

# THE INQUIRY

THE JOURNAL OF THE MELLON MAYS  
UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

2013

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UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

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# editor's note

All the articles in this journal are formatted in the Chicago style, even social sciences papers that would normally use APA formatting. This was done for the sake of uniformity (to make the journal as professional looking as possible by giving it one style) and readability (to make the journal easier to read by not abruptly changing styles from article to article, particularly in regards for nonacademic readers, who constitute a significant portion of the journal's audience). We wish to make social science professionals who may read this journal aware of this fact and why this formatting was used. Aside from normal copyediting and uniform formatting, the content of these articles was not changed in any way.

**Shanti A. Parikh**

Associate Professor of Anthropology  
Washington University in St. Louis

# foreword

It must be borne in mind that the tragedy in life doesn't lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal, but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture. It is not a disgrace not to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim is sin.

(Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, 1894-1984).

Welcome to *The Inquiry* journal! The essays in this journal reflect research undertaken by our five senior Mellon Mays Undergraduate (MMUF) Fellows. Every year Washington University's MMUF program selects a small group of fellows in the middle of their sophomore year and after a rigorous application process during which applicants discuss their proposed project with faculty advisors and current Fellows and later defend the value of their proposed project and their own preparedness to a panel of judges. The rigorous application process is followed by two years of intense training in what it means to be a scholar and researcher. In other words, the works and ideas that appear in this journal are merely a small part of what these promising future scholars have developed over the past thirty-two or so months—more than half of their undergraduate experience. Their commitment to their research has been remarkable. We are very proud of them!

In 1993, the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) accepted its first cohort of young scholars at Washington University. The program is part of a national fellowship that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York City started in 1988 as the “centerpiece” of “the Foundation's long-term effort to help remedy the serious shortage of faculty of color in higher education.”<sup>1</sup> Today, the MMUF program includes 42 colleges and universities across the country and in South Africa, and a consortium of 39 historically black colleges and universities within the membership of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).

The fundamental objectives of the Foundation's MMUF program “are

to reduce, over time, the serious underrepresentation on faculties of individuals from minority groups, as well as to address the consequences of these racial disparities for the educational system itself and for the larger society that it serves.”<sup>2</sup> The program achieves these goals by supporting the development of research and academic skills of not only undergraduate students from underrepresented minority groups but also “students who may not come from underrepresented minority groups but have demonstrated a commitment to the goals of MMUF.”<sup>3</sup> The ultimate goal of the program is to shape the environment and broaden the discussion on university campuses in such a way that it includes critical conversations about social justice, social critique, and intellectual engagement.

The name of the Fellowship honors and connects its mission to the educational achievements and social justice vision of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays (1894-1984). As reflected in the opening quotation, Dr. Mays was a firm believer of high attainment not just in academic achievement but in translating that into improving the world around him. He embodied this commitment in his own life as exemplified in the many roles he played; he was a noted African American educator, eloquent critic of segregation, minister, former president of Morehouse College, former president of the Atlanta Board of Education, and also an important mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. Mays possessed a clear and determined vision for American society, a vision forged as he struggled against the inequalities and oppression faced by black citizens in the U.S. But his vision for a “just society” was universal, extending to everyone—*every family* deserves a good home; good health care is a necessity *for all*; poverty should be abolished *for everyone* and so on. Therefore, it is entirely fitting that the program, dedicated to remedying “the serious shortage of faculty of color in higher education,” bears the name of Dr. Mays as a tribute to his commitment to equity and justice.

Our Mellon Mays program at Washington University is involved in identifying, nurturing, and preparing a pipeline of gifted scholars who will pursue doctoral programs and eventually become “scholars of the highest distinction” and mentors in the academy. The MMUF program at

Washington University is dedicated to continuing the legacy of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays by nurturing the talents of some of the brightest minds and leaders of tomorrow. Each year up to five juniors are admitted into the program. Working closely with faculty experts and mentors, the Fellows are guided through a long-term research project through the structure of weekly seminars devoted to the discussion and analysis of their research. Mellon Mays Fellows are also provided with a summer stipend and support during the academic year to facilitate their research, permitting them to travel to archives, conduct research overseas, attend academic conferences, and visit graduate programs in preparation for their future academic careers. Finally, the Fellows produce an annual journal of their work, *The Inquiry*, the latest volume of which you hold in your hands. (Copies of the earlier volumes are also available.)

In its 19-year history at Washington University, our MMUF program has graduated 115 Fellows of whom 38 have or are currently enrolled in PhD programs. And a remarkable 10 of our alumni are in tenure or tenure-track faculty positions. This year's five graduating MMUF seniors will join a prestigious national network of Mellon Mays alumni that includes, as of September 2011, over 3,733 undergraduate Fellows; over 405 with PhDs and an additional 645 currently in PhD programs.

The work of our seniors is featured in this issue of *The Inquiry*. **Oluwakemi "Kemi" Aladesuyi Arogundade**, a History major, examines the music of the internationally-known Nigerian musician, Fela Kuti, as a popular form of social critique that emerged during the country's post-colonial period. Using insights from her Women, Gender, and Sexuality (WGSS) studies major and Anthropology and Writing minors, **Yasmin Boakye** conducted ethnographic research among college students in Ghana, and considers their highly gendered ideas about contraception, responsibility, and sexuality. **Joelle Julien**, an Education and Anthropology major, was inspired by her own experiences of being a Haitian in the U.S. and by her interest in class dynamics, immigration, and discourse. In research that combines analysis of interviews with two waves of Haitian immigrants to St. Louis and newspaper coverage of these distinct groups, Julien's essay explores debates surrounding the breakdown of unity in the Haitian diasporic community. **Sophia Nuñez**, a major in the Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities and Spanish with a minor in Physics,

undertook archival research in the architecturally impressive library *Real Biblioteca del Escorial* and explores how the library practice of classifying “dangerous” books reflects wider socio-political concerns about dangerous people and cultures in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain. Finally, **Jessica Page** utilized skills from her Arabic and International & Area Studies majors to conduct an ethnography of public use of a popular and commercial street in the city of Amman, Jordan, arguing that the street can be read as a window into conflicting ideas of what modernity, exclusion, and cosmopolitanism means in contemporary Jordan.

These are independent essays; some are extracted from the students’ Honors theses, but all represent tremendous work and re-working. The articles contained here are intended for non-specialists, and hence they presented students a new set of challenges, namely how to translate one’s own academic jargon into language that is understood by a wider audience. Their articles have been vetted by faculty mentors, and their arguments have been developed through deep engagement with their fellow MMUF colleagues. I am deeply proud of what these rising scholars have achieved during their two years in the MMUF program. I hope you enjoy their work!

**Shanti A. Parikh, PhD**

Associate Professor of Anthropology

Interim Co-Director, African & African American Studies

MMUF Academic Coordinator

Washington University in St. Louis

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<sup>1</sup> From The Andrew W. Mellon website: [http://www.mellon.org/grant\\_programs/programs/higher-education-and-scholarship/mellon-mays-fellowship](http://www.mellon.org/grant_programs/programs/higher-education-and-scholarship/mellon-mays-fellowship) (accessed April 24, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



# “Anarchy in the Republic”: 1974-1977, Fela Kuti and the Spaces for a Nigerian [Re]-Imagination

By Oluwakemi Aladesuyi Arogundade

***Abstract:** Fela Anikulapo Kuti, also known as: “he-who-holds-death-in-his-pocket,” “the father of Afrobeat,” the “Black President,” “Chief Priest Say,” was a prominent Nigerian musician and activist in the 1970s-1980s. He was the symbol of the postcolonial critique. His impressive repertoire with his band Afrika 70 challenged all aspects of Nigerian society. Addressing socioeconomic inequalities and political corruption through the lens of cultural nationalism, Fela Kuti was a champion for the urban poor. His music provided conceptual spaces to (re)-imagine Nigerian identity as it offered countercultural narratives for the oppressed to understand themselves and their relationship with society. The spaces he provided in his venue the Afrika Shrine, and in his commune the Kalakuta Republic, which he declared an “autonomous zone free from the jurisdiction and authority of Nigeria” in 1974, were essential locations for these (re)-imaginings to take place. Through Fela we can hear a social history not captured in elite dominated public spaces. An individual’s ability for “self-understanding” captures the continuous tension presented to the imagined state. I argue we can hear in Fela’s lyrics a different narrative for self-understanding, a (re)-imagining of the Nigerian state.*

Fela Anikulapo Kuti, also known as “he-who-holds-death-in-his-pocket,” “the father of Afrobeat,” the “Black President,” and “Chief Priest Say,” was a prominent Nigerian musician, activist and a revolutionary rebel. In the freedom of his commune, the Kalakuta Republic, and the sanctuary of his nightspot, the Afrika Shrine, Fela performed his politics of resistance and social critique of the Nigerian state.<sup>1</sup> Fela’s impressive discography was

a social history of the urban poor. His songs were a confrontational counter-narrative to the hegemonic discourse of the Nigerian state; Fela's music narrated an urban experience of social inequality, police brutality and economic disparities in the midst of public narratives of independence and prosperity.

In the words of Rodgers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, Fela's songs provided a means of "self-understanding" for the urban poor.<sup>2</sup> The ontological narrative in Fela's Afrobeat made sense of growing economic inequality and social exclusion in what international editorials would call the world's premier black nation.<sup>3</sup> Fela was an icon of popular culture. For successive government regimes, Fela threatened their precipitous sense of legitimacy. His critique of socioeconomic elites challenged their claim of cultural authenticity.

Fela created unique spaces for Nigerians to locate their experiences in a narrative that ran counter to the exclusivity of other elite-dominated public narratives. Specifically, "Ikoyi Blindness," "Noise for Vendor Mouth," and "Alagbon Close" presented new "narrative locations" that usurped ideas of unity, development and the very foundations of society. The way that Fela's music renegotiated narratives and relational settings provided, as Margaret Somers argues, "some sense of social being in the world."<sup>4</sup> His music was a space for the marginalized to reconstruct and revalue their experiences as authentic. Fela created public narratives of a (re)-imagined Nigerian identity.

## **"Unity in Diversity": Development and the State in Nigerian Identity**

The Federal Military Government envisioned "national culture" as the key to rebuilding a country fractured by brutal civil war.<sup>5</sup> General Gowon, the military head-of-state, initiated a plan of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3Rs) aimed at producing "a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a just and egalitarian society; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and a free and democratic society."<sup>6</sup> The Federal Military Government envisioned "development" as a way to create a national culture.

General Gowon's 3R program attempted to change all aspects of Nigerian society as articulated in the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974). Planners wrote that the government must "play a dominant role in the public sector . . . [and have] access to all the major natural resources";

such intervention was critical to the success of the development plan. With the hope that economic autonomy would quell any doubts about continuing colonial dependence, the Second National Development Plan focused on economic nationalism. In other words, there was a concerted effort to make Nigeria, and her economy, self-reliant and independent from foreign investment and aid. The plan was meant to be “a deliberate weapon of social change, by correcting defects in existing social relations in various spheres of production, distribution and exchange”; it would correct colonial economic imbalances.<sup>7</sup>

The government employed the rhetoric of “indigenization” to assuage fears of neocolonial economic domination. Indigenization Decrees (1972, 1974) mandated Nigerian ownership of select small-scale service and labor enterprises. Key medium industries could have at the maximum forty percent of foreign-born participation. These decrees focused on formal sectors of the economy like manufacturing. The Federal Military Government used policy to bridge the gap between the private and public sectors. The government federalized petroleum production and created parastatals, government-owned enterprises, from other extractive industries.<sup>8</sup> However, economic nationalism in formal sectors did not address the income disparity of more than sixty percent of people who lived in Lagos and worked in informal sectors.<sup>9</sup>

Fela released “No Buredi” (No Bread) in 1976. It captured the contradiction of Federal Military Government intervention:

You no get-e power to fight/ (No Buredi!)

For Africa here e be home.../ Oil dey flow underground like river/ (No Buredi!)/ Everything for overseas, na here e dey go/ (No Buredi!)

Na for here we know de thin’ dem dey call/ (No Buredi!)/

Me I tire for dis thin’ dem dey call/ (No Buredi!)

In Nigerian Pidgin, “buredi” meant bread and was a synonym for money. In these verses Fela shared the experience of being too tired to complain about economic injustices. The song took the form of call-and-response. The response (in parentheses) to Fela’s statement, “You no get-e power to fight,” as to why people did not stand up for themselves, was a lack of money, a lack of food. Poverty disempowered people and prevented them from addressing the ironies of hunger in a nation that was rich in natural resources. The economic potential of petroleum and other natural resources was literally processed overseas as the wealth generated at home was spent on imported goods. Despite the national rhetoric of indigenization and economic independence, Britain remained Nigeria’s largest foreign inves-

tor. During the years of the Indigenization Decrees, from 1974 to 1976, Nigerian imports of British goods increased 130 percent.<sup>10</sup>

In *The Pan-African Nation*, Andrew Apter discusses the social transformation engendered by the oil boom. “The magical realism of Nigerian modernity,” notes Apter, was located in objects like televisions, cameras and carpeting. Financed by the oil boom and funded by the swelling bureaucracy of the new parastate, the new middle class engaged in a conspicuous consumption of imported goods.<sup>11</sup> In “No Buredi” and throughout his repertoire, Fela accused the nouveaux riche culture of consumption that impoverished Nigeria. Further, the oil boom enabled the government to finance the production of a national culture through the extraction of national resources, as Apter explores in Nigeria’s hosting of the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (FESTAC ’77).

Fela’s critique worked against powerful public narratives and the symbolic power of the state. As other forms of popular arts, his music was a channel of public communication in a world where “newspapers, radio, and television [only] offered a magnified image of the class that controls them,” the bourgeoisie political elite.<sup>12</sup> In “No Buredi” Fela promised to stand up for those too impoverished to protest social inequalities. He ends the song singing “me I dire dis thing’ dem call – No buredi!” In other words, he proclaimed that he would no longer tolerate the impoverishment of Nigeria.

## Theorizing “No Agreement”

The 1977 song “No Agreement” was one of Fela’s most ardent declarations of his philosophy. He sang:

I no go agree make my brother hungry/ I no go agree make my brother jobless/ I no go agree make my brother homeless

In contrast to the government, Fela would not make other Nigerians hungry. The Federal Military Government privileged developing the petroleum industry over the agricultural industry, distorting the labor market and causing an agricultural shortage during a population boom.<sup>13</sup> Before the petro-economy, the agricultural sector was 61 percent of Nigeria’s GDP (gross domestic product).<sup>14</sup> By 1977, 10 percent of all Nigerian imports was food, an 1100 percent increase from 1970. The rising food prices overwhelmed the urban poor; they had “no buredi.”<sup>15</sup> In contrast to the government, Fela would not make people jobless. A good portion of the wealth the petroleum industry generated was either spent overseas or redistributed within the government’s ever-expanding bureaucracy. In contrast to

the government, Fela would not make people homeless. The government responded to urban growth in Lagos by implementing housing policies. But these policies favored those in the Nigerian Civil Service, driving the poor out of land and housing markets.<sup>16</sup> The government cleared informal settlements on Ikoyi and Lagos Island while simultaneously enacting policies that allowed just 20 percent of the population to secure over 92 percent of housing resources in these upscale locations.<sup>17</sup>

Fela was a pop-culture icon that threatened the Nigerian government. His critiques delegitimized their authority. Karin Barber explains in her analysis, “Popular Arts in Africa,” how governments feared the power of popular arts in “their power to communicate. This power [of popular arts] is eloquently testified to by the frequency with which they are repressed.”<sup>18</sup> As an example, in 1977 over a thousand soldiers surrounded Fela’s Kala-kuta Republic, stormed the compound, beat and raped residents and razed buildings.<sup>19</sup>

Like all other nation-states, the notion of “Nigeria” rested on fluid ideas of belonging, stated in Benedict Anderson’s thesis as “an imagined political community.”<sup>20</sup> The foundation of the nation rested on its ability to categorize people as its citizens: to make a claim about who people were despite the fluidity in how people understood themselves. In “Beyond ‘Identity,’” Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper illustrate how “the state is thus a powerful identifier, not because it can create identities in the strong sense . . . but because it had the material and symbolic resources to impose the categories, classificatory schemes . . .” to influence people’s understanding of themselves, their social locations and their social actions.<sup>21</sup>

Fela threatened the Nigerian government because he identified people in a way that countered the state. The Nigerian government categorized people as Nigerians, and employed a rhetoric of national identity and unity to justify its nation-building project; however, this action did not necessarily converge with the individual’s own process of self-understanding and identification. Margaret Somers uses narrative as a tool to understand the process of self-understanding. She argues that “social life is itself *storied*, and narrative is an *ontological condition of social life*.”<sup>22</sup> Somers says that “‘experience’ is constituted through narratives. . . people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them” by looking to narratives for historical and relational contextualization.<sup>23</sup> The relational settings of narratives, the “contested but patterned relations [between] people and institutions” present a social location, a way for people to understand their cultural, political and economic relationship to society.<sup>24</sup>

The narratives in Fela's songs challenged those of the Nigerian government by presenting social locations that opposed those of the government. The government declared that it would create an equitable society with ample opportunity for all. The narrative of development obliged the urban poor to be patient. It normalized their poverty while maintaining the idea that economic inequalities would soon be addressed. According to this rhetoric of relation, the poor were included in the national project. Fela's lyrical narratives disagreed with state narratives of an inclusive society. Songs like "Mr. Grammaticology Is The Boss," "Ikoyi Mentality vs Mushin Mentality" and "Alagbon Close" illustrated the exclusivity of Nigerian society. With these songs Fela showed how shared experiences of economic inequality, social exclusion, institutional neglect and oppression formed for the poor a different relationship with the Nigerian government. These new social locations asked the urban poor to understand themselves outside of dominant imaginings of Nigerian society but also offered them a new way to relate to an "authentic" Nigeria, a Nigeria imagined in the verses of Fela's songs and practiced in the Afrika Shrine and Kalakuta Republic.

## **The Politics and Pedagogy of Afrobeat**

The very performance of Afrobeat was political. It was one of Fela's most powerful mediums of social critique and re-imagination. Afrobeat was a new genre blended with essences of Jazz, Funk, Soul and Highlife. Fela's conscious adaptation of African musical traditions like complex polyrhythms and call-and-response patterns carried the sounds of his cultural nationalism.<sup>25</sup> In contrast to other genres of popular music, Afrobeat challenged socioeconomic hierarchies. Christopher Waterman, in his excellent study of West African popular music, examines how the social performance of neo-traditional genres like Jùjú reinforced systems of patronage and clientelism. Systems of band patronage valorized local elites who were sung accolades of their deeds and wealth. Further, the framing of these genres as "traditional" reinforced a sense of authenticity, continuity and heritage to social stratification.<sup>26</sup> Highlife, a genre birthed in West African port cities during the early 20th century, featured multiple guitars and jazzy horns. It was called Highlife because of the "high life" of African elites who could enjoy its cosmopolitan pleasures. In contrast Fela's Afrobeat valorized the lives of the market woman and petty trader. Through it Fela was scathingly critical of elites and their bourgeoisie culture.<sup>27</sup>

His songs were patterned with distinctions between "us" and "dem," challenging notions of social unity. "Us" and "dem" were diametrically op-

posed throughout Fela's repertoire. Identifying "us" as his audience, Fela gave new value to their experiences of socioeconomic marginalization. Fela continually positioned "dem" as inauthentic and illegitimate. His structural adaptation of call-and-response patterns (such lyrics are noted in this work through parentheses) beckoned his audience to take an active part in these new narrative spaces. The "response" often was in agreement and confirmation of Fela's prior critique. In this way Fela invited others to fully situate themselves in the narrative of the song and to rethink their own process of self-understanding with new countercultural narrative locations.

Fela sang in Nigerian Pidgin, which underscored the politics of Afrobeat. It was the urban vernacular that cut across the social and ethnic diversity of Lagos. With a primarily English vocabulary but use of Yoruba syntax, Nigerian Pidgin was accessible to the petty trader, laborer or market woman. Fela's choice to sing in Nigerian Pidgin invoked an anti-elite sensibility.

British English standard grammar was only familiar to those with a formal education, an elite group of Nigerians.<sup>28</sup> The development of education in Nigeria fit the social and political needs of the colonial government. The first colonial colleges had the objective to "produce men and women with the standards of public service and capacity" to fill the professional and administrative needs of the colonial government.<sup>29</sup> For Fela, using British English standard grammar continued oppressive colonial relationships. "Mr. Grammaticology is the Boss" captured the social tensions of language in Lagos.

Dey talk oyinbo well well to rule our land o/ (Him talk oyinbo pass English man!)/ He talk oyinbo pass American man/ (Him talk oyinbo pass English man!)/ He talk oyinbo pass French man/ (Him talk oyinbo pass English man!)

The better oyinbo you talk/ The more bread you go get/ School start na grade four bread/ B.A. na grade three bread/ M.A. na grade two bread/ Ph.D na grade one bread/ The better oyinbo you talk/ The more bread you go get

In this verse Fela argued that speaking oyinbo, or like a white foreigner, was used by elites to justify their political power. The chorus (and audience) in a call-and-response reaffirmed him. Speaking in British English standard grammar was an attempt to be "English." Language was a symbol of an education modeled after British institutions and ways of thinking. The colonial enterprise embedded education with political capital as it created an administrative elite.<sup>30</sup> Fela explained the cycle of education and its economic privileges. The comparison between levels of education and civil

service tiers showed how colonial education reproduced levels of economic stratification. Fela argued that education and “British” English continued colonial hierarchies of political power and wealth. Education enabled economic success. Institutions for a public sphere, like newspapers, normalized educational privilege to the exclusion of others:

First thing for early morning/  
Na newspaper dem give us read/  
The oyinbo wey dey inside/  
Petty trader no fit to know/  
De oyinbo wey dey inside/  
Market woman no fit to read/  
De oyinbo wey dey inside /  
Na riddle for laborer man

In this stanza Fela voiced how privileged aspects of culture, here of reading the morning news, excluded ordinary Nigerians. Everything in the newspaper was in the “oyinbo wey”: foreign and Western. From one perspective Fela meant this literally. In the next stanza he sang:

Inside the paper/  
Lambastical dey/  
Inside the paper/  
Ipso facto, dey  
that one na Latin/  
Inside the paper/  
Jargonism dey/  
Inside the paper/  
Youth delinquency dey

In addition to newspapers being filled with exclusionary and elitist language, in these stanzas Fela argued that the urban working poor were never meant to be a part of the readership in this public sphere. The “oyinbo wey” was not understood because it was English or American, French and German. It was not African or Nigerian. Further it was the “oyinbo wey” that would categorize youth as delinquent and create narratives of social exclusion.<sup>31</sup> (Fela resisted the categorization of “delinquency.”) Engaging in a politics of identification and recognition, Fela argued that it was “dem” in their “oyinbo wey” that were the true delinquents and social outcasts.

Inside the paper/  
Youth delinquency dey /  
Who be delinquent?/  
Na dem be delinquent/  
Who be delinquent?/  
The oyinbo talker delinquent/  
Who be delinquent?/  
Na be me-oh

“Mr. Grammaticologylisationism Is The Boss” was poignant because Fela argued that the government supported a colonial education system as a path of economic advancement in the midst of its rhetoric of developing a Nigerian nation. The Implementation Committee of the National Policy on Education stated that education was the “instrument for ensuring national unity.”<sup>32</sup> The Second National Development Plan implemented plans for Universal Primary Education. The government envisioned that universal education would address regional economic imbalances and promote a national culture. The 1973 Guidelines on Primary School Curriculum published by the Nigeria Educational Research Council stated that education would “develop in children a positive attitude to citizenship and a



desire in them to make a positive personal contribution to the creation of a united Nigeria.”<sup>33</sup> For Fela, this would continue to perpetuate a colonized mentality.

## **Contesting Voices of (Neo)“Colo-Mentality”**

The dynamic between education, with its roots in Nigeria’s colonial experience, and the so such educated political elite of postcolonial Nigeria, was a fundamental contradiction for Fela. Fela was critical of those who were educated in colonial and mission schools. Their political privilege and social capital continued colonial cultural hegemony.<sup>34</sup> It was a root of the “colo-mentality” of the bourgeoisie culture of the middle class that had created Nigeria’s structural social and economic problems. In the song “Colo-mentality” Fela laid out its basic symptoms:

Dey think wey black no good/ Na foreign things dem dey like/ Dem go turn air condition and close dem country away/ Dem judge him go put white wig and jail him brothers away/ Dem go proud of dem name and put dem slave name for head/ Colo-mentality now make you hear me now

“Colo-mentality” was a story of the disenchantment of the realization of Nigerian cultural independence. Fela gave examples of inauthentic cultural values: “Dey” wanted foreign things over African ones; in criminal court, judges donned the “white wig” court dress of their colonizer and “dey” used the British system of justice to judge and jail other Nigerians. Cultural values inevitably shaped the form of social institutions. Because colonial cultural values were maintained post-independence by the elite, Fela saw that the relationship between the individual and social institutions had not changed since colonialism’s end. Fela concluded that “colo-mentality” caused “dem dey do dem think say dem better pas dem brother” and maintained an imperially tinged social hierarchy. From the ideal modern houses with European air-conditioning to the pride of Christianized “English” names, the elite used foreign things as a precedent for social stratification of “dem brothers.”<sup>35</sup>

Nigeria was still in colonial chains if current social relations perpetuated colonial social stratification. Fela emphasized the contradiction of a symbol of a “modern” Nigerian who “close[d] dem country away” in a bourgeoisie luxury in the midst of attempts to develop Nigerian national culture and social practices. In an era of social reform in the name of Nigerian identity, it did not make sense that citizens were judged by British systems of justice.

In “Colo-Mentality” Fela critiqued the inauthenticity of Nigerian society; however, these lyrics offered more than a cultural critique. The dichotomy between “us” and “dem” was a new narrative for social understanding. “Ikoyi Mentality versus Mushin Mentality” reimagined the cultural experience that constituted what it meant, to Fela, to be Nigerian. This song addressed contested ideas of authenticity. Ikoyi was home to the political and economic elite. The prestige associated with former European Reservation Areas like Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Apapa created one of the most expensive housing markets in Africa. In contrast, Mushin was a self-built neighborhood and designated a slum by government officials in the Lagos State Ministry of Works and Housing and the Nigerian Federal Housing Authority.<sup>36</sup> Fela sang about how the social experience in each place produced a “mentality” related to the geography of education and class. Fela made these places monikers for a mindset; the differing social performances in Ikoyi and Mushin were a point of critique about the location of authentic values.

Ikoyi man dey travel/ Him travel all over the world/ Him bring  
civilization for us/ Civilization we no understand/ Mushin-man  
dey for home/ Him never travel anywhere at all/ Him understand  
him people language/ Dey language of Africa

In these lyrics Fela said that the “civilization” or knowledge brought by bourgeoisie education was not salient for the Africans, the true Nigerian public. Africans needed to live by African ideas. The “Ikoyi mentality” valued foreign education, travel, and material consumption. Fela revalued the experience wrought by a “Mushin mentality” and other self-built communities in Lagos.

Ikoyi man dey talk/ Ikoyi man go talking in big-i big English  
Mushin man dey talk/ Dey go talk in broken English/ He go talk  
like dey way he know/ The original African way of life

The language of an “Ikoyi mentality” was an aggrandized emulation of English social airs. The Mushin man’s experience was more authentic. He did not attempt to impersonate an experience other than the one that he lived. Therefore, Fela argued, the location of authentic African experience was not in Ikoyi, despite these places being idealized in larger public narratives. For Nigerian cultural independence, Fela argued, society needed to look towards Mushin for guidance on how to live in a truly African way.

## **“Ikoyi Blindness”: Sights of Exclusion in the Built Environment**

Fela located the place where Nigerian identity should be imagined. His music revalued the lifestyles of those who lived in Mushin and other self-built communities. The location of Nigerian identity was challenged by the Biafra succession, which underscored the significance of the social geography of an “authentic” Nigerian mentality. “Ikoyi” and “Mushin” captured the dynamic between authentic and inauthentic Nigerian experiences as they illustrated the privileging of norms established by colonial inequalities.

The spatial hierarchies of Lagos were rooted in Britain’s colonial project. The official practice of early segregation by British colonial officers, thinly veiled under the rhetoric of health regulations and sanitation needs, created distinct racial and socioeconomic housing inequality in Lagos.<sup>37</sup> Colonial officials designated Ikoyi as a European Reservation Area. The Colonial Government did not regulate settlements outside of European residential and commercial reserves. In the midst of population growth due to rural-urban migration, much of Lagos developed without an official plan. Residency in colonial planned European-only areas was strictly restricted by race until 1947. Afterwards “standard of living” requirements based on European-style construction and building materials maintained the exclusivity in areas like Ikoyi.<sup>38</sup>

Ikoyi developed according to the British urban planning theory of the garden city. The garden city model stressed the separation of residences, industry and agriculture. Houses were built far apart and with deep lawns that preferably were landscaped. Residential areas had wide streets. The government used zoning regulations to maintain the cultural value of a separation between commercial and residential spaces. British theories about urban planning were ushered in through transitional institutional bodies and the prevalence of Nigerian planners with a colonial education. African elites adopted European housing norms. They continued to import “better” building materials to maintain a “standard of living” and notions of a “universal modernity.” British-style homes were fitted for the model nuclear family, not the extended-family style compounds built in 19th and 20th century versions of Yoruba urbanism.<sup>39</sup>

When we examine the built environment, “Ikoyi” takes on a new dimension of meaning. Nigerian experiences in Ikoyi and Mushin were embedded in historically significant relationships. Mushin was a self-built

neighborhood, and classified as a slum because of its high density. Its informal nature was due its noncompliance to retrospectively applied building and planning regulations.<sup>40</sup> Colonial indifference and continued post-colonial neglect meant that Mushin residents faced social and economic exclusion. Yet Fela privileged the experience gained by being in places like Mushin over those gained by being in places like Ikoyi. “Ikoyi Blindness” worked with other songs in Fela’s repertoire to relocate the sites of authentic and valuable experiences. The song began:

You miss road you miss road/ You miss road you no go rich/ You nouveau rich where you gonna go/ ‘cus it do no be a road-o

The nouveaux riches were political and economic elites. Their recently gained wealth stemmed from the shift in the economic base to extractive industries; they benefited from government contracts and public service kickbacks from the parastate.<sup>41</sup> For Andrew Apter the “prestige economy” of Nigeria in the 1970s created a culture of lavish spending on “parties and mansions . . . [that] secured social status” for the newly moneyed nouveaux riches.<sup>42</sup> Living in Ikoyi embodied economic inequality and social capital gleaned from colonial spatial hierarchies.

At the same time the urban poor normalized their experience of inequality. Adenrele Awotona’s 1970s-1980s surveys of housing attitudes in high-density Lagos areas like Mushin are useful gages of how low-income workers and the urban poor understood their relation to spatial hierarchies in Lagos. In his interviews of residents of Idi-Araba, a neighborhood in Mushin, people expressed the ideas that the squalor of Idi-Araba, when compared to the “ostentatious luxury quarters of Ikoyi and Victoria Islands,” was “Iko ko dogb,” which means that the fingers on the hand were not made equal. To them this inequality seemed like a natural way of life. People internalized their experience of social stratification to the extent of blindness to the fact that the inequalities around them were planned and created.

