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Undergraduate

**THE
UNDERGRADUATE
HISTORICAL
AND
CRITICAL RACE &
ETHNIC STUDIES
JOURNAL
At UC Merced**

Volume 7 ⇔ Issue 1 ⇔ Fall 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 second issue of the Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal at UC Merced, as a continuation of the 7th 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.

Throughout this semester, we as student editors have still been struggling to keep up with coursework and editing responsibilities with operations remaining online. This year and all of the tragedies and uprisings that came along with it have made questions of race, class, imperialism, and representation in hollywood to the forefront of everyone's minds. In this edition, our articles and book reviews explore those topics in new and creative ways.

Cynthia Bravo, in her review of *For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria* By Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, discusses ideas of feminism and anti-imperialism. Maya C. Ramirez in, *The Other in Hollywood: Asia and Asian Americans and the Fight Against the Western Perspective*, explores the roles of Asian American's in film and the strides that are being made to make their representation more accurate and inclusive. Yohel Salas takes on Salvador Allende's socialist movement in Chile in, *Chile: Detouring the Road to Socialism, 1970-1973*. Finally Andrea Guerra chooses to make a creative critical race argument in her article, *A Successful Border Crossing in Chicken Run*.

This semester's board was staffed by Lesly Garcia, Yohel Salas, Cynthia Bravo. Kevin Ng, Jeremy Paguibitan, Andrea Guerra, Jessica Martinez, Guadalupe Vasquez, and Jessica Olivas. I cannot thank these amazing editors enough for the work they put in this semester despite all of our challenges. Finally, on behalf of the entire board, I would like to thank Mario Sifuentez, PhD for serving as our faculty advisor.

Madelyn Lara
Editor in Chief

Faculty Forward

It is a testament to our students that in this extremely challenging environment, they have not only been able to concentrate on their studies but that they have published another stellar edition of the Undergraduate Historical and Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Journal. In this era of alternate facts and fake news, our profession fills a desperate need for teaching students critical thinking skills, the ability to assess evidence, and making compelling arguments. This year's edition demonstrates a continuation of UC Merced HCRES students who have taken that challenge to heart. As is our tradition the journal examines questions of race, gender, sexuality and seeks to provide students with a publishing experience that will serve them in various aspects of their lives. It takes a tremendous amount of diligence and bravery to send your work out into the world and for that our students should be commended.

The issue opens with a timely book review of a biography of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, a Nigerian activist for women's rights and self-determination.

The articles in this edition tackle issues of representation in the media at a time when we see how powerful these messages can be and how important it is to challenge damaging and derogatory stereotypes. But more importantly we can see the power in creating our own stories and telling our own truths and how those stories often turn into concrete change. Andrea Guerra and Maya C. Ramirez provide us with two powerful articles that force us to rethink how we consume film.

As we face a worldwide pandemic, we are also forced to ask ourselves what the nation is obligated to provide its citizenry. Recent polls have demonstrated that younger generations are becoming increasingly critical of capitalism and are looking for alternative ways to organize society. History here too can shed some light on what it means to be a socialist, Yohel Salas provides us some perspective from Chile and the fascinating story of Chile's Socialist President Salvador Allende.

Finally, I want to thank the members of our editorial team for putting together this issue, which is a challenge in typical circumstances and even more so in the COVID era. Specifically, our Editor in Chief Madelyn Lara, and her team of editors Lesly Garcia, Yohel Salas, Cynthia Bravo, Kevin Ng, Jeremy Paguibitan, Andrea Guerra, Jessica Martinez, Guadalupe Vasquez, and Jessica Olivas. I am constantly in a state of awe when I think about all the challenges this team has overcome.

Mario Jimenez Sifuentez, PhD

For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria.
By Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba: (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

The biography, *For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*, by historians Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba focuses on the life of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti (FRK), a western-educated feminist and activist who fought for her countrywomen's suffrage and equal rights during the struggle for nationalism in Nigeria. She was born in the British-ruled Nigeria and died in the independent Federal Republic of Nigeria.¹ Johnson-Odim and Mba explain how FRK created various clubs and organizations to promote women's suffrage and nationalism in order to reverse the impact of colonialism and its ideology. She created a "young ladies club" for the daughters of the elite Ijebu-Ode with the purpose of creating traditional Christian wives but the club steadily became more politicised and changed its name to Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU). This group radicalized its members' perspective on gender and aimed to demystify colonialism and imperialistic ideology.² Women under FRK's leadership began organizing mass demonstrations and AWU became the Nigerian Women's Union with the emphasis on enfranchisement of women. FRK also went on to create the West African Students Union which was a nationalist and anti-colonialist organization.

Organizing the book in seven chapters, Johnson-Odim and Mba seek to portray Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's personal and political life and how her activism led to changes in Nigeria. Chapter one discusses the historical background that led to the emergence of FRK political career³. Chapter two serves as a background information on Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and her family, from their lineage to their religion and to her education⁴. Chapter three describes

¹ Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Nina Emma Mba, *For Women and The Nation: Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Nigeria*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1.

² *Ibid.*, 38.

³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴ *For Women and The Nation*, Johnson-Odim and Mba, 26-30.

Funmilayo Ransome-Kutie's dilemma of trying to balance her time and energy between her family as a housewife, her teaching job, and her participation in political programs⁵. Chapter four showcases how FRK's courage and determination gave her recognition both nationally and internationally as a heroine for fighting for women's rights⁶. Chapter five discusses how and why FRK lost commanding influence in national politics during the Nigerian Civil War⁷. Chapter six explores FRK's active role as political figure in the international scene and although she had the option to move elsewhere, she chose to remain in Nigeria and continued to work from there⁸. The final chapter, details Rasome-Kuit's contribution to Nigerian education, Aberokuta Grammar School and her conflicts with the brutal Nigerian dictatorship which is believed to have precipitated her death⁹. This chapter also discusses how Rasome-Kuit's children have continued their parents legacy by being active in protest against human rights violations¹⁰.

The historians, Johnson-Odim and Mba were able to connect Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti's personal life and political views to the movement that emphasized the enfranchisement of women and anticolonialism ideas in Nigeria. This book is a bibliography of Funmilayo Ransome-Kuit that details how her political activities and ideas encouraged others to fight colonialism and demand women suffrage in Nigeria. This book would be a great read for anyone interested in women studies and African studies with an emphasis in Nigeria or for anyone who is interested in knowing more about Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and how her involvement in politics has shaped Nigerian politics for the better.

Cynthia Bravo¹¹

⁵Ibid., 58.

⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁸ Ibid., 151.

⁹ Ibid., 168.

¹⁰ Ibid., 178.

¹¹ The author, being also an editor, recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

The Other in Hollywood: Asia and Asian Americans and the Fight Against the Western Perspective

By Maya C. Ramirez

Hollywood filmmaking operates as an outlet for Western ideologies, often crafted to fit the gaze of white audiences. Asia, and Asian Americans specifically, find themselves depicted in American film as objects meant to fit the molds crafted by Western perspectives. Representation of the East as exotic, foreign, illogical, and different stems from orientalist ideas which are common in Western media. *Orientalism* by Edward Said presents the argument that many Western scholars continue to promote ideas of the Occident being superior to the Orient culturally, religiously, and ideologically.¹ Films that exhibit Orientalist ideas allow the West to take authority over the Orient and continue creating films through a colonialist lens. Repeated representations of Asians in cinema has created specific tropes or themes that prove difficult for independent filmmakers and Asian American videographers to break. Independent films, however, counter the stereotypes which are commonly disseminated among Western audiences to illuminate the damages of late capitalism and ideas surrounding the model minority. Throughout the twentieth century, Asian Americans have been relegated to limited roles like diligent workers, Kung Fu masters, and oriental “buddies” that personify the “Model Minority” on screen. The damage of Orientalism in Western cinema is incredibly evident in *Aladdin*, which eroticizes women and Eastern cultures. Multiple Asian countries, and ethnicities continue being grouped as one, where different cultures are characterized as a singular “Other.” The eroticization of the East places Asia and Asian Americans in recognizable tropes, which has led

¹ Edward W Said. *Orientalism*. Brantford, Ontario,: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2006, 2

to multiple counter-movements that fight against stereotypes and racialized perceptions of Asian Americans within a white imaginary.

Asia and the East as One: Aladdin

The Disney animated film *Aladdin*, released in 1992, demonstrates classic Orientalist understandings of Asia, through the othering and exoticizing of the characters and the setting of the movie. *Aladdin* is full of unsavory and harmful portrayals of Asia, through the sexualization and villainization of Asian people. There are a vast amount of peoples encompassed by the term Asian and Asian American, however, individual cultures, and peoples are frequently mixed together as a singular other through the Western perspective. This Western perspective is a view of the world through a colonialist lens, in turn producing perceptions of those from the East as a singular group. It allows for the consumption of different Asian cultures to be palatable to Western audiences. The Western gaze has damaging effects on the ways Asian and Asian American communities are perceived. Author Serenity Joo summarizes this Western gaze as the;

“...ways in which Hollywood films crystallize and commodify multiple, heterogenous Asiatic cultures, histories and aesthetics into a small number of recognizable, often interchangeable tropes that help to shape dominant cultural attitudes about Asia and people of Asian descent.”²

This quote heavily supports the impact the Western gaze has on audiences’ knowledge of the East since it classifies an array of people and places them into a singular “one.” *Aladdin* is a story that follows a pauper, who is granted wishes from a genie in order to win the heart of a

² Serenity Joo, *Oriental Style and Asian Chic: The Politics of Racial Visibility in Film and Fashion*, 155

Princess.³ The movie revolves around Princess Jasmine, her pet tiger, and her feeble father who is the king of an Eastern city that has a mixture of many different Asian cultures. *Aladdin*, although being set in a fictional place, takes direct inspiration from Baghdad, despite utilizing other cultures as imagery for the setting. This can be seen in the architecture of the film since the palace is made to mimic the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum located in India. Besides this, the desert where the riches are located takes inspiration from the Arabian desert, illustrating the culmination of Asian locations used to make up a singular fictional place—Agrabah.

