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WITH AMERICAN STUDIES INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 60 ISSUE 2 AUGUST 2021

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On the cover: Nipsey Hussle Mural by Danny Mateo, Hyde Park Los Angeles 2019. Photo by Susy Chávez Herrera.

ISSN 0026-3079

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A quarterly interdisciplinary journal sponsored by the Mid-America American Studies Association, the University of Kansas College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the KU Department of American Studies, and KU Libraries

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Review Essay

Dialogues: Blog of American Studies

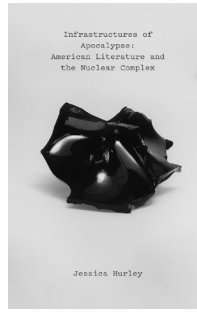
2021 VOL. 60, NO. 2

Book Reviews

Review Essay

New "Movement of Movements" in American Studies and Environmental Justice

Shane Hall



Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger. By Julie Sze. Berkeley: University of California, 2020.

Infrastructures of Apocalypse: American Literature and the Nuclear Complex. By Jessica Hurley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.

In *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (2001), George Lipsitz argues "the history of American Studies is the history of successive social movements" (XVI). For Lipsitz and American studies, "academic struggles over meaning are always connected in crucial ways to social movement struggles over resources and power" (XV-XVI). How then has the rise of the environmental and climate justice movement influenced American studies, and how is American studies scholarship making meaning alongside the grassroots movements against environmental racism and other intersectional forms of environmental violence?

In *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* (2020), Julie Sze writes that "American studies is one ideal, albeit uncomfortable, home for environmental justice." As both a social movement and an interdisciplinary field of study, environmental justice (EJ) is considerably newer than American studies. And yet one reason American studies is an ideal/uncomfortable home for EJ is that American

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studies was in some respects slow to train its attention as a field towards issues of environmental racism (the initial focus of U.S.-based EJ activists), while at the same time environmental justice scholarship was slow to employ qualitative and humanist methods common to American studies. As a field, environmental justice began in sociology and critical geography: early papers and books by Robert Bullard, Paul Mohai, and others established the academic alliance with grassroots activists seeking to map and measure the disproportionate environmental risks and burdens communities of color faced in the U.S. compared to white and wealthy communities. The first academic conference focused on environmental justice was held among a small group of mostly sociologists at University of Michigan in 1990, over a decade before Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein published, in 2002, *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy* (to which Sze supplied a field-defining chapter on literary analysis of environmental justice). Arguably the first American studies anthology to take up environmental justice, the *Environmental Justice Reader* highlights two critical dimensions of American studies engagement with environmental justice: 1) the privileging of direct testimony from grassroots communities experiencing and actively resisting environmental racism as a source of knowledge, and 2) the importance of using humanist inquiry to read counter hegemonic narratives within cultural texts that counter environmental racism and oppression.

The two books under review here, Julie Sze's *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* and Jessica Hurley's *Infrastructures of Apocalypse*, showcase the cutting edge of American studies engagement with environmental justice along these two dynamics long-resonant in this field. *Environmental Justice* highlights the activist knowledge and frontline wisdom of emblematic 21st grassroots resistance to extractivist, white supremacist, climate change-fueled environmental violence. Sze writes in service to the goals of EJ as movement, while Hurley's monograph shows how the wisdom of grassroots movements can lead scholars to productively re-read established narratives of American literature and popular culture through new perspectives.

Like virtually all of what David Pellow terms "critical environmental justice," both books are focused on the historical, structural, and narrative dimensions of environmental violence and the social movements (both political and artistic) that arise to resist this violence. If, as Sze argues, "environmental violence is baked into the history of the United States," then the scope of any study of environmental justice extends back in time well before the start of the EJ social movement to these violences as well as the social movements that fought them under different nomenclature. Jessica Hurley does this by applying aspects of environmental justice theory on the twentieth-century nuclear-industrial-complex's slow violence and the racialized, apocalyptic chronopolitics of the Cold War. And yet environmental justice as a field of study also remains focused on, to borrow the title from Robert Bullard's field-defining book, "confronting environmental racism" by hearing "voices from the grassroots."

Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger is the eleventh entry in Uni-

versity of California Press's *American Studies Now: Critical Histories of the Present* series. The series offers, in the words of the publisher, "concise, accessible, authoritative books on significant political debates… quickly, while such teachable moments are at the forefront of public consciousness." True to form, the chapters of *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* are organized around contemporary and unsettled environmental conflicts that many new to environmental justice or American studies would readily recognize: the Standing Rock Sioux and allies' stand against the routing of the North Dakota Access Pipeline, the government lead poisoning of Flint, Michigan's water, and the legacy of hurricane Katrina read against the more recent aftermath of Hurricane Maria, all feature as prominent case stories in this book. And like other entries in the *America Studies Now* series, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* has an almost manifesto-like feel in style and tone, rather than the more circumspect political valence most monographs (including Hurley's) possess. Sze also pays homage to Lipsitz beyond her book's title. In each chapter Sze addresses the productive insights and tensions American studies brings to environmental justice studies in analogous ways to Lipsitz situating ethnic studies with American studies in *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*.

An introduction and concluding chapter frame the three cases of *Environmental Justice*. In the introductory and first chapter, Sze describes the environmental justice movement as an intersectional "movement of movements" that has focused on "expanding social and racial justice in environmental terms (land, pollution, health)" (5). Noting that the structural forces of racism, capitalism, militarism, and colonialism that produce and sustain environmental risks and inequalities long predate the formation of the term "environmental justice," Sze's introduction charts how the social movement and academic study of environmental justice has evolved over the past forty years. Sze productively notes how EJ studies developed similarly to recent movements in American studies, notably in that both responded to liberation movements organized around intersectional aspects of identity and that each critically interrogate American exceptionalism. Sze ends her introduction by unpacking Eric Garner's last words, "I can't breathe," as a symbolic and material reality of political oppression, and how political oppression deploys environmental violence. While not conflating environmental violence and environmentalism with state violence, Sze shows how EJ scholarship contributes to American studies interrogations of the "many-hydra-headed beasts" of oppression directed against marginalized communities.

Sze's first body chapter, "This Movement of Movements," takes up the struggle against the North Dakota Access Pipeline route (#NoDAPL). While quick to note that theories of environmental racism are inadequate to address all issues of Indigenous land dispossession, sovereignty, and Indigenous land-based social movements, Sze persuasively presents Standing Rock as an emblematic case of environmental justice. Environmental justice defined as both the resistance to specific environmental violence and *in*justice, as well as environmental justice defined as new forms of community (often led by youth and women) pushing for

just transition away from extractive, polluting economic activities and oppressive political systems. Relying extensively on Indigenous scholars and activists involved directly in this internationally significant conflict, Sze outlines, on the one hand, how histories of land dispossession and environmental racism routed the risks of the pipeline away from majority-white Bismark towards the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. When the unprecedented coalition of self-described water protectors resisted the pipeline, Sze details how militarized police violence served as the industry's weapon against the water protectors. This is environmental justice as resistance to violence and oppression. But by describing the rhetoric, art, and transnational communities and alliances of the water protectors—including the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Movement for Black Lives and climate justice organization UPROSE—the #NoDAPL movement also exemplifies environmental justice as transformative political communities. Comprised of hundreds of different Indigenous nations from across North and South America, as well as anti-racist organizations and environmentalists, the #NoDAPL movement showcases how environmental justice is a "movement of movements."

