

**THE  
UNDERGRADUATE  
HISTORICAL AND  
CRITICAL RACE &  
ETHNIC STUDIES  
JOURNAL**

*At UC Merced*

Volume 6 • Number 2 • 2020

*The Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies  
Journal*

*At the University of California, Merced*

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## Letter from the Editor in Chief

It is with great pleasure that I present the first issue of the *Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal at UC Merced*, as a continuation of the sixth volume of the *Undergraduate Historical Journal at UC Merced*. As a reflection of our joint department's commitment to urgent questions of race, class, and gender in the past and present, this issue stands as a testament to the benefits of collaboration from students across disciplines and UC campuses.

As we entered this semester, no one anticipated the unprecedented events that would shake us to our core. In just its first few months, 2020 has brought to the forefront critical questions of empire, democracy, public health, and state surveillance; questions that scholars of History, Critical Race Theory, and Ethnic Studies grapple with daily. In the articles that follow, each author had to edit their work amidst these uncertainties, with a keen eye to how they could contribute to new understandings. The issue opens with two book reviews, each dealing with exigent issues of race, state, and power. I review Maile Arvin's *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania*, which asks questions about the role of social science in furthering American Empire and white supremacy. Next, Madelyn Lara reviews *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* by Monica Muñoz Martinez, highlighting Martinez's interrogation of state-sanctioned violence and community memory in Texas. These are followed by three articles spanning the Mexican-American border in the early 1900s, the cinema of Shanghai in the 1920s, and literature in 1990s and 2000s California. Thomas Paniagua follows American reactions to the Mexican Revolution and German strategy in World War I to show how the US state justified a standing, peace-time army along its Southern border. Next, in an examination of cultural forms, space, and modernity, Parker J. Bovée demonstrates emerging societal conversations concerning gender roles and female agency fostered by theaters and film in early twentieth-century Shanghai. Omar González closes this issue by bringing the voices of racially marginalized authors to the forefront in an interrogation of multiculturalism and California's claims of diversity through California Literature from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

I cannot stress enough how faithfully the editorial staff worked to make this issue possible. Despite virtual meetings, spotty Wi-Fi, and the pressures of remote learning, each and every editor made time to adjust passive voice and fix footnotes and I am forever grateful. This semester's board was staffed by Oshree Barak, Omar González, Madelyn Lara, Darlene Medrano, Kevin Ng, Thomas Paniagua, Jeremy Ternate Paguibitan, Yohel Salas, Ariell Wright, and Guadalupe Vazquez. Thank you all for the hard work and dedication you put into this edition. I would also like to thank the head of the Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Major at UC Merced, Assistant Professor Ma Vang, for her guidance through our name change. Finally, on behalf of the entire board, I would like to thank Assistant Professor Romina Robles Ruvalcaba

for advising the journal and offering support throughout this stressful semester. Leading the journal in my final semester at UC Merced has not been without challenges, yet I could not be prouder of the result. And so, I now present this edition of the journal for your enjoyment.

Sarah Lee  
Editor in Chief

## Faculty Forward

With great enthusiasm, I have the honor to present to you the Spring 2020 issue of the UC Merced based *Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal*. We are moving almost into our eighth year of great sharing and collaboration that promotes the best research among undergraduates. We have broadened the base for accepting submissions by welcoming Critical Race & Ethnic Studies students whose work has been guided by amazing scholars, including Professors Ma Vang, Kit Myers, and Sapana Doshi. The incorporation of CRES is a natural one for the kind of historical approaches the *Journal* has always taken: One that is interdisciplinary, innovative, and critical. Our *Journal* has always taken pride in presenting analyses that incorporate a diverse set of voices expressing forms of knowledge intertwined with experiences of struggle, resistance, and contestation. We are therefore proud to strengthen this mission and welcome students whose work contributes to this vision to consider submitting their work to the *Journal*.

The editorial team has worked diligently to bring to life the Spring 2020 issue despite enormous challenges and these very difficult times. Nothing demonstrates the beauty of the life of the mind than when it can find continuity and voice in the midst of chaotic circumstances. In this sense, we present three wonderful articles that critically examine power, gender, and race: Thomas Paniagua's "Preventing the American Front: A Transnational Examination of the U.S. Border Patrol, 1908-1924," Parker J. Bovée's "Shifting Gender Norms Through Cinema: Physical Spaces and Cultural Ideals of 1920s Shanghai Cinema," and Omar González's "Diversity for Whom? Interrogating California's Racial Diversity Through California Literature." We also present two book reviews that seek to explore analyses that have pushed forward key points of conversation and discussion: Sarah Lee's critique of Maile Arvin's *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania* and Madelyn Lara's critique of *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the members of our editorial team for doing such an amazing work in bringing this issue to life: Oshree Barak, Omar González, Madelyn Lara, Darlene Medrano, Kevin Ng, Thomas Paniagua, Jeremy Ternate Paguibitan, Yohel Salas, Ariell Wright, and Guadalupe Vazquez. In particular, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to Sarah Lee for her tireless commitment to the *Journal* and to the enormous generosity she demonstrates towards her peers. Her leadership and vocation stand as a model for the kind of scholarship and camaraderie that we should all strive for in the good times but especially the trying times.

Romina Robles Ruvalcaba, PhD  
Latin American History



***Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania***  
**By Maile Arvin. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).**

Beginning with late-nineteenth century American intervention in the Kingdom of Hawai'i as a settler state and moving through the persistent coloniality of Hawaiian statehood, social scientists, anthropologists, and the US state developed a keen interest in the origins of Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian peoples. In *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania*, historian Maile Arvin grapples with this ongoing fascination by white Americans and Europeans with the question: *what is a Polynesian?* in an attempt to interrogate how representations of Polynesian culture are omnipresent in American life while the Polynesian individual is decidedly absent.<sup>1</sup> Using an interdisciplinary approach, she argues that through the knowledge produced by social science about Polynesians as a race, whites have defined an origin for the Polynesian people that both links them to and limits them from whiteness, allowing whites to claim and possess Polynesian indigeneity. By claiming Polynesian identity as 'almost' white in this way, social scientists and the American state both undergird settler colonial claims on Polynesian land and answer overarching questions about Man to ameliorate anxieties about the security of whiteness.<sup>2</sup>

In Part I, "The Polynesian Problem: Scientific Production of the 'Almost White' Polynesian Race," Arvin examines the Western social scientific studies produced about the Polynesian race from the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries to demonstrate how settler colonial ideology framed a supposed connection to Polynesian-Aryan heritage, allowing

<sup>1</sup> Maile Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in Hawai'i and Oceania* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

white settlers to map themselves onto Polynesian time/space.<sup>3</sup> Chapter 1 uses Western studies of Polynesian origins from the 1830s to the 1930s to argue that European discourses connecting Polynesia to classical Western “civilizations” positioned Polynesian identity in a dialectical relationship with Melanesians that perpetuated antiblackness.<sup>4</sup> In Chapter 2, Arvin employs twentieth-century anthropology and eugenics problem literature concerning Polynesian origins, both by white and Polynesian social scientists, to argue that these works calcified a logic of racial purity that positioned Polynesian identity as both ‘almost white’ and ‘dying native,’ furthering the settler colonial ideology of possession through whiteness. In addition, she points to these works as the beginnings of arbitrary logics of blood quantum, dividing Polynesian indigeneity into Pure and Part Hawaiian.<sup>5</sup> Chapter 3 examines the generation of the hybrid “Hawaiian” girl of the mid-twentieth century, arguing that the hula girl image stems not from the tourist industry, but from social scientific discourses of Hawai’i as a racial melting pot.<sup>6</sup>

Part II, “Regenerative Refusals: Confronting Contemporary Legacies of the Polynesian Problems in Hawai’i and Oceania,” shifts to an indigenous feminist framework to argue that Native Hawaiians and Polynesians still grapple with the discourses of racial purity and mixture in their challenges with and against the American settler state.<sup>7</sup> As a call to action, she posits the concept of regenerative refusals, where Indigenous communities dynamically challenge settler colonialism through restoring pre-colonial connections to people and land and constantly questioning “state-recognized forms of authenticity.”<sup>8</sup> Chapter 4 turns to two public debates of Native Hawaiian membership, arguing that Polynesian individuals have used regenerative

<sup>3</sup> Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

refusals in different ways, some working through and by the settler state, while others protesting through and by Indigenous voices, solidarity, and dissent.<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 5, Arvin examines contemporary attempts to catalogue Polynesian DNA and the revived interest in Polynesian origins, arguing the importance of understanding the logic of possession through whiteness as it still operates through Western science's attempts to move toward the post-racial.<sup>10</sup> Chapter 6 uses Indigenous Pacific art to argue that subverting notions of indigenous authenticity through representation reveals important strategies for imagining Indigenous futures and regeneration away from the settler state.<sup>11</sup>

Arvin's work presents new opportunities for interrogating whiteness and the settler state in ways that disrupt, rather than sustain, the power of empire and white supremacy. Oftentimes, works seeking to deconstruct the shifting boundaries of whiteness unintentionally center the discussion around white supremacy as a forgone conclusion. Arvin resists this fallacy through her integration of Indigenous voices, who echo the haunting logic of possession through whiteness, particularly in questions of federal recognition. In a nuanced and gentle reminder that power can work through the oppressed, Arvin challenges historians of settler colonialism and race to move beyond a linear narrative of discourse to empire. Instead, she demonstrates how to move towards a narrative with dynamism and scope, allowing space for our own refusal of looming inevitability and the regenerative potential lying in overlooked voices.

Sarah Lee<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*, 167.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 198–99.