In critiquing the “Ikoyi man” Fela argued for people to re-understand the structural causes of these relations. The Ikoyi man was not something to aspire to. His home in Ikoyi should not be esteemed. Fela upended the location of Nigerian progress. Building on his corpus of the “Ikoyi man [wanting to] bring civilization” and discourse surrounding development and national identity, Fela deconstructed the idea that knowledge and foresight resided with those who lived in Ikoyi, the political and socioeconomic elite, the leaders of Nigeria. In “Ikoyi Blindness” Fela argued that the “blindness” of the Ikoyi man was in how he continued to go down the

same road, paved by colonial injustice. His blindness was leading him into a swift flowing river, as was depicted on the album cover. With his music Fela wanted to reposition the way that the urban poor saw themselves. As he points out in the beginning of the song, it is “us,” Fela and his audience, who could see the Ikoyi man’s route down a dead-end path. Despite this knowledge:

From Ablaganto Close to Atlantic Ocean/ Where dem for Ikoyi dem no zeroed at all/ Where dem no see us for Mushin at all at all/ Where dem no see us for Somolu at all at all/ Where dem no see us for Aje-gunle at all/ Maroko dem no see us at all all

In a chant Fela challenged those in Mushin and other self-built communities to change their understanding of their relationship with society. Informal communities were rendered invisible by “dem.” Contrasting Ikoyi and Mushin, Fela commented on the discrepancy in the endowment of Ikoyi with greater social and political value when it was, by Fela’s accounts, disingenuous to the true Nigerian experience. Fela argued that the government ignored the true spaces of authenticity and progress in Mushin, Somolu, Ajegunle, Maroko and other “slums.”<sup>43</sup>

During the 1970s the population of Lagos swelled. Development plans made efforts to accommodate urban growth by creating housing policies. The Second National Development Plan stressed the need for more housing for the “masses” but created no incentive for the private sector to build housing estates in lieu of offices for foreign firms and mansions for the rich. In the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980) the government specified a goal of building 100,000 housing units to improve the living conditions of low-income urban workers. Yet mid-level public servants were the primary beneficiaries of government housing programs. In surveys petty traders and other low-income workers said that they thought “only the rich benefit[ed] from government housing programs” and that “too many ‘big men’ influence the allocation of government built houses.”<sup>44</sup>

Adenrele Awotona and other scholars remain critical of government housing initiatives, citing them as elitist and indifferent to local experiences, cultures and economies. The garden city model in upscale areas like Ikoyi and Victoria Island clearly distinguished residential and commercial areas. Yet over half of people who lived in Lagos were involved in some kind of informal economic interaction, which was not restricted to fixed commercial locations. Residences in Mushin and other self-built communities had permeable boundaries in-between ideas of the home and the public space surrounding it. Housing estates, like the 1976 Festival Town,

were built with low-income people in mind; yet they criminalized residents for bringing the commercial activity of “the street” into the home. Low-income and poor urban residents were actively engaged in informal business but were prohibited from selling items within government managed housing estates.<sup>45</sup>

Although those representing “us” were not seen in Mushin, Marako and other government-identified slums, Fela argued that these locations did not need to be developed, in contrast to the powerful message of public narratives that valued other areas and styles of living in Lagos. Both the Colonial Government and the Federal Military Government cleared slums in locations like Apapa and Victoria Island to make way for business districts and administrative centers. The geography of economic disparities fits into what Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch would call an ecological segregation of Lagos.<sup>46</sup> Fela argued that people who lived in higher-density informal areas were vital to Nigeria. The construction of low-density housing in a crowded metropolis limited the spaces available for the majority of Nigerians. The needs of the petty trader, market woman or laborer were rendered invisible in light of the priorities of the elite.<sup>47</sup>

## The Disenchantment of Development

Fela challenged the urban underclass to stop thinking that the government included them in its narrative of development. In “Ikoyi Blindness” socioeconomic status shaped the stratified urban experience of Lagos. In a similar way “Noise For Vendor Mouth” challenged the idea of developing a unified nation. “Colo-Mentality” and “Mr. Grammaticology Is The Boss” were sociocultural critiques of an idea of Nigerian authenticity; “Noise for Vendor Mouth” and “No Buredi” critiqued socioeconomic relationships. Development plans promised to create a more just society and a national identity. “Noise for Vendor Mouth” and “No Buredi” argued that society misplaced its value of certain sectors. Fela opened “Noise for Vendor Mouth” singing “Dem no know you before abi how dey lie/ Dem no know we before abi how dey lie.” His chorus and the audience reaffirmed him in a call-and-response reply “Abi how dey lie.”

Dem say we be hooligan/ We do no talk we no answer/ Dem go call us ruffians/ We no talk we no answer/ Dem go call us hemp smokers/ We no talk we no answer/ Dem go call us prostitutes/ We no talk we no answer/ We be at very hard-o work

Addressing the audience, Fela identified the shared experiences of social marginalization and criminalization. In the context of a performance at

the Afrika Shrine, a diverse group of people participated in an aspect Fela's vision of cultural authenticity; however their presence at the shrine identified them as aberrations, as social delinquents, according to some public narratives.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the public narrative of the elite, Fela identified "dem" as the real delinquents. He sang how "the V.I.P.s have dey fight," and "dey parliamentarians dey fight." "Dey break sha dey break window." The symbolic destruction by the governing class was matched by causing true social unrest.

"No Buredi" captured the economic disorder caused by political leaders. After Fela sang about how he was tired of the impoverishment of the urban worker, he ended the song with the verse, "Udoji I don tire/ No Buredi!" or "Udoji I'm tired of your 'no bread.'" Fela referenced the 1972-1974 Udoji Commission that reviewed and recommend improvements for the Nigerian Civil Service. The civil service expanded to implement nation-building projects and manage parastatals at to a "revolutionary" degree.<sup>49</sup> The Udoji Commission recommended that the Federal Military Government reclassify the Civil Service to end bureaucratic hierarchies and redundancies. The entire public service should be organized according to a 17-grade structure with scaled wages in-between. The Commission recommended increased salaries for public sector workers to accompany the reorganization. A higher and narrower pay scale in the public sector would help it remain competitive with the private sector, retain talent and encourage productivity. The Federal Military Government implemented the wage increases but ignored the recommended structural reforms. The Civil Service remained notoriously inefficient thereafter despite, in some cases, public servants receiving doubled wages.<sup>50</sup>

The Third National Development Plan promised to improve the standard of living for average Nigerians through redistribution of wealth, yet the bounty of national revenue was redistributed to the select elite.<sup>51</sup> The Udoji Commission did not benefit most Nigerians. In his critique of the Udoji Commission in "No Buredi" Fela accused the government of impoverishing Nigeria by using national wealth irresponsibly. "We" were the models of social order undervalued by society. Fela promised that he would no longer tolerate poverty in Nigeria. He would no longer tolerate "Udoji" and similar governmental decrees. At the end of "Noise for Vendor Mouth" Fela incited the audience to act. He sang:

"Now we go talk-o/ Now we go answer"

## “Alagbon Close”: The Fuck with Society

“Who the fuck is Society? Who jails Society when it does horrors to people?”<sup>52</sup>

Fela Kuti, in an interview with Carlos Moore

At the end of the Biafra War General Yakubu Gowon claimed that civil war left “no victor, no vanquished.”<sup>53</sup> The Federal Military Government deemed that the casualties of war were too great on both sides to consider the war “won.” The entire country decimated by the war, the government promised that the program of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation would not include retribution. According to Carlos Moore’s foundational authorized biography, *Fela: This Bitch of a Life*, Fela disputed that the military government functioned from a policy of “no victor, no vanquished.”

“General Yakubu Gowon was then in power. That foolish man! ‘Cause Biafra war had just finished, you see. Federal soldiers were walking round with fuckin’ guns and sticks; pushing people around and acting so big-o! They’d been the “victors,” you see!”<sup>54</sup> [emphasis mine]

Playing on words, Fela revealed the hypocrisy of General Gowon’s statement. From Fela’s perspective, the military was the true victor of the civil war. Its victory was control over the state. Nigerians were the victims of the militarized society. Society was the vanquished. “Alagbon Close” was the story of the victims and the vanquished under the military regime.

The military administration assumed control over the country under the auspices that social crisis made its rule necessary. Only through its egalitarian discipline could social order be reestablished. The military argued that its ability to “rehabilitate” the ills of society legitimized its rule. The Federal Military Government used the Nigerian Police to execute its decrees of social reform. Operating under the federal discretion of a military regime, the Nigerian Police Force drew its organizational philosophy to function as the arm of the military government and not as a public service agency.<sup>55</sup> When Fela argued that a military regime necessitated society’s destruction, the brutality of the military’s police force supported his logic. Police violence inverted the narrative of the military government and its promise to restore social order and to create a just society. Police brutality chipped away at the institutional relationship between Nigerians and the state.

The Nigerian Police Force leaned towards a military style over a civilian one, and they functioned as if Nigerian society was the enemy. The use of violence to enforce social order was normalized by institutional history. In the span of the civil war the military grew from 6,000 soldiers to over



250,000. At its end, thousands of demobilized soldiers were redeployed into the National Police Force.<sup>56</sup> The violence of the police force was not surprising given how it was integrated into military culture. Wrought from the experience of his arrest earlier that year (1974) and the continuous harassment made by the military police, “Alagbon Close” opened with Fela chanting: “Now listen.” After repeating this three times Fela continued:

Never mind never mind never mind/ I’m going to do my part/

I’m a human being like you like you

Fela sang directly to the soldiers and police officers at Alagbon, the military barracks in Ikoyi that serviced Surulere, Mushin and other areas. His desire to make a comment about society was met with a brutal retaliation that almost left him speechless and pleading for his humanity to be recognized. Although the song was his personal narrative of confrontation, his shared experience, and his response, allowed the audience to graft similar experiences onto the plot of the song.

The military embodied a power that silenced objections to its presence. The military police were the judges of society; in this narrative they determined the social value of others. In Fela’s mind the relationship between the actions of the military regime and civilians created spaces of marginalization and isolation. While the experience of marginalization was not new to the “us” in other songs of Fela’s like “Noise for Vendor Mouth” or “Ikoyi Blindness,” Fela made a critique that cut across socioeconomic class.

I be doctor, I be lawyer/ Without me you will die or go for jail/ (Never mind I will do my part I’m a human being like you)/ I be sing I be dance I be paint/ Without me you no go happy at all/ (Never mind I will do my part I’m a human being like you)

Fela sang for different people, across social class and means of employment; all were scrutinized under the military regime for their social worth. The call-and-response pattern invited participation of all Nigerians, because all Nigerians, whether they were highly educated professionals or entertainers and artisans, were at the mercy of the Nigerian Police Force.

Dem no know say you got blood like dem/ Dem go send dem dog to bite bite you/ Dem go point dem gun for your face/ The gun wey dem take your money to buy/ Dem don butt

my head with dem gun/ Dem go torture you and take your statement from you . . .

Sanctioned by the government, the military police treated Nigerians like outsiders. Contrary to the notion of “blood and country” Fela argued that their actions eradicated the idea that the people were actually members of

the nation. The government's narrative of inclusion and national unity was far from true. The government's social reform actually increased injustice. Violence and brutality were the nature of the institutional relationships between the citizens and the state.

Fela deconstructed the idea that the police functioned with any greater authority to treat Nigerians this way. Fela sang:

If you know dem for Alagbon / Make you tell dem make dem hear /  
Uniform na cloth, na tailor dey sew am/ Tailor dey sew am like your  
dress / Tailor dey sew am like my dress / Nothing special about uniform

Fela challenged the visual representation of authority, which was particularly salient for a military regime. He challenged the legitimacy of the Federal Military Government. "Dem [at] Alagbon," the soldiers and police that administered quasi-judicial social reform, did not have an innate right to do so just because of their affiliation with the military government. The Federal Military Government justified their control of society because of their distinction from the public. With "Alagbon Close" Fela said that there was no distinction. He dismantled the logic of the military regime administering the state. The military did not have moral authority to keep society in check. They had perpetrated the abuses that called for social reform.

In another sense, Fela gave disparate encounters a new directional logic. Seemingly isolated events had greater meaning because they said something larger about the nature of institutional relations. In "Alagbon Close" the audience was able to conceptualize how their experience related to others and to the state. Police brutality was not just incidental but related to the wider structure of society. The dynamic of re-understanding and re-relating relationships between the public and the state was a process of imagining new forms of social identities. In the narrative of "Alagbon Close" the audience could understand their relation to society under a military regime. While Fela began the song chanting "Never mind," he closed it saying: "Make you tell dem make dem hear." It was a call for action: an action to change social identities and to reshape institutional relations.

## **A Conclusion: Spaces for Nigerian (Re)-Imagination**

Fela used his music like a weapon. He dismantled the state-told narratives of Nigerian identity. The military administration argued that its "development" would foster Nigerian unity through an egalitarian society with opportunities for all citizens. The government meant for its narrative of development to be inclusive; yet Fela argued that this narrative, as well as the ideas of a "modern Nigerian" it adhered to, was at its core culturally

inauthentic and socially exclusive. Fela addressed socioeconomic inequalities through the lens of cultural nationalism; Fela Kuti, championed the urban poor. His songs critiqued the social marginalization by bourgeoisie elite who used education to justify their status. He joined disparate experiences of social and economic exclusion at the urban periphery, and he revalued their lifestyles as Nigerian.

Fela was in “no agreement” with Nigerian society and was inspired to create countercultural spaces safe for his (re)-imagination of it. In the dynamism between identification and self-understanding, the setting in which “people may understand and experience themselves in terms of a grid of intersecting categories; in others, in terms of a web of connections of differential proximity and intensity” is important.<sup>57</sup> Fela’s music was a space for the urban underclass because it was accessible, but his venues were equally important. The Afrika Shrine was a place where people could hear his music of resistance and also be a part of its performance. His commune, the Kalakuta Republic, was a place where people could see Fela’s anarchist dissent but also be rebels, by choosing to enter an autonomous space in the middle of Lagos. His music was a space for the marginalized to reconstruct and revalue their experiences as authentic. In the places of his music and politics, people were transformed into shine-goers or rebels. By participating in a shared experience of “being” in a new social location, people engaged in new processes of self-understanding and political imagination.

## **Acknowledgements**

I have worked on this project, in different shapes and forms, over the past two years. But in many ways I feel that I have just begun my research. Fela was, and still remains, a dynamic figure in Nigeria and throughout the world. His music provides a unique perspective for hearing narratives of urban social history. I have loved the opportunity to delve deep into the rich repertoire of Fela and The Afrika 70, but I realize that I’ve only scratched the surface. If anything, my studies of Fela have enlightened me to the many ways of telling, and retelling, complementing and countering and contesting understandings of an idea of a Nigerian self. I am grateful for support from the Mellon Mays Foundation and for the support of my mentor, Professor Tim Parsons, Professor Shanti Parikh, Dean Mary Laurita, Gold Onyeneho and my Mellon Mays cohorts, without whose help and encouragement this project would not have been possible.

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- <sup>34</sup> Veal, *Fela*, 23-24.
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<sup>45</sup> Awotona, “Nigerian Government Participation,” 75; 82-84; Fourchard, “Lagos and the Invention of Juvenile Delinquency”; Immerwahr, “The Politics of Architecture and Urbanism,” 170-175; Nwafor, “Physical Environment, Decision-making,” 100-104.

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<sup>53</sup> General Yabuku Gowon in his radio address. Cited in Elaigwu, *Gowon: The*

*Biography of a Soldier-Statesman.*

<sup>54</sup> Moore, Fela, *This Bitch of a Life*, 110.

<sup>55</sup> Etannibi Alemika, "Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria," *Crime, Law and Social Change* 20, no. 3 (October 1993): 202–207; L. O. Dare, "Military Withdrawal from Politics in Nigeria," *International Political Science Review* 2, no. 3 (January 1981): 351–362; G. O. Okereke, "Police Officers' Perceptions of the Nigeria Police Force: Its Effects on the Social Organization of Policing," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 23, no. 3 (1995): 279.

<sup>56</sup> George, "Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics and Its Impact on the Development of Managerial Elite," *Canadian Social Science* 8, no. 6 (December 2012): 45–47; Patrick Edobor Igbinovia, "The Future of the Nigeria Police," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 23, no. 4 (2000): 538–541.

<sup>57</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" 17.

## **Selected Discography**

Fela Anikulapo Kuti with The Afrika 70

1971. *Why Black Men Dey Suffer* (with Ginger Baker). Unreleased on EMI. Released as African Songs Limited AS 0001. Contains "Why Black Men Dey Suffer" and "Ikoyi Mentality Versus Mushin Mentality."

1974. *Alagbon Close*. Nigeria: Jofabro Nigeria JILP1002; USA (1975): Editions Makossa EM2312. Contains "Alagbon Close" and "I No Get Eye for Back."

1975. *Noise for Vendor Mouth*. Nigeria: Afrobeat ABR011. Contains "Noise for Vendor Mouth" and "Mattress."

1976. *Again Excuse O*. Nigeria: Coconut PMLP1002. Contains "Excuse-O" and "Mr. Grammartologylisation-alism Is the Boss."

1976. *Ikoyi Blindness*. Nigeria: Africa Music LP AMILP001. Contains "Ikoyi Blindness" and "Gba Mi Leti Ki N'dolowo."

1976. *No Bread*. Nigeria: Sound Workshop SWS1003; USA (1982): Editions Makossa EM2382 (Unnecessary Begging). Contains "No Bread" and "Unnecessary Begging."

1977. *No Agreement*. Nigeria: Decca Afrodisia DWAPS 2039; France (1977): Barclay 829 682-1. Contains "No Agreement" and "Dog Eat Dog."

1977. *Sorrow, Tears and Blood*. Nigeria: Unreleased as Decca Afrodisia DWAP2025; released as Kalakuta KK001-A. Contains "Sorrow, Tears and Blood" and "Colonial Mentality."

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# “Boys Boys” Talk, “Girls Girls” Talk: Gendered Collegiate Attitudes on Contraceptive Use in Urban Kumasi

By Yasmin Boakye

***Abstract:** Contraceptive use in Ghana has been covered extensively by public health and anthropology scholars looking to document the beginnings of the West African fertility transition. Though a significant amount of attention has been directed towards the gendered socialization of adolescents, few studies fully explore the ways that collegiate populations come to understand the varied hormonal and barrier contraceptive methods available to them. My work seeks to develop an understanding of the gendered strategies that men and women enrolled at a university in urban Kumasi use to broach the socially taboo topics of sex and sexuality. I interviewed 30 university students about their views on contraceptive use, analyzed related media and promotional material, and spent time observing interactions at the campus Planned Parenthood of Ghana clinic. My data suggests that students’ burgeoning understandings of contraceptive use are highly shaped by popular media and social space. Because Ghanaian university peer groups are primarily single-gendered, both men and women rely on popular notions and in-group social discourse to construct their perceptions of the other gender’s views on contraceptives, creating distinct gendered narratives on contraceptive decision making that align with traditional values but differ greatly from the stated knowledge of each group.*

Traveling down Osei Tutu II Boulevard, one of the main thoroughfares in Kumasi, I find it impossible to ignore the hundreds of billboards sprouting from each side of the road like sky-high weeds. Though most are colorful advertisements that implore their viewers to purchase the products they are promoting, many of the billboards serve an entirely different

purpose: STI and STD prevention. Funded by the Ghanaian government and various non-governmental agencies (NGOs), these equally prominent messages promote a moral and health agenda largely through a series of widely known slogans. To outsiders from the Western world, they often appear out of place among the other signs. But in Ghana, and much of Sub-Saharan Africa, these messages have become so commonplace in urban centers—from Accra to Tamale to Cape Coast—that many of the individuals who live in or frequent these cities can list the messages they display without a second thought: *Love Life, Stop AIDS, ABC: Abstain, Be Faithful, and Use Condoms, AIDS is Real*.

During the four months I spent in Ghana, these disease prevention signs became as familiar to me as the product advertisements did. I began to wonder how their messages were understood by young adults who had seen them since the ABC—abstinence, be faithful, and use condoms—message was promoted first in Uganda in the late 1980s<sup>1</sup> and subsequently spread throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Though ABC continues to be promoted as a way to stop the spread of HIV throughout sub-Saharan Africa, the assumed success of the slogan and billboard campaigns has also encouraged a broader incorporation of mass media in efforts to achieve specific reproductive health outcomes.

I highlight these images because of the significant role that visual media has played in recent government and NGO public health endeavors. However, the current literature about youth sexuality in Ghana fails to consider the role that this media climate plays in developing attitudes about contraceptive use. As researchers studying the effects of the ABC media narratives in Uganda have noted,<sup>2</sup> relying on statistical correlations alone neglects the complexity of the sexual decision-making process, and often only considers the relationship between the idealized media recipient and related public health outcomes.

To combat this trend, I use ethnographic research to offer a more nuanced portrait of university students' contraceptive understandings that will complement and complicate the largely statistical public health reports. My project explores the ways students organize their beliefs about contraceptive use in a social milieu that was not created to address the specific issues of unmarried youth. I examine ways that education, societal beliefs about gender, and the media shape and augment these views in the collegiate population. My hope is to meld these new explorations of collegiate life in Ghana with the existing research considerations that focus on adolescent gender role socialization, HIV prevention focused on

youth, and contraceptive use in adult married populations. I use existing scholarship in the fields of public health, cultural sociology, and medical anthropology to outline the historical, present, and idealized future landscapes of sexual socialization and reproductive health status and goals in the urban regions of Ghana.

Analysis of formal interviews with 30 students at Kumasi's Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) reveals that youth attitudes on contraceptive use are largely imparted by family members of the same sex and through the grade school system. Though traditional understandings of female-controlled fertility regulation and patriarchal attitudes dominate, I argue that for the residential collegiate population, media messages and sex-segregated dormitory spaces complicate the transfer of reproductive knowledge. Though the limitations of the ABC method and high condom promotion often revealed themselves in students' confusion about hormonal contraceptives, I found that students utilized same-sex peer networks and social spaces to discuss, debate, and develop their attitudes about safe and appropriate sexual practices. My analysis of the ways that students appropriate and deploy media messages offers the opportunity to understand how governmental and NGO efforts are indirectly regulating and shifting social norms on a micro-level.

## **The Ghanaian Fertility Transition, 1980-2008: “Children By Choice, Not By Chance”**

Ghana's Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), a national survey undertaken by the Ghana Statistical Service with the support of USAID and UNICEF, has been produced every four years since 1988<sup>3</sup> and provides a starting point for comprehending the shifts in reproductive health that have occurred in the past two decades. Since this data has been available, Ghana has been deemed a success story in the sub-Saharan African fertility transition. This success has been frequently attributed to aggressive family planning efforts of the Ghanaian government and NGOs.

However, in public health and NGO reports, this data is used to highlight Ghana as exemplary in relation to other sub-Saharan nations without mention of culturally specific behaviors.<sup>4 5</sup> Demographers Caldwell and Caldwell's classic work on the historical cultural context of high fertility and the delayed fertility decline in sub-Saharan Africa provides a starting point for analyzing these statistical trends in a way that incorporates a culturally relevant framework.<sup>6</sup> I borrow Caldwell and Caldwell's theories

on periodic female abstinence as the primary realm of fertility control in many sub-Saharan nations. Though Western ideals of contraceptive use have partially permeated through NGO work and mass media, there is still a strong localized knowledge of fertility control not as an *effort mostly related to reducing number of children and household size*, but rather as a project directly focused upon societal stability. By juxtaposing firmly rooted Ghanaian ideals about fertility control against media produced by NGOs and the Ghanaian government, I show the incomplete but identifiable transference of both traditional and novel ideals into the university population.

Smaller regionally focused surveys, such as the Kumasi Peri-Urban Survey, support localized considerations of shifts in reproductive health that become relatively invisible in the large-scale observations underscored in the GHDS and similar reports. Specifically, as White et al. discuss in their work on migration and Ghanaian fertility transition in Kumasi,<sup>7</sup> contemporary fertility control practices are heavily shaped by location-related socialization and adaptation.<sup>8</sup> White et al. maintain that “what makes urbanization potentially so important in understanding Africa’s fertility transition is that all of the models of fertility change . . . might operate more powerfully and swiftly in urban areas.”<sup>9</sup> White et al.’s emphasis on post-migration shifts in attitudes and behaviors provides a useful framework for conceptualizing the ways that students who move from home to a new city (in some cases) and into dormitories or apartments have the potential to forcefully alter existing ideas about contraceptive use.

Though looking at large-scale surveys and trends highlights Ghana as “successful” in reducing fertility rates, smaller scale inquiries are crucial to understanding the micro-processes that have effected this change. The changes in behavior and attitudes after moving into away from home to university revealed in interviews incorporate both contemporary and historical understandings of the relationship between contraceptive use and gender. This results in a modified knowledge base that is distinct from but draws upon the historical considerations of female-controlled fertility management.

## **ABC Rewritten: The Intersection of HIV Prevention and Unplanned Pregnancy Reduction**

The necessity of focusing on particular data in order to elicit nuanced analyses of isolatable aspects of reproductive health has limited the bridging of the ways that HIV prevention efforts have influenced fertility tran-

sition theories.<sup>10</sup> This division is possibly the result of the dated nature of many fertility decline studies (most of which were produced in the 1980s and early 1990s) and the intensified focus on HIV research in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>11</sup> Studies with a specific focus on the relationship between the fertility decline and the proliferation of HIV prevention campaigns, such as Lewis et al.'s comparative work in Uganda, were mainly concerned with the decline in fertility of HIV-positive women.<sup>12</sup> However, attempts to elucidate changes in fertility in HIV-negative women were "inconclusive," according to the 2004 study, and "merit further study."<sup>13</sup>

Because my interviews were specifically focused on contraceptive use and only indirectly addressed the relationships to HIV prevention campaigns, my analysis does little to help bridge the cleavage I have observed between studies focused on the fertility decline and analyses of the effects of HIV prevention. Still, the ways that respondents integrated (or at times, confused) their understandings of contraceptives with the mass-produced narratives of HIV prevention was the origin for my desire to display the connectivity between these two intersecting spheres of sexual decision making. The responses offered by my study population are quite varied in this regard, but taken broadly and collectively, they highlight the need to more closely observe the unintended (but quite natural) meshing of personal, familial, and publicly disseminated ideas about HIV prevention and pregnancy prevention.

Susan Cohen's report for the Guttmacher Institute emphasizes the need for advanced comprehension of the ways that HIV-focused promotional material can no longer be separated from family planning campaigns, teenage pregnancy prevention, and abortion rate reduction in the contemporary era. In the years following the "Ugandan miracle," much of the urban Sub-Saharan Africa that university students know is a place where condoms are distributed on college campuses and youth have grown up surrounded by ABC and similar messages. Reevaluating the relevance of these ubiquitous messages outside of their original intended target groups is crucial to continued reproductive public health success.<sup>14</sup>

I have titled this section "ABC Rewritten" in reference to Cohen's playful but genuine redefinition of the highly conservative understanding of the ABC agenda as "A [Abstain] for unmarried people, bolstered by advocacy of B [Be Faithful], but for most people, 'anything but C [Use a Condom].'"<sup>15</sup> This quote succinctly mirrors my attempt to show that HIV prevention can no longer be viewed in a narrow disease-prevention light, but



must be considered as part of a larger internationally constructed project of morality-based influence on sexuality.

In my effort to highlight the experiences of university students, I find that looking at attitudes related to contraceptive use provides a new avenue for understanding the efficacy of governmental and NGO efforts beyond statistical data sets. Looking holistically at the development of these attitudes offers a highly specific lens that might be applied in future evaluations of Ghana's reproductive health efforts.

## **“You Rarely Find These Things Talked About In the Home”: Formations of Contraceptives, Gender Roles, and Sexual Decision Making Prior to University Entrance**

Through a review of existing literature on gendered socialization and interviews with university students about family and school-based education, I elicit two specific types of information: *how* and *what* young men and women in the study know about contraceptives, and how they locate themselves and their understandings within the collegiate social framework. Gendered differences in students' responses suggest the perpetuation of historically gendered relationships between men and women and the generational transfer of sexual knowledge. The development of this ideology begins during the pre-pubescent years, and is continually sharpened through the collectively experienced Religious and Moral Education course.<sup>16</sup>

In her 2001 work on gender socialization and sexual attitudes in adolescents, Adomako Ampofo uses focus groups to examine the relationship between matriarchal and patriarchal lineage systems and early ideas about gender roles. In her discussion of the existing related literature, Ampofo summarizes several concepts that informed my fieldwork—most importantly, the assumption that dual-gendered classrooms and education can work as an equalizing space and that the competing notions of traditional gender roles are established inside the home, long before a child goes to school.<sup>17</sup> Though Adomako places hope in the eventual erosion of patriarchal trends in schooling and within matrilineal cultures, her study of approximately 60 boys, girls, and adults in one matriarchal and one patriarchal community found that “patriarchal attitudes essentially prevail across age, sex, and lineage type.”<sup>18</sup> In her ardently feminist critique of Ghanaian social stratification, she describes female children as “the bottom of the to-

tem pole” left to complete household tasks while young boys are socialized for their future roles as heads of household.<sup>19</sup>

Ampofo’s study focuses on Junior Secondary School (JSS) students ages 11-13 in government schools from the smaller cities of Akropong and Mampong, and therefore does not explore gender socialization of those from an elite background who may have attended private, single-gendered schools or may have been more exposed to Western gender roles through family members, teachers, and expanded access to international media. However, her baseline discovery of the durability of community ideas of gender roles and the projection of these ideas into children’s self-visualized futures as sexually active adults mesh extraordinarily well with my respondents’ discussions of their childhood experiences. Simply put, the effects of family and primary school teachers on university students’ sexual attitudes, expectations, and practices are long-lasting, often because they involve an early idealization of what one will be like as an adult member of society.

Though Ghana’s educational system mandates the incorporation of sexual education through its Religious and Moral Education (RME) curriculum from primary school to secondary school (SS), respondents were initially exposed to information about contraceptive methods in a variety of ways. Most recalled first encountering the topic of contraceptives from their Junior High School teachers, though a few reported learning about contraceptives as early as in primary school and some as late as senior high school. This variety of responses seemed to reflect the structure of Ghana’s sexual education system, where according to Mary, a 21-year-old student at KNUST, information about contraceptive methods is released “a little by a time.”<sup>20</sup> In lieu of providing young children with the full range of contraceptive methods available to them, my research suggests that schools and RME teachers tend to follow the “less is more” adage until students are in SS.

Most respondents recalled being exposed to condoms in school, but many could not recall exposure to female-controlled hormonal methods (birth control pills, Depo-Provera, IUDs, and the implant) through school. This phenomenon mirrors what is shown on television and in advertisements—a clear majority of advertising is focused upon the male condom.

The respondents’ collective indication of the government school as the primary space for contraceptive education fits nicely with the assumptions Ampofo makes about the classroom as an idealized place with the potential for the construction of new ideas about gender. However, household inter-

actions between parents, siblings, and extended family members begin the gender socialization process long before primary RME teachers introduce ideas about contraceptives, and far before secondary school, when the full gamut of reproductive health information is (theoretically) taught.