Sze's second chapter, "Environmental Justice Encounters," shifts the focus away from issues of Indigenous sovereignty and land control to that of the anti-democratic governance that produced the environmental racism of Flint, Michigan. Sze maintains focus on this "movement of movements" by tracing how artists and activists connect #NoDAPL to the concurrent issue of "government-facilitated lead poisoning" in Flint, Michigan. While the events leading to the lead poisoning have been treated in numerous scholarly and popular press publications, Sze's reassessment of this familiar ground is useful in highlighting aspects of EJ struggles that are typical of many lesser-known instances of environmental racism. For example, while the residents of Flint knew immediately that something had gone wrong with their water, their experiential knowledge was largely dismissed or doubted by officials until knowledge was produced by proper experts. Sze turns to the pesticide poisoning of California's Central Valley, pointing to other instances of working-class communities of color identifying environmental harm while being ignored or dismissed after raising concerns. As in every environmental justice struggle, history matters. Sze traces the anti-democratic decisions of the emergency manager back to the financial management by state and federal officials long before 2015 (when the poisoning began), as well as a century before that when the lead industry successfully began efforts to regulate the toxin in consumer products and infrastructure. Against the common-sense hegemonic assumptions that guide officials and corporations, EJ activists in Flint, MI, and Visalia, CA marshal different forms of artivist storytelling, and in so doing take democracy into their own hands.

The third chapter, "Restoring Environmental Justice" is dedicated to the affective and artistic dimensions undergirding all environmental justice struggles and the ways in which culture matters to issues of climate violence and just transition. Like the earlier EJ case studies in chapters one and two, Sze selects three well known climate justice case studies to anchor her analysis in chapter three. In this chapter,

however, Sze focuses her whole energy on the artistic productions that "generate hope in dark times" of climate injustice. Of course, she argues that distinguishing between grassroots activism and art is a false binary—and preceding chapters attend to artistic efforts made amidst activist communities (e.g. #HipHop4Flint, "Words for Water"). Likewise, while she touches on issues of affect and emotion in earlier chapters, in "Restoring Environmental Justice" Sze focuses on the need for emotional, epistemological, and narrative inventiveness in EJ movements. In each case study Sze demonstrates how disruptive climate violence generates both "monstrous" and "utopian" disruptions to established ways of thinking and relating to each other (96-97). Again, Sze's chapter in *The Environmental Justice Reader* was among the first scholarly arguments for ecocritical engagements with literature and affect in environmental justice scholarship. In the third chapter and short conclusion Sze extends her long scholarly engagement with these issues to argue that environmental justice art challenges the "death cult of whiteness, extraction, and violence through diverse voices, media, and perspectives" (100).

Sze's lean book also stands as a miniature state-of-the-field of American Studies as it has engaged with the environmental justice movement, offering a compelling summary of the different structural forces that produce and sustain the immense measures of environmental inequalities we observe in the U.S. and across the world. In doing so *Environmental Justice at a Moment of Danger* adds to the growing list of new EJ teaching texts and pedagogical resources seeking to expand conversations, such as *Keywords for Environmental Studies,* edited by Joni Adamson, David Pellow, and William Gleason, and *Environmental Justice in Postwar America: A Documentary Reader* (2018), by Christopher Well.

While certainly more accessible than many monographs, Sze's book does not shy away from engaging with robust theorizations of racialization, militarism, settler colonialism, and neoliberal capitalism. As such, *Environmental Justice* will likely find its most sympathetic audiences among the students of graduate coursework and those preparing for field examinations, or alternatively, scholars seeking to familiarize themselves with new areas of environmental justice research within the field of American studies. That said, Sze is able to write in a fairly high scholarly register throughout and still produce an accessible volume due to her inclusion of several helpful organizational resources that teachers may well take advantage of in undergraduate coursework. The *American Studies Now* signature overview of each chapter, complete with simple 1-2 sentence descriptions and a list of 8-10 keywords for the individual chapter, is invaluable, as is the clear glossary, chapter notes, and selected bibliography. The glossary is particularly useful in the undergraduate context; the entries ranging from "anti-capitalism" to "intersectionality" to "solidarity" offer an essential Raymond Williams-*Keywords* for where Sze maps overlapping areas of environmental justice and American studies scholarship. One organizational tool all of the *American Studies Now* series, including *Environmental Justice*, would benefit from is an index.

Jessica Hurley's *Infrastructures of Apocalypse* takes one inside the cannon of post 1945 literature and retrains a reader's eyes from their skyward orientation,

expecting nuclear death from above, down towards the earth, the quotidian-yet-lethal mundane of the nuclear industrial complex's slow violence and the racialized apocalyptic chronopolitics of the Cold War. While literary and cultural critics have attended to the apocalyptic, universalized threat of nuclear Armageddon, and what Robert Lifton terms the "absurd double life" of living under the threat of nuclear death from above, Hurley's *Infrastructures of Apocalypse* reconsiders the archive of nuclear literature by focusing on the material consequences of the nuclear state's infrastructures for specific communities rendered "futureless" by the United States' investment in its nuclear complex—a complex economic and military industrial complex engaged in mining, refining, testing, planning and preparing the country for geopolitical influence through nuclear supremacy.

Each body chapter takes up narrative responses to the bureaucratic, infrastructural, and ecological imbrications inherent to the expanding nuclear complex in American life. These narrative responses come from what Hurley productively terms "hotspot" writers, those authors critiquing the nuclear state's everyday slow violence rather than the universalized Armageddon that never came. Roughly speaking, each chapter also covers approximately twenty years of the nuclear era, spanning the early 1950s to Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2015.

Categorically, the first body chapter, "White Sovereignty and the Nuclear State," stands apart from the rest of the book, serving as hinge point between hegemonic modes of white futurity inculcated by the nuclear state and the imposed futurelessness of Black, queer, and Indigenous communities. Contra the threat of ICBM-delivered Armageddon well-traced in literary studies of the post 1945 nuclear era, Hurley's first chapter explores "the fear of America transforming into its other under the internal pressures of the nuclear security" (42). In this first chapter Hurley traces the fear—even amongst otherwise conservative and hawkish white Americans—that the expansion of the nuclear state may transform America *from within* into something abhorrently *other.* America's proper, pre-nuclear self, Hurley argues, is commonly imaged as independent, democratic, and white, whereas America's potential post-nuclear other is always totalitarian, collectivist, and Oriental. Ayn Rand serves for Hurley as a paragon of this line of thinking and purveyor of its concretized anxieties in her novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Hurley looks to Rand's biography as both a Cold Warrior and nuclear skeptic who was, in her life and *Atlas Shrugged*, "deeply critical of the increasing bureaucracy, secrecy, and militarization of the American state" (68). In the novel, John Galt's supposedly self-made brilliance, independence, and indifference to the larger American population is coded as the white corrective to Project X, a "science fiction infrastructure of the nuclear state that… makes 'savages' of people" (53). The socialist savagery is undeniably enacted through anti-Asian tropes of "reflexive yellow-perilism." The nuclear state stands as a "apocalyptically radicalizing threat that must be resisted" by the impeccable rationality and heroically self-centered White Galt (73). It is only after the nuclear state's collapse into socialist anarchy and the loss of electricity that Galt and his compatriots are free to return to, and take their rightful place, within society. There is no need to salvage the savages;

they merely disappear.