<sup>12</sup> As an editor, the author recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

***The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas.***  
**By Monica Muñoz Martinez. (Harvard University Press, 2018).**

In the early twentieth century, Texas police, military, and vigilante groups participated in a concerted effort to harm and intimidate the Mexican population of Texas through acts of violence, including lynchings, burnings, shootings, and more. In her book, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, historian Monica Muñoz Martinez examines these acts of violence to circumvent active attempts to cover up documentation by state officials. Martinez highlights not just a long history of violence absent from the record, but also the ways that violence affected the individual and familial generations. Martinez argues that violence committed by the state of Texas worked to establish and enforce the relatively new border with Mexico by instilling fear in Mexican communities. Further, Martinez argues that because this time period is falsely remembered as a time of progress, collective memories and popular history should be reevaluated to address the true circumstances of anti-Mexican violence in Texas.<sup>1</sup>

Organizing the book into two parts, Martinez discusses examples of violence on individuals and groups targeted by state terrorism in chapters one through three, while focusing on the role state officials, (such as rangers and state representatives), played in that violence in chapters four through six. Chapter one details lynchings committed by Texas Rangers, examining both Mexican and American reactions to them in the media in order to argue that the memory of these lynchings still colors racial tensions in Texas today.<sup>2</sup> Chapter two describes how the events of Ranger violence against Mexicans led to both police and military forces increasing in number at the border, which Martinez argues led to a similar increase in the

<sup>1</sup> Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, (Harvard University Press, 2018), 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

number of incompetent and untrained officers.<sup>3</sup> In Chapter three, Martinez discusses the aftermath of a massacre committed by a vigilante group that escaped justice, arguing that, for the victims' families and community, actively remembering the unprosecuted killers became an act of generational resistance.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter four details the weak response to the state violence crisis in Texas, despite several investigations proving the extreme levels of attacks and corruption targeting Mexicans in the early twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> The lack of state acknowledgement of its failing police practices, Martinez argues, was an indication of the deep racism found in Texas government at the time.<sup>6</sup> In Chapter five, Martinez argues that photographic documentation of lynchings starting in the twentieth century, such as the distribution of photos and postcards depicting violence against Mexicans, (a lucrative business in the twentieth century), operated as a major terror tactic for Texas officials.<sup>7</sup> The sixth and final chapter in Martinez's book examines the false history celebrated in Texas today, where proclaiming Texas Rangers as heroes and patriots completely ignores the long history of racism and violence in the state.<sup>8</sup>

In proving her thesis, Martinez cites specific examples of anti-Mexican violence and details the response by both whites and Mexicans in Texas. While Martinez employs some extant archival sources from the early twentieth century, she strategically navigates the lack of a full documentary record through oral histories—giving voice to the living memories of Texas Ranger terrorism. Not only does her work deftly prove the persistence of state-sanctioned racial terrorism, but beyond that, it employs storytelling in such a way that readers viscerally *feel* the

<sup>3</sup> Martinez, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 274.

pain of the individuals and families who experienced the everyday violence of living in Texas while Mexican. In the end, Martinez relates her research in an easy to follow and incredibly engaging way, making her vital story an interest to both an academic audience and anyone interested in a deeper understanding of Mexican-American history.

Madelyn Lara<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> As an editor, the author recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

**Preventing the American Front: A Transnational Examination of the U.S. Border Patrol,  
1908-1924**

By: Thomas Paniagua<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction**

In a discussion of the relationship between war, force, and legitimizing power, French philosopher Michel Foucault argues that “The role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals.”<sup>2</sup> This supports Foucault’s proposition that politics is a continuation of war by other means, as the formation of government institutions continues the use of force from wartime during peacetime. In the context of the formation of the United States Border Patrol, the continued racialized policing of immigration on the Mexican-American border, as this paper will explain, acts as the continuation of wartime politics.

Currently, the U.S. Border Patrol continues to set record numbers for the amount of detained and deported undocumented immigrants. This paper will examine the formation of the U.S. Border Patrol and its maturation into the massive militarized, use of force in American politics, stemming from national security concerns during the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution and World War I. These national security concerns that troubled the U.S. government enough to form an institutionalized, peace time force are directly tied to the possibility of lost economic profit. The corporate power of American investors influenced government policies and led to the creation of agencies to protect profit. Profit contributes to a country’s economic growth and protects against economic decline, incentivizing the government to protect profit and assist

<sup>1</sup> As an editor, the author recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, Michel, and François Ewald. " *Society Must Be Defended*": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. Vol. 1. Macmillan, 2003 Page 15-16.

in the expansion of possible markets. Countries in conflict often rely on foreign assistance for aid to keep soldiers and civilians fed and supplied. In exchange when the conflict ends, the newly war-free country gives those investors a positive return. These war-free countries also typically allow those foreign investors to continue operating in their countries, allowing the entry of newer markets. This paper will explore the lead up to the creation of the U.S. Border Patrol as an institutional and material force, operating through racialized policing in service of American investors and profit protection.

The U.S. Border Patrol was formally established in 1924, however, this is only the institutionalization and legitimization of a system that stemmed from the Mexican Revolution and World War I. The security threat along the Mexican-American border during World War I created a panoptic structure that polices immigrants in service of the economic interests of the United States.<sup>3</sup> The national security threat that the Mexican Revolution imposed due to the threat of possible lost profit, led to the institutionalization of militarized policing of the Mexican American border. World War I, a global conflict that lasted from 1914 until 1918 pitted the Center Powers against the Allied Forces, occurred during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1919). The creation of a space that policed immigrants became a watchtower to view Mexico to prevent German, and Central Power intervention during the First World War that American investors believed threatened their possible profit. The United States attempted to prevent German influence during the Mexican Revolution and World War I, by heavily policing and intervening during the Mexican Revolution through institutionalized, racialized policing, contributing to the formation of the Border Patrol. This paper argues that a combination of racialized policing and

<sup>3</sup>A panopticon is a type of institutionalized building and system of control designed by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. Michel Foucault uses the panopticon as a metaphor for the modern, disciplined society in his book *Discipline and Punish*, best used for the understanding of the mechanism of power. Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

German interference is responsible for the formation, militarization, and Anti-Mexican institution of the Border Patrol.

### **Historical Context**

In the beginning of the twentieth century, American investors profited from the monopolization of Mexican industries like agricultural, railroad, and mining, that led to the creation of company towns.<sup>4</sup> These company towns exploited the peasant and indigenous population by forcing them to live in near feudalistic conditions.<sup>5</sup> The creation of these company towns, and the mass monopolization of these industries extracted profit for American investors. Mexico subjected itself to these foreign investors under the authority of Porfirio Díaz, a Mexican general turned politician who ran the country from 1876 until 1910 serving seven consecutive terms as president. Díaz provided a stable government and opened Mexico to foreign investors to modernize the country, advocating for European immigration to “whiten” the population.<sup>6</sup> He hoped to achieve this whitening of the country by bringing wealthy Europeans into Mexico while simultaneously marginalizing the existing indigenous and mestizo populations. Indigenous populations who protested or rebelled against mistreatment by Díaz’s regime suffered arrest and were sold to Cuba.<sup>7</sup> Díaz’s authoritarianism also terrorized the working class through arbitrary arrests, executions, and exile by actively supporting the exploitations that kept them in abject poverty. When combined, these oppressions led to revolution. Díaz crushed revolutionary sentiment and criticism through heavy policing in order to keep American investors interested in Mexican industries.

<sup>4</sup> Company towns are places where all stores, schools, hospitals, places of worship and housing are owned and controlled by one company or employer, often paying their workers in currency that would be worthless outside of area, making it impossible for workers to move.

<sup>5</sup> Becker, Marc, *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolution*. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2017), 37-41

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-41.

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

The outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 created revolutionaries that faced racial and authoritarian violence from both the governments of Mexico and the United States. Díaz had been so successful in censoring and terrorizing the working population that company owners operating in Mexico saw “no signs” of revolution before the official outbreak.<sup>8</sup> The self-censorship of the working class led many revolutionaries to migrate to the United States to flee the Díaz regime’s brutal crackdown. Complicating matters, as depicted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* the majority of educated Americans believed “bandits” and “criminals” were responsible for the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, further criminalizing revolutionary thoughts in the American imagination.<sup>9</sup> American officials labeled Mexican rebels as “ignorant Cholos,” reflecting their perception of the revolutionaries as foolish and uneducated for rebelling against the beneficial Díaz regime.<sup>10</sup> The profit of American investors became an unquestionable benefit, and the authoritarianism and exploitation was dismissed, with the American press positioning revolutionaries as emotional children who irrationally lashed out at Díaz.<sup>11</sup> This shared ideology between the United States and the Mexican government promoted racial violence that criminalized brown skinned revolutionaries. This criminalization led to the first deportation of “enemies” by private detective agencies, likely to face capital punishment when they returned to the sovereignty of Díaz.<sup>12</sup> The Díaz regime created a refugee workforce of

<sup>8</sup> “MEXICAN REVOLUTION A JOKE, SAYS THOMSEN: SEATTLE CAPITALIST RETURNS FROM THE LAND OF DIAZ AND DECLARES THAT BANDITS CAUSED THE ROW,” January 12, 1911, *San Francisco Chronicle*, California Digital Newspaper Collection (Hereafter CDNC).

<sup>9</sup> “RED LEADERS RECRUIT HERE: SEND MANY IGNORANT CHOLOS DOWN TO MEXICO; THREE HUNDRED REPORTED ON THEIR WAY NOW; REVOLUTION IS DEAD, BUT THE ANARCHISTS PERSIST,” November 27, 1910, *Los Angeles Times*, (1886-1922), CDNC.

<sup>10</sup> “HOW WE PULL DIAZ’S CHESTNUTS OUT OF THE FIRE: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ACT AS AGENTS OF MEXICO, AND EVEN KIDNAP LIBERALS TO AID DIAZ’S POLITICAL FORTUNES.” August 7, 1910, *New York Times*, (1857-1922), CDNC.

<sup>11</sup> “RED LEADERS RECRUIT HERE: SEND MANY IGNORANT CHOLOS DOWN TO MEXICO; THREE HUNDRED REPORTED ON THEIR WAY NOW; REVOLUTION IS DEAD, BUT THE ANARCHISTS PERSIST.” November 27, 1910, *Los Angeles Time*, (1886-1922), CDNC.

<sup>12</sup> “RED LEADERS RECRUIT HERE.”

Mexican revolutionaries, who most likely had negative feelings toward the U.S. for their support of Diaz, that diversified American workplaces. With an ingrained paranoia of possible revolutionary sympathizers led to the racial purification of the workforce that targeted Mexican workers, which would later become a formal institutionalized function of the Border Patrol targeting Mexican workers for deportation.<sup>13</sup>

The outbreak of World War I and the German threat to the United States became a turning point that would formally institutionalize the Border Patrol. American investors shifted their focus away from Mexico and focused more on war profiteering from the carnage of World War I. American investors from 1914 until 1917 lent over 2 billion dollars to the Allied forces, despite the country being officially neutral until 1917. These investments incentivized the United States support of an Allied victory. The massive economic support quickly resupplied Allied troops in the European theater, driving the Central Powers' need to disrupt this aid to harm the Allied Forces. The German threat was Germany's active attempt of disrupting U.S. efforts of resupplying Europe, using unrestricted submarine warfare to prevent supplies from reaching Europe, and establishing a Mexican government that was friendly to the Central Powers. Any Mexican government formed due to the support of Germany would most likely have been friendly to the Central Powers, it became Germany's mission to influence the outcome of the Mexican revolution. Mexico also declared neutrality during the outbreak of the First World War, however the Mexican government maintained a close relationship with Germany. Mexican officials allowed German businesses and officials to continue their operations within the country during World War I. With German officials allowed to travel freely, they threatened U.S.

<sup>13</sup> Hernández, Kelly Lytle. *Migra!: A history of the US border patrol*. (University of California Press, 2010).

economic growth and security by convincing Mexican revolutionaries to harass the United States by creating a new American front.

