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Revolutionary Futures: Romance and the Limits of Transnational Forms 1910-1986

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Revolutionary Futures:

Romance and the Limits of Transnational Forms 1910-1986

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in English

by

Renee Lynn Hudson

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Revolutionary Futures:

Romance and the Limits of Transnational Forms 1910-1986

by

Renee Lynn Hudson

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Yogita Goyal, Chair

"Revolutionary Futures" examines the revolutionary unconscious of American literature. While revolution shapes American national identity, it also threatens that identity as evidenced by American support for oppressive regimes such as Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship in the Philippines. Despite this fraught relationship, there is, I contend, a persistent preoccupation with revolution in its literature. This unease reveals itself through genre, itself productive of futurity and national imaginaries in the prose of authors as varied as Richard Wright, Cormac McCarthy, Jessica Hagedorn, and Junot Díaz. This dissertation rethinks heterosexual romance as the paradigmatic frame for the nation by drawing upon recent queer theory to investigate how failures of romance offer new models of kinship. By resisting the prevailing understanding of romance as allegory, my project untangles more complicated, unsettled ways of imagining the future. The authors I consider create new models for political futures that do not rely on teleological conceptions of time, but, instead, are open-ended and generate new forms of

historicity. With such innovative kinship models driving conceptions of the future, each novel posits a different national imaginary that reconsiders the relationship between kinship and the state. By analyzing revolutions that engage with the history of Spanish colonization and American intervention, such as the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the Filipino People Power Revolution (1986), and the Dominican Republic under the dictator Trujillo (1930-1961), I track how these revolutions are central to American literature, and prove the distinction between center and periphery to be illusory. In this way, my dissertation brings together literary criticism, critical race theory, and queer studies. More specifically, it reshapes how transnationalism and hemispheric studies conceptualize American literature by building upon earlier work on majority and minority literatures as well as multiculturalism.

The dissertation of Renee Lynn Hudson is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2016

for D.R.,

patron saint of lost causes

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Introduction: The Revolutionary Unconscious in US Literature, 1910-1986

Revolution haunts US literature. Invoking Jameson's political unconscious, the revolutionary unconscious evokes the uncanny, the return of the repressed in the national imagination. Indeed, unease often accompanies the relationship between the United States and revolution given the number of revolutions the US has stridently opposed. Here we can think of the United States aiding the Philippines in overthrowing Spain, only to occupy the archipelago for nearly fifty years. Or, we can think of Cuba and the Dominican Republic, where the fear of communism led the United States to oppose the Cuban Revolution and support Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic. This resistance to revolution would seem to be antithetical to US principles; however, as scholars such as Gretchen Murphy illustrate, celebrating a revolutionary tradition while advancing an imperialist agenda marks the paradox of US policies such as the Monroe Doctrine (5-6). Similarly, the US's advocacy of liberation and democracy as stemming from the American Revolution coupled with the disavowal of revolutions on the so-called periphery points to the conflicted relationship that marks the US's stance toward such forms of resistance. As Amy Kaplan compellingly argues in her examination of historical romances during the 1890s, "[r]evolution, in these novels, thus becomes a uniquely American heritage lodged firmly in the past, safe from the grasp of minorities and immigrants at home and anticolonial nationalists abroad" (*Anarchy* 118). In other words, the US celebrates its revolutionary history as long as it remains in the past. Because of the US's uncomfortable proximity to revolutions on the periphery, which challenge its own revolutionary history, this aspect of revolution is relegated to the unconscious, the secret, the hidden.