Aladdin illustrates the profound effect many Hollywood films have on the way the West pictures the East. One of the most recognizable roles in the film is Jafar who acts as the villain of the story. Spiteful and dangerous, he terrorizes the well-being of Princess Jasmine and Aladdin. Represented on screen as an evil Middle Eastern sorcerer, obsessed only with power and wealth, Jafar exemplifies a problematic Orientalist trope that is continuously repeated in Hollywood and recognized by Western audiences. Jafar's physical characteristics accentuate problematic perceptions of Asian features, as he has a long jaw, a curled thin beard, and a large nose. His personality as an evil, selfish Middle Eastern man, wishing to deceive those around him heavily coincides with Western stereotypes. Jafar illustrates the creation of recognizable themes of the East for the consumption of Western audiences. Besides this, Jafar also participates in a trope of a character consistently used by the West to organize Middle Eastern people as a singular one, sharing the same kinds of spiteful characteristics. This engages with the tropes created to characterize Asian Americans, as an *other* by being placed in recognizable and stereotypical roles.

Besides the villainizing of Middle Eastern characters, *Aladdin* also sexualizes and

³ Ron Clements, *Aladdin*, November 25, 1992; USA: Walt Disney Pictures, Movie

exoticizes women. Throughout the film, women living in fictional Agrabah dress in sheer garments and bare midriffs, depicting hyper-sexualized characterizations of Middle Eastern women. This includes Princess Jasmine, whose sexualization far exceeds any of the other Disney Princesses. Princess Jasmine wears an incredibly revealing sheer garment, and uses it to seduce her way out of captivity. This scene is misleading to audiences and showcases a seductive woman attempting to trick the villain of the story. *Aladdin* depicts the damaging effects Western cinema has on the understanding of Asia.

The Signature Tropes: Characterizing Asian Americans

In *Oriental Style and Asian Chic: The Politics of Racial Visibility in Film and Fashion*, film scholar Serenity Joo explains how the Model Minority myth continues to play a large role in the perception of Asian Americans on-screen. Western films present stereotypes through Asian values, such as obedience, skill, and intelligence, as more desirable than those held by other, more “problematic minorities” in the white American imagination. These favorable skills such as being talented in martial arts, academic endeavors, and even expressing American patriotism began building characteristics that shaped the repeated representations of Asia and Asian Americans on screen. The tropes indicate the admirable characteristics the West assumes of all Asian Americans, although they are still referred to as “other.”⁴ Orientalist ideologies which permeate into the depictions of Asia and the damaging effects Western cinema has on the perceptions of Asia and Asian Americans are evident through the model minority myth and their depictions through various tropes. The model minority myth is common among Western impressions of Asian Americans since they are portrayed as a minority with noble characteristics.

⁴ Joo, *Oriental Style and Asian Chic*, 154

Similar to the way the East itself is frequently characterized and categorized as an *other* for the consumption of Western audiences, Asian Americans are also assigned recognizable roles to fulfill in Western cinema. The trope of the compliant Asian worker is a persistent theme that presents Asians silently laboring for the superior white men who dominate the film's narrative. These negative impressions have lasting effects on Asian people and communities and present a narrative of Asians as subservient and silent workers. This trope of the obedient Asian worker perpetuates the false understanding of Asian people's purpose—to follow and be advantageous for their white leaders.

Blade Runner (1982) demonstrates the trope of easily exploitable Asian laborers. *Blade Runner* follows the story of Deckard, a police boss sent out to adopt his old job of being a Replicant, or synthetic human hunter. Set in a futuristic Los Angeles, *Blade Runner* appears technologically advanced and future-forward, a theme frequently used to characterize East Asia.⁵ This is due in part to Japan and China becoming economic superpowers in the early 1980s, where Asia became a metaphor in the film for futurity in the American imagination. Despite these technologically advanced scenes, the film represents Asian people as obedient, naïve, hushed workers serving the white man's every need. This is incredibly evident in the noodle scene, which occurs within the first ten minutes of the movie and is commonly referred to as one of the most iconic moments of Deckard in the film. This sets the tone of the naive Asian worker as Deckard orders a bowl of noodles from a stand. The Japanese man working the stand is confused, and does not understand Deckard's request until he says it forcefully. Following this he serves him quietly, thanking him for his patronage. Joo argues *Blade Runner* is controversial because of its portrayal of Asians in a futuristic America, making it easily digestible for Western

⁵ Scott Ridley, *Blade Runner*, June 25 1982; USA: The Lad Company, Shaw Brothers, Movie

audiences, this is evident through their styles and customs which Joo elaborates in the following passage: “..the distinct ‘film noir’ vision that is dependent upon the representation of Asia as a ‘consumable style’ and Asians as ‘invisible workers.’”⁶ Despite the Asian workers and their commitment to the advanced project composing the entire story’s backbone of the *Blade Runner* film, the narrative of the film is controlled by the white men in it. Joo mentions that the plot relies on the interactions between the white leaders and Asian workers continuing perceptions of Asian peoples purpose: “invisible Asian laborers structure the film’s narrative questioning the limits of humanity, literally serving and working for the film’s primary white characters.”⁷ This way, the film regurgitates Western ideologies of Asian people’s inability to lead, reinforcing the belief that Asian countries should follow the lead of Western nations as the only means of success. This illustrates the model minority myth since it characterizes Asian Americans as obedient and willing to follow and assimilate to Western ideologies.

The “Asian Buddy” trope further bolsters the model minority myth by depicting Asian Americans as patriotic and hard working. The Asian buddy is shown through characters made to seem overly assimilationist toward Western culture. Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid* (1984) strongly illuminates the ways the role of the Asian buddy plays into the model minority myth.⁸ The *Karate Kid* provides comfort within the unstable reality of late capitalism by valorizing the honorable, hardworking Japanese veteran Miyagi while juxtaposing him with the dishonorable white soldier. In the film, Mr. Miyagi, an Asian American war veteran, teaches a young boy karate in order to defeat the fighters from the Cobra Kai dojo, a white karate studio. The Cobra Kai sensei is white, yet he is shown as an ignominious American because of his dishonorable

⁶ Joo, *Oriental Style and Asian Chic*, 156

⁷ Joo, *Oriental Style and Asian Chic*, 156

⁸ John Avildsen, *The Karate Kid*, June 22, 1984; USA: Delphi II Productions, Movie

discharge from military service during the Vietnam War. Mr. Miyagi teaches Daniel (the karate kid) through manual labor, this includes waxing cars and painting fences, jobs which are typically deemed as unskilled work. Despite Mr. Miyagi being seen as a teacher, through the process, he becomes a friend and role model to Daniel, further illustrating his patriotism, due to his dedication to justice and his past as a veteran. The Asian buddy films have a large impact on the perceptions of Asian Americans as a model minority since they stand as a way to help further develop the white protagonist while simultaneously teaching the white character how to navigate through the pressures of late capitalism.⁹ Late capitalism was a prominent theme and idea from post World War II and is a term utilized to characterize the large industrial boom which occurred internationally and within the United States. This massive economic and consumerist empire began influencing the ideas of the Other within the West, in order to reassure white audiences that they were not being threatened by Asian economic superpowers. This ties into the ways Mr. Miyagi is represented throughout the film as a model minority, associating Asian Americans with dedicated patriotism, disseminating the racialized trope of a devoted, “Asian buddy” to a new generation of American filmgoers.

Unlike the Oriental Buddy which focuses on the Asian teacher and friend to a white protagonist, the Kung Fu master role accentuates idealized Asian American characteristics. Despite the Kung Fu master theme being used to benefit Western cinema, it has allowed actors like Bruce Lee to shed light on the upsetting portrayals of Asian Americans. Typically, Western cinema fits Asian Americans in roles which are digestible to Western audiences, making it impossible for real Asian stories to be told. Popular movies that use the Kung Fu master trope include *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and *Enter the Dragon*. Although there

⁹ Joo, *Oriental Style and Asian Chic*, 156

is stereotyping within these films, Bruce Lee created a platform by using his stardom for activism. This granted for movies like the ones mentioned to garner popularity and attention despite depicting strong Asian characters and narratives.

The legacy of Bruce Lee illustrates a positive side of the Kung Fu master trope, as Bruce Lee began breaking the Asian American molds due to his depiction as a martial arts hero. Although Bruce Lee still fits into the model minority, he is able to transcend the typical definition due to his fight against stereotypical Asian American images, which is shown in his film *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*. The film is a narrative based around Bruce Lee and his martial art pursuits, made in 1993 and directed by Rob Cohen, who would later direct *The Mummy* and *Fast and Furious*.¹⁰ There is a specific scene where Bruce Lee and his girlfriend are in a theater watching *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. As the audience within the theatre laughs at Mickey Rooney's portrayal of a naive Asian man in severe yellowface despite being white, Bruce Lee gazes at the screen before his girlfriend ushers him out of the theater, understanding the upsetting result of the racist portrayal of Asian Americans in movies. Bruce Lee was able to convey the damaging and degrading results of the Western depiction of Asians and Asian Americans on screen. This is done primarily through his reaction to a white man playing an ignorant Asian character through the use of yellowface. Bruce Lee, challenged the stereotypical roles many Chinese Americans and East Asian Americans are delegated to identify with, and continued crafting his own stories and utilizing his roles as a Kung Fu master to combat hurtful portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans in a creative space dominated by the white American imaginary.

Bruce Lee was a martial artist, a hero, and a sidekick, and he eventually used his story to

¹⁰ Rob Cohen, *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*, May 7, 1993; USA: Universal Pictures, Movie

try to change the Western portrayal of Asian Americans in film. Bruce Lee stands as one of the first Asian actors to resist biased depictions in Western cinema and the damages it causes Asian Americans in Hollywood and in the United States. Bruce Lee was able to build a platform for the Asian American community, one which was soon occupied by Jackie Chan. However, this platform was also capitalized on by white actors. Films like *Game of Death* (1978) and *The Way of the Dragon* (1972) use Eastern martial arts in predominantly white stories, appropriating a racialized trope in such a way that supports white supremacy in cinema. Older movies like these, featuring Chuck Norris as the main character misappropriated Asian Americans in film, a pattern that continues and is evident through *The Matrix* (1999) and *Kill Bill* (2003). These movies not only exhibit Asian customs through a colonialist lens but also misappropriated cultures while simultaneously using them to portray white protagonists and heroes.