Bringing the destruction of World War I to the American homeland disrupted the United States' economic prosperity, namely by preventing it from providing goods or services to the Allied Forces. Opening an American front would lead the United States to prioritize conflicts closer to its southern border, leaving the Allied Forces with less aid. Before entering the First World War, the United States enjoyed the economic benefit of assisting the Allied Forces from a safe distance that prevented the likelihood of invasion. The creation of an American Front would have endangered the economic profit and physical safety of the United States. It is from this desire to prevent German influence and establish a Mexican government willing to protect American economic interests that led to the militarization of the border and the creation of the Border Patrol.

Language used to describe Mexicans fleeing the conflict as enemies to wage war against the U.S. is still present in the U.S. Border Patrol histories to date. For example, the Texas Rangers is noted by the Border Patrol as “the first immigration Border Patrolman [*sic*],” as occasionally during the 1910s patrolled the entire Mexican-American border for the movement of suspected “enemies”.<sup>14</sup> Formally founded in 1835 as a call-to-arms group that patrolled the border and officially disbanded during the post-Civil War Reconstruction, the Texas Rangers claimed to maintain law and order during the Mexican Revolution. Hundreds of new special Texas Rangers appointed by the State worked with American soldiers to patrol the entire Southern Border. At the border, obscure and nebulous definitions of their power allowed the Texas Rangers to police the region through arbitrary arrests, suspending court proceedings, and

<sup>14</sup> “Border Patrol History,” U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Accessed December 14, 2019,

sentencing many to death, if not outright lynching them on sight.<sup>15</sup> For example, the Canales investigation, a 1919 legislative hearing to “investigate the activities and necessity for a continuance of the force,” reviewed the criminal activities committed by the Texas Rangers. The investigation uncovered that around 300 to 5,000 people, mainly Hispanic, had been unjustly killed by Rangers from 1910 to 1919.<sup>16</sup> This revealed the racial profiling and ethnically motivated violence against Mexicans from Texas Rangers.

The Canales investigation was not an isolated incident of Anti-Mexican violence perpetrated by the Texas Rangers. In 1918 in the town of Porvenir, Texas Rangers unlawfully searched the homes of villagers suspected of committing border raids, illegally confiscating two weapons and detaining three Hispanic men. The Texas Rangers later physically separated the Mexican men from their families, and then ten Rangers, eight U. S. Army Cavalry, and four local Anglo-American ranchers massacred those fifteen Mexican men.<sup>17</sup> The remaining Mexican villagers fled back to Mexico and settled in Pilares, Chihuahua where they buried the dead.<sup>18</sup> The U.S. Border Patrol would learn from the Texas Rangers, using their pervasive power to illegal search and confiscate private property. The Border Patrol today also uses physical force in order to separate people from their families and community. This also contributes to the obscure power of the Border Patrol through suspicion, as “power should be visible and invisible.” The fact that anything could be considered suspicious for the U.S. Border Patrol is a testament to the obscure

<sup>15</sup> Martinez, Monica Muñoz, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas*, (Harvard University Press, 2018), 30-170.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Houston Harris and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920*. (University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 435.

<sup>17</sup> Francisco Arturo Rosales, *Testimonio: A Documentary History of the Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights*, (Arte Público Press, 2000), 71-72.

<sup>18</sup> Tom Dart, “Life and Death on the Border: Effects of Century-Old Murders Still Felt in Texas,” January 22, 2016, *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media.

nature of their power.<sup>19</sup> Brown bodies are not aware of what actions render them suspicious, though the Border Patrol has full authority to use that power of suspicion in the execution of their duties.

Despite the special Texas Rangers disbanding in 1919, the policing apparatus provided the foundation for the Border Patrol. The United States portrayed the Texas Rangers as noble heroes, systematically upholding the violence the Texas Rangers performed through discourses of gallant men fighting against the savagery of Mexican residents and refugees. Military intervention from the United States would not only police the movement of Mexicans but would also be the force that would respond to any German threats. The Mexican Revolution replaced the direct violence of the Texas Rangers with the systemic violence of a standing army on the Southern border. With the historical context of the Mexican Revolution, World War I, and the Texas Rangers established, I will review relevant literature that influenced the creation of this paper.

### **Literature Review**

The historical literature on the construction of the border as a place for policing began with Friedrich Katz's book *The Secret War in Mexico*, which contextualizes the construction of the Mexican-American border with the outbreak of World War I. Katz's book relates to this paper by discussing German influence in Mexico and the United States' response of militarization the Southern border. As the United States maintained its isolationist policy, it had economically benefited from supporting the Allied Forces with aid. A great relationship between Mexico and Germany before and during the revolution, along with Mexico's neutrality, allowed German businesses to operate in the region. Katz argues that the military intervention of the

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

United States in the Mexican Revolution to prevent German from threatening America became a secret war.<sup>20</sup> This work leaves off and does not build upon the United States' militarization of the border that is racialized and later construct the Border Patrol, which this paper addresses.

The environmental history of natural barriers has shown that they can be used in the service of controlling immigration for the continued separation and alienation between the United States and Mexico. C.J. Alvarez's book *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction of the US-Mexico Divide* discusses the history of division between the United States and Mexico through construction projects. Alvarez dedicated a whole chapter to the Mexican Revolution, *The Border and the Mexican Revolution*, and its relation to construction projects that separated the two countries.<sup>21</sup> This chapter also leads into multiple other chapters that discuss the policing of waterways and rivers against Mexicans. Alvarez traces the construction projects that creates physical and national barriers that serve as surveillance infrastructure for police that control the idea of immigration. Alvarez argues that policing the Southern border controls immigrations by alienating both countries from each other.<sup>22</sup> This paper takes this idea of surveillance infrastructure and barriers combined with Michel Foucault's idea of a panopticon.

A key tenant of a Panopticon is the institutionalization of violence, an examination of the institutionalized racial violence of pre-border patrol tactics is important in understanding how violence is legitimized. Monica Muñoz Martinez's *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* discusses social memory and the racialized violence of Texas

<sup>20</sup> Friedrich, Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution*, (University of Chicago Press, 1981),

<sup>21</sup> C. J. Alvarez, *Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the US-Mexico Divide*, (University of Texas Press, 2019), 53-94.

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

Rangers on Mexican refugees during the Mexican Revolution. During their patrols of the southern border, Texas Rangers were guilty of promoting a violent agenda against Mexicans, committing countless human rights offenses, such as carrying out mass executions, unwarranted arrests, murders, and sentencing Mexicans accused of crimes to lynching without trial. Martinez argues that the perception of ‘noble’ Texas Rangers as a force that upheld civilization against savagery is largely due to the discrimination of Mexicans.<sup>23</sup> However, my research will examine the actions of the Texas Rangers and their racialized policing and association with the military also on patrol along the Southern border that become institutionalized in the Border Patrol.

The Anti-Mexican politics that continues the United States’ war against brown immigrates after World War I and using brown bodies in the institutionalization of the Southern border. Kelly Lytle Hernández’s book *Migra! A History of the US border Patrol* at first seems to be out of place, as it discusses a fully formed Border Patrol that operated during the 1930s and 1940s. However, it shows a direct connection of the racialized policing from Texas Rangers and the Border Patrol. Hernández argues that the Border Patrol view themselves as guardians of immigrants, but in reality, target Mexican workers creating a racial purification in the American workforce. With the authority to abstractly arrest workers and abstract use of violence that had military capabilities. During World War II the Border Patrol had transformed and expanded its personnel.<sup>24</sup> I intend to show a pattern of militarization along the Southern border, brought on by the fears of war and continuing to this day, harms immigrants and American brown bodies. My paper will make that connection of wartime politics that feared the loss of economic profit and increasingly racialized policing is responsible for the continuation of Border politics.

### **Argument**

<sup>23</sup> Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*.

<sup>24</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*.

The Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz created an authoritarian government that encouraged foreign investment, which resulted in the mass monopolization of Mexican industries by Americans and prompted the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. The collapse of Díaz's regime created a power vacuum that had various revolutionary factions fighting to fill the void.<sup>25</sup> The intense multi-factional fighting created a massive refugee crisis, with Mexicans fleeing to the United States to escape violence. The United States reacted to this immigration crisis with a military occupation of the Southern border, with troops like the Eighteenth Infantry and Fourth Calvary, being sent "to prevent Mexicans from passing to and fro" in 1912.<sup>26</sup> The fear of revolutionary violence spilling over into the United States and threatening the profits made from the Díaz regime and the pre-World War I Allied forces justified the use of military personnel as a type of pre-border patrol.

Despite the United States' official neutrality, it held a beneficial economic position of isolation from the direct fighting taking place in Europe while also being able to support the British with aid. The Central Powers, especially Germany, saw the Mexican Revolution as an opportunity to disrupt American aid. Germany interfered in the Mexican Revolution, supporting both revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries with the hope of creating an American front. The prevention of German involvement and protection of American profits during the Mexican Revolution became the guiding light for American intervention during the First World War. Despite the negativity the United States later faced during its various interventions in the Mexican Revolution, the various images of "ignorant Cholos" reinforced the notion that

<sup>25</sup> Marc Becker, *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2017), 35-41.

<sup>26</sup> "MEXICAN WAR NOW NEAR THE BORDER: FEDERALS AND REBELS CLASH AT POINT JUST SOUTH OF BOUNDARY," May 21, 1912, *San Francisco Chronicle*, CDNC.

Mexicans were unable to provide a stable government.<sup>27</sup> A weak Mexican government would be unable to dissuade German influence and serve U.S. interests. As a result, the byproduct of the United States' prevention and protection of profits was the intensification of anti-Mexican sentiment.

The United States' intervention in Mexico began with General Victoriano Huerta and his counter-revolutionaries encouraging German intervention. Huerta, a military officer who served under Díaz, had grown frustrated by the infighting between radical revolutionaries and simply wanted to return to the days of Díaz. This also meant the restoration of previous established relationships with foreign powers like Germany. The Germans supported Huerta's military coup by providing weapons and aid to Huerta's forces. The United States in order to prevent German interference, sent troops to Veracruz to prevent weapons from reaching the counter-revolutionaries in 1915. After Huerta's defeat by rebel forces, he fled to the United States, where he quickly began working on rebuilding his forces and armory. Despite revolutionary forces demanding the extradition of Huerta, the United States believed itself better able to punish Huerta.<sup>28</sup> This choice stemmed from the American state's belief that Mexicans were unable to handle domestic issues and create stable law and order, and therefore needed the United States. Later Huerta would be arrested under charges of conspiracy, as he attempted to negotiate with German spies in hopes of inviting the German Navy into Mexico.<sup>29</sup> Huerta, kept in a U.S. prison until his death in 1916 never faced justice in a Mexican court.