In this way, the American Revolution and revolutions on the periphery create the dialectical tension at the center of the revolutionary unconscious. Indeed, while revolution shapes

US national identity, it also threatens that identity as evidenced by US support for oppressive regimes. By analyzing revolutions that engage with the history of Spanish colonization and US intervention, such as the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the Filipino People Power Revolution (1986), and the Dominican Republic under the dictator Trujillo (1930-1961), I track how these revolutions demonstrate an alternate revolutionary history that foregrounds the centrality of ethnic US literature. The first half of my project historicizes how two already established forms, the gothic and the western, emerged out of revolution and imperialism. The gothic informs Richard Wright's emergent sense of global solidarity in Francoist Spain while Cormac McCarthy's western as well as the work of María Cristina Mena reveal the collusion between empire and domesticity. The second half of my dissertation investigates two genres that emerged out of colonization, what I have identified as the guerrilla conversion narrative and the Latin American Dictator Novel. Chapter three analyzes how Ninotchka Rosca and Jessica Hagedorn draw upon the work of José Rizal to imagine narrative and political possibilities for revolution based on heterosocial friendship. Meanwhile, Junot Díaz and Julia Alvarez transform the conversion narrative to demonstrate a revolutionary form of the *bildungsroman* that resists the totalizing narrative of the Latin American Dictator Novel.

As Jameson reminds us, genre offers us one way to investigate submerged histories. By attending to the structures, conventions and genealogies that characterize genres of romance, I uncover how the question of revolution has been suppressed as the US upholds a particular type of revolution while disavowing those on the periphery. Indeed, attending to the revolutionary unconscious in US literature means revising our understanding of revolutionary mythology in the US. The American Revolution reveals the disjuncture between history and representation that

forms romance's central concern as it underlines the incompatibility of the US revolutionary spirit with the US's opposition to revolutions that threaten its imperial projects. Richard Slotkin outlines these conflicting mandates in his discussion of President Eisenhower's Third World policy in which "the revolutions then in progress seemed clearly inimical to American interests" (408), but "[t]hough they disliked the revolutions they knew, Eisenhower's advisers were unwilling to concede that the word 'revolution,' with its connotations of rapid, liberating, and progressive change, could no longer be used by an American President with safety and authenticity" (408). In short, despite the threat revolutions pose to US empire, to consciously refuse revolution would mean to disavow a key part of US exceptionalism: the mythology surrounding the American Revolution, with its claims as the first free colony in the Americas, undergirded by an ethos of freedom.

Indeed, as Hannah Arendt points out, the evacuation of the US from the discourse of revolution stems from the failure to situate the revolution within philosophical and political thought (212). However, a far more compelling reason for the erasure of the American Revolution emerges in Arendt when she argues,

> Fear of revolution has been the hidden *leitmotif* of postwar American foreign policy in its desperate attempts at stabilization of the *status quo*, with the result that American power and prestige were used and unused to support obsolete and corrupt political regimes that long since had become objects of hatred and contempt among their own citizens (209).

That is, the erasure of the American Revolution within the US political imagination is a strategic choice that allows the US to pursue its own expansionist interventions into other countries. Further, Arendt argues that this fear of revolution undergirds US foreign policy, a point that I extend into literary study by demonstrating how contemporary US literature theorizes revolution.

I argue that the Eisenhower example Slotkin discusses and Arendt's articulation of the fear of revolution point to a desire to uphold a particular *kind* of revolution that installs a form of conservatism rather than liberation. As María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo notes in her remarkable book, *The Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas*, the role of revolution holds a paradoxical position, both in the US and Latin America. In one especially telling example, she observes a 1962 speech made by President John F. Kennedy in which he comments that the goal of the Alliance for Progress Initiative is to "'complete the revolution of the Americas'" (3), which Saldaña-Portillo rightly reads as more than a neocolonial rhetorical gesture (4). Rather, she argues that Kennedy's ability to draw upon a shared history of revolution in the Americas indicates the entanglement between discourses of revolution and those of development (4-5). By unpacking the ways in which the discourse of development incorporates the language of revolution, she further underscores the persistent preoccupation with revolution in the US national imagination as well as the strategies of containment that repress revolutionary thought in service of developmentalism. However, whereas she argues for the ways in which discourses of revolution are seduced by the ideas of developmentalism, I instead emphasize the other side of her argument, how "even as Cold War development paradigms defined themselves in contradistinction to revolutionary movements, they nevertheless articulated the requirement for revolutionary agency and change in the American nations" (7). That is, I explore the investment in revolutionary history in the Americas, particularly the friction between revolutions on the "periphery" and the legacy of the American Revolution. While Saldaña-Portillo contends that development and revolution are "animated by a particular theory of subjectivity," I consider how the previous remarks by both Eisenhower and Kennedy reveal a US purchase on revolution that, in the case of the latter, conflates revolutionary histories that elide the American Revolution with

Latin American revolutions even as the US disavows and undermines these latter forms of revolution.