One of the overarching issues of the Kung Fu master trope is despite the innovations made by Asian Americans in redefining the theme, the roles are still adopted and appropriated by white actors, revoking the power earned by Asian American actors. In turn, the theme has left a problematic and harmful mark on Asian Americans in cinema placing Asian American characters in racialized, stereotypical roles to become more digestible for white audiences. Western cinema has constructed images of Asian Americans as obedient, assimilated, or “other” resulting in Asian American audiences rarely seeing stories of Asian histories, struggles, or the reality of their existence as a minority in America.

Resistance: Asian American Cinema

Racialized themes have been repeatedly challenged, especially through the Visual Communication Movements of the early 1970s, which sought to tell true stories of Asian Americans. Motivated young Asian American filmmakers unified under this movement and

created films that captured Asian American history and rejected Western cinematic stereotypes. The stereotypical depictions of Asian Americans in cinema lead to the creation of Visual Communications, National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), and Asian Cine Vision (ACV), which redefined the presentation of Asian Americans in film. The goal of these movements was to challenge the harmful racial consequences of fitting Asia and Asian Americans into specific tropes while demonstrating the reality and vitality of Asian Americans through the depiction of honest cultures and histories.

Visual Communications was a program that began at UCLA in the early 1970s and prompted the development of a co-authorship between students and independent Asian American filmmakers. Since the majority of the work produced by Asian American filmmakers and students were documentaries, they heavily influenced the artistic community and Asian American identities. Visual Communication films were anti-capitalist, challenged Western ideologies, and led to the creation of Ethno-Communications, a movement which motivated Independent Asian filmmakers to work together on projects, like the Asian American film *Manzanar* (1971). *Manzanar* is a documentary that paints a vividly accurate picture of life at Japanese internment camps during World War II.¹¹ Author Jun Okada explains the strong impact *Manzanar* had on the Asian American community as well as the films effort to confront racism: “*Manzanar* was less an attempt to master the form of cinema than an attempt to use cinema as a device of preservation and documentation with a decidedly ideological purpose: to redress the internment with the larger project to fight racism.¹²” *Manzanar* is meaningful and relevant to the Asian American community by illustrating the struggles faced by Asian Americans. *Manzanar* was able to outstrip the typical shackles of the Western perspective as it

¹¹ Robert Nakamura, *Manzanar*, 1971; USA: UCLA Ethno Communications Program

¹² Jun , Okada, *Noble and Uplifting and Boring as Hell’: Asian American Film and Video, 1971-1982*, 26

heavily resonated with Asian American audiences by attempting to fracture the pre-existing tropes in Western cinema. These regurgitated themes in Western cinema came from ideas of Asian Americans dictated by the West. *Manzanar* exhibits the ways in which the Visual Communication movement sought to produce films that touched the Asian American community and redefine the connection between Asian Americans and cinema.

The portrayal of real stories of Asian Americans, characterizing their struggles of being accepted in America allows for the Asian community to acknowledge their losses and move towards a united future. The search for Asian American stories in film allowed for cinema to become a tool that remembers Asian American history and commemorates the struggles Asian Americans have faced. As mentioned by Okada in *Noble and Uplifting and Boring as Hell: Asian-American Film and Video*, Visual Communications, along with NAATA, motivated Asian American filmmakers to redefine the importance of cinema to Asian American communities and the creation of films for greater social change.¹³ By acknowledging the existence of there being “Asian American films,” it confirms that there are Asian American cultures and communities attached to cinema produced accurately by Asian Americans.¹⁴ This idea is firmly illustrated by filmmakers acknowledging the struggles of Asian Americans and depicting them on screen without stereotypes, which has allowed them to preserve the stories of Asian Americans and maintain a connection with Asian Americans’ past, to move towards a unified future. Evidence of this can be found in the 1988 documentary *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* which follows the story of Vincent Chin, an Asian American who fell victim to a hate crime and lost his life by being beaten to death by white auto shop workers. Due to its documentary format, the film outlines anti-capitalist

¹³ Ibid, 27

¹⁴ Peter X. Feng, "In Search of Asian American Cinema." *Cinéaste* 21, no. 1/2 (1995), 32

ideas by depicting the damaging and deadly effects of late capitalism.¹⁵ Vincent Chin lost his life to auto shop workers who disliked Asian Americans partially due to negative perceptions of Asian economic superpowers. Asian automobile companies were weakening the American economy, and many white Americans grew fearful for their jobs and livelihoods. Many felt that Asian Americans were to blame for America's debilitating economy, especially with regards to the automotive industry. Vincent Chin's story presented audiences with a genuine, despondent story of Asian American struggle within the United States, and the constant fight for justice.

More Asian American organizations formed, and although the movement began on the West Coast, it soon spread to the East. The formation of Asian Cine Vision in New York promoted the first Asian Film Festival in 1978. Despite the noble and impactful movements created by independent Asian American filmmakers, there were small developments as independent works continued to produce, but few were Hollywood theatrical releases. Even into the 1990's popular releases like *Joy Luck Club* and *M. Butterfly* were still being regarded as Asian cinema, continuing the idea of Asian American filmmakers being separate from the Hollywood monopoly. However, this does not discredit the work done by the movements and organizations of the '70s as mentioned by Peter Feng in his article; *The State of Asian American Cinema: In Search of Community*;

“..most Asian American filmmakers acknowledge that a variety of institutions have helped them complete their films and find audiences, ranging from National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) grants to Asian American film festivals...”

Feng emphasizes the power these organizations held for Asian American filmmakers decades

¹⁵ Christine Choy, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, 1987; USA: Filmmakers Library, Movie

after they were created.¹⁶ Organizations like NAATA and Visual Communications challenged the racialized ideas regurgitated in cinema by funding and promoting movies created by and for Asian American audiences. These organizations, movements, and studies influenced the presentations of Asian Americans in cinema today.

Asian Americans are a part of American culture, their contributions are evident through history and politics, yet they still hold the title of “other” in a white American society. In many ways, Asian Americans are the Other, lacking recognition and being placed in understandable themes and tropes, consumed by Western audiences. The struggles to change the perceptions of Asia and Asian Americans continue in cinema, but as Asian representation grows, so too does the respect within the industry for upcoming writers, directors, and actors. With the recent release and popular response to *Crazy Rich Asians* and *Parasite*, there is a heightened production of Asian written scripts. The increased presence of Asian stories and cultures within Hollywood further accentuates the understanding that Asian American culture is a part of American culture. Due to the influence of multiple Asian American film organizations, the call for a change in representation persists as the struggles of being an Asian American grows more prominent in the media. Although the history of Asian Americans in cinema has been ridden with stereotypes and appropriated by Western ideologies, there is a movement towards altering this once unbreakable mold. Despite new films coming out, many still prove to be problematic interacting with the tropes of Asian American characters. Challenging these themes are incredibly difficult for filmmakers, however, there are steps to change as Hollywood is accepting different depictions of cultures and people. Those who have been the "other" in society continue to be separated from what is considered the mainstream which is encapsulated in a Western space. With the

¹⁶ Peter X. Feng, "The State of Asian American Cinema: In Search of Community." *Cinéaste* 24, no. 4 (1999), 24.

acceptance of Asian American writers, directors, and actors the Other is beginning to occupy a space within America as Asian cultures now being seen as a part of American stories and cinema.

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Chile: Detouring the Road to Socialism, 1970-1973

By Yohel Salas¹

Leftist revolutionaries often resort to armed struggles after exhausting other avenues of change, to reach an executive position to carry out agendas that benefit their country's working class. However, Chile experienced a different revolution, one involving the ballot box and multiple campaign attempts. Salvador Allende rose to the position of President of Chile through electoral means, a rare occurrence in Latin America as many other attempts at revolution in the hemisphere were met with armed struggles and bloodshed, as seen in the uprisings to oust the Bautista regime of Cuba and the Somoza family of Nicaragua. In 1970 Salvador Allende led a coalition, Unidad Popular (Popular Unity—UP), consisting of Socialists, Communists, and people of other leftist ideologies. The UP coalition was an attempt to gather support and ultimately landed Allende the office of the presidency. Chile doesn't have a two-party system like that of the U.S., rather they're a representative democratic republic—making room for multiple parties to participate in elections. Allende ran in a multi-party race, where their congress, functioning under a proportional representation, decides who wins if no one receives a majority vote, a victory typically goes to the top vote-getter. Once in office, Allende carried out policies aimed to benefit the Chilean working class as proposed in his “Popular Unity Government: Basic Program” in 1970. In the short term, results looked promising with an increase in wages, job creation, as well as the nationalization of copper mines, electrical plants, and railroads among other assets. Allende had inherited a damaged economy from his

¹ The author, being also an editor, recused themselves from the editing process regarding this article. It received no special treatment and was required to conform to all standard requirements.

predecessor Eduardo Frei who advocated reformist policies that left Chile in debt and division. In the long run, Allende was struggling to meet his intended goals of a peaceful transition to socialism, with the weight of opposition on his home front in Chile, the American press as well as the Nixon Administration and then-Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, intervening in Chilean politics.

Allende's goal was to transition from wealth being concentrated in the hands of the few, to investing in the working class, and he intended to make it happen through nationalizing several private institutions while not resorting to violence. Allende was one to 'play by the book' as opposed to his counterparts in other parts of Latin American who resorted to guerrilla warfare. Allende was also not in favor of implementing an authoritarian-like rule, as capitalists and conservative critics might suggest. This stance by Allende was bold considering just years earlier Fidel Castro of Cuba, a friend of the Allende administration, overthrew the Bautista regime through an armed struggle with guerrilla warfare tactics.

The tactics that Castro used were influenced by the revolutionary Augusto Cesar Sandino of Nicaragua, who emerged victorious against U.S Marines in an armed conflict in the late 1920s.² Once in power Castro and his allies would target political opposition and the right-wing press. Public trials and executions of the former dictator's henchmen were held, with the intent of securing the survival of the revolution. While Allende shared much of Castro's political ideologies, he chose to pursue them through electoral means rather than with violence.