<sup>27</sup> "RED LEADERS RECRUIT HERE."

<sup>28</sup> "EXTRADITION IS DEMANDED: HUERTA ACCUSED OF MADERO ASSASSINATION; CHARGES FILED WITH UNITED STATES DECLARE FORMER PRESIDENT WITH FELIX DIAZ AND OTHERS ARE GUILTY OF MURDER AND THEIR RETURN TO MEXICO IS ASKED," July 4, 1915, *Los Angeles Times*, CDNC.

<sup>29</sup> "OROZCO'S PLOT RECALLED: MEXICAN ONCE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN HIRED TO GERMANY TO START BACKFIRE REVOLUTION," December 7, 1925, *Los Angeles Times*, CDNC.

Other revolutionary figures like Pancho Villa had the support of the United States until his involvement with Germany. Pancho Villa, a Mexican revolutionary general and provisional governor of the northern Mexican state of Chihuahua, had taken up arms against Díaz and Huerta. Villa had constantly fought against counter-revolutionaries and provided funding for the Mexican Revolution. The relationship between Villa and the United States became so severely damaged, due to German involvement, that it led to a U.S. invasion. This U.S. “expedition” meant to capture Villa but would also contribute to the creation of the Border Patrol by militarizing the Mexican-American border, providing an easier staging area for invasion or counterattack from Mexican Revolutionaries.

The U.S. justification of the militarization of the Mexican-American border came with Villa’s infamous 1916 Columbus raid. In an attempt to prevent Villa from possible creating an American front, a standby army patrolled the Southern border in case of invasion or in order to invade. The Mexican-American border had been subject to numerous raids by Pancho Villa, who sought supplies for the Mexican Revolution. However, the famous raid of the small border town of Columbus, New Mexico in 1916 differed because it resulted in a US ‘expedition’ into Mexico. A key difference between this Columbus raid and other border raids by Villa was Germany’s involvement. Germany had continuously offered Villa weapons and monetary aid to incentivize an invasion of the United States in the hopes of diminishing the supplies sent to the Allied Forces. The town of Columbus had nearly half a million dollars of German currency and documents that proved German contacts had placed the money in the bank. Villa’s closest advisors and representatives had personal ties to Germany and encouraged Villa to provoke the United States.<sup>30</sup> Germany hoped that by arranging the raid, Villa would feel obligated to commit

<sup>30</sup> Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico*, 280-187.

to an invasion of the United States. Villa's Columbus raid appeared to the United States as if Villa had finally taken Germany up on their continuous offers of invasion.<sup>31</sup> The United States sent an expedition to capture Villa and prevent further raids, an action that would inspire the creation of a militarized Border Patrol to make future interventions easier. The occupation force only left Mexico after the newly installed Mexican President Venustiano Carranza threatened to retaliate, which would have created the American front the U.S. so desperately wanted to avoid.

The only success the expedition had was strengthening anti-Mexican sentiment, as Pershing complained to his family that the President imposed too many restrictions that prevented him from his "intention of eating the Mexicans raw."<sup>32</sup> The desire of returning U.S. soldiers to destroy the 'enemy' strengthened their hatred felt towards Mexicans.<sup>33</sup> For example, some of these veterans assigned to patrol the border after their return expressed their frustration to soldiers that occupied the region.<sup>34</sup> Labelling Mexicans as enemies degrades them, as military training goes to great lengths to dehumanize the enemy. Soldiers often find it necessary to refer to their opponents as animals or somehow 'other,' as compassion towards the enemy makes it more difficult to carry out their duties. The military desensitizes their personnel, and when soldiers are denied the ability to destroy their enemy, that hatred may not have a release and can continue for many years.<sup>35</sup> After the Pershing expedition and World War I, the border was patrolled by unsatisfied military personnel, policing the movement of a once believed 'enemy.'

<sup>31</sup> James A. Sandos, "German Involvement in Northern Mexico, 1915-1916: A New Look at the Columbus Raid," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1970): 70.

<sup>32</sup> Kennedy Hickman, "Chasing Pancho Villa: The US Punitive Expedition." ThoughtCo. Accessed July 1, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth West, *Santa Fe: 400 Years, 400 Questions: Commemorating the 400th Anniversary of the Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1610*. (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2012), 147.

<sup>34</sup> West, *Santa Fe*, 147.

<sup>35</sup> David Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1996).

Similar events occurred during the fall of 1918, when German military advisers traveled to Mexico, with the intention of having Mexican federal soldiers transport weapons across the border and attack the small town of Nogales, Arizona. After the United States received information that German advisors had been sent down to Mexico to assist in the raid the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment intervened. The conflict killed an estimated 30 to 130 Mexican troops and resulted in the capture of the majority of the German advisors.<sup>36</sup> Similar to Villa's 'expedition,' the United States invaded Mexico to prevent further border raids from Mexican bandits. This institutional militarization of the Mexican American border, replaced the Texas Ranger's use of force, justifying any potential violence.

However, the Mexican Revolution would end, the border violence that justified militarization had ended but the institution remained, the Panoptic tower stands policing the border to secure U.S. investors. Carranza helped draft the 1917 Mexican Constitution, which typically marks the end of the Mexican Revolution, despite various factions continuing to fight against the newly established government. Fighting only eased after the assassination of the revolutionary figure Emiliano Zapata in 1919, after which the majority of the fighting ended the following year. The relatively stable Mexican government allowed the United States to establish the Border Patrol in 1924, four years after fighting from the Mexican Revolution had died down. The United States witnessed the fall of the Díaz regime, and despite the support given, could no longer trust any Mexican government. The Mexican Revolution provided an opportunity for Europeans to possibly interfere with American profits, and therefore, the reliability of the Mexican state to protect the border would always be in question. This laid the groundwork for the development of a regular standing army on the Mexican-American border. The scars and

<sup>36</sup> John H. Nankivell, and Quintard Taylor. *Buffalo Soldier Regiment: History of the Twenty-Fifth United States Infantry, 1869-1926*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 145.

memory of the Revolution became the foundation for the development of the Border Patrol, becoming the policy current members enforce. Essentially, the war and its troops never left the border, as the Border Patrol is one of the most militarized government units.

The United States eventually joined the First World War as Germany publicly threatened their profit by targeting American ships that delivered aid to the Allied Forces and by sending the Zimmerman Telegram. The Zimmerman Telegram was a secret diplomatic communication issued by the German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann in January 1917, proposing a military alliance between German and Mexico to attack the United States. The Zimmerman Telegram differed from Germany's previous interventions in the Mexican Revolution, by informing the Mexican government of the unrestricted submarine warfare ahead of time and promising "generous financial support and an understanding on [German's] part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona."<sup>37</sup> This provided public collaboration between the Mexican and German governments, solidifying the belief that Mexico was, in fact, an enemy. This stood as public confirmation of Mexico and Germany's collaboration, and along with Germany's use of Submarine warfare against American ships, justified America's entrance into the war as a threat to America's economic growth.

Labeling Mexicans as violent criminals has been a historical constant since the beginning of these conflicts, but an organization meant to police the movement of people crossing the border was the most recent result of this rhetoric. The rights of brown immigrants were worth nothing in comparison to the goal of protecting profits and American land. The Border Patrol, institutionalized after the Mexican Revolution and World War I, is the physical manifestation of anti-Mexican sentiment. Viewing Mexicans as a continuous threat just south of America's

<sup>37</sup> "Transcript of Zimmerman Telegram (1917)." *Our Documents*, National Archives & Records Administration,

border, the United States felt the need to police movement to prevent “terrorists” from entering.<sup>38</sup> This laid the seeds for the full policing potential of the U.S. Border Patrol, with current methods and tactics informed by past military actions along the border.

The full potential of the U.S. Border Patrol lay in the creation of a panoptic structure, that legitimized the policing power conducted by the Texas Rangers. The pervasive power of this panoptic structure allows the expansion of unlawful searches and seizure of private property, violating the rights of brown-skinned peoples. This legitimization of the Mexican-American border policing replaces the direct violence of Texas Rangers and military personnel to a more structural institutional system that can regulate the movement of brown bodies. The obscurity of the Border Patrol comes from the power to be “visible and invisible.”<sup>39</sup> The visibility of power allows Border Patrol personnel to use physical force the border under the excuse of suspicion. The invisibility of power transforms any action of immigrants into a suspicious action, because there is no clarity of what the Border Patrol will perceive as dangerous. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that reasonable suspicion, includes “such factors as the mode of dress and haircut,” which amounts to racial profiling, a testament to the obscure power of the Border Patrol.<sup>40</sup> The institutionalization of this power creates systematic violence, as immigration courts don’t provide legal representation and pressures judges to make rulings. The legal institutions have upheld and affirmed the actions of the Border Patrol as “Suspicious actions” allow the Border Patrol to legitimize and structure the suspension of rights and possible deportation.<sup>41</sup> This

<sup>38</sup> “Border Patrol Overview,” U.S, Customs and Border Protection,

<sup>39</sup> Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

<sup>40</sup> Kevin R. Johnson, "How Racial Profiling in America Became the Law of the Land: *United States v. Brignoni-Ponce* and *Whren v. United States* and the Need for Truly Rebellious Lawyering," (June 22, 2009), *Georgetown Law Journal*, UC Davis Legal Studies Research Paper No. 174, 1005.

<sup>41</sup> “Border Rights.” December 15, 2015, American Civil Liberties Union of Arizona,

structure has been for the protection of American profit that Mexican revolutionaries and European conflict threatened.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding border policing is important in contextualizing the foundational creation of the Border Patrol that is still operating and has the legal authority to continue its anti-Mexican harassment. The Border Zone is a 100-mile zone within every land or land port of the United States, covering around two-thirds of the population.<sup>42</sup> The United States established military like checkpoints along the Border Zone and racially decimates against brown skinned individuals. With the Border Zone the Border Patrol has the pervasive power of detainment, seizure of private property, and unwarranted vehicle searches, regardless of citizenship status. Refusing to cooperate or being unable to produce papers proving citizenship status results in detainment, despite no law requiring the carrying of citizenship status existing. The lack of typical American juridical practices and the abundance of martial infringements on rights along the Border Zone demonstrates the continuation of lessons learned through force during the early twentieth century, with devastating impact on Mexican and Mexican American individuals and communities.

The Mexican Revolution was a complex series of shifting alliances caused by the actions of Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz, who provided a stable government at the price of foreign investors monopolizing Mexican land. The United States and Díaz shared similar views concerning the dehumanization of non-white Mexicans, making an easy alliance to punish and police those individuals. Working with the United States, Díaz was able to punish critics and revolutionary figures. The removal of Díaz created a power vacuum that the United States feared

<sup>42</sup> “The Constitution in the 100-Mile Border Zone.” American Civil Liberties Union, June 21, 2018.