In distinguishing the American Revolution from those in Latin America, I turn to Hannah Arendt's discussion of a central paradox in the Declaration of Independence: the erasure of property in favor of the pursuit of happiness, which I contend provides one way of theorizing this distinction beyond different colonial regimes (which are then replaced by US expansion from the nineteenth-century on). Arendt argues that the failure of the American Revolution was the failure to maintain the revolutionary spirit (117), a failure she locates in the formulation "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" rather than "life, liberty, and *property*, which currently defined civil, as distinct from political, rights" (117-118, emphasis mine). Arendt reads "the pursuit of happiness" as meaning both "private welfare as well as the right to public happiness, the pursuit of well-being as well as being a 'participator in public affairs'" (123), the latter of which she asserts disappeared from the meaning of "the pursuit of happiness," which resulted in the failure of the American Revolution because it led to an emphasis on private welfare rather than an engaged citizenry (123).

However, in drawing attention to the notable omission of property in the Declaration of Independence, Arendt unwittingly draws attention to a distinguishing feature of the American Revolution, no doubt because of her investment in the political philosophies that distinguish the French and American Revolutions rather than the historically specific circumstances that differentiate the two. Namely, Arendt – even as she remarks upon the paradoxical emphasis on freedom in the US despite the continued reliance on slavery (61-62) – fails to consider how the assertion of property in an abstract philosophical sense neglects to take into account the specious claim to property the colonists had in the Americas. This claim to the land, not surprisingly,

informs Latin American revolutions in a way that it cannot in the US because of divergent approaches to indigenous ownership of the land.

Indeed, the threat indigenous peoples pose to the land informs Doris Sommer's influential text, *Foundational Fictions* so persuasively because her book demonstrates how romance was used to foreclose any indigenous claim to the land (15) by incorporating indigenous characters into creole marriages (38-39) thus ensuring the creole class's legitimacy while neutralizing the threat of indigenous rights. Despite the constant refusal of indigenous rights to the land, the issue is far from resolved as it continues to inform Latin American revolutions to the present day, namely as a strategy of authentication.[1] In the US context, rather than ensuring land rights through miscegenation with indigenous peoples, the US virtually exterminated the indigenous population while simultaneously pursuing legal strategies that divested them of their land.[2] Thus, Saldaña-Portillo's example of President Kennedy's conflation of US and Latin American revolutions demonstrate how he glosses over the key factors that distinguish both types of revolution.

By distinguishing the American Revolution from Latin American revolutions, I call for a reevaluation of the significance of revolution in the US apart from the counterrevolutionary

[1] The appropriation of indigeneity in Latin America underlines how the claim to indigenous heritage served to grant a form of legitimacy to land rights, which is a strategy unavailable in the US. As Saldaña-Portillo points out, "even as indigenous struggles seemed to be at the forefront of revolutions in the Americas, the Indian in mestizaje is dead weight, modernity incomprehensible to him. Indeed, Mexican scholars and philosophers since Manual Gamio have repeatedly shackled the Indian and his lack of futurity with the responsibility for the failure of a system that was predicated on his erasure to begin with" (283). Further, even as indigeneity authenticated revolution, as Saldaña-Portiollo notes in her discussion of the Mexican revolution, "the revolutionary elite also identified Indian difference as a potential threat to the formation of a revolutionary nation" (205).

[2] See Harris, 1721-1724, particularly footnotes 46 and 49.

legacy of the American Revolution.[3] When, in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time,* Reinhart Koselleck contends (albeit in a different context) that "all modern expressions of 'Revolution' spatially imply a *world revolution*" (49), he points to the dangers latent in any revolution: that it will spread like a contagion. Thus, when twentieth-century revolutions demonstrate what a world revolution would look like, they also point to why the US occludes the differences among the American Revolution and those in Latin America exemplified by Kennedy: to admit to the true legacy of the American Revolution, from its initial formation as a counterrevolution to the ways in which it has organized against revolutionary movements in the present, would mean recognizing that the US's claim to a revolutionary history is a mere fabrication.