In concordance with many of the historical ideas about fertility, only a few of the students with whom I spoke relayed examples of in-home discussions of contraceptive methods. This finding confirms the idea that through the unspoken (i.e. lack of discussion about contraceptives), older generations pass along long-held taboos against premarital fertility in order to maintain existing social structures.<sup>21</sup>

In sum, respondents' perceptions of the knowledge and beliefs that their peers held about contraceptive use was highly gendered, often in ways that were in direct accordance with traditionally held beliefs. But *how* do they become gendered? If most of the men and women in my sample group are able to provide the same level of knowledge about contraceptives, and most learned about contraceptives in exactly the same spaces and ways as their opposite-sex counterparts (government school classrooms) in accordance with Ghana's fairly progressive RME curriculum, then why do their perceptions continue to rely heavily on cultural tropes passed down from previous generations?

My conversation with a 21-year-old male student, James, illuminates some of the roles that early gender socialization might play in sustaining gendered individual knowledge vs. publicly displayed belief discrepancies. I argue that this discrepancy is marked by disjuncture between university students' knowledge, experiences, and personal beliefs about contraceptives and what these university students say or do in relation to the larger gendered university social network. Explaining how he first learned of contraceptive methods, James said:

My dad was a teacher, so [contraceptive use] was spoken about in the home to me and my brother. But I don't think that is common at all, because of the culture of Ghana. [Most parents] would not talk about such things to their children.<sup>22</sup>

In the span of a few sentences, James provides a personal understanding of the concepts already explored in this paper on a broader level—contraceptive knowledge as something typically conveyed outside of the home, by trained educators. His words also demonstrate the taboo nature of open discussion of contraceptive use within families.

Through further inquiry, it became clear that James was only privy to the exchanges about contraceptive use that occurred between the males in

his household. He was not aware of any mother-daughter education that may have taken place, and was only able to offer the following response:

Like I said, you rarely find these things talked about in the home. But if it is, it is more likely that a mother or sister will talk to a girl than a father talking to son.<sup>23</sup>

To be clear, James's lack of knowledge about any sexual health education that may have taken place between his mother and sister does not mean that this education did not take place, and lack of access to James's extended family precluded me from collecting the same information from the women in his household. Instead, I am primarily interested in observing how James positions himself, in his recollection of his experiences as a young boy, in a unique place in relation to other young boys. In his first response, he suggests that his experience was unusual, primarily because his father is a teacher, and generalizes about the lack of communication between *parents* and their *children*—terms that notably encompass mothers and fathers as well as young boys and young girls. When pushed to relate the experiences he and his brother had with his father to those that his sisters may have had with their mother, he collapses the larger categories *parents* and *children* into *mothers/sisters/fathers* and *girls/sons*. More simply put, the descriptive categories that James utilizes take on gendered specificity when he begins to talk about Ghanaian households on a broader level. I argue that throughout my engagement with the university students, this gendered reframing takes effect primarily in this manner—when individuals begin to talk about their beliefs on a larger community or societal level.

This analysis of the shift in language in James's related responses offers several opportunities to locate the gendered upbringings that Ampofo suggests in more specific manifestations related to the production of contraceptive knowledge. Without the knowledge that James has two sisters, the gendered nature of his first statement (about *parents* not talking to their *children*) would have been unclear. However, combining this added information with his second statement ("It is more likely that a mother or sister will talk to a girl than a father talking to a son") shows the extent to which early gender roles can significantly augment the ways that an individual thinks about something as seemingly well defined as one's personal history. Until James is specifically asked about his sisters, and admits that he doesn't know what their mother might have told them about contraceptive use, he is comfortable juxtaposing his experience with his father as unusual compared to *all children*. But once gender enters the conversation (through follow-up questions about his sister), he quickly deconstructs his previous

ideas about cross-generational contraceptive knowledge transmission to invoke differences between boys and girls. In doing so, he posits young girls as the primary beneficiaries of familial contraceptive knowledge.

My analysis of James's gendered language reconstruction in his discussion of the transfer of contraceptive knowledge adds a novel light to Ampofo's ideas about the socialization of men for a dominant societal role. This socialization is evident in James and other men who discuss knowledge related to contraceptive use, even though the majority of young men "report a virtual absence of information . . . and are reluctant to admit they lack knowledge."<sup>24</sup> Ampofo limits her understanding of the influence of gender to the highly specific *practice* of men openly discussing what they do not actually know and women remaining passive. I argue for a broadening of her theory that goes beyond practices and includes conceptualizations of gender roles as related to contraceptive use. Looking at the ways that the beliefs and ideologies held by an individual function within the social sphere illuminates the way that gender functions organically in the minds of my study population.

## **"It's Your Life, It's Your Choice": Respondent-Based Synthesis and Perceptions of Media-Related Influence**

Gendered upbringings among university students continue to play a significant role in creating *discursive* differences between young men's and women's contraceptive understandings. But simultaneously observing how the omnipresent specter of media influences students' understandings is crucial in my attempt to show the variety of influences on university students' contraceptive understandings. It is well documented that for much of their lives, university students have traveled between home environments governed by cultural notions of gender and fertility mores (with a few exceptions) and school environments that are influenced by teachers or NGO workers. I argue that it is also necessary to outline the less clearly defined ways that the media are able to create, shift, or reaffirm specific understandings of gender roles and contraceptives.

My analysis of Ghana's media related to contraceptive use centers on two realms: one physical (the PPAG Young and Wise Center's promotional material) and one re-created, relayed to me through the stories and recollections of my respondents. Critical observation of the PPAG materials offers me the chance to derive a secondary analytical framework—one that again shows the differences between what students know and what they

believe their peers know. However, through media analysis I am able to show how the differences are significantly complicated by the non-specific messages that exist not only on television and in the city, but also on the KNUST campus.

Many gaps between university students' understandings and practices exist, partially because there is little to no historical basis for youth or even married adults to consider the place that hormonal contraceptives might occupy within their personal relationships. Promotional media and slogans play a significant role in many NGO efforts to shift or influence firmly rooted social mores. An analysis of media materials of PPAG at the Young and Wise Center on campus shows the ways that this particular NGO attempts to shift public perceptions of contraceptive use.

Located on a college campus, the Young and Wise Center displays many posters from the national headquarters that target married adults and focus on using family planning to space children.<sup>25</sup> Two posters in particular stood out to me because of their prominent presence on a wall facing the seating area where most of PPAG's public programming takes place. The posters depict drawn caricatures reminiscent of those that might hang on the walls of a U.S. high school classroom, and feature a large, dark-skinned woman in traditional Ghanaian clothing surrounded by children. In the first poster, she is surrounded by six or seven children of varying ages, with the text "Too many—have no more than four." In the second poster, she has fewer children but they are all screaming infants that appear to be under the age of five, with the text "Too close—space children 2-3 years apart." Under both there was an emblem for PPAG, and the phrase "Use Family Planning."

Of the dozen other posters I analyzed, there was no overlap between messages explicitly targeting unmarried youth and family planning messages targeting married adults, with the exception of the rather ambiguous "Children by Choice, not by Chance." The emphasis here lies in the isolation of family planning as relegated to women within the context of marriage and encouraging them to space children. Even the phrase "family planning" itself as a colloquial catch-all term for contraceptive technologies reflects the extent to which these narratives have been absorbed into Ghanaian cultural understandings. Through NGO and governmental promotion of family planning methods as a way to combat maternal mortality and infant death rates, contraceptive use has become relevant for married people.

Reports such as "Family Planning: The Unfinished Agenda," which was

sponsored by the WHO and published in the esteemed medical journal *The Lancet*, show that highly formulaic messages strengthen the relationship between marriage, child spacing, and contraceptive use and are specifically developed and sustained by public health campaigns aimed at producing specific health goals.<sup>26</sup> In regards to the idea of traditional understandings of fertility as non-related to reduction of family size, it becomes important to use these historical norms to observe how public health researchers incorporate these widely held beliefs into their efforts to change health outcomes. The idea promoted in the posters works alongside traditional understandings of child spacing. Specifically, cultural understandings and the practice of spacing of children as a way of promoting social stability were part of local reproductive landscapes before these public health campaigns arrived. These ideas were continuously reproduced through fertility myths and other means of keeping women from having children too closely together, and in practice, do not differ greatly from the goals outlined by the public health organizations.<sup>27</sup>

The public health goal of reducing births altogether works within this *pre-existing framework*—the same woman who is using a hormonal contraceptive to space pregnancies might have fewer children, depending on the method.<sup>28</sup> While constrictive economic factors such as physical household space, necessity for income of two spouses, and the inverse relationship between number of children and financial stability in urban environments<sup>29</sup> may lead some to have fewer children, large families are still highly valued in an idealized sense.<sup>30</sup> Looking at the ways in which the promotion of hormonal contraceptive use for married women both fits into local frameworks and relies upon the effects of existing economic pressures to bring about statistical results makes it easier to see how and why little to no effort has been made to advertise or promote hormonal contraceptives for unmarried young women. Doing so would go *directly against* the cultural belief that unmarried women can simply rely on abstinence to prevent pregnancy.<sup>31</sup> Assuming a donor-funded model that correlates statistical shifts in demographic trends with public support, one can better understand why a hormonal contraception campaign among unmarried women has yet to be attempted. This is especially comprehensible as decades-long efforts at reducing fertility in married populations have been deemed unsatisfactory, incomplete, or even have reversed across the Sub-Saharan continent.<sup>32</sup>

This daunting conclusion provides a relevant endpoint for the discussion of the dearth of hormonal contraception campaigns targeting youth. However, the prominence of condom promotion in HIV prevention cam-

paigns that target youth complicates assumptions about contraceptive use and its relationship to youth. Students' understandings of the fertility decline and condom promotion offers an entry point into the side of the reproductive health promotional campaigns most visible and important to them.

When asked, respondents had a difficult time remembering specifically what they had learned in high school and earlier in the sex education portions of the required Religious and Moral Education course. However, they could easily recite many of the messages on these massive, ubiquitous signs, nestled among advertisements for coffee and laundry detergent. Of the dozen posters, billboards and other HIV campaigns that I saw in the various parts of Ghana I visited, almost all were centered on HIV prevention, and many spoke solely of the ABC method. Participants' descriptions complemented what I had observed; taken collectively, these descriptions offered a rich and deep portrait of the ways that these messages had pervaded their television sets, school buildings, and views during long road trips for the past two decades.

The proportion of respondents who learned about contraceptive methods, particularly condoms, through media formats such as television and radio was second only to the proportion of respondents who learned about contraceptives in school. For some, awareness of contraception was transmitted through viewing 30-second commercial spots over and over again, and others discovered various methods through public service specials that they watched on television. Many respondents recognized that advertisements in particular were more focused on selling a product than on providing all of the information necessary to ensure unbiased, safe, and proper use of contraceptive methods. Though my study population was quite small and cannot be taken as emblematic of larger youth trends, I found no correlation between contraceptive-related media consumption and gender. Where, if not in stated knowledge based on media consumption habits, is the influence of media on the sustained gendered understandings observed? I argue that gendered understandings in this population are most often located not in stated individual knowledge, but in the way that this knowledge is related in the social sphere.

Florence, a 21-year old university student, spoke energetically about how she learned about contraception through a local radio program:

I heard about it on the radio, through Love FM, on David A's program. It's on every day at two, and on Fridays they talk about health issues, and I remember one Friday I was listening with my friends and they



brought a woman to talk [about contraceptive methods].<sup>33</sup>

Through follow-up questions, it becomes clear that for Florence, this particular show provided a great deal of information about contraceptive methods. The radio show also gave her a level of confidence about what she knew that contrasted directly with the understandings of some of the individuals who could only cite commercials and advertisements as the basis of their knowledge. But when we look at *how* Florence came to use this particular episode of a radio show to develop her understanding of contraceptives, the connection between media and gendered understandings becomes clearer. Florence goes beyond the general description of David A's radio show to point out the fact that the episode that most influenced her was delivered by a woman. The clarity and specificity of this response is unique and could point to the idea that the few interactive media discussions of contraceptives (outnumbered dramatically by billboards that contain only text) hold a significant level of importance in the minds of youth. However, further research is needed to solidify this idea.

In sum, media influence plays a significant role in the development of collegiate attitudes towards contraceptive use. Billboards and promotional materials are designed with specific public health goals and target populations in mind, and in alignment with traditional models of Ghanaian culture that emphasize female control of fertility. Billboards and other advertisements emphasize HIV prevention either through abstinence and condom use (the ABC campaign) or through contraceptive use in monogamous partnered relationships. I argue that any interest that university students might have related to hormonal contraceptive use falls outside the purview of these two media tropes, making it difficult for students to broach the alternative conceptualizations of contraceptives available to them (i.e. hormonal contraceptive use outside of married relationships).

As seen in Florence's responses, more interactive media sources such as radio shows offer the opportunity for students to receive dynamic information that covers more area than billboards or the RME curriculum. The level of knowledge and empowerment that Florence felt from listening to David A's radio show surpassed that of individuals who had only interacted with billboards and other text-based promotional materials. To fully engage the university population, NGOs and governmental organizations should look to interactive media as a way to provide more nuanced information about contraceptive use and related topics.

## **“But They Only Like Toffee Without the Wrapper”: Single-Sex Discursive Tropes in Single-Sex Spaces**

Combining spatial and social analyses makes it possible to locate a crucial division in university students' contraceptive understandings that separates what students know (stated knowledge) and what they say and believe others will know (ideologies). Students' stated knowledge of contraceptive use and efficacy was often similar between genders. However, I found that gender most often entered conversations about contraceptive use only when students discussed their larger social spaces and ideologies about sex and fertility in general. I argue that students mobilize traditional gendered understandings about fertility when discussing contraceptive use as a way to organize their beliefs about a socially taboo topic.

Media, interactive and otherwise, complicates the full transfer of traditional gendered understandings of fertility through a combination of gender/age specific and non-specific messages that fill in assumed gaps in knowledge. I argue that looking at the language and discourse that university students utilize in discussions of contraceptive use (instead of solely observing practices) can provide new ways to fully understand the effects of gender on contraceptive understandings. In looking for other ways that the transfer of traditional ideas is shifted, I found that sex-segregated spaces and social groups provide an additional realm for understanding how university students' conceptualizations of contraceptive use are developed.

All interviews I conducted took place in gendered spaces (dormitories), and every group interview I did was among a single-sex group of friends. While the direct relationship between single-sex living spaces and single-sex friend groups is unclear, what was fairly clear from comments respondents who interviewed in groups provided was that similar conversations about sex, sexuality, and related issues like contraceptive use already had or would likely take place in these same spaces. The accepted prevalence of these single-sex “behind closed doors” conversations was significant enough that my fellow interviewer and PPAG educator Emefa relayed two slang terms to me when I asked about the presence of these discussions—“boys boys” talk and “girls girls” talk. According to Emefa, both of these terms are representative of youth-initiated private talks about sex-related topics. These two terms succinctly characterize something I was just realizing but that was already well understood by my study population.

To give an example of how “boys boys” talk can function (with the given caveat that my presence as a woman and outsider probably influ-

enced the trajectory of the discussion), I highlight an abbreviated portion of a conversation I had with four male students in their dorm room. The concept of “toffee without the wrapper”—or having unprotected sex or sex without a condom—came up as I spoke with Robert, Kwesi, Thomas, and Bruce, all male students of varying ages at KNUST.

Interviewer: What do you think men in general, at KNUST, think about family planning?<sup>34</sup>

Bruce: Some guys won't use condoms—it's like eating candy with the wrapper.

(raucous group laughter)

Interviewer: Can you explain more?

(laughter ensues, and Bruce and Robert seem hesitant to offer more detailed examples)

Interviewer: What about how women think about family planning?

Robert: Ladies prefer condoms and tablets.

Thomas: Yes.

(Kwesi shows nonverbal disapproval. Interviewer indicates interest in his response.)

Kwesi: Sex is for marriage. So you as the husband should just study your woman's cycle. That's what Onan was told in the Bible.<sup>35</sup>

These statements display a variety of information about the ways that these particular men see sex in relation to contraceptive decisions. There seem to be three modes of understanding present in the situation—understanding on an individual level, on a generalized male level, and on a female level. While each man (except Thomas, who remained notably quiet for the majority of the time) repeated throughout the interview that sex was for marriage and should not be promoted to the youth (including college students), they did feel that women were more interested in contraception than men. However, when the circumstances were right (meaning within the context of marriage), they believed that no artificial modes of contraception should be utilized, and that it was a man's duty to decide how birthing should be spaced by using the rhythm method. This summary of the conversation only touches upon a few of the many ways that the men in this discussion interacted with each other and felt a degree of comfort in both supporting and disagreeing with each other on topics that are highly personal but related in a generalized fashion, that (as depicted previously) is reliant on gendered language.

## Conclusion: Gendered Upbringings, Gendered Social Milieu, Gendered Futures?

As tempting as it might be to forward one or several of the gendered understandings presented above as emblematic of most collegiate men and most collegiate women, the answers to the gender-focused questions were as broad as the responses to all of the questions. While the lack of consensus in the questions about individual upbringings is hardly unexpected, the accompanying lack of a central set of explicit ideas about gender and contraceptive use and understanding moves me towards a final synthesis that offers new grounding for shifts in ideas about gender roles in this particular population.

Simply put, though what students may know about contraceptive use may not be explicitly gendered, their interpretations or *framing* of what they know is. Because it is still highly taboo to discuss sexual practices, it is primarily through discursive means that gender division becomes most visible. In general, discussions of future sexual practices, though squarely located in the realm of the hypothetical, were primarily rooted in patriarchal tropes of male dominance. Placed in alignment with the Caldwells' and Ampofo's ideas about the continued promotion of historical gender roles, the words of the university students collectively referred back to ideas about female-controlled fertility practices within a male-dominated context. These patriarchy-reaffirming declarations might serve as harbingers for a generation of men and women whose understandings of contraceptive methods lie not too far from those of their parents and grandparents.

However, my analysis of university students, who live in dormitories away from home and who are most likely to have had access to numerous types of media and education, opens up several spaces for an argument about an incomplete transfer of the previous generations' sexual mores and contraceptive understandings. Even though these students are living within a confusing media climate, and are laden with almost two decades worth of exposure to specific ideas about gender roles and the purposes of various contraceptive methods, the physical space of the dormitory and the related tendency to congregate in single-sex groups offers a space for "boys boys" talk and "girls girls" talk to occur. These youth-led informal discussions have the potential to broaden contraceptive understandings without the direct influence of family members, the media, or members of the opposite sex. I argue that this space is unique because it has not existed for these students in any prior living situation and likely did not exist for many of their parents.

Public health scholars concerned with shifting fertility outcomes might argue that these spaces have the potential to help disseminate rumors or gossip centered around myths about contraceptive use. However, my data suggests that “boys boys” talk and “girls girls” talk is primarily useful because it provides a necessary arena for critical sexual identity and knowledge development that lies away from the noisy combination of familial, media, and NGO influence, behind closed doors. Though these spaces often help to sustain highly gendered ideas about contraceptive use and the broader realms of sex and sexuality, conversations among one’s peers can provide researchers with a view into the future of a generation with greater opportunities for self-definition. I argue that as these peer group conversations proliferate, the students who benefit from them will begin to critically construct their own understandings of contraceptive use from a combination of information conveyed by family and schools and messages generated in the media and reproduced by friends.

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<sup>1</sup> Susan A. Cohen, “Beyond Slogans: Lessons From Uganda’s Experience With ABC and HIV/AIDS,” *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy* 6, no. 5 (2003): 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> “Beyond Slogans: Lessons From Uganda’s Experience With ABC and HIV/AIDS,” a report produced in 2003 by the US-based Guttmacher Institute, argues against the creation of simplistic connections between the presence of the billboards and the subsequent drop in HIV/AIDS transmission rates.

<sup>3</sup> Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Health Service (GHS), and ICF Macro, *Ghana Demographic and Health Survey 2008* (Accra, Ghana: GSS, GHS, and ICF Macro, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Garrene and Veronique Joseph, “The Timing of the Fertility Transition in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *World Development* 30, no. 10 (2002): 1835-1843.

<sup>5</sup> Barney Cohen, “The Emerging Fertility Transition in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *World Development* 26, no. 8 (1998): 1431-1461.

<sup>6</sup> John C. Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, “The Cultural Context of High Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Population and Development Review* 13, no. 3 (September 1987): 409-437.

<sup>7</sup> Michael J. White et al., “Urbanization and the Fertility Transition in Ghana,” *Population Research and Policy Review* 24 (2005): 59-83.

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

<sup>9</sup> *Idid.*, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Martha Ainsworth, Katherine Beegle, and Andrew Nyamete, “The Impact of Women’s Schooling on Fertility and Contraceptive Use: A Study of Fourteen Sub-Saharan African Countries,” *The World Bank Economic Review* 10, no. 1 (1996): 85-122.

- <sup>11</sup> Jurgens de Lange, “Research or Treatment? Priorities in South African’s HIV/ AIDS Funding,” *Africa Initiative, Backgrounder* (May 31, 2012): 29.
- <sup>12</sup> Lewis et al., “The Population Impact of HIV on Fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *AIDS* 18, no. 2 (2004): S35-S43.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, S35.
- <sup>14</sup> As Cohen argues, “ABC refers to individual behaviors, but [also] . . . to the program approach and content designed to lead to those behaviors. Researchers and public health experts continue to study both and to delve into the many and varied complex relationships among them . . . [but] at the same time, much more research is needed into the relevance of the ABC approach for the prevention of other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as well as unintended pregnancy and the abortions or unplanned births that inevitably follow, both in Sub-Saharan Africa and in other parts of the world.”
- <sup>15</sup> Susan A. Cohen, “Beyond Slogans.”
- <sup>16</sup> The RME curriculum, produced and distributed by the Ghanaian Ministry of Education, is designed to provide students with a baseline knowledge level of contraceptive methods, in addition to other health-related topics.
- <sup>17</sup> Adomako A. Ampofo, “When Men Speak, Women Listen: Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents’ Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues,” *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 5, no. 3 (2001): 196-212.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.
- <sup>20</sup> Mary (pseudonym), interview by Yasmin Boakye, April 2012, Kumasi, Ghana.
- <sup>21</sup> Caldwell and Caldwell, “The Cultural Context.”
- <sup>22</sup> James (pseudonym), interview by Yasmin Boakye, April 2012, Kumasi, Ghana.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*.
- <sup>24</sup> Ampofo, “When Men Speak.”
- <sup>25</sup> John Cleland et al., “Family Planning: The Unfinished Agenda,” *WHO Sexual and Reproductive Health* 3: 1-18.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> Caldwell and Caldwell, “The Cultural Context.”
- <sup>28</sup> And sometimes, as I found in interviews not directly related to this study, depending on the ability (or lack thereof) of the removal of an IUD.
- <sup>29</sup> White et al., “Urbanization and the Fertility Transition.”
- <sup>30</sup> Caldwell and Caldwell, “The Cultural Context.”
- <sup>31</sup> Also emphasized by the increasingly dominant world religious institutions (particularly Christianity) in Ghana.
- <sup>32</sup> Cleland et al., “Family Planning.”
- <sup>33</sup> Florence (pseudonym), interview by Yasmin Boakye, April 2012, Kumasi, Ghana.
- <sup>34</sup> The term “family planning” was utilized in interviews under the suggestion of PPAG Director ‘Auntie Mimi’ because of the lack of familiarity with the formal term “contraception.”
- <sup>35</sup> Kwesi (pseudonym), interview by Yasmin Boakye, April 2012, Kumasi, Ghana.

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*Interviewer's Note: All interviews were conducted in confidentiality and in concordance with measures taken to protect interviewee privacy; pseudonyms have been utilized throughout the body of the paper.*

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions on contraceptives. Republic Hall Commercial Area, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Student boarding house in Anwomaso, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions on contraceptives. Republic Hall Commercial Area, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.



*Interview: Community Member.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Student boarding house in Anwomaso, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Two KNUST Students.* Group discussion on personal opinions of contraceptives. Republic Hall, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Community Member.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Outside of Akua's hair salon in Ayudase, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Student boarding house in Anwomaso, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Five KNUST Students.* Informal discussion on personal opinions about contraceptives. Unity Hall, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Four KNUST Students.* Informal discussion on personal opinions about contraceptives. Republic Hall, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Republic Hall, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Community Member.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Mechanic's work area in Ayudase, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student and PPAG Peer Counselor.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Student boarding house in Anwomaso, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Student boarding house in Anwomaso, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: Community Member.* Formal interview on personal opinions of contraceptives. Outside of Maame's house, near Akua's hair salon, Ayduase, Kuamsi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions on contraceptives. Republic Hall, Commerical Area, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

*Interview: KNUST Student.* Formal interview on personal opinions about contraceptives. Unity Hall, KNUST Campus, Kumasi, Ghana, April 2012.

# “The Haitian Way” in St. Louis: Diasporic Subjectivities and Conflicting Narratives of Remembering and Disunity

By Joelle Julien

***Abstract:** The term “diaspora” has dual connotations of both population dispersal and the formation of collective identity. These dual connotations engender questions that challenge traditional notions of community. Does a diasporic population by design equate to a community? Does the plasticity of culture inherent to diasporas necessarily lead to a breakdown of said diasporic community? Instead of conceptualizing diaspora in terms of collective identities, recent work on diasporic subjectivities suggests that diasporas are locally produced, subjective conditions, not simply groups of people. This theoretical approach challenges the popular perception that a shared country of origin renders diasporic populations as homogenous communities. Shifting away from viewing diasporic communities as a unified collective towards an analysis of how diasporic subjectivities are formed calls for thinking of diasporic communities as dynamic states of existence that are shaped by internal and external power relations in both the homeland and the receiving community. I use this idea of diasporic subjectivities to critique the common scholarly perception of a singular Haitian diasporic community.*

*Through in-depth interviews of two waves of Haitian immigrants to St. Louis and textual analysis of news coverage of their arrival and community, this generational study examines the disparate representations and experiences of Haitian immigrants. While the first wave immigrated to St. Louis during the Duvalier dictatorship in the 1960s and were primarily bourgeois, the second wave of less affluent immigrants settled in St. Louis after the coup d'état of President Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1991. Examining the changing local social dynamics within this time period, in both Haiti and the U.S., aids in our understanding of how ideas about Haitianess*

*are reproduced and transformed in the diaspora and why solidarity within diasporic populations may dissipate over time. My research is particularly focused on how Haitian cultural patterns, such as the presumed rigidity of class identification, transform through space and time. I argue that the commonly expressed cultural trope of “the Haitian way” serves as a unifying discourse to explain Haiti’s precarious social legacy while simultaneously inhibiting further conversations regarding challenges experienced within a Haitian diasporic community.*

## **Introduction**

“It’s just the Haitian way,” a Haitian leader from Indiana told me at the Global Haitian Diaspora Unity Congress hosted by the Organization of American States in October 2012. We had been discussing my interest in how political differences are expressed and performed in Haitian diasporic communities, more specifically, how it seems as though the legacy of political polarization and persecution in Haiti has continued to hinder the creation of meaningful partnerships among Haitians with different political affiliations. With his explanation of my research question as “just the Haitian way,” our conversation soon waned, but this chance encounter served as a catalyst for the reshaping of how I understood the Haitian community in St. Louis that I had spent over a year exploring.

His depiction of divisions in the Haitian community as natural reminded me of similar sentiments expressed by Haitians in St. Louis in their attempts to document the breakdown of the Haitian community in St. Louis after different, lower-class Haitians began immigrating here. When I spoke with Haitians in St. Louis about current and past issues in their local diasporic population, such as the consequences of political persecution, ubiquitous gossip, and divisions along the lines of class and religion, “It’s just the way we are,”<sup>1</sup> “It’s the Haitian way,”<sup>2</sup> and “That’s Haiti...that’s all Haitians”<sup>3</sup> were among the many ways this essentializing trope was used to rationalize these difficult topics. This type of justification that leaned on the naturalization of culture suggests that the “Haitian way” is a cultural trope that assists in the subversion of dialogue surrounding *how* these differences are created and the subsequent challenges within Haitian diasporic communities. Consequently, such statements can be looked at as a symbol of a repudiated Haitian past. The commonly expressed cultural trope of “the Haitian way” thus serves as a unifying discourse in an attempt to avoid recognition of Haiti’s precarious social legacy while simultaneously inhibiting further conversations regarding challenges experienced within Haiti

as well as within a Haitian diasporic community.

In September 2011 I began my exploration of the St. Louis, Missouri, Haitian community through participant observation at two St. Louis area Haitian Creole-speaking churches, as well as through a series of seven structured interviews with Haitians living in St. Louis County. Using a historical anthropology framework, I draw from theoretical approaches to the historical process, critical discourse analysis, and diasporic identities in examining the oft-neglected accounts and experiences of Haitians living outside of their home country. As I evaluated both newspaper coverage of Haitian immigrants and field-based experiences in both St. Louis and Haiti, the discourses through which Haitian participants in this project described the idea of a “St. Louis Haitian community” revealed the challenges faced by black immigrants during and after the Jim Crow Era, and how the memory of political persecution and class divisions plays out in diasporic populations. This article focuses primarily on the competing narratives that two waves of Haitian immigrants in St. Louis have constructed about the breakdown of the formal community and explores how Haitian cultural discourses—such as the presumed rigidity of class identification—are transported and translated by Haitians living in the diasporic community in St. Louis. This project, however, does not claim to produce a comprehensive account of the history of the Haitian community in St. Louis, but rather explores how disparate memories of the past help inform contemporary notions of the community.

## **Diaspora Studies and Diasporic Subjectivity**

In this research, the concepts of diaspora and diasporic subjectivity are central. The term diaspora has dual connotations of population dispersal and collective identity, which engender questions that challenge traditional notions of community. Does a diasporic population by design equate to a community? Does the plasticity of culture inherent to diasporas necessarily lead to a breakdown of said diasporic community, if one even exists? The idea of diasporic subjectivity has been proposed by Lily Cho and Paul Brodwin, among other theorists, as a means of determining ways in which diasporas are locally produced, subjective conditions, not simply groups of people. This theoretical approach challenges the commonly held perception that a shared country of origin renders a singular diasporic experience. Particular to the case of Haiti—in which political processes have led Haitians to identify with Haiti as a nation, but not necessarily the Haitian state—and the presumed rigidity of class identification have undoubtedly

been translated in the diaspora and have shaped the disparate diasporic experiences as immigrating bodies travel through space and time.<sup>4</sup> My research contributes to the knowledge of Haitian diasporic subjectivities and the flexibility of cultural tropes, and to the understanding of why people may not exhibit solidarity in diasporic communities.