Germany would fill, thus Mexico became a potential staging area for the creation of American front during World War I. This resulted in the intensification of anti-Mexican sentiment, as the United States began a military occupation of the Mexican American border. The transition of Texas Rangers and police to military personnel in the creation of the Border Patrol shows the troops never really left the border, they simply changed uniforms.

In an attempt to prevent German influence in the Mexican Revolution, the United States had to institutionalize its anti-Mexican sentiment. Originally, anti-indigenous and anti-Mestizo policing for Diaz's approval strengthened the relationship between the two countries, as both had benefited from the involvement of each other. The United States monopolized Mexican industry and was able to extract resources from the region while also punishing Mexicans that crossed the border. After the outbreak of the First World War, the United States' view of Mexicans as idiotic and incapable of preventing German interference in the Revolution threatened the economic position of the United States. President Wilson felt it was the responsibility of the United States to prevent Germany from influencing the Revolution, disregarding the autonomy or Revolutionary process of the Mexicans.

The combination of military personnel and Texas Rangers policing the movements of brown bodies to prevent German interference in the border regions of the Southwest United States. This military style policing led to the formation of a Panoptic structure that is the U.S. Border Patrol. The United States' attempt to prevent German influence in Mexico to protect economic profit resulted in the fascistic foundations of the Border Patrol. The U.S. Mexican border became one of the heaviest militarized borders between two countries at peace.<sup>43</sup> The Border Patrol is fundamentally rooted in the anti-Mexican sentiment shared by various American

<sup>43</sup> "U.S.-Mexico border Militarization." American Friends Service Committee, November 20, 2017.

officials that conducted similar duties as the future Border Patrol. Border politics have been a continuation of an Anti-Mexican war, as Mexicans entering the United States are still perceived to be national security risk.

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# Shifting Gender Norms Through Cinema: Physical Spaces and Cultural Ideals of 1920s

## Shanghai Cinema

By Parker J. Bovée

### Modernizing on the City's Terms

By the 1920s, Shanghai had established its economic authority domestically and internationally and painted itself as a modern city. With increasingly influential economic connection to the West, Shanghai gained access to new goods associated with Western cultural modernity. While many of the city's residents refused outright acceptance of Western culture, some urban residents carefully adopted many of the aspects of Western cultural modernity, specifically through Shanghai's emerging cinema industry.<sup>1</sup> Largely originating from Western influence brought to the banks of the Bund, Shanghai's cinema followed a similar path to many other defining traits of the city with curators of Shanghai culture, be they directors, chefs, or actors, focusing on taking the novel, foreign influence of European and American styles and molding them to the tastes and themes of the city.<sup>2</sup> A subsection of the city's cinema industry, composed mostly of young and hopeful cultural idealists, sought to blend Western influence with their preexisting cinematic styles. Using film to portray the thoughts and ideas of Shanghai's residents, the city began to forge a definition of modernity through nurturing one of the more progressive and intellectually provoking communities on the Asian continent.<sup>3</sup> The movement and ideals cinema portrayed especially highlighted topics focused on gender, such as the plight

<sup>1</sup> Zhang, Zhen. *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen: Shanghai Cinema, 1896-1937*. (University of Chicago Press), 2005, x-xi.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai*. (Stanford University Press, 2013). 96.

<sup>3</sup> Modernity, as a nebulous term, manifests in numerous forms and definitions. Economically, Shanghai came to represent Western perceptions of a modernizing China developed under the intense influence of European and American authority. Modernity in this economic sense represented the shift from a mid-nineteenth century fishing village into the economic pearl of Europe's access to China. Bergère, Marie-Claire and Janet Lloyd. *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity*. (Stanford University Press, 2010). 242.

of women in society, new dimensions of public interaction, and a greater focus on the elevation of women beyond the traditional norms of conservative Chinese culture.<sup>4</sup> While many of these progressive themes were questioned by the city's older residents, the public spaces within Shanghai continued offering an opportunity for an open dialogue.<sup>5</sup> Amongst the city's parks, teahouses, and gardens, movie theaters and the films they showed stood in a uniquely separate class.

Films proliferated new and diverse messages across society, many advocating for abolition of social restrictions placed upon women, while the space of the cinema provided a new freedom from tradition and increased the feeling of individualism for women within the city. The film industry, and the spaces it provided, proved influential in developing the role of women as independent, powerful members of the new society Shanghai was becoming. This essay will develop the argument for the importance of Shanghai's film industry by focusing on two separate areas of analysis: first, how the physical spaces of theaters offered a break from traditional, gendered relationships and expectations and second, the cultural significance and impact on gendered norms of the films *The Abandoned Wife* by Hou Yao and *Red Heroine* by Wen Yimin, as well as the magazine *Liangyou*. I will discuss how the theater in Shanghai came to represent what film theorist Xuelei Huang calls "a unique public space of social intercourse," known above all else for its "social and sexual dynamics outside the more regimented and moralizing public world."<sup>6</sup> This analysis of the dynamics and traits of theaters that challenged traditional gendered norms will focus first on a story from the historic Paris Theater and women's increasingly equal influence over their social relationships.

<sup>4</sup> Yingjin Zhang, *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 334.

<sup>5</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*. x.

<sup>6</sup> Xuelei Huang, "Through the Looking Glass of Spatiality: Spatial Practice, Contact Relation and the Isis Theater in Shanghai, 1917-1937." *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2011), 1-33.

Shi Zhecun's "At the Paris Theater," a short work of fiction that takes place in Shanghai's historic Paris Theater, depicts a date-night outing shared between a married man and his mistress.<sup>7</sup> Though scrutinized and dissected countless times by scholars using commentaries focused on urban male lust and the rise of emboldened females in the dating scene, I wish to instead analyze this story's setting and how the theater as a social space affects the characters.<sup>8</sup> At the theater, the male suitor grows more and more frustrated with the seemingly unreadable enigma that is his mistress. He then reflects on the wedding ring he removed earlier just as his mistress springs back to her extroverted, emotional self. The story goes on with further signs of sexual tension and desire between the two before the mistress rejects his advances, yet offers him another date.<sup>9</sup> The narrative of the short work focuses on this social dynamic between the theater's spectators, demonstrating the potential for romantic, sexual, and emotional whiplash within the theater's space. The two individuals arrived to engage in socialization, where their focus remains throughout, not the passive consumption of film. In this way, the theater operated as a realm of flirtation and social engagement for its patrons, a phenomenon as significant as the content of Shanghai films.

Though fictional, Zhecun's short story offers an insightful view of gender dynamics within the theater itself. Violations of traditional Chinese behaviors were frequent among the younger generation of Shanghai, with the theater becoming a hub of sexual expression for couples.<sup>10</sup> As previously mentioned, with her ever changing emotions and unreadable nature, the mistress controlled the dynamics of the date, not to mention the future trajectory of the

<sup>7</sup> Shi Zhecun, "At the Paris Theater," in *One Rainy Evening* (Beijing: Panda/Chinese Literature Press, 1994). 38.

<sup>8</sup> Zhan., *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 75.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>10</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 73.

relationship. The social nature of the date represented Shanghai's departure from notions of filial piety across familial boundaries that were still deeply rooted outside the city. The mistress' role as leading the social engagement, apart from the influence of her older date and any elderly figure, speaks to a uniquely Shanghai experience. This demonstrates how the space of the cinema allowed for expressions of agency by women within the theater that might not be possible in other public spaces. The aspect of control over one's own romantic and emotional relationships was a new-found freedom beginning to open to women of economic mobility. While still limited to just these more urban, economically equipped women, the new social liberation associated with more open and equitable relationships began to alter women's expected social roles.<sup>11</sup> The theater served as a transformative, gendered space and a break from the restrictive society so often in conflict with the theater and the films shown therein.<sup>12</sup> As a public space, it openly displayed not just women's growing agency, but also burgeoning societal conversations concerning established hierarchies and the status quo. While Shanghai's more traditional population continued to critique novel sexual promiscuity, the city's progressive residents began to readily embrace their new definition of cultural modernity and the sexual and social liberties it entailed. Understanding the sociospatial nature of the theater and its gendered tensions, I now turn to an analysis of films shown during this time to analyze how cinema took up progressive themes in hopes of societal reformation.

### ***The Abandoned Wife and Red Heroine***

The physical space of the cinema provided a remarkable new avenue for redefining the sexual dynamics within the city, yet the messages disseminated through films also furthered this

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Zhang, *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, 122.

new social transition. The growth of Shanghai cinema's female patrons, coupled with a rising emphasis within films on themes of social inequality, promoted an increasingly supportive base for films pushing the boundary between art and social critique.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the two following case studies on Hou Yao's *The Abandoned Wife* and Wen Yimin's *Red Heroine*, two highly controversial films for their day that focused on promoting unconventional roles for women, will demonstrate how the boundary between art and social critique became blurred. These films also offer the chance to examine the social influence and impact of these creators' work on Shanghai society.

Hou Yao was a writer and director in the 1920s and 1930s, who largely broke from the still young, traditional style of Chinese and Shanghai cinema in his thematic exploration of realism and contemporary struggle.<sup>14</sup> Much of Hou Yao's work centered on the plight of urban women and their economic subjugation to a husband or male employer. Hou Yao sought to provide social commentary on the flaws within his society and, in the words of Chinese film scholar Yingjin Zhang, still "wanted to use his film as a way of demonstrating the possibility of change."<sup>15</sup> This style of film offered an extremely unique perspective into an industry that had become entrenched in the "spirit of comic relief and quotidian entertainment," embodied by traditional comedic filmmaker Xu Zhou dai.<sup>16</sup> Notable scholar of Chinese cinema Zhen Zhang labeled Hou Yao's methods of "creating a cinematic language to dramatize a tragic sense of life" as a way of presenting serious topics that would normally be ignored or disregarded within the popular Chinese comedies of the time.<sup>17</sup> Yao's philosophy of film as a vehicle for social

<sup>13</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 95.

<sup>14</sup> Yingjin Zhang, *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*. (Stanford University Press, 2002), 55.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>16</sup> Zhan, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 157.

<sup>17</sup> Zhan, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 157.

commentary is best exemplified in his 1926 film *The Abandoned Wife*, which analyzes the demeaning role of women within urban spaces and the freedoms women could pursue if unhindered by a constricting society.

*The Abandoned Wife* tells the story of Wu Zhifang, a young wife who becomes unable to cope with the oppressive and restricting treatment of traditional life perpetuated by her “debauched husband and tyrannical mother-in-law.”<sup>18</sup> Hou Yao focuses on the young wife’s abandonment of domestic life in her pursuit of a life with more meaningful purpose. She eventually decides to campaign for women’s rights while attempting to live a modest, independent life. Yet, her transformation leads to her downfall at the hands of the conservative Chinese society that alienates her as a social outcast; likely a commentary by Yao on the need for broad, societal progressivism.<sup>19</sup> The mother-in-law’s irritation with the young wife’s entrance into the public, political sphere, at odds with her own strict alignment with traditional, gendered norms, directly pits the two against each other in a broader theme of generational division. Zhifang’s husband is defined by debauchery in order to speak against the abusive, restrictive marriages of traditional Chinese and conservative Shanghai society. By representing conservative Chinese society through Zhifang’s husband and mother-in-law, Hou Yao creates thematic underpinnings of authority and associates them with society’s reluctance to acknowledge the female population as equal.