In other words, conflating revolutionary histories in the Americas allows the US to conceal the shared political and narrative histories that bind it to the periphery because doing so enables the US to maintain its purchase on revolution while simultaneously occluding its central role as the driving force behind the conservative governmental regimes that contribute to instability abroad. By homogenizing the political and narrative histories in the US and Latin America, the US is able to suppress the ways in which the dialectical tension between the American Revolution and decolonial revolutions is a tension about the future and how we judge progress. Addressing the historical amnesia surrounding the American Revolution's counterrevolutionary impulses demonstrates how this dialectical tension uncovers an alternate history of revolution in the US based on the periphery. Examining the tensions between competing revolutionary histories in the Americas illuminates how authors writing within the context of revolutions from the periphery have insisted upon and impacted the revolutionary history in the United States. In

[3] For a fuller discussion of the conservatism of the American Revolution, see Gerald Horne, *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United State of America.*

other words, there *is* a shared revolutionary history in the Americas; however, this shared relationship is one in which the US supports dictatorial regimes and revolutionaries oppose both such regimes and the US. Foregrounding such alternate revolutionary histories open up new narrative possibilities, which I analyze as I demonstrate how romance rewrites the future by liberating the past from the teleological determinism reinforced by national narratives.[4]

By resisting prevailing understandings of romance as allegory, my project untangles more complicated, unsettled ways of imagining the future. While Sommer and Myth and Symbol School critics point to how romance narrates and historicizes the nation, I examine romance as both relationship and genre to investigate how ethnic literatures reveal alternate narratives and create new genres to theorize liberation. Lisa Lowe's *The Intimacies of Four Continents* usefully points to the ways that liberalism created narratives of freedom as part of national history while simultaneously erasing the violence and enslavement that undergirded the formation of such narratives (3). In contrast, my project unpacks how genres of romance foreground colonial violence as the original sin that shapes these genres in the Americas, thus producing oppositional narratives that rely on the very history that liberal narratives deny. In this way, I consider how romance as relationship stages questions of kinship, sexuality, and intimacy to transform romance as genre into a liberatory, oppositional literature.

Building upon Ann Laura Stoler's work, which examines the intimacies that arise from "close attachments of other kinds" (xxiii), such as mixed relationships, I investigate the anxieties that attend romance, particularly in light of miscegenation such as the specter of blackness that haunts national identity in Trujillo's Dominican Republic. Critics such as Joan Dayan as well as

[4] While Barbara Fuchs argues that by privileging the past, romance "undermines the social ideals of the here and now" (6), I argue that romance rewrites the future by liberating the past from the teleological determinism reinforced by national narratives.

Lowe and Stoler demonstrate how the way sexuality and race are regulated reveals how intimacies threaten empire. Indeed, as Stoler points out, colonial policy was deeply concerned with "racially coded notion[s] of who could be intimate with whom" (2).[5] Extending these ideas into the twentieth-century, my project analyzes how this legacy managed intimacy by considering how *failures* of romance and forms of *anti*-romance reveal new kinships and reject the complicity of romance with nation. In other words, rejecting such complicity allows for a more complex understanding of the forms of sexuality and sociality that arise when the conventional form of heterosexual romance gives way to "close attachments of other kinds."

As Jameson's explains in *The Political Unconscious*, "the appropriate object of study emerges only when the appearance of formal unification is unmasked as a failure or an ideological mirage" (56). These ruptures and failures render textual conflict – and thus ideological conflict – visible. In this way, refusing conventional narratives of romance, I argue, means refusing to accept nation-based political futures and teleological conceptions of time, thus opening up new forms of historicity that are open-ended and free to engage recursively with the past to imagine the future. While María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo observes how even revolutionary discourse, with its focus on progress, liberation, and democracy, subscribe to the same notion of development articulated by US practices of intervention, I contend that there is a tradition of US literature that refuses such notions of progress and, in so doing, offers revolutionary futures. More specifically, by reading authors such as María Cristina Mena, Ninotchka Rosca, Jessica Hagedorn, Junot Díaz, and Julia Alvarez back into their political contexts and literary traditions, rather than as multicultural or global novels alone, I show how

