of displacement, capitalism, and alienation. This is done through attracting tourists and white residents who visit the neighborhood and move in, leading landlords and property developers to raise rent or want to build luxury condos. In terms of capitalism, value and profits appear to be prioritized over community by gentefiers, with them utilizing culture as a tool for accessing capital. As one Pilsen resident states, “They’re further feeding a capitalistic system that has never played in our favor.” Both of these things, displacement and prioritizing profits over people, lead to long-term residents not being seen by businesses, which takes away a sense of belonging from an area where they grew up.

This sense of belonging might be further lost when gentefying businesses hire white or younger people as a strategy to bring in a younger and/or whiter demographic. This sends a message: that when older Latinxs are not seen in employment and when Spanish does not dominate at the business, then the business is “safe” for white people. The difference in the employees and the targeted audience of some of these newer businesses has been noticed by a Pilsen resident who shares, “I’d like to see older people represented in some of the newer shops.” In long-term businesses like Panaderia Nuevo Leon, older women dominate the workplace. This is a stark contrast to newer, similar businesses where younger faces are more likely to be seen, as “youthification”—the association of urban living with a young adult life stage—occurs alongside gentrification (Moos 2904). In cultures where intergenerational households are common, this influx of youth in an area and in businesses may contribute to the alienation of older residents.

Taking Back the Block

Reflecting on gentefication and displacement leaves the question, “What can be done about gentefication?” Gentefication is a multilayered process which produces complicated outcomes that require creative solutions. In order to understand what long-term residents need in place of gentrification, or even from gentefication, those who took the survey were asked what they would like to see in their community. Pilsen residents share that they would like to see the needs of their community being met. One shares, “There’s a big need for affordable housing, financial education, accessible health care/clinics . . . It’s been years since I’ve felt like this was our community.” If Latinxs are seeking survival in a shifting neighborhood, it may be worth surveying long-term residents and asking what it is they need; that is, what kinds of businesses they would benefit from and what price range could be beneficial to maintaining a community connection. This would prevent businesses that tend to cater to young, white newcomers from continuing to crop up and instead provide public space for a population that is intergenerational, BIPOC, and Spanish speaking. In addition to this, another remedy might be to offer sliding scale pricing, a trend that is becoming popularized in some contexts to ensure equitable access to goods and services. In polling residents or offering flexible pricing, collective community ownership can be asserted over the neighborhood.

Moving beyond individual responsibility, the city could also play a role in supporting long-term residents. One thing the city could do is sponsor business loans for long-term residents to open needed businesses. By supporting

these kinds of businesses, wealth can stay in the neighborhood as needs are met and wealth is generated among the community. This would be a bottom-up approach to supporting Latinxs to be successful rather than a top-down approach where those with most decision-making experience and capital are those with institutional relationships. Changing the way we perceive wealth, knowledge, and success from being about proximity to whiteness to instead being about community connection and intergenerational knowledge can lead to greater transformations within communities as everyone is uplifted.

To conclude, gentefication is multidimensional in its forms, effects, and possible solutions. *Gentefied* provides ample insight on gentefication and interviewees from Pilsen help to flesh out some of the portrayals in the show. Looking at different perceptions of gentefication makes evident that older businesses may feel forced to partake in gentefication as a way to keep up with changing demands while newer businesses chase a younger and whiter clientele with cafés and plant studios. In both situations, it is the long-term or low-income residents or both who feel the negative impacts of gentefication as prices rise and cultures shift. It is through understanding these effects that we can begin to envision a future where success is possible without leaving behind or displacing those who are most vulnerable to a changing landscape. While this paper does provide some insight on the issue of gentefication, more research is needed to further investigate business owners’ intentions, quantify displacement from gentefication, and compare new Latinx businesses to older ones.

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Sarah Keaton | *Bones 1 (untitled)*



Sarah Keaton | *Bones 2 (untitled)*

KILL YOUR DARLINGS

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Kill Your Darlings is a basic text-based choose-your-own-adventure style video game. The user plays as a 1950s lesbian pulp fiction author attempting to write a book that appeases their publisher, avoids censorship, and does not end in the death of one or both main characters. The game feeds the user excerpts of a story in addition to choices about how that story should continue, gradually problematizing the very idea of a “happy ending” in this genre of literature.

Kill Your Darlings is a project I completed for a class called Queer Intersections: Creative Nonfiction Literature & LGBTQ Existence. Broadly described, the assignment was to use archives to inspire a narrative that considered multiple potential progressions for untold stories using Saidiya Hartman’s “critical fabulation” method (11). After completing the course, my best understanding of this method is that it draws a complete, semi-nonfictional story from scattered and sparse archival information. These stories may not be entirely true nor entirely accurate but based on the research that backs up the stories, the reader knows that they are entirely possible; this breathes life back into people, or even groups of people, that the historic record has disregarded while also grieving the archive’s silence (12).

The critical fabulation element of *Kill Your Darlings* is not in the pieces of the imagined book laid out in the game but rather in the story in between. This text takes the user

from book excerpt to book excerpt and attempts to paint a picture of an author’s decision-making process and emotional connection to their work. When 1950s lesbian pulp authors had to make complicated narrative choices, what emotions drove those decisions? Did they act out of anger? Did they feel complicit? Did they understand their work as part of a larger discussion of representation, or did the work feel more personal? My goal was to provide answers to some of these questions, not by guessing but by reading as much as I could about the genre, the writers, the censorship laws, the social climate of the time, and so on.

The other significant area of research I delved into in this process was research related to the long-standing media trope that demands queer characters die early and often. Though we see this phenomenon in modern media, it has a long history in stories about gay women specifically; in fact, “Lesbian Death Syndrome” was one of the earliest names for this phenomenon. In the game, I wanted to explore not only the literal deaths that lesbian characters suffered in early pulp novels but also the symbolic ones. Of the pulps that I read and skimmed in my research, those that didn’t end in suicide or freak accidents saw one or both of the lesbian characters happily married off to men or suffering some other sad fate—such as extreme mental illness or total social ostracization. I tried to honor this trend; that is, it is possible to keep the lesbian characters alive in the game, but whether it is possible to give them a happy ending is an entirely different question.

(pause here to avoid spoilers)

I developed the project using Twine, a relatively popular open-source tool for creating click-through narratives

* Created for Prof. Barrie J. Borich’s HON 302/203 Queer Intersections: Creative Nonfiction & LGBTQ Existence. Selected by the LGBTQ Faculty Advisory Board Creative and Scholarly Works Prize subcommittee: Prof. Gary Cestaro, Prof. Lisa Dush, and Prof. Francesca Royster.

and games. Though mapping the story involved some rudimentary coding, it was unlike any code I'd encountered in previous HTML and CSS classes. However, after learning the ropes, I had no doubt that it was the best option for the story I wanted to tell due to the control it gave me over tone and pacing.

Rather than create a game for playability's sake, I appreciated the opportunity to use the game format to build tension and incite emotion. For example, there are some places where you are offered multiple choices for your story's ending, but some of them are no longer viable based on your earlier decisions. If you click one of these options, you might be directed to a screen where your publisher tells you that you have to go back and rewrite. The "Go Back" option, however, redirects you not to the previous screen but to a nearly identical copy where the initial choice you made has been removed, leaving you with fewer options for your ending. In a traditional game, it might not make sense to offer pathways that send the player right back, but this was what allowed me to build the feeling that your early choices affect your final options.

Additionally, I enjoyed sharing my research in the form of author's notes that you could choose to read along the way. Given that I'm still learning about the subject matter myself, it felt more sincere to discuss my research in my own voice rather than to try to state conclusions in formal footnotes.

As a lesbian growing up in a time of increased queer representation in media (not perfect, not abundant but increased), the most meaningful aspect of this project for me was hearing older generations of lesbians speak on why they liked pulp novels. In the interviews I encountered, the main takeaway was rarely that pulp novels were a malicious form of representation that only served to kill lesbians over and over and over again. By and large, people fondly spoke about the opportunity to read a romance they could relate to. They told stories of sneaking these books into their bedrooms before they even really knew why, and

when they described pulps as "trashy," it was with a laugh not a sigh. I've felt very honored to, if only briefly, dive into these stories in making this game, and I hope that anyone who plays it will understand it as a product of the time we live in, where an increasing catalog of queer media grants us the flexibility to critique these early origins.

I've included some sample images from the game below, but it's best experienced in full on a desktop or mobile device. Play online at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8wvbk>.

GAME SAMPLE

FIGURE 1

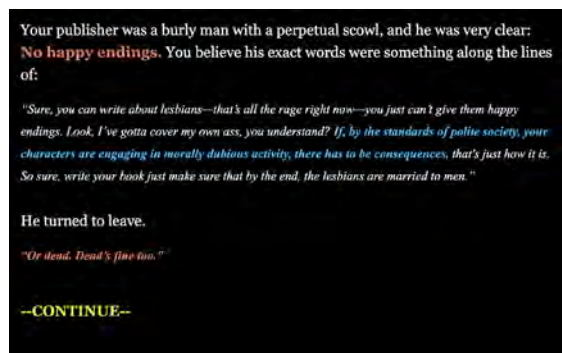


FIGURE 2

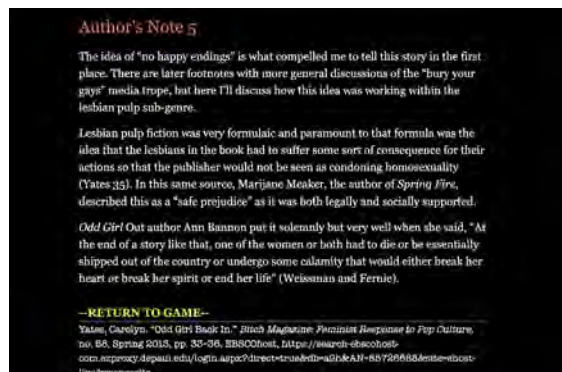
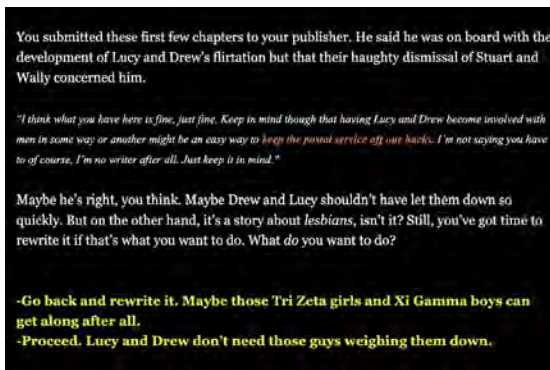


Figure 2 shows an example of the author's notes in the game. Red text turns blue when the user hovers over it, indicating that it is clickable, and brings them to a note about my research. The blue text in figure 1 links to the author's note in figure 2.

FIGURE 3



FIGURE 4



Though I encountered occasional technical difficulties in trying to change fonts, sizes, and colors, I wanted to establish patterns of text appearance. Excerpts of the imagined book the user is writing appear in a small typewriter font as shown in figure 3, and dialogue with the publisher appears in italics as shown in figure 4.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The video game offers the player opportunities to read about my research as it's relevant to the specific choices presented to them. I understand my sources as falling into three major categories: primary, secondary, and contextual sources. Primary sources include all of the novels I read in full, skimmed, or read summaries of to better understand the genre and its tropes. Additionally, some of these sources contain forewords and afterwords

that give additional context to the book writing process. The secondary sources analyze these novels or present additional commentary from their writers. I found some interviews with notable lesbian pulp authors as well as articles discussing the sociopolitical implications of these stories. Finally, there are the contextual sources that I used to fill in the remaining gaps; the sources in this category range from definitions of different terms and theories to legal and social histories relevant to the pulp fiction era. This brief literature review will discuss my most relevant findings.

Primary Sources

As I mention in the game's author's notes, I wanted the story the player is writing to both feel like a stereotypical pulp novel and capture some of the complex emotions pulp authors felt about their work. Reading actual lesbian pulp immensely helped me with the first part of that goal. The first pulp I explored was *Odd Girl Out* by Ann Weldy, who wrote under the pen name "Ann Bannon." This book helped me build out the game storylines wherein both lesbian characters had potential male suitors. *Spring Fire* by Marijane Meaker—who used the pseudonym "Vin Packer"—helped me set up the mental health crisis story arc users may encounter in the game, and a variety of other books, including *The Girls in 3-B* and *Whisper Their Love*, helped inspire settings, character traits, and tone (Walker; Taylor).

Secondary Sources

A favorite resource of mine was "Odd Girl Back In" by Carolyn Yates—which is primarily an interview with Meaker. The article not only sets up the idea that lesbian pulp novels could not have happy endings but also the lack of entitlement authors seemed to feel to a happy ending. Meaker basically explains that given the social climate of the time, most lesbian pulp authors were just glad to be able to write about lesbian themes without legal repercussions (Yates 35). This helped me establish the tone of the author's thought process throughout the game. Additionally, this article mentions the involvement

of the United States Postal Service (USPS) in queer media censorship—which sent me down a rabbit hole that ended up being very important for my research—as I’ll discuss later (Yates 34–35).

Other secondary sources I heavily relied on were Ann Bannon’s website—where Bannon herself mentions some of her own thoughts on the pulp genre—and Christopher Nealon’s “Invert History: The Ambivalence of Lesbian Pulp Fiction.” The latter is, in part, a discussion of the way lesbian pulp novels treated gender, which was useful in helping me determine how much of a butch/femme dichotomy I wanted to adhere to in the game and how I might or might not want binary gender stereotypes to come into those portrayals. Indeed, Nealon’s article and many of the other pulps I read reaffirmed the idea of queer partnerships that contained one masculine person and one feminine person, but there was also evidence of stories and characters that were divorced from this binary. All of these ideas were front of mind for me as I constructed the game, even though the end product itself could not fully capture the complexity of 1950s gender portrayals.

Other Contextual Sources

While some of the sources directly related to the pulps and their authors provided me with necessary sociopolitical context, there were a myriad of others I used in pursuing my previously mentioned critical fabulation-esque goal. Though the options presented to the user in the game may not be direct quotes from authors about the mid-process decisions, I wanted them to be backed up by enough research to be believable. I used Michelle Abate’s article “From Cold War Lesbian Pulp to Contemporary Young Adult Novels” almost exclusively to verify that the trends I was seeing in my primary sources were universal. Other sources, such as Jason Shepherd’s article “The First Amendment and the Roots of LGBT Rights Law” and Haley Hulan’s “Bury Your Gays,” answered some of my historic questions. The former explains how and why the USPS was involved in censorship and is specific about the kinds of writings that were and were not acceptable.

The latter helped me understand the origins and modern implications of the “bury your gays” trope. Near the end of my research, I even returned to a very basic article from *American Pulps* in order to find a formal definition of *pulp fiction* as well as general information about where readers might have been accessing this literature.

The final source I want to mention is one that truly fits in all three of these categories. *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* is a documentary about lesbian pulp fiction and the lesbian scene in Canada in the late 1900s. It includes an original lesbian pulp storyline played out on screen in intermittent scenes, interviews with pulp authors and readers, and archival information about everything from protests to the underground club scene. Along with being an incredibly interesting viewing experience, this film helped me finally piece together the entire tapestry of my research. It helped me understand the social pressures pulp authors faced—pressures that often led to somewhat flat portrayals of the lesbian experience. However, in the same breath, this documentary helped me understand how those potentially flat works could be meaningful and important to a wide audience of young lesbians.