To examine a diaspora one cannot make generalizations about the group as a homogenous whole, but instead one must first consider the relationships and hierarchies within and outside of the group that influence how it functions. In examining the notion of diasporic subjectivity, I draw from Lily Cho, a theorist whose work challenges traditional conceptions of diaspora as a collective, homogenous group. In her article “The Turn to Diaspora,” she suggests that diasporas are formed in the presence of power structures found internally and externally in relation to the group. In other words, she argues that scholars must consider the power structures within the new region, within the homeland, and between the specific people who have relocated to the geographical area; it is a combination of these three factors that influence the identity formation of the members of the diasporic population as well as the relationships within it.<sup>5</sup>

Most radically, this theoretical approach takes into account greater forces such as government policies and historical events as legitimate factors in how diasporic subjects come to view and experience the world around them. Paul Brodwin’s idea of how marginality affects collective subjectivity fits well with this idea. Brodwin defines collective subjectivity as “the way that people define their group’s essence and represent it to others and marginality as the predicament of ambiguous belonging.”<sup>6</sup> In his analysis of marginality and subjectivity he states that “collective identity depends on the politics of location, and the location of diasporas is (by definition) plural, fragmented, dynamic, and open.”<sup>7</sup> Diaspora and the identities associated with it are fluid and distinguished from the community outside of it. In the case of Haitians in St. Louis, it is important to collaborate with Haitians as well as investigate the greater St. Louis, American, and Haitian communities in which they are situated. It is imperative then, when taking into account the idea of Haitianess<sup>8</sup> in the diaspora, to consider political, religious, and linguistic conflicts that came from Haiti and have found a new resting place with the displaced group.

According to Cho, diaspora is a condition of being that emerges from “deeply subjective processes of racial memory, of grieving for losses which cannot always be articulated and longings which hang at the edge of possibility.”<sup>9</sup> How do different Haitians remember their loss of a homeland,

and how does that inform the relationships within and construction of diasporic communities? In examining the Haitian diasporic community in St. Louis as a confluence produced in the presence of power structures, I discovered through my research how the population has created narratives about two distinct types of Haitians in St. Louis. There is a tension between how the Haitians “with power,” primarily those with more social capital who arrived during the first wave of immigration to St. Louis, and those without it, the political refugees who immigrated after the coup d'état of President Aristide, tell stories about sameness and difference. By this tension in discourses I refer to how the first Haitians who immigrated to St. Louis selectively silence the historical production of deeply embedded and rigid class and religious divisions that exist within the Haitian community. Their willful silencing and ignoring of the historical construction of hierarchy allows them to construct their privilege as natural and the marginality of the second-wave immigrants as a consequence of their dysfunctional choices. By silencing the tales of class division within the community, these narratives serve as an act of power over less dominant Haitian narratives and disregard the subjective experiences of these later Haitian immigrants. To silence contentious issues like class division is a means for ignoring the existence of such issues as well as avoiding critical analysis of their impact on other Haitians.

## **Diaspora Studies and Critically Exposing Silences**

As a Haitian American researcher, my greatest challenge throughout this process has been finding Haitians who were willing to speak to me. One Haitian participant told me, “The only way you will get into the Haitian grapevine is if you mention that you know me.”<sup>10</sup> Further conversations revealed that a distrust of Haitian strangers in the Haitian population in St. Louis after the coup d'état of President Aristide may have come from negative experiences with the secretive paramilitary force, the *Ton Ton Macoutes* in Haiti.<sup>11</sup> As the Haitian proverb, *devan koze moun mwen bay bouch mwen manje*,<sup>12</sup> suggests, withholding information from strangers about acquaintances and the like is often the norm in Haiti. Thus, this sentiment of distrust of other Haitians in St. Louis must be read in relation to historical moments occurring in both Haiti and the U.S. that have shaped the immigration process of Haitians and their experiences in St. Louis. How have Haitian social structures, and U.S. policy both aided in the silencing of Haitian narratives in general? In addition, especially considering the differences in access to prestige and wealth between Haitians who immigrat-

ed to St. Louis voluntarily before the 1990s and Haitians who were forced out of Haiti after the coup d'état of President Aristide, silencing seems to be at the core of the competing narratives used to describe the circumstances of the community.

Research on how historical consequences influence diasporic subjectivities requires attention to the implications of creating a historical record which will undoubtedly contain silenced voices. In his seminal work, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, prominent Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot examines the relationship between history and power. Trouillot makes two claims that are particularly pertinent to the scope of this article: first, in any historical event there will be those who are silenced, and second, history must be evaluated in the context of when it is created and when it is being consumed.<sup>13</sup> These observations apply wholly to this historical understanding of the Haitian diasporic community in St. Louis as well as to the everyday politics of conducting this research.

Trouillot emphasizes four sites in the history-making process that the silences that inform our contemporary understanding of the past are produced: first, the moment something happened; second, the socio-historical process or the interpretation of the fact; third, the creation of narratives; fourth, “retrospective significance.”<sup>14</sup> This project involves the unpacking of all four levels with an emphasis on the different narratives regarding Haitian immigration to St. Louis. Although, as Trouillot advises, I must acknowledge the absence of many voices in this article, Trouillot also eloquently states that “history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives. What matters most are the processes and conditions of production of such narratives. Only a focus on that process can uncover the ways in which the two sides of historicity intertwine in a particular context. Only through that overlap can we discover the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others.”<sup>15</sup> Through the use of narratives, this project reveals some of the historical processes and conditions, reinforced by power differentials, which Haitians in St. Louis have experienced and reproduced. For this reason, in unpacking the narratives constructed by the Haitians in St. Louis who were interviewed, my analysis employs the framework of critical theory and critical discourse analysis.

Critical theory is an all-encompassing genre of study that is based on the critique of society and culture as a whole. In effect, critical theory aspires to interpret social functions in a manner that gives voice to social

perspectives that are often ignored, with the hope of subverting the power of elite institutions. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the general term used to describe the various different approaches to analyzing texts and language; it ranges from examining more traditional linguistic features, such as sentence structures and speech patterns, to considering more sociocultural points of reference such as word and metaphor choices. CDA examines the use of language in social and political frameworks, with the underlying assumption that since only certain players in society have the means to express their ideas through public outlets, their texts or truths have more power to shape public perceptions. It most prominently embraces the idea that language (written, spoken, and otherwise) perpetuates inequalities, abuses, and power imbalances within societies. In my use of CDA, I evaluate linguistic features of language that serve as either power inhibitors or power perpetrators.<sup>16</sup>

## Four Dualities of Haitian Culture

Historical processes in Haiti have created and sustained distinct lines of difference that, in effect, produce a culture rife with dualities. While this article focuses on the duality of class, *bourgeois* versus the masses, other points of division and difference exist.<sup>17</sup> In 1804, Haiti, the Caribbean country that shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, became the first black-led republic in the world and the first nation to be born from a successful slave revolt. As esteemed as these accomplishments may seem, propagated by the racial and colonial tensions of the period, upon its independence Haiti was ostracized and soon seen as an outsider by Western nations. From France's refusal to recognize the country as a legitimate nation until 32 years after the end of the successful revolution, to America's rejection of Haiti's bid to attend the Western Hemisphere Panama Conference of 1825, Haiti has persistently struggled with being considered as outside the paradigm of legitimate nationhood.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, with increasing numbers of Haitian immigrants to the United States following the Duvalier dictatorships of the 1960s-1980s and the 1990s coup d'états, this exclusion of Haiti from legitimacy in the sense of nationhood has been one of many influences on how Haitians perceive one another outside of their homeland.

After the 10-year slave revolution against the French, the colony of St. Domingue officially became Haiti. The revolution, which forced disparate racial populations (*mulattos*, blacks, *bossols*) and class populations (freedmen and slaves) to oppose the same colonial force, resulted in the birth of a



society that faced the daunting task of “imagining a nation,” in other words, attempting to define Haiti in a particular set of cultural terms.<sup>19</sup> In respect to class politics in Haiti, in “Complexities of Imagining Haiti: A Study of National Constitutions, 1801-1807” Julia Gaffield examines how the four earliest Haitian Constitutions can be read to “help explain [the] emphasis on defining the national character of Haiti in terms of three themes: economic, religious, and political-military activity.”<sup>20</sup> For example, Article 173 of the Constitution of 1806 states that “trade, another source of wealth, will not be impeded and will receive the greatest protection [which] favoured the work of merchants above agriculturalists and as a result would have aided in the development of a new elite class.”<sup>21</sup> Similar policies and the rhetoric of early Haitian leaders helped perpetuate class divisions that in turn informed the social, economic, and political spaces of the early nation. Albeit with changing political, economic, and social contexts, these societal divisions situated within the framework of race and class persist to this day in Haiti.

Scholarly and popular discourses on Haiti’s socio-political structure often mention four main dualities in Haitian culture that reflect this colonial inheritance: race (black masses versus mulattos), religion (the African diasporic religion of Vodou versus Roman Catholicism), class (the masses versus elite urban dwellers or *bourgeois*), and language (Haitian Creole vs. French). This class dichotomy remains most pertinent for the scope of this paper because a class analysis reiterates my furthering of Cho’s conception of diaspora to include competing notions of Haitianess based on one’s social standing. In his article “In the Name of the Nation: Blood Symbolism and the Political Habitus of Violence in Haiti,” Louis Hans Marcelin, an anthropologist studying Haiti, outlines these impenetrable class divisions along the lines of education, wealth, and race. Just as in other post-colonial countries, class disparities prevail in Haiti; however a combination of neocolonialism and a de-facto and de-jure exclusion of rural dwellers from political life among other factors have produced a social structure that severely inhibits social mobility.<sup>22</sup> These class divisions in Haiti are made manifest in the construction of social norms, cultural identities, and political ideology, among other aspects of Haitian life. When transported to St. Louis through diasporic migration, this cultural characteristic has prevailed, albeit in a different context. As the first black-led republic in the world at the birth of the nation in 1804, Haiti has been the subject of economic sanctions and political and militaristic invasions, and has been forced to pay reparations to its former colonizers. This situation has set the

stage for Haiti's constant political instability that has forced a large number of its inhabitants to flee from the nation during the past five decades.

## Haitian Immigration to St. Louis

Beginning in the 1960s, in response to the violent and oppressive reign of the dictator Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, Haitians began to flee Haiti en masse. These early émigrés were primarily *bourgeois*, and it was during this period that St. Louis received its first significant number of Haitians. One of the large draws to St. Louis was the Homer G. Phillips Hospital in North St. Louis, the premier black teaching hospital in the U.S. at the time, which welcomed, and even directly recruited, a number of medical doctors from Haiti.<sup>23</sup> At Homer Phillips, they specialized in different areas of medicine such as gynecology, pediatrics, and cardiology.<sup>24</sup> The first wave of Haitians in St. Louis included a sizable number of these doctors or other medical professionals from elite and wealthy backgrounds in Haiti, their families, and their maids. These émigrés formed the St. Louis chapter of the Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad (AHME) in 1972 and the Haitian Association of St. Louis (HASTL) in the late 1970s, both of which provided a foundation for the creation of a formal Haitian network and community in St. Louis before the coup-d'état of President Aristide.<sup>25</sup> Religiously, these early Haitian émigrés were primarily Catholic and practiced their religion in various English-speaking Catholic churches in St. Louis.<sup>26</sup>

The majority of these Haitian physicians remained in St. Louis after their medical training and created a fairly tight-knit Haitian community. Collective activities during the early days of the Haitian community in St. Louis included social and cultural events organized by the Haitian Association of St. Louis such as playing soccer games in the park. An important cultural event that tied the community together was the eating of traditional squash soup on January 1st in celebration of Haitian Independence. Later, we will see how this celebration, which is considered the most revered Haitian holiday for its symbolism of Haitian pride and unity, has become distorted and has culminated in the disunion of the official Haitian community network in St. Louis.

In 1994, about forty years after the first wave of Haitian immigrants settled in St. Louis, another influx of Haitians immigrated to the city. While the first wave emigrated from Haiti voluntarily for prestigious positions in the U.S., this second wave of Haitian immigration to St. Louis was precipitated by the 1991 coup d'état of the nation's first democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide after he had been in office for only 8

months. Approximately 38,000 Haitians fled to the United States within the first 8 months after the coup.<sup>27</sup> In 1994, an estimated 200 Haitian political refugees<sup>28</sup> were directly sponsored to come to St. Louis by the International Institute of St. Louis, Catholic Charities, as well as by some longtime St. Louis residents of Haitian descent.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the first wave of Haitian immigrants, who were from elite backgrounds, the political refugees of the second wave were mainly from working-class segments. According to a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article about the Haitian political refugees, the majority did not come from such elite backgrounds as the doctors who had arrived in the 1960s, yet they “had good jobs” in Haiti. These “good jobs,” such as secretarial work, often required some training and skill but not advanced higher education and the sponsorship or money to obtain this professional training. The idea that secretarial work was “good” may reflect the prevailing class climate in Haiti in which those with any wage-paying job were considered to have a decent job. In other words, in Haiti they were members of the small Haitian middle-class who may have owned property but did not attend universities abroad like the Haitian elite.<sup>30</sup>

After this second wave of Haitian immigration to St. Louis in the mid-1990s, the previously active Haitian community reached an impasse. The immigration narratives examined in the latter half of this paper, which explore the politics of class difference in Haitian communities, present different perspectives on why this occurred. Today, the Haitian Association of St. Louis has all but disbanded, and all of the Haitians that I interviewed for this project adamantly declare that there has been no unified Haitian community in St. Louis in existence since the late 1990s after the arrival of the second wave of immigration. Instead, as the ex-Vice President of the HASTL noted, “There happens to be some Haitians living in St. Louis. I don’t even know how many . . . or where they live.”<sup>31</sup> This critical comment, especially coming from a past leader of the Haitian community, implies a disconnect between the earlier arrivals of Haitians and the later arrivals.

The analysis of two newspaper articles in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that ran during the two immigration waves reveal the differing circumstances in Haiti and in St. Louis that shaped the experiences of the newly arrived groups. The first story, “Doctor’s Story—From Haiti with Love,” published in 1975, was featured in the St. Louis: Melting Pot series in the newspaper. The purpose of the piece was to celebrate the cultural diversity in St. Louis. The article told the story of Dr. Beaumanoir Prophete, who arrived in St. Louis in 1953 for his medical residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital. Including pictures of him in his lab coat, and direct quotes, the

article presented Dr. Prophete as an accomplished, satisfied, member of the St. Louis community.<sup>32</sup>

Conversely, the second story, “A Haitian Family Struggling,” published in 1994, detailed the arrival of two Haitian political refugees, Elimene-Val and Andieu Elie, and their two young children. As these new arrivals had yet to master English, the interview was translated by Hans Caleb, a long time St. Louis resident of Haitian descent. Commencing with, “The proud smiles of Elimene-Val and Andieu Elie belie their pain,”<sup>33</sup> the article perpetuated the common media perception of passive Haitians who remain “proud” despite their circumstances.<sup>34</sup> While the author does mention how a Haitian organization, the Peasant Movement of Papaye, made arrangements for the United States government to give the family asylum, he also does not provide detailed information about how and why they were physically tortured because of their community-based activist work.<sup>35</sup> Instead, the author writes, “*They say* they were tortured and their home was destroyed,” delegitimizing their story of physical persecution to be a yet-to-be verified claim as opposed to their true lived experience. Alternatively, a report produced by the Human Rights Watch in 1994 paints a more inclusive picture of the Elie family as “activists,” while simultaneously relating the family’s traumatic experience.

Andieu Elie, an MPP activist in hiding in Port-au-Prince since the September 1991 coup, tried to return to his home in Hinche after the ICM established an office there in April 1993. On May 7, a large group of attachés and soldiers out of uniform arrived at his house. They beat the family and took Andieu Elie with them to a location near a river. They danced on his back as he lay on the ground. They beat him hundreds of times on his buttocks, and forced him to dance and sing, while they beat him into unconsciousness and left him for dead. Elie was found there by members of the ICM and hospitalized in Pignon. After two attachés went to the hospital looking for him, he was taken to Cap Haitian and later to Port-au-Prince.<sup>36</sup>

This account, which was a result of a direct interview with Andieu Elie while he was still in hiding in Haiti, is in strong contrast to the imagery of the passive smiling family that the author of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* describes. I do not doubt the pride of the family, but I do call into question this commonly used imagery of Haitians smiling yet poor—conjuring up earlier images of the happy, simple Negro. Such imagery delegitimizes the family’s subjective, individual experiences.

Three themes in the articles reveal the different contexts and experi-

ences surrounding these migration patterns to St. Louis: voluntary displacement versus forced migration, a lack of a community in St. Louis that reminds them of their homeland, and differing levels of agency. These themes provide a background for the lived experiences of Haitians who immigrated to St. Louis under different circumstances and help shed light on how these differing circumstances have impacted their subjectivities in St. Louis. Dr. Prophete's story in St. Louis began in a privileged space with his opportunity to master a specialization in medicine at the premier black teaching hospital at the time. When speaking about why he remained in St. Louis after his residency at Homer G. Phillips Hospital, Dr. Prophete states, "I had roots here—I had friends, new interests here. I decided to stay. And I can't say I've ever regretted my decision."<sup>37</sup> Dr. Prophete played an active role in his settling in St. Louis as evidenced by his use of the word "decision." Whereas Dr. Prophete's settlement story reflects his own desire to remain in St. Louis, his story greatly contrasts with the Vals' forced migration in 1994, which was precipitated by violent political persecution in Haiti. When describing how the Val family came to reside in St. Louis, the article states, "Finally his organization, the Movement Paysans Papaye, made arrangements for the United States government to give him asylum. Otherwise, the entire family would have been killed."<sup>38</sup> Note that not only did another entity "make arrangements" for the family's move, but also the subjects in the 1994 article are talked about in the third person, suggesting a lack of agency and individual choice. Due to their lack of fluency in English and for other reasons, the voices of the second-wave immigrant family were effectively silenced in the article, unlike the voice of the doctor, who was portrayed as able to actively choose his positioning in St. Louis.

One common factor in both of the articles was the notion of a lack of community in St. Louis. However, there is a difference in how Dr. Prophete and the Vals experienced community in Haiti. When speaking about what he misses about Haiti, Dr. Prophete recounts that "living in Haiti is like living in a big, extended family—people care for each other, there is mutual love and protection of children. Those are the things that I miss."<sup>39</sup> This sense of losing one's extended family and social network upon leaving Haiti is almost in direct contrast with the Val family's experience. They left Haiti under the threat of death because of their support of the ousted president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and civic participation in political affairs, which suggests that living in Haiti for them was not necessarily always loving, familial, caring, and, most strikingly, safe.<sup>40</sup> However, the sense that St. Louis lacks a supportive community is echoed in the article about the Val

family. In describing the deficiency in support for the refugees the article says, “There are few resources for them because the old-time Haitian community is so small it can only do so much.”<sup>41</sup>

The final theme that emerges from the articles is the difference of experiences outside of the homeland between those who were forced out versus those who migrated voluntarily because of their class. The newspaper quotes Dr. Prophete as saying,

I have found a great deal of freedom in America, and great opportunities. Even for a man of my color, there are many opportunities— to learn, and to make something of oneself. You asked me, ‘What don’t I like about America?’ Well, I’d have to say that social and racial prejudice are things I don’t like about it. But I have to be fair. Being a foreigner, I have not suffered considerably from it. And if there are other things about this country that I don’t like, they can’t be very important.<sup>42</sup>

Freedom and opportunities are the lived experiences in the U.S. and St. Louis that Dr. Prophete and other first-wave immigrants seem to value the most. He attributes his success as a doctor to the “many opportunities” that America has provided him, and is able to recognize racial prejudice but feels it has not factored into his life. In contrast, the Val family has experienced the opposite effect in their transition from life in Haiti to life in St. Louis. The 1994 article reports: “Until the military coup ousted their elected government in Haiti in 1991, the Vals had good jobs and were community leaders. Now Andieu Elie gets below-minimum wages in odd jobs—cleaning houses and digging ditches.”<sup>43</sup> With a poor background in English, and lacking an education within an English-speaking system, the Vals are not afforded the freedom and opportunities that Dr. Prophete describes.

These patterns of Haitian migration to St. Louis reflect the history of Haiti’s relationship with North America (a topic that falls outside the scope of this article) and also intersect with the experiences of the estimated 200-500 Haitians living in St. Louis today, and directly influence how Haitian immigrants interact with one another in a city where there is no longer an open or formal Haitian cultural network.<sup>44</sup> As demonstrated by these two newspaper articles on Haitians in St. Louis, competing ideas of Haitian politics, class, and citizenship that stem from these two distinct migratory contexts and experiences reveal tensions between notions of shared Haitianness and notions of stark difference. What does it mean, if anything, to be Haitian living in the diaspora if the Haitian experience is culturally and politically bound to difference?

## Rethinking the Haitian Diaspora

As a second-generation Haitian-American who has spent most of my life in predominately white communities, I perceived that being Haitian was a private experience. I spoke Creole with my family at home, and reverted to English once I stepped outside of the front door; I ate rice and beans, fried plantain, *picklees*, and *griot* with my family, and American food with my friends; and I attended religious services in Haitian Creole but rarely spoke about this with others outside my church. Thus, before I began my ethnographic research, I was under the impression that although the Haitian community in St. Louis was not especially visible to outsiders, their common national ties were more expressly shared in private. My interviews with Haitian immigrants, however, immediately debunked this simplistic understanding of diaspora, which fetishizes nationality as a marker of a common experience and unity. Through their narratives about being Haitian in St. Louis, the people I interviewed revealed that although there seems to be fairly explicit informal Haitian family networks in St. Louis, the dissolution of the HASTL problematizes the notion of privileging nationality when examining diasporic communities. Immigrants' competing memories of the HASTL expose the tension between sharing a homeland, and not sharing collective experiences or a way of life.

These two divergent narratives about the Haitian experience in St. Louis are complicated by class and perpetuated by public acts. The story of Hans Caleb reflects how some Haitians with social capital—such as English fluency, high paying jobs, and longtime St. Louis residency—have come to construct the narrative of Haitians in St. Louis. An analysis of subjective experiences of Haitians in St. Louis reveals tensions surrounding the nature and flexibility of class divisions.

Hans Caleb is a man in his 60s who immigrated during the first wave of Haitian immigration to St. Louis. Although he was not a doctor, he was nonetheless accepted into the elite circle. His case reveals how some rigid Haitian class divisions dissipate in America, while others are reinforced. As I sat across the dining room table from Mr. Caleb and his older sister Marianne in his home in suburban Webster Groves, Missouri, a stream of nieces and nephews, family friends, and young children came in and out of the living room where we were conducting the interview. Two young children were watching cartoons in the adjacent room; his wife ordered pizza, and every few minutes our conversation was interrupted by someone who wanted to know who I was and what we were doing. Upon hearing that I was Haitian, family members and visitors asked me, “And you live in

St. Louis?” Mr. Caleb apologized for the interruptions, but he told me, “I never know who will stop by.” Lucky for me, even his older sister’s visit to his house that day was by coincidence, and it offered me another experience for understanding the contemporary Haitian community in a historical context. Caleb appears to be the patriarch of the family, and his home serves as a converging place for his extended family and friend network. Besides the vaguely French accents of the two siblings, there were no clear signifiers that everyone in this racially and linguistically diverse household was of Haitian descent and descended from the man whom Caleb termed as one of the “founding fathers” of the Haitian community in St. Louis.<sup>45</sup>

Caleb’s older sister Marianne had trained as a nurse at Homer G. Phillips in the early 1960s and sponsored Caleb’s move to St. Louis from Haiti in the early 1970s. He too trained at Homer G. Phillips to be a radiographer and soon took over leadership roles in the HASTL. Our conversation surrounded not only their experiences as Haitians in St. Louis, but also the evolution of the HASTL. According to Caleb, Marianne, and other Haitians I interviewed for this project, the HASTL was primarily a cultural association that was formed after the first Haitian doctors arrived in St. Louis. All seven Haitian interviewees in this project insisted that the HASTL had no political ties or agenda and was solely a cultural institution for the purpose of maintaining Haitian cultural traditions for the benefit of American-born children. The structure of the organization included a board with a president, vice president, and treasurer; general body meetings occurred on a bi-weekly basis.

However, once the second wave of Haitian immigrants to St. Louis arrived, the general body meetings ceased to exist, and the HASTL was relegated to being an organization that would appear for fundraising purposes in response to natural disasters in Haiti. In Caleb’s narrative of the collapse of the HASTL, he suggested that differences in class did not have a role, but instead he believed that “different ways of life” and “internal oppression” of the newcomers were primarily at fault.<sup>46</sup> Caleb’s privileging social difference over historically produced economic class tensions runs counter to scholarly and popular analysis in which the impenetrability of class divisions is a consistent and prominent feature of the Haitian social landscape.<sup>47</sup> Haiti’s social stratification has been conceptualized as a caste system,<sup>48</sup> along the lines of race, ethnicity, and religion,<sup>49</sup> and its socio-political structure referred to as social and cultural apartheid.<sup>50</sup> However, along with deeply rooted notions of class division within Haitian society, which date back to the “race” revolution that led to the birth of Haiti in 1804,



come conflicting interpretations and lived realities surrounding the experience of class separation.<sup>51</sup> As reflected in Caleb's story, the wealthier class may interpret difference as a matter of personal choice, while the lower class may perceive it to be the consequence of structural violence in Haiti that has prevented those outside of the *bourgeois* to experience social mobility.

Although Haiti has a long and rooted tradition of inflexible divisions along the lines of class, Caleb's experiences revealed a counter-understanding of the reality of this trend that is often held by the wealthy. He held competing beliefs about the nature of class structure in Haiti and its effects within the Haitian diasporic community in St. Louis. While he recognized class divisions among Haitians in St. Louis, he minimized the role that these class divisions among Haitians in St. Louis contributed to the breakdown of the HASTL. Instead, he noted that the divide in the Haitian community that occurred after the newcomers arrived was a reflection of the "internal oppression" that less affluent Haitians possess in relation to others who might be wealthier. By internal oppression Caleb was referring to the internalization of a stigmatized identity. According to Caleb, the less affluent newcomers did not want to socialize with the earlier arrivals because they felt inferior. Again, this reveals a tension of locating blame for cultural differences at the individual level versus at the structural level.

The case of first-wave immigrant Hans Caleb reveals how some rigid Haitian class divisions dissipate in the U.S. while others are reinforced. Caleb himself was accepted into the elite circle; while he did not have a highly privileged educational background in Haiti, he was still separate from the new immigrants in a different social category. The social mobility American societal structures afforded Caleb, his acceptance into the Haitian doctors' circle, and his procurement of leadership roles in the diasporic community transmuted his remembering of Haiti as well as influenced his understanding of the power dynamics among Haitians in St. Louis. In effect, his own power (which is represented in this instance by his upper-middle-class lifestyle, command of the English language, and longtime residency in St. Louis) shielded him from acknowledging that perhaps invisible class lines may have contributed to the discord among Haitians in St. Louis.

## **A Feast No More—Marianne's Narrative of the Beginning and End of the St. Louis Haitian Community**

Caleb's 70-something-year-old sister, Marianne, who immigrated to St. Louis in the late 1950s, emphasized a slightly different interpretation

of what happened to cause the decline of HASTL. Whereas Caleb located the decline in “internal oppression” experienced by the new immigrants, his sister suggests that the need to identify with a formal Haitian network subsided the longer that the Haitians had lived in St. Louis. In her narrative, divisions along the lines of class also did not play a role in the divide because the “physicians were very eager to *help those people* if they were in need”<sup>52</sup> (emphasis added). Her labeling the second wave of Haitians to St. Louis as “those people” to be assisted suggests that she understood the later immigrants to be in a separate category of Haitian people, occupying a different space and having different ways of life. Whereas Caleb associated the decline of HASTL with the arrival of the new Haitians, according to Marianne there was no correlation between the two.

She expressed a loss of community from the 1960s to 1990s, but does not go into detail as to what precipitated the end of their social activities. She nostalgically spoke of the time when the first wave arrived in St. Louis as being a communal effort to remember their homeland. She explained that the association’s initial goal was to

get some families together. A way to meet, to get together, to eat, because we were, I have to tell you, we didn’t have all those nice stores that we have today. We did not have black rice, we did not have red beans. A lot of things that we eat we did not have before we had Jay’s International open. If you have something you get it from people who send to you from New York or Florida. Well that was something [celebrating Haitian Independence] that we never missed. And it was so nice because at that time the hotel would allow us to bring [our own meal]. We pay for their meal, but they allow us to bring the rice. So people would bring big, big things of rice to serve everybody. And the jumou, the soup jumou! They always let us do that.

Although Marianne’s description appears to be ideal, we must remember that nostalgia for the past often ignores critical points of conflict and disillusionment. As communities are not always homogenous, there were presumably Haitians in St. Louis who did not identify with the HASTL. And considering St. Louis’s history of segregation, I imagine that the earliest members of the HASTL faced racial prejudices at a time in which having a “black teaching hospital” was the norm. Perhaps, for those Haitians arriving during segregation or at a time when African Americans had to have their own social groups, the HASTL was one of the few opportunities that these early immigrants had for social interaction.

Ironically, according to the past Vice President of HASTL, the same

motivation that originally brought the Haitians together in St. Louis—the gathering around food to celebrate Haitian holidays—played a role in the demise of the Haitian Association in St. Louis, one of the only formal networks of Haitians in St. Louis. By the time the second wave came, non-profits like the Catholic Charities and the International Institute had taken the place of providing support and settlement assistance, thus replacing the more organic social support groups of the HASTL. Dr. Lionel described his impression of why the group began to break down:

I think things started to go downhill in 1997, 1998. What happened, I think, two things. One was every time we had these gatherings of course there would be food and people had to cook. And it was the same people cooking every time. And I think that the people who were doing the cooking were tired. They really didn't want to get involved in cooking for large numbers of people. That was one thing.<sup>53</sup>

When the immigrants first arrived in St. Louis, sharing a Haitian meal with other Haitians was seen as the highlight, even the focus of the HASTL, but three decades later this would come to be seen as a burden. While Dr. Lionel did not go into detail, his change of topic when I attempted to bring class differences into the conversation implied that perhaps the cooks did not find it tolerable to have to cook for the new Haitian arrivals, despite their common homeland. Because they no longer needed this sort of tie to the homeland, ceasing to have communal meals together marked the beginning of the end of the Haitian community.

But the end of preparing and eating soup *joumou* on New Year's holds a greater significance when you consider the origins of this tradition. Why exactly do Haitians throughout the diaspora continue this tradition despite the difficulties of procuring the hard-to-find ingredients native to Haiti? And what does it mean for the Haitians in St. Louis to have discontinued this cultural practice? Haitian scholar Dr. Bertin Louis describes the foundations of the holiday celebration in the following way:

Two of the most important holidays that Haitian Americans celebrate are Haitian Independence Day (January 1) and Haitian Flag Day (May 18). Haitian Americans take great pride in Haitian Independence Day and visit each other to celebrate. It is also customary for many Haitian Americans to make a squash-based soup called *joumou*, which they share with company. It is said that the newly freed slaves who fought in the Haitian Revolution ate soup *joumou* on Independence Day as an act of defiance because the French did not allow slaves to eat the soup.<sup>54</sup> Eating soup *joumou* is thus more than a culinary or recreational act, but

for many Haitians it symbolizes a significant and defining moment of solidarity and resistance in Haitian history. Haitians congregate with their loved ones, both friends and family, to celebrate the past heroic acts of their ancestors. Considering that the peaceful years of coming together around holiday feasts ended after a different, a lower class of Haitians began moving to St. Louis in 1994, this loss of unity can be analyzed in light of how this new population did not fit into the *bourgeois*' conception of Haitians with whom to share this important meal. It is also interesting to note that the same people who had been cooking the meals for these celebrations had done so for three decades prior, but they found cause to end the celebrations only three years after the newcomers arrived. Or perhaps, with a more negative international perception of Haiti, the earlier *bourgeois* Haitian immigrants may have wanted to distance themselves from a Haitian identity.