Having established *Atlas Shrugged* as a paradigmatic White treatment of nuclear infrastructure Hurley turns in Chapters 2-4 to these alternative spaces of imposed futurelessness, explicating narratives which resist or radically inhabit futurelessness in opposition to the hegemonic futurity of Whiteness and its nuclear ambitions. In Chapter 2: "Civil Defense and Black Apocalypse," Hurley juxtaposes the settler-colonial tropes of nonfictive Civil Defense Administrative with close readings of two Black, queer writers imagining post-apocalyptic American cities: James Baldwin and Samuel Delaney. Hurley notes that investitures in nuclear infrastructure in the 1960s came at the expense of civilian and urban infrastructure; White flight to the suburbs was pushed along not only by anti-Black sentiment but also by military projections that city centers would be Ground Zero for nuclear war. Thus, the growing sprawl of highways, byways, and commuter communities served a defense imperative. As inset maps of "Hypothetical Test Exercises" show, the defense community assumed the majority of African Americans would be wiped out within minutes of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, as cities such as Philadelphia, Detroit, and Memphis would be bombarded by missiles. It is against this nightmarish backdrop that Baldwin and Delaney interrogate the nuclear city as a historical iteration of how "race, environment, and time have been braided together in the Western world" and highlight the "instability" of the ideological systems that underpin this infrastructural constellation (122).

Chapter 3: "Star Wars, AIDS, and Queer Endings" takes a similar tact as Chapter 2 by first reading the non-fictional (yet fantastical) rhetoric surrounding Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiate (aka the Star Wars missile defense system) before attending to the chapter's central literary text, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. In this self-admittedly "wide ranging" chapter, Hurley takes up a "temporal regime" of "retrocontainment" that she argues is crucial to understanding the neoconservative movement of the 1980s and its present day, MAGA-flecked successors. Hurley argues the explosion of nostalgic 1950s iconography and popular culture in the 1980s tell us more about Regan era than about the actual state of the country in the mythologized 1950s. "It is impossible to imagine neoconservatism without the 1950s," as the mythic 1950s of pop culturedom posits a time and place where the defensive posture of containment—towards communist ideological threats—actually worked. Instead of engaging with the challenges of an ecologically, culturally, and economically connected planet, the "metaphorized 1950s" stand as a conservative "gold standard" and "rededication" to valuing of the nuclear family and consumerist culture (126-127). Hurley links this ever-backward-looking fantasy embodied in 1980s fashion and pop culture to Reagan's fantasy of constructing a missile defense system that would re-place the U.S. as the only and undisputed (undisputable) nuclear hegemon, as it was in the early 1950s. Alongside this fantasy Hurley places her reading of the contrasting and contesting temporalities of Kushner's *Angels of America*. In the play, the return of 1950s figures such as Ethen Rosenburg and Roy Cohen exist with millennial and prophetic horizons of time. *Angels in America* offers up both retrocontainment

narratives within other narratives that threaten to "break open history."

The final portion of *Infrastructures of Apocalypse* return to the material impact of radioactive isotopes and nuclear waste produced by two distinct kinds of events: the lingering impact of uranium mining and waste disposal which frame Leslie Marmon Silko's *Alamac of the Dead,* David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* and the eruptive meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi power plant discussed in the book's Coda via Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*. By placing Silko and Wallace into conversation, Hurley is able to discuss ideas of nuclear colonization and decolonization within both novels. The CLEAN part of *Infinite Jest* promises a nation sustained through its own toxification, whereas the mysterious megalith of the nuclear snake in *Almanac* ultimately signifies disruption of the normative present in favor of an unknown and decolonial future.

Hurley's attention to the long duree and material consequences of the nuclear state— it's physical infrastructures, narrative structures, and chronopolitics— will no doubt pose useful lessons for scholars of post 1945 American literature, and in particular those tracing the many plateaus this literature offers on the study of race, environment, sexuality, and the relation of space/place to time. Hurley's book should also prove useful to critics attempting to recognize and explore other archives of hotspot writers addressing anthropogenic climate change, the flagship issue defining 21st century environmental and social justice movements much as nuclear technology dominated the latter half of the 20th century. Like the nuclear state itself, climate change emerges at the concatenation of colonialism, racial capitalism, and militarism. And like the lines of argument Hurley draws in *Infrastructures of Apocalypse,* climate change engenders fierce scholarly, activist, and aesthetic debates around the temporality and scale of representation and political urgency.

Infrastructures of Apocalypse would have benefitted from some clearer glosses of the novels' plot's engagement with nuclear infrastructure in the body chapters. Hurley's "hotspot" writers are largely canonical—including James Baldwin, Samuel Delaney, Ayn Rand, Leslie Marmon Silko, and David Foster Wallace—but nonetheless make for an eclectic collective. Some readers will appreciate this efficiency in Hurley's writing, for others this lack of plot summary will create a higher barrier of entry and send readers back to the primary sources (or at least a Wikipedia page or two). Overall, however, this variety is no doubt a strength of the project, for it showcases both the breadth of literary engagement with the nuclear state *as infrastructure* and Hurley's command of this rich and challenging archive.

Both Sze and Hurley clearly move from the assumption that narratives and culture matter to social movement struggles. The ideal and uncomfortable question(s) remain, however, of how to more productively read social movement work and explicit artivism (Sze) together with the cultural work of novels and plays (Hurley). To be clear, Hurley's notion of the "hotspot writer" is not synonymous with the intersectional "communities of solidarity" resisting environmental injustices that Sze describes within *Environmental Justice*. Hurley's archive skews decidedly auteur over artivist. Still, as Sze argues throughout *Environmental Justice*, it

is the frontline wisdom of the grassroots environmental justice movement that makes more readily apparent how "environmental violence is built into the history of the United States"—including its cultures and nuclear infrastructures. Hurley's productive reassessment of some of the most heavily read and critiqued authors within this fundamentally EJ framework attests to the productive interplay between activist traditions and diligently undisciplined American studies scholarship. Yet this is also the site of tension between these two books, and more broadly, American studies engagement with environmental justice. The struggles of environmental justice activism, artistic creation, and academic attempts to make meaning of all three seldom share common geographic and temporal horizons, something Bethany Wiggin noted in a recent forum on environmental justice at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference.

The chronopolitics of nuclear infrastructures, lead contamination, Indigenous sovereignty claims, and the slowly-yet-inexorably rising seas each pose the challenge of acute present social inequalities alongside long horizons of environmental risk and challenges for just governance. When such challenges exceed conventional spatial and temporal limits and boundaries, both Sze and Hurley look to the mushrooming "hotspots" that indicate much larger and complex webs of interlacing histories.

One potential site to continue interrogating these tensions within environmental justice is in Hurley's astute attention to chronopolitcs of infrastructures. Hurley's reconsideration of the apocalyptic chronopolitics of the nuclear age parallel the ways that environmental justice movements has redirected environmentalist understandings of risk and temporality. It's not the environmental apocalypse of the future to mobilize against, both environmental and climate justice perspectives maintain, it's the last 500 years of oppression that continues to produce social and environmental catastrophe in the present. Hurley and Sze are interested in the ways in which cultural productions suture or disrupt taken-for-granted understandings of futurity, though the visions of new futures seem diffuse compared to both scholars' articulations of the past and present.

The environmental justice movement, as a "movement of movements," is shaking up established understandings of identity and labor, risk and precarity, and justice and solidarities. While both Sze's emphasis on activist "communities of solidarity" and Hurley's analyses of the U.S. nuclear state's physical and narrative infrastructures showcase the productive work of American studies scholars on issues of environmental justice, they also point to the ways in which environmental justice studies is maturing as an interdisciplinary field in its own right. This field rejects the separation of politics and poetics in understanding the environmental justice social movement, and uses the connections observed by EJ grassroots communities to guide readings of history and culture across social identities and conflicts. As the nuclear age continues to radiate its energies alongside the accelerating globalized challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, such scholarship is certain to evolve in tandem with the movements weathering the twenty-first century's storms to come.

Since April of last year, *Dialogues: Blog of the American Studies Journal* has published 14 new blog essays—original short-form essays that comment on culture, politics, academia, archives, technology, and much more. Several pieces speak to this specific moment via one of our themed series: On Teaching, On Writing, Protest Poetics, and Artist Scholar. Contributions have come from educators, researchers, librarians, archivists, artists, practitioners of digital humanities and social sciences, and community activists, each presenting historically-specific yet expansive dialogues informed by the multi-pronged issues that continue to be central to American studies.