CONCLUSION

As I mentioned previously, the game allows you to understand with a greater precision how I was using this research; for example, you can click on a sentence or phrase and see all of the sources that were behind my decision to write it into the game. The result, I hope, is a very intentional—and entirely possible—story about an author trying to write something truthful against incredible odds and succeeding as often as she fails.

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Saskia Bakker | *One for Sorrow*

RELEVANCE AND INCLUSIVITY IN HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS AND SITES

HALLE BLAUWKAMP*

Museum Studies Minor

In the last decade, historic house museums and sites have been scrambling for relevance and connection with the public. This is especially true in the case of young adults who have been historically difficult to engage. As cultural heritage tourism has increased, historic house museum visits have steadily decreased. A study done by the National Endowment for the Arts found that Americans were fifty percent less likely to visit a historic site in 2012 than they were in 1982.¹ While this research is several years old, it does reflect a steady downward trend in visitation; this trend has only been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic and the limited technological resources of many historic house museums and sites. Additionally, those visiting cultural institutions, such as historic homes and sites, do not accurately reflect the diversity of the American population.² Many scholars in fields such as museum studies and public history have pointed out that this lack of engagement with the young public is caused in part by the rigidity of historic house museums and sites as well as the often less than welcoming atmosphere that

exists for diverse groups. All this is further hindered by the lack of resources, physical space, and volunteer staff as well as the meager operating budgets that many historic house museums and sites face.

Due to long-standing insular and conservative practices, many historic house museums and sites have had to address criticisms of their interpretation, authenticity, and narrative voice in order to increase their relevancy and foster inclusivity. An example of this evolving social responsibility can be seen in the ways that historic house museums and sites have, or have not, addressed the complete narrative of American history, specifically the realities of racism and slavery in America. As historic house museums and sites struggle to remain relevant and to attract the attention and interest of America's youth, it is imperative that they address multiple points of view to examine the narrative of American history more accurately, even its most painful but often overlooked realities. By implementing modern best practices and approaches, historic house museums and sites can establish stronger connections with their audiences and continue to operate as stewards and educators of history.

To begin this analysis, one can turn to a powerful case study of a historic house museum transforming its interpretation practices to reflect a more honest history and to foster inclusivity: the Royall House and Slave Quarters (see fig. 1). Located in Medford, Massachusetts, this small historic house museum is a high-style Georgian mansion (built 1732–37) on a sprawling, multiacre estate

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1 Bob Beatty, "Running the Numbers on Attendance at History Museums in the US," *Hyperallergic*, August 7, 2018, <https://hyperallergic.com/429788/running-the-numbers-on-attendance-at-history-museums-in-the-us/>.

2 Cherstin M. Lyon, Elizabeth M. Nix, and Rebecca K. Shrum, "Engaging Audiences," in *Introduction to Public History: Interpreting the Past, Engaging Audiences* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 116.

FIGURE 1

Caption: The Royall House and Slave Quarters, Medford, MA.

Image Courtesy of Royall House and Slave Quarters/Theresa Kelliher.



with slave quarters standing just thirty-five feet away from the main home.³ In the eighteenth century, the Royall House was home to Isaac Royall, his family, and some sixty plus enslaved individuals, making the Royall's the largest slaveholding family in Massachusetts.⁴ For over a hundred years, the interpretation at this historic house museum focused exclusively on the Royall family, who were wealthy loyalists that made their money through the triangular trade—that is, the trade in enslaved humans. In fact, prior to 2005 the site operated under the title of “the Royall House Association,” before being renamed “the Royall House and Slave Quarters.” An examination

of heritage preservation and interpretation demonstrates that the past is much more complicated than what is presented to the public. Historic house museums like the Royall House and Slave Quarters remind us that the stories of the past must be complicated—that is, fully and accurately examined and represented—in order to create a more inclusive and comprehensive heritage.

The transformative process of this historic house museum was jump-started by an archaeological excavation project that occurred on the site of the museum between 1999 and 2001. This project unearthed a multitude of objects—the fragments of everyday life on the estate. Objects such as china teacups, wine bottles, crystal glassware, redware milk pans, and broken tiles provide insights into the daily lives of both the elite Royall family and the enslaved Africans living and working on the property. This excavation offered the Board of the Royall House and Slave Quarters

3 Jennifer Pustz, “Chapter 15: Listening for the Silences: Stories of Enslaved and Free Domestic Workers,” in *Reimagining Historic House Museums: New Approaches and Proven Solutions*, eds. Kenneth Turino and Max van Balgooy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 161–70.

4 “The Royall House and Slave Quarters,” The Royall House and Slave Quarters, accessed July 28, 2022, <https://royallhouse.org/>.

FIGURE 2A

The Royall House and Slave Quarters, the kitchen chamber before reinterpretation.

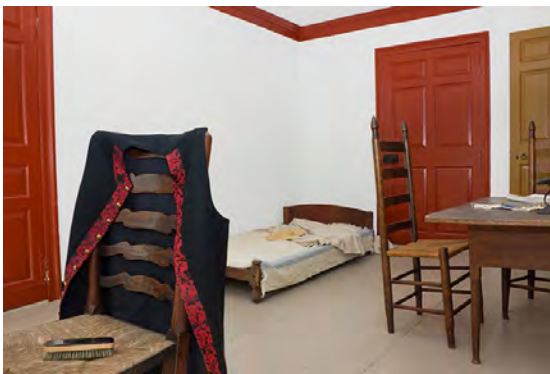
Image courtesy of Royall House and Slave Quarters/Theresa Kelliher.



FIGURE 2B

The Royall House and Slave Quarters, the kitchen chamber after reinterpretation.

Image courtesy of Royall House and Slave Quarters/Theresa Kelliher.



the opportunity to reflect on the organization's mission. Backed by this new body of archaeological evidence and research, they adopted a new mission and revised their historical interpretation practices, placing equal emphasis on the Royalls and the enslaved Africans whose history had previously been ignored or erased.

In 2008, visible steps were taken to accomplish this goal; this is primarily seen in the reinterpretation of the physical spaces in the main home. A bedroom above the kitchen, known as “the kitchen chamber,” once decorated in the colonial revival style (like the other bedrooms in the home) was deinstalled of its high-style period furnishings. Since this part of the home had clearly been inhabited by the enslaved, per the inventory records of the household, the new interpretation focused on a realistic reflection of their lives and activities in this space (see figs. 2a and 2b for before and after reinterpretation).⁵ This strategy was applied to other areas of the home as well—including the kitchen, kitchen chamber, and the back staircase—recognizing that these areas of the home were likely the places where the enslaved worked and lived. Substantiated by archival research, these spaces were deinstalled, reinstalled, and reinterpreted to more accurately reflect the story of the Royall House and Slave Quarters.

Another step taken was the introduction of new programming, tours, and educational lessons for visitors and school groups. The staff at the Royall House and Slave Quarters developed a lesson entitled “Belinda’s Footsteps” that follows the true story of a woman enslaved by the Royalls who successfully sued the estate for a pension, highlighting the untold stories that are a part of the Royall home. It is important to acknowledge that all of these changes were accomplished by only two paid staff members and a diligent group of volunteers and volunteer board members, all within a limited budget. The successful efforts made at this historic house museum have resulted in growing visitation and peer recognition, as they are referred to more and more frequently in recent historic house museum literature. Due to changes in their mission and interpretation, the Royall House and Slave Quarters has grown beyond “just another Georgian house museum” and invites visitors to consider “the complex narrative about relationships between wealthy families and the

5 Turino and van Balgooy, “Chapter 15,” 161–70; figs. 2a–2b.

FIGURE 3

Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA. Photo by Wayne Reynolds, courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.



men and women they enslaved.”⁶ This commitment to accurately telling the story of history, welcoming change, and fostering innovative programming is an excellent example of a historic house museum taking the necessary steps to achieve relevance and inclusivity.

Another effective case study is the establishment and evolution of Colonial Williamsburg, a popular and extensive (500+ building) historic site, or open-air museum, in Williamsburg, Virginia (see fig. 3). Colonial Williamsburg has long-established roots as a patriotic and conservative historical site due to its 1926 founding by a local reverend; the site is supported by the fortune and historic preservation enthusiasm of John D. Rockefeller

Jr. and is even dubbed by some as a “Republican Disneyland.”⁷ Alongside a patriotic motivation, there was also an interest in displaying the historic architectural character in the creation of Colonial Williamsburg. The selective preservation of “desirable” architecture is an example of the site’s unfortunate reinforcement of a discriminatory narrative. In the last several decades, Colonial Williamsburg has faced criticism for its elitist focus and carefully crafted narratives that have often lacked authenticity and inclusivity. This resulted in a general downward trend in visitation at this famous outdoor historical site and according to the *Virginia Gazette*, its attendance dropped from annual highs of one million visitors in the 1980s to less than half a million in 2016.⁸

6 Eric Gable, Richard Handler, and Anna Lawson, “On the Uses of Relativism: Fact, Conjecture, and Black and White Histories at Colonial Williamsburg,” *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (November 1992): 792–93. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/644919>.

7 Gable, Handler, and Lawson, “On the Uses of Relativism,” 792–93.

8 Beatty, “Running the Numbers on Attendance.”

FIGURE 4

Colonial Williamsburg, historical interpreters in action. Photo by Tom Green, courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.



An important focus of Colonial Williamsburg's revisions to its curriculum and interpretation was the inclusion of African American history, and frankly visual representation at all. In 1977, Colonial Williamsburg began this overhaul to include the "other half," very accurately termed because at least half of the population of eighteenth century Williamsburg, Virginia was African American (see fig. 4).⁹ Colonial Williamsburg established a committee to oversee this project and hired six African American interpreters to depict enslaved peoples in Williamsburg.¹⁰ While this effort was certainly a step in the direction of inclusivity, this ratio still does not accurately reflect the demographics of Williamsburg in the colonial

era, which is problematic because visitors are in a situation where they are not receiving an entirely accurate history. Additionally, as one could expect, this effort was met with some resistance, and African American staff at Colonial Williamsburg experienced verbal harassment as well as subtle and overt forms of racism from visitors and from fellow (white) staff.¹¹

The case study of Colonial Williamsburg reminds us that the exclusion of people and their deliberate misrepresentation is a political act that reinforces current, accepted narratives and that this practice must be disrupted.¹² Colonial Williamsburg's evolution and its

9 Gable, Handler, and Lawson, "On the Uses of Relativism," 791; fig. 4.

10 Lyon, Nix, and Shrum, "Engaging Audiences," 124.

11 Record of this behavior occurring is directly after the implementation of more diverse staff and programming in 1979. Lyon, Nix, and Shrum, "Engaging Audiences," 124.

FIGURE 5

The Destrehan Plantation, Destrehan, LA. Photo courtesy of Melissa A. Monica of the Destrehan Plantation.



burgeoning social conscience—forced into being by social activism and professional criticism—shows that major, well-established historic house museums and sites do have the capacity to change and adopt modern practices. While it certainly seems more comfortable and less risky for institutions to overlook, or even mystify, the painful aspects of American history like slavery, today society rightfully demands that the historical truth be fully and accurately represented in places, like historic sites, where education occurs.

A category of historic house museums and sites that is important to consider when discussing the accounts of enslaved peoples is American plantation homes. These are sites with perhaps the most explicit connection to enslavement and racism in America. Yet, some historic plantation sites narrowly focus on the lives of the plantation owners and the historic architecture of the main home. There are many examples of interpretation practices at plantation museums that partially, or even completely, omit the stories of Africans and African Americans who were enslaved on those very same grounds. To understand this phenomenon, one can turn to a specific site—the Destrehan Plantation (see fig. 5).

¹² Antoinette T. Jackson, *Speaking for the Enslaved: Heritage Interpretation at Antebellum Plantation Sites* (London: Routledge, 2016).

Built in 1787, the Destrehan Plantation in Louisiana is the oldest documented antebellum plantation home in the Lower Mississippi Valley. It was the subject of a research project conducted in 2011 entitled *Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums*. Historic house museums—and in the south specifically plantation homes—depend on tourism, so docents, staff, and volunteers are especially important in creating an effective visitor experience and navigating the often politically and emotionally high-stakes topic of slavery. Tour guides serve as “creators” of historical empathy. According to E. Arnold Modlin et al., “The concept of historical empathy recognizes that a full understanding of the past requires people to adopt, cognitively, a perspective different from their own and to establish an emotional connection with historical actors from different eras and walks of life.”¹³ On tours, increasing the representation and in-depth, vivid detail of slave life at plantations is just one way to allow for greater historical empathy in visitors.

Staff or volunteers at plantation sites are storytellers who are responsible for educating visitors through detailed imagery, personal stories, and spatial context. All these factors facilitate a stronger emotional investment in the past lives of the enslaved and allow for a deeper understanding of the historical narrative of slavery in America. Through the 2011 research study of docent-led tours at the Destrehan Plantation, instances of affective inequality, or “the uneven way in which tourists are encouraged to invest emotionally in the planter versus the enslaved,” were uncovered.¹⁴ By including poignant tales of loss, loneliness, and joy surrounding the lives of the plantation-owning family as the rooms of their home were toured, visitors were compelled to feel some form of

empathy. Shockingly, the vocabulary and facts used by docents on the tour described enslavers as “generous” and described their hardships, such as the danger of cooking on open flames, in relation to the planter family instead of the enslaved who were actually doing the cooking.¹⁵ These findings reiterated the unfortunate truth that many plantation house museums and sites fail to emphasize; that is, they served as economic enterprises that exploited the labor of enslaved individuals and helped to establish a legacy of racism in America. By contrast, the tours did not even include the personal interior living spaces of enslaved cabins on the property, which offered no opportunity for visitors to feel a connection or commonality with the humanity of the enslaved peoples who lived on the Destrehan Plantation (see fig. 6). The 2011 study revealed that tour guides, such as those at the Destrehan Plantation, play a very important role in telling a vivid history not only full of facts but also emotions that engage visitors.

Beyond storytelling and relaying facts, historic house museums and sites can serve as effective classrooms through their objects. Organizations such as the Slave Dwelling Project¹⁶ highlight the importance of allowing students the opportunity to interact with historical objects in the spaces that were once inhabited by the enslaved. Being in such a specific physical space lends itself to deeper conversations and more intense emotional experiences that historic sites related to enslavement, like plantations, can and should take advantage of to build historical empathy. Creative historical interpretations—such as cooking in a cabin that was home to the formerly enslaved or participating in a historical blacksmith reenactment—allow for visitors to better connect with the reality of the day-to-day life of enslaved peoples and for historic museums and sites to better connect with visitors and maintain relevance with a younger audience.¹⁷

13 E. Arnold Modlin, Derek H. Alderman, and Glenn W. Gentry, “Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy: The Role of Affective Inequality in Marginalizing the Enslaved at Plantation House Museums,” *Tourist Studies* 11, no. 1 (July 2011): 4, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797611412007>.