This sentiment counters Michel-Rolph Trouillot's poignant observation that "the past does not exist independently from the present. Indeed, the past is only past because there is a present . . . that sense, the past has no content. The past—or more accurately, pastness—is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify the past as past."<sup>55</sup> In this case, it appears as though those in positions of power possess narratives about the past that do not incorporate this idea that the past cannot be separated from the present. Or more specifically, that the Haitian diasporic community in St. Louis cannot exist outside of the structural violence in both St. Louis and Haiti that has perpetuated class divisions. These narratives directly contrast with the experiences of Dr. Lionel and Maxime, two Haitian men who tell stories of exclusion and explicit class divisions in their experiences within the Haitian community in St. Louis.

## **Complexities of Diaspora—Displacement, Memory, and Exclusion**

"You don't have that sense of community, really. But really in St. Louis, there is no sense of a community. The first question you must ask then . . . is whether they believe that there is a Haitian community in St. Louis."<sup>56</sup> Dr. Jean Lionel, a Haitian professor at a local university, made this critical observation as we discussed the changes in the Haitian community in St. Louis since the 1960s. Dr. Lionel, who was born in Haiti and immigrated to New York at age 15, served as the Vice President of the HASTL in the mid 1990s, during the decline of the Haitian civic organization. His statement

implied that although there have been a significant number of Haitians in St. Louis since the first arrivals, perhaps today, Haitians in St. Louis are living amongst one another, but not in community. But most importantly, the need to ask this question suggests that the tendency to associate diaspora with community is false. One common misconception about the notion of community is that any group of people residing in a common area, and/or who share a common background comprises a community. However, this definition does not take into account that a community will always be a heterogenous group of people with varied interests, perspectives, and experiences. In other words, community is not only a place, or a group of people, but also a concept driven by individual beliefs, ways of life, and aspirations. When a group of people chooses to recognize their collective existence they define the parameters of that community.

The experiences of Maxime and Dr. Lionel especially seem to suggest that the social distances that separate the various sub-populations of their homeland, particularly across the lines of class, have been maintained and transformed in the diaspora; one can consider this to be a major contribution to the perceptible disunity. Maxime, a 35 year old second generation Haitian-American born in St. Louis, was the son of one the earliest Haitian families to settle in St. Louis. As a child of Haitian parents in 1980s St. Louis, he recalls how the HASTL served as one of the only venues in which he was able to learn about the birth country of his parents. When prompted about his relationship to Haiti as a young child growing up in St. Louis, he recounted how “when you deal with a city that only deals in black and white, there’s no space to be Haitian. You know what I mean? Because people here are basically their skin color as opposed to dealing with nationality or ethnicity . . . so every *premiere janvier*<sup>57</sup> [Haitian Independence day] we would always have a party and play *kompas*<sup>58</sup> [Haitian style of meringue], so we learned about Haiti through that.”<sup>59</sup> Across every interview with Haitians in St. Louis for this project, communal meals and the celebration of holidays have been conveyed as the most visible signifier of public displays of Haitianness. In Maxime’s experience as a second-generation Haitian-American, these festivities served as one of the only explicit opportunities that he had to learn about the culture of his family. Although Maxime was specifically speaking of learning about the significance behind Haiti’s independence in his statement, his seemingly benign remark that he *learned* about Haiti through the HASTL’s events is particularly enlightening when we consider it through Dr. Lionel’s narrative on how “exclusion,” displacement, and conflicting memories played a role in the HASTL and

the relationships between the different generations of Haitians in St. Louis.

As Vice-President of the HASTL in the mid-1990s, Dr. Lionel was privy to tensions within the executive level of the organization as well as in the general body. Unlike Caleb, who was the president of the association at the time of Dr. Lionel's tenure, his story of the HASTL is more inclusive of the experiences of those outside of the first generation. His more neutral stance perhaps comes from having been a fairly recent transplant to St. Louis himself at that time. Dr. Lionel moved to St. Louis in 1994 to join the faculty at a local university and met Caleb soon after at a colloquium at Washington University in which they were both on the same panel regarding the United State government's response to the overthrow of Aristide. From Dr. Lionel's perspective, class and political differences, primarily between the first generation of Haitians and the new arrivals, were overtly visible and contributors to the end of the HASTL. Without being prompted about internal strife in the organization he stated,

You could tell that there was some tension between these two groups. Like when we would have parties, for example, that New Years Day celebration, we would have *Reveillant*, December 31st going into January 1st. So we would go to a hotel and rent a ballroom and have a very formal party, and of course to do that, at one of the better hotels, that would cost. So the ticket would also have to go high [...] for example, renting a Marriott ballroom might result [in] charging people \$40 a head. That would not be a problem for a doctor bringing his or her wife, but there were those among the new arrivals who felt that that was too high and that was a way of excluding them. So you had, on one hand, people who wanted to do something big, and formal, and classy so to speak, but you had others who couldn't afford it, but wanted to go, but who felt that this was a way for their exclusion.<sup>60</sup>

This sense of exclusion was a clear marker for Dr. Lionel for why such a disjuncture within the Haitian population occurred after this new set of Haitians took up residence in St. Louis. This idea of class and economic divide echoes similar processes in Haitian history in which the masses were excluded from participation in civic society. While these two situations certainly do not mirror one another, these divisions along the lines of class certainly reverberate within Haitian society as well as within the Haitian diaspora.

## Conclusion

Considering my position as a researcher and second-generation Haitian, I initially undertook this project with the intention of not only writing about experiences of the Haitian diasporic community in St. Louis, but also enhancing my self-understanding of what it means to be Haitian in the U.S. Consequently, this process has revealed the tensions between conflicting remembrances of the Haitian homeland and the Haitian experience outside of it, as well as the realization that one's Haitianness is not bounded in a common or collective iteration of Haiti. Rather, the bracketing of Haitian experiences as homogenous or using the limiting rationalization of the "Haitian Way" serves as the source of excluding certain voices and concerns pertaining to differences in the Haitian diaspora.

Additionally, the divergent narratives I present in this article highlight the importance of research that challenges the reductionistic nature of diaspora as a trope that erroneously essentializes and privileges a common nationality over internal differences. Ignoring processes through which differences are created and sustained hinders our understanding of how hierarchies are reorganized, transformed and translated outside of the homeland. Similar to Cho's analysis of the diaspora as an experience that often cannot be articulated, my analysis of the Haitian diasporic experience in St. Louis is one that reveals the cognitive disconnect between memories and myths of Haitian solidarity. In order to continue appreciating the critical complexities of Haitian diasporic subjectivities, we must continue to produce narratives that expose the way various historical, political, and individual structures traverse to create these disparate experiences. The disunity suggested by the narratives presented implies that although Haitians are in a new land, scars acquired in Haiti have accompanied them and have been reshaped in St. Louis. How we remember and what we choose to remember come to serve as symbols of both a repudiated and translated past. If memory alone cannot always account for the structural processes that affect our experiences, we must continue to theorize the diaspora in ways that attend to the individual.

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<sup>1</sup> David Leon (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien. Digital recording. Panera Bread, St. Louis, MO, July 1, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Hans and Marianne Caleb (pseudonyms). Interview by Joelle Julien. Digital recording. Webster Groves, MO, May 06, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Maxime Jean (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien. Digital recording. University City, MO, March 24, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Haiti, *State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Lily Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora," *Canadian Journal of Culture Studies* 17 (2007): 11-30.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Brodwin, "Marginality and Subjectivity in the Haitian Diaspora," *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2003): 383.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this article, I draw from Fabienne Doucet's definition of Haitianess: "expressions of ethnic identity, class dimensions of ethnic identity, and how these issues are manifested." Fabienne Doucet, "Identities and Their Complexities: A Review Essay of Trends in Ethnic Identification among Second-Generation Haitian Immigrants in New York City by Flore Zephir," *Race and Society* 6, no. 1 (2003): 77.

<sup>9</sup> Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora," 15.

<sup>10</sup> Maxime Jean (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.

<sup>11</sup> John Dover (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien. Digital recording. Dogtown, St. Louis, MO, August 12, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> When it has to do with other people's business, I fill my mouth with food.

<sup>13</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi Ehrenberger Hamilton (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001): 353.



- <sup>17</sup> In Haitian Creole, *bourgeois* is used to describe the small minority of well-educated, wealthy Haitians.
- <sup>18</sup> Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti*, 2nd ed. (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2003).
- <sup>19</sup> Julia Gaffield, "Complexities of Imagining Haiti: A Study of National Constitutions, 1801-1807," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 81–103.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.
- <sup>22</sup> Louis Hans Marcelin, "In the Name of the Nation: Blood Symbolism and the Political Habitus of Violence in Haiti," *American Anthropologist* 114, no. 2 (2012): 253.
- <sup>23</sup> Dr. Jean Lionel (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien. Digital recording. UMSL, St. Louis, May 24, 2012.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> Remy Obas, Association of Haitian Physicians Abroad, "History." Accessed March 30, 2012. <http://www.amhe.org/history.html>.
- <sup>26</sup> Maxime Jean (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>27</sup> Ruth Wasem, "U.S. Immigration Policy on Haitian Migrants," CRS Report for Congress, May 17, 2011. RS21349 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011): 3, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21349.pdf>.
- <sup>28</sup> In May 1994 President Bill Clinton changed Haitian refugee policy and allowed for Haitian refugees to apply for asylum if interdicted at sea. Earlier policy had labeled Haitian refugees as "economic migrants" and sent them back to Haiti.
- <sup>29</sup> Opitz, Götz-Dietrich. "Haitian Refugees Forced to Return: Transnationalism and State Politics, 1991-1994" (PhD diss., University of Munich, 1999), Münster, Westphalia: LIT-Verlag; Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, Rutgers University, 2004.
- <sup>30</sup> Roger Signor, "A Haitian Family Struggling But Safe in St. Louis," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, August 8, 1994, Five Star edition, sec. 1B.
- <sup>31</sup> Dr. Lionel (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>32</sup> Robert Duffy, "Doctor's Story—From Haiti with Love," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, September 10, 1975, sec. 3H.
- <sup>33</sup> Signor, "A Haitian Family Struggling."
- <sup>34</sup> Hillary L. Brown, "Representations of Haiti in Western News Media: Coverage of the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti" (2012). Communication Theses. Paper 88. [http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/communication\\_theses/88](http://digitalarchive.gsu.edu/communication_theses/88).
- <sup>35</sup> Human Rights Watch/Americas, Jesuit Refugee Service, and National Coalition for Haitian Refugees, *Fugitives From Injustice: The Crisis of Internal Displacement In Haiti* (Washington DC: Human Rights Watch/ Americas, 1994): 14. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/h/haiti/haiti948.pdf>
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Robert Duffy, "Doctor's Story—From Haiti with Love," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, September 10, 1975, sec. 3H.

- <sup>38</sup> Signor, "A Haitian Family Struggling."
- <sup>39</sup> Duffy, "Doctor's Story."
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>41</sup> Signor, "A Haitian Family Struggling."
- <sup>42</sup> Duffy, "Doctor's Story."
- <sup>43</sup> Signor, "A Haitian Family Struggling."
- <sup>44</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *American Community Survey*, Washington DC, 2005-2009.
- <sup>45</sup> Hans Caleb (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>46</sup> Hans Caleb (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>47</sup> Thorald M. Burnham, "Everything They Hate: Michele, Mildred, and Elite Haitian Marrying Strategies in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Family History* 31, no. 1 (2006): 83-109.
- <sup>48</sup> Alex Dupuy, *Haiti in the World Economy: Class, Race, and Underdevelopment Since 1700* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 5.
- <sup>49</sup> Burnham, "Everything They Hate."
- <sup>50</sup> Hector Francisco Pena, "Haiti and the Racism Within: A Social and Class Apartheid, a Study of Class and Race Relations Between Black and Mulatto Haitians; an Evaluation of Race Relations Between Haitians, French, Dominicans and Americans from French Colonialism to the End of the First U.S. Occupation of Haiti, 1700-1934" (master's thesis, City College of New York, 2008).
- <sup>51</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
- <sup>52</sup> Hans and Marianne Caleb (pseudonyms). Interview by Joelle Julien.
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- <sup>55</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 25.
- <sup>56</sup> Dr. Lionel (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>57</sup> Premiere Janivier refers to January 1st, the celebration of Haitian Independence. Haitians throughout the country and throughout the diaspora celebrate this holiday by eating *soup joumou*, Haitian pumpkin soup, together.
- <sup>58</sup> *Kompa* is a distinctly Haitian style of meringue that has spread throughout the Caribbean and Africa.
- <sup>59</sup> Maxime Jean (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.
- <sup>60</sup> Dr. Lionel (pseudonym). Interview by Joelle Julien.

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*Interviewer's Note: The following interviews were conducted in confidentiality and in concordance with measures taken to protect interviewee privacy; pseudonyms have been utilized throughout the body of the paper.*

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# Reading the Real Biblioteca del Escorial: Dangerous Books, Readers, and Populations

By Sophia Blea Nuñez

***Abstract:** Amid the imperial politics, censorship, and inconsistent religious discrimination in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain, the royal and religious Escorial library's acceptance of Hebrew, Arabic, and forbidden books initially appears anomalous. However, I contend that textual incorporation and exclusion within the library both contrasts with and parallels the relationships to corresponding populations and readers. The symbolic and practical significance of the Escorial's collections makes the library a unique lens onto Early Modern Spanish history and culture. Given the shared nomenclature of *cuerpos* that describes both books and bodies, and the convergence of diverse *cuerpos* in the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, I highlight similarities and contrasts in the treatment of books and bodies. To do so, I combine studies on book history with scholarship on the political and cultural contexts of Spain's treatment of Muslims, Jews, and their converted descendants. Furthermore, I examine published and archival Inquisition licenses, catalogues, constitutions, descriptions, histories, and letters regarding the Escorial library in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, paying particular attention to the treatment of suspect books and their readers. I suggest that keeping "dangerous" books in this library expressed power over the conquered, showed royal pride and prestige through a universal and valuable library, and minimized the risks that the books present by isolating them from all but trustworthy readers in the Escorial. Indeed, although the library was ostensibly open to "all men of letters who wished to come and read," in the words of Philip II, I find that only those most trusted readers enjoyed an unusual, potentially dangerous, freedom of reading at the Escorial.*

The cultural dramas of the Inquisition, post-Reconquista discrimination towards those of Muslim and Jewish ancestry, Counter-Reformation religious fervor, and a worldwide empire render the story of a library from Don Quijote's "Golden Age" or Early Modern Spain particularly relevant to those concerned with issues of censorship, religious and cultural contact, and discrimination even in other places and periods. With such concerns in mind, in this article I synthesize political and religious history from sixteenth to seventeenth century Spain, early modern book history, historiography of the Escorial library, and my own archival research in the Archivo Histórico Nacional and the Real Biblioteca del Escorial to show how the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, though acting out Spanish power by incorporating and controlling use of dangerous or other books, nevertheless retained a cautious level of openness—and therefore risk of cultural contamination and heresy—for certain readers.

To "read" the Escorial library, I examine the history, contents, and place in Early Modern Spain of the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, a library founded by King Philip II in 1559 as part of a monumental palace, monastery, college, seminary, basilica, and royal pantheon located about 45 kilometers from Madrid. The Escorial looms large in this period of Spanish history for its richness, its size, and the sizable amount of Spain's finances that it required. Visitors, commentators, and scholars have often taken the Escorial as the epitome of Spain's Counter-Reformation religious fervor, Philip II's personal character, and a variety of idealizing or demonizing notions of early modern Spain. I therefore analyze the Real Biblioteca del Escorial not only because it was the preeminent Early Modern Spanish library, but also because its rich collections of prohibited, Arabic, and even some Hebrew manuscripts initially appear anomalous as possessions of a royal and religious library in the heart of Counter-Reformation, absolutist Spain, where such books could have easily been destroyed by the Inquisition. In Spain and elsewhere, books were censored and sometimes publicly burnt in auto de fe-like<sup>1</sup> ceremonies in an effort to destroy the beliefs, cultures, and bodies of the authors, possessors, or readers of the burnt books in addition to the books themselves.

It is precisely the wider cultural context of dangerous, potentially subversive books and readers that renders the library's possession of books connected to populations of cultural others so charged. Given the changes to Spain's place in the world in 1492 with the conquest of Granada that ended Arab control of southern Spain, the forcible conversion or expulsion of Jews, and Columbus's voyages, the period just after this end of *conviven-*



*cia* (the “coexistence,” peaceful or otherwise, of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Spain) and radical expansion of its empire make Early Modern Spain a fruitful place of study for those interested in issues of cultural and religious contact, tolerance, intolerance, and mechanisms of control. Other areas in Europe did not have such a legacy of ethnic and religious diversity, followed by such fervent efforts to erase and deny it. Libraries, as “*figuras del mundo*” (figures of the world)—privileged spaces and collections that reflect the basic opposition of the orderly and the disordered—reveal the essential tensions of the world beyond their walls, such as justice/affront, peace/war, common good/tyranny, identity/alterity, communion/exclusion, and wisdom/rusticity.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, “Reading had high stakes,” as the early modernist scholar Georgina Dopico Black attests.<sup>3</sup>

This history and the singularity of the Real Biblioteca del Escorial within Early Modern Spain make the library a uniquely representative lens on Early Modern Spanish culture. Yet I, like Dopico Black, see the Real Biblioteca del Escorial as more than a simple mirror reflecting the culture, but rather as what Foucault calls a “heterotopia,” a space in which “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.”<sup>4</sup> Although Foucault offers libraries (and museums) as nineteenth-century examples of “heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time” and claims that seventeenth-century libraries and museums were instead the “expression of an individual choice,” I believe that Foucault’s concept of the heterotopia is still pertinent for understanding the mausoleum-like Escorial.<sup>5</sup> Not only were Philip II and other individuals important in the growth of the Escorial’s collections, but “the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages” that Foucault associates entirely with our modernity was present in the dream of the universal library.<sup>6</sup> As numerous complaints of the Escorial’s inaccessibility (discussed below) show, the library clearly fulfills another characteristic of heterotopias, which are “not freely accessible like a public place.”<sup>7</sup> Although Foucault’s chronology does not perfectly fit my project, I invoke the concept of the heterotopia because I believe that libraries are indeed singular places from which to draw illuminating parallels to and distinctions from life outside their walls.

In this paper, I focus on the policies and rhetoric regarding access to the Escorial library’s collections, particularly the “dangerous” or “other” books. My primary sources include manuscript and published Inquisition licenses, catalogues, constitutions, descriptions, histories, and letters in Spanish regarding the Escorial library and the people who used it in the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries. Through an examination of the practices of power and control over knowledge in the library, I also trace the parallels and contrasts between human readers or populations and books—books that were often called *cuerpos*, or bodies, much like the people who read them or the cultural or religious groups associated with them. For instance, during their scrutiny of Don Quixote's library in Part I, Chapter VI, the curate, barber, and niece of Don Quixote “hallaron más de cien cuerpos de libros grandes” (found more than a hundred large volumes/bodies of books).<sup>8</sup> Though the amount of shared vocabulary for books and bodies is telling, the connection is in fact more than a question of common terminology. Insofar as the cultural dramas of inclusion and exclusion played out among all kinds of *cuerpos* in Early Modern Spain, I deem it appropriate to investigate their histories in a parallel fashion, in the library where these histories converge.

## Other, Dangerous Books and Bodies (*Cuerpos*)

Although this metaphor of books as bodies was not exclusive to Early Modern Spain, it is particularly illustrative in this cultural context and for the “dangerous” and “other” books of the Real Biblioteca del Escorial. By “dangerous” and “other,” I refer to the abilities of both kinds of *cuerpos* to be subversive or culturally and religiously other than the ideal of Visigoth-descended, orthodox Old Christians. This is not to suggest that all Jews (or their presumably converted *converso* descendants) and Hebrew books, nor all Muslims (or their presumably converted *morisco* descendants) and Arabic books posed the risks of contamination to the national body that were feared, or even that they were uniformly mistrusted. In writing of a “national body” in this context we can extend the comparison between individual books and bodies to the collectivity, making the national body (which is composed of individual bodies) analogous to the library. Dopic Black writes of the Escorial library, in fact, as a “machine of incorporation that swallows whole the cultural output of a group expelled as waste from the national body,” in reference to the 4,000 Arabic manuscripts seized at sea from the Sultan Muley Zaydan of Morocco's ships and brought to the Escorial library in 1614, just as the last *moriscos* were being expelled from Spain.<sup>9</sup> Much medical and scientific knowledge from the classical world was preserved in Arabic, and these works were coveted rather than loathed—so much that Ximenes de Cisneros spared the priceless Arabic manuscripts on medicine from his massive bonfire in the Plaza de Vivarrambla, Granada, in 1500 by donating them to the University of

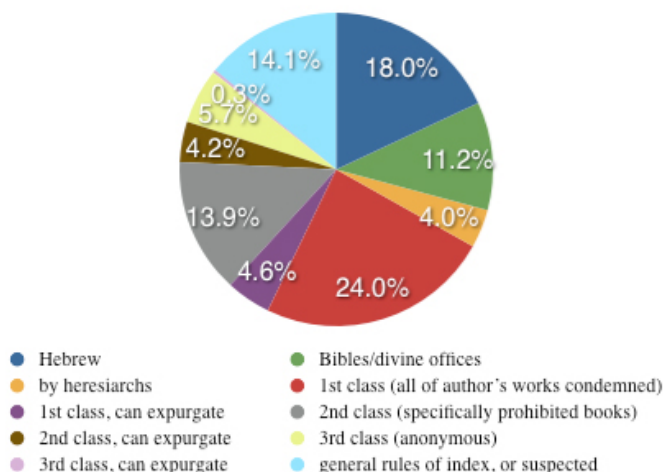
Alcalá.<sup>10</sup> Yet Arabic as well as Hebrew books and the corresponding populations often sparked fears of contamination that were expressed through persecution, censorship, conversion, exclusion, and burning of paper and flesh. Before Jews and Muslims were converted and expelled from Spain, they were required to wear distinctive clothing; in an analogous fashion, books by prohibited authors (though not themselves offensive), had to be marked at their beginnings as specially permitted despite being written by banned authors.<sup>11</sup> The similarity of books and human bodies breaks down, however, in that dangerous books expressly could not be removed from the library, while dangerous people were summarily expelled. Before a poorly extinguished chimney fire ravaged the library in 1671, the Real Biblioteca del Escorial held 110 Hebrew and about 4,500 Arabic manuscripts.

This slippery symbolic, verbal, and practical likeness between human and written *cueros* also extends to questions of legibility involved with reading the human body. Both human and textual *cueros* could at times circumvent Inquisitorial or governmental efforts at control, whether by fabricating genealogies or hiding behind false covers in a kind of “textual passing” that paralleled human passing.<sup>12</sup> Danger arises when the typical legibility of human bodies breaks down—when the usual signs of “otherness” lose their meaning yet difference is still suspected—for how, then, are the dangerously “other” bodies to be identified and controlled? Dopic Black describes precisely this dilemma facing Spain: “Once expulsion forced semitic difference underground in the late fifteenth century, there was no longer any reliable way to identify Otherness.”<sup>13</sup> Following the expulsion and forcible conversion of Jews in 1492, baptism rendered their remaining corporeal markers of difference (such as circumcision) unreadable as signs of religious distinctions. Suspicion towards *conversos* and, later, *moriscos*, was problematic much like the suspicion of adultery in an age deeply concerned with honor and purity: “for both the (adulterous) wife and the (presumably false) converso or Morisco the threat of contamination was perceived as particularly serious because of its fundamental illegibility.”<sup>14</sup> The human body, even in such stubborn illegibility, shared the book’s threat of contaminating the national body with impure ideas or lineages, and its risk of being misread.

Books prohibited by the Spanish Inquisition yet held in the Escorial library included some of the Hebrew and Arabic texts, plus Bibles in the vernacular, books by anonymous authors, and books by heretics, even if the text in question was not itself heretical. Nevertheless, the Real Biblioteca del Escorial held 932 banned books in total in 1639, not including Arabic

books.<sup>15</sup> Of these books, 168 (18.0%) were Hebrew codices; 104 (11.2%) were Bibles and books of the divine offices; 37 (4.0%) were by heresiarchs (founders of heretical sects); 224 (24.0%) were by condemned authors (of the first class, wherein their entire oeuvres were forbidden); 43 (4.6%) were by condemned authors but could be expurgated to render them harmless by removing the offending sections; 130 (14.0%) were of the second class of specifically prohibited books, 39 (4.2%) were of the second class but could be expurgated; 53 (5.7%) were of the third, anonymous class; 3 (0.3%) were of the third class but could be expurgated; and 131 (14.1%) were of none of the three classes, but rather fell under the general rules of the index or were simply suspected (see figure 1).<sup>16</sup> Overall, 85 (9.1%) of these books could be expurgated—a surprisingly low proportion given the fact that they were preserved in a royal monastic library that was theoretically open to other learned men, and also given the length of time it took to catalogue and censor them.<sup>17</sup> Ten Arabic volumes are numbered, but perhaps because of the language difficulty, multiple Qurʾans are sometimes lumped together into one number, making the actual quantity difficult to assess.<sup>18</sup> Another, earlier librarian, brother Juan de San Jerónimo, also wrote a “Memoria de los libros vedados q’ se hallan en la libreria de St Lorenzo el Real,” this one organized by language (Latin, Castilian, Italian, and Arabic), manuscript versus print, and size (folio, quarto, octavo, and sextodecimo).<sup>19</sup> At this moment, the majority of Latin texts were religious, while the much less numerous but at least as dangerous (because vernacular) Castilian texts in-

Figure 1: Composition of the non-Arabic prohibited books in the Escorial library in 1639



cluded religious texts such as the *Antialcoran del Maestro Bernadino Perez and the Arte de confesar por un Religioso de la orden de St Hiermo*, a reasonable banned text to possess because it was written by a monk of the Hieronymite order itself, and the manuscript novels of Giovanni Boccaccio.<sup>20</sup> Banned Italian texts included, among others, more Boccaccio, multiple copies of Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and *Historia*, and, waiting for expurgation, the sermons of Girolamo Savonarola.<sup>21</sup> Prohibited Arabic books held in the Escorial included the whole Qur'an, fragments of the Qur'an, and other Muslim texts.<sup>22</sup> Whether "other" or not, religiously questionable books predominated in the Escorial's banned collection.

Admittedly, using the words "dangerous others" to include all of these Arabic, Hebrew, heretical, anonymous, and even Asian or indigenous books and bodies may be convenient, but it may also blur the distinct ways in which incorporating and burying these different kinds of books or bodies reinforced Spanish power. Muslims, Jews, Protestants, heretics, indigenous groups and assorted "others" not present in the peninsula had distinct political histories in relation to Early Modern Spain. For instance, the few indigenous books held in the Escorial could represent trophies of a conquered people, and souvenirs of an exotic land. Books connected to dangerous or other populations from within or nearer the Iberian peninsula carried a different valence. The possibility of Jewish, Islamic, or Protestant presence in early modern Spain was a matter of significant concern, polemics, and discriminatory measures.<sup>23</sup> Though Jewish as well as Muslim conversions to Catholicism were often forced, according to Peters, "Christian canon law held that even a forced conversion was binding, and the *conversos*, against their will or not, were now fully privileged members of Spanish Christian society"—at least in theory—who were now subject as Christians to the Inquisition.<sup>24</sup> In early 1567, royal efforts to enforce prohibitions of Moorish customs, dress, and Arabic language soon led to rebellion in the Alpujarras mountains of southern Spain, so beginning in 1570, about 80,000 *moriscos* were forcibly expelled from the Granada region and distributed through parts of Castile, presumably to assimilate them.<sup>25</sup> *Conversos* were mistrusted as an even more insidious threat to Spanish Catholicism and bloodlines, lurking even—or especially, given the wealth of numerous *conversos*—within the Spanish elite.

The large differences in the numbers of Arabic manuscripts (about 4,500), Hebrew manuscripts (about 110), and prohibited works (nearly 1,000) collected in the Escorial may reflect, among other things, the varied levels of severity faced by different kinds of "dangerous" populations

and books. Although Hebrew literature was most effectively repressed, the Inquisition in fact concentrated on Protestantism and routine Christian religious offenses between 1530 and 1650—the bulk of this project’s roughly 1559 to 1671 span—while it focused on curtailing the spread of Jewish practices from 1481 to 1530 and from 1650 to 1720.<sup>26</sup> Due to the heightened tensions regarding the historical presence in Spain of Muslims, Jews, and Protestants, I am particularly interested in the Escorial’s surprising preservation of the corresponding Arabic, Hebrew, and heretical books.