Allende's approach gave new hope to the Latin American region to transition to a system that benefited the poor and working-class, without the necessity of bloodshed. Though Allende assumed power constitutionally and ruled fairly, opposition on Allende's home front and foreign

² Marc Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 113

intervention severely slowed his ability to put his agenda into practice, most notably by an antagonistic Congress that failed to cooperate by providing funds Allende requested. An American-backed coup staged by General Augusto Pinochet overthrew him from office, Allende lasted from 1970 to 1973. Sufficient evidence demonstrates the American press, covert operations, as well as economic and political intervention obstructing Allende's path to socialism— as well as a combative right-wing on his home front.

Allende Behind The Wheel: Fueled By A Leftist Ideology

“Chile's Leading Marxist: Salvador Allende” by Juan de Onis from the New York Times, portrays Salvador Allende as hopeful, yet still met with criticism. In this piece, it starts with Salvador Allende being introduced as a medical student forty years prior, exposing himself to Marxist-Leninist criticism of the capitalist society. As a medical student at the University of Chile, Allende entered politics during the dictatorship of General Carlos Ibanez (1927-1931). His student opposition activities landed him jail time, but despite this, he rose VP of the student federation the same year he received his medical degree in 1932. In 1933, Allende along with former student leaders and Marxist intellectuals founded the Chilean Socialist Party, Allende being elected national deputy in 1937.³ Between 1937 through 1939 Allende held a position as Regional Secretary of Valparaiso (Secretario regional de Valparaiso), as well as being elected a deputy, (equivalent to a congressman in the U.S) in their parliamentary elections of 1937⁴. His experience as a student activist and his medical practice in provincial cities enabled him to reach that position through legitimacy. In 1939, he became Minister of Health in the Popular Front

³ Tedeschi, Sara K, Theodore M Brown, and Elizabeth Fee. “Salvador Allende: Physician, Socialist, Populist, and President.” American journal of public health. © American Journal of Public Health 2003

⁴ BCN. Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, “Salvador Allende Gossens. Presidentes De La República En El Congreso Nacional,” (BCN. Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, January 1, 1970)

Coalition, under President Pedro Aguirre Cerda. That same year, Allende's leadership was put to the test through a natural disaster, with relief efforts earning him a national and positive reputation⁵. Allende then published his book, *Socio-Medical Problems of Chile*, attacking Chile's capitalist system and blaming it as a cause for illnesses and malnutrition amongst the poor and working class. Allende's history in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, credits him with more than 100 bills, specifically on social security, health policies, and women's rights.

This *New York Times* article proceeds on how Allende claims to be a different type of revolutionary by setting himself aside from Fidel Castro or Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam. At the time, there was a lot of skepticism of the government in Latin America with Allende saying,

“There are many Latin Americans who do not believe that the electoral process of bourgeois democracy can produce good government.”⁶ and following with, “they would favor power achieved only by a revolution of the masses, by the armed struggle. A victory by the electoral route will be difficult for us, but it is the best way by far for Chile.”⁷

Leading his leftist coalition Unidad Popular and having ties to the Chilean Communist Party, many of his proposals had anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic sentiment. He proposed a program that would nationalize major companies, and develop close ties to other communist countries such as North Vietnam, China, and Cuba. At the height of the Cold War between the Soviets and the U.S, it was politically advantageous to develop ties to other ideologically aligned nations, to promote the best chances for Unidad Popular's program. That same program called for the nationalization of the banking system, agrarian reform, and the elimination of the political and

⁵ Juan de Onis Special to The New York Times. 1970. Chile's leading Marxist: Salvador Allende. *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, September 7, 1970.

⁶ Juan de Onis, "Chile's Leading Marxist: Salvador Allende,"

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9

economic power of Chile's wealthy families. Allende recognized the resentment that the working class had towards the few rich families that formed the only private economic group in Chile, where the state already controlled most basic enterprises such as: oil, railroads, and power.⁸ Allende was well aware of the wealth inequality that plagued Chile saying, "bourgeoisie structurally dependent on foreign capital" is to blame for poverty, lack of housing, and hunger.⁹ He came into office intending to end this inequality and beginning "the construction of socialism."¹⁰ He goes on to say that Chile would have a unique approach, not following other countries in their violent revolutions, stating that the nation was "better off industrially than Cuba at the start of her Revolution."¹¹ Allende dreamed of a legislative approach to replacing the old system with a new one, as opposed to arming the proletariat and lighting up Molotov cocktails.

One key step towards his plan would be the replacement of the present constitutional system, placing legislative power in two houses: the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. An elected body would select new judges for the supreme court. Reporters asked Allende at a news conference if his left-wing coalition would establish a one-party system and he answered "never!" as he maintained the support of the Communist Party as well as other radical left groups in his broad coalition¹². Allende's campaign intended to portray to his voters that his government would be fierce with foreign imperialists and oligarchs but compassionate to the working people of Chile. However, the demonization of leftist figures is a common tactic used by the American press. A critic of Allende said, "He will seem to be gentle, but it will be the iron fist in the velvet

⁸ Juan de Onis, "Chile's Leading Marxist: Salvador Allende,"

⁹ Juan de Onis, "Chile's Leading Marxist: Salvador Allende,"

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

glove. If he is elected it will just be a matter of time before most of Latin America becomes Marxist.”¹³ Allende was shown to be an optimist, loved by the Chilean people, and trusting of Chile’s democratic structures by ruling out the option of violent revolution, yet is met with criticism by the American Press.

Allende at the Polls

Marc Becker’s book, *Twentieth-Century Latin American Revolutions*, in the chapter, “The Chilean Road Socialism,” dissects the political activity before and during Allende's Presidency. In 1952, Salvador Allende campaigned for President for the first time, running under the Socialist Party of Chile.¹⁴ In that first attempt, Allende had poor showings and placed last in a field of four, however, with this attempt Allende did not intend to win, but rather lay his groundwork for his future attempts.¹⁵ In 1958, Allende ran as the candidate of the Chilean Socialist and Chilean Communist parties, of which were part of a coalition, *Popular Action Front*, to help increase Allende’s chances of an electoral win.¹⁶ He had better showings this time around with his support increasing fivefold, but still narrowly lost to Jorge Alessandri who received 36% of the vote, Allende earning 28%. Jorge Alessandri led a coalition of traditional liberal and conservative parties.¹⁷ Conservative Jorge Alessandri held office from 1958 to 1964. Salvador Allende had lost by 33,500 votes out of a 1.2 million cast.¹⁸ The narrow defeat inspired leftists to push Allende to claim power through extra-constitutional means. However, Allende held on to his faith in Chile’s traditions and institutional order. Fairly and without protest,

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ BCN., “Salvador Allende Gossens.”

¹⁵ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 139.

¹⁶ BCN., “Salvador Allende Gossens.”

¹⁷ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 139.

¹⁸ Ibid., 139.

Allende conceded defeat and encouraged congress to designate his conservative rival as President. All the same, conservatives were struck with fear at Allende's growing support and the increased left-populist sentiment during the 1958 election. That same fear pushed for the abandonment of Alessandri in order to rally behind the centrist Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei in 1962, to prevent a socialist victory—Eduardo Frei held the office of the presidency from 1964 to 1970. His victory would not have been made possible without the backing of both conservatives and centrists. Eduardo Frei played a large role in creating the state of the country Allende would later inherit.

A Reformist Predecessor

Eduardo Frei is remembered as a reformist and that left behind a hurting economy that Allende then inherited. While Frei was in office, he promised a “revolution in liberty.”¹⁹ Chile under Eduardo Frei saw the most progressive political activity in Chilean history, from an increase of education spending to agrarian reform in 1967²⁰. That same land reform expropriated land from a feudal style estate, legalizing peasant unions, and even encouraging the formation of cooperatives. Though these reforms were heading in the right direction, the Chilean people did not feel the efforts were sufficient enough to bring about the profound transformation in their society they felt was necessary. Frei was elected to a second reform, attempting a partial nationalization of the copper mines—the goal was to strengthen domestic control over the industry and increase earnings from exports²¹. Chile shifted away from its dependence on copper since the creation of synthetic alternatives contributed to the collapse of the nitrate industry earlier in the century. The copper industry in Chile was held almost entirely by U.S based

¹⁹ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 139

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 139

²¹ *Ibid.*, 139

corporations. Kennecott Corporation owned Chile's largest copper mine in the world, *Mina el Teniente*. Mines were profitable, but their wealth flowed to the U.S rather than remaining in Chile. Frei believed the full nationalization of the copper mines was too expensive, which instead led to a 'Chilenization' of the copper industry in which the government bought part ownership of the mines, hoping to reinvest the profits and double production.²² Chile purchased fifty-one percent of Kennecott Corporations and twenty-five percent of Anaconda Co., but in the end, the results were unsuccessful. Due to contracts, much of the profits continued to flow to the companies and not into the pockets of Chilean laborers.²³ Frei's efforts made him out to be a reformist through his "Chileanization" of the copper industry, but failure in having wealth flowed back into the hands of the workers and still concentrated in those at the top.

With help from friends: U.S. Covert Actions & Relations

It is crucial to note that most of Freis' reforms came into being with foreign aid and covert planning from the United States, only to have these loans create a burden for Chile. A policy carried out by the JFK administration, resembling the Marshall Plan, entitled the Alliance for Progress, enacted in 1961, was intended to flex the muscles of capitalism and portray the United States as a champion for economic development. The intention was to attract moderate reforms to prevent another Cuban style Revolution in the western hemisphere and halt any more Soviet influence on the Latin American region. Chile was its exhibit and would receive more aid than any other country involved in the program.²⁴ The U.S. also played a handsome role in the 1964 election through meddling. Also the CIA contributed three million dollars to Frei's

²² Ibid., 140

²³ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 140.