14 Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry, “Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy,” 9.

15 Modlin, Alderman, and Gentry, “Tour Guides as Creators of Empathy,” 13.
16 Joseph McGill, “Honor Rings the Loudest,” The Slavery Dwelling Project, December 2, 2018, <https://slavedwellingproject.org/honor-rings-loudest/>.

17 McGill, “Honor Rings the Loudest.”

FIGURE 6

The Destrehan Plantation, enslaved quarters. Photo courtesy of Melissa A. Monica of the Destrehan Plantation.



When addressing the complex issues of questioning authority and finding an accurate, appropriate narrative voice, institutions often ask the following: What would possible solutions look like? And what are the next steps for historic house museums and sites? The positive outcome of discussing the many shortcomings that exist in historic house museums and sites is that many museum studies and public history professionals are generating conversations about creative solutions on forums such as the *Incluseum*, the *American Alliance of Museums blog*, and *Hyperallergic*. One topic that is often examined, and discussed concerning the Destrehan Plantation, is the important concept of storytelling in historic house museums.

Storytelling is an essential component of historical interpretation because of the inherent emotionality that uniquely resonates with audiences.¹⁸ By displaying innovation and engagement in programming, tours, and lessons as well as capitalizing on this emotional aspect, historic house museums and sites may avoid irrelevance and better relate to their visitors. The “storytellers,” or historical interpreters, at historic house museums and sites are essential in helping visitors move beyond their initial assumptions and make meaning on their own. By creating a “scaffolding,” staff/volunteers can provide

18 Hilary Iris Lowe, “Dwelling in Possibility: Revisiting Narrative in the Historic House Museum,” *The Public Historian* 37, no. 2 (2015): 43. <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2015.37.2.42>.

content expertise and emotionally impactful experiences while also highlighting different perspectives that guide visitors to making their own revelations.¹⁹ This strategy is appealing to house museums and sites struggling with financial limitations and looking to enact change that can be affordable and achievable within their existing volunteer and staff resources. Indeed, historic house museums and sites should be encouraged to reform outdated, less-engaging historical interpretations and move toward “reflective practice and continuity for multigenerational audiences.”²⁰ Additionally, creating partnerships with community stakeholders and embracing histories of race, gender, and sexuality would allow for historic house museums and sites to connect with the pulse of their communities so that visitors may learn about what is truly relevant to them.²¹ At the very least, adopting a storytelling-focused approach embraces multiple points of view when interpreting the past.

Another priority when considering progress for historic house museums and sites looking to embrace inclusivity and narrative voice is to abandon the notoriously vague nonanswer that often comes up with this topic: that everything must be considered on a case-by-case basis. This “answer” offers no clear path of action, and while it is true that institutions will take varying specific steps, all routes should lead to the establishment of best practices and standards. In order to realize this goal, scholars in the field have developed a multitude of resources for historic house museum board members and staff to utilize.

One of these resources, a technical leaflet published by the American Association for State and Local History, encourages the development of vision/mission statements, audience analyses, and marketing/advertising plans.²²

Helpful aspects of this publication include checklists and citations of success stories for historic house museum staff to reference and use practically. Another resource that offers clear and direct steps is “The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums.” In this radical and critical guide written by historic house museum practitioners, the visitor experience is given center stage. It is informed by community engagement practices from outside the field. Techniques are offered to develop stronger connections with visitors through effective social media, diverse staff who speak the languages of the community, innovative uses of space for community activities, the emphasis of “home” in historic house museums to create a welcoming atmosphere, and many more progressive standards prepared for integration and implementation.²³

It is important to remember why it is worthwhile and necessary for museum studies and public history professionals to consider integrating historic house museum practices. The implementation of modern best practices in historic house museums and sites creates a welcoming, inclusive environment that is inviting of diverse audiences. Representation remains of the utmost importance in museums of all types, and this is true of historic house museums and sites such as the Royall House and Slave Quarters, Colonial Williamsburg, and the Destrehan Plantation. Historic sites must continue to embrace inclusive and accurate narratives that reflect a moral obligation to present historical truth, as painful as that history may be to some. As shown here, these narratives and best practices play an integral role in ensuring that historic house museums and sites maintain relevance and continue to exist for the education and enjoyment of future generations while also telling stories of truth.

19 Turino and van Balgooy, *Reimagining Historic House Museums*.

20 Lowe, “Dwelling in Possibility,” 44.

21 Lowe, “Dwelling in Possibility,” 44.

22 AASLH’s Historic House Affinity Group Committee, “How Sustainable Is Your Historic House Museum?,” *History News* 63, no. 4 (Autumn 2008): 1–12, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42654184>.

23 Franklin Vagnone, Deborah Ryan, and Olivia Cothren, “The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums: Evaluation Methodology for Historic House Museums,” *The Public Historian* 37, no. 2 (2015): 104–07, <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2015.37.2.97>.

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GENDERED SPACE AND TIME ALONG THE US-MEXICO BORDER

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Los femicidios, or the femicides, are the systemic disappearances and killings of women, predominantly young women, along the United States (US)-Mexico border. *Los femicidios* are a phenomenon of violence disproportionately perpetrated against women and began being noticed by the larger world in the 1990s. In recent years, the rate of femicidios has risen. In this paper, I analyze how *los femicidios* take place because of the existence of gendered space and how it is used to control the mobility of women in Mexico. Then, I explore the concept of gendered time that is advanced by Fanny Söderbäck in her book *Revolutionary Time*; afterward, I propose that *los femicidios* should be analyzed through the lens of both gendered space and gendered time as well as how they interact with one another.¹

Los Femicidios

The term *los femicidios* was first used in 1993 when a group of women reported on the disappearances and

killings taking place in Ciudad Juárez in the Mexican state of Chihuahua (Wright 707). The word *femicidios* combines *femenino* (female) and *los homicidios* (the homicides), inherently speaking to the gendered nature of the violence.

Ciudad Juárez lies on the US-Mexico border, across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. In an effort for Mexico to participate in the global neoliberalism surfacing in the 1980s and 1990s, Ciudad Juárez became “a profitable hub of global industrialization” (708). As a result, jobs were created in the “export-processing industries,” such as *las maquiladoras* (712). *Las maquiladoras* are notorious for low-wages and poor working conditions (712). The industry of Ciudad Juárez contributed to the formation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 (712).²

Although NAFTA was not implemented until 1994, the phenomenon of *los femicidios* began earlier because *las maquiladoras* relied on poor, working-class women to work so that Mexico would reach economic success (712). The painful irony is that, with the failure of the Mexican state to protect its vulnerable citizens, the very workers who contributed to its economic progress were the targets of violence to which the state was complicit in, if not completely responsible for (712).

* Written for Professor Ken Butigan's PAX 350-201 (Senior Capstone), Winter Quarter 2022; Dr. Butigan and Dr. Susan Martinez—Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies Program Director—were involved in selecting and editing this manuscript.

1 In November 2021, I attended a seminar by Fanny Söderbäck at DePaul University regarding her book *Revolutionary Time: On Time and Difference in Kristeva and Irigaray* without any idea of what it would be about. I was quite surprised when I found myself in a space discussing gendered time, a concept I had never even thought about up until that point. I was shocked and outraged by the realization that the societal value of women is attributed to their potential to be mothers. I began to piece together stereotypes of women and gendered space with gendered time. Despite being an initial critic of *Revolutionary Time*, I cannot ignore the connections that I have found. This essay is my exploration of these connections.

2 Though NAFTA was terminated in 2018 by former US president Donald Trump, it has been succeeded by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

After international attention was drawn to los femicidios, the Mexican state denied any and all responsibility, which would have required acknowledging shortcomings within its own system (713). Instead, the Mexican state blamed the women against who violence was perpetrated (713).

In Mexico, prostitution is legal. Unlike other cities, however, Ciudad Juárez did not have “*zonas de tolerancia*” (tolerance zones) to which prostitution was confined (713). The significance of legal and open prostitution led to a confusing association between working women and “public women,” or sex workers (713). In other words, as Wright states:

The public association of *obrero* (worker) with *ramera* (whore) was something that factory workers faced constantly, as women who walked the streets on their way to work and women who walked the streets as part of their work added to the city’s fame as a city of public women. (713)

Due to this misconception, in response to outrage over los femicidios, the Mexican government turned the narrative around by blaming the working women, stating they should not have been “provocative” by being out in public (713).

The Mexican government’s association of working women with “public women” confined women to the home, not only as the respectable place to be but also because it was the only space where a woman would have any chance of protection. In response to the Mexican government’s accusations, the anti-femicidios movement argued that working women had the best interest of their family and home life in mind because working in las maquiladoras allowed them to contribute with providing for their families (715). This appealed to the traditional values endorsed by the Mexican state, delegitimizing its justification for blaming women for the violence they experienced.

Necropolitics and Gendered Space

The Mexican state’s failure to acknowledge and protect its women citizenry can be explained by Achille Mbembe’s term *necropolitics* (Wright 708). Necropolitics is meant to complement Michel Foucault’s biopolitics (709). Biopolitics is the political-population control of a living population (709). For instance, Foucault’s panopticon exemplifies biopolitics. The panopticon, which is also relevant to los femicidios, theorizes that the possibility of surveillance by the state is enough for individuals to surveil themselves (Selod 100). The target can be an ethnic group or prisoners; regardless of the target, the state encourages self-surveillance without actually needing to perform actions against the target group (100).

Mbembe introduced the term *necropolitics* as the control of a population by whom the state allows to die (Wright 709). Los femicidios exemplify necropolitics because the Mexican government deems the death of working women to be of less value than those of “at home” women, and especially of lesser value than their male citizenry. If women in Mexico do not want to be in constant peril, they need to self-censure by staying in the home space; in this way, Chihuahua uses Foucault’s panopticon to control the living female population with the violence of necropolitics—or in other words, the threat of death.

It is through necropolitics that the gendering of public space becomes evident. Women who venture into public spaces to work are seen as casualties of their own making because they fail to conform to the traditional gender norms of Mexican society that confine them to the home space; women are discouraged and unwelcome in working spaces (710). By contrast, to be a “public man” is synonymous with being a “citizen” because it means a man partakes in the societal institutions around him (713). For this reason, space is gendered. The home, where the family resides and children are nurtured, is associated with femininity while any working space is masculine. Neoliberal society values partaking in work, which means progress and profit. Therefore, the norms of gendered

space contribute to excluding Mexican women from partaking in neoliberal society.

Gendered Time

However, I would like to put forth that it is not only the gendering of space that has subjugated women in Mexican society but also the gendering of time.

So far, my argument has heavily relied on a gender binary. I would like to turn to queer theory to introduce how and why time is gendered. Charles Édouard St-Georges discusses how queer temporalities challenge “society’s chrononormative” notions of childhood and adulthood (298). St-Georges explains, “In the binary logic of the heteronormative national fantasy, part of what graduates someone from childhood into adulthood is the procreation of one’s own children” (297). People who are queer, homosexual, or nonbinary may not “pass” this traditional milestone of a heteronormative timeline (302). With this condition for adulthood, those who identify as queer and do not have children of their own are stuck in between childhood and adulthood, which St-Georges calls “growing sideways” (294). This example illuminates that time is not just gendered for women and that all time is in fact gendered.

In contrast to those who identify as queer and are purported to “grow sideways” in order to enter adult life, I would like to argue that women are prohibited from moving forward because they bear children. In Mexican culture, the words *woman* and *mother* are synonymous (Silva Londoño 153). An example of this traditional thinking in Mexican society is the reverence of *María de Guadalupe*, or the Virgin Mary, in Catholicism (152). Our Lady of Guadalupe is valued because she is the mother of Jesus. Not only that but her conception is seen as pure and “immaculate,” so Guadalupe manages both to stay innocent and to become a mother, becoming an example for Catholic women.

To be clear, the phenomenon of a woman’s value lying in her potential to have children is not unique to Mexico, but in the interest of this paper, I discuss it in the context of Mexican society. The societal expectation of women to constantly act as potential mothers and uphold the virtues associated with motherhood has traditionally excluded them from certain spaces, such as working environments. An example of gendered space leading to the exclusion of women can be found in Ciudad Juárez.

In response to los femicidios, a female group of rappers Batallones Femeninos (“Female Battalion”) created songs honoring the memories of the women who were killed or disappeared (Silva Londoño 151). The group rebelled against the narrative propagated by the government in that the lyrics did not assign fault to the women, nor did they victimize them, but rather the lyrics remembered them (151). The usage of rap as a social space in which to discuss los femicidios is noteworthy because “rap has a fundamental component that is gendered” (148). Rap, which initially started as a mechanism to discuss social inequality in New York City, evolved into a subsection called “gangster rap” in 1989 (156). Gangster rap is characterized by singing about brand-name products (wealth), drugs, or sex (153). These topics disqualified women from partaking in rap culture because any potential mother was not supposed to sing about drugs or sex since that goes against the societal values of an ideal mother.

So, the criticism of society by Batallones Femeninos functions in two ways. First, the group managed to find a space to discuss los femicidios in a city and state in which the government continues avoiding responsibility and altering the narrative. Second, Batallones Femeninos created their own space in rap, a largely masculine gendered professional space, to discuss feminine issues.

Revolutionary Time

It is at this point that I would like to distinguish between masculine time and feminine time by drawing on the work of Fanny Söderbäck in *Revolutionary Time: On*

Time and Difference in Kristeva and Irigaray to define gendered time. While the work of Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, two French feminist theorists, shapes Söderbäck's argument, I am going to focus on Söderbäck's own findings and conclusions.

In the simplest terms, masculine time (fig. 1) is linear while feminine time (fig. 2) is cyclical (Söderbäck). Masculine time is linear because man “transcends” the restrictions of his body (33). In other words, men are not confined by their bodies because their time, which is linear and forward moving, discourages being stationary through embodiment (32). By contrast, female time is cyclical because women have been confined to their bodies, which by the nature of female reproduction follow a cycle. The repetition of women having children each generation contributes to the cyclicity. The cyclical time confines women to “the past” while men are able to move into “the future.” However, masculine time relies on the contrast with cyclical time because the linearity is by nature repetitious despite linear time being seen as forward moving. Söderbäck writes, “the linear model of time end[s] up replicating the past through a repression of sorts (the past is overshadowed by an idealized notion of futurity)” (42). Linear time is associated with masculine “rationality” and cyclical time is linked with feminine “irrationality.”