## Incorporating the Dangerous Other’s *Cuerpos*

Early Modern Spain’s context of censorship, suspicion, and former *convivencia* makes the incorporation of such “dangerous other” books into the royal and religious Escorial library striking. These “dangerous” Arabic, Hebrew, and prohibited books arrived in major purchases or noble donations, but also through more violent means than their benign counterparts. The bulk of the library’s Arabic collection was captured at sea in 1612 from the Sultan Muley Zaydan of Morocco’s library, which Georgina Dopico Black terms “cultural pirating,” wherein these Arabic manuscripts were brought into the library just as the last *moriscos* were being expelled from Spain.<sup>27</sup> Ramiro Flórez and Isabel Balsinde succinctly describe this anomalous affection for the texts of precisely those people rejected from Spain: “Políticamente se expulsaba a los judíos, se perseguía a los ‘marranos’; pero ‘la verdad hebraica’ tenía aquí su mejor refugio y su mejor devoción de estudio. . . . Se expulsarían políticamente moros y moriscos; pero se buscaba, recogía y admiraba su cultura” (Politically Jews were expelled and ‘marranos’ were persecuted; but ‘the hebraic truth’ had its greatest refuge and most devoted study here [in the Escorial]. . . . Moors and *moriscos* were politically expelled; but their culture was sought, gathered, and admired).<sup>28</sup> It is difficult to ignore the imperial, religious, and political implications of this crisscrossing of some 300,000 *moriscos* expelled from Spain between 1609 and 1614, and roughly 4,000 Arabic manuscripts incorporated into the Real Biblioteca del Escorial at the end of this period.<sup>29</sup>

The library also had an archive of the Inquisition, with special licenses allowing the library to keep banned books and certain people to read them. For instance, a “Licencia de la Inquisicion para expurgar los libros de estas Librerias de S. Lor.o Juxta catalogum expurgatorium &.” from 1595 grants license to “Fray garçia de sancta Maria Prior del Monasterio de st Lorenço el Real para q’ con asistencia de vno de los Cathedraticos q’ alli leen Theologia pueda expurgar y hazer expurgar, todos los libros q’ ay las librerias

del dicho Monasterio q' hasta a/ora no estuuieren expurgados" (Brother García de Santa María, Prior of the Monastery of St. Lawrence the Royal so that with assistance from one of the Professors who read Theology there, he may expurgate and have expurgated all the books that there are in the libraries of said Monastery that until now may not yet have been expurgated) in accordance with the catalogue and expurgatory, for a period of four months.<sup>30</sup> Four months were inadequate for the task—such licenses were repeatedly renewed to allow librarians to sort the incoming books, and the number of those helping expurgate varied. A license from 1613 attests to the amount of remaining work, for it allows the Prior, the librarian, and four monks to expurgate for three years.<sup>31</sup> By 1645, a two-year license expanded this list so that the Prior, vicar, rector, main librarian, and all the professors could try to finish expurgating according to the newest expurgatory index.<sup>32</sup> The constant arrival of new books presented challenges for librarians, and Antonio Mauricio admits in "Raçon de lo q' ay en la libreria prinçipal" that the covered shelves in the main library contain some prohibited books still waiting to be moved upstairs to the archive of the Inquisition and expurgated in accordance with the privilege granted, "aunque es cierto que no se guarda lo q' alli se diçe, sino q' es mucho lo que ay que hacer para auer se de ajustar con el" (although it is true that not everything said there [in the license] is kept, but rather that there is much to do in order to comply with it).<sup>33</sup>

Although expurgation was certainly one reason for the librarian and others to read the Escorial's dangerous books, they were allowed to read forbidden books for other purposes as well. The licenses from 1613 and 1634 do not mention expurgation at all.<sup>34</sup> Between this glaring absence, and the evidence of Fray Francisco de Jesús's successful petition on September 13, 1617, to extend the previous license, it is clear that a variety of books were in fact used and not merely censored. Writing of his successful request ("s Ill.ma me dijo de palabra" [his most Illustriousness told me on his word]), Francisco de Jesús noted how not having permission for the professors to read prohibited books of the first class that do not deal with religion "los priua de las maiores vtilidades, q' podrian sacar de estender la dha licencia" (deprives them of the greatest utilities, that they could get from extending the said license), and reported that from now on they could "leer generalmente quales quiera libros prohibidos" (generally read any prohibited books).<sup>35</sup> The monk working in the Escorial monastery's pharmacy was also sometimes (such as in a November 6, 1635 license) granted permission to "leer, y aprouecharse dê algunos libros de la facultad

de medicina de autores de la prim.ra clase, para las destilaciones, y quintas esencias” (read, and take advantage of some books from the medical faculty by authors of the first class, for distillations and quintessences).<sup>36</sup>

The books’ literal incorporation and organization within the Escorial library changed somewhat over its history, moving from their temporary home (in what then housed human *cueros* as a dormitory) to their proper space, being categorized and sorted according to different librarians’ preferences, isolating especially dangerous or valuable tomes, and outgrowing certain spaces. Benito Arias Montano sorted the books thematically to correspond to the painted allegories of Theology, Philosophy, and the Seven Liberal Arts that adorn the ceiling of the Salón Principal (see figure 2),<sup>37</sup> but his successor José de Sigüenza considered the appearance confused and ugly because the books were “muy descompuestos y grandes con chicos” (very out of order and large with small).<sup>38</sup> A nearby room on the same floor held manuscripts, and the Salón Alto (identical in size and shape to the Salón Principal, but without the grand frescoes) on the floor above held the archive of the Inquisition. There, prohibited books were shelved by language and class—in effect, sorting them by kinds and levels of danger—behind a “reja” or grille.<sup>39</sup> Unsorted Arabic books from the Sultan of Morocco’s library were also kept in the Salón Alto behind the grille, as though they were still too “other,” potentially dangerous, or simply unknown to place in the manuscript library where most were eventually housed.<sup>40</sup> So, although the “dangerous other” books escaped the Inquisition’s bonfires, each category was isolated even from other kinds of suspicious books in the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, not to mention from the average reader.



Figure 2: The Salón Principal of the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, photographed by Escorial librarian Luis Sánchez Rubio. Pictured at the far end, which leads to the monastery, is Theology, accompanied by St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory, with an image of the Council of Nicaea beneath. The frescoes were executed by Pellegrino Tibaldi and his collaborators. Books are placed on the shelves with their spines facing inwards and their edges out, lending the tomes an elegant, uniform sheen. (Luis Sánchez Rubio, “Salón Principal,” JPG file, n.d.)



## Controlling the Threat of the Library's *Cuerpos*

As the care taken when allowing and organizing these “dangerous other” books suggests, librarians mitigated the risks of their incorporation through isolation, censorship, and limited reader access. Although Sigüenza explains how to locate books easily using his author and subject catalogs and system of topographic signatures, the addition of this system actually complicated the process of finding and reading books—as book historian Fernando Bouza Álvarez charges, the “mayor beneficio era la imposición de la mediación de la figura del bibliotecario, custodio de los catálogos, que podía controlar qué se consultaba y quién lo hacía en mejores condiciones con este nuevo sistema de signaturas inextricables para libros asentados con el único concierto de formato” (main benefit was the imposition of the mediation of the librarian figure, custodian of the catalogues, who could control what was consulted and who did so in better conditions with this new system of inextricable signatures for books situated only according to uniformity of format).<sup>41</sup> Sigüenza’s readers may readily contest his claim that his reorganization of the volumes by size and creation of author and subject catalogs allows “que con summa facilidad se hallase lo que se busca en ellos” (that with utmost ease what is sought in them may be found) and simultaneously “satisfaciesse a todo a la buena apariencia y compostura de fuera, y al orden de las ciencias y facultades en lo de dentro” (satisfies all good appearance and outer composure, and the order of the sciences and faculties inside).<sup>42</sup> The very reorganization that Sigüenza aims to justify prioritizes aesthetics over ease of use, much as the Escorial in its isolation was intended as a royal resting place and monument to Spain’s victory at the 1557 Battle of St. Quentin rather than a convenient resource for scholars.

The physical isolation of books within the library and of the library within Spain brought several complaints from scholars and visitors about the general lack of accessibility, complaints that have special resonance in the cultural and historical context of Early Modern Spain. Philip II did not take Juan Páez de Castro’s suggestion to locate a new library in an urban center or university town like Valladolid,<sup>43</sup> where it could be easily visited by lettered men (see figure 3). On the contrary, an anonymous 1591 letter charges that in the isolated Escorial, “avn los mismos libros allí se hazen saluajes, y huyen la vista de los hombres doctos, escondiéndose por aquellos encantados caxones de la imbisible librería” (even the books themselves become savage there, and flee the sight of learned men, hiding themselves in those enchanted shelves of the invisible library).<sup>44</sup> In his widely-circu-

lated 1599 text *De Rege et Regis institutione*, Father Juan de Mariana compared the books to “captivis” (captives),<sup>45</sup> a prescient description for the thousands of valuable manuscripts soon to be captured at sea, sent to the Escorial, and withheld from several Moroccan ambassadors. Both complaints personify the inaccessible books, yet not all comparisons of books and bodies imbue the volumes with life. The Jesuits Papebroch and Henschen likened the Escorial library to a “magno sepulcro de libros” (great sepulcher of books) where manuscript codices rot like cadavers,<sup>46</sup> in the same building as the magnificent sepulchers for royal cadavers.

Naturally, librarians and others from within the Real Biblioteca del Escorial and the Hieronymite order contested these charges and argued that rather than burying its books, the library welcomed many scholars who could then give the texts a wider diffusion. Near the beginning of the seventeenth century, P. Fr. Lucas de Alaejos (d. circa 1631) responded to Mariana’s complaint in his own work *Del reino de Christo* with a list of several learned men who visited and used the Escorial’s books. Alaejos concludes, “Cada día tenemos huéspedes eruditos, cada día extranjeros curiosos que revuelven nuestras librerías: . . . Cardenales, Obispos, Príncipes, Embajadores, y de ordinario los cortesanos, a todos se abre la puerta, a nadie se niega el libro que pide, y si no sabe pedir se le enseña el modo de pedir y hallarle” (Every day we have erudite guests, every day curious foreigners who rummage through our libraries: . . . Cardinals, Bishops, Princes, Ambassadors, and normally courtiers, the door is opened to everybody, nobody is denied the book he requests, and if he does not know how to request it he is shown how to request and find it).<sup>47</sup> Such starkly contrasting



Figure 3: The Escorial seen from the Silla de Felipe II outlook, as photographed in June 2012 by Sophia Nuñez. Though the village is hilly, it is not the case that “las cuestras son tan ásperas que a la subida es menester asirse con las manos, y a la vaxada, seruirse de las nalgas” (the hills are so rough that on climbing it is necessary to grab hold by the hands, and on descending, use the buttocks) as the anonymous, satirical 1591 letter claims. (Quoted from José Manuel Blecua, “Carta satírica describiendo El Escorial,” in *Miscelánea Ofrecida Al Ilmo. Sr. Dr. José María Laccarra y De Miguel* (Zaragoza: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Zaragoza, 1968), 112).

accounts make one wonder who is exaggerating, the librarians or the complainers. Nevertheless, the existence of such discrepancies suggests that outsiders may not have found the library as open to “*todos los hombres de letras que quisieren venir a leer*” (all men of letters who wish to come read) as Philip II claimed in 1570.<sup>48</sup>

Sigüenza also responds to the usual complaints about the library’s location, but he takes a rather different tone, emphasizing the royal and religious purposes of the Escorial: “*Digo pues que está respondido a todo esto con lo que hemos declarado, los intentos del Principe y sus fines, y el fin desta religion, las comodidades y partes del sitio, y si no se satisfizieren con esto no importa . . . tambien afirmaremos que los motiuos del Rey parece por los efetos que fue inspiracion diuina*” (Well, I say that it is responded to all this with what we have declared, the intents of the Prince and his purposes, and the purpose of this religion, the conveniences and parts of the site, and if they are not satisfied with this it doesn’t matter . . . we also will affirm that the King’s motives seem by the effects to have been divine inspiration).<sup>49</sup> In addition to irreproachably attributing Philip II’s motives for founding the Escorial to God, Sigüenza blithely characterizes opponents as self-interested, “*como si fuera este edificio para solos ellos,*” and their objections as “*tachas nacidas ó inuentadas de sus antojos*” (flaws born or invented of their whims).<sup>50</sup> The royal nature of the Escorial library is patent in another key passage of Sigüenza, yet there it is opposed to the building’s religious nature. One may question who did benefit from the library, since some monks (the library’s main beneficiaries who had ready access to the isolated site and even to its prohibited books) found the library contents “*profano y gentílico*” (profane and gentile).<sup>51</sup> While admitting that “*cada cosa se ha de guardar su decoro*” (each thing must keep its decorum), Sigüenza’s explanation suggests that the Escorial library was predominantly royal in nature, even if its audience was not: “*Esta libreria es Real*” (This library is Royal).<sup>52</sup> He justifies what others labeled “*profano y gentílico*” with the reasoning that libraries are common stores for all sorts of men, and moreover, that because this library is royal, “*han de hallar todos los gustos como en mesa Real lo que les assienta*” (all tastes must be found there as are placed on the Royal table).<sup>53</sup> Sigüenza seems to advocate the ideal of a universal, comprehensive library to suit all tastes, rather than the more selective ideal that other monks prefer.<sup>54</sup> His universal ideal seems at odds, however, with Sigüenza’s disregard for those who complain of the Escorial’s inaccessibility. Nevertheless, for those privileged few who both appreciated and were allowed access to the Escorial’s “dangerous oth-

er” books—namely the prior, professors, librarian, and some monks—the Real Biblioteca del Escorial offered unusual opportunities to read freely. Notably, holding such a role demanded proofs of *limpieza de sangre*, or blood purity, and other class, spiritual, moral, and academic qualifications.

Precisely because standing permission to read the library’s prohibited books was such a privilege and presented such a potential danger, the qualifications required to join the Hieronymite order or otherwise receive ready access to the library were considerable. Escorial manuscript XIII-29, 3r-4r, “Traslado dado en El Escorial a 14 de octubre de 1597 de Real Cédula de Felipe II dada en El Escorial a 2 de septiembre de 1586 para que se realicen averiguaciones sobre la familia de quien hubiere de ser recibido por religioso en el monasterio de El Escorial,” requires that the mother, father, and grandparents of those received as monks, professors of theology and arts, and boys in the seminary be “cristianos viejos limpios . . . sin ninguna raza de linajes Judios moros ni herejes” (clean, Old Christians . . . with no race of Jewish, Moorish, or heretical lineages).<sup>55</sup> The Escorial’s college primarily drew its students from the San Lorenzo monastery and other houses of the Orden de San Jerónimo<sup>56</sup>--with all the precautions and *limpieza de sangre* qualifications that applied there—though from the start four non-monastic students also received scholarships to attend.<sup>57</sup> The Rector also needed to be a Hieronymite, at least thirty-five years of age and professed in the monastery of San Lorenzo.<sup>58</sup> For professors, “conviene que sean personas cualificadas, no menos en costumbres que en letras” (they should be qualified people, no less in habits than in letters).<sup>59</sup> Thus, candidates were required not only to have a *licenciatura*, masters, or doctorate degree from an approved Spanish university, and to have or have been offered a chair at one of the preeminent universities of Alcalá, Salamanca, or Valladolid, but also to undergo an investigation of their *limpieza de sangre* and habits.<sup>60</sup>

These manifold obstacles to reading—in the Escorial library and in general—made reading there an especially privileged activity. At the beginning, professors belonged to the secular clergy—that is, living in the world rather than under a rule in a monastery—but Philip II later wished the professors to be Hieronymites.<sup>61</sup> Admittedly, outsiders did visit the Real Biblioteca del Escorial, and sometimes stayed for significant periods of time (as the Scottish humanist David Colville did from 1618-1627), or even received books from the library (as did Queen Christina of Sweden’s agent Matías Palbitzki, in 1651, including a Qur’an and three Greek manuscripts).<sup>62</sup> However, I consider visitors’ and foreigners’ sporadic access to the library’s “dangerous other” books less symbolically striking than that

of those monks, librarians, and others from within the heart of the royal palace and monastery itself: foreigners given a copy of the Qur'an as a souvenir do not threaten *Spain's* Catholic orthodoxy.

The possibility that a monk, prior, librarian, or professor at the Escorial could be implicated in heresy was particularly problematic, since these men, as we have seen, were trusted with free access to the very same dangerous texts they were to expurgate. For the Escorial librarian Benito Arias Montano, orthodoxy (or the lack thereof) and the extent to which it was shaped by his ready access to dangerous books are subject to debate—but the fact remains that the Inquisition banned his books from 1607, a mere nine years after his death, until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>63</sup> Benito Arias Montano's successor as head librarian, Brother José de Sigüenza, attracted the Inquisition's attention during his lifetime. Brother Sigüenza was put on trial by the Inquisition from April 4, 1592, until February 19, 1593, when he was absolved.<sup>64</sup> Of the nineteen charges against Sigüenza, the most serious and accurate were that he considered scholastic theology an unnecessary waste of time (1.<sup>a</sup>), that he thought it better to consult the Hebrew text of scripture rather than the saints (6.<sup>a</sup>), that he considered St. Jerome's works to be corrupted with apocrypha and additions, and that he did not learn anything from reading St. Gregory twice, while he could study with just three of Arias Montano's books (16.<sup>a</sup>).<sup>65</sup> Arias Montano's teaching of Hebrew at the Escorial and both men's ready access to Hebrew books surely contributed to such allegations, since without Hebrew scriptures to consult, they could hardly have deemed the Hebrew texts superior. The fact that Benito Arias Montano and José de Sigüenza were respectively censored and investigated by the Inquisition confirms that trusted readers were not automatically trustworthy.

Despite all the precautions regarding how "dangerous other" books were incorporated in the Escorial library and who could read them, preserving the books meant accepting certain risks, even if these were lessened by the library's remote location. Reading, according to book historian Roger Chartier, is inherently "rebellious and vagabond": even apparently intelligent people can be swayed by what they read, and one cannot control how even trusted readers interpret books.<sup>66</sup> It was not for lack of trying. Some critics, such as the B. Francisco Peña, who addressed the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and General Inquisitor in 1609, proclaimed that "no puede auer error en ser liberal en prohibir libros destos modernos llenos de mil nouedades" (there can be no error in liberally prohibiting these modern books full of a thousand novelties).<sup>67</sup> Rather, he blamed the "mal-

dita luxuria de stampar libros” (cursed luxury of printing books) for great losses on the Church’s part, “oluidando los hombres la antigua i segura doctrina de buenos doctores, por la sofisticada i adulterina de los modernos” (men forgetting the old and sure doctrine of good doctors, because of the sophisticated and adulterous one of the moderns).<sup>68</sup> As a member of the group that prepared the 1629 Index remarked in 1632 while planning corrections for the next Index, “es menos inconveniente carecer de algunas curiosidades (no es sola la curiosidad utilidad) que traen algunos de estos libros, que no de ponernos a peligro de que entre el veneno de la fe con paliación de curiosidad” (it is less inconvenient to lack some curiosities [curiosity is not the only thing of use] that some of these books bring, so as not to risk letting the venom of faith enter with palliation of curiosity).<sup>69</sup> Yet the “curiosities” that such books brought were far from lacking, bringing with them the symbolic heft of sometimes-dangerous corresponding bodies and populations. Preserving these books (albeit as domesticated “captives” or “buried treasure”) kept their “cadavers” remarkably alive, and therefore in need of librarians’ vigilance to prevent the ideas within from threatening the orthodoxy of other readers and of Counter-Reformation Spain.

## **Conclusion: Captive Cuerpos and Continued Controversy**

In closing, I return to the incident of the Sultan of Morocco’s captured library—a saga periodically re-opened over the years precisely because the books were incorporated rather than destroyed. After the manuscripts’ capture at sea by Spanish ships in 1612, the Sultan Muley Zaydan of Morocco’s library was then deposited in the Real Biblioteca del Escorial two years later, where it remained despite repeated Moroccan pleas for its return. The drama, certainly, is rife in this incident, but more than that, the inclusion of these textual *cuerpos* at the same time as *moriscos* were being expelled from Spain raises precisely the kind of cultural and religious issues that most intrigue me about this period in Spanish history. How did Spain relate to the *morisco* “other” inside and the Muslim “other” outside of her borders? In what ways were books considered similar and different from human bodies? Why were Arabic—and therefore possibly religiously suspicious, dangerous, or “other”—books preserved rather than destroyed by the Inquisition? What made the Escorial library a safe place to house them? By invoking such questions, the story of the Sultan’s library exemplifies the extent to which the history of libraries is indeed enmeshed with wider (political, cultural, literary, religious, etc.) histories. The stories of books and of bodies come together in a particularly notable way in the Real

Biblioteca del Escorial; Muley Zaydan's library reveals some of the tensions within libraries as well as the disjunctions between the human and paper *cueros*.

While the political symbolism of retaining the Arabic books saved the manuscripts from the censorial impulses of nobles who advocated quietly burning the Sultan's books to avoid disputes, it served to hold the books hostage from the Moroccans who attempted to regain them, and it could not protect them from poorly extinguished flames spreading from a sooty chimney. Indeed, the Arabic books were disproportionately affected by the Escorial's 1671 fire. The books were lost in the attempt to save them—in a fiery parallel to the Sultan Muley Zaydan of Morocco's earlier loss of the very library he had loaded onto a ship in order to save from rebels. Although not all the Arabic manuscripts were destroyed in the fire, the librarians and prior tried to claim as much to a later Moroccan ambassador rather than return the books to him. The Sultan Muley Ismael's ambassador, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Gassānī al-Andalusī, arrived in Spain in 1690 to request the return of 5,000 Arabic manuscripts and 500 Moorish captives.<sup>70</sup> The ambassador was told that the Arabic codices had all burnt in the 1671 fire, even though only about half had burnt; he had more success in redeeming 1,500 human captives.<sup>71</sup> Though this claim did not fool al-Gassānī, his overall opinion of the Escorial and its founder Philip II was positive.<sup>72</sup>

Such machinations continued with later Moroccan visitors. When Abu-l- 'Abbas b. al-Mahdi b. 'Abd Allah visited Spain in 1766 to finalize a peace treaty and liberate Muslim captives, he spent some five days in the Escorial and insisted that he be allowed to take some of the Arabic codices with him.<sup>73</sup> Apparently, according to the scholar Gregorio de Andrés, he was presented with some copies of the Qur'an, including the one plundered during the victory at Lepanto, although "el Marqués de Grimaldi había prevenido al Prior para que se ocultasen todos los *Coranes* valiosos y tan sólo regalarle algunos corrientes" (the Marquis de Grimaldi had warned the Prior so that he might hide all the valuable Qur'ans and only give him some ordinary ones).<sup>74</sup> Yet again, there was a connection between attempts to liberate human captives and efforts to reclaim the written Arabic *cueros* held in the Escorial, supporting my view of an underlying connection between books and bodies. This incident shows a continued Spanish possessiveness towards the paper Arabic *cueros*—and, by extension, towards the cultural achievements embodied therein. The library's close control of the Qur'ans also demonstrates a recognition of the political and symbolic

power of hoarding the Qur'ans and keeping them out of the hands of those who might actually use them.

Though the Sultan Muley Zaydan's captured library is particularly significant due to its size and the sharp contrast between its incorporation and the *moriscos'* expulsion in 1614, it is not the only group of texts acquired by violence. The booty from the Battle of Lepanto on October 7, 1571, taken to the Escorial included the enemy standard and apparently some twenty Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts, such as the famous *Corán de Lepanto* (Qur'an of Lepanto), whose provenance and subsequent disappearance are somewhat unclear.<sup>75</sup> Nor is this phenomenon of building and destroying libraries through violence unique to the Escorial. Rather, the Real Biblioteca del Escorial constitutes a singularly representative lens for understanding the treatment of paper and human *cuerpos* in Early Modern Spain.

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<sup>1</sup> The auto de fe or "act of faith" was an often public ceremony at which the sentences of those tried by the Inquisition were pronounced. Those who repented were publicly reconciled to the church, though often with penitential requirements such as wearing a distinctive *sanbenito* garment, having goods confiscated, or scourging, while those who did not repent were condemned to punishments. A solemn mass concluded the proceedings. Overall, the long ceremony was a theatrical combination of faith, punishment, and spectacle. It is worth noting that



the Spanish Inquisition could not sentence anyone to death, so unrepentant or relapsed heretics were “relaxed to the secular arm”—that is, turned over to public officers of the crown who performed the burning after the auto de fe’s completion. Edward Peters, *Inquisition* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 93-4.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Bouza Álvarez, “La Biblioteca de El Escorial y el orden de los saberes en el siglo XVI,” in *El Escorial: arte, poder y cultura en la corte de Felipe II: Cursos de verano El Escorial 1988*, ed. Fernando Checa Cremades, Cursos de Verano (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1988), 88.

<sup>3</sup> Georgina Dopico Black, “Canons Afire: Libraries, Books, and Bodies in Don Quixote’s Spain,” in *Cervantes’ Don Quixote: A Casebook*, ed. Roberto González Echevarría, Casebooks in Criticism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 105.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” trans. Jay Miskowicz, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (April 1, 1986): 24, doi:10.2307/464648; Dopico Black, “Canons Afire,” 96.

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 26.

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

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

<sup>8</sup> Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Francisco Rico, 6th ed. (Madrid: Punto de Lectura, 2008), 60. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

<sup>9</sup> Dopico Black, “Canons Afire,” 106.

<sup>10</sup> Leo Lowenthal, “Caliban’s Legacy,” trans. Carol Hamilton, *Cultural Critique*, no. 8 (December 1, 1987): 7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354209>; Haig A. Bosmajian, *Burning Books* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 2006), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Inquisition section, libro 500, 51r. For ease in locating manuscript sources, I list them in the footnotes and bibliography according to archive, section, and item signature. If the author, title, place, or other pertinent information is known, I provide it in the bibliography. Publishing a book in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain was a complex and bureaucratic process. It required, as Fernando Bouza Álvarez summarizes, edition of the original manuscript, approval from the censors designated by the Council of Castille, a printing license, and an ecclesiastical license from the episcopal deanery—all before it could be printed. Proofs would need to be shown to censors, to ensure that the printed text did not differ from the manuscript approved, and any discrepancies were to be mentioned in a “fe de erratas.” All of these licenses and other prefatory matter show that early modern Spanish printed books were highly regulated by prior censorship, in addition to that faced in later Indexes of the Spanish or the Roman Inquisition. Fernando J. Bouza Álvarez, *Del escribano a la biblioteca: la civilización escrita europea en la alta edad moderna (siglos XV-XVII)*, 1st. ed., Historia Universal Moderna 5 (Madrid: Síntesis, 1997), 62. Inquisitorial Indexes included general rules that forbade, for instance, Bibles in the vernacular, books by founders of heretical sects, and anonymous works, and also listed specifically prohibited texts and authors whose entire *ouvrés* were forbidden. Later

Indexes, such as the 1571 Roman Index edited by the Escorial librarian Benito Arias Montano, indicated which passages must be expurgated in order to permit otherwise banned works.

<sup>12</sup> Dopico Black, “Canons Afire,” 105.

<sup>13</sup> Georgina Dopico Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain* (Durham [N.C.] ; London: Duke University Press, 2001), 41.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Kamen states that the Escorial library held 932 prohibited books in 1639. Henry Kamen, *The Escorial : Art and Power in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 108. However, Kamen overlooks a pertinent detail: because the total of 932 given by librarian Antonio Mauricio does not include the Arabic books, the actual total was higher. AHN, Inquisition section, legajo 4517, n.º 1.

<sup>16</sup> AHN, Inq., leg. 4517, n.º 1.

<sup>17</sup> The extent to which each book eligible to be expurgated was in fact expurgated, and whether many of the other texts that were more strictly prohibited were instead expurgated are topics for further investigation. The average time that it would take to expurgate a text varied, sometimes requiring the excision of whole pages or sections, and sometimes only the blacking out of offending sentences.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> AHN, Inq., leg. 4470, n.º 4, 7r-8r. His surname is alternately spelled Hieronimo or Geronimo.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

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

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

<sup>23</sup> After 1526, the Muslim religion no longer existed officially in Spain, and all former mudéjares (Muslims in Christian lands) became *moriscos*, not always voluntarily or with much instruction in the Catholic faith. Not surprisingly, the dispersion of and discrimination towards *moriscos* did not eliminate issues of cultural difference, and their general expulsion from the country was decreed on April 4, 1609; between then and 1614 about 300,000 *moriscos* in all out of some 320,000 in the peninsula were ejected—about 4% of Spain’s population. Jews had been forcibly converted and expelled in 1492, earlier than Muslims, and the *conversos* that remained were often of a higher, more literate—and riskier—class than *moriscos*. *Conversos* became doctors, lettered men, even members of the nobility and clerics, sparking periodic preoccupations about *limpieza de sangre* (which was laxly enforced and could be evaded) and judaizing, or spreading of Jewish practices. Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven [Conn.] ; London: Yale University Press, 1998), 217, 227-8, 239-41.

<sup>24</sup> Peters, *Inquisition*, 82.

<sup>25</sup> Kamen, *Philip*, 129-31.

<sup>26</sup> Peters, *Inquisition*, 88.

<sup>27</sup> Dopico Black, "Canons Afire," 106.

<sup>28</sup> Ramiro Flórez and Isabel Balsinde, *El Escorial y Arias Montano: ejercicios de comprensión*, Monografías 77 (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2000), 311.

<sup>29</sup> Kamen, *Spanish Inquisition*, 227.

<sup>30</sup> Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (RBME), manuscript H.I.11, 24r. When transcribing manuscript documents, I regularize word spacing but conserve spelling, capitalization, and abbreviations wherever possible. I represent various abbreviations for the word "que" as "q."

<sup>31</sup> RBME, H.I.11, 27r.

<sup>32</sup> RBME, H.I.11, 28r.

<sup>33</sup> RBME, H.I.11, 258r.

<sup>34</sup> AHN, Inq., lib. 500, 51r-52r; and AHN, Inq. lib. 500, 49-50r

<sup>35</sup> AHN, Inq., lib. 500, 52v.

<sup>36</sup> AHN, Inq., lib. 500, 53v. The express permission to use prohibited books for the pharmacy brings us again to a book-body connection, in which otherwise forbidden books are acceptable if used for the benefit of the body. The Escorial was in fact a center of scientific and technical investigation, in alchemy in general and in distillations, with dedicated *alchimistas* (alchemists) and posts of *Destilador de Su Majestad*, *Boticario de Su Majestad*, and *Boticario de Sus Altezas* (His Majesty's Distiller, His Majesty's Pharmacist, and Their Highnesses' Pharmacist). "Quintas esencias" were the distilled liquors of herbs and other substances. For more about the distillation of "quintas esencias" in the Escorial, see José Manuel Loring Palacios, "Aportación de los destiladeros de El Escorial a la fabricación de quintaesencias: materia vegetal empleada en dichas técnicas y un tratado anónimo de destilación (s. XVI) en el ámbito escorialense," in *La ciencia en el Monasterio del Escorial: Actas del Simposium, 1/4-IX-1993*, ed. Francisco Javier Campos y Fernández de Sevilla (Real Centro Universitario Escorial-María Cristina, 1993), 1: 593, 589, [http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=352367&utm\\_source=catalogo.bne.es&utm\\_medium=libro&utm\\_campaign=Dialnet\\_Widgets](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=352367&utm_source=catalogo.bne.es&utm_medium=libro&utm_campaign=Dialnet_Widgets). The same collection also contains several articles on the Escorial pharmacy.

<sup>37</sup> Regarding the centrality of organization to the library's nature, Fernando Bouza Álvarez explains that "una *librería* en el siglo XVI era algo más que un lugar en el que se daba custodia a un conjunto de libros; ante todo, porque teóricamente, la biblioteca es más el orden de los libros que los propios volúmenes que la componen. Sí, en su teoría, la *librería* es un lugar donde se podría reflejar, parafraseando unas palabras de Antonio Gracián, el mundo orgánico que ha sido salvado de la confusión del antiguo caos hesiódico" (a *library* in the sixteenth century was something more than a place that gave custody to a collection of books; foremost, because in theory, the library is more the order of the books than the volumes themselves that comprise it. Yes, in his theory, the *library* is a place where one could reflect, paraphrasing some words of Antonio Gracián, the organic world that has been saved from the confusion of the old Hesiodic chaos).

Bouza Álvarez, “La Biblioteca de El Escorial,” 88. Vicente Durán Barceló discusses how Benito Arias Montano’s organization of the Escorial library differs from that ideated by the humanists Conrad Gesner and Alejo Venegas. According to Durán Barceló, “Arias Montano fue el primer bibliotecario humanista en crear una sección aparte para clasificar la ficción fabulosa que no se confundiera con la historia ni con la poesía” (Arias Montano was the first humanist librarian to create a separate section to classify fabulous fiction so it would not be confused with history nor with poetry)—an operation concerned with distinguishing fiction from truth by controlling the organization of knowledge. Vicente Durán Barceló, “El orden de la ficción literaria en la biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial,” in *La memoria de los libros : estudios sobre la historia del escrito y de la lectura en Europa y América*, ed. Pedro Manuel Cátedra García, María Isabel Páiz Hernández, and María Luisa López-Vidriero Abello (Madrid: Instituto de Historia del Libro y de la Lectura, 2004), 199. <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/libro?codigo=4965>. For an analysis of how José de Sigüenza’s descriptions of the library frescoes reflect the way he thought nature should be studied at the Escorial, see María M. Portuondo, “The Study of Nature, Philosophy, and the Royal Library of San Lorenzo of the Escorial,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 1106-1150. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/658508>. For a discussion of the Escorial library as a “monumento a la protección del saber de la casa de Austria” (monument to the protection of the house of Austria’s knowledge), and an analysis of the role of the frescoes in its goal of “cristianización del saber clásico” (Christianization of classical knowledge), see Fernando Checa Cremades, “El lugar de los libros: la biblioteca de El Escorial,” in *El libro antiguo español: El libro en Palacio y otros estudios bibliográficos*, ed. María Luisa López-Vidriero and Pedro M. Cátedra, *El libro antiguo español* 3, (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1996), 107.