²⁴ Ibid., 140

electoral campaign and an additional seventeen million dollars in anti-Allende propaganda most notably when, “large amounts of funds were channeled into the opposition media, notably *El Mercurio*, to help the ongoing propaganda campaign”²⁵ The CIA left it’s print on Chile before and during Allende’s presidency and is often brushed off. CIA officer, Jack Devine, published in *Council on Foreign Relations* journal that a strategy was carried out on supporting Allende’s domestic political opponents and making sure Allende did not dismantle the institutions of democracy: the media outlets, political parties, and labor organizations that formed the Chilean opposition.²⁶ Devine arguably mentions *El Mercurio* never used propaganda to deliberately mislead readers towards Allende’s government economic policies, however emphasizing stories on government seizures of private property and specter of economic disaster.²⁷ In any case, American intelligence was still present and loaded language like, seizures of private property, reflects on their stance for Allende.

The article, *Democratic Peace and Covert War: A Case Study of the U.S Covert War in Chile*, covers a number of the steps and phases enacted to obstruct fair elections in favor of Salvador Allende’s challenger. Phase 1 involved the Kennedy Administration’s aims to influence the outcomes of the 1964 presidential election, this action took various forms but consisted of two main factors. (1) Direct funding of the Christian Democratic Party candidate, Eduardo Frei, and (2) massive anti-Allende propaganda campaigns.²⁸ An estimate of roughly \$4 million was spent by the CIA on about 15 clandestine action projects for the 1964 election, and other claims state that approximately \$20 million was invested into the Frei Campaign. Frei’s electoral victory

²⁵ Jaechun Kim, "Democratic Peace and Covert War: A Case Study of the U.S. Covert War in Chile." *Journal of International and Area Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005), 31

²⁶ Devine, Jack. "What Really Happened in Chile: The CIA, the Coup Against Allende, and the Rise of Pinochet." *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (2014), 29

²⁷ Devine, "What Really Happened in Chile:[..]", 29

²⁸ Kim, "Democratic Peace and Covert War:[..]", 30

proved that these campaigns were a success for the US.²⁹ However, Frei failed to live up to the growing demands of Chilean society.³⁰ His moderate reforms were too extreme for conservatives and not radical enough for leftists. Heavy debt became a burden and triggered an increase in inflation, and his progressive reforms strained relations with conservative allies. The midterm congressional election had a shortage in support for the traditional liberal and conservative parties, falling from 43 percent in 1965 to 31 percent in 1965.³¹ These poor showings also led to the dissolution of their parties, leading to the reconstitution in 1967 of liberals, conservatives, and right-wing radicals as a National Party. With this new face, the conservative bloc gave a better showing in the 1969 congressional elections, resulting in scoring twenty percent of the vote.

Allendes Inauguration

For the 1970 presidential election, a big portion of Chile's political spectrum moved significantly leftward. Going back to the beginning of the article, it shifts to portray him as the solemn winner of a plurality, and becoming the 'President-Elect', as called in the U.S, at the age of 60 and proclaiming himself as a Marxist.

Allende, once more running as a leftist candidate as the head of *Unidad Popular*, (UP, Popular Unity) coalition³². UP consisted of socialists, communists, Christian Democrats, Christian socialists, and other dissident radicals. Under their campaign, UP published the "Popular Unity Government: Basic Program", in 1970. This document brought awareness to

²⁹ Ibid., 30

³⁰ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 140

³¹ Staff Report of The Select Committee to study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence activities United States Senate. 1975. Review of Covert Action In Chile. Edited by Frank Church and John G. Tower. U.S. Intelligence Committee on Intelligence. U.S. Government Printing Office, 5.

³² Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 144.

Chile's dependence on imperialist powers and global capitalism, and how their export economy did not benefit the Chilean people. Some economic policy goals this program advocated for were; the nationalization of national monopolies, natural resources (copper, iron and nitrate mine), banks, and infrastructure (electricity, railroads, air and sea transportation)³³. This program was the basis by which they UP ran their campaign for Salvador Allende. *The Washington Post, Chile Inauguration: A Leftist Fiesta*, gives an account of who was present and what took place during the Inauguration. The then-Assistant Secretary of State, Charles Meyer, met Allende for 45 minutes on November 4th, 1970. The conversation was kept secret but Meyer reported it to be 'serious and friendly', and essentially was sent to acknowledge Allende's victory on behalf of President Nixon³⁴. Though Allende's position was extremely critical of the U.S government, Allende did seek to establish normal relations with mutual respect.³⁵ Latin American exiles and representatives from other Communist countries, even those with no formal relations with Chile, were having a good time at the inauguration³⁶. These same "out-of-power" leftists and delegates from North Vietnam, China, North Korea and Cuba celebrated in the courtyard of the presidential palace and toasted to the ascension of Allende.³⁷ Though the newly ascended president of Chile welcomed representatives of 65 nations Chile to hold diplomatic relations with, the favored guests were those of trade unionists, leftist militants, and especially Cuban representatives. Their welcoming was broadcasted and the press was also called in to record the greetings and then lead to a series of interviews with local television and radio newsmen. Leftists, militants, and delegates of Chinese and South American backgrounds gave interviews to

³³Ibid., 144.

³⁴ Lewis H. Diuguid and Foreign Service Washington Post. 1970. "Chile Inauguration: A Leftist Fiesta." *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (1959-1973), Nov 05, 1970.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

media outlets. Though the article only portrays the festivity, it was convenient to have allies of similar political left-leaning ideology because of the aggression the U.S was giving, notably funding Eduardo Frei to secure his victory. The last thing Allende would want is extra aggression from foreign powers and hostility for his policies and agenda.

The Socialist Route: Your Destination Is On The Left

Allende's policies consisted of nationalizations and expropriations that the workers themselves demanded and were partially started through his predecessor. On December 21, 1970, Allende called for the nationalization of the foreign-owned copper industry that made up three-quarters of the country's exports. This action was well-received and popular support was given since the previous Eduardo Frei started partial ownership through his "Chilenization".³⁸ On July 17, 1971, the Allende administration nationalized the large copper mines with the unanimous support of congress; and to United Nations principles. Chile compensated the corporations for the book value of the mines, minus excessive profits of which Allende argued the higher-ups would keep more than fair, and that these mines rightfully belong to Chile³⁹. Coal, Steel, International Telephone and Telegraph, and Ford soon followed in the nationalization wave and disrupted foreign firms. Workers pressured Allende in an attempt to force him to move more quickly on the expropriations and nationalization; workers occupied management offices and refused to leave until an expropriation took place. By the end of 1971, the Popular Unity had taken over more than 150 industries, hence meeting the expectation for workers. Agrarian reform was under fast pace under The Popular Unity Government and was an extension from the 1967

³⁸ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 146

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 146.

Agrarian reform under his predecessor Frei.⁴⁰ Agriculture in Chile was a less important source of employment and export products than other Latin American countries. This situation meant less resistance to agrarian reform, which made the government move fast with a massive agrarian reform program.⁴¹ Allende managed to distribute more land in a year than Frei had in six. To make agriculture an increasing source of employment and export, agricultural production must increase, and the expropriated land had plans for organized cooperatives and land titles given to peasants. This agrarian reform consisted of and included more than just expropriation, farmers needed credit, and access to physical capital (equipment, tools, supplies). However, due to the fast pace, the government could not provide these amenities, affecting how successful the program would be practiced.⁴² The failure to meet these amenities was a result of opposition from Congress and even those on the left arguing the pace of implementing Allende's program.

A rise in disagreements on the leftist side dealt with the pace of direction the government should take, given that their 1971 short term achievements reflected in 1972 on rising inflation, shortages, and lack of foreign exchange. Congress refused to increase taxes, which resulted in a scarcity of funds for public works projects that initially brought their short-term goal into fruition. These acts left the middle class alienated and extreme leftists felt these problems stemmed from governmental inaction. The Marxist Chilean administration managed to get a major redistribution of income and it led to an increase in demand, but unfortunately, it did nothing to increase production to satisfy it. The Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, pointed out in further reading how "Marxism is a revolution of production; Allende's was a revolution of

⁴⁰ Ibid., 146.

⁴¹ Ibid., 146.

⁴² Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 147

consumption”⁴³, championed by Castro's goal of a drastic increase of sugar production in the 1960s, while Allende focused more on increasing wages and triggering an increase in demand in consumption

Take The Next Exit On Your Right: Detour Ahead

Allende experienced roadblocks from all angles. On his homefront in Chile for example, despite having congressional support, opponents in both the legislature and judiciary created barriers for the Popular Unity nationalization efforts. Particularly the oppositional Congress refused to provide funding for Allende’s socialization programs, leaving Allende no choice but to use laws during the Frei Administration to his advantage and move ahead.⁴⁴ On a different corner, the nationalizations gave the U.S. a convenient reason to cut aid, increased economic aggression, aid from the “Alliance for Progress Program”.⁴⁵ The U.S. hand didn’t stop there, it held a big role in economic obstruction for Chile:

“Declassified NSC records and a memo show conclusively that, after the inauguration of Allende, the Nixon administration moved quietly and quickly to shut down multilateral and bilateral foreign aid to Chile, intervening at the World Bank, IDB, and the Export-Import Bank to curtail or terminate credits and loans to Chile. In a memo prepared by Kissinger for the National Security Council(NSC), he explicitly stated that the U.S. policy toward the new Allende government was to reduce existing U.S. assistance and investment”⁴⁶

⁴³ Lewis H., and Foreign Service Washington Post. Chile Inauguration: A Leftist Fiesta. *The Washington Post, Times Herald* (1959-1973), Nov 05, 1970.

⁴⁴ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions*, 146.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁶ Kim, "Democratic Peace and Covert War[...]" 34.

The U.S has been involved prior to Allende in office and once in office moved discreetly to obstruct financial means for his Popular Unity government, Allende had roadblocks on all corners of his homefront and from the meddling U.S.