FIGURE 1: MASCULINE TIME

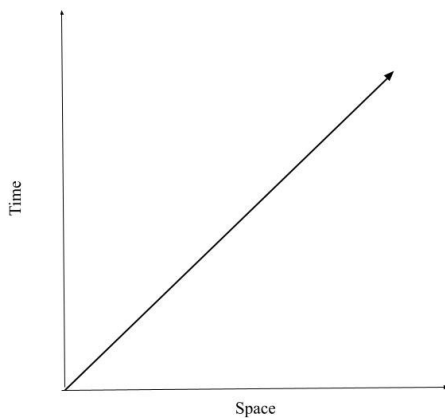
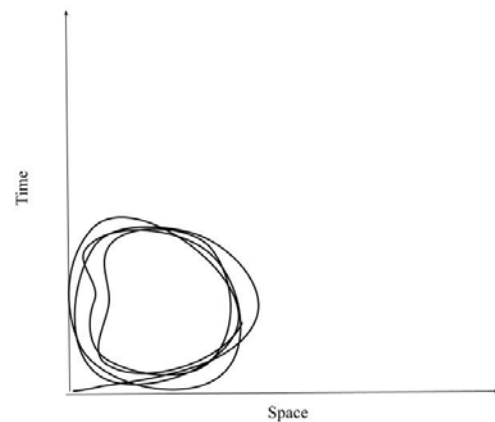
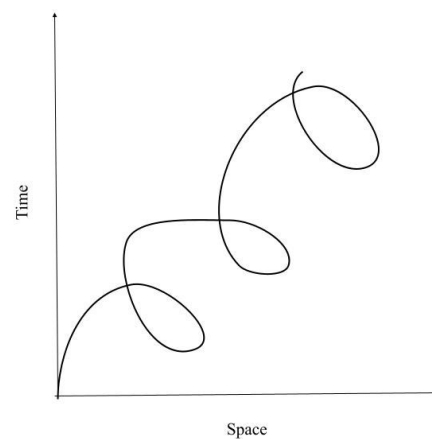


FIGURE 2: FEMININE TIME



Söderbäck proposes the concept of “revolutionary time” (fig. 3) as a means for women to partake in society but also as a more humane metaphysical conception of time for all. Revolutionary time combines linear and cyclical time to form time that is forward moving yet returns to the past—so as not to repeat it—and achieve real progress. It is through embracing cyclicity on a woman’s own terms that a woman does not have to transcend her body but is able to use the constant return to the past as a means forward. However, there is a push from Söderbäck to use revolutionary time, not just for women but for all members of society.

FIGURE 3: REVOLUTIONARY TIME



I would like to extrapolate the idea that women are confined to their bodies—meaning that women are controlled through the gendering of space because the body occupies a space—while men are not. If a man can transcend his body and the space in which his body could be limited to, then he is no longer restricted by space. Therefore, I would like to propose that gendered time and space interact with one another. When time becomes cyclical, space and time become one in the same. If one cannot go forward in time, one remains in the same space as before. In other words, gendered space is created by gendered time. A woman does not have space beyond that of her cyclical time, confining her to a space in which repetition is required: the home. The masculine linear time moves forward, so by nature, the possibilities of space evolve in tandem with time.

Then, by the nature of the interaction of space and time, Söderbäck's revolutionary time should be implemented in a temporal-spatial way as well. Instead of being confined to a cyclical nature, revolutionary time requires it; however, the return to the past lacks the negative connotation of cyclical time (Söderbäck). Returning to the past is not a means of holding someone back, as in feminine time, but rather a requirement to move forward not just in time but in space. It is through this returning to the past that the revolutionary label of Söderbäck's revolutionary time comes into effect because it is not about transcending all space but rather creating new spaces in which women and their bodies are accepted.

It is through this relationship of space and time that I would like to propose that los femicidios be looked at, not just from a gendered space perspective but also through the lens of gendered time and gendered space-time. Women in Mexican society are excluded from partaking in public space activities because they are restricted to cyclical time which inevitably assigns them to being a mother without a choice. Now, if Mexican women in Ciudad Juárez work, that insinuates they have given up motherhood because

linear time, by the definition of masculinity associated with it, requires transcendence; this means going against the culturally held values of motherhood, which provokes men to use their own temporal transcendence against women. I see revolutionary time as a means to create spaces for women, not for women to be accepted into those of men. Söderbäck also qualifies that revolutionary time is not seeking to insert females into masculine time but rather creating a new framework of time for females. Therefore, the next question is: how can revolutionary time be used to better the situation of los femicidios along the US-Mexico border?

Lederach's Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding

The support for such a space-time relationship can be seen in conflict resolution work. John Paul Lederach's Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding exhibits the importance of spatial and temporal relation in conflict resolution (144). The whole of the past has contributed to the conflict in the present moment (142). However, future problem solving relies on a return to the past to solve the current problem for a conflict-free future (145). Only when the next issue arises would a return to the past be absolutely necessary. Conflict is inevitable, so a constant return to the past will not only happen in a reactive way but could also take place in a proactive sense. In fact, Lederach's Expanded Framework for Peacebuilding is not that different from Söderbäck's revolutionary time. One could almost equate one "coil" in revolutionary time to the three main temporal pieces (past, present, and future) of Lederach's model.

Conclusion

While I believe that revolutionary time could be a means forward in the struggle for recognition with los femicidios and in creating spaces for Mexican women, I acknowledge that this theoretical proposal is only the beginning and has its limitations. My essay does not mention how this could be implemented. It assesses the situation in a predominantly binary manner and without recognition

of intersectionality. It uses French feminist theory on another culture where there are bound to be unique cultural struggles. I also acknowledge my own social location and its limitations as a white woman who has never been to Mexico. While I see these holes, I do not see them as detracting from the argument but rather as areas for further research.

Los femicidios along the frontera of the United States and Mexico are a pressing example of the control of women through gendered time. While masculine time is linear,

allowing for transcendence, feminine time restricts the woman to the limitations of her body, and therefore, space. It is through revolutionary time that Söderbäck presents that cyclicity is required to move forward in space. Revolutionary time combines cyclicity with linearity so that new spaces, in which women can be accepted, are created. Through acknowledging the systemic gendering of time, my hope is that a conversation can begin to be had and that awareness can incrementally lead to change and larger discussions.

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DERRIDA AND THE IMPOSSIBLE

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Throughout Derrida's corpus, the theme of "impossibility" appears again and again: the impossibility of the gift, an impossible hospitality, the impossibility of a democracy that will never arrive, and the impossibility of mourning. For Derrida, however, the impossible is never as simple as "traditional" impossibility, never a stoppage for his thought. In this paper, I will explore Derrida's thinking of the impossible and the various shapes it takes throughout three of his works, *Given Time*, *Rogues*, and *Of Hospitality*.

We begin with *Given Time*, where Derrida extensively and specifically discusses the impossible in relation to the "problem" and aporia of the gift. This problem is that, in spite of our traditional understanding of the gift as an unconditional thing with no expectation of reciprocity, the gift still cannot escape the "circle" of exchange. When I give a gift, I am always receiving or expecting to receive something in return: a future gift, feelings of gratitude from the recipient, a feeling within myself that I've done well by giving, etc. If the recipient is disappointed by my gift and this upsets me in turn, then the gift was obviously not an unconditional one. If *anything* were to escape the circle of exchange, to become "aneconomic," Derrida writes, it would be the gift proper; not only is the gift "aneconomic," but it "interrupts" economy, stepping in the way of the ever-turning wheel of exchange. Yet, at the same time, the gift is fundamentally tied in relation to the circle that it *must* evade. Derrida refers to this as "the

impossible," differentiating "*the impossible*" from simply "impossible," as the conditions of the gift's possibility are already responsible for its destruction, for its return to the circle of exchange. Furthermore, relating again to the gift's possibility resulting in its destruction, the gift must not be phenomenally recognized by *either* party as a gift. If the recipient recognizes the gift as gift, it becomes a symbolic recognition of the gift that is not gift, of the gift that expects and almost demands reciprocity. If the giver recognizes their gift as gift, this symbolic recognition results in the aforementioned expectations of reciprocity, feelings of self-gratitude, and so on.

Derrida is left with a seemingly inescapable and almost pessimistic aporia. If the very structure of the gift itself makes it impossible, and the reader is on the verge of asking this question at this point in *Given Time*, *why bother?* Derrida, unlike me, the reader, does not see the pessimism that we see in the impossible gift, but rather encourages us to give in spite of knowing the unchangeable structure of the impossible gift, to attempt to achieve the unachievable. Derrida writes:

Know still what giving wants to say, know how to give, know what you want and want to say when you give, know what you intend to give, know how the gift annuls itself, commit yourself even if commitment is the destruction of the gift by the gift, give economy its chance. (*Given Time*, 30)

There is almost a necessity in this urging. To surrender the gift to the realm of the impossible is to acknowledge, once and for all, that there is and will only ever be the cycle of exchange, so we must continue to compel ourselves toward the "pure" gift, the unconditional gift.

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This structure of thinking the impossible, that it must be pursued and intended toward, is a common thread throughout Derrida's thought that appears again in *Of Hospitality*. In fact, the shape of the argument is similar as well. There are two poles of hospitality, "conditional" and "unconditional," much like the two poles of the conditional and unconditional gift. Conditional hospitality is hospitality as it is known to us: a caution toward the stranger that is rational, hospitality that is only offered by one with power over another, hospitality only offered due to who one is, if that be race, class, religion, and so on. Conditional hospitality, like the "false" gift, is also fated to fall into the circle of exchange and reciprocity: I am giving you hospitality because it is the right thing to do, because I expect you to do the same for me. Examples of conditional hospitality, like examples of the "unpure" gift, are all around us: immigration, the asking of who has knocked on the door before I open it, and an invitation to couch-surf with the expectation of a future karmic good deed to be done unto me.

Unconditional hospitality, on the other hand, is known to Derrida as a "hyperbolic" hospitality, one that is limitless and opens the door without asking the name of the stranger on the opposite side. If conditional hospitality is on the side of exchange and reciprocity, then unconditional hospitality is the opposite, given as the *pure gift*. Conditionless, unknown to either party as hospitality, it is a "relation without relation" within the circle of exchange (Derrida, *Given Time*, 29). Similar to how the gift and unconditional hospitality are "aneconomic," unconditional hospitality offers a complete interruption of nationality and borders. Derrida writes:

Let us say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female. (*Of Hospitality*, 77)

Pure hospitality, unlike the pure gift, is not necessarily something that should be strived toward without caution. Absolute hospitality is blindness, madness, and its dangers cannot be ignored. The named stranger's motives are unknowable enough, but what of the unnamed, radically anonymous stranger? What if they are not a "guest" but a harmful intruder? It is at this point that the logic of unconditional hospitality departs from the logic of the unconditional gift. There is no danger entailed in attempting to give the pure gift despite its impossibility, I cannot be personally harmed by it. One could say there is no "practical" reason why the gift should be measured and limited, I should always be trying to give the unconditional gift to the best of my ability.

On the other hand, we can intuitively find good reason to consciously limit the hospitality we provide, and many times we *must* do so to ensure our own safety. So, why even continue to think unconditional hospitality? If it is truly impossible, and should not be limitlessly intended toward like the gift, what purpose does it serve? This question will arise again and again in any reader of the aporias that Derrida scatters throughout his works, and the answer will always be the same:

The impossible is not nothing. It is even that which happens, which comes, by definition. I admit that this remains rather difficult to think, but that is exactly what preoccupies what is called thinking, if there is any and from the time there is any. (Derrida, *Rogues*, 172)

The impossible, for Derrida, is never the *unthinkable*. In fact, to think at all is to think the impossible. A rejection of "the impossible as nothing" is at the core of all of Derrida's aporias of impossibility. Furthermore, the impossible is never left alone as "that which does not happen." Both the gift and hospitality, when given those respective names, are made impossible by the conditions of the possible, but Derrida always reiterates that unconditional hospitality and the gift *do happen*. The exact circumstances of these possible, impossible occurrences are unknown to

us, for they cannot even be named as such at the risk of their immediate destruction at that moment, but they exist nonetheless. Impossibility, for Derrida, does not exclude happening. We can return to the earlier quote in *Given Time*, referring to the gift being definitionally “the impossible,” but not impossible as excluded from occurrence.

Moving finally to *Rogues*, Derrida develops the idea of a “democracy to come,” never properly arriving and always deferred. The “democracy to come” appears as a fundamentally different form of the impossible than the two aforementioned aporias of the gift and the impossible, but the contradictions inherent to democracy are similar in structure. Firstly, Derrida argues that democracy is “autoimmune.” In biology, an immune response that results in the attacking of its own healthy parts is known as an “autoimmune response.” In describing democracy as autoimmune, Derrida is suggesting that within democracy’s own definition its destruction is risked and almost implied. It can be seen immediately how democracy as autoimmune challenges many narratives around democracy: democracy is not being challenged by external, foreign, “anti-democratic” nations as Western governments continually reiterate, but it is always being challenged as part of its own nature from the beginning. Secondly, and this is a direct cause of democracy being permanently deferred, democracy must rely on sovereignty and the power of the state to exist properly. However, a democracy that relies on sovereignty is definitely no “true” democracy as such: we again return to the impossible necessity of “relation without relation” (Derrida, *Given Time*, 29). It must also be noted that, and this is the main divide between impossible democracy and the impossible gift/hospitality, a democracy to come has a more “traditional” impossibility: it is not on the horizon, and it is not a moral imperative that we must strive toward despite its impossibility. “Democracy to come” is permanently and properly *deferred*; it is not “the

impossible,” it is simply impossible. This, again, is easy to interpret as a pessimistic move by Derrida, but it can also be seen as an openness to the future. If democracy is, as Derrida says, shapeless and permanently deferred, not a stable ideal on the horizon to work toward, then the “democracy to come” is always in flux and open to any future. This could be its autoimmune self-destruction by way of electing a leader that dissolves democracy itself, or a betterment of itself, a constant “working” of democracy due to its permanent deferral of itself.

Following this thread of thinking the impossible throughout these three works, we can see that Derrida’s thought, again and again, resists the usual temptation to read impossibility as something negative or pessimistic. Instead, there is always an openness, an unwillingness to treat “the impossible” as eternally impossible” in action, even if it is bound to never be realized. The impossible “preoccupies thinking,” and we should not shy away or reject it despite its difficulty. It is also important to make note of the pattern of aporias in Derrida’s work, as they use an extremely similar structure of thinking the impossible. Commonalities that are considered unquestionable in our lives, mourning, gift-giving, forgiveness, justice, hospitality, etc., are deconstructed and their aporias of impossibility are drawn out. And, despite their ultimate impossibilities, there is always an intending of mourning, pure gift-giving, etc. I move forward now, “knowing how the gift annuls itself” (Derrida, *Given Time*, 30), knowing my conditional hospitality as false, yet continuing to give anyway.

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Maisey Phillips | Storefronts Project: The Very Best

EL LEGADO DEL COLONIALISMO

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ABSTRACT This essay discusses how colonialism has evolved from an overt occupation and exploitation of a country by a foreign government to a more subtle manipulation of a country's citizens by their own government, using four Spanish-language films as case studies: *Noche de fuego* (*Prayers for the Stolen* in English), directed by Tatiana Huezo; *Distancia de rescate* and *La teta asustada* (*Fever Dream* and *The Milk of Sorrow*), directed by Claudia Llosa; and *También la lluvia* (*Even the Rain*), directed by Icíar Bollaín. In these films, the governments of Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Bolivia obfuscate their methods of exploitation with claims that they are acting in the best interest of their citizens. In reality, these institutions are primarily focused on economic profit, which disproportionately harms those marginalized by their class, race, or gender. These modern-day governments continue the legacy of colonialism by pretending to help their citizens.