<sup>38</sup> José de Sigüenza, *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo*, vol. 2, 2nd ed., Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 12 (Madrid: Bailly-Bailliére é hijos, 1909), 586.

<sup>39</sup> RBME, H.I.11, 259r.

<sup>40</sup> RBME, H.I.11, h. 259r-v.

<sup>41</sup> Bouza Álvarez, *Del escribano*, 128.

<sup>42</sup> Sigüenza, *Historia*, 586.

<sup>43</sup> Juan Páez de Castro and Juan Bautista Cardona, *Juan Páez de Castro* (Madrid: E. de la Riva, 1889), 29.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in José Manuel Bleuca, “Carta satírica describiendo El Escorial,” in *Miscelánea Ofrecida Al Ilmo. Sr. Dr. José María Laccarra y De Miguel* (Zaragoza: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Unversidad de Zaragoza, 1968), 111.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Eusebio-Julián Zarco-Bacas y Cuevas, *Catálogo de los manuscritos castellanos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial*, vol. 1, 3 vols (Madrid, 1924), xxv.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Bouza Álvarez, “La Real Biblioteca del Escorial,” 81.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Guillermo Antolín and Julián Ribera, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial: discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de la Historia en la recepción pública*

del P. Fr. Guillermo Antolín y Pajares O.S.A., *el día 5 de junio de 1921* ([Escorial]: Impr. del Real Monasterio del Escorial, 1921), 113.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Braulio Justel Calabozo, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial y sus manuscritos árabes: sinopsis historico-descriptiva* (Madrid: Instituto hispano-árabe de cultura, 1978), 14-15.

<sup>49</sup> Sigüenza, *Historia*, 409.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 577.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of this tension between comprehensiveness and essence in the ideal of a library, see Roger Chartier, "Libraries without Walls," in *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 61-88.

<sup>55</sup> The document acknowledges the occasional difficulty of persuading people in candidates' native villages to testify for the *limpieza de sangre* investigations: "porque muchas vezes las personas de quien se han de informar El religioso que ba a hazer la tal informacion se excusan de declarar en ella lo que saben y no se le dan los traslados de las scripas tocantes a ello que pide ya menester para que las informaciones se hagan con la satisfacion que combiene" (because many times the people, from whom the monk in charge of the inquiry must be informed, excuse themselves from declaring what they know about it, and they don't give him the copies of the deeds that are relevant to what he asks and necessary so that the inquiries are done satisfactorily) RBME, XIII-29, 3v.

<sup>56</sup> Philip II, "Constituciones del Colegio de S. Lorenzo El Real, dadas por Felipe II en el año 1579," ed. Miguel Modino, in *Documentos para la historia del Monasterio de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial*, by Eusebio-Julián Zarco-Bacas y Cuevas, vol. 5 (Madrid: Editorial Cimbório, 1924), 143.

<sup>57</sup> Julián-Eusebio Zarco-Bacas y Cuevas, *Los Jerónimos de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial: discursos leídos ante la Real Academia de la Historia* (San Lorenzo de El Escorial: Imprenta del Real Monasterio, 1930), 35.

<sup>58</sup> Philip II, "Constituciones," 156.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Zarco, *Los Jerónimos*, 32-33; Auguste Boudinhon, "Secular Clergy," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13675a.htm>.

<sup>62</sup> What began as a visit developed into an extended stay for David Colville, who ended up cataloguing the library's Greek sources for Philip III and teaching Hebrew, Greek, and Arabic to the monks. Gregorio de Andrés, "Presencia de ilustres visitantes en El Escorial durante el siglo XVII," *Cuadernos de Investigación Histórica* no. 5 (1981): 187, 200. <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=241296>. The efforts of "El Señor Daudid Coluillo" to catalogue the

Escorial's Greek manuscripts and his progress and remaining work to catalogue the Arabic manuscripts from the "Rey de fez" Muley Zaydan's library are attested in the documents "Raçon de lo que ay en la libreria alta" and "Raçon de lo que ay en la libreria m.s." (Escorial H.I.11, h. 259r-v). As mentioned, the as-yet unsorted Arabic manuscripts were kept in the libreria alta along with other kinds of dangerous, prohibited books. After David Colville inventoried the Arabic books, they could become part of the regular manuscript library.

<sup>63</sup> B. Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano* (1527-1598), Studies of the Warburg Institute, v. 33 (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1972), 12. In his biography of Benito Arias Montano, Rekers argues that Benito Arias Montano became part of a spiritualist sect called the Family of Love (*familia charitatis*) while in the Low Countries, for which he proselytized among the monks of the Escorial. Other scholars have since questioned the soundness of Rekers's thesis. Sáenz Arance considers Rekers's idea "una interpretación sugestiva" (a suggestive interpretation) but critiques "la unilateralidad del razonamiento de Rekers" (Rekers's unilateral reasoning), wherein Benito Arias Montano's earlier trajectory before his supposed conversion to a kind of tolerant humanism is marginalized. Antonio Sáenz Arance, "Entre la teología y la política: Arias Montano, agente de la confesionalización," in *Benito Arias Montano y los humanistas de su tiempo*, ed. José María Maestre Maestre, Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, Manuel Antonio Díaz Gito, Luis Charlo Brea, and Pedro Juan Galán Sánchez, vol. 1 (Mérida: Editora Regional de Extremadura; Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos, 2006), 152-3. F. Javier Campos and Fernández de Sevilla doubts the reasons that Rekers offers to link Benito Arias Montano to the Family of Love and its supposed extension to the Escorial. Campos argues, "la relación del Capellán del rey con los monjes no fue demasiado íntima, intensa y duradera—salvo contados casos—, para que hubiese oportunidad de que surgiera un pequeño grupo con el que tuviera mayor trato que pudiera derivar a la difusión de esa secta de tipo espiritualista" (the relationship of the royal Chaplain with the monks was not so intimate, intense, and lasting—save some specific cases—that there would have been opportunity for a small group to emerge with which he would have had greater dealings that could result in the diffusion of this sort of spiritualist sect). Moreover, Campos insists that there was no such Hieronymite monk by the name of Bartelus Valentinus in the Escorial; Rekers cites a letter from Plantino to this individual as key evidence. According to Campos, Marcel Bataillon also indicates like Rekers the presence of an "escuela esotérica" linked to Benito Arias Montano in the Escorial, with Alaejos and Sigüenza as his best disciples, bringing Erasmianism into the Royal Site. F. Javier Campos and Fernández de Sevilla, *Arias Montano en la Biblioteca Real y en el Gabinete de Estampas del Escorial*, Colección del Instituto Escorialense de Investigaciones Históricas y Artísticas 29 (San Lorenzo de El Escorial: Ediciones Escorialenses, 2010), 42-3. Fernando Bouza Álvarez maintains that prohibited books in the Escorial "no llegaron hasta allí para alimentar un cenáculo de herejes en el corazón mismo de la Monarquía Católica; más sencillamente, su

existencia allí puede ser explicada como base sobre la que realizar trabajos de crítica textual” (did not arrive there to feed a circle of heretics in the very heart of the Catholic Monarchy; more simply, their existence there can be explained as a base from which to realize works of textual criticism). Bouza Álvarez, *Del escribano*, 105.

<sup>64</sup> Flórez and Balsinde, *El Escorial y Arias Montano*, 549.

<sup>65</sup> Gregorio de Andrés, *Proceso inquisitorial del padre Sigüenza*, *Documentos Históricos* 5 (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975), 58-64.

<sup>66</sup> Chartier, *The Order of Books*, viii.

<sup>67</sup> AHN, Inq., leg. 4517, n.º 1, first letter.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> AHN, Inq., lib. 291, 441r, quoted in José Pardo Tomás, *Ciencia y censura: La Inquisición española y los libros científicos en los siglos XVI y XVII*, *Estudios sobre la ciencia* 13 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1991), 85.

<sup>70</sup> Andrés, “Presencia de ilustres visitantes,” 201.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Gassānī al-Andalusī, “Rihlat al-Wazīr fi Iftikak al-Asir” (The Journey of the Minister to Ransom the Captive), in *In the Lands of the Christians: Arab Travel Writing in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. and ed. Nabil I. Matar, 113–196 (New York: Routledge, 2003), 184.

<sup>73</sup> Justel, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial y sus manuscritos árabes*, 193.

<sup>74</sup> Gregorio de Andrés, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial* (Madrid: Aldus, 1970), 40.

<sup>75</sup> Justel, *La Real Biblioteca de El Escorial y sus manuscritos árabes*, 134-5, 138-9.

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# Rainbow Street: Heritage, Cosmopolitanism, and Urban Space in Amman, Jordan

By Jessica Page

**Abstract:** *In this article I examine Rainbow Street in Amman, Jordan, a heritage-based urban regeneration project sponsored by the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) beginning in 2005. The street's architects aimed to highlight Amman's architectural and social heritage and create a public, pedestrian space accessible to Ammanis of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Rainbow Street represents efforts of GAM and Ammanis to brand Amman as a historical, cosmopolitan, global city. Amman, established as the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1921, has since become home to diverse peoples—Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Libyan refugees; Egyptian, South Asian, and Filipino migrant laborers; and rural migrants. Jordan's stability in relation to other countries in the region has attracted growing numbers of tourists, scholars, and entrepreneurs to the city and country. Government and foreign agencies are forging a distinctive identity for Amman, a city positioned between long-established urban centers such as Cairo and Damascus and newer oil-rich capitals such as Dubai and Doha. Rainbow Street stands in contrast to neoliberal, market-oriented urban development projects in Amman such as hotels, business towers, and shopping centers that create spaces for international investors and elite consumers rather than the ordinary people of Amman. Rainbow Street is both a translocal and Ammani space, and presents ordinary Ammanis, those without structural positions of power, the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of cultural cosmopolitan codes of global urban centers without consumption. The ordinary Ammanis who frequent Rainbow Street are the center of popular discussion (news articles, entertainment forms) revealing their influence in shaping Amman's urban life. Their presence on Rainbow Street challenges GAM's control over Amman's urban image. I use textual analysis, street observations, participant observation, and informal interviews to analyze how Rainbow Street enables ordinary Ammanis to be active participants who shape Amman's public, urban character and international image.*

The online YouTube video clip “Rainbow Street 101” features the comedian Rajae Qawas, who lives in Amman, Jordan, and works with N20 Comedy, an online program that presents comedy skits created by Ammanis.<sup>1</sup> Qawas critiques Rainbow Street, a recently redeveloped street located in the historical residential neighborhood of Jabal Amman. Rainbow Street is the most famous street in Amman and is a subject of Ammani popular discourse. The video “Rainbow Street 101” is one of the many blog posts, newspaper articles, online videos, and caricatures that discuss Rainbow Street. Qawas wears a yellow X Men t-shirt and stands against a white background while he satirizes *shabab* (unmarried males)—guitarists, skaters, drivers—*benat* (unmarried females), and their gendered relations and performances on Rainbow Street.<sup>2</sup> He imitates the *shabab* who sit on benches each evening playing their guitars. “Lalalalaalaa”: a screen shot flashes with Qawas playing an imaginary guitar and making monotonous sounds. Another shot features him sitting down holding a guitar backwards singing an Arabic song in a raspy, off-key voice. “I advise anyone who works at *National Geographic* to come and photograph Rainbow Street, not the humans, but the animals that come,” he says. The clip ends with a man sitting down playing a guitar and singing a song: “I am walking on Rainbow street to find people, and I am walking alone, I am watching people, people walking in Rainbow Street, a million people, and I am watching by myself, watching people, people every day . . . going out dressing up, I’m going as well, but I can’t find a plaaaaace [to sit, stand] . . .”<sup>3</sup> Qawas centers his critique on the people who frequent Rainbow Street—*shabab*, *benat*, drivers, guitarists, and skaters. Most discourse surrounding Rainbow Street focuses on Ammanis who occupy the street.

In this article I examine Rainbow Street in Amman, Jordan, a heritage-based urban regeneration project. The street’s architects aimed to highlight Amman’s architectural and social heritage and create a public, pedestrian space that Ammanis of all socioeconomic backgrounds can access. Rainbow Street represents efforts of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) and Ammanis to brand Amman as a historical, cosmopolitan, global city. Rainbow Street stands in contrast to market-oriented, neoliberal, urban development projects in Amman such as hotels, business towers, and shopping centers that create spaces for international investors and elite consumers rather than the ordinary people of Amman.<sup>4</sup> Rainbow Street is an alternative to projects that target an elite socioeconomic group and provides ordinary Ammanis the opportunity to shape the image of Amman on the global stage.

Through an examination of the discourses and narratives about Amman and Rainbow Street deployed by GAM, TURATH, and ordinary Ammanis, I demonstrate how Rainbow Street is a cosmopolitan space where ordinary Ammanis—rather than the translocal shops, cafes, and restaurants that line the street—are the center of discussion.<sup>5</sup> Rainbow Street represents larger efforts of Ammanis to brand an image of the city, and by examining multiple perceptions of Rainbow Street I present contested notions of urban life in Amman. My analysis is based on data I collected from participant observation, informal interviews, and textual analysis, during six months in Amman, specifically January to August 2012.

## **Jordan: Forging a National Identity**

Amman is the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, formed in 1921 by a British mandate. Western colonial powers envisioned Jordan as a peaceful buffer state to Israel and perhaps a homeland for the Palestinians. Shortly after Jordan gained independence in 1946, King Hussein (r.1953-1999) became the official ruler. The main goal of his rule was to establish a unified nation state and forge a national identity among the kingdom's diverse inhabitants. Jordan's political stability and central location made it a choice for migrants leaving neighboring states—Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, and Syria—for various political and economic reasons. Large waves of Palestinian refugees came to Jordan during the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel, and they currently form half of the six and a half million residents in Jordan. The influx of Palestinians has led to tensions between Palestinians and Trans-Jordanians and what Brand has called a “crisis of identity.”<sup>6</sup> King Hussein worked diligently during his reign to overcome ethnic tensions. He created a lasting legacy of the monarchy by claiming shared lineage with the Prophet Muhammad, emphasizing tribal identity, and building popularity among his subjects.<sup>7</sup> The monarchy became the main focus of Jordanian national identity and a symbol of the nation, a symbol that Hussein's son King Abdullah II has focused on maintaining since he took the throne in 1999.<sup>8</sup> Although the monarchy has not completely calmed tensions among its inhabitants, its popularity among citizens has played a critical role in maintaining Jordan's political stability.

## **Political Stability and Economic Uncertainty: Jordan's Role in the Arab Spring**

The 2011 popular mobilizations in the Arab world, referred to as the “Arab Spring,” have had a unique impact on Jordan. Jordan has maintained political stability compared to other Arab states (Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain). The words “security” and “stability” have been popularized in public discourse among Jordanians, who emphasize the security of Jordan compared to neighboring states.<sup>9</sup> One example is an image that has appeared in many variations on Web forums. It is a map of Jordan comprised of three firm hands (red, green, and black, the colors of the Jordanian flag) gripping each other in the center with the words, “Lord, keep this country stable.” Thousands of Libyan and Syrian refugees have entered Jordan since the start of the Arab Spring.<sup>10</sup> They add additional economic pressure to this resource-poor country that relies heavily on foreign aid and tourism to sustain its economy. Economic tensions peaked when the government removed fuel subsidies in November 2012, sparking widespread protests in Amman and other cities around the kingdom (Salt, Karak, Madaba, Ma’an, Aqaba, Irbid). Regional and national events were reflected on Rainbow Street through the dozens of Syrian refugees who took work at restaurants or the hundreds who waited near the Saudi Arabian consulate to get visas.<sup>11</sup> Employees voiced economic concerns about low wages and rising prices, and a group of young Ammanis staged a demonstration near First Circle in June 2012 about the rise in the cost of gas and electricity.<sup>12</sup> The Hashemite monarchy has maintained political stability within its borders, but economic uncertainties among residents remain.

### **Amman: The City of Recent Migrants**

The Hashemite monarchy concentrated on building a national identity for Jordan, but did not put the same efforts into fostering a city identity for Amman. Amman was an ancient Roman capital, unoccupied for centuries until a group of Circassians settled in 1898.<sup>13</sup> In 1927, the Hijaz railroad was completed with a train stop in Amman, establishing a direct route from Damascus to Mecca. The station in Amman encouraged new groups to settle in Amman: Trans-Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians, Hijazis, Bukharis, Armenians, Kurds, and bedouin.<sup>14</sup> They lived in the *beled* (downtown, city center) near the railroad station until an earthquake destroyed many buildings and forced residents to relocate in the neighboring hills such as Jabal Amman and Jabal al-Weibdeh.<sup>15</sup> Amman's population

Figure 1: Amman is famous for its low-rise, limestone buildings.



increased from 4,000 in 1920 to 2.1 million in 2011 to 2.9 million in 2012. More recent migrants include Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Libyan refugees and Egyptian, South Asian, and Filipino migrant laborers. Because most inhabitants are recent migrants, they are not strongly affiliated with Amman, a trend noted by Daher.<sup>16</sup> Urban development projects demonstrate recent efforts to build a city identity for Amman. Certain projects—hotels, shopping centers, and business towers—emphasize Amman’s role as an emerging global city. Heritage-based projects like Rainbow Street emphasize Amman’s urban and social heritage in an attempt to link Amman—a relatively new city—to a firm past. Developers, inhabitants, and the municipality are trying to achieve a balance between highlighting Amman’s heritage and supporting its current role as a capital city.

## **City Branding: Development Projects, Neoliberalism and Online Discourse**

The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), the city government, is beginning to brand an image for Amman that highlights its heritage and emerging place as a global capital. One of its goals, as stated on its Web site, is “urban development that brings [a] balance between modernity and authenticity.”<sup>17</sup> GAM is located in the *beled* and employs 2,300 staff who supervise twenty-seven regions within the city as a whole. GAM is developing techniques to market Amman to international investors and tourists. Amman competes for international capital, investment, and tourism with older, more well-established Arab cities like Damascus and Cairo, and newer, oil-rich Arab cities such as Dubai and Doha. GAM’s city-branding attempts echo municipality campaigns in Beirut and Nazareth that aim to “sway perceptions of and attract international capital to damaged or ne-



glected urban settings with significant image problems.”<sup>18</sup> Amman is another urban setting with image problems. Jordan’s most famous attractions (Petra, Wadi Rum, the Dead Sea, the Baptism Site) lie outside of Amman.

One way GAM markets Amman is through its municipal Web site. The GAM Web site features English and Arabic pages and demonstrates the municipality’s efforts to boost Amman’s image. It provides a history of Amman, GAM, city initiatives, development projects, and cultural activities sponsored by the GAM. It labels Amman as an “organized, attractive, safe, livable city.”<sup>19</sup> Studies have examined the political power that municipalities exercise when shaping an image for themselves. Paganoni’s analysis of municipalities in Great Britain suggests that municipality Web sites can be problematic because of their emphasis on positive aspects of the city, rather than on a holistic representation of contemporary city issues that inhabitants face.<sup>20</sup> Certain GAM-sponsored projects such as the Abdali Project and Jordan Gate Towers have made areas in Amman less “livable” for its residents by encroaching on their living space.

These multi-million-dollar investment projects constructed large, commercial skyscrapers and transformed traditional neighborhoods (characterized by their low-rise, limestone buildings) of ordinary Amman into “sites of transient global connection.”<sup>21</sup> The projects reflect GAM’s aspirations to brand Amman as a modern capital city with opportunities for global investments. Huang examines how globalization is changing the living spaces of residents in the East Asian cities of Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Shanghai: “When the urban fabric has to be remodeled for the new user of the city and the capital flows, the original city-users often find themselves forced to give up their living space.”<sup>22</sup> Mega shopping malls, expensive hotels, and gated communities are urban developments that remodeled the urban fabric of Amman and created spaces for the new city-user—the transnational investor—at the expense of the original city user—the ordinary Ammani.<sup>23</sup> Daher, Parker, and Potter et al. link neoliberalism, the development model based upon open, competitive, and unregulated markets, with urban developments in cities.<sup>24</sup> Neoliberal projects like shopping malls, business towers, hotels, and gated communities are “fusion[s] of international finance, supranational authority, and local state” but they also exclude ordinary Ammanis in the planning process.<sup>25</sup> One example is the construction of the five-star Le Royale hotel in 2003 in the center of a residential neighborhood in the Zahran district. Despite violating building regulations and residents’ strong opposition to the project, GAM sponsored the construction of the high-rise building because it symbol-

ized modernization and would attract international capital.<sup>26</sup> Projects such as the Le Royale hotel reveal GAM's efforts to transform Amman into a "global city," which Huang defines as "the urban space that has been intensively subjected to the global flows of capital to the extent of compressing the living space of the inhabitants in the service of capital accumulation."<sup>27</sup> Ammanis have responded to neoliberal development projects. Sites such as Facebook reveal the non-hegemonic discourses of ordinary Ammanis surrounding these projects.

"Save Amman's Neighborhoods," is a public page on Facebook, a Web site ordinary Ammanis utilize.<sup>28</sup> The page's goal is to save neighborhoods from "creeping towers" that disrupt the daily life of Ammani residents by leading to traffic congestion and environmental problems.<sup>29</sup> The "creeping towers" refer to commercial skyscrapers such as the Abdali Project and Jordan Gate Towers that have been planned in residential neighborhoods. The profile picture is similar to the GAM official logo and font, but the words say "Save Amman's Neighborhoods" instead. The page includes images, artwork, and graphics of the Abdali and Jordan Gate Towers in contrast with the low-rise buildings of the city. The site strongly critiques commercial towers in Amman's residential neighborhoods and posts captions about how they disrupt the quiet character of the neighborhoods and kill the gardens and trees that exist within them. The Arabic word *inqath* means to save or rescue, and it implies that the towers are an enemy or force that threatens Ammanis, their daily lives, and their homes. In addition, there have been short videos interviewing residents about these skyscrapers and their negative responses to how they tower over apartment buildings and block traditional views of the city and neighborhood.<sup>30</sup> The Facebook page is a statement, rather than a call to action, that reflects residents' sentiments about the neoliberal development impact of the GAM's plans. I heard Ammanis refer to the owners of these towers as "thieves," which suggests that Ammanis consider the towers to be wasteful spending projects. My experience is similar to that of the anthropologist Anseel Sawalah, who listened to ordinary residents of Beirut, Lebanon, criticize the unpopular neoliberal Solidare development as they drove past the project in *services* (shared taxis).<sup>31</sup>

Tensions between residents and city planners exist in other cities such as Beirut, Nazareth, and Bethlehem and raise the question, "Whose city is it?"<sup>32</sup> In response to various criticisms, GAM developed the Amman 2020 master plan, which is a compromise between maintaining allegiance among residents and attracting foreign investment.<sup>33</sup> Rainbow Street can

be understood as a compromise between the desire of GAM to attract foreign capital and the desire to create a livable space for ordinary Ammanis.

## **TURATH: The Construction of Ammani Heritage**

The GAM is also attempting to brand Amman as a city with an authentic heritage.<sup>34</sup> Sponsoring heritage-based urban regeneration projects in Amman is an alternative to the modern, neoliberal high-rise buildings that characterize past GAM investments. The heritage-based urban regeneration project of Rainbow Street is unique because it exclusively emphasizes Ammani architectural and social heritage. Scholars traditionally considered heritage in the Middle East a Western colonial construct. Western travelers chose sites of heritage, like Greco-Roman ruins, that reflected Western interests rather than sites, such as Islamic ruins, that carried more meaning for the local population. Maffi notes how colonialists and archeologists in Jordan focused on Greco-Roman or pre-Islamic heritage sites rather than Arab-Islamic historical sites because “they were not interested in the identity of the contemporary local population and in their perception of the past.”<sup>35</sup> After Jordan gained independence from Great Britain, the government invested in historical sites relevant to the identity of Jordanians such as mausoleums of the Prophet Muhammad’s companions, early Umayyad mosques, and the Cave of the Seven Sleepers.<sup>36</sup>

Heritage tourism reflects the political agenda of the monarchy to establish ruling legitimacy.<sup>37</sup> Interest in Amman’s urban heritage reflects the political agenda of GAM to affirm Amman’s legitimacy as a historical Arab city. The following quote from an Amman Tourist brochure reveals GAM’s intent to establish Amman’s image:

Welcome to Amman, capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In this country full of natural wonders and historical sites, it may be easy to view Amman as nothing more than a place to stay between trips further afield. But don’t be mistaken--Amman itself has much to offer the visitor! Explore the tracks of the many civilizations who have left their mark here. Get to know the modern Amman, with its vibrant arts scene and bustling business community . . . Dedicate a few days of your time in Jordan to explore this fascinating city, by turns ancient and modern, energetic and mysterious.<sup>38</sup>

GAM’s interest in Amman’s urban heritage parallels the interest in urban heritage that is increasing in other Middle Eastern cities like Ankara, Turkey, and Damascus, Syria.<sup>39</sup> Jacobs, a scholar on heritage tourism, analyzes local discoveries of urban heritage in the Levant and concludes

that although residents of Damascus and Amman are constructing urban heritage imbued with “nostalgia and romance,” they use a different positionality from Western colonial constructs of heritage in the Middle East.<sup>40</sup> Ammanis converted 1920s houses into coffee shops, art galleries, and restaurants in historical residential neighborhoods in Amman such as as Jabal al-Weibdeh and Jabal Amman.<sup>41</sup> Jabal Amman and Jabal al-Weibdeh are significant sites of social and architectural heritage for Ammanis. The interest in these neighborhoods and converting them into galleries reveals that Ammanis select and utilize sites of urban heritage that are significant to the local population. This contrasts with the modernist, neoliberal projects in Amman that disrupt the traditional urban architecture of Amman and create sites for transnational capitals rather than ordinary Ammanis.

Rainbow Street exemplifies an intentional construction of Ammani heritage as well as an alternative city branding technique based on the traditional urban landscape of Amman (low-rise, limestone buildings) rather than modernist sky scrapers. It was designed by Rami Daher and his organization TURATH, whose office is located in the historic neighborhood of Jabal al-Weibdeh. Founded in 1999, TURATH focuses on “architecture, urban regeneration, heritage conservation (adaptive reuse), green architecture, and planning.”<sup>42</sup> The firm provides consultation for urban planning, tourism management, site planning, community empowerment, and heritage conservation. “Turath” means “heritage” in Arabic, signifying a local, Ammani construction of heritage as opposed to a western interpretation of heritage. TURATH has re-developed other historical areas in Amman such as Faisal Street in the *beled*.<sup>43</sup> TURATH has worked in cities outside of Amman such as Jerash, Ajloun, Salt, Madaba, and Aqaba. It has also worked internationally in Doha (Qatar) Beirut (Lebanon) Tripoli (Libya) and Damascus, Aleppo (Syria).

Rainbow Street is TURATH’s most famous project. Rami Daher, the chief designer, was born in Amman and is an advocate of Amman’s social and urban heritage. He led architectural tours of the city, presented at Ted Talks Amman, blogged, and published articles about Ammani identity, urban heritage, and development. His vision for Rainbow Street was to encourage public city life among Ammanis from all sectors of society and visitors to the city while highlighting Amman’s architectural and social heritage.

Rainbow Street, formerly known as Abu Bakr Alsadiq Street, is a one-way, one-kilometer street renovated in 2005-2006.<sup>44</sup> Its name comes from Rainbow Cinema, one of the first modern cinemas built in Jabal Amman

in the 1950s. The street is nestled in Jabal Amman, one of the oldest residential neighborhoods in Amman that overlooks the *beled* of Amman. The neighborhood is known for its white limestone apartments that were built in the 1920s-1940s, during the early stages of Amman's development. Its narrow, winding streets, abandoned houses, and worn stairs contribute to its historical character. The ninety restaurants, bookstores, cafes, social organizations, schools, religious institutions, business offices, and government buildings that line the street highlight the architectural heritage of 1920s-1940s Amman and the social heritage of coexistence among socio-economic, religious, and cultural groups. Points of heritage on Rainbow Street include homes of powerful political families, the first Chinese restaurant, King Hussein's birthplace, a girls public school, the Bible Society, and a mosque.<sup>45</sup> The variety of educational, religious, social, and commercial institutions on Rainbow Street reinforces the idea that Jabal Amman was a diverse neighborhood and important social and political center during Amman's first years as Jordan's capital. Tourist brochures, walking trails, and the Jabal Amman Residential Association (JARA) provide information about Rainbow Street's social heritage. In the process they paint 1920s Amman as a cosmopolitan city with cultural diversity, artistic creativity, and political importance.

## A Walk Down Rainbow Street on a Summer Night

The yellow taxi cabs, Harley Davidson motorcycles, pick-up trucks, small military buses, cars, and SUVs that come to the First Circle roundabout at the beginning of Rainbow Street have two choices: loop around the circle and return to Al Koliya Al Eilmiyya Al Islamiyya Street, or enter the one-way, cobblestone street filled with vehicles slowly making their way through the street. <sup>46</sup> "I'll take you to First Circle *bes* (only), not Rainbow

Figure 2: A line of cars at the beginning of Rainbow Street on a Friday night. Every evening, especially Thursday and Friday nights, cars filled with Ammanis drive down Rainbow Street.



Street itself,” warned my taxi driver when I requested a ride to Rainbow Street. At least he agreed to take me to First Circle, unlike some taxi drivers who refuse to enter the area during the evening. Reasons for not entering the street include *ezma* (traffic) and the bumpy, cobblestone street that, according to drivers, damages their cars.

I exit the taxi and pass by a small, public garden made of white stone benches, walls, stairs, and an open area. A few vendors stand near the entrance selling coffee, tea, or nuts to the families and groups of *shabab* (unmarried males) and *benat* (unmarried females) sitting in the garden. At the entrance of Rainbow Street is a large navy blue and white sign that displays a map of the street and Arabic and English descriptions explaining the street’s historical and cultural significance. Cafes, bookstores, and restaurants line the beginning of the street, as well as the Saudi Arabian consulate, which is guarded by tall, armed military personnel. Across from the consulate are more cafes that play loud, Arabic pop music. Two tall, muscular, Egyptian male employees stand on the sidewalk holding tin buckets of hot coal to fill the *argila* (water pipes) of the customers. They wear bright blue polo shirts with the message “I love my job” printed on the back. The café has expanded its chairs and tables onto the sidewalk, leaving no room for pedestrians.<sup>47</sup> I step off the sidewalk onto the street side, careful not to bump into an employee, burn my hand on a hot coal, or get my foot run over by the cars that are on my other side. “Welcome, welcome!” the employees call out in English as I squeeze by.