*The Abandoned Wife*, and Hou Yao’s work as a whole, represented an exposure of contemporary audiences to the problems of gender inequality facing society. Film scholar Zhen Zhang labeled Hou Yao’s creative thought process as making it “possible to transform the

<sup>18</sup> Zhang, *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, 55.

<sup>19</sup> *The Abandoned Wife*. Directed by Hou Yao. Performed by Wang Hanlun. China: Great Wall Studios, 1924. Transcript.

notions of suffering and redemption...into a set of modern concerns.”<sup>20</sup> With this film, Hou Yao sought to shift the perception of gender roles in two essential ways. Firstly, Hou Yao sought to communicate that the movement for greater levels of equality between the sexes was not only a fight currently in progress, but a righteous and necessary fight.<sup>21</sup> In doing so, Yao hoped to encourage greater social and political participation amongst the women of Shanghai. Secondly, Hou Yao sought to inspire a public interrogation of traditional gender roles.<sup>22</sup> Using the cinema as a vehicle to communicate his messages, Hou Yao was able to directly disseminate his social commentaries, critiques, and ambitions for change.<sup>23</sup> This common theme runs throughout the film, with acts such as the disregard of marriage, domestic life, tradition, and protest all being celebrated as contributing to a new societal norm apart from traditional filial piety. While the young wife's life is decidedly more difficult after taking control over her present and her future, Yao's films argue the empowerment and agency women regained over themselves outweighed any societal and personal backlash they received. In this way, Hou Yao used his work to communicate his own personal challenge to Shanghai's gendered norms through the imagined space of his films, in the physical space the theater provided.

While many films like *The Abandoned Wife* used women's lives to critique general social conditions, few films actively promoted the social advancement of women alongside, or at the expense of, their male counterparts. Wen Yimin's *Red Heroine* broke from this norm. *Red Heroine* served as a milestone within Chinese cinema as one of the first noted martial arts films, functioning as the genesis for an entire genre that would come to define the film industry of the

<sup>20</sup> *The Abandoned Wife*. Directed by Hou Yao. Performed by Wang Hanlun. China: Great Wall Studios, 1924. Transcript.

<sup>21</sup> Zhang, *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, 55.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang, *A Companion to Chinese Cinema*, 30.

country.<sup>24</sup> Yet *Red Heroine* remains notable within Chinese cinema for a different aspect of the film: its use of a strong and independent female protagonist. The film depicts a village being terrorized by oppressive warlords, inspiring a young girl to learn martial arts to defend her family. Much of the film focuses on the concept of revenge, ending with the deaths of the warlords at the young girl's hands.<sup>25</sup> As referenced by scholar Jubin Hu, Wen Yimin was far less politically motivated compared to his contemporaries in Shanghai's film industry, like Hou Yao.<sup>26</sup> However, his work did serve to promote the cause of increasing women's standing within the cultural zeitgeist of society by representing them in nontraditional roles.

By associating a female with the traditionally male practice of martial arts and its legacy of strength, Wen Yimin attempted to alter the perceptions and limitations placed on women by demonstrating female strength. While perhaps not directly encouraging martial arts reform, Wen Yimin made the conscious effort to select a female actor to play the role of a traditionally male martial artist. This choice speaks to an attempt to chip away at restrictive gender norms that would traditionally discourage these transgressive actions on screen.<sup>27</sup> Yimin's directorial choices demonstrate how Shanghai's cinematic culture enabled filmmakers and actors to step outside tradition and speak to larger social issues. *Red Heroine* was an important influential step in Shanghai's greater movement toward the realignment of gendered norms in favor of

<sup>24</sup> Jubin Hu, *Projecting a Nation: Chinese National Cinema before 1949*. (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 72.

<sup>25</sup> *Red Heroine*. Directed by Wen Yimin. Performed by Wen Yimin, Fan Xuepeng, Wang Juqing, Shu Gohui, and Sao Guanyu. China, 1929. Film.

<sup>26</sup> Politically motivated in the case of Wen Yimin refers to his distinction between spheres of culture and politics. Culture focused on attempts to promote a society defined by greater equality and opportunity regardless of gender while politics in Shanghai were centered around issues of international diplomacy. The creation of two cultural spheres, that of foreign policy looking Shanghai and Chinese controlled Shanghai, reflected this as the two cultivated wildly divergent cultures with the main interaction being political. This wide cultural definition allowed Yimin to advocate for societal shifts in perception and attitude without focusing on the minutia of international relations in pursuing equality. Hu. *Projecting a Nation*. 72.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

expanding female roles. The film industry, with Wen Yimin as a catalyst, focused less on simply appealing to the popularity of tradition and more so on innovation by placing women in progressive roles that promoted women's pursuit of social empowerment.<sup>28</sup> Yimin's work operated as a successful model for other filmmakers to follow, opening up larger societal conversations about female agency and strength and narrower industry conversations about broadening roles for female actors.

### ***Liangyou* in Support of Shanghai Cinema**

Similar to how Wen Yimin's *Red Heroine* sought to establish a strong, independent female protagonist in order to promote a trend of female actors in traditionally male roles, the print industry of Shanghai also aided in the popularization of strong female roles in cinema.<sup>29</sup> The already massively popular cinema industry gained further attention as magazines such as *Liangyou* began covering new films and trends within Shanghai to a national audience. *Liangyou* illustrates an important cultural landmark of Shanghai society in relation to gender at the time. The film industry's commitment to practices and ideals considered by many to be culturally offensive represented an intent to foster "a Shanghai brand of visual modernity, with print culture or film culture at the center."<sup>30</sup> This Shanghainese relationship focused on furthering the messages conveyed through film. With film serving as the inspiration behind the print medium, many magazines such as *Liangyou* further contributed to the spreading of radical ideas on gender roles and women's rights.<sup>31</sup> Few magazines outside of Shanghai would ever consider publishing

<sup>28</sup> Hu, *Projecting a Nation*, 73.

<sup>29</sup> Pickowicz, Paul, Kuiyi Shen, and Yingjin Zhang. *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis, 1926-1945*. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), Leiden: Brill. 2013, 113.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Jennifer M. Bean and Diane Negra. *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. (Duke University Press, 2003), 522.

the provocative pieces that *Liangyou* and others did regularly.<sup>32</sup> This radical sphere of publishing only furthered the influential nature of the Shanghai film industry in relation to normative gender roles, such as promoting the decline of traditional marriages and foot binding and the emphasis on greater liberties for the women of Shanghai.<sup>33</sup> Many of these proposed radical shifts came in the form of spotlight pieces on actors.

Alongside *Liangyou*'s public support of controversial films and admiration for Shanghai's critical questioning of traditional gender relations in cinema arose direct praise for actors' brash lifestyles and rebellious attitudes. Issues, such as *Liangyou* no. 2 (March 1926), focused on displaying the rising actor Wang Hanlun in its most prominent positions to advertise for her upcoming films.<sup>34</sup> Wang Hanlun gained a great deal of attention for her actions in her onscreen roles, particularly from many traditional Chinese viewers who saw her work as culturally offensive. Wang had made the leap to "boldly show her unbound feet on the screen" and cut her long, traditional style of hair during filming.<sup>35</sup> Commonly associated with the lower tiers of society, Hanlun's unbound feet and shorter hair shocked traditional, elite Chinese society, who understood her actions as disrespectful.<sup>36</sup> However, Wang Hanlun consciously sought to be provocative in her actions and lifestyle as a means of fighting against the stranglehold she felt as a woman in Chinese society. By proudly displaying such controversial actors, *Liangyou* actively supported actors they believed to be "champions of the modern lifestyle."<sup>37</sup> This open support of such prominent and contentious figures further supported the trend emerging within Shanghai's

<sup>32</sup> Kuiyi Pickowicz and Yingjin Zhang., *Liangyou: Kaleidoscopic Modernity and the Shanghai Global Metropolis*. Leiden: Brill, 2013, 35.

<sup>33</sup> Bean, Negra, *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*, 522.

<sup>34</sup> *Liangyou (The Young Companion)*, no. 2 (March 1926).

<sup>35</sup> Bean and Negra, *A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*, 522.

<sup>36</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 12.

cinema of questioning traditional performance of gender as a way of encouraging modernity. Theaters and films represented arenas where Shanghai's youth could challenge social conventions, yet these cultural products would be meaningless without public media support used to spread them. Progressive institutions, like *Liangyou*, willingly supported the messages portrayed in controversial films like *Red Heroine* and *The Abandoned Wife*, giving a voice to a young, reformist generation.

### Conclusion

The previously described methods of communicating the new, modern thoughts on gender roles all share a common link: popularization and prominence through cinema and the film industry. The environment of the theater offered a culturally unique experience that allowed for an expression of shifting definitions of social and sexual liberty now defined, to a greater degree, by Shanghai's young, well-off women. Simultaneously, the cinema and progressive publications served as vehicles for filmmakers who intentionally and unintentionally made strides toward reshaping societal perceptions of the limitations of strict, gendered expectations on personhood and agency.<sup>38</sup> Shanghai found itself at the foreground of a transition between traditional beliefs and norms for women into a more liberating and curious society. Women could find strength in seeing relatable struggles on screen and begin to sympathize with struggles they were not familiar with.<sup>39</sup> The actors who served as inspirations of female strength were supported in print culture across Shanghai, in spite of backlash from more traditional audiences. In this way, these mediums of cultural innovation fostered continuing critiques of gendered norms within the city. The cultural works listed above all incorporated heavily progressive ideals and themes within their work, but this is by no means a demonstration of their widespread

<sup>38</sup> Zhang, *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922-1943*, 46.

<sup>39</sup> Bean, *Negra. A Feminist Reader in Early Cinema*. 76.

popularity. The eventual gains made in promoting gender equality and shifting the constrictive gender norms of the era were largely made in spite of the majority of the artistic community, not because of it.<sup>40</sup> While a great number of directors, writers, and filmmakers were inspired and driven by dreams of a progressive future, just as many, if not more, stood in polar contrast to these ideals and their cinematic tools. Often condemning the attacks on foot binding and other traditional practices as representing a corrupting Western influence, many Chinese stood diametrically opposed to the novel nature of the cinematic movement. Additionally, Chinese cinema remained a realm of comedic entertainment, with serious pieces acting as a major break from convention.<sup>41</sup> For these more traditional audiences, the reflection of the sexual aspects of modernity and overall progressive themes of female empowerment felt out of place and culturally invasive.