El colonialismo, que en términos generales es ocupar otro país y explotarlo económicamente, se originó como una acción y se convirtió en una forma de pensar, lo que supone que gran parte de la lucha del siglo XXI ha consistido en descolonizar nuestras propias creencias y sistemas sociales. Esto significa que incluso las naciones que aparentemente se han deshecho de sus captores occidentales y han restaurado la autonomía de sus pueblos todavía luchan por abordar los restos del colonialismo a nivel estructural. El cine, a través de su uso de imágenes, es un medio poderoso para revelar y subvertir estas estructuras existentes. Las películas *Noche de fuego*, dirigida por Tatiana Huezo, *La teta asustada* y *Distancia de rescate*, dirigida por Claudia Llosa, y *También la lluvia*, dirigida por Icíar Bollaín, muestran gobiernos que infligen daño a sus ciudadanos de alguna forma, alegando explícita

o implícitamente que es por el bien común. De este modo, estos gobiernos actúan de la misma manera que lo han hecho los colonizadores en el pasado, afirmando que trabajan por el interés de su gente, pero en realidad solo están interesados en su tierra, recursos y mano de obra, como los colonizadores. Las directoras de estas cuatro películas se enfocan en personas que han sido marginadas por su sexo, género, raza, clase o los cuatro. Centrándose en cómo se explota a estas víctimas y cómo se justifica esa explotación, las directoras revelan que estos gobiernos continúan con el legado del colonialismo.

En *Noche de fuego* (*Prayers for the Stolen* en inglés), la directora Tatiana Huezo retrata la llegada a la mayoría de edad de tres niñas en Guerrero, México. Viven en una aldea rural y pobre donde las mujeres jóvenes son frecuentemente asesinadas o secuestradas por los carteles de la droga. La protagonista principal es Ana, una niña rebelde cuya madre la debe criar sola porque su padre trabaja en el norte y no siempre responde a sus llamadas telefónicas. El conflicto principal de la película es entre Ana y su madre, ya que esta última intenta limitar

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la libertad de Ana, escondiéndola del cartel cuando comienza a desarrollar características físicas femeninas. La película termina en un enfrentamiento con el cartel al que Ana y su madre sobreviven por poco, pero la amiga de Ana, María, es secuestrada. La toma final es de Ana y su otra amiga Paula viajando en un camión al norte, ya que sus madres han considerado que es demasiado peligroso que se queden en la aldea.

FIGURE 1

Fotograma de *Noche de fuego* mostrando (de izquierda a derecha) a María, la protagonista Ana y Paula como niñas durante la primera mitad de la película.

Image Credit: "Cine aparte • Noche de fuego." *Letras Libres*, 16 September 2021. letraslibres.com/cine-tv/cine-aparte-noche-de-fuego/.



Aunque los principales antagonistas de la película son los carteles que representan una amenaza constante para los habitantes de la aldea, el estilo documental de Huezco revela las formas en que el gobierno es culpable de la peligrosa situación en Guerrero. Muchas de las escenas de *Noche de fuego* no tienen diálogo y simplemente representan a los personajes en su rutina diaria. Las dos formas en que los aldeanos se ganan la vida en la película son trabajando en la cantera o en los campos de amapolas. Se muestra que la primera opción está disponible principalmente para los hombres e implica un trabajo peligroso y difícil. Los trabajadores transportan equipos pesados, colocan explosivos y respiran constantemente el polvo de la roca destruida. Este polvo ciertamente dañará sus pulmones con el tiempo, pero se muestra que muy pocas personas usan algún tipo de mascarilla para protegerse. La otra opción es trabajar para los mismos carteles que amenazan a la aldea, recolectando goma de

opio de las plantas de amapola para convertirla en heroína. Esto también es peligroso, ya que el gobierno mexicano frecuentemente intenta frenar la producción de drogas rociando los campos de amapola desde helicópteros con productos químicos peligrosos. La gente de la aldea a menudo queda atrapada en el espray, e incluso cuando no es así y el gobierno solo rocía los campos, los aldeanos pierden el acceso a su fuente de ingresos.

Parte de la razón por la cual las únicas dos opciones laborales disponibles para los aldeanos son peligrosas es la política interna del gobierno mexicano. Tal y como describe Mercedes Olivera en su artículo "Violencia Femicida: Violence Against Women and Mexico's Structural Crisis," las políticas neoliberales del gobierno mexicano "are applied dogmatically, favoring national and transnational companies and financial institutions at all costs" (52). El ejemplo principal de esto es la aprobación del TLCAN en 1994 (Tratado de Libre Comercio Norteamericano, o NAFTA por sus siglas en inglés), que estableció ciudades como Juárez "as a profitable hub of global industrialization" (Wright 708). El gobierno mexicano insiste en que el TLCAN es bueno para la economía, pero el aumento en la manufactura y las ganancias también produjo un aumento en la actividad y el asesinato por parte de los carteles, dejando como las principales víctimas a las mujeres y la clase trabajadora. En su película, Huezco describe la terrible elección que tiene que hacer la gente de Guerrero, entre un trabajo manual peligroso y mal pagado en la cantera provocado por el TLCAN, o un trabajo manual peligroso y mal pagado provocado por los carteles de la droga, que prosperan en las regiones pobres que han sido más perjudicadas por el TLCAN.

Además de obligar a los ciudadanos mexicanos a elegir el menor de los dos males, como lo representan los personajes de *Noche de fuego*, el gobierno mexicano también ha infligido violencia directa a sus ciudadanos a través de la acción militar. En los últimos años se han desplegado militares en varias ciudades mexicanas

donde el narcotráfico ha provocado un aumento de la violencia, y en muchas de esas ciudades la presencia de tropas federales ha incrementado el número de muertos. En Juárez, por ejemplo, “domestic and international human rights organizations have documented record-breaking numbers of human and civil rights violations on the part of Mexican federal forces” (Wright 708). El gobierno mexicano ha tratado de tergiversar el aumento en el número de muertes como una señal de que las tropas federales están haciendo su trabajo y que todos los asesinados por las fuerzas gubernamentales han estado asociados con el narcotráfico (708). Incluso si esto fuera cierto, enmarcar el tema de esta manera ignora la realidad de que a algunas personas no se les da otra opción que trabajar en el narcotráfico, como se muestra en *Noche de fuego*. Los soldados mexicanos están presentes a lo largo de la película, y aunque nunca dañan directamente a nadie, parecen intimidar a los aldeanos más que hacerlos sentirse seguros. A veces también parecen incitar al conflicto, como es el caso de una escena en la que los carteles atraviesan el puesto militar donde los aldeanos reciben atención médica. El cartel está molesto por la presencia militar e intenta intimidarlos, pero los militares no hacen nada mientras los aldeanos se refugian en los edificios.

FIGURE 2

Fotograma de *Noche de fuego* mostrando (de izquierda a derecha) a Paula, la protagonista Ana y María como adolescentes durante la segunda mitad de la película.

Image Credit: “Prayers for the Stolen.” 2021. *IMDb*, www.imdb.com/title/tt10366574/.



Todos estos temas económicos y sociales impactan más a las mujeres, por lo que Huezo centra su película casi exclusivamente en las historias de mujeres. Ella afirma en una entrevista que “Mexico is definitely a social reality characterized by these violent contexts, and women are usually the ones affected the most” (Mahmud 28). Tampoco es simplemente la violencia física a la que están sujetas las mujeres como resultado de las acciones del gobierno, sino también la pobreza y la marginación. Olivera describe cómo “femicide is but the extreme end of a range of violations of women’s human rights—a direct and extreme expression of economic, political, social, and gender violence that is structural in nature” (50). Las luchas que soporta la madre de Ana como esencialmente madre soltera y la dificultad de encontrar un maestro para la escuela local son formas adicionales en las que se muestra la opresión de las mujeres en la película. Si bien las mujeres son los principales objetivos y víctimas de la violencia, Rita Laura Segato señala en su artículo “Patriarchy from Margin to Center: Discipline, Territoriality, and Cruelty in the Apocalyptic Phase of Capital” que “acts of violence against ‘minorities’ are nothing other than the discipline imposed by patriarchal forces on all of us on the political margins” (619). El colonialismo, en su enfoque ciego sobre la explotación de la tierra y el trabajo, abusa e ignora a los marginados de la sociedad, pues el feminicidio es sólo un resultado de un sistema de gobierno colonizador que oprime a todos los marginados.

Otra película que se centra en el feminicidio es *La teta asustada* (*The Milk of Sorrow* en inglés), donde la directora Claudia Llosa cuenta la historia de una mujer que se llama Fausta. Basada en un pueblo en Lima, Perú, la película comienza con la muerte de su madre, quien fue víctima de agresión sexual por parte de soldados peruanos durante los años ochenta cuando El Sendero Luminoso era un grupo terrorista activo. Fausta intenta ganar suficiente dinero en la ciudad para enterrar a su madre en su aldea natal, mientras que estar cerca de hombres desconocidos la asusta debido a las historias

horribles que su madre le contó cuando era niña (de ahí “la teta asustada,” el concepto de que los bebés heredan el trauma de su madre a través de la leche materna). Fausta guarda una papa dentro de su vagina para disuadir a los hombres de violarla, ya que el asco es la única forma de defensa en su mente. Ella trabaja para una pianista adinerada que termina robando canciones inventadas por Fausta para su concierto sin darle crédito. Al final, Fausta deja que los médicos le quiten la papa y puede enterrar a su madre junto al mar.

FIGURE 3

Fotograma de *La teta asustada* mostrando a la protagonista Fausta (derecha) y su tío (izquierda) trabajando en un evento de bodas.

Image Credit: “Fausta: La teta asustada.” *Festival du nouveau cinéma*, 2019. 2019.nouveaucinema.ca/en/films/fausta-la-teta-asustada.



El trauma generacional que dicta las acciones de Fausta a lo largo de la película es el resultado de que el gobierno peruano supuestamente protegía a sus ciudadanos contra El Sendero Luminoso, el cual, al igual que los carteles mexicanos, era un grupo que se aprovechaba de los empobrecidos e indígenas. Las tropas federales torturaban a los sospechosos de trabajar con el grupo terrorista, y el grupo terrorista obligaba a la gente a darle recursos, por lo que los peruanos quedaron atrapados en una situación similar a la representada en *Noche de fuego*. El daño colateral causado por el ejército peruano en su lucha contra El Sendero Luminoso es semejante al daño causado por el ejército mexicano en su lucha contra los carteles de la droga, cuyas víctimas frecuentemente son

las mujeres. Mientras tanto, el gobierno peruano insistía en que estaban actuando en el interés de los ciudadanos peruanos para protegerlos del terrorismo.

El artículo “Sexual Violence and Justice in Postconflict Peru” de Jelke Boesten y Melissa Fisher analiza cómo la violencia sexual precede y sobrevive a este conflicto político, lo que significa que existe antes y después del conflicto, mientras la mayoría de la gente considera que esta violencia termina con el conflicto. Así como los efectos económicos del TLCAN aumentaron las tasas de feminicidio ya presentes en México, el conflicto entre el gobierno peruano y El Sendero Luminoso exacerbó las tasas de feminicidio en Perú. La observación de Rita Laura Segato sobre la interseccionalidad de la violencia gubernamental se aplica aquí, como explican Boesten y Fisher que “[i]n a society stratified by gender, race, and class, exerting power over indigenous women can confirm heterosexual masculinity. Committing sexual violence may compensate for one’s own powerlessness” (3). Al igual que antes, la violencia contra las mujeres es un resultado de un sistema colonial que abusa de los marginados por género, raza y clase.

Al centrarse en Fausta y en su viaje, Llosa muestra cómo la injusticia y la opresión del pasado continúan hasta el día de hoy, exponiendo la naturaleza estructural de esta violencia. Los problemas que enfrentó su madre no se resolvieron, simplemente se mitigaron, como lo muestra el artículo de Boesten y Fisher, el que trata de comprender las circunstancias que crean a los violadores. No es simplemente la cultura de la violación en Perú lo que hace que los cuerpos femeninos sean susceptibles a ser manipulados, sino la cultura general de misoginia y falta de respeto por la autonomía de la mujer. Al final de la película, Fausta intenta devolverle a su madre su autonomía corporal enterrándola donde ella hubiera querido, y de esta manera, recupera también su autonomía.

FIGURE 4

Fotograma de *La teta asustada* mostrando a la protagonista Fausta sosteniendo una flor en la boca mientras mira a través de la mirilla de una puerta.

Image Credit: “La teta asustada”: cuando la cinta peruana ganó el máximo premio de la Berlinale.” *El Comercio*, 14 February 2019. elcomercio.pe/luces/cine/teta-asustada-berlinale-diez-anos-cinta-peruana-nominada-claudia-llosa-magaly-solier-fotos-noticia-607228-noticia/.



En *Distancia de rescate* (*Fever Dream* en inglés), la directora Claudia Llosa se centra en las historias de dos madres en el campo de Argentina, Amanda (quien está de vacaciones) y Carola (quien vive allí de forma permanente). Ambas mujeres son esencialmente madres solteras durante el transcurso de la película, ya que sus maridos son distantes tanto física como emocionalmente. Las historias de estas dos mujeres y sus hijos se entrelazan con la contaminación química desenfadada que se vive en el campo argentino, que afecta de diversas maneras a todos sus habitantes. La enfermedad y la mutación son comunes, tanto en humanos como en animales, pero la causa no se discute abiertamente y, a veces, se considera sobrenatural. La película termina con la muerte de Amanda y la implicación de que su hija, Nina, se ha fusionado espiritualmente con el hijo de Carola, David.

Un estudio realizado en 2020 muestra que niveles peligrosos de contaminación por pesticidas continúan presentes en el agua de Argentina, diciendo que “[a]ll the concentrations were above [Maximum Residue Limit] established for water, and they are a matter of concern because it is not suitable to human consumption” (Medina et al. 988). Llosa se enfoca principalmente en el impacto

que este nivel de contaminación tiene en la zona rural, especialmente en la vida de las mujeres. Los pesticidas se utilizan para evitar la pérdida de cosechas a causa de los insectos, y de esa forma se utilizan para aumentar las ganancias. De la misma manera que el gobierno mexicano prioriza las empresas más grandes con el TLCAN, el gobierno argentino prioriza las grandes empresas agrícolas por encima de los ciudadanos individuales. Se puede afirmar que el uso de pesticidas es mejor para la economía en general, pero eso ignora el hecho de que estos pesticidas están dañando a sus ciudadanos cuando podrían desecharse de manera segura. Una vez más, la directora se centra en el daño que estos gobiernos infligen a las mujeres y sus hijos e hijas.

FIGURE 5

Fotograma de *Distancia de rescate* mostrando a la protagonista Amanda (izquierda) y Carola (derecha) tomando el sol.]

Image Credit: “‘Fever Dream’ Review: Touching From a Distance.” *The New York Times*, 13 October 2021. www.nytimes.com/2021/10/13/movies/fever-dream-review.html.



En *También la lluvia* (*Even the Rain* en inglés), la directora Icíar Bollaín retrata una versión ficticia de las protestas reales de Cochabamba en el año 2000. Fueron provocadas por el gobierno boliviano cuando aumentó los precios del agua para satisfacer a los inversionistas extranjeros, e incluso aprobó una ley que prohibía la recolección de agua de lluvia. Un equipo de filmación intenta hacer una película histórica sobre la conquista por Cristóbal Colón y otros, a pesar de las inexactitudes históricas de filmar en Bolivia y utilizar extras indígenas que hablaran quechua.