[5] In addition to *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, see Dayan's *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, particularly her discussion of Médéric Moreau de Saint-Méry's taxonomy of blood quanta, pages 231-235.

their formative involvement with historical events and genres elsewhere reshapes our understanding of transnational American literature. The prevalence of US occupations and interventions in places such as the Philippines and the Dominican Republic signal the palimpsestic layering of intervention and occupation that unites the "periphery" and the US in a shared history of empire and resistance as well as a shared narrative history.

Because of romance's flexibility in accommodating varying ideologies and political interests, it allows us to track these shifting political imaginaries and alternative histories to received knowledge about the nation and national history more broadly and the US specifically. In this way, I extend Barbara Fuchs's claim romance that while "might seem ideally suited to the enterprise of empire, it is also possible to read romance as the deflation of epic purpose and imperial conquest" (83) to assert that romance, while it may seemingly operate in imperialist frameworks, also contests these very structures. Such resistance to the novelistic project of nation-building is grounded in differences of class, gender, and racial identity. That is, the texts that form the body of this dissertation reveal and render visible the divides that prevent national unification from occurring rather than concealing difference. Because of the struggle over these divides, romance is the key battleground on which this conflict over difference is staged, particularly in those romance plots that offer stasis over progress (for example, María Cristina Mena's "Doña Rita's Rivals" and Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* in chapter one) and failure over courtship (José Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* in chapter three). In this way, genres of romance reveal the revolutionary unconscious of US literature by speaking to their historical moment: the occupations, expansions, and support for dictatorships that characterizes US history.

In short, my project underscores the revolutionary possibilities of romance and, in so doing, draws upon the longer history of romance that highlights the genre's oppositional

potential.[6] I build upon this longer history of romance to rethink how romance is figured in the Americas, particularly because the two traditions of romance that emerged in the nineteenth-century demonstrate romance's complicity with nationalism and thus, the ease with which romance can also support counterrevolutionary interests. In the first example, outlined by Doris Sommer in her seminal text, *Foundational Fictions*, the romance performed the ideological work of bridging national differences using the trope of marriage to join together the creole elite and the disenfranchised indigenous population, thus papering over the violence that accompanied the formation of Latin American nation-states during the nineteenth-century. Because Latin America began its decolonization process roughly a century before the period deemed the era of decolonization (the mid-twentieth century), this ideological work figured prominently as it lent structure to unstable governments and, more importantly, foreclosed any indigenous claim to the land by neutralizing this threat through the trope of marriage. In this way, the creole elite absorbed indigenous claims to the nation by enfolding the indigenous population into the national romances of Latin America.

Much like Sommer's configuration of the romance created a founding mythology for Latin American countries, the romance in the US created a similar national mythology, as Nathaniel Hawthorne theorized romance as a defining characteristic of US literature, an idea that was taken up and applauded by critics of the Myth and Symbol School. These critics imagined a virgin land in which a prelapsarian "American Adam" (Lewis 5) exists ahistorically and, therefore, innocently. And yet, not all is right with this mythology; this American Adam proves to be not at all innocent. As Leslie Fiedler remarks, American literature reveals "certain

[6] As Fuchs observes, in medieval romances the "distance between the clerkly narrator and the chivalric protagonist results in a pronounced irony in many romances, complicating the genre's ideological investments" (40), which suggests the potential for romance to stage a critique of the status quo.

obsessive concerns of our national life," including "the guilt of the revolutionist who feels himself a parricide" (xxii) who is "haunted by the (paternal) past which he has been striving to destroy" (109). In short, while the US origin story depends on Edenic mythology, for Fiedler the American Revolution, rather than creating a blank slate in a new land, reminds us of the violence that begat our nation and uncovers a nation haunted by its European roots and unable to face the pre-existing history of the Americas, long before conquest. As Hannah Arendt reminds us, speaking of Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel: "The tale spoke clearly: whatever brotherhood human beings may be capable of has grown out of fratricide, whatever political organization men may have achieved has its origin in crime" (10). Parricide, fratricide – the murder of fathers and brothers only engenders a cycle of violence that the New World proves incapable of erasing.

