

# Undergraduate Research Symposium May 17, 2013 Mary Gates Hall

## Online Proceedings

### SESSION 2B

#### THE AMERICAS REVISITED: LOCAL VOICES CHALLENGING AND OCCUPYING CONSTRUCTED NATIONAL IDENTITIES

*Session Moderator: Julie Villegas, English*

**171 MGH**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

##### **Queering the Discourse: The Importance of Intersectional Identities and Artivismo in Social Movements**

*Alejandra Juliette (Alejandra) Olivos, Junior; Comparative History of Ideas, American Ethnic Studies*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

This research will illuminate shared discourse between the Chicano Movement and the Undocumented Youth Movement to highlight the intersectionality of identities. The Chicano Movement has been studied extensively by scholars and much has been said about the machista exclusions of women and Queer Chicana/os. My research seeks to examine the Undocumented Youth Movement and how this group has changed the typical exclusionary elements of its predecessor by making active efforts for inclusion. Through theoretical framework surrounding Queer and Chicano identity and my own personal experience, I will compare cultural production created during the Chicano Movement by Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga y otras compañeras and the Undocumented Youth artivismo of Yosimar Reyes and Julio Salgado, who identify as "Undocu-Queer" artists. Their work contributes to an inclusive social movement crossing borders of sexuality, gender, citizenship, and race. Artivistas are providing new narratives and integrating it in U.S. society by claiming agency and demanding change in a country where anti-immigration laws are becoming more restrictive. The contributions of artists like Salgado and Reyes add to the strength of this movement. This research will add to a broader understanding of social movements, immigration policies in the U.S., and allow for a deeper understanding of the way culture

fuels and defines social movements and politics. Additionally, through my own journey of understanding my Self and learning to survive through learning, creating and producing art I seek to queer the discourse that is occurring ahora in the Undocumented Youth Movement.

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##### **Triquis from San Juan Copala: Identities Around Conflict**

*Michelle Carrizosa, Senior; International Studies*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

*Mentor: Raj Chetty*

Colonization in the 16th century permitted the creation of borderlands of indigenous groups in Mexico. As Mestizos became the majority in the country, indigenous groups rested in a borderland of injustice and inequality. To this day, indigenous groups still live in the struggle for justice. My aim is to research Los Triquis from San Juan Copala, Oaxaca and explore the realities surrounding the conflict that is taking place there; especially the implications in shaping Triqui identities around this conflict. Though various scholars have examined the paramilitary conflict in San Juan Copala, Triquis along with a study of their identify formation have been left out of the picture of the conflict. I intend to focus on the direct consequences on the individual rather than on the nature of the conflict itself through analyzing interviews with experts on the conflict and videos with first-hand accounts by Triquis who have escaped such violence. Since 1988, rising Triqui paramilitary groups allegedly helping Triqui people in San Juan Copala against injustices from the government, have created a paramilitary conflict. The resulting violence has led to the displacement of thousands of Triquis, who find it impos-

sible to return home as they are attacked by their own people once they try. The particularity of this conflict is the government's hidden involvement and it has affected every age and gender group in San Juan Copala thus changing the dynamics of interaction.

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## SESSION 2P

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### MCNAIR SESSION - ECONOMIES OF EXPLOITATION, CULTURES OF RESISTANCE

*Session Moderator: Sonnet Retman, American Ethnic Studies*

**295 MGH**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

#### **Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes: The Integrated Audience's Gaze on Black Performance**

*Alexander (Alex) Catchings, Senior, English*

*EIP Scholar, Mary Gates Scholar, McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Sonnet Retman, American Ethnic Studies*

This talk explores African American cinema, and the ways black representations emerge in different commercial contexts to appeal to interracial audiences. Understanding independent "black cinema" as films that intend to resist voyeuristic spectatorship, this talk distinguishes the economic disparities between expressly black cinema versus commercial cinema that employs specific, trope-centered representations of black characters. This discussion pivots around Manthia Diawara's theoretical framework from "Black Spectatorship: Problems of Identification and Resistance" (1988), which suggests that commercial films bearing the intent to propel negative narratives of African Americans can be viewed with a resistant, critical spectatorship by viewers of differing races. While Diawara is correct, and some directors have been producing more independent black cinematic works, this talk lays out the enduring economic boons and ramifications from continued voyeurism in black and commercial cinema. Pieces of cultural production addressed include Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* (2000), Tyler Perry's *Madea* franchise, Tate Taylor's *The Help* (2011), Bruce Joel Rubin's *Ghost* (1990), and variety television shows including Richard Pryor's 1977 *The Richard Pryor Show* and Lorne Michaels' *Saturday Night Live* (1975). Ultimately, this talk analyzes how box office gains and television ratings both reflect and interact with black iconography and representation. Through this undertaking, a better understanding can be had as to the extent of veracity and implication when black artist Ralph Ellison notes that, "Movies are not about Blacks but what Whites think about Blacks."