Al final, la película no se puede terminar de filmar debido a las protestas por la población indígena pobre que crecen en magnitud, muchos de los actores huyen y el director Sebastián y el productor Costa aparentemente obtienen una nueva perspectiva sobre las luchas de los pueblos indígenas.

El aumento de los precios del agua por parte del gobierno tiene una clara conexión con las tres películas anteriores, ya que una vez más, un gobierno actúa como colonizador al dañar a los grupos marginados y afirmar que están actuando por su bien y por el bien del país. En una escena, un funcionario del gobierno boliviano insiste en que los manifestantes indígenas están mal informados y que las protestas en general son solo una excusa para causar problemas. Por lo tanto, el gobierno no debe ceder a las demandas y necesita responder agresivamente para proteger a la nación y su gente. La persona que sufre las lesiones más graves es Belén, una niña indígena pobre que queda atrapada en un fuego cruzado durante las protestas. Una vez más, aquellos que son miembros de grupos marginados son las víctimas más frecuentes de la violencia gubernamental.

FIGURE 6

Fotograma de *También la Lluvia* mostrando al protagonista Daniel (centro) liderando a los manifestantes.

Image Credit: "También la Lluvia (Even the Rain, Spain/France/Mexico 2010)." *The Case for Global Film*, 18 August 2012. itpworld.wordpress.com/2012/08/18/tambien-la-lluvia-even-the-rain-spain-france-mexico-2010/.



De las cuatro películas, esta es la única que utiliza el punto de vista de quienes participan en actos colonizadores. Los productores de la película se aprovechan de los extras indígenas pobres pagándoles salarios bajos, y están más enfocados en su película sobre los conquistadores que en la lucha de la gente por su derecho al agua. Icíar Bollaín hace esto para desafiar a su audiencia, que está compuesta en su mayoría por personas blancas que se han beneficiado del colonialismo de alguna manera. Costa y Sebastian representan a la audiencia y, en cierto modo, al gobierno colonizador boliviano. El artículo "Consuming Empathy in *También la lluvia*" de Elisabeth Austin interpreta este final pulcro y ordenado como demasiado pulcro y ordenado, ya que Costa abandona la lucha por el agua por la seguridad de su hogar. Esto obliga a los espectadores, seguros también en sus hogares, a considerar cuánto tiempo ellos mismos "will remember the conflict between narratives of progress (in the form of neoliberal industrial development) and real-life betterment in living conditions for the working-class citizens of Bolivia and other less industrialized countries around the world" (Austin 319). En otras palabras, el final lleva a la audiencia a mirar más allá de la superficie de lo que dicen los gobiernos y cómo sus acciones hacia sus ciudadanos reflejan una actitud colonialista.

FIGURE 7

Fotograma de *También la Lluvia* mostrando a Daniel (izquierda) vestido como el cacique taino Hatuey y hablando con el director de la película de ficción Sebastián (derecha).

Image Credit: "Even the Rain." 2010. IMDb, www.imdb.com/title/tt1422032/.



Noche de fuego, *Distancia de rescate*, *La teta asustada* y *También la lluvia* se enfocan en las formas en que los gobiernos continúan con el legado del colonialismo. Así como las poblaciones indígenas fueron esclavizadas y convertidas al cristianismo hace cientos de años “por su propio bien,” los grupos marginados de hoy se ven obligados a realizar trabajos peligrosos por circunstancias económicas nefastas “por el bien del país.” Las directoras de cada una de estas películas usan varios puntos

de vista para analizar el impacto multifacético que este colonialismo gubernamental tiene en diferentes personas en diferentes países. Este problema no es exclusivo a América Latina, ya que se pueden ver restos del colonialismo en casi todas las partes del mundo. La apariencia exterior de ese colonialismo es lo único que ha cambiado, y en ese sentido, la famosa cita de Eugene O’Neill es apta: “There is no present or future—only the past, happening over and over again—now.”

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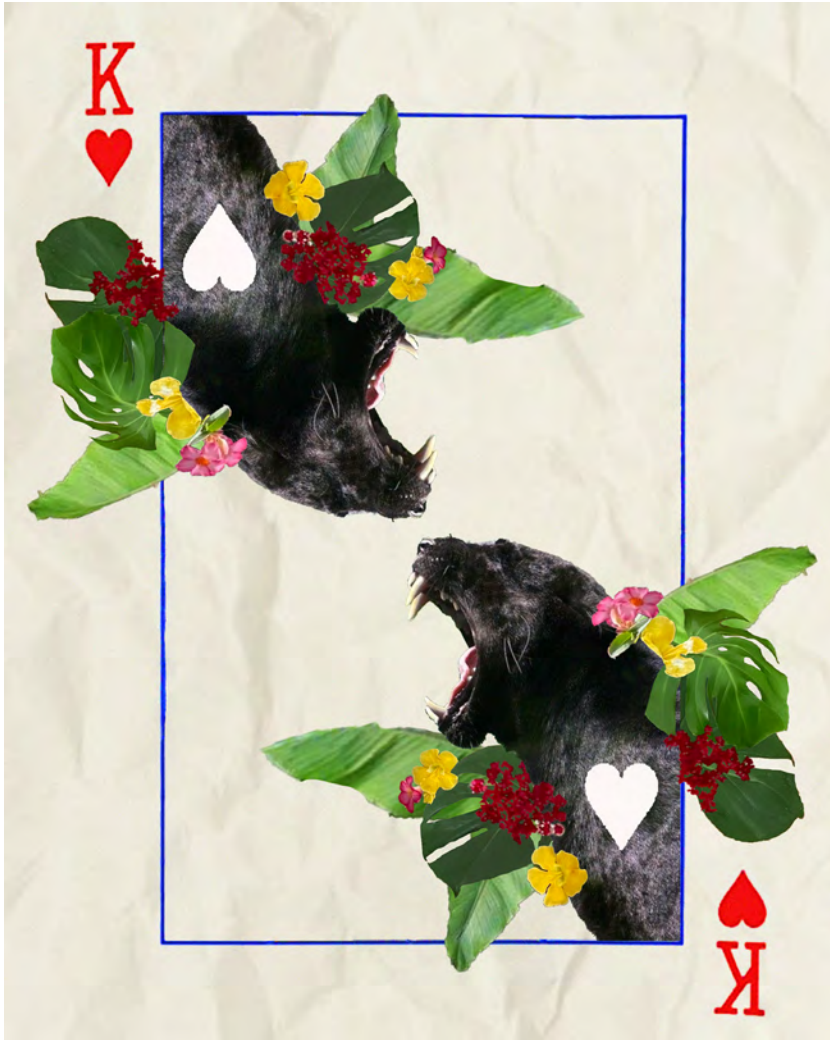
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Angelina Cortez | Panther Playing Card

HEAVEN'S GATE: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE GROUP'S CONSTRUCTION OF CODE AND IDEOLOGY

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Semiotics is the study of the signs, and no other phenomena is as rich with signifiers as a cult. A cult is typically created by an intelligent, charismatic personality who believes that they alone hold information that will solve or address a negative societal fact. The Heaven's Gate cult, based in California, was a group that believed in an alien afterlife and is best remembered for the suicide deaths of thirty-nine members in 1997. Members of the Heaven's Gate cult developed a blind faith, rejecting the traditional American lifestyle to dedicate themselves to reaching an Edenic—an alien state after death that purportedly superseded any life available on Earth. Ti and Do, the founders of Heaven's Gate, led the group by positioning themselves as figurative heroes and cultivated the ideological identity that led to the death of their followers. A semiotic analysis of Heaven's Gate will explore how the cult's two leaders gained power through creating and enforcing an abnormal set of beliefs as well as exploring how members acted out an ideology and associated behavioral code to gain access to an extraterrestrial heaven called the Next Level.

Group Origins

Heaven's Gate was realized in 1972 by Bonnie Lu Nettles and Marshall Applewhite. Beginning as a loose organization of individuals, the group grew to over two hundred members at its peak.¹ Nettles and Applewhite—

who took on the names Ti and Do, respectively, and were collectively referred to as “the Two”—“produced a sophisticated theology combining dispensational Protestantism, theosophy, and UFO lore.”² As Michael Hafford mentions, “The cult's philosophy took its roots from Applewhite's Presbyterian upbringing”³—the Presbyterian church is a branch of Protestantism—and placed Ti and Do as Messiah figures. The foundational lore describes “how [the Two] would be publicly killed and rise up again after three days—an event they referred to as ‘The Demonstration.’”⁴ While the group evolved throughout the twenty-five years Heaven's Gate was active, its original tenants remained. Through the teachings of Ti and Do, members of Heaven's Gate believed that real existence, free from the pain and weight of human existence, was reachable on the so-called Next Level.

The Next Level, comparable to biblical Heaven, was only accessible through dedication to Ti and Do who held the secrets to alien transformation. Following an apocalypse, “a UFO would descend for them and their followers, taking them away and transforming their bodies into perfected beings.”⁵ When Ti died in 1985, she was deified and became a guiding figure who continued to preach through mental communication with Do.⁶ Under Do, members were required to dispose of material possessions, gender

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1 *Heaven's Gate: The Cult of Cults*, directed by Clay Tweel (CNN Original Studios, 2020), 3 hrs., 19 min., <https://www.hbomax.com/series/urn:hbo:series:GX72QuwdZoyGqwgEAAAY4>.

2 David G. Robertson, “Benjamin Zeller, *Heaven's Gate: America's UFO Religion*,” *History of Religions* 56, no. 3 (February 2017): 361, <https://doi.org/10.1086/689402>.

3 Michael Hafford, “Heaven's Gate 20 Years Later: 10 Things You Didn't Know,” *Rolling Stone*, March 24, 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/feature/heavens-gate-20-years-later-10-things-you-didnt-know-114563/>.

4 Robertson, “Benjamin Zeller.”

5 Robertson, “Benjamin Zeller.”

6 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

associations, and all family connections. As George D. Chryssides states, “With [Do] as the sole leader of the group, the New Age components diminished, giving way to Protestant-derived ideas of dispensationalism and belief in imminent Rapture.”⁷

Heaven’s Gate was never violent; however, the consistent belief in impending divine destruction led the remaining members to pursue a drastic action. On March 26, 1997, Rancho Santa Fe Police officers discovered thirty-nine dead bodies inside the Heaven’s Gate compound, all of whom passed by way of suffocation and the willful ingestion of barbiturates.⁸ Following this event, the group was disbanded, but there is speculation that the cult’s website and beliefs are quietly maintained by surviving members.⁹

Retrospectively, it can be difficult to comprehend why Heaven’s Gate attracted as many members as it did. The group was formed in 1972 and followed in the wake of the countercultural “free love” movement of the 1960s, which was described as being “a decade of war, rebellion, drugs, sex, peace, [and] love.”¹⁰ The 1960s and its values shaped the future members of Heaven’s Gate, instilling a desire for freedom, self-discovery, and fulfillment beyond a job and a stable homelife. Into the 1970s, young adults sought to rebel from the strict domesticity of the post-World War II life their parents lived, characterized by seeking long-term careers and homemaking. Young adults fulfilled their rebellious desires and search for mental exploration through psychedelic drug experimentation and alternative faiths.

Numerous future members of Heaven’s Gate divulged using psychedelic drugs as a gateway into cultural exploration, but the overarching answer to the “why” of fringe group membership was self-fulfillment for “more.” Sawyer, a member of Heaven’s Gate who left shortly before the 1997 group suicide, recalls “seeking truth” and explored multiple fringe cultural movements, such as Sufism Reoriented, before finding Heaven’s Gate.¹¹ According to Chryssides’s book on Heaven’s Gate, “allied to the rejection of traditional authority and the belief in the integrity of the self came the concept of the seeker.”¹² Frank, a member of Heaven’s Gate for twenty years, describes his motivation for joining as feeling that “there’s gotta be something more than this.”¹³ “More” can be understood as a general dissatisfaction with the presented life path, such as that of the age group’s parents; members embodied this desire for more by joining Heaven’s Gate.

In the early 1970s, the notion of alien saviors was not as outwardly questionable to the general public as extraterrestrial life was a relatively new theory. Benjamin Zeller, a preeminent authority on Heaven’s Gate, describes the general open attitude held toward extraterrestrial existence in an audio recording noting that the 1970s were

much closer to the birth of UFO-ology and belief in extraterrestrial and extraterrestrial visitation and flying saucers. One of the best-selling books of the time was a book called *Chariot of the Gods* [that claimed that] the world’s ancient religions were actually founded by extraterrestrial visitors who passed themselves off as gods because that’s how the ancients could understand them. This is one of the best sellers in the 1970s. People gobbled this up.¹⁴

7 George D. Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate: Postmodernity and Popular Culture in a Suicide Group* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 11.

8 Cable News Network [CNN], “39 Men Die in Mass Suicide near San Diego,” March 26, 1997, <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9703/26/mass.suicide.too/index.html>.

9 Hafford, “Heaven’s Gate 20 Years Later.”

10 Patricia Lantz, “Key Facts about Family Life in the 1960s,” LoveToKnow, accessed June 13, 2022, <https://family.lovetoknow.com/about-family-values/key-facts-about-family-life-1960s>.

11 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

12 Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 3.

13 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

14 Ibid.

Popular media discussed aliens as a legitimate potential phenomenon, which allowed the casual belief in extraterrestrial life. The motivations for joining Heaven's Gate become slightly more understandable when we combine the cultural context of psychedelic drug usage and seeking behavior of the cultural subset who ended up joining Heaven's Gate.

The follower membership may have been an exploratory result of the time, but founders Bonnie Lu Nettles and Marshall Applewhite were older and thus did not experience the same influences during their respective formative years. Nettles was a wife, mother, and nurse, all of which fit into the more traditional existence of post-World War II baby boomers.¹⁵ According to her daughter, following the collapse of her marriage, Nettles became "obsessed" with spiritually fringe beliefs, such as tarot, and even claimed she had a real, direct connection to Saint Francis.¹⁶ Applewhite had failed to find career success following his departure from the Protestant church, and following a near-death experience, he was cared for by Nurse Bonnie Nettles.¹⁷ Both "Ti" Nettles and "Do" Applewhite failed to succeed in normal American society and, in response, created an exceptionally abnormal set of beliefs. But what, from a semiotic standpoint, do the labels "normal" and "abnormal" mean?

Code and Ideology

"Normal" is a loaded word, rife with assumptions of what standard form is within a subject. Its opposite, "abnormal," is equally abstract, allowing for all deviations from which a subject is being compared.¹⁸ Normal is the belief of the dominant ideology, whereas abnormal is anything counter or challenging to the preeminent group's values.¹⁹ Fringe belief groups tend to derive their philosophies from

one or several foundational disagreements within their society's normal practices. Understanding ab/normalcy, through semiotic theory, provides an understanding of how Heaven's Gate operated, which adds nuance to their beliefs in a way that may discourage one from judging the group by its legacy as a purely alien suicide cult.