Thus, rather than imagining that American literature evades the imperialism of the English novel (Chase 4), American literature reveals the imperialism that underlies the presumption that "the American novel has usually seemed content to explore, rather than to appropriate and civilize, the remarkable and in some ways unexampled territories of life in the New World and to reflect its anomalies and dilemmas. It has not wanted to build an imperium but merely to discover a new place and a new state of mind" (Chase 5).[7] Chase inadvertently reveals how, at this formative moment in American criticism, there was already a sleight of hand in which the revolutionary potential of American literature was put forward even as its imperialism was disavowed. Indeed, as Nina Baym notes, regarding Chase, this description "represent[s] the activity of writing in metaphors of discovery and exploration, as though the writer were the hero of the landscape" (137). Yet, more damningly, as Baym unearths the ideology that underlies the Myth and Symbol school's interpretation of American literature as

[7] Note that Chase makes this comment in relation to D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*.

structured around notions of virgin land and Adamic myth, she points to the ways in which the "melodramas of beset manhood" referenced in her article do not just allude to Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville. Rather, these "melodramas" refer to the Myth and Symbol itself as "just at the time that feminist critics are discovering more and more important women, the critical theorists have seized upon a theory that allows the women less and less presence" (139), which leads her to remark: "This observation points up just how significantly the critic is engaged in the act of *creating* literature" (139). In other words, the "American Adam" becomes the American critic, demonstrating the potential complicity between national mythologies and literary scholarship.

While both Sommer and the Myth and Symbol School use romance to narrate the nation – Sommer by demonstrating how the creole elite incorporated indigeneity to unify the nation, the Myth and Symbol School by creating a founding myth to strengthen US claims to a national literature while erasing the violence that attended the creation of an imagined prelapsarian paradise – I turn to Frye to consider how modifying the content of romance away from such nationalist paradigms alters the form as well. Northrop Frye argues that romance reveals "the weak spot in the traditional form-content distinction: what is called content is the structure of the particular or individual work" (*Scripture* 59-60). That is, we know romance by its content, not its form. To transform the content – from marriage to failed courtship, heterosexual romance to heterosocial kinship – means altering the very terms on which romance is based, thus making the seeming drawbacks of romance (the difficulty of categorizing it) into a method for revolutionizing the form itself.[8] The slipperiness of romance thus requires an expanded rubric for

[8] Regarding the difficulties categorizing romance presents, Gillian Beer asserts that romance is "a cluster of properties" (10), with the caveat that "[t]here is no single characteristic which distinguishes the romance from other literary kinds nor will every one of the characteristics I have been describing be present in each work" (10). In other words, the "properties" or romance can be present (or not).

categorization, or what Barbara Fuchs calls "a set of literary strategies that can be adopted by different forms" (2).

More provocatively, the flexibility of romance allows for generic mixture as "it infects other genres" (Fuchs 72), refusing to "be quarantined into a generic category" (Fuchs 72). This refusal accounts for what Fuchs terms the "'survival' of romance" (111), which we will see in the following chapters, where each examines the productive tensions genres of romance elicit. Reading romance as mixture underscores the fears of contamination that revolution inspires, particularly in terms of class, race, and gender. Romance is uniquely suited to addressing such anxieties about social hierarchies given its roots in medieval romance as well as the space it provides for readers "to explore in fantasy the boundary between the permitted and the forbidden and to experience in a carefully controlled way the possibility of stepping across this boundary," according to John Cawelti (*Adventure* 35).

Yet, as Sommer and Myth and Symbol School critics demonstrate, it also readily lends itself to the hegemonic management of difference rather than the liberatory exploration of it. In this way, we can read the very features we may associate with romance, such as rigid social hierarchies and nation-building projects, as opportunities for critique and opposition. To grapple with the emancipatory possibilities of romance means exploring the "political unconscious" that unfolds historically alongside it. While romance as a form reveals much about its historical time period, it also participates in its own historical moment by shaping how a people stand in relation to their own history, which underlines the future orientation of the historical novel elaborated by Jameson (*Antinomies* 298).