To no surprise, The *Wall Street Journal* published a piece strongly criticizing Allende and his reforms under, *Wrecking Chile to Build Marxism*, by Everett G Martin, on November 13, 1972. Nationwide strikes, consisting of independent truckers and protests from the middle class erupted against the Marxist policies. The view on these policies framed them as temperate remedies, considering inflation had increased by one hundred percent and no sight of it to halt that inflation.⁴⁷ Chile's main source of foreign exchange, copper, running short leading to unsatisfactory copper productions, and homegrown foods weren't proving to be sufficient.⁴⁸ A specific action like doubling wages triggered inflation and the seizure of farms both big and small only aggravated the food shortages. Arguably, Allende's antagonistic Congress and the hand of the U.S. provided barriers in easing the rising problems.

Epilogue

On September 11, 1973, army general Augusto Pinochet, appointed by Allende, led a military coup that ousted Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity government. This took place on the day Allende had planned to announce a plebiscite to resolve the economic crisis that the country was facing⁴⁹. When the Presidential Palace was being bombarded and under attack, Allende and a small group of close supporters in his government attempted to defend themselves and hold off for as long as they could. He made a last radio broadcast in the final moments that stated, "history was on the side of the workers and that they would determine the future of the

⁴⁷ Everett G. Martin, "Wrecking Chile to Build Marxism." *Wall Street Journal (1923 - Current File)*, Nov 13, 1972, 18.

⁴⁸ Martin, "Wrecking Chile to Build Marxism," 18.

⁴⁹ Becker, *Twentieth-century Latin American Revolutions.*, 150

country”.⁵⁰ Coup plotters made it clear that once captured, Allende would not go into exile peacefully and opting for torture, Allende instead took his own life away with a Kalashnikov rifle that Fidel Castro gifted him.⁵¹

Conclusion

Salvador Allende, the Marxist to reach an executive position in Latin America by its democratic rules, unfortunately, didn't achieve a successful socialist Chilean society. Despite his very best efforts, and his impressive record of activism since his youth, it's proven that Allende had no place to go on his homefront with the opposition, foreign economic obstruction from the U.S. and the American Press. Make no mistake, Salvador Allende was extraordinary as a person with a great history in politics since he was a student at his university. His medical background landed him the title of Health Minister and he exercised his administrative skills quite well. Allende definitely wasn't a quitter, given that he attempted multiple times to run for office and always increasing his support with the backing radicals, communists, and socialists. Though having the American press portraying him very negatively, he did not rule as an authoritarian and left behind violent ideas or a single-party system. He was respected as he was made out to be by other socialist countries, as shown in his inauguration. But once in practice, his program did have positive results, while in the long run failing to simmer down inflation rates and causing his coalition and other leftists to argue the pace of the reforms and causing the middle class to be left out. Not to mention the antagonistic Congress that set roadblocks against him and U.S economic intervention. This should not be taken as a model which proves democracy and socialism are

⁵⁰ Ibid.,150

⁵¹ Ibid., 150

incompatible. A dictatorship is not the solemn way to achieve socialism, the Chilean experience offers no evidence of that, and as Paul N. says, “It is not inherent in socialism to be inefficient.”⁵², it would be unfair to make these conclusions, must a leftist be elected fairly in the western hemisphere or elsewhere.

⁵² Rodan Rosenstein, Paul N. “Why Allende Failed.” *Challenge* (June 1974), 7

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A Successful Border Crossing in *Chicken Run*

Introduction

In the animated film *Chicken Run*, we learn the story of an entire hen farm trying to escape. The leaders of this escape are the co-protagonist of Ginger, a hen and Rocky, a rooster. I chose to explore the film in relation to the U.S.-Mexico border crossing experience as well as how the characters and the U.S. are represented. When watching the film, the audience witness criticism of the U.S. government, however, there are still details that glorify the U.S. through the character of Rocky. Throughout this paper I build on the possibility of the entire hen farm being general representations of Mexican migrants. With this said, my approach is to explore the content of *Chicken Run* in relation to the persistent paranoia that the U.S. government has had historically towards immigrants. Paranoia exists in spaces where it seems like the U.S. government is unable to control big waves of migration¹. In multiple scenes of the film the hens pursue to flee from their heavily patrolled farm, these imagery mirrors the migrant experience of crossing the heavily militarized U.S.-Mexico border. When critically watching *Chicken Run*, we can notice an engagement in the U.S.-Mexico Border discourse created through the use of the hen and rooster characters as human representors rather than their animal portrayals given their accents, dialogue and actions.

I find it significant to mention that this film has a global viewing audience since Dreamworks is an international company, therefore my interpretation is just one of the many possible. I will also mention the character of Rocky as a U.S. American, in order to have an approach where U.S. citizenship is not the only factor validating being an “American”. I pursued

¹ Raymond Michalowski, “Border Militarization and Migrant Suffering: A Case of Transnational Social Injury.”, 68.

this research topic because this is not the first time a children's film holds a discussion about the U.S.-Mexico border. A prior case that allows my arguments to be made is Manuel Martín-Rodríguez's article about *Lion King* in "Hyenas in the Pride Lands: Latinos /as an Immigration in Disney's *Lion King*". In his article it is argued that a border is created through having two locations that are opposite². In *Chicken Run* this is reflected when the audience is introduced to the scenery of a farm filled with dirt, desert-like characteristics, fields of mud and a life-less environment overall. The audience sees a clear depiction of the farm fences and barbed wire separating the chickens from the free landscape full of grass. These exaggerated opposite landscapes allow us to separate the land as two different places. For the purpose of continuing my analysis, I assigned the farm to serve as a symbolic representation of a borderland space. The green landscape on the other side of the fence is used to glorify the United States as always being *the side with the greener grass*. Before continuing with my analysis, it is important for me to state that the scenes I will touch upon are not written in chronological order within the timeline of the film but instead the scenes are organized based on theme.

Chicken Run Plot

The film begins with a night scene that provides the audience context that the location is a chicken farm. The characters of the film include the hen egg producers, one rooster inside the farm, and two human farmers. The introduction scenes repeatedly demonstrate the co-protagonist Ginger attempting to escape, along with her chicken colleagues, but failing at every attempt. Ginger and the rest of the hens live a plain life of egg producing and when they don't meet the farmers expected quotas then the hen is executed. Given this situation, Ginger's hopes and

² Martín-Rodríguez, Manuel. "Hyenas in the Pride Lands: Latino /as and Immigration in Disney's *Lion King*.", 53.

dreams are to escape the farm with her friends to obtain freedom and control of her life. The group of friends includes three main chicken supporting roles under the names Mac, Babs, Bunty, and a British Rooster named Fowler. The previous three named chickens are Ginger's partners in scheming the escapes while Fowler, on many occasions throughout the film, takes on the role of a father figure . The escape process is portrayed as impossible until the appearance of a new character. The audience is then introduced to the other co-protagonist Rocky, a U.S. American Rooster. With his appearance comes scheming, planning and pursuing freedom by trying to escape the farm once more. Rocky, miraculously falling from the sky, becomes a savior to the chickens and complicates Ginger's leadership role to her chicken community. Rocky attempts to guide the chicken to freedom but fails as he had promised to teach them how to fly over the fence, an impossible reality for the chicken. This last failed attempt pushes Ginger and the other chicken to work harder than ever, leading them to build a plane in which they will escape successfully.

Hens Representing Mexican Migrants

The only animals that appear in *Chicken Run* are chickens and roosters. To be able to give a race, ethnicity and or nationality to a chicken, we must humanize their traits through Anthropomorphism. For example, the concept of anthropomorphism which is “seeing the human in non-human forms and events”³ allows me to argue that they are not just chickens. The film creators gave the chicken characters human personalities and human decision-making skills detaching them from their realistic animal traits. By having animals who dress like humans and that don't act like their real animal presentation reinforces the audiences to see the characters

³ Jessica Birthisel, “How Body, Heterosexuality and Patriarchal Entanglements Mark Non-Human Characters As Male in Cgi-Animated Children's Films”, 341.

through a humanistic lense. Accents are also a keyway of connecting these animated characters to be more human-like rather than the practical nature of who they are⁴. Viewing and analyzing the hens and roosters through their human-like traits is unavoidable because the film creators assigned these characters to have prominent human appearances and human voices.

The choice of animal, being hens and roosters, have significant cultural context and pre-existing stereotypes. Companies like Disney contributed to this cultural context attached to stereotypes of chickens and representing Mexicans. The choice of animal is an interesting one that helps support the claim that these animals are potential representations of Mexican migrants. I make this argument by reflecting on an old U.S. animated film that has used roosters. The use of a rooster has been used to represent Mexicans and we see it in the Disney film *The Three Caballeros*, released in 1945, with their use of Panchito the rooster. *Chicken Run* builds on this history of Mexican representation.

I will emphasize that *Coyotes*, also known as human smugglers in the U.S.-Mexico border are also referred to as *Polleros* (Aquino 2012). A *pollero* in Spanish is a name used to describe someone who works with chickens by raising them. This Mexican/Latinx context of a pollero contributes to why the hens make more sense of representing Mexican Migrants over the British identity they are meant to have in the film. In this film we witness a multi-layer cultural product of the chickens' identity. Although the film creators have attempted to give the hens a British persona through their British accents, the chickens actually better embody the representation Mexican migrants because of their hardships and lived experiences.

The presence of Mexican culture exists in this film when we look at the historical context

⁴ Birthisel, "How Body, Heterosexuality and Patriarchal Entanglements Mark Non-Human Characters", 341.

of the legality of cockfighting. Through the presence of Mexican culture, those in the audience who share this culture can now see themselves as those characters in the film. Cockfighting is mentioned during a scene between Fowler and Rocky who are the only two roosters of the film. During a heated argument between the two roosters Rocky's response is "cockfighting is illegal where I came from"⁵. This dialogue helped me address that Rocky's statement implies that Fowler's position, as "the other", is a rooster originating from a place where it is a tradition and legal to have cockfights. What Rocky implied is a misrepresentation of information since cockfighting is illegal both in the U.S. and in the U.K.— Rocky's accusation to Fowler does not correlate with Fowler's visual U.K. national identity in the film. By having mentioned the culture of cockfighting, the creators of the film brought up a connection to Mexican context. Cockfighting is legal in Mexico and commonly practiced, having this in mind not only are the hens representation of Mexican migrants but so is Fowler within this cockfighting context. The film creators continue to build on a Mexican representation for the characters through the tradition of cockfighting. In connection to the hens of the film, whose main goal is to escape, Fowler shares the same goal. Now that we can place Fowler in a Mexican identity then we can also perceive him as a Mexican migrant who at the end of the film migrates and escapes with the rest of the hens.