Two semiotic theories apply to the discussion of ab/normality: code and binary opposition. Normal society (which Heaven's Gate left) produced the dominant, or hegemonic, code of the time—that of careers, family life, and domesticity. Members of Heaven's Gate produced and lived out an oppositional, or counterhegemonic, code that directly countered the normal code. However, the group also applied negotiated code, wherein some facets of the dominant code were sparingly allowed into their beliefs. Heaven's Gate adopted numerous attributes of the popular TV show *Star Trek* and famously recruited new members using the Internet, then in its infancy.²⁰ Both the Internet and *Star Trek* were a definitive part of the dominant code, but both items served to further Heaven's Gate's beliefs and were negotiated to belong to their own oppositional position.

Binary opposition is "black and white thinking," or comprehending meaning through opposite terms.²¹ In terms of ab/normality in Heaven's Gate, binary opposition is visible in the way the group firmly asserted themselves, in all manners possible, against "normal" society. Any extremist position Heaven's Gate took—be it in their appearance, beliefs, or actions—is an example of the group's predisposition to act against the dominant code. The most intriguing example may be their deaths: surviving members, and the deceased via a farewell video, report being elated at their impending death.²² In the dominant code of American society, suicide is an

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Routledge, 2017), 126.

¹⁹ Chandler, *Semiotics*, 126.

²⁰ CNN, "Some Members of Suicide Cult Castrated," March 28, 1997, <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9703/28/mass.suicide.pm/>.

²¹ Chandler, *Semiotics*, 127.

²² Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

awful action, one taken in desperation. Before joyously taking their lives to ascend to the Next Level, the group celebrated their final earthly moments with a final act in defiance of normalcy: having a “last supper” and keeping with Do’s Presbyterian upbringing²³ A joyous suicide was a final rejection of normal society as well as the ultimate display of complete commitment to Heaven’s Gate.

For the purpose of this semiotic analysis, “[i]deology . . . is not a static set of values and ways of seeing, but a practice.”²⁴ Ideology is the culminative actions that construct group identity and further the actor’s allegiance to the group. Within the cult, ideology established an abnormal, total commitment to the beliefs and values set forth by Ti and Do, which was often visible within any single member. The member identity became so deeply entrenched with the group’s routine beliefs and daily habits that they become inextricable from one another. The group identity requires one to be “able to use and respond appropriately to signs, connotations, and myths. Participating in the signifying practice of [the] culture [they are] the means by which ideology maintains itself.”²⁵ Ideology uses figurative language, “which is part of the reality maintenance system of a culture.”²⁶ Creating and maintaining an ideology requires group belief and participation. Ideology is action that demonstrates belief; through devotion to Ti and Do, the members of Heaven’s Gate actively built the group’s purpose. Integral to Ti and Do’s shared power was their positioning as saviors to their devotees, which they created using the metaphorical position of the hero. They proselytized their possession of divine wisdom to share with their followers what would allow them to outlast the apocalyptic Rapture referred to in the Book of Revelations.²⁷

23 Hafford, “Heaven’s Gate 20 Years Later.”

24 John Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 3rd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 163.

25 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 178.

26 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 173.

27 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

Metaphor assumes power through linguistic integration.²⁸ It is socially contrived and coded into a group’s daily experience, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that furthers and strengthens beliefs. Ti and Do created their leader identity by “identifying themselves as the two Witnesses of Revelation 11.”²⁹ This claim is semiotically relevant through multiple layers: claiming their communal identity as the foretold biblical witnesses to the apocalypse, setting themselves apart from the common folk, and presenting their beliefs as a solution to the destruction. All three of these connections derive and deliver power to Ti and Do’s claims as leaders of Heaven’s Gate. First, as biblical idols, Ti and Do could claim divine right to power, a historically situated invocation, that is only disputable through complete denunciation of Heaven’s Gate. With even the slightest inclination toward belief, it would be difficult to reject this claim as disagreeing would destroy the validity of the system. Second, the biblical defense set Ti and Do apart from the common folk by claiming that God has foretold only the Two as marked figures that had been mentioned in the Bible’s description of the end of God’s creation. Third, ideology is perpetuated through markedness, and Ti and Do were marked as saviors.³⁰ No other member could claim this rite, so Ti and Do held higher statuses. With God’s endorsement, whatever beliefs they presented would be considered the divine secret to outlasting the apocalypse foretold in the biblical Book of Revelations. Their direct connection to God presented Ti and Do as heroes to those willing to listen, believe, and follow.

The hero metaphor is semiotically significant because it shows how the figurative language changed the action and hierarchy of the group. The traditional hero myth “consisted of several salient features—for example, heroes often came from another (heavenly) world, and they possessed superhuman strength, although they might

28 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 173.

29 Robertson, “Benjamin Zeller.”

30 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 114.

be constrained by a ‘flaw’ that rendered them vulnerable in certain situations.”³¹ Ti and Do claimed two different heroic sources: God and aliens. By borrowing biblical power, the Two garnered divine power. The extraterrestrial Next Level, a literal “heavenly world,” was a place only they had the knowledge to reach. Their statuses as earthly humans were their fatal flaw; Ti and Do preached a necessary departure from “human vehicles” to reach the Next Level.³²

The Two used the hero metaphor to dangle the Next Level in front of members, requiring complete devotion to receive any chance at reaching this divine state; according to Chryssides, “only ‘tagged’ individuals were guaranteed salvation in the Next Level.”³³ Dedicated members and leaders insisted that Ti and Do were figures of mythical proportions, which normalized the belief within the group. Members of Heaven’s Gate praised their leaders through their everyday behaviors, leading the hierarchy to become conventional and normalized “as though the figurative system that surrounds [it is] logical and natural.”³⁴ The hero metaphor equated Ti and Do with messianic prophets, to the extent that saying their names was akin to invoking a god. Therefore, the denial of the Two’s power would have been harder to deny than to prove, especially within the social context of the group’s furtherance of its ideology. The conventional creation of the Two as heroes ideologically functioned in the group’s daily existence because the cult’s daily worship meant access to the Next Level. Following Ti’s death, “as Applewhite felt the need to assert his own authority over the group, all purported communication from the Next Level required his endorsement.”³⁵ Ti became an invisible god to the group

who was gifted an even higher rapport with God than Do’s earthly presence.

The cultivation of myth is foundational to the power of Ti and Do and required followers’ total dedication to the creeds of the Two and the Next Level. Myth and its associated values are the physical manifestations of an ideological structure; that is, they are themes observable in action and discussion.³⁶ In this case, members of Heaven’s Gate supported the myth of the Next Level and changed their actions, lives, and bodies in search of it; as Hafford notes, “members were asked to cleanse their bodies of the impure influence of things like fast food and impure sexual thoughts.”³⁷ In maintaining a cult belief, it is absolutely necessary that the mythos surrounding the leaders and the knowledge that *only* they possess be upheld through the

ideological process of signification. Central to this process are the connotated values and myths common to members of a culture. The only way their commonality can be established and maintained is by their frequent use in communication. . . . The user of the sign keeps it in currency by using it and maintains the myths and connotated values of the culture.³⁸

In terms of myth, the connotated values of Heaven’s Gate were the dedication to the Two and the Next Level. These two foundational creeds functioned ideologically, allowing the group to create itself, thrive, and evolve. The actions and systems that supported this were the code by which Heaven’s Gate operated.

Code works within an ideological framework, at the ground level, to reinforce the belief system. According to semiotician Daniel Chandler, “Codes organize signs into meaningful systems . . . codes provide a framework

31 Marcel Danesi, *The Quest for Meaning: A Guide to Semiotic Theory and Practice*, 2nd ed. (University of Toronto Press, 2020), 87.

32 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

33 Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 11.

34 Thomas McLaughlin, “Figurative Language,” in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd ed., eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 86.

35 Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 4.

36 Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 158.

37 Hafford, “Heaven’s Gate 20 Years Later.”

38 Fiske, *Introduction to Communication Studies*, 163–64.

within which signs make sense. They embody rules or conventions of interpretation which systematically regulate the ways in which meanings are produced.”³⁹ The codes at work in Heaven’s Gate were narrowcast codes, which are shared by limited audiences, and thus must be learned to be applied.⁴⁰ The use of narrowcast codes distinguishes the group and its innerworkings as separate from codes used by the general populace, thus reinforcing an internal identity.

Social codes are visible in language, body, and commodity.⁴¹ Heaven’s Gate members adopted new names to indicate their full inclusion into the cult.⁴² Member Neody recalls receiving his suffix “only after he had proven his commitment to the group, approximately three months later, and that this represented his new ‘family name.’”⁴³ The use of the diminutive suffix *-ody* placed members into a nominative submission to God, extending to Ti and Do through their positions as metaphorical heroes. In addition to Neody, other members were renamed Jwnody, Lvbody, and Nrrody, using portions of their legal names in combination with the *-ody* suffix.⁴⁴ In a video, Do is quoted explaining that undertaking a different name, like both of the Twos did, helped members “overcome” their earthly lives and set forth a new path dedicated to God.⁴⁵ However, here, Do is metaphorically referring to a dedication to himself and his partner as they operated as the conduit to God’s true form in the Next Level. The hierarchal difference between the Two and the members is visible in the style of the newly undertaken name. Ti and Do are stylized in contrast to all their

submissive followers, but the consistent style of naming was not the only manner that conformity was dictated through code.

Representational codes are conventions of form, style, and content.⁴⁶ Representational codes are analogous signs, meaning that they allow for comparisons or suggest similarities between ideas. Heaven’s Gate used representational codes to create cohesion and signify their identity within the group; this created the analogy that if the codes were in use, the associated actor was in the group. Within the cult, members adhered strictly to similarity. Behaviors were strictly dictated with members being required to prepare food in strictly allotted amounts and in specific, repeatable steps. According to the waitress that served the group at the “last meal” prior to their deaths, all members ordered a turkey pot pie, iced tea, and apple pie.⁴⁷

Heaven’s Gate conformed to tight representations of appearance in life and death, most notably in appearance. According to a CNN article published on March 28, 1997, “Both male and female members of the Heaven’s Gate group affected a unisex look, with buzz-cut hair and shapeless clothes. This androgynous appearance led investigators to at first mistakenly identify all of the bodies as young men,”⁴⁸ though it would later be realized that twenty-one women and eighteen men had died.⁴⁹ Their death uniform also included a patch that read “Heaven’s Gate Away Team” with one member in their farewell interview joyfully remarking “thirty-nine to beam up!,” which were both references to *Star Trek*.⁵⁰ The most iconic, lasting memory of Heaven’s Gate is the shoes they wore during the suicide: black Nike Decades.⁵¹ Members of

39 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 201.

40 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 232.

41 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 243.

42 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

43 Benjamin E. Zeller, *Heaven’s Gate: America’s UFO Religion* (New York University Press, 2014), 139.

44 Mary Colurso. “7 Creepy Things We Learned about Cult Leaders and Former UA Teacher Marshall Applewhite.” *AL.com*, December 13, 2020, <https://www.al.com/life/2020/12/7-creepy-things-we-learned-about-cult-leader-and-former-ua-teacher-marshall-applewhite.html>.

45 Zeller, *Heaven’s Gate: America’s UFO Religion*, 139.

46 Chandler, *Semiotics*, 210.

47 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

48 CNN, “Some Members of Suicide Cult Castrated.”

49 CNN, “Mass Suicide Involved Sedatives, Vodka and Careful Planning.”

March 27, 1997, <http://edition.cnn.com/US/9703/27/suicide/index.html>.

50 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

51 Hafford, “Heaven’s Gate 20 Years Later.”

Heaven's Gate selected the specific style of shoe because it was readily available at a low price for the thirty-nine pairs, but everyone wearing the same shoe model functioned to symbolize the insistence on similarity in the group.⁵² Nike discontinued the Decade shoe due to its close association with Heaven's Gate, showing the popular impact and strengthening its identification as a symbolic icon.⁵³ Heaven's Gate's greatest legacy is the group's iconic dress in these final moments, but these details also speak to the strength of the representational code of conformity throughout the cult.

Representational codes include gender expression—which was discouraged by Do who actively preached against the need for traditional gender conformity. Some members of Heaven's Gate—including Do—castrated themselves, and both male and female members kept short hair and wore loose, homemade uniforms.⁵⁴ Do's position against gender also forbade any sexual behavior and, in combination with gender disapproval, may have arose from conflict over his own homosexuality.⁵⁵ Do had some kind of a relationship with a male member prior to his declaration against gender constructs, though it is not clear if this relationship was only romantic or if became sexual.⁵⁶ Do's official reasoning for his declaration against gender constructs was that gender was not a construct in the Next Level and that, in preparation for this change, members should disassociate themselves from gender identities during their time on Earth. By shedding gender labels, the representational code of conformity strengthened Heaven's Gate ideologically, physically, and linguistically.

Learning about Heaven's Gate, even by means of a semiotic lens and without a value judgement on their beliefs, leaves the quiet question of how the group

retained enough steadfast believers; some believers were even committed enough to pursue castration and thirty-nine were persuaded to die. Cults create environments that promote long-term, committed belief to the leader's purposes. Members, when indoctrinated, develop a mental preference to the belief system they are under. Semiotically, this is referred to as a "blik." A blik is a blind spot produced by faith and a predisposition to believe even when presented with overwhelming contradictory evidence.⁵⁷ For members of Heaven's Gate, the blik functioned as an all-consuming religion or alliance to Ti, Do, and the Next Level; this blik prevented members from leaving the group. A blik is developed using selective perception and motivated reasoning; members only saw what they wanted to see, and "any information that disconfirm[ed] a belief [was] questioned."⁵⁸ Within Heaven's Gate, the blik was strengthened after Ti's death and in the desperation leading up to their suicide. Followers of Heaven's Gate believed their relief would only be found after death, in the Next Level; the followers viewed death as a conduit to happiness, a final resolution to the search for more that prompted them to join Heaven's Gate.

Ti and Do had formed Heaven's Gate and conditioned their followers to uphold the Two as answers to the apocalypse. Death, in their beliefs, was not a finite stage of being. When Ti died, Do was presented with a conundrum as no UFO had come to deliver her body to the Next Level. In response to Ti's death, Do became the sole leader, and Ti became a spiritual figure who gifted Do ultimate authority over the group, speaking through him. For seventeen years, this strategy was accepted by the members because of their blik; as Goodale states, "humans are so deeply committed to their beliefs that they find ever more complicated schemes . . . to support their

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

56 Tweel, *The Cult of Cults*.

57 Greg Goodale, *The Rhetorical Invention of Man: A History of Distinguishing Humans from Other Animals* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 19.

58 Goodale, *The Rhetorical Invention of Man*, 19.

blik before tossing it out as impractical.”⁵⁹ Do was the lone figurehead of Heaven’s Gate for longer than Ti had been involved, which speaks to the power of motivated reasoning and selective perception.