Following *AMSJ*'s 2020 summer issue (59.2), the Editors are happy to include below two blog essays reflecting on the moment. "Imagining Futures Through the Archives" by Victor Betts explores what it means to inhabit the space of the university while asking North Carolina State University students to "think beyond what is simply absent from the archive." Betts meditates on a serendipitous encounter while searching through the library collections—a photograph of Justina Williams, the first African American academic staff member to be hired at NC State in 1958. Betts suggests that educational spaces could think more critically about not only what/who is missing from the archives and collections, but how institutions have been built around a "calculated effort" to exclude. Indeed, Betts offers a case-study provocation for imagining futures through the archives. Likewise, Maurice Rafael Magaña's "Giving Form to Black and Brown" illuminates how a focus on Latinx and Black artists in Los Angeles, who are actively creating new forms of solidarities through creative expression, "opens up social and political possibilities." Magaña points to the music and memorialization of beloved L.A.-based rapper Nipsey Hussle, who was murdered in 2019. A surge of creative expression by Latinx muralists—including Nessi Arte (Vanessa Prado), Z the Art (Bobby Z. Rodriguez), and Danny Mateo, whose mural of Nipsey Hussle serves as the cover art of this summer issue—symbolize a shared history of resisting racism and state violence. At the same time, Magaña provides a nuanced reading of relational formations of race through analytics of visual culture that cautions too-easy solidarities across time, space, and racialization.

We present these essays here as part of our ongoing effort to archive the moment through multiple platforms. We hope you'll enjoy reading them as much as we have.

Chris Perreira
Associate Editor, *American Studies*
Editor, *Dialogues: Blog of American Studies*

Imagining Futures Through the Archives

Victor Betts

Figure 1: Justina Williams conducting genetics research[1]

> We can agree, I think, that invisible things are not necessarily "not-there"; that a void may be empty, but is not a vacuum. In addition, certain absences are so stressed, so ornate, so planned, they call attention to themselves; arrest us with intentionality and purpose, like neighborhoods that are defined by the population held away from them.
>
> Toni Morrison[2]

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During the summer of 2019, I was searching through the archives at the North Carolina State University Libraries' Special Collections and Research Center for materials pertaining to Justina Williams. Justina Williams was the first African American academic staff member hired at NC State in 1958—starting her work in the midst of the Jim Crow era and working in the lab of Dr. Kenichi Kojima, a Japanese faculty member in the Department of Genetics during this time. Thirty years later, she retired as the department's Head Research Technician. Although I was not able to find any new traces related to Justina Williams, she did lead me to other fragments pertaining to Asian faculty and scholars. Asians and Asian Americans are almost absent in our collections. This reflects their small demographic population and also dominant narratives of campus history itself, which often center the lives, voices, and perspectives of white men. After nine months of digging through the digitized archives, I developed a historical timeline on Asian and Asian Americans at NC State that is open-sourced and available to anyone with internet access. The Historical State timeline identifies significant figures and moments in the history of the Asian and Asian American community at NC State. The timeline includes information and links to digitized materials, such as photographs, yearbooks, enrollment data, and more. There are also other timelines documenting the history of African American, Native American, GLBT and Latinx communities at NC State. As a Black archivist and librarian, this kind of work is the type of intervention I have been thinking through in order to recognize and address the gaps and silences that exist in the archives. Teaching students and researchers both within and outside of our institution how to approach and engage with archival materials provides a way to contextualize the present and help imagine different kinds of futures, especially now in the time of COVID-19 and the past month's (July 2020) movements naming racial injustice.

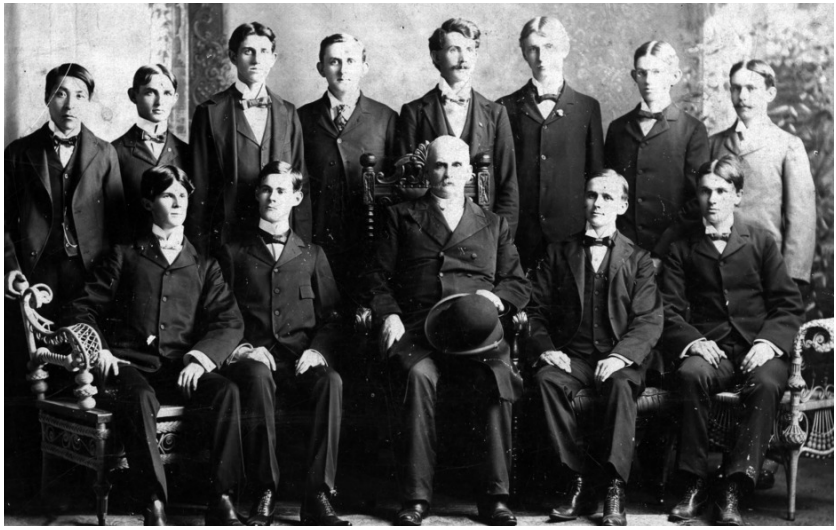

Figure 2: College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts Class of 1898[3]

Archivists and special collections librarians are in a unique position to help researchers think through the shifts and turns of current events by decentering whiteness and amplifying the voices that have been buried in the archives. Libraries and archives are often seen as depoliticized spaces that view their mission and goals as neutral and objective. However, librarians and archivists of color have long argued that given their institutional history, policies, and practices of exclusion, archives and libraries are in fact not neutral, transparent, comprehensive, nor easy to access even today. For example, Professor Jason Miller's research on the absent records of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s visit to NC State in 1966 reveals how white supremacy has shaped what is deemed worthy to preserve. Once we recognize that archives were designed through policies and practices of systemic racism, then we can better understand what is present and visible in the archives and, perhaps more importantly, what is not. How do we confront and address these voids? Knowing that such shortcomings exist, what can archivists do to reconcile these gaps, silences, and unknowns?

One way I have attempted to address these missing narratives and memories is by conducting archival literacy instruction that centers the lived experiences of underrepresented communities. Facilitating critical conversations about how issues of voice and gaze shape the creation of collective memory provides students a useful framework to understand modes of power. By this I mean, critical archival analysis provides context to contemporary issues by connecting us to stories and images of the past that are not part of the dominant narrative. Curated information, like the historical timeline and similar digital public platforms, help make primary sources accessible to users remotely.

Archivists are positioned to be interdisciplinary and multi-modal, and so I have also been working to establish meaningful and sustainable relationships with campus partners for collaborative projects. One important lesson I learned from my experience with community building in academia is that all work about communities of color should be in constant dialogue with those communities. This same practice should also apply to archives when building collections and other works of memory. Through intentional outreach and community building efforts, I collaborated with the Women's Center and African American Cultural Center on campus to help build content for the Women Center's annual exhibition. The theme for this past academic year was titled *Existence as Resistance: The Magic in Blackness,* where NC State students, staff, and faculty, and community members were invited to think and create radical Black futures through an Afrofuturist lens. Incorporating digitized images from the university archives, we created a section in the exhibit titled "Reimagining Black Futures Through the Archives." Viewers saw historical images of Black life both on and off campus. Our themes invited viewers to critically reimagine these historical records and speculate futures in which Black people live out fully realized lives.

As Toni Morrison states above, "a void may be empty, but is not a vacuum." It is imperative that archivists and researchers think beyond what is simply absent from the archives, and continue to focus on how much calculated ef-

fort and intention was enacted to exclude others in order to build the archives. The work of dismantling dominant narratives cannot be solely rectified by somehow hastily filling the gaps in the stories. Rather we must ask ourselves what structures and policies have been and are currently in place today that reinforce and reproduce institutional racism. A reckoning of the archives and archival practices must first take place before any premature reconciliation. We may not be able to fill the voids of individuals or groups in the archives, such as Justina Williams; yet her presence, like so many absented from the archives, tells us much about the systems of power that created such voids in the first place.