Cinema promoted reform and rethinking of classical gender roles while carving out a portion of public influence within Shanghai.<sup>42</sup> Shanghai's cultural forms offered women a chance to claim a feeling of independence and liberty in methods previously unheard of in Chinese society. The cinema of Shanghai provided inspiration for this experimentation. Some films and their actors questioned tradition and created norms they, not conventional society, found appropriate. Without the physical space of the theater and the themes it spread, this progressive movement toward shifting the gender norms of Chinese society would have remained a demonized, radical movement without the large base of followers and supporters the art form cultivated.

<sup>40</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 45.

<sup>41</sup> Hu, *Projecting a Nation*, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Zhang, *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen*, 379.



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## Diversity for Whom?: Interrogating California's Racial Diversity Through California Literature

By Omar González<sup>1</sup>

California has been popularly imagined as a model for diversity through the consistent integration of various immigrant groups that continues in the present. Although racial conflict in the Golden State's history is well documented, it has always appeared less when compared to more brutal conflicts present in other regions of the nation. At the same time, popular portrayals of California often depict the state as a leader for progressivism, and thus a model for diversity. California may be farther ahead than other regions in the United States in constructing an equitable multi-racial society, but California's diversity has many flaws presented below. These flaws need to be recognized and known by a wider audience to place California on the proper path to constructing a multi-racial society grounded in equality.

It is easy to dismiss literature as an invaluable source for understanding the world because it is fictional; however, when utilized appropriately, literature can serve as a valuable fount of knowledge. Literature often captures key struggles and experiences of the time of its creation, making it a valid way for interrogating race relations. Thus, in demonstrating the flaws with California's diversity, I will be interrogating California novels written in the late 1900s and early 2000s. In particular, Le This Diem Thuy's *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, and Rick Rivera's *A Fabricated Mexican* will be used to examine California's claims of diversity. Together, this collection of novels offers a broad range of experiences in California's history and recent past. More importantly, these novels platform the voices of minority races who would benefit from a perfectly diverse society that popular

<sup>1</sup> As an editor, the author recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

portrayals of California claim it to be. As a result, these novels lay a solid foundation from which to critique the flaws inherent in California's diversity.

Although the existence of a multi-racial society in California is no small feat, the Golden State is far from being a true model of racial diversity. Digging below the surface of California's racial diversity reveals many flaws that prevent all groups of people from enjoying full acceptance. More specifically, the ability of people, especially racial others,<sup>2</sup> to seek full inclusion into the dominant racial group is nearly impossible as a result of multiculturalism. While multiculturalism calls for the celebration of racial diversity which justifies the admission of ethnic groups into California, that celebration often falls short in developing solutions that address structural racism. As a result, multiculturalism fails to bring full acceptance to ethnic groups because it does not bring full attention to the underlying issues of marginalized, racialized groups.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, efforts taken by ethnic groups seeking full inclusion often result in the development of a new identity rooted in duality, allowing for individuals to enjoy the cultural practices of both their original and adopted identities.<sup>4</sup> The development of these identities helps to mitigate the struggles of limited inclusion brought by multiculturalism, but are far from being a permanent solution to racial exclusion. The structural racism that plagues California is rooted in the continued existence of whiteness as a category of inclusion/exclusion, which must become widely recognized before it can be fixed and establish racial equality in California.

<sup>2</sup> Race is a social construct and thus has no grounding in biology or phenotypes. As a result, race is constantly being redefined with the passage of time based on assertions of power and inequality. In recognition of this reality, I utilize the term "racial other" to recognize that the people who were the victims of racism were victimized for reasons exclusive to their particular time period and region. Within the context of US and California race relations, "racial other" is synonymous with "non-white." While I do use "non-white" from time to time, I utilize "racial other" as a reminder that race is fabricated and to contribute to racial theory broadly, as opposed to US race relations alone.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Padoongpatt, *Flavors of Empire: Food and the Making of Thai America* (University of California Press, 2017), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 80.

## Complicating California's Diversity from a Refugee Standpoint

Le Thi Diem Thuy's *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* is a collection of short stories that center a refugee family from Vietnam who settled in San Diego during the 1970s. The work highlights the contradictions in California between its image as a diverse, multicultural triumph and the realities of limited refugee inclusion. In comparison with immigrants, refugees stand apart as they are threatened less with deportation and thus, are often perceived differently by the public. As scholar Yen Espiritu notes, the master narrative of refugees presents them as the victims of an event beyond their control and in search of a refuge capable of offering new opportunities and prosperity. In regards to California, this master narrative has not only painted refugees as helpless victims, but has romanticized California as the ideal refuge where upward mobility awaits all "proper" refugees.<sup>5</sup> In describing the various experiences the family lives through in California, the novel reveals the inability of refugees to attain full inclusion in the US and brings discriminatory policies that prevent refugees from enjoying the opportunities California has to offer to the forefront.

The narrator beginning school after her family arrives in California demonstrates limits placed on refugees to attain full inclusion into the dominant culture. In order to go to school, she must wear an American dress and plastic sandals, which she is uncomfortable in. She complains about it to no avail, and when she gets to school, she is completely alienated by her peers as they all play with each other during recess without her, despite wearing her American uniform.<sup>6</sup> The narrator's father makes an effort to have her attain full inclusion by dressing her in American clothes. However, the swift alienation by her peers demonstrates that the narrator's racial

<sup>5</sup> Yen Espiritu, *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees* (University of California Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Le Thi Diem Thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 16-17 & 19.

characteristics are too strongly inscribed in her appearance to allow her clothing to change how she appears to others. At the same time, the decision made to dress the narrator in American clothes reveals the restrictions placed on refugees seeking American acceptance, who can only attain inclusion by copying American ways of living. Although the narrator's attempt at assimilation failed to satisfy her peers, her ability to embrace an American identity demonstrates the duality of her identity. After all, the narrator managed to leave her Vietnamese identity at home in order to perform like a white American at school, which demonstrates the two cultural worlds she cycles between school and home.

The story also demonstrates the limits of California's multiculturalism through the existence of discriminatory policies that make life difficult for the refugee family. In the novel, an elderly couple sponsors the refugee family through their church group, allowing for them to enter the US.<sup>7</sup> While the initiative taken by individuals to bring in racial others shows a positive aspect of multiculturalism, (especially for refugees), the logistics of the procedure to get into the US, however, demonstrates otherwise. The highly selective process, replete with excessive legal documents and bureaucratic red tape, continues long after the family arrives in the US.<sup>8</sup> Determining who gets admission into the US reflects multiculturalism's intent to maintain the status quo, even if it means maintaining a highly regulatory system that screens out more refugees than it admits. Furthermore the novel shows that, in spite of California's decision to accept refugees, the maintenance of oppressive systems restricts the refugees who make it past the highly selective and laborious asylum process. The very first paragraph of the novel details the constant migration the Diem family experienced in California by describing the various

<sup>7</sup> Le Thi Diem Thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

residences the family took up.<sup>9</sup> When getting into the details behind these migrations, it becomes clear that the refugee family lives a very unstable, insecure life in California. For example, the family's landlord evicted them from their home in Linda Vista because the landlord wanted to build a more expensive housing complex in the area.<sup>10</sup> Being unable to meet a higher rent, the refugee family had to find a new home, demonstrating the financial struggles of refugees in California. More importantly, the lack of support given to refugees in adjusting to California shows that California's multiculturalism is more than willing to boast racial diversity in advocating for new racial groups to arrive than to address the underlying issues that oppress refugees. Overall, multiculturalism may benefit refugees by encouraging the arrival of new racial groups, but that benefit is limited because not all refugees are welcomed. Once welcomed into California, refugees struggle with identity because they are excluded from being fully American.

### **Dismantling California's Diversity from a Chinese-American Perspective**

*The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston is an account of the author's experiences growing up as a Chinese-American in California. The book does not follow a strict timeline. Instead, each of its five chapters focuses on a specific character and their interactions with and influence on Kingston. Born in the US to Chinese parents, Kingston relates her experience with an identity crisis stemming from her first-generation status throughout the novel. Because of multiculturalism's limits on immigration, Kingston never fully adopts an American national identity, despite being born in the US. At the same time, Kingston's mother places harsh restrictions on her behavior, preventing Kingston from desiring and adopting a Chinese racial identity. As a result, Kingston never fully adopts an identity based solely on her Chinese racial identity or American national identity, despite having a birth right to both identities. Although

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 96.

excluded from both identities in one way or another, Kingston still manages to adopt a mixed cultural identity that bridges both of her cultures.

Kingston's birth in the US highlights the difficulties American born children of Chinese immigrants have with being accepted into Chinese culture. This can be seen through the interactions Kingston has with her aunt, Moon. Moon arrives in the US from China to find her husband who migrated to the US long before she did. Brave, Kingston's mother (and Moon's sister), agrees to take in Moon temporarily as they both work to find her husband. Moon's temporary stay with Kingston's family is best summarized with Moon asking Brave, "Why didn't you teach your girls to be demure?"<sup>11</sup> Moon continually and harshly judges all the cultural oddities Kingston and her siblings have, to the point where she is not able to develop a strong relationship with any of her nieces or nephews. At the same time, Kingston and her siblings are quick to ignore their aunt and her critiques by avoiding long conversations with her.<sup>12</sup> The conflict between Moon and her nephews and nieces reveals that Kingston does not fully belong to Chinese culture, while the lack of motivation to reach Moon's standards demonstrates a lack of desire to claim a monolithic Chinese identity by Kingston and her siblings. This desire from Chinese-Americans to separate themselves from certain aspects of Chinese culture manifests itself more clearly in Kingston's dispute with her mother's expectations of her. For example, Brave expects her daughter to attend Chinese school and to eventually marry a wealthy man at a relatively young age, expectations which stem from her own cultural experience in China. Towards the end of the book, Kingston confronts Brave about her expectations, feeling them unfair and unreasonable. During this confrontation, Kingston renounces Chinese school in favor of American schools, promising to chase after her dreams of going to college because the white

<sup>11</sup> Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 133.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Americans at her school think she would be exceptional in college. As a result, Brave forces Kingston to leave home.<sup>13</sup> This conflict's roots originate from cultural differences between mother and daughter and highlight Kingston's inability to be fully accepted into Chinese culture. Brave's expectations for Kingston only appear foreign to Kingston because she had grown accustomed to American ways of living. Thus, Kingston may boast Chinese ancestry, but her access to Chinese cultural practices is severely limited by the restrictions her mother has placed around Chineseness. In refusing to conform to her mother's unreasonable restrictions, Kingston is essentially denied access to her Chinese heritage. At the same time, Brave's expectations of Kingston make claiming a Chinese identity especially undesirable because they directly conflict with white American norms. The lack of compatibility between Chinese and American cultures, as perceived by Kingston's mother, demonstrates that multiculturalism is not intended to bring about racial equality. Rather, the glorification of racial differences serves to preserve distinct identities and limit the amount of racial others who are able to attain full inclusion.