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**295 MGH**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

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#### **"Black Folks Passing for Black Folks": The Black Middle Class, Hip Hop, and "Black Authenticity" in the 21st Century**

*Janelle Lena (Janelle) White, Senior, History, American Ethnic Studies*

*EIP Scholar, Mary Gates Scholar, Presidential Scholar, McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Sonnet Retman, American Ethnic Studies*

In Touré's 2012 book, *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now*, Touré quotes Henry Louis Gates, stating, "if there are 40 million black Americans, then there are 40 million ways to be black." While there exist as many ways to be black as black Americans, and while American pop culture and mainstream media are experiencing new exposure to different modalities of blackness, the rhetoric of black authenticity and the perceived need to prove oneself based on a racial category are still prevalent. Through a close reading of excerpts from Stew's play *Passing Strange*, Colson Whitehead's novel *Sag Harbor*, and Paul Beatty's novel *White Boy Shuffle*, I will use the analytics of authenticity and blackness in literature to explore how identity manifests itself for black males in hip hop music. In focusing on rappers Childish Gambino and Kanye West, I complicate a static popular image of blackness that is transformed through different modes of socio-economic status and education level by these artists. My research explores the lingering rhetoric of authenticity, focusing on contemporary intersectionalities of identity in regards to gender, socio-economic status, and race. These intersectionalities can conflict and influence one another for individuals who struggle to personally define themselves, while simultaneously being defined by their communities. In focusing on how black identity is created within the arts, specifically literature and music, my research aims to unpack the idea of "authenticity" surrounding blackness and make meaning of the ways in which black male teenagers and young adults explore, qualify, and define their identity in regards to race. Ultimately, my analysis sheds light on a more heterogeneous representation of black identity, while suggesting that restrictions on identity for black Americans are not obsolete in the 21st Century.

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## SESSION 2Q

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### INTERSECTIONS: ART, CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY, PHYSICALITY

*Session Moderator: Jennifer Salk, Dance*

**389 MGH**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

**Women as Warriors; A Transnational and Gendered Perspective on the Mind, Body and Soul of Lucha Libre**  
*Elke Victoria (Elke) Hautala, Senior, Comparative History of Ideas*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

*Mentor: Naraelle Hohensee, Comparative History of Ideas*

*Mentor: Adam Warren, History*

Lucha libre, or Mexican Free Wrestling, is both sport and entertainment with strong connections to the history of Mexican cultural production. Employing ethnography, historical research, and media documentation, that includes a film and an interactive art exhibition, my research produced a complex examination of the mind, soul and body of a gendered and transnational identity formation within lucha libre. My earlier ethnographic study of Lucha Libre Volcánica, a local school and performance group, found that male and female performers use physical embodiment and characterization to achieve a fluid gender boundary. Now my focus centers on a specifically female gendered standpoint and the cultural implications on women's roles in US and Mexican society as a result of the sport's transnational migration. Ethnographic research of Princesa Quetzal in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico, Las Poubelles in Los Angeles and La Avispa in Seattle illustrates how their involvement in lucha libre parallels a metaphorical struggle of "la lucha" (the fight) for three possibilities – visibility, empowerment, and a new identity or transnational cultural hybrid. Framing their performances within the historical context of post-revolutionary Mexico and the migratory movement of Mexican culture to Los Angeles and Seattle sheds light on how the perfect climate was created for the development of both lucha libre and female empowerment as evidenced in studies of cultural production by Heather Levi, Jose Muñoz, Laura Gutierrez, Eric Zolov, and Laura Pérez. It will not only open your eyes to the experience of being a female wrestler within a masculine world but also emphasize the important implications beyond the wrestling ring into the social fabric we all share.