Character Dynamic

There are three main categories in the characters in *Chicken Run*: the hens, the roosters and the humans. The humans are Mrs. Tweedy and Mr. Tweedy, who are the owners of the farm. The egg laying chickens are a source of income for the two farmers that play the role of the

⁵ Nick Park and Peter Lord, *Chicken Run*, August 10, 2000; USA: DreamWorks, Movie.

patrol. The hens are an allegory for the Mexican migrants as they constantly interact with the farmers and with the rooster characters with migration-themed dialogue. Fowler's role is to be in charge of the hen's behavior while Rocky's role is of the white savior. Rocky is interestingly unique in that he fluctuates between being a human smuggler and the embodiment of a United States patriot. In regard to Mr. Tweedy, he embodies the role of being the farm's border patrol and his responsibility is to ensure no hens escape.

Mrs. Tweedy and Mr. Tweedy showcase their governmental power in the twelfth minute into the film, as they are eating one of the hens. This scene allows Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy's to exercise their control over the hens' well-being and fate. This power relation is parallel to how the U.S. government controls the mobility and life experiences of Mexican migrants by having a border patrol. In this scene we see death not as a natural process but as a decision of Mr. and Mrs. Tweedy's. In the case of the U.S. government and the border patrol there are traumatic histories on how they utilize their power to decide the life or death fate of migrants. Through parallel comparison, we become aware of the authority, power, and exploitation that governments have over migrant bodies.

Within the relationship of the hens and roosters, Rocky is purposely made different. He is the only chicken with an American identity and wears a cape with the U.S. flag; his yellow feathering hints that he is blonde. Both of these features are prominent characteristics that convert Rocky into a patriotic white male. Rocky continues to embody an American patriotic identity as the hens consistently refer to him as their only hope of freedom, access to the free land and as brave during the last scene when he helps all the hens escape. Rocky's image is created by his wearing of an American flag and as an embodiment to the lyrics of The Star-Spangled Banner. We cannot see the hen characters as having white ethnic backgrounds but instead through the

colors of their animation. Unlike the rest of the characters, the hens are animated to be different shades of brown. Even if this animation decision was unintentional the hens are still *othered* (made different) through their color.

Another instance where the chicken is *othered* is when Mac, the most intellectual chicken, speaks to Rocky. Rocky claims that he cannot understand her and during an argumentative scene he states, “Was that English?”⁶. Mac is the only hen in the film with a deep Scottish accent. Some can argue that this is a joke referring to Rocky not understanding her intellectual manner, but I argue that this dialogue holds deeper significance. Rocky is referring to her strong accent as well since Mac is the only one whose accent is the most prominent and different. I connect Rocky’s dialogue to the phrase “Speak English!”, a phrase commonly used to marginalize minorities who either do not speak English or speak it with a notable accent. By including such clashes in communication the audience can notice that Rocky accepts an American accent as the correct way to speak English. The example in this scene is tied to the historical discourse of migrants being questioned and pointed out for their way of speaking. To add another reason to why the hens continue being a representation of Mexicans; Mac’s experience of being shamed for her accent, reflects the immigrant populations that are *othered* by American society for the simple reasons of pronunciation.

The First Scene

The protagonist in this film is Ginger, she is the hen who leads the rest in attempting to escape the farm as she aspires towards freedom. In this first scene we see Ginger having agency by escaping the farm by digging a hole under the fence. As she gets out successfully, but the others do not, the dogs become aware of her escape. Ginger is then chased around the farm by the

⁶ Nick Park and Peter Lord, *Chicken Run*, 2000.

dogs who have obviously been trained to stop these hens from leaving. When connecting the border crossing experience we can then see how Ginger represents Mexican women and makes migration not only appear as a male situation. Ginger experiences plenty of emotions as each of her attempts are shown to fail and only place her in solitary confinement. The narrative of attempting to cross the border and being unsuccessful multiple times is a shared experience for many migrants. In Alejandra Aquino Moreschi's work, "Cruzando La Frontera: Experiencias Desde Los Márgenes", we learn about the experience of a Mexican women migrant that has attempted to cross the border multiple times during 1999, a year before *Chicken Run* was released. The women's experience is as following:

"Corría 1999 y era la primera vez que doña Mati intentaba pasar al otro lado, se encontraba sola en Tijuana, completamente desanimada, con mucho miedo porque los agentes de migración ya la habían detenido tres veces y mantenido incomunicada en centro de detención."

"Ongoing 1999, it was the first time that doña Mati attempted to cross over to the other side of the border, she found herself alone in Tijuana, completely discouraged, with a lot of fear because the border patrol had already detained her three times and maintained isolated within the detention center."⁷

The experience of Ginger is similar to the lived-experience of doña Mati. Both attempted to cross multiple times and both had encounterments with the authority, in the case of Ginger she was punished by the farmers and Doña Mati was taken by border patrol agents. One last significant sharing between Ginger and doña Mati is that both felt lonely, scared, and hopeless. Doña Mati's

⁷ Alejandra Aquino Moreschi, "Cruzando La Frontera: Experiencias Desde Los Márgenes",14; My translation.

lived experience, similar to the situation of other women Mexican migrants, is what allows to draw a parallel between Ginger's plot development to a Mexican migrant's process crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

When watching the first scene, I was reminded of the depictions of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in the film *Desierto*, released in 2016. As simple as comparing the release date we can interpret plenty of the migration experience as a collective experience. Even though this film was released 16 years after *Chicken Run*, they both share the dog chasing scene that allows me to make a comparison. In *Desierto*, we have a U.S. white male, possibly militia member, trying to hunt down undocumented immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border.⁸ Situations like these are not fictional as Raymond Michalowski describes it to be “nighttime watches with anti-immigration Minutemen as they [peer] into the desert night ‘hunting’ for undocumented migrants”⁹. In *Desierto* the white male is successful in tracking, chasing and attacking immigrants because of his trained dog.¹⁰ These *Desierto* scenes mirror Ginger's attempt of running away from the dogs that were trained by the Tweedy's with the shared goal of keeping control of bodies. The connection between *Chicken Run* and *Desierto* demonstrate the lived experiences that film continues to discuss in regard to the U.S.-Mexico border narrative.

A Militarized Border

The film begins with a night scene, and the first object we see is barbed wire. Which to some audiences, barbed wire represents a border that physically separates two different sides. As the scene progresses, we get to see the chicken cages and the fences that are set up in a style

⁸ Jonas Cuaron, *Desierto*, October 14, 2016; Movie.

⁹ Michalowski, “Border Militarization and Migrant Suffering”, 63.

¹⁰ Jonas Cuaron, *Desierto*, 2016

similar to the set up of border detention centers. It is this introduction that reflects the farm as a militarized border. With an established representation of the U.S.-Mexico border: we can further this discussion by analyzing how the farm was heavily militarized. During the 1990s the U.S. government purposely militarized its borders. Michalowski argues that the reason is because “the intentional results of border militarization strategies [are] designed to force migrants away from safer routes and toward more dangerous ones”¹¹. One important scene is when the hens decided it was best to let go of their mission to escape and accept that they are just going to die trying. We realize this when Babs, one of the hens, knits a rope that would serve to hang herself. This imagery creates a violent presentation of the border crossing experience. Prior to the 1980’s crossing the border was not the deadly experience it started to become as time got closer to the years of the 1990’s.¹² It sends a message that all who try to cross the border will bring death upon themselves. These scenes reflect how the militarization of the border puts migrants in extreme/deadly situations.

In *Chicken Run*, one of the major parts of the plot was Mrs. Tweedy’s decision to modernize by getting a pie making machine that will kill her hens. Mrs. Tweedy was not able to fix her economic failure of the farm by relying on egg laying, so she augmented her technology and repurposed her farm and allowed her to profit as much as possible. I connect Mrs. Tweedy’s new machines with the advancement of technology in the U.S.-Mexico border. Jardine describes Operation Gatekeeper as “[enhancing] the U.S. - Mexico boundary in a material sense by increasing the number of U.S. Border Patrol agents and augmenting the amount of technology”¹³. When the U.S. government executed Operation Gatekeeper, it enhanced the U.S. control of the

¹¹ Michalowski, “Border Militarization and Migrant Suffering”, 66.

¹² Aquino Moreschi, “Cruzando La Frontera: Experiencias Desde Los Márgenes”, 9.

¹³ Jardine, Matthew, “Operation Gatekeeper” *Peace Review* v. 10 (no. 3), 329.

border. Mrs. Tweedy's farm, under this context, becomes a nation with borders; she controls the border patrol, lays the law and is responsible for the farm's economic status. Mrs. Tweedy's aspirations are to be economically successful like how the U.S. saw profitable gain by being the main executor of control for the border. Jardine emphasizes, "[the border] now has an economy larger than that of Poland"¹⁴. Being aware of the magnitude of the economic profit of the U.S.-Mexico border, we can see the parallel of Mrs. Tweedy's greedy dreams of becoming rich off the lives of her hens.