Notes

1. University Archives Photograph Collection, Student Life Photographs, 1893-1997, UA023.025, Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries

2. Morrison, Toni. "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature." *The Source of Self-regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations*. Knopf, 2019, p. 173.

3. University Archives Photograph Collection, People, UA023.024, Special Collections Research Center, NC State University Libraries

Giving Form to Black and Brown: The Art and Politics of Solidarity

Maurice Rafael Magaña

Figure 1: Nipsey Hussle Mural by Danny Mateo, Hyde Park Los Angeles 2019. Photo Credit: Susy Chávez Herrera

"It wouldn't be the USA without Mexicans/if it's time to team up shit let's begin/ Black love, Brown pride on the sets again."

YG & Nipsey Hussle, "FDT"

In the historical moment following the Minneapolis Police lynching of George Floyd, talk of abolition is in the air (Kaba 2021). The conspiracy between law enforcement, immigration enforcement, border patrol, and the rhetoric of the "War on Terror" has been laid so bare with the repression and surveillance of protestors

0026-3079/2020/5904-023$2.50/0 American Studies, 60.2 (2021): 23-28

by the homeland security state that even those privileged sectors of the population who had not felt its collective knee on their necks have been shaken out of their slumber (Polini 2020; Rambo 2020; Vladeck and Wittes 2020; Walia 2021). As the existing political establishment and the social institutions that reproduce it scramble to try and usurp, moderate, repress, criminalize, and otherwise destroy Black Lives Matter and the networked movements mobilizing against antiblack racism and state violence, organizers and activists refuse to limit their demands and visions to mere reforms (Speri et al. 2020).

Moreover, politicians of all stripes and mainstream media distract from the matter at hand— antiblack state violence— by obsessing over looting. Robin D.G. Kelley takes on this tired sleight of hand in his provocative essay in the *New York Times*, "What Kind of Society Values Property Over Black Lives?" (Kelley 2020). The answer he points to is the kind "built on looting — the looting of Indigenous lands and African labor." The moral clarity of today's organizers who demand nothing less than abolition of the police state and its carceral logic has exposed both political parties' inability to match the radical vision and humanity driving the historic Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 (Maldonado-Torres 2020).

Artists, on the other hand, are masters of making such visionary futures seeable and knowable. Whether through visual art, music, or dance, artists reveal the contours, sounds, visions, choreographies, and ways of relating that might help usher in an abolitionist decolonial world. Political rhetoric is ill equipped to capture the interlinked struggles around Black Lives Matter, antifascism, immigrant and refugee rights, Native American sovereignty, QTBIPOC liberation, and allied causes. Critical scholars develop theoretical frameworks and analysis in an effort to capture the nuance of mutually constituted yet distinct modes of domination and struggle. The problem is making this knowledge seeable and knowable beyond the paywalls, jargon, and prerequisite readings. In my own academic work, I examine how young people experiment with novel ways of enacting more just and liberatory futures in the present, most often by combining social movement organizing and cultural production (Magaña 2020b; 2021).

In my first book, *Cartographies of Youth Resistance: Hip-Hop, Punk, and Urban Autonomy in Mexico*, I study how urban and migrant Indigenous youth in Oaxaca, Mexico weave deep family and community histories of organizing together with anarchist, autonomous, and decolonial politics (Magaña 2020b). Activists combine these influences with hip-hop and punk cultures to innovate new ways of doing politics, transforming urban space, and imagining new kinds of social relations. More recently, I have looked at how Black and Brown artists and activists co-produce a politics of solidarity that uproot the white supremacist logic of the existing racial and spatial order. This is a legacy that stretches back at least to the post-WWII era, when Black and Brown communities came together to carve out spaces of congregation, and joy through shared cultural expressions in cities like Houston, Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York City (Alvarez 2009; Johnson 2013; Kelley 1996; Márquez 2014; Steptoe 2015).

Figure 2: Nipsey Hussle Mural by Vanessa Prado aka Nessi Arte, Mid-City 2019. Photo Credit: The artist.

Multiracial formation and political solidarities take form in murals, find expression in hip-hop lyrics, and produce new visual poetics in music videos. In his 1996 song "To Live and Die in L.A.," for example, 2Pac celebrated the potential of a Black and Brown solidarity politics, "Black love, Brown pride on the sets again." And in his 1993 song "Last Wordz," he declares: "United we stand/Divided we fall/They can shoot one ni**a but they can't take us all/Let's get along with the Mexicans and we can all have peace on the sets again." When read together with histories of activism, community formation, and the political landscapes of their time, these lyrics become even more powerful and telling. "To Live and Die in L.A." came on the heels of a slew of racist and xenophobic laws in California such as the infamous Proposition 187 and California's three strikes law, which 2Pac gestures to when he charges that then-governor "Pete Wilson tryin' to see us all broke." "Last Wordz" came in the aftermath of the 1992 L.A. Uprising, which the late rapper also evokes together with the scourge of police violence.

While 2Pac used his sizeable platform to shine a light on Black and Brown mutuality, unequivocally calling out police violence, dominant media and political narratives focus on racialized conflict and inner-city violence to, in effect, obscure and sanitize police violence. Returning to Kelley's interrogation of what "looting" means for the United States, mainstream media and politicians have long obsessed over tropes of criminality to avoid state-sanctioned forms of looting. The list of examples is too long to name here, but mass incarceration and migrant detention centers are two of the most visible forms that require our collective imagination and energy to dismantle.

With racist and xenophobic politics resurgent at the national level in 2016, South L.A. rappers YG and Nipsey Hussle joined forces on the track "FDT," which is a scorching critique of the Republican nominee in that year's presidential election. Nipsey Hussle raps, "If you build a wall/we'll probably dig holes" and "It wouldn't be the USA without Mexicans/if it's time to team up shit let's begin/ Black love, Brown pride on the sets again." The lyrics referencing the politician's promise to "build a great great wall" and to 2Pac's lyrics from "To Live and Die in L.A." Throughout the video Nipsey and YG are surrounded by young Black and Brown people proudly waving Mexican, Honduran, and Salvadoran flags, together with upside down U.S. flags, and blue and red bandanas.

When asked about his motivation for creating the song, Nipsey reflected on feeling solidarity with members of his community that were under attack:

> Him being so vocal and one-sided on how he feels about Mexican people as far as categorizing [them] as illegal immigrants and that they make no positive contributions to the country. Number one, I'm from L.A. so I grew up with Mexican people and number two, I see Mexican people at all my concerts that really support. I felt like they needed somebody to ride for 'em. (Platon 2016)

After Nipsey Hussle's tragic murder in 2019, artists with last names like Rodriguez, Mateo, Ponce, Prado, and Zermeño went to work creating murals in his memory all over Los Angeles (Pineda 2019). In my work I look at such cultural productions as expressions of shared experiences of historical and contemporary discrimination, state violence, and activism that have shaped the racialization of Latinxs in Los Angeles in relation to African Americans and other marginalized groups. My interlocutors in Los Angeles articulate and mobilize the racial category of Brown, which encompasses non-white Latinxs, as well as other racialized groups such as Filipinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders. Brown is most often articulated as part of a Black and Brown multiracial formation, which challenges whitewashed notions of Latinidad, the erasure of Indigenous and Black Latinxs, and disrupts the dominant black/white racial binary.