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## SESSION 2U

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### STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE

*Session Moderator: Allison Master, Psychology*

**175 JHN**

*3:45 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

**The Power of Discourse: Politics and Construction of the DSM**

*Anne Kennebeck (Anne) Wolken, Senior, Psychology, Anthropology: Medical Anth & Global Hlth*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

*Mentor: Jos?? Antonio Lucero, International Studies/CHID*

Early medical philosophers describe psychiatric illnesses as natural, biologically bound entities with clear definitions. However, other thinkers have begun to trace the source of these definitions to a more political root. I argue that the very language we use to diagnosis, define, and treat mental illnesses is influenced by the social and political climate, and that this language has been creating an increasing number of borders within the spectrum of human experience since the introduction of the DSM (the primary mental health diagnostic tool in the U.S.) in 1952. Using discourse analysis as a tool to examine the four editions of the DSM, I will discuss how the change in language of the last 60 years has followed political and social movements of the times. In particular, an investigation into the changing language describing and defining gender and sexuality disorders will uncover these changes. Psychiatry has been using particular language to create and negotiate the line between "normal" and "abnormal" since the origin of the field. Individuals labeled using this fluctuating language have to negotiate all the legal, social, political and cultural consequences of this line, and understanding the origins of these borders will shed some light on the human experience behind them.

## POSTER SESSION 3

**Commons West, Easel 3**

*2:30 PM to 4:00 PM*

**How Gender Shapes the Migratory Experiences of Mexicans in Eastern Washington**

*Henedina Tavares, Senior, American Ethnic Studies*

*McNair Scholar, Zesbaugh Scholar*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

According to recent estimates from the PEW Research Hispanic Center in 2006, more than half (6-7 million) of all the

unauthorized migrants living in the United States entered the country clandestinely by evading customs and immigration inspectors at ports of entry by hiding in vehicles, trekking through Arizona desert, wading across the Rio Grande or otherwise eluding the Border Patrol. However, the Mexican border experience encompasses more than crossing a physical barrier in dangerous conditions. This experience begins from the time individuals decide to make the treacherous crossing to the time they settle in their US communities. While previous research has examined the border-crossing experience (Durand, J., Massey, D. S, 2004), few have offered a comprehensive understanding that considers the context of preparation, crossing and consequently the context of arrival. This research attempts to make such a contribution. In addition, this work considers the critical role that gender plays in households and social networks that shape distinct border-crossing and settlement experiences for Mexican men and women. By interviewing Mexican immigrants and engaging in literature review, interviews with members of one community in the lower Yakima Valley in Eastern Washington will provide an in-depth exploration of migration to the Pacific Northwest; helping us understand the cultural, social, and economic context for the harrowing journey and include their accounts in the broader research of area studies in Eastern Washington.

community while ignoring the role that race has played in their current environment lead to blaming, “othering” and only serve to reinforce borders of power and race. Communities that have focused on their strengths, existing assets and are working with their racialized environment (as opposed to ignoring it) towards food justice have experienced higher rates of sustained community involvement. Through a comparative discourse analysis, I examine and report upon the consequences of deficit-based language focusing on problems and deficits and look into the importance of strength-based approaches towards more environmentally just policies.

## POSTER SESSION 3

Commons West, Easel 37

2:30 PM to 4:00 PM

### **Why the United States Cannot Let Go of Food Deserts: A Look into the Discriminatory Rhetoric and Approaches to Food Insecurity**

*Alicia Naomi (Alicia) Moreno, Senior, Social Welfare*

*Mary Gates Scholar*

*Mentor: Carolyn Pinedo Turnovsky, American Ethnic Studies*

Food Deserts are most commonly described as just that – deserts, empty, void and lacking. The newer term, Food Swamp, implies there is too much of a bad thing. Food Deserts are a community defined by barriers restricting the opportunity for healthy food including a lack of access to food retailers, availability of nutritious foods, or affordability of foods. The dominant academic and public policy discourse has primarily aligned with the environmental rather than social justice movement, the consequences of which can be seen in a local, sustainable, fresh food movement that treats the symptoms of a broken food system by simply introducing more healthy food, failing to acknowledge its responsibility in addressing the root causes of hunger, poverty and racial oppression. The dominant, deficit-based view of food deserts misrepresents and silences the experiences of these communities, misshaping how they are made visible and understood. Approaches that use language focusing on the deficits of a