The limits of California's multiculturalism for Chinese-Americans does not impact people discreetly because even children can recognize it. Tolerance for the Chinese living in the US only extended to those thought to be capable of supporting themselves financially. Notably, the author displayed this awareness from a very young age, demonstrating how ingrained multiculturalism's limits are within California's Chinese-American population. For example, when Kingston talks about her parents with her beloved sixth grade teacher, she remembers "silence in front of the most understanding teacher. There were secrets never to be said in front of the ghosts, immigration secrets whose telling could get us sent back to China."<sup>14</sup> In this moment, Kingston understood that it was too risky to reveal the truth of her father's past as a

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 201-204.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 183.

gambler, not a farmer, when talking to white Americans, referred to as “ghosts” throughout the novel. Kingston recognized that the dominant culture’s perception of immigrants with certain jobs made her father especially vulnerable for removal by deportation should anyone discover his past as a gambler, despite her father no longer holding a problematic job since his arrival in the US. Thus, even as a child, Kingston understood the strict class requisites placed on Chinese immigrants by white Americans. Her experience illuminates the continuance of California’s long history of denying acceptance and limiting tolerance of the Chinese in strictly economic terms. Furthermore, Kingston’s inability to fully express herself around her closest teacher and non-Chinese peers reflects her inability to attain full inclusion within the dominant culture. As a result, Kingston cannot claim an American identity because of multiculturalism’s demand for racial others to behave in ways acceptable to the dominant culture, nor is she able to fully cling to her Chinese identity and the unjust expectations that come with it. Overall, Kingston’s identity struggle illuminates the flaws within California’s diversity that prevent the state from becoming a model for diversity.

Although critical race scholar and activist Gloria Anzaldúa coined the *mestiza* consciousness when talking about the Chicana experience, the duality of identity is highly applicable to immigrant families of different racial backgrounds. The *mestiza* consciousness aims to “break down the subject-object duality that keeps her [an immigrant] a prisoner and to show...how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between white race and the colored...lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundations of our lives.”<sup>15</sup> Duality allows for mixed-race people to take in values and practices of either racial group, which is useful for dealing with the exclusion brought by multiculturalism. In *The Woman Warrior*,

<sup>15</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 80.

Kingston adopts a mestiza consciousness by occupying the liminal space between her two identities, never gaining full inclusion with either of her racial/national groups. Instead, she learns to live with an identity that is not quite fully American or Chinese. Kingston's decision and ability to stay in contact with her mother points to this. Even though Brave expels her from the house, Kingston continues to visit and talk to Brave, who keeps criticizing Kingston for her lack of visits and way of living.<sup>16</sup> Kingston's ability to stay in contact with Brave after being kicked out of the house demonstrates that she has not been completely rejected by her Chinese culture. At the same time, Kingston's decision to continue visiting Brave represents a desire to maintain aspects of her Chinese identity, but actively decides against attempting to adopt all Chinese customs. Overall, Kingston has adopted a new identity that allows her the freedom to enjoy life without being confined to a single culture/identity by rejecting the oppressive aspects of Chinese culture. In adopting a dual identity, Kingston finds a way to persist and live life within the constraints of multiculturalism. Although the mestiza consciousness works for Kingston, it may not be sustainable for everyone. Furthermore, the development of a mestiza consciousness to deal with the exclusion brought by multiculturalism illuminates its shortcomings. After all, had multiculturalism really brought racial equality, the need to develop a mestiza consciousness to survive racial exclusion would not be necessary. Kingston's struggle as a Chinese-American in California parallels the struggles faced by Mexican-Americans residing in the golden state.

### **Unraveling California's Diversity from a Chicana Point of View**

*A Fabricated Mexican* by Rick P. Rivera follows the life of Ricardo "Ricky" Coronado, the son of Mexican immigrants in California. Like *The Woman Warrior*, the novel does not

<sup>16</sup> Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, 100.

follow a strict timeline, but begins with Ricky as a child and tells various short stories about Ricky that loosely move forward in time and end with Ricky pursuing a doctoral degree. Being born in the US to Mexican parents causes Ricky to struggle with his identity, especially since he does not fit neatly into cultural expectations of either Mexicans or Americans. Ricky makes attempts to belong to both of those cultures throughout his life, but is never truly successful. Instead by the end of the novel, Ricky learns to accept that he is not fully American nor Mexican, allowing him to be content with the duality of his identity.

From a young age, Ricky failed to fit into traditional beliefs of Mexican masculinity, grounded in notions of hard work and being physically active. This is apparent in his refusal to play little league baseball during his summer break because he wanted to watch TV and read instead.<sup>17</sup> Ricky's mother disliked her son spending his free time reading, as she believed it had little value, most likely because reading did not give Ricky the physique necessary for farm labor, which his mother required him to do the following year.<sup>18</sup> Unsurprisingly, Ricky found no comfort in farm work, and swiftly protested working the fields by refusing to leave the car when his mother announced she would no longer work alongside Ricky and his siblings for the remainder of the harvest season. In explaining his resistance, Ricky exclaimed "We always have to work. And I get in trouble for doing something like reading."<sup>19</sup> In other words, Ricky rejected the expectation placed on him by his Mexican heritage of constant physical activity for both leisure and work. In doing so, Ricky received quite a few scoldings from his mother, demonstrating Ricky's inability to fully belong to his Mexican culture. In taking up reading as his favorite pastime, Ricky instead attempted to attain full inclusion with his American identity.

<sup>17</sup> Rick P. Rivera, *A Fabricated Mexican* (Arte Publico Press, 1995), 23-26.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

However, the oppressive systems in California, that are strengthened by multiculturalism, relegate Mexican immigrants to farm labor, which in turn shapes the form of masculine performance in immigrant families that reside in California. Without the racialized expectation of Mexican immigrants being physical laborers, Ricky may have had more freedom at home to choose his occupation and leisure activities, making his relationship to his mother and Mexican heritage easier.

Despite being born in the US, Ricky experiences constant othering throughout college, demonstrating the limits of multiculturalism's acceptance of American born immigrant children. Early in his college career, Ricky eats dinner at his friend Greg's house, where he not only felt alienated by the standard practices of eating Anglo cuisine, but also by the conversation Greg's family had that he never experienced with his own family.<sup>20</sup> Taken together, the dinner served to remind Ricky that he did not truly belong to white American culture. Ricky may have been born in the US and taken up hobbies traditionally associated with white Americans, like reading, but his upbringing in a Mexican household prevented him from learning customs to feel welcomed by white Americans. Ricky's lack of knowledge of white culture was not the only alienating factor of the dinner. At one point, Greg's mother critiqued Ricky's appearance and went on to talk about how prepared Greg was to excel in higher education.<sup>21</sup> Greg's mother othered Ricky by implying he would fail in college, solely based on his appearance. Her opinion about Ricky's educational ability was undoubtedly influenced by the discourse surrounding Mexicans in higher education, where traditional representation associates them with physical labor and low-income jobs. Greg's mother later warns her son against mirroring Ricky's appearance in order to protect him from receiving any influences that could lead towards low-income labor. More importantly,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

<sup>21</sup> Rick P. Rivera, *A Fabricated Mexican*, 104-105.

in warning her son against copying Ricky's appearance, Greg's mother reminded Ricky that his racial characteristics were highly visible to white people like herself.

Ricky proved Greg's mother wrong by finishing his undergraduate education and earning a master's degree with high honors; however, Ricky continued to encounter discourses that discounted his ability to do well in academia. Shortly after graduation, Ricky landed a job as a guest lecturer, but Brian, a tutor for his beginning writing class, accused Ricky of "doing a tremendous disservice to these kids."<sup>22</sup> Ricky's educational background made him far more prepared to teach an introductory English course than Brian, yet Brian felt emboldened enough to complain about Ricky's teaching ability to his face without presenting a compelling reason.<sup>23</sup> Brian felt justified in his critique because of white privilege, with Brian believing racial others, like Ricky, are not capable of excelling in higher education. It matters little how much inclusion racial others feel they can achieve by earning credentials like master's degrees. Racial characteristics are too inscribed in modern representation to allow Ricky to feel truly accepted among white Americans in higher education or to achieve a degree of whiteness himself.

The constant othering of Ricky in higher education for his appearance demonstrates the insufficiencies of California's model of multiculturalism. Ricky is eligible for various scholarships and benefits from affirmative action that celebrate diversity in higher education, but the people who surround him constantly work to make him feel out of place there.<sup>24</sup> The institution may be doing its part in reversing the history of educational disenfranchisement, but as shown above, the white dominant culture refuses to extend full inclusion to minority groups. Thus, California is fast to celebrate the diversity that appears to exist within its borders but does

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Rick P. Rivera, *A Fabricated Mexican*, 130-132.

little to address the underlying issues that make racial groups feel unwelcome in California. Furthermore, Ricky's experience in academia, from his undergraduate education to his time as a lecturer within the California State University system, shows the flaws of institutions built to give otherwise economically and racially disenfranchised students opportunities for education. However, as Ricky's experiences demonstrate, the distance between promises of diversifying academia and the reality of limits placed on racial minorities, who can never fully gain enough social capital to end microaggressions, prevents even the most progressive institutions from allowing racial others to attain full inclusion.

### **Conclusion**

California boasts a highly diverse population, but the existence of diversity does not ensure perfect race relations exist in the Golden State. For any society to claim itself as a model of racial diversity, it must establish racial equality free from structural racism. Although California is often imagined as a place of opportunity where even the most marginalized are able to attain social mobility, inequalities between races continue to exist as the result of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism glorifies diversity, which encourages the development of a multi-racial society, but it ultimately falls short of full inclusion because it does not destroy whiteness as a category of exclusion. As demonstrated from a refugee, second-generation immigrant, and Chicana standpoint, racial others are able to claim space within California, but ultimately fail to claim an American identity and advantages that come alongside it. With racial characteristics too strongly inscribed in modern representation, racial others are easily discriminated against based on their appearance. Although multiculturalism excludes racial others from fully belonging, racial others often adopt aspects of Americanness and their original cultures to navigate life in California. This duality of identity, referred to as the *mestiza*

consciousness by Gloria Anzaldúa, is relevant beyond the Chicana experience with other racial groups capable of adopting it to combat their exclusion. However, the development of a dual identity is far from a permanent solution to the structural racism that plagues California's race relations. Rather than spouting multiculturalism as a model for race relations, the flaws need to be more widely recognized in order to dismantle it and whiteness as a category for exclusion.

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