Black and Brown political solidarities are also given form in the work of Indigenous Mexican artists who contribute their highly skilled creative labor to their transborder communities through elaborate murals and musical performances in places like South Central, Watts, Koreatown, and Boyle Heights (Magaña 2020a). These artists refuse antiblackness and assimilation as the cost of U.S. belonging for Mexican migrants by visualizing alternative social relations based on solidarity and mutual recognition.

Figure 3: Nipsey Hussle mural by Bobby Z. Rodriguez aka Z the Art, Hyde Park 2019. Photo Credit: Susy Chávez Herrera.

Black and Brown opens up social and political possibilities, yet is also fraught with the potential to slip into racial analogy, which anthropologist Savannah Shange poignantly argues, risks "cannibaliz[ing] Black suffering" (2019). Understanding race through a relational formations of race framework helps us not lose sight of the ways that "racial difference is consti-

tuted through... distinctive yet mutually imbricated modes of domination" (Molina et al. 2019). Establishing and nurturing the kinds of horizontal relations made possible through Black and Brown imaginings requires us to make connections while carefully attending to difference and privilege. Artists help us envision and enact such liberatory antiracist horizons in the present— if we pay attention.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Editorial note: Book reviews are lightly edited for clarity and typographical errors.

THE BREAKBEAT POETS VOL. 4: LATINEXT. By Felicia Rose Chavez, José Olivares, and Willie Perdomo, eds. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020.

The stated purpose of the fourth volume of The BreakBeat Poets series collection, *LatiNext*, edited by Felicia Rose Chavez, José Olivares, and Willie Perdomo, is to bring "the aesthetic of hip-hop practice to the page." It is the latest from *Haymarket* in a series that has published several collections based around sets of marginalized identities. The editors highlight poetics that have been excluded to center the works as serious subjects of study and literary merit. During a moment in which the analytical use of the term "latinidad" in the United States trembles (se tambalea, por de alguna manera decirlo), revealing both the possibilities and fissures in better understanding or wielding concepts like identity or relation, the voices in *LatiNext* complicate, rather than attempt to foreclose, those discussions. As a whole, the book celebrates what Perdomo in the introduction calls a "somos más" moment. This proclamation seems to be simultaneously referring to the diversity of communities to which the label of Latinx/a/o may or may not apply, but also to a growing number of artists making noise in increasingly visible stages. There are 125 poets in this anthology. They hail from Houston, New York, Chicago, many places in California, the DMV — but also Cuba, New Mexico, Chile, the Dominican Republic. They are Nuyoricans, Afro-Latinx, Ch/Xicanx/o/as, Central American, Queer, Black, poet laureates, established voices, and young new-comers.

In Mariana Goycoechea's "PoEma for MaMi," to highlight just one, the speaker mourns a mother who struggled with writing: "Mujer,/... I don't know what I'll/ write from here on/ other than to remember to write the entire alphabet/ every time I write your name" (43). Gabriel Ramirez's "Afro-Latinx Manifesto (or I learned to Count Salsa Steps to Laffy Taffy by D4L)" proclaims that "I let go of my father's abandonment to carry a name I knew better than any," that of the mother whose belly was kissed by Celia Cruz (73-74). Too many to name here, the collection includes explicit odes to the peacock, to the chola, to Kendrick Lamar, to dipset, to new money, to Tego Calderón — along with many others to place, memory, and future. "These poems, though, they wanna be about something beautiful like birds 'n' shit," writes Joseph Rios in "Fellowship Application." The poem continues (57-58):

> This poetry is for the birds...
> ...Birds that get
> cancer. Birds that get valley fever. Birds that die of
> diabetes. Birds that watch professional wrestling and
> own cats with feline leukemia. I hate that my poetry has
> to be about this shit, but it's true....

The poems in the collection constitute remembrances, eulogies, portraits, and celebrations. Ashley August's "Luanne" celebrates a young woman at school, much less concerned with what others may think or say and more with living in her joy. She (23-24):

Run when it scares her
Stay when it feel good
Say nothing when she ain't got nothing to say
Don't fake the funk
She don't be polite for nobody's feelings
Tell you she want it, tell you to take it back
Tell you you stupid when you is stupid

The speaker in Victoria Chávez Peralta's "Dios te Salve, María" insists that "la virgen de guadalupe loves me, even though i'm queer." Susi García's "The Bridge is out" defiantly declares that "The bridge is out/ but it won't stop us, amigax –/ we under water walk" (131). Jonathan Mendoza's "On nationalism" critically states: "I do not need to wave an empire's flag/ to prove I am deserving of a life" (183). Cierto es, como el poema de Raquel Salas Rivera "preguntas frecuentes" nos dice, que (246):

en inglés el plural singular ya exitse
el yo muchamente
en español tenemos que inventar el plural
ellx
    elle
un singular bastardo
    una caja de galletas/
duct tape /
unas espordosas descompuestas/ en pegamento

Cierto también es que en los versos de muchos de estos poemas hay acertijos, puntos suspensivos, a veces intimaciones y a veces no-respuestas a los tantísimos ¿por qué? que se han extendido hacia el tunel de la ascendencia y sido contestados con un eufemismo, como relata la abuela en el poema "Rain" de Janel Pineda: "porque allá llueve mucho" (295).

Willie Perdomo writes in the introduction: "If poetry is truly a decolonial practice, then this anthology lifts its lyrical machete, its formalistic authority, its innovative approach toward language, its queerness, its nonbinary *they*, its sense of lineage, family tradition, pride, and, refreshingly, its Blackness" (1). Part of Perdomo's presentation of the anthology states that the poems redraw the lines around notions such as nationhood and nationalism, patriarchy, and gender. Especially ascribing to a hip hop aesthetic, important contributions open up creative and analytical space to ponder the often fraught or exclusive relationship between Blackness and "latinidad" — a relationship embodied or addressed in many of the poems in the collection.

Less highlighted in the theoretical context of the introduction is the interaction between Indigeneities and the exceedingly large and increasingly challenged category of "latinidad" — especially considering waves of migration from Indigenous communities

from what we know as México and Central America — the latter diaspora, I am happy to report, finds many contributors in the collection. The questions that scholars like Gloria Chacón ask remain relevant. Referring to what she terms "Indian trouble — the trouble of Indians not fitting into US LatinX diasporic communities and their troublesome possibilities," Chacón urges us to consider experiences that are "peripheral to the nation-state and even marginal to what LatinX being constitutes at the present moment" (52).

In thinking, broadly, of the categories that bring together the series (*New American Poetry in the Age of Hip Hop;* vol. 2 *Black Girl Magic;* vol 3. *Halal if you Hear Me;* and vol. 4 *LatiNEXT*), analytical space opens up to think about the ways that state and cultural categories influence or are challenged by authors in the collections. Collections such as this one invite important questions regarding spaces both within and without the literary sphere. How do or don't cultural works centering Indigeneity fit into a "broader LatinX archive" (55)?[1] How could we apply concepts such as "Critical Latinx Indigeneities" — which urge us to "seek out a more engaged reading and analysis of history and the various structural systems that impact the experiences of Indigenous Latinx migrants and their future generations in the US" — to understanding the formations of poetry communities and anthologies within the literary purview of the so called United States?[2]

For those of us interested in creative, literary, or scholarly interventions, these questions can be helpful in continuing to challenge homogeneous conceptions of what it might mean to draw coalitions or separations along/against contemporary ethnic, racial, national, and class categories. The provocations of the poets in the collection can certainly be fruitful in continuing to dislodge homogenous conceptions of what is here termed LatiNEXT, hinting at a (perhaps otherwise!) future or futures.