Because romance is uniquely suited to meditations on history and futurity, it lends itself to the study of revolution as they create temporal borderlands that straddle the period between

two epochs. The liminal space of the revolution itself – the duration of the revolution – is significant because the way in which this period is narrativized determines both how the past and the future are perceived, which also signifies the failure or success of the revolution. For example, in Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, Dueña Alfonsa's discussion with the protagonist John Grady Cole in which she describes the Mexican Revolution freezes time at the moment of the revolution. In so doing, she depicts a Mexico that is unable to move past the revolutionary moment and uphold the values over which the revolution was fought. In another vein, Ninotchka Rosca and Jessica Hagedorn return to the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino, a vocal critic of the Marcos dictatorship, to remember the moment that galvanized the Filipino People Power Revolution of 1986. By revisiting the assassination, both authors imagine an alternate future where the revolution does not fail.

Such rewritings are necessary to decolonization projects because they offer a way to think outside of the structures of colonization. As Frantz Fanon observes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, "The Third World must start over a new history of man which takes account of not only the occasional prodigious theses maintained by Europe but also its crimes, the most heinous of which have been committed at the very heart of man . . ." (238). Following European models means perpetuating the current system rather than overthrowing it. Writing a new future involves foregrounding the violence of colonialism to imagine a completely different way of thinking and being. Decolonization thus depends on a future orientation that simultaneously acknowledges colonial violence and shifts away from it.

As Frye reminds us, romance is uniquely suited to narrating such historical events as there is "a special kind of transformation of the past which is distinctive of romance […] Themes of ascent are pervaded by struggles to escape and survive: the other side, of descent and

disappearing identity, takes place in a world of violent and cunning leaders" (*Scripture* 176). Rethinking such narratives of ascent and descent allow us to reconsider how romance transforms the past, particularly given the cyclical nature of romance (*Scripture* 186), which, in the texts I examine, recursively returns to earlier moments in national history to revise their significance. While Jameson argues that Frye's theorization of romance "tends to erase the markers of history and to make romance self-identical over the course of time" (Fuchs 7), the texts I discuss reveal the historical specificity of romance, the ways in which it is "a reflection of particular ideological contexts" (Fuchs 7).

In this way, like Toni Morrison, I read against the view of romance as "an evasion of history" (36) and examine how romance offers "not a narrow a-historical canvas but a wide historical one" (37) that allows for the "exploration of anxiety imported from the shadows of European culture, [romance] made possible the sometimes safe and other times risky embrace of quite specific, understandably human, fears" (36). Indeed, when Morrison details these human fears as "Americans' fear of being outcast, of failing, of powerlessness; their fear of boundarylessness, of Nature unbridled and crouched for attack; their fear of the absence of so-called civilization; their fear of loneliness, of aggression both external and internal. In short, the terror of human freedom – the thing they coveted most of all" (37), she reads against the Myth and Symbol School version of romance. Simultaneously, she points to the concerns that arise in their criticism, "the guilt of the revolutionist who feels himself a parricide" (*Love* xxii); in short, the fear that the "terror of human freedom" will lead to a day of reckoning for parricide, for imagining a tabula rasa in the Americas.

While Morrison details the ways in which history haunts the romance, I examine how the authors discussed in my project rewrite history to contend with the past and imagine new futures.