Adding to what has already been discussed, having a militarized border is typically reinforced by the media as the only way a nation can remain secure and safe. *Chicken Run* reinforces the concept of a militarized border. Referring back to Martin-Rodriguez's article: "Latinos /as and Immigration in Disney's *Lion King*" he states:

"the fictional/filmic militarized border that *The Lion King* presents is nothing but a reflection of the U.S.-Mexico border area from the late 1970s to that of our days, in which the immigrant as enemy is often imagined as part of an (in)visible army ready to invade the United States"¹⁵

What is being described here about *The Lion King* perfectly addresses the issues present in *Chicken Run*. The chickens are presented as a potential army the moment Fowler can treat them as his military trainees and line them up perfectly. In addition, Fowler reminds the chickens and the audience that he is someone who has a military background. Later, in the movie we have a scene of Rocky physically training the hens. This scene appears correlated with the hyena army scene in *The Lion King* in which Martin-Rodriguez refers to. In *Chicken Run* we see a mass of

¹⁴ Ibid., 334

¹⁵ Manuel, "Hyenas in the Pride Lands: Latinos /as and Immigration in Disney's *Lion King*", 57.

hens physically training as if they were an army. This army scene plays with the idea of the invasion being visible and invisible. When the hens train, they are only visible to Mr. Tweedy who becomes paranoid that the hens are organizing and taking over the farm. Mr. Tweedy addresses his concerns of paranoia to Mrs. Tweedy, and this is when the film criticizes the U.S. The film captures Mrs. Tweedy as failing to address the paranoia of Mr. Tweedy. The film implies the conclusion of not paying attention when her farm/nation was being destroyed by the hens. In connection to the migration discussion the film reveals about how the U.S. government's paranoia is all about the fears of immigrants *destroying* the nation.

Context on the U.S.-Mexico Border

The historical context is important to be able to understand why *Chicken Run* is potentially a U.S.-Mexico border film. This film was made in a moment where Mexican migrants made up a big percentage of all immigrants. There are a lot of correlations between what had occurred in the decade prior, the 90's, and the decade after the release of the film, the 2000's. According to the Pew Research Center, "Immigration grew sharply during the rapid economic and job expansion of the 1990s"¹⁶. The research stated that in the years of 1999 and 2000 immigration levels had peaked¹⁷. This is significant to my analysis because of the demographic influx of migrants; the film was created during a time where immigration in the U.S. was growing. As a result, the political climate of the time could have made an influence in the execution of *Chicken Run*. Pew Research Center noted that "Mexico represents by far the largest source of immigrants and is sending about 400,000 migrants each year"¹⁸. The research article

¹⁶ Pew Research Center: Hispanic Trends, ed. "Rise, Peak and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992 – 2004." Pew Research Center, 1

¹⁷ Ibid., 1

¹⁸ Ibid., 4

suggests that the push factor for immigration was not as major as the pull factor, the pull factor was the job opportunities available¹⁹. Emphasizing the connection to Ginger's aspiration to leave the farm and better herself through freedom. There is a correlation that exists here in the motives of the Mexican migrants and Ginger to emigrate. Through this evidence we concluded that *Chicken Run* is addressing the waves of Mexican migration.

It is significant to consider the history of immigration policy when engaging in topics of immigrant. In order to build Rocky's presentation as a part smuggler we have to see real case studies where smugglers have been key to the migration process. In "Operation Gatekeeper" by Matthew Jardine he states that, "migrants [were] actually having greater success in crossing than before 'Gatekeeper', the operation has led unauthorized migrants to rely increasingly on professional smugglers."²⁰ As the border was becoming more militarized through Operation Gatekeeper human smugglers were in high demand. This militarization of Operation Gatekeeper calls for the demand of human smugglers, just how Rocky is portrayed in relation to being a smuggler to the hens. In Jardine's statement he recognizes that the smugglers are professional in their field. Parallel to this is in minute nineteen of the film in which the hens see Rocky as a "professional flyer." Due to all of Ginger's failed attempts to escape, her next big answer was to fly over the fence. Leaving Rocky, the professional flyer, to become the key smuggler. Chickens cannot physically fly making the term symbolic, not only representing freedom but also that flying becoming successful border crossing. The hens now depend on Rocky, their professional smuggler, to help them fly out of the farm and cross the border.

In "Border Militarization and Migrant Suffering: A Case of Transnational Social Injury.",

¹⁹ Ibid., 6

²⁰ Matthew, "Operation Gatekeeper", 333.

by Raymond Michalowski there is an anecdote that has a parallel to one of the final scenes of *Chicken Run*. The anecdote is from 2006 so it was six years after the release of *Chicken Run* but the correlations are still significant. Michalowski states the following:

“[A] border patrol agent described to me his shock when he saw a truck literally ‘fly’ over the border fence”, “what he saw was a truck with a long ramp angled to the height of the fence, nosed into the Mexican side of the barrier” and “the smugglers had driven up the ramp with sufficient speed to vault the fence.”²¹

One of the final scenes of *Chicken Run* consists of a plane that had a large ramp facing the fence in order to escape. One of their challenges was to have the plane gain speed in order to make it over the fence. Eventually they were successful and if one needs to visibly see Michalowski’s anecdote then we can utilize the chicken’s final escape scene. By connecting both scenarios in such a manner there was no doubt that these *coincidences* are not just coincidences but instead reflect the process of the diversity of attempts to cross the border.

A Nation of Liberty

The criticism towards the U.S. in the film was done in a very indirect manner. One of the hunting arguments the film has is that the U.S. heavily idealized. For example, Rocky is portrayed as having a cocky personality, which can also be seen as word play since he is a cock. The first example is when Fowler refers to Rocky as “Pushy Americans”²². It is later seen again when Rocky abandoned the hens and one of the main hen characters states how she doubted that Rocky was American. This is interesting because this implication hints that Americans are not as

²¹ Michalowski, “Border Militarization and Migrant Suffering”, 72.

²² Park, Nick, and Peter Lord, dirs. *Chicken Run*. DreamWorks, 2000.

reliable, committed or honest like the rest of the world imagines. These small details of criticism made me wonder while watching the feel if there was any deeper criticism being made.

Regardless of the film's small criticism towards the U.S. government, the nation is still glorified. This glorification can be found in the politics within the film industry, yet in a film review the analytical standpoint is much more meaningful. In order to hold the propaganda argument that the U.S. is the land of freedom, then glorification of the U.S. must be present in a film. In order to replicate that for this film, Rocky, the only American character, shows patriotism and glorification for his nation as a place of liberty. The first thing we hear Rocky scream is “freedom” and moments later he recites the U.S. national anthem and says, “the land of the free and the home of the brave”²³. To the U.S. American audiences, who may not be critically analyzing the film, they might think of this as a cheesy patriotic scene. There is a joke that occurs right after this dialogue where one of the hens believes that Rocky is referring to Scotland; this is a moment where the U.S. is once more discredited for that nation they perform and claim to be. Not only does Rocky advertise freedom but he also carries his nation’s laws with him when he says, “over in America we have a rule”²⁴. Here we have Rocky glorifying the U.S. by demonstrating that the laws of the U.S. are better than the ones of foreign nations. A migrant narrative has been that the U.S. attracts many immigrants because of the laws of justice and a land where one can be and act freely. This perspective though is one of superiority, and continues to disregard the perspective of immigrant communities and diasporas. In the case of the film Rocky carries this perspective of superiority.

Rocky portrays that because he is an American, he has global freedom. He does this when

²³ Park, Nick, and Peter Lord, dirs. *Chicken Run*. DreamWorks, 2000.

²⁴ Ibid.

he mentions, “I’m a traveler by nature”²⁵. Rocky as an American has mobility while the hens do not have this freedom of movement. Rocky showed his mobility as he easily moved from entering and leaving the farm. The hens lack of ability in their mobility pursues the issue that immigrants deal with as the concept of legality restricts their mobility. When Rocky first entered the farm there were no issues since he flew inside. Then he quickly abandoned the farm by digging a hole under the fence, which the hens had failed doing in the first scene. In the final scene when the hens are about to fail their final escape plan, Rocky appears out of nowhere and jumps over the fence of the farm. This is interesting because it seems like this border plays no restrictions on him meanwhile the hens had spent a tremendous amount of time and effort to escape. Their final escape plan would have failed if they would have not received Rocky’s help. This finally reinforces Rocky’s image as the white savior that the hen’s need in order to have freedom. To put in a parallel position to the historical context of the migration narrative, the U.S. has presented itself through the white savior lens as the nation of liberty.

Closing Scene

In the last scene of the movie we witness the chickens enjoying, relaxing and having a new established community in the paradise Ginger had dreamed about. *Chicken Run* can potentially demonstrate the accomplishment of the American Dream as Ginger makes it to a glorified version of the U.S. and land of the free while assimilating through her marriage with Rocky. This is a plausible conclusion, but I would like to add that even on the very last image the audience gets the invasion element does not disappear at all. The last thing we are presented with is a sign that says, “Bird Sanctuary Keep Out” but the bird has been crossed out and instead says

²⁵ Ibid.

“Chikin”²⁶. The writing of the word chicken in such form infers two different interpretations about the chickens. The first one would be that the chickens are uneducated therefore they don’t know how to spell and when said aloud it assumes a thick Mexican accent. Although it has the purpose of humor, this portrays the hens negatively and as we have argued that they represent Mexican migrants then the interpretations extend as harmful as well. Besides the accented language interpretation and the intended humor in this, it is evident that the chickens invaded and claimed the land that was not theirs. This last scene reflects the paranoia that existed in the U.S. because of Mexican migration seen as a possible invasion. It is interesting to dissect a children’s film to find the deeper meanings and historical context that exist within the details of dialogue, character choice and location. This analysis hopefully causes a ruminating experience that brings other components of the film into further discussion; such as the content that regards the role of gender, which will bring a whole new perspective either far away or in relation to the border-crossing experience.

Conclusion

Ginger and Rocky as protagonist for *Chicken Run*, carry a whole conversation on attitudes about the increase of Mexican migration to the United States during the 1990s. There could be multiple interpretations to this film yet I argue that given the historical context of both the creation and release date that this film does contain details that reflect migration experiences. I reiterate that Ginger as a Mexican migrant woman could only cross the border because of Rocky’s white savior role. Not only does this film contain racial connotations but also participates in patriarchal norms. At moments it is unclear if the British creators of the film are

²⁶ Park, Nick, and Peter Lord, dirs. *Chicken Run*. DreamWorks, 2000.

criticizing or lavishing the United States. Nonetheless, the creators commentate on the rising governmental policy *issues* of increasing Mexican migration by including stereotypical characters along with the migration experience that reflect what real Mexican human migrants were experiencing when they encountered a heavy militarized border. To come to an end, *Chicken Run* is a film in which I urge Mexican children and adults to critically analyze the film when noticing the role that race and the borderland plays, all depending on their own and their families' experience with migrating to the United States.

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