Poems in the collection flood the categorization of its sections — named after a traditionally Mexican or Mexican-American cultural object: lotería cards. Las rebasan. In denouncement and celebration — mundane, sacred, and profane — many voices in this collection push against and, at the same time, invite us to consider both the utility and shortcomings of Latinx/o/a as a category, while simultaneously engaging generative creation within a larger (set of) community(ies). As Raque Salas Rivera's poem cited above puts it: "no importa el presente/ tanto como el presente plural" "the present doesn't matter/ as much as the plural present."

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Notes

[1] Chacón, Gloria. "Indian Trouble. Cultural Dynamics. 31 (1-2): 60-61, 2019.

[2] Blackwell, Maylei, Floridalma Boj López, and Luis Urrieta Jr. "Special Issue: Critical LatinX Indigeneities." Latino Studies, 15: 126-137, 2017.

WE GOT THIS: EQUITY, ACCESS, AND THE QUEST TO BE WHO OUR STUDENTS NEED US TO BE. By Cornelius Minor. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2019.

Despite the pervasive, yet misleading narrative that teachers cannot deviate from the curriculum because they "must teach to test," teachers have agency and hold more power than they realize. The mandated curriculum in schools dictates *what* teachers are required to teach, but it does not dictate *how* it must be taught. This loophole allows for teachers to use their creativity and passion to make necessary adjustments to their teaching to ensure student learning and success. In *We Got This*, Cornelius Minor reminds us that with great power comes great responsibility. In this way, this book serves a call to action for teachers to strive toward (or continue striving towards) more equitable student engagement practices as a way to combat structural inequalities. Specifically, Minor seeks to address the following question: "What does it mean to be appropriately equipped to serve a community and its most precious resource—the children?" (xiv-xv).

Throughout *We Got This,* Minor uses his love for comic books to make comparisons between the journeys of superheroes and teachers. While most recognize and admire superheroes for who they are and what they do, many fail to recognize the process of what it took for those superheroes to get where they are. Thus, like the journeys of superheroes, Minor emphasizes that the journey of teachers striving to employ equitable teaching practices is a messy and imperfect one. Teachers must accept the idea that everyone has their own journey of pursuing equity and they must not rely on a formula that will teach them how to do it. Though many teachers may feel as if the odds are stacked against them and that they are able to do very little, if at all, about social injustices that negatively impact their students, Minor argues otherwise and suggests that disrupting these injustices, even if it is on a smaller scale, can happen in school classrooms. However, in order to do so, teachers must critically self-reflect about their practices, adjust accordingly, and be willing change their teaching. After all, as Minor insists, we can't expect teachers to change the lives of their students if they are unwilling to change themselves.

To initiate this journey of change, Minor prompts teachers to do something they ask their kids to do on a daily basis—to listen. One can transform their teaching by listening to the needs of their students, and by actively incorporating lesson plans that address those needs. Yet, according to Minor, a teacher is unable to adequately address the needs of students if they are reluctant to disrupt the status quo in their classrooms. Systems of oppression like racism, sexism, ableism, and other -isms exist in and outside of a classroom. Thus, teachers can directly challenge and change the systems that govern their classrooms. This change requires for teachers to share their power with their students, which is daunting, except when considering that "[one] can let go of power without letting go of control" (82). Sharing power with students not only shows them they are an integral part of the classroom, but also allows them to see and understand that their voices can change a classroom, and also change the world. In underscoring the idea that schools celebrate innovation, but encourage and reward compliance, Minor makes an important distinction between being a good teacher versus being a good employee. While being a good teacher entails constantly learning and challenging yourself to change your teaching accordingly to suit the needs of your students, a good employee who teaches means being complicit in order to be well

liked by colleagues and supervisors. That said, good teachers, Minor claims, do their homework/research on equitable teaching practices and apply it, even if it's imperfect, in order to make the curriculum work for their students.

Unlike the aforementioned paragraph, which prompts teachers to make changes to their teaching with very little instruction on how to do so, Minor provides various step-by-step scenarios on how he made these changes in his own teaching throughout this book. *We Got This* is a recommended read for teachers interested in better serving their students, but who do not know where to start. Teachers who want to be part of the solution and not the problem.

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SPATIAL AND DISCURSIVE VIOLENCE IN THE U.S. SOUTHWEST. By Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita. Durham: Duke University Press. 2021.

Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita have made enduring contributions to Chicana/o studies. In *Telling Identities* (1995), Sánchez examined the testimonios of Californio elites who lost their land after the U.S.-Mexico War. She discovered a counter-history that revealed the social conflicts that resulted in the Californios' dispossession. *Telling Identities* was a milestone early study of 19th century Mexican American history and writing. Together, Sánchez and Pita edited the writing of 19th century writer María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, whose work, especially the novel *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), galvanized the study of 19th century Latinx literature and drew attention to the recuperation of texts through the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, initiated in 1992. In their new book, *Spatial and Discursive Violence in the U.S. Southwest,* Sánchez and Pita continue to examine land loss, expanding their consideration to three new regions — Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas — and taking into account the effect of overlapping colonizations on Indigenous as well as Mexican American communities.

The Marxist term "enclosure" is key to their study. The classical view of enclosure posits it as a shift from feudal to capitalist modes of production as communal spaces are transformed into private property. Sánchez and Pita see enclosure as "an ongoing and recurrent process" (3). Their title names the two aspects of enclosure they examine: spatial violence that is associated with state actions like war, genocide, and theft, and discursive violence that produces new subjects as modes of production are transformed, generating new discourses of citizenship and race. In the work of dispossessed writers, Sánchez and Pita detect a "critical memory" that has no nostalgic relation to the past, but instead registers "the collective scars left by history" (204). As they examine each region, they provide periodizations of the enclosures specific to a locale, taking us from Indigenous communal systems of production through the semifeudal systems associated with Spanish colonization to the capitalist modes of the United States. These deep histories are distinct for each region and always involve a multiplicity of temporalities.

The chapter on Oklahoma considers the seizure of Indigenous land through a sustained reading of Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (1990), which chronicles the Osage

murders of the 1920s that were motivated by a desire to obtain the Osage's oil-rich land. Sánchez and Pita's reading of Hogan's novel clearly contextualizes the events in the novel, and demonstrates how Hogan remixes and critiques the dominant historiography about these events. Unlike the chapters on New Mexico and Texas, this chapter moves from *Mean Spirit* to Hogan's other novels and works by Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday, none of which take place in Oklahoma. One wonders why the Native American writers are all contained in this chapter, and why the chapters on New Mexico and Texas deal only with Mexican American writers. The New Mexico chapter, in particular, would have conveyed a richer sense of the multiplicity of temporalities by including Indigenous voices like Silko's.

The chapters on New Mexico and Texas use writings by Mexican Americans to reveal the social conflicts at play in the contest for land while also demonstrating how these writers came to understand themselves as historical subjects. These chapters are noteworthy for drawing our attention to Mexican American complicity in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and showing the ways Mexican American writers negotiated accommodation to the forces overwhelming them as they attempted to hold onto ways of life that they were rapidly losing. Working across a large body of writing, Sánchez and Pita demonstrate how literature helps us understand the everyday experience of enclosure from the standpoint of the dispossessed and how "Chicano/a land narratives in differing ways respond to, reject, or acquiesce to hegemonic narratives of US settlement in the Southwest" (203).

Given their interest in both Indigenous and Mexican American dispossession, one wishes the book engaged the emerging field of Critical Latinx Indigeneities. Indeed, Sánchez and Pita's New Mexico chapter could be profitably read alongside Simón Ventura Trujillo's *Land Uprising* (2020), which shares Sánchez and Pita's concerns but situates them within conversations in Critical Latinx Indigeneities. The closest the work comes to engaging this thought is a dismissal of the term "decolonial" as offering a form of liberation that is epistemic but not material. They do not offer readers a way of making material interventions but instead see literary criticism as part of a consciousness raising process that can catalyze activism. They make a persuasive case for the necessity of delineating these histories as enclosure assumes new forms such as gentrification and environmental extraction. Sánchez and Pita give us tools for understanding the long history of these contemporary conflicts, and push us to think more deeply about what liberatory futures may look like.

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THE BONDS OF INEQUALITY: DEBT AND THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN CITY. By Destin Jenkins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Focusing on the city of San Francisco from the aftermath of World War II through the late 20th century, this book creatively documents the role of municipal debt in the creation and maintenance of a class and racially fragmented and unequal metropolis. Carefully conceptualized, deeply researched and persuasively argued, this book makes a signal contribution to knowledge by focusing on the social, cultural, and political as

well as economic history of municipal debt. Unlike most existing studies of finance capitalism that give the lion's share of attention to the ideas and behavior of the organized white labor movement, the real estate industry, and journalistic accounts among other similar sources, *The Bonds of Inequality* places the municipal bond market and a coterie of heretofore little acknowledged actors at the center of the story.

This study revolves around the activities of what the author describes as a "fraternity" of white professional and business elites — specifically, city controllers, accountants, bondholders, lenders, bond financiers, peddlers of debt, credit analysts and bond raters (11). In careful detail, Jenkins demonstrates how municipal finance officers collaborated closely with banks and professional credit and bond rating agencies to sell municipal bonds. Together, bankers and their allies and city finance officers crafted a system of urban finance that depended on the sale of municipal bonds to secure capital for a variety of urban infrastructure projects — including schools, roads, public parks and playgrounds.

The tasks of financial officers was by no means left to chance. Working through their "modernized" national Municipal Finance Officers' Association of the United States and Canada (MFOA), city finance officers not only successfully accessed the municipal bond markets, but also used credit rating professionals, bankers, lawyers, and legal experts to stymie popular input into their actions. As such, they were able to shield municipal debt from the close scrutiny and demands of activist public service and civil rights groups. The buyers of municipal debt took a seat at the influential heart of urban financial strategy discussions. They served as members of urban governmental advisory committees and diverse governing bodies responsible for such local spending projects as urban renewal, public housing, and city transportation systems. Such in-house influence of bondholders ensured policy decisions that repeatedly favored the profit-making interests of finance capitalists over the social welfare and infrastructure-building needs of the vast majority of the city's people.

Moreover, the statutory power of such municipal organizations as the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and the San Francisco Housing Authority enabled the approval of bond issues without a public referendum on the matter. When the interests of the broader public good clashed with the profits of funders, the former always gave way to the latter. But the broader public good was by no means monolithic. In the wake of the Great Depression and passage of the Glass-Steagall Act, New Deal financial policy helped to transform what Jenkins calls the "rights consciousness" of white Americans in "new ways." To the painful and destructive disadvantage of African Americans and Latinx people, New Deal social policy facilitated the emergence of what Jenkins describes as an "*Intraracial* [white] cross-class compact." The collusion of white workers and their middle-class counterparts enabled municipal government to dramatically expand the bonded debt by extensive borrowing for a series of infrastructural improvements: schools, roads, museums, and other leisure facilities, to name a few. These projects benefitted white citizens, particularly elite white men through such entities as the San Francisco Bond Club.

Although communities of color paid taxes and put the weight of their votes behind most bond issues during the first two postwar decades, they received little in return for their support. After several decades of delivering benefits to white citizens, *The Bonds of Inequality* shows how this system finally broke down under the demands of the Modern Black Freedom Movement, an emerging left-wing critique of municipal bonds as lopsided "redistributionary" elite claims on the resources of the many in

the interests of the few, and, most tellingly, conservative reactions against the New Deal social welfare state with the rise of Reaganomics in the 1980s. In short, this is a stellar model of the impact of municipal debt on one city, but it provides a clear and persuasive model for future research on other places during the same period. This is no small accomplishment.

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ABSTRACT BARRIOS: THE CRISIS OF LATINX VISIBILITY IN CITIES. By Johana Londoño. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

My mom lives in Santa Ana — I grew up there. To say that I strongly identify with the Orange County city, its social geography as a largely diverse Latinx community shaped by a history of Mexican-origin and African American migrant marginalization and segregation, strength and resilience (*Mendez v. Westminster* (1947); *Reitman v. Mulkey* (1967)), would be an understatement. So, when I read Londoño's *Abstract Barrios*, which has a chapter on the late-1980s construction of a downtown Santa Ana shopping center (the Fiesta Marketplace), my mind raced to those early childhood memories of being an undocumented child amidst the colorful ethnic niche business that occupied that space. I was struck by Londoño's deep accounting of just how the construction of the Fiesta Marketplace abstracted Latinx cultural difference as a way to visually index a kind of Latinidad in the built environment that would appeal to Latinx residents and business owners, a new space for belonging and economic opportunity, while simultaneously sanitizing, domesticating, the history of Mexican presence in the city and county, which had, at the time, increasingly been aligned within narratives of urban blight. Of course, Londoño has us understand, that the result was an urban shopping center where competing and often contradictory meanings and claims challenged the originally conceived consumer-friendly representation of the city's Latinx population, making Fiesta only ever a partial *fait accompli*. And, as *Abstract Barrios* has us further consider, capital urbanism constantly reproduces itself anyway: so, by the time the Fiesta Marketplace was demolished in the mid-2010, it was no longer seen as the solution to urban blight but had actually come to be an example of it, thus needing, once again, to be remade, this time, as a playground for the county's primarily white economically advantaged population — now an anchor, however tenuous, for the city's ongoing downtown gentrification (138).

This concerted attempt to domesticate Latinx racial difference, what, to me has always seemed a particularly Orange County move, crystalizes a primary concern of Londoño's text: Latinx culture and the symbolic anxiety-inducing racial difference that it represents for white people is sublated into the urban built environment, where, as part of a late-capitalist logic that spatially reifies the contradictions of modernity, "Latinx visibility," ironically, also becomes the life force, the very "key to the cyclical nature of U.S. capitalist urbanism: its decay and reconstitution of its normativity" (5).

Rather than offer a book-length case study of one particular urban geography, *Abstract Barrios* shuttles across the U.S., from Puerto Rico, to New York, to Southern

California, to demonstrate how the abstraction of Latinx culture into the built environment as complexly tied to the *barrio*, a social space where poor and racialized people are perceived to live outside of modernity's fold and spatial reach. Londoño provides a historical lodestone for understanding how, since the middle of the twentieth century, a quintessential U.S. city-making process — development projects — have served as a modality of urban capitalist accumulation by attempting to appropriate surplus value from racialized communities (from the *barrio*) — by appropriating their visual culture as a resource for urban design. This is achieved not only by capturing value from people's labor and by hounding them through policing efforts across cities but, as Londoño notes, also through seemingly benign efforts like the development of housing, as seen in the chapter "Design for the 'Puerto Rico Problem,'" where U.S. urban planners and settlement workers fomented transnational connections to their Puerto Rican counterparts to glean from Puerto Rico's self-help housing models as a way to plan housing — in a digestible design kind of way — for New York's Puerto Rican community; an antidote to the perceived danger of Puerto Rican *barrioization* and the *barrio's* purported deviance from and incommensurability with U.S. urban modernity.

Abstract Barrios enriches the fields of American, Latinx and urban studies and planning by having readers rethink the concept of the *barrio* as something much greater than the literature has heretofore defined as spatially relegated as outside from, peripheral to, and excluded within city making processes. In this work, the very abstraction of racial difference and space (the *barrio*), as the progenitor of a visual threat — *crisis* — to white people and white supremacy, is assuaged into the built environment in ways that enable new arenas of accumulation built from the marshalling of difference, its abstraction signaling both a kind of extraction and inclusion.

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