Whether it is Cormac McCarthy demonstrating the dangerous ahistoricity of John Grady Cole's romanticized view of Mexico or Julia Alvarez's rewriting of the Latin American Dictator Novel from the view of resistance through the Mirabal sisters rather than the perspective of the dictator, each author contends with the complicity between genre and teleology by recasting the terms of progress. Rather than follow the future-orientation of the Western that drives relentlessly towards the goal of Manifest Destiny, McCarthy reveals the historical erasures that accompany the mindset of the tabula rasa. This mindset reveals the imperialism that undergirds the western as it follows the form of the 1890s romances Kaplan regards as its predecessors, imbued with "a potent nostalgia that renders imperial conquest and the struggle for power over others as nothing more than the return home to the embodied American man" (*Anarchy* 120). However, McCarthy departs from this framework by denying John Grady Cole a relationship with Alejandra Rocha y Villareal, thus denying him the imperial conquest that would result in his affirmation of US masculinity. Julia Alvarez similarly resists such teleological narratives by depicting the Dominican Republic as a nation that was not inevitably moving towards the Trujillo dictatorship, but towards new models of resistance and thus, new ways of writing history. In short, although teleological conceptions of time often imply a historical determinism that makes narratives of expansion and dictatorship seem predestined and unavoidable, by challenging such assumptions, each author points to the need to contend with the past to dream up new possibilities.

Recent work on the *bildungsroman* demonstrates how reading against narratives of progress allows for new kinship formations that reveal alternatives to narratives of development. Although the *bildungsroman* is no doubt the paradigmatic example of the relationship between form and futurity, Jed Esty's ground-breaking book, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*, focuses on *bildungsromane* that are anti-

developmental, on characters – like Peter Pan – who do not reach maturation and therefore do not marry and install a narrative of progress and development. As Esty writes, the novels he discusses "resist or forestall the traditional plot of libidinal closure in the bildungsroman (heterosexual coupling and reproduction) and feature instead story lines driven by homoerotic investment, sexual indifference, homosexual panic, and same-sex desire" (22). In fact, the *bildungsroman* for anyone outside the white male middle-class, hinges on the very resistance to "heterosexual coupling" that Esty describes and queer theorists resist. In making this claim, I am reminded of Franco Moretti's comment about *bildungsromane* outside of the white male bourgeoisie: "The mistake of my book," he writes, "is not that of having 'denied' the *Bildungsroman* to this or that human group, as if it were health coverage (which indeed should never be denied anybody); it consists rather in never fully explaining why this form was so deeply entwined with one social class, one region of the world, one sex" (Moretti x). Moretti's attempt at a joke – his analogy of the *bildungsroman* to health care coverage – misses the point. The issue is not that the *bildungsroman* should be available to everyone, but that its very unavailability leads to new ways of thinking about the genre. For him, social mobility characterizes the *bildungsroman*; imagining such mobility for anyone other than a European man (like manual laborers, which is his example), "seems to defy narrative imagination" (Moretti x). Yet, what for Moretti is unimaginable is exactly the purview of the authors discussed in my dissertation. In fact, the very traits that define the *bildungsroman* for Moretti are those traits that, in being denied to other communities, forms the central tension of those *bildungsromane*.

In addition to Esty, recent queer theory challenges the hegemonic futurity of the white middle-class family. What is at stake in such theorizations is how the ability to imagine alternative kinship relationships also offers the possibility of counterhegemonic, anti-imperialist

structures that resist the traditional happy ending and the need for reconciliation. Queer theory offers a rich discussion of the politics of such resistance while simultaneously offering alternative futures by, as Judith Halberstam observes, decoupling time from "the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction" (*Time* 1), thus allowing for oppositional forms of temporality. Further, in her discussion of children's films in *The Queer Art of Failure*, Judith Halberstam argues, "we should use them to disrupt idealized and saccharine myths about children, sexuality, and innocence and imagine new versions of maturation, *Bildung*, and growth that do not depend upon the logic of succession and success" (119). Similarly, by analyzing the ways in which genres like the *bildungsroman* fail, I chart alternate ways of "growing up" and forming kinship ties. Central to this project is the way in which the values of the white middle-class family do not fit or account for other identities. As Halberstam observes,

> futurity signifies the nation, the divisions of class and race upon which the notion of national belonging depends, and the activity of celebrating the ideological system which gives meaning to the nation and takes meaning away from the poor, the unemployed, the promiscuous, the noncitizen, the racialized immigrant, the queer" (107).

While the white middle-class family often stands in allegorically for the nation, to subscribe to such a view of family and nation is, as Halberstam argues, to "take meaning away" from other identity formations. To imagine other possibilities, I insist, is to find value in not only failure, as Halberstam does, but