Heaven’s Gate, with its religious connotations and leadership claiming witness to the biblical Rapture, presented itself as a type of New Age religion; according to Chryssides, “if we have a religion, and it seems familiar to us, and its sheer familiarity makes it seem normative . . . [that] makes it difficult to explain to those who are unfamiliar with it.”⁶⁰ Despite members’ inability to properly justify their membership during rare contact with outsiders, Heaven’s Gate members wanted to stay in the group as they were already subject to their bliks and because the cult had created their perception of the world. Members did not believe they were in a cult, a label given only after the events of March 1997. Instead, members believed they were on the path to a better afterlife. As Chryssides elaborates, the “two survivors of Heaven’s Gate did not regard themselves as having had a fortunate escape [from the suicides].”⁶¹ The beliefs had developed so strongly, so undeniably that one member, found after death, “was wearing the standard black trainers and a black T-shirt bearing a patch that read: ‘Heaven’s Gate Away Team.’”⁶² Heaven’s Gate, in its end, had created an incredibly powerful set of beliefs that no committed member, current or former, could completely shed.

Conclusion

The collection of signs at work in Heaven’s Gate created a group with immense power and weight. The Heaven’s Gate cult stands out in American popular culture for its bizarre system of beliefs and unfortunately large loss of life, but these remnants are not indicative of its members’ experiences within the group. Members of Heaven’s Gate

truly believed that through their beliefs and actions, they were going to find the Next Level and achieve a happiness not possible on Earth. The leaders, Ti and Do, created this belief by positioning themselves as God’s chosen saviors and cultivated a culture that never questioned their ultimate authority. The members’ collective identity was reinforced through constant repetition of coded behaviors and linguistic conventions, which was visible in members’ names, appearances, and actions. In the end, the members developed a blik that led to an abnormal view of suicide as the best answer to their societal dissatisfaction.

Those who remember Heaven’s Gate will assume the mass suicide meant the members were victims of Ti and Do, but while Ti and Do should be held responsible in some part, the suicide was a willful consequence of ideological identity. Thirty-nine Heaven’s Gate members committed mass suicide because they were fully and thoroughly convinced that they were not going to die but were instead going to the Next Level. It is a tragic conclusion because the members were unable to see beyond a substantial blik and did not question the extremism of their own beliefs within a system of living and believing so resistant to doubt. Heaven’s Gate was created through group indoctrination to code—which, in turn, formed an ideological basis that profoundly changed the lives of all members.

⁵⁹ Goodale, *The Rhetorical Invention of Man*, 27.

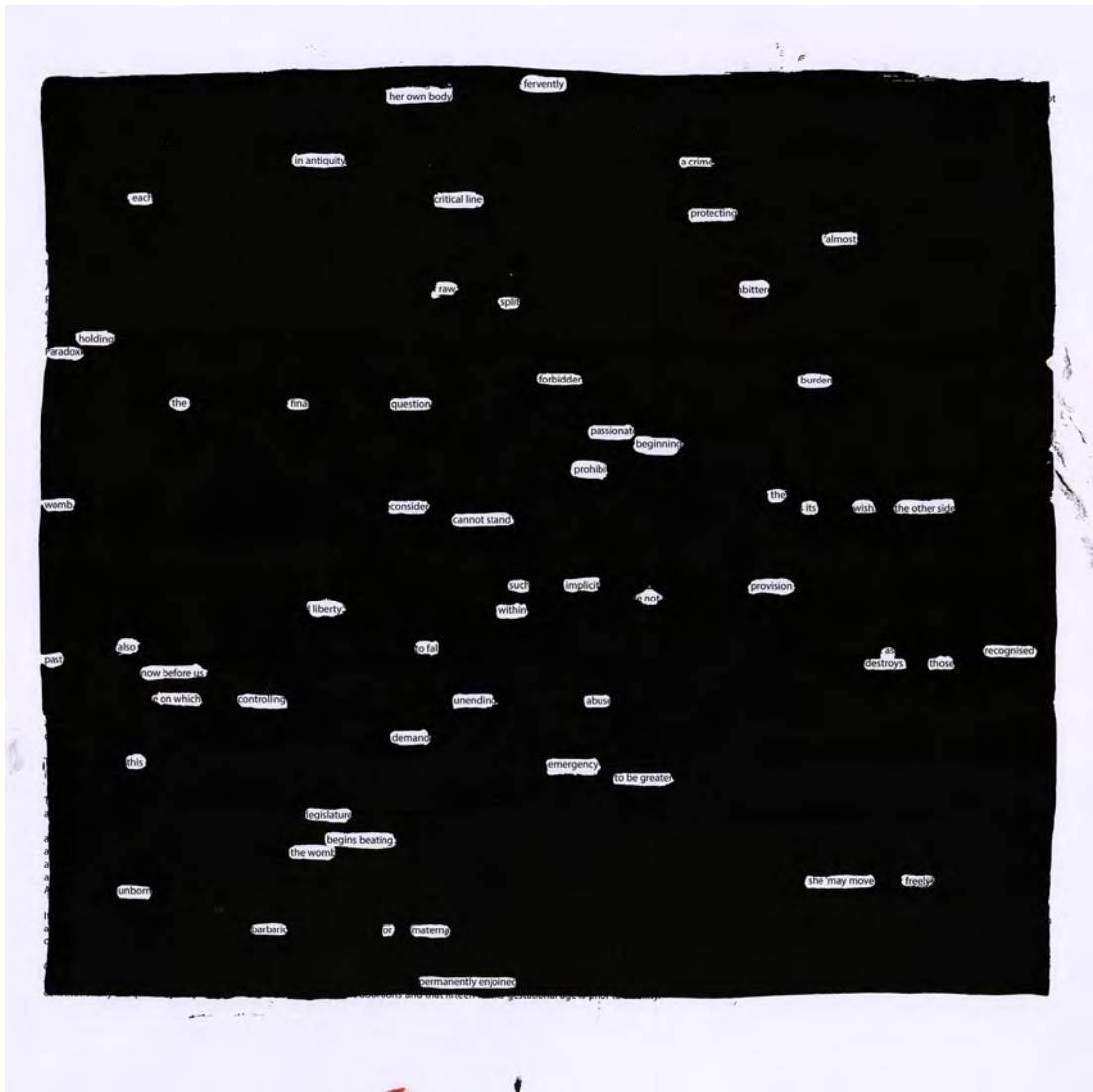
⁶⁰ Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 10.

⁶¹ Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 13.

⁶² Chryssides, *Heaven’s Gate*, 13.

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Saskia Bakker | *Dear Mr. Alito*

ABLE-BODIEDNESS AS A THREATENED COLLECTIVE BODY

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I am fighting for an interdependence that embraces need and tells the truth: no one does it on their own and the myth of independence is just that. — Mia Mingus¹

In her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed asks, “How do emotions such as hate work to secure collectives through the way in which they read the bodies of others?”² Using Sara Ahmed’s framework of “affective economies of hate,”³ I explore how white supremacist capitalist production, society’s ableism, and ableism’s impacts on the people it disables, are based in the creation of a collective able-bodied identity—an identity that is both constructed through hatred of, and threatened by, interdependence. I intentionally refer to societal ableism’s impacts on “the people it disables” rather than “disabled people.” This is informed by the social model of disability as theorized in the 1970s and 1980s in resistance to the medical model of disability, which “pathologizes the concept of disability”⁴ and frames disability as the natural consequence of individual impairments. Rather, the social model places disability squarely within discussions of social justice, defining disability as resulting from “social organisation that takes little or no account of people who have impairments and/or social organisation that creates segregated and second-rate provision.”⁵ In other words, it

is society’s lack of accommodation of impairments that disables individuals rather than individuals’ impairments themselves.

Many disability scholars have pointed out that even as the social framing makes an important intervention against the naturalization and decontextualization of disability found in the medical model, it simultaneously works to stabilize the notion of impairment as coherent and definable.⁶ The naturalization of impairment operates in a similar fashion to the common refrain that designates sex as biological, and gender as constructed. This discourse allows for the normalization of some gender variance, but implicitly shores up the biological sex as factually binary when the boundary between biological designations “male” and “female” is indeed historically and culturally constructed as well.⁷ Similarly, what are considered disabilities and impairments are based on socially constructed meanings in varied historic and cultural contexts.

The goalposts around able-bodiedness are ever-shifting. Susan Wendell’s robust exploration of the social construction of disability meaningfully engages with this

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1 Mia Mingus, “Changing the Framework: Disability Justice,” *Leaving Evidence*, February 12, 2011, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/changing-the-framework-disability-justice/>.

2 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed (Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 42.

3 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 42–61.

4 Abigail Mulcahy, “Medical Model of Disability,” in *Gendered Voices, Feminist Visions*, ed. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 349.

5 Northern Officer Group, *Defining Impairment and Disability*, ed. Alden Chadwick.

6 Shelley Tremain, “On the Government of Disability: Foucault, Power, and the Subject of Impairment,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006): 185–96; Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Indiana University Press, 2013); Susan Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability,” *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (Routledge, 1996): 91–98.

7 Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender,” in *Women’s Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, ed. Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2013), 21–24; Nelly Oudshoorn, “Sex and the Body,” *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones* (Routledge, 1994), 6–11.

tension by avoiding the impairment/disability dichotomy, locating the construction of disability in

social conditions that cause or fail to prevent damage to people's bodies; expectations of performance; the physical and social organization of societies on the basis of a young, non-disabled, "ideally shaped," healthy adult male paradigm of citizens; the failure or unwillingness to create ability among citizens who do not fit the paradigm; and cultural representations, failures of representation, and expectations.⁸

Wendell's social construction explanation is useful to demonstrate how disability (and the gendered able-bodiedness which composes the "paradigm citizen") is dynamically and contextually constructed—and depending on one's position in the local and global arrangements of production, capital, power, and domination, the conditions of able-bodiedness shift dramatically.

Nirmala Erevelles further explains that since notions of productivity, and therefore notions of (dis)ability, shift relative to the current needs of transnational corporations and the interests of empire, "an individual's productivity is not measured by his/her skill to produce goods and services that would satisfy social and human needs; rather, her/his productivity is based solely on the capitalists' exploitative demands for increasing profits."⁹ This shifting, together with inequitable distribution of bodily harm across globalized systems of production, reveals the constructed nature of disability and its uses to maintain social power.¹⁰ The aims of constructing

disability this way are also revealed—to maintain the colonialist/imperialist legacy of white supremacist, cis heteropatriarchal capitalism. The maintenance of this system allows people deemed able-bodied (especially those with other paradigmatic identities) to experience power and belonging, so long as they forsake notions of interdependence that would challenge their participation in capitalist production.

To better understand how an able-bodied identity committed to independence gives access to power and belonging, let us first consider Sara Ahmed's notion of affective economies of hate. Ahmed's theorization centers around a text from the Aryan Nations' website that declares that white nationalism is born of love rather than hate—a common rhetorical refrain among hate groups that creates

a subject that is endangered by imagined others whose proximity threatens not only to take something away from the subject (jobs, security, wealth), but to take the place of the subject. The presence of this other is imagined as a threat to the object of love. This narrative involves a rewriting of history, in which the labour of others (migrants, slaves) is concealed in a fantasy that it is the white subject who 'built this land.'¹¹

Within this theory, Ahmed establishes that "the sideways and backwards movement of emotions such as hate is not contained within the contours of a subject" and simultaneously that "in hating another, this subject is also loving itself... as a fantastic investment in the continuation of the image of the self in the faces that together make up the 'we.'¹² Not only does hate rely on a collective, rather than an individual, in order to exist, but the act of hating can create the collective identity itself through its construction of and hatred toward "others." It follows that

8 Wendell, "The Social Construction of Disability," 91–99.

9 Nirmala Erevelles, "Disability in the New World Order," *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*, edited by INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Duke University Press, 2016), 25–31.

10 See also Michael Davidson, "Universal Design: The Work of Disability in an Age of Globalization," *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 117–30; Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Brenda Jo Brueggemann, Sharon L. Snyder, and Rosemarie Garland-Thompson (New York: Modern Language Association, 2002), 88–100.

11 Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 43.

12 *Ibid.*, 46, 51.

society's work to disable "others" is the action that allows abled "subjects" to access their experience of subjecthood and ability itself.

This construction of abled identity through the hatred of disabled "others" is in service of capitalist production. Capitalism, as promoted by globalized European coloniality of power, demands the conception of self as independent—from other people, ecosystems, and more—to coerce individuals into competition and personal responsibility. Paradoxically, this individualistic self-concept defines the collective identity able-bodied people find belonging within. They are part of the superior *group* of abled individuals who are characterized by their *lack of need for one another*. As such, expressed needs for interdependence threaten one's status as abled, which then threatens one's ability to belong.

In a sense, this collective, individualistic abled identity is at the root of forced intimacy. Mia Mingus coined the term "forced intimacy" to refer to the "common, daily experience of disabled people being expected to share personal parts of ourselves to survive in an ableist world."¹³ Sharing these personal parts becomes necessary because requests for access by disabled people threaten the collective abled identity group's commitment to individualism. The only route for disabled people's inclusion is through a highly individualized explanation. Additionally, since "people with impairments are forced to articulate their needs in terms of deficiencies in their own bodies they consistently have to show that they are standard; that their impairment equates to a deficiency in their whole identity."¹⁴ In this way, the disabled person is forced to establish themselves outside the abled identity group, preserving the idea that only deficient people rely on interdependence. Access needs can be denied out of

hate or met out of pity while still operating within this framework. All that matters is a vulnerable body with social needs is established as "other."

Significant feminist and queer disability studies frameworks exist in contrast to this ideology and are engaged in struggles for radical cultures of care. Disability writers and activists of color—such as Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarsinha, and others—have been at the forefront of challenging ideologies of independence and transforming culture. Disability justice, "a vision born out of collective struggle,"¹⁵ has flourished to resist the flattening of the lives of people with disabilities, with organizations such as Sins Invalid¹⁶ emphasizing that interdependence and collective access are necessary to ensure collective liberation.

Another example, such as in Johanna Hedva's *Sick Woman Theory*,¹⁷ uses the inherent vulnerability of the body as a principle to organize around. They extend the work of Judith Butler and offer that because "a body is defined by its vulnerability, not temporarily affected by it, the implication is that it is continuously reliant on infrastructures of support in order to endure, and so we need to re-shape the world around this fact."¹⁸ Here, Hedva is making an appeal to reorganize society around bodily vulnerabilities. I would contend, though, that the current ableist system is already constructed around the vulnerability of a body—the collective body of abled identity, forged by a hatred of interdependence. Since ability is inherently temporary, the abled identity is uniquely and persistently threatened. This produces

¹³ Mia Mingus, "Forced Intimacy," *Leaving Evidence*, August 6, 2016, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2017/08/06/forced-intimacy-an-ableist-norm/>.

¹⁴ Mingus, "Forced Intimacy."

¹⁵ Patty Berne, "Disability Justice," *Sins Invalid*, June 10, 2015.

¹⁶ Sins Invalid is an organization that centers the lives of those "who lived at intersecting junctures of oppression—disabled people of color, immigrants with disabilities, queers with disabilities, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, people with disabilities who are houseless, people with disabilities who are incarcerated, people with disabilities who have had their ancestral lands stolen, amongst others."

¹⁷ Johanna Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory," *Topical Cream*, April 1, 2022, <http://topicalcream.org/features/sick-woman-theory/>.

¹⁸ Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory."

individuals who anxiously, performatively distance themselves from their needs, maintaining their belonging under capitalism—which continually reproduces ableism.

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Tessa Hilaire Collins | *to mourn a broken thing*

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