After a few meters I am able to return to the sidewalk. I look up at the large projector screen on top of Rainbow Cinema. White letters and numbers flash across the screen: “7:45 pm, 25° C.” A group of *shabab* with black leather jackets, blue jeans, and black shoes sit together at a wooden table smoking cigarettes. Beyond the table stands the British Council, a heavily fortified building with a five-foot concrete wall. The wall is decorated with a colorful mural as a part of a youth community project, perhaps to conceal the true purpose of the wall—to protect the Council from threats. I cross the street to the other side, stepping in front of a red Toyota filled with young men in their twenties who are playing loud music from their stereos.

Towards the middle of the street are several *argila*-free cafes and restaurants with large glass windows that display the customers drinking specialty tea, smoking cigarettes, working on their laptops, and chatting in groups. Across from the Tourist Police booth is a public patio with a more diverse group gathered—families, small children, couples, *shabab*, *benat*, locals and tourists. The street gradually slopes downwards until it

ends with a set of stairs leading down to the beled (downtown Amman). The long line of cars turns right on Omar Ben al Khattab Street, looping the winding street that leads them back to First Circle.<sup>48</sup>

## **Previous Notions of Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East**

The above descriptions reveal how Rainbow Street is a cosmopolitan space filled with ordinary Ammanis. Cosmopolitanism has been studied in other Middle Eastern cities such as Cairo, Istanbul, and Beirut.<sup>49</sup> Koning and Peterson, anthropologists who study cosmopolitanism in Cairo, have analyzed cosmopolitanism in Cairo by examining recently-built translocal spaces such as upscale coffee shops and restaurants. Peterson deems these spaces translocal because they do not carry state- and city-based notions of territoriality.<sup>50</sup> A translocal coffee shop in Cairo demonstrates connection with the global commodity chain, resemblance to similar coffee shops around the world, and difference from traditional coffee houses of Cairo.<sup>51</sup> Hotels, skyscrapers, office towers, and shopping malls in Amman are translocal spaces that are connected with global capital flows, resemble structures in cities like Dubai, and differ from the traditional architectural landscape in Amman. Scholars have noted the economic and social exclusivity of cosmopolitan, translocal spaces.<sup>52</sup> A customer at a mall, a guest in a hotel, or a consumer at an upscale restaurant holds economic resources that an ordinary Ammani does not have. The regular participants in these spaces, the elite, possess “superior economic resources” and own villas, designer clothing, private cars, and hire guest workers.<sup>53</sup>

While consumption and wealth commonly characterize cosmopolitanism, it can also be performed and achieved through social and cultural practices.<sup>54</sup> Cosmopolitan Ammanis are “world-wise and well-traveled, multilingual, hip or cutting edge, and comfortable and fluent in the cultural codes of the world’s major urban centers.”<sup>55</sup> Political scientist Jillian Schwedler and anthropologist Sarah A. Tobin both focus on Jordan, noting that in Amman different classes have begun to occupy these cosmopolitan spaces despite the economic burden. Schwedler’s study of Ammani cosmopolitanism focuses on middle class workers who adopt cosmopolitan representational codes—dress, language, musical taste, and conversation topics—when they interact with their elite customers.<sup>56</sup> Schwedler labels these Ammanis “aspiring cosmopolitans.”<sup>57</sup> Tobin examines the emerging middle class in Amman. The economic range of the middle class is wide, ranging from students who make 25JD (\$35) per month to service-sector employees who make 250JD (\$352) per month to business proprietors who

make 1,000 JD (\$1,411) monthly.<sup>58</sup> Although the economic range of the middle class varies, they are united by social and cultural practices such as post-high school education and knowledge of Western leisure practices like coffee shops, malls, and pop culture.<sup>59</sup> Middle-class Ammanis “emulate” elite cosmopolitan codes by accessing elite malls and upscale coffee shops and being versed in Western leisure practices.<sup>60</sup> Scholars have discussed cosmopolitanism in elite spaces, but they have not addressed cosmopolitanism in a non-elite space, such as a street. Rainbow Street is a space where notions of cosmopolitanism intersect with the street. I examine the intersection between cosmopolitanism and the street, which is a traditional haven for non-elite citizens in the Middle East.

### **Rainbow Street: At the Intersection of Cosmopolitanism**

Rainbow Street is a space where the Arab street and notions of cosmopolitanism collide. Asef Bayat, a sociologist who examines urban space and politics in the Middle East, calls the street in the Arab world the “chief locus of politics for ordinary people, those who are structurally absent from positions of power.” Rainbow Street is a space for ordinary Ammanis, who are structurally absent from neoliberal projects and elite, cosmopolitan consumption patterns. As a public street, it is a place for Ammanis of all socioeconomic backgrounds: the Sudanese *shabab* (unmarried young men) who hold rap battles at night, the Circassians who host break dancing competitions, the group of guitarists who gather nightly, the neighborhood children who race on their skates and dash through the long line of cars, the Syrian refugees who wait outside the Saudi Arabian consulate for visas, the employees who sit on the street during their cigarette breaks, the *shabab* who tease the American man who exercises on the street, and the families

Figure 3:  
A scenic  
lookout on  
Rainbow  
Street.





that sit on the panoramic lookout eating ice cream. Rainbow Street differs from other streets in Amman because it is a primary space, rather than a subspace. Scholars have examined subspaces in developing Arab cities, the spaces that lie in the background of development projects that shape the city. Elsheshtawy looks at the ordinary inhabitants of Dubai—South Asian and Filipino migrant laborers and long-time residents (before the oil boom) and the spaces they inhabit that exist between spectacular hotels, office towers, and shopping malls that characterize Dubai. Residents form subcultures in subspaces through informal markets, advertisements, and ethnic restaurants and create an alternative landscape in Dubai.<sup>61</sup> Elsheshtawy examines the ordinary activity in forgotten spaces of Dubai, whereas I examine the ordinary activity in Rainbow Street, the most famous street in Amman.

Rainbow Street also differs from older public plazas and parks like Al-Saha Al-Hashimiyya, a plaza and park constructed in 1986 in front of the Roman Theatre in downtown Amman. It was designed to create an active, public life among Ammanis, but locals did not utilize the space as expected. Amerih argues that a disconnect existed between the planning and the use of the space. Designers did not present cultural cues to Ammanis about how they should interact with the space.<sup>62</sup> Daher, the designer of Rainbow Street, publicized Rainbow Street in publications, city tours, and interviews: “The architect . . . must have a kind of consciousness . . . you must have a sufficient understanding of . . . the details of the place . . . in terms of relationships and development and change . . . this is the primary step, that you understand the place,” stated Daher in an interview about Rainbow Street with Aramram TV, an Amman-based online television show.<sup>63</sup> Daher and Turath presented cultural cues to Ammanis about how to interact with Rainbow Street. Local newspapers like the *Jordan Times*, *Al Ghad*, and *Al-Dustor* as well as international newspapers like the *New York Times* discussed Rainbow Street.<sup>64</sup> Daher’s and news agencies’ attention to Rainbow Street presented other cues to Ammanis about Rainbow Street’s place in Amman and on the international stage. It is a local space designed to enhance urban life in Amman, but also an international space designed to enhance Amman’s global image.

Rainbow Street is an Ammani space—it highlights Ammani heritage and is utilized by Ammanis. It is also a cosmopolitan, translocal space that allows Ammanis to demonstrate knowledge of cultural codes in the world’s urban centers. Peterson, the anthropologist who studies cosmopolitanism in Cairo, examined translocal cafes in Cairo where state-based notions of

territoriality were absent. The cafes Peterson studied in Cairo were connected with the global commodity chain, and had similar features as cafes in other urban centers.<sup>65</sup> Rainbow Street demonstrates Amman's connection with the global commodity chain, and it has institutions that exist in other globalized, urban centers. The cafes, restaurants, and shops that line Rainbow Street take multilingual names: Kups and Kilos, Café des Artists, Bifrost, Turtle Green, La Calle, Falafel Al-Quds, Jaridah Café, Al Malaabas, Café Strada, Tche Tche, Books@Cafe, and Cantalope. The restaurants and cafes serve various food and drink items: falafel and shawarma sandwiches, hummus, local nuts and tea, gluten free cookies, pizza, camel burgers, hot-dogs, specialty tea, lattes, *sahlab* (a local beverage), salads, buffalo wings, cheese puffs, ice cream, beer, and non-alcoholic cocktails. The mix of Arabic, English, Italian, and Spanish names and diverse cuisine portray Amman as a multilingual and multicultural urban center. A café owner compared Rainbow Street to Times Square in New York, a global urban space famous for its diverse ethnic groups. Western and Arab tourists frequent Rainbow Street, further contributing to its translocal character.<sup>66</sup> Rainbow Street is a translocal space utilized by Ammanis. Previous studies have examined cosmopolitan, translocal spaces such as coffee shops, restaurants, cafes, and shopping malls that were designed primarily for elite consumers. Rainbow Street differs from these cosmopolitan, translocal spaces because it is not reserved for elite consumers. TURATH designed Rainbow Street primarily as a public, pedestrian space for local Ammanis. It is centrally located between affluent West Amman and low-income East Amman, allowing Ammanis from all socio-economic backgrounds to access the area. Ammanis can access Rainbow Street through a *service* (shared taxi) ride or staircase from East Amman, or a taxi or personal vehicle from West Amman.

Rainbow Street's distinguishing feature is the hundreds of ordinary Ammanis who frequent its space nightly. The majority of Ammanis who frequent Rainbow Street occupy the physical space of the street, rather than the cafes and restaurants. I spent many Thursday and Saturday nights in a nearly empty café or restaurant while the street was filled with Ammanis. I suggest that Rainbow Street obtains its cosmopolitan character from the hundreds of ordinary Ammanis who frequent the space each evening. Rainbow Street creates an inclusive space for Ammanis to participate in global, urban life as cosmopolitan actors. Ordinary Ammanis perform cosmopolitanism by slowly driving their cars down the cobblestone street, playing the guitar and drums, hosting rap battles and dance

competitions, socializing near the scenic lookouts, and smoking cigarettes on the side streets. A frequenter of Rainbow Street discussed the “creativity” that comes from Rainbow Street: “When someone is playing a guitar, he has his friends and an audience. Perhaps something will come out of it . . . like something beautiful, perhaps he will be discovered.” Other frequenters mentioned famous people who have visited Rainbow Street such as Angelina Jolie and King Abdullah II. Their comments reveal Ammanis’ consciousness of practices in other global, urban centers and demonstrate how ordinary Ammanis place Rainbow Street and Amman on a global stage.

The *shabab, benat*, musicians, and drivers who frequent Rainbow Street form what Bayat calls “nonmovements” which are “collective actions of noncollective actors.”<sup>67</sup> The nonmovements among Ammani youth trigger social change because they shape discussions and perceptions of Rainbow Street and public, urban life in Amman. Their actions reveal a growing sentiment among Ammanis: Amman is a global urban capital which possesses the same services, activities, and practices that other more prominent capitals provide. Their everyday actions and encounters are a type of cosmopolitanism that is displayed through performance and encounter rather than economic transactions. The ordinary people on Rainbow Street can be considered “participants in a modern and increasingly global world” without practicing elite patterns of consumption.<sup>68</sup>

Beyond Rainbow Street, non-government organizations are reclaiming Amman as their city. BeAmman.net is a Web site designed by Ammanis that incorporates blog posts and photos about Amman’s places, people, and activities. The Web site owners state that the site was “born out of a love and passion for our city, and our desire to present Jordanians and visitors with all that Amman has to offer—from people to meet, places to see and things to do, to the challenges and opportunities that exist in the city.”<sup>69</sup> The Amman Facebook page, a digital NGO, features videos, pictures, and posts about places and events in Amman. It aims to “re-design the written, read, visual identity of the city to suit the population of Amman as a whole from the East to the West.”<sup>70</sup> Other organizations and projects include Naas Amman (Humans of Amman), a photography project that takes portraits of Ammanis from all parts of the city.<sup>71</sup> Amman Bidha Alwan (Amman wants colors) is a non-government organization that paints murals in Amman’s public spaces like stairs and walls.<sup>72</sup> These organizations demonstrate how ordinary Ammanis, those outside of GAM’s agenda to form an image for Amman, are culturally investing in their city. They present Amman as a global, urban capital with activities and practices similar to those

of well-established cities. The actions of ordinary Ammanis on Rainbow Street do not go unnoticed.

In the popular YouTube video “Rainbow Street 101” that the Jordanian comedian Rajae Qawas performs, Qawas focuses on the ordinary Ammanis on Rainbow Street rather than the shops, restaurants, and cafes. I spoke with Ammanis about Rainbow Street. A café owner explained that ninety percent of the people who come to Rainbow Street come to watch each other. He said that he felt like an *‘ard* (exhibit) when he walked on Rainbow Street because other people look at him. Some employees admitted that they frequent Rainbow Street because of the *benat* (unmarried young women) who come. A taxi driver referred to Rainbow Street as *shari’a al’ashq* (street of passion) in reference to male-female relationships. In these comments Ammanis focused on the physical occupants of Rainbow Street, revealing that ordinary Ammanis shape Rainbow Street’s image. The public nature of Rainbow Street grants Ammanis the power to impact the character of urban Amman in contrast to the private development projects like office towers and shopping malls that exclude certain Ammanis. I spoke with Jordanians who reside outside of Amman about Rainbow Street. A woman from Irbid said that she cried [out of happiness] when she first saw Rainbow Street. A hotel receptionist in Aqaba lit up in excitement when he described Rainbow Street and all of its activities compared to Aqaba. Their remarks demonstrate Rainbow Street’s significance among residents outside of Amman and uniqueness compared to other cities in Jordan. The ordinary Ammanis on Rainbow Street have the power to influence Rainbow Street and Amman’s image.

## **The Politics of Cosmopolitanism on Rainbow Street: GAM Response**

The ordinary Ammanis who choose to occupy Rainbow Street’s physical space are somewhat of a threat to the GAM because of their power in shaping Rainbow Street and Amman. GAM sponsored Rainbow Street in an effort to boost Amman’s international image, but it cannot exercise the same amount of control over who frequents Rainbow Street because it is a public space. Previous GAM-sponsored projects like hotels, shopping malls, and office towers created space for transnational investors and elite consumers at the expense of ordinary Ammanis. Spaces such as shopping malls and upscale clubs are regulated by a security force that filters out certain Ammanis, like unaccompanied young men.<sup>73</sup> Ammanis from all

socioeconomic backgrounds are able to frequent Rainbow Street, in contrast to previous GAM investments. Most of the ordinary Ammanis who frequent Rainbow Street choose to occupy the outside space of Rainbow Street rather than the inside spaces of translocal shops, restaurants, and cafes. The actions of *shabab* who drive down Rainbow Street blasting music from their car stereos, Syrian refugees who sit on benches waiting for visas, and musicians who attract gatherings of Ammanis around them may be in contrast with shop-owners' and GAM's plans to use Rainbow Street to attract capital from international investors, tourists, and local consumers.

Seteney Shami, an anthropologist at Yarmouk University, examines the politics of identity, inclusion, and exclusion in the formation of cityscapes. She acknowledges the dominant, hegemonic narratives of a city's history and identity as well as the ordinary, non-hegemonic narratives of the city: "With assertions of identity come 'rights' to certain spaces."<sup>74</sup> GAM controls the dominant, hegemonic narrative of Amman and its place as a modern, globalizing city. It has the power to sponsor development projects around Amman that attract transnational investors and international attention. Rainbow Street, although sponsored by the GAM, allows ordinary Ammanis to display an ordinary, non-hegemonic narrative of Amman to an international audience. Ammanis assert their right to Rainbow Street by continuously frequenting the area. In November 2011 GAM attempted to curb ordinary Ammani's influence on Rainbow Street by removing benches from a scenic lookout on Rainbow Street without explanation and adding a Tourist Police booth where officers monitor the pedestrian traffic.<sup>75</sup> A group of *shabab* explained that when four or five of them get together, they are approached by the Tourist police.

"How long will we, the citizens of Amman, sit idly by as our most basic rights to public space are taken away, in some cases, right from under our very noses?" wrote prominent Ammani blogger Raghda Butros. GAM's actions reveal a desire to completely control the narrative of Amman and to silence the non-hegemonic narratives of ordinary Ammanis who frequent Rainbow Street's physical space and shape Amman's public, urban life. Ordinary Ammanis exercise great influence in shaping Rainbow Street's character, and they are perhaps a threat to the municipality. In the past, GAM exercised more control in shaping the international image of Amman. GAM previously removed benches from Wakilat Street, a pedestrian street designed by TURATH in the commercial shopping district of Swafiyya, because shop owners complained that the pedestrian traffic hurt business.<sup>76</sup> GAM's actions demonstrate its attempt to regulate cosmopolitan life

in Amman. GAM's interaction with ordinary Ammanis on Rainbow Street reveal that cosmopolitan life in Amman is disputed. On Rainbow Street the benches were eventually re-installed, revealing the power of ordinary people against the GAM. GAM's re-installment of the Rainbow Street benches suggests that ordinary Ammanis will play a more active role in shaping Amman's urban image in the future than they have in the past.

## **Conclusion**

In this article I have demonstrated efforts of the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), TURATH, and ordinary Ammanis to brand Amman as a modernizing, cosmopolitan city with a deep heritage. Amman competes with well-established Arab cities, like Damascus and Cairo, and with oil-rich gulf cities like Dubai and Doha. Rainbow Street is an Ammani space that highlights the social and architectural heritage of Amman. It stands in contrast with modern, neoliberal urban development projects like high towers, luxurious hotels, and shopping centers that disrupt the traditional urban landscape of Amman and create space for transnational investors and elite consumers rather than ordinary Ammanis. Rainbow Street is also a translocal, cosmopolitan space. The multilingual and multiethnic shops, restaurants, and cafes that line the street portray Amman as a multicultural urban center. Ordinary Ammanis who occupy Rainbow Street's outside space demonstrate their knowledge of cosmopolitan codes of urban centers without consumption. They are the center of popular discussion about Rainbow Street in news articles, entertainment forums and other online media outlets, revealing their influence in shaping Amman. Ordinary Ammanis' presence on Rainbow Street challenges GAM's attempt to attract international investors and to control Amman's urban image. The persistent popularity of Rainbow Street reveals that the ordinary people are still a force despite efforts of GAM to control them by removing benches and establishing a Tourist Police. Ordinary Ammanis are asserting their right to Rainbow Street and their right to participate in Amman's urban development.

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<sup>1</sup> This YouTube clip had over 850,000 views as of 18 February 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Gendered relations and performances on Rainbow Street are beyond the scope of this article, although future research should perform a gender analysis on Rainbow Street.

<sup>3</sup> *N2O Comedy*: *وبنيرلا عراش 101 ساوق يئاجر مع* 2011. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw9iEj6Jg0&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rw9iEj6Jg0&feature=youtube_gdata_player). This clip was performed in Arabic, and the translations to English are mine.

<sup>4</sup> I borrow the term “ordinary” from Bayat to refer to Ammanis who are outside of structural positions of power. See Bayat, Asef, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010) and Bayat, Asef, “The ‘Street’ and the Politics of Dissent in the Arab World,” *Middle East Report* no. 226 (April 1, 2003): 10–17.

<sup>5</sup> TURATH is the non-governmental architectural foundation that designed Rainbow Street.

<sup>6</sup> “Trans-Jordanians” refers to Jordanians originally from the Trans-Jordanian East Bank rather than the Palestinian West Bank. See Laurie A. Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24 no.4 (July 1, 1995): 46-61.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Layne, *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994): 104.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah A. Tobin, “Jordan’s Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution,” *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 1 (2012): 107.

<sup>10</sup> Estimates of Syrian refugees in Jordan as of February 2013 are 300,000.

<sup>11</sup> During July 2012 Saudi Arabia was issuing visas to Syrians.

<sup>12</sup> See the article on Amman.net entitled *وبنيرلا عراش يف تخرجس: انومحرا* <http://ar.ammannet.net/news/160306>.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed account of the Circassian urban experience in Amman, read Seteny Khalid Shami, “The Circassians of Amman: Historical Narratives, Urban Dwelling, and the Construction of Identity,” in *Amman: The City and Its Society*,

ed. Seteney Khalid Shami and Jean Hannoyer (Beirut, Lebanon: Cermoc Press, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> JARA Center, Tourism Board.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Rami Daher, *Tourism in the Middle East: Continuity, Change and Transformation* (Buffalo: Channel View Publications, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ammancity.gov.jo/en/gam/about.asp>.

<sup>18</sup> Laurie King-Irani, "The Millennial Medina: Discourses of Time, Space and Authenticity in Projects to Market and Renovate Beirut and Nazareth," *HAGAR: Studies in Culture, Polity & Identities* 7, no. 1 (May 2007): 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ammancity.gov.jo/en/gam/about.asp>.

<sup>20</sup> Paganoni, Maria Cristina, "City Branding and Social Inclusion in the Glocal City," *Mobilities* 7, no. 1 (February 2012): 13-31.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher Parker, "Tunnel-bypasses and Minarets of Capitalism: Amman as Neoliberal Assemblage," *Political Geography* 28, no. 2 (February 2009): 113. The low-rise, limestone buildings that characterize neighborhoods in Amman carry architectural diversity. For more information on the architectural diversity, read Fethi and Mahadin, who characterize limestone villas in West Amman by different styles—Modern, Post-Modern, Islamicist, Cottage, Classicist, and Eclectic. Ihsan Fethi and Kamel Mahadin, "Villa Architecture in Amman: The Current Spectrum of Styles," in *Amman: The City and Its Society*, ed. Seteney Khalid Shami and Jean Hannoyer (Beirut, Lebanon: Cermoc Press, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Huang, Tsung-yi Michelle, *Walking Between Slums and Skyscrapers: Illusions of Open Space in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Shanghai*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004): 114

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> See Daher, Rami, "Amman: Disguised Genealogy and Recent Urban Restructuring and Neoliberal Threats," In *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development*, edited by Yasser Elsheshtawy (New York: Routledge, 2008). Parker, Christopher, "Tunnel-bypasses and Minarets of Capitalism: Amman as Neoliberal Assemblage," *Political Geography* 28, no. 2 (February 2009): 110-120. Potter, Robert B., Khadija Darmame, Nasim Barham, and Stephen Nortcliff, "Ever-growing Amman, Jordan: Urban Expansion, Social Polarisation and Contemporary Urban Planning Issues," *Habitat International* 33, no. 1 (January 2009): 81-92.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>26</sup> Abu-Ghazalah, Samer, "Le Royal in Amman: A New Architectural Symbol for the 21st Century," *Cities* 23, no. 2 (April 2006): 149-159.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>28</sup> I met Ammanis from all socioeconomic backgrounds who have Facebook—Filipino maids, Syrian refugees, Egyptian migrant laborers, students, young professionals. I consider Facebook a tool for ordinary people because it is popular among all segments of society.



- <sup>29</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/saveamman?fref=ts>.
- <sup>30</sup> See Aramram's interviews with residents at <http://www.aramram.com/episode/219>. Aramram is a Jordanian-based online television company that films short documentaries around Amman.
- <sup>31</sup> Sawalha, Aseel. *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City*. Jamal and Rania Daniel Series in Contemporary History, Politics, Culture, and Religion of the Levant. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010): 38.
- <sup>32</sup> Fenster, Tovi, and Haim Yacobi, "Whose City Is It? On Urban Planning and Local Knowledge in Globalizing Tel Aviv-Jaffa," *Planning Theory & Practice* 6, no. 2 (2005): 191–211.
- <sup>33</sup> Robert A. Beauregard and Andrea Marpillero-Colomina, "More Than a Master Plan: Amman 2025," *Cities* 28, no. 1 (February 2011): 68.
- <sup>34</sup> See GAM website <http://www.ammancity.gov.jo/en/gam/about.asp>.
- <sup>35</sup> Maffi, Irene. "The Emergence of Cultural Heritage in Jordan: The Itinerary of a Colonial Invention." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 9, no. 1 (February 1, 2009): 12.
- <sup>36</sup> Neveu, N. "Islamic Tourism as an Ideological Construction: A Jordan Study Case." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 8, no. 4 (2010): 332.
- <sup>37</sup> Hazbun, Waleed. *Beaches, Ruins, Resorts: The Politics of Tourism in the Arab World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> This quote is from a brochure published by the Jordan Tourism Board, 1995.
- <sup>39</sup> Orbasli, Aylin. "The 'Islamic' City and Tourism: Managing Conservation and Tourism in Traditional Neighborhoods." In *Tourism in the Middle East: Continuity, Change and Transformation*, edited by Rami Daher. Buffalo: Channel View Publications, 2007: 177.
- <sup>40</sup> Jacobs, Jessica, "Re-branding the Levant: Contested Heritage and Colonial Modernities in Amman and Damascus," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 8, no. 4 (2010): 325.
- <sup>41</sup> Abu-Dayyeh, Nabil, and Firas Ziadat. "GIS for Understanding Physical and Social Change in Urban Settings: A Case from Amman, Jordan." *Environment & Planning B: Planning & Design* 32, no. 1 (2005): 138.
- <sup>42</sup> TURATH Profile. See <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Turath-Architecture-Urban-Design-Consultants/229729897088468>.
- <sup>43</sup> This project was completed 2007-2008.
- <sup>44</sup> Abu Bakr AlSadiq was a prominent Caliph during the Umayyad period.
- <sup>45</sup> See the Jabal Amman Walking Trail written by Jennifer Marsh. Contact JARA Center.
- <sup>46</sup> The following description is a combination of experiences and observations on Rainbow Street January-August 2012. I walked from First Circle to Rainbow Street several times each week. I present different images of Rainbow Street on a summer evening, in order to provide a greater sense of the activity that occurs on the street.
- <sup>47</sup> The designer of Rainbow Street, Rami Daher, explained his disapproval of cafes that have extended their seating areas onto the public sidewalk, minimizing the

sidewalk space for the pedestrian, an important aspect of the Rainbow Street project.

<sup>48</sup> Omar Ben al Khattab Street is named after the prominent Umayyad Caliph (579-644 CE).

<sup>49</sup> See Brink-Danan, Marcy, "Dangerous Cosmopolitanism: Erasing Difference in Istanbul." *Anthropological Quarterly* 84, no. 2 (2011): 439-473. de Koning, Anouk. *Global dreams : Class, Gender, and Public Space in Cosmopolitan Cairo*, (New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2009). Meijer, Roel. *Cosmopolitanism, identity and authenticity in the Middle East*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999. Peterson, Mark Allen. *Connected in Cairo: Growing up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. Seidman, Steven. "The Politics of Cosmopolitan Beirut: From the Stranger to the Other." *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 2 (2012): 3-36.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 43.

<sup>53</sup> Beal, E. Anne. "Real Jordanians Don't Decorate Like That! The Politics of Taste Among Amman's Elites." *City & Society* 12, no. 2 (2000): 67.

<sup>54</sup> Tobin 2012: Tobin, Sarah A. "Jordan's Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution." *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 1 (2012): 100.

<sup>55</sup> Schwedler, Jillian, "Amman Cosmopolitan: Spaces and Practices of Aspiration and Consumption," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30, no. 3 (2010): 551.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 559.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 548.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>61</sup> Elsheshtawy 2010. Elsheshtawy, Yasser, *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle*. Planning, History and Environment Series. (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Amireh, Omar. "Amman Experiencing Plazas and Parks: Adaptation of Users to Space or Space to Users." In *Amman: The City and Its Society*, edited by Seteney Khalid Shami and Jean Hannover. Beirut, Lebanon: Cermoc Press, 1996: 160.

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.aramram.com/episode/503>.

<sup>64</sup> See the *New York Times* articles about Rainbow Street: <http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/09/04/travel/20110904-surfacing-amman.html> or <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/24/world/middleeast/24amman.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

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

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>69</sup> <http://beamman.com/home/about-beamman>.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/Amman/info>.

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/HumansOfAmman/info>.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/AmmanBidhaAlwan?fref=ts>.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Shami, Seteny Khalid, "Re-Searching the City: Urban Space and Its Complexities." In *Amman: The City and Its Society*, edited by Seteny Khalid Shami and Jean Hannoyer. Beirut, Lebanon: Cermoc Press, 1996:43.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.beamman.com/on-the-street/places--/351-bring-back-the-benches>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.beamman.com/on-the-street/places--/351-bring-back-the-benches>

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### **OLUWAKEMI ALADESUYI AROGUNDADE**

Oluwakemi Aladesuyi has enjoyed the past 4 years she has spent at Washington University. Her major in International Studies, with a concentration in development, has given her an opportunity to understand more about the world at large through the perspective of global political economy. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, Oluwakemi has also enjoyed the opportunity to explore how people respond to changing societies and class dynamics through the music and politics of Fela Anikulapo Kuti. She hopes to move forward in her current academic interest about the (re)-imagination of identities through relations shaped by capital-labor migration. Cities are a current lens of interest to her where so many of these issues come to head. With an ardent passion for social justice issues and human rights, Oluwakemi plans on pursuing her studies further in order to provide a better context for international policy.



### **YASMIN BOAKYE**

Yasmin Boakye is a senior from Mitchellville, Maryland, majoring in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies with minors in Anthropology and Writing. Academically, she is interested in using ethnographic methodologies to explore the intersections between race, gender, and sexuality in the United States and abroad. Her Mellon project considers the way the media and gendered social spaces affect understandings of contraceptive use held by university students in Kumasi, Ghana. Post-graduation, she will spend a year in the United Arab Emirates as a Global Academic Fellow in Writing at NYU Abu Dhabi. Following her year abroad, Yasmin hopes to pursue a graduate degree in Anthropology or American Studies.



### **JOELLE JULIEN**

Joelle Julien is a senior, majoring in Educational Studies and Anthropology. Her project on the Haitian diaspora in St. Louis was inspired by her Haitian background and her curiosity about the disparate experiences of being Haitian in America. Her academic interests include diaspora studies and collective memory, both of which are touched on in her research. This project has allowed her to transform personal interests into academic pursuits and has also afforded her the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time in Haiti over the past two years. Upon graduation she will be moving to Haiti where she will use her background in Haiti and theories of education in a teaching position at the Matènwa Community Learning Center in La Gonave, Haiti.



### **SOPHIA BLEA NUÑEZ**

Sophia Blea Nuñez is a double-major in the Interdisciplinary Project in the Humanities and Spanish, with a minor in Physics. She became interested in the Hispanic world because of her family heritage and in library history after taking a course on Golden Age Spanish literature, as a way to study the convergence of literary, political, and cultural histories in one site. At Washington University, she has found kindred spirits, critical readers, and encouraging companions in the passionate and curious communities of the Annika Rodriguez Scholars Program, IPH, and of course Mellon. Next year, she will continue to study Early Modern Spanish literature, history, culture, and libraries as a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures at the Princeton University.



### **JESSICA PAGE**

Jessica Page is a senior from Claremont, California majoring in Arabic and International & Area Studies, focusing on the Middle East. Her academic interests include Arabic literature, urban anthropology, and socio-political movements in the Arab world. Her Mellon project is based in Amman, Jordan, where she spent a total of nine months studying Arabic and conducting research. Post-graduation, she will continue her Arabic studies by spending a summer in Ibbi, Oman studying Arabic with the Critical Language Scholarship program and a year in Doha, Qatar with Georgetown University's Qatar Scholarship program. After spending a year abroad, she will return to the United States to pursue a graduate degree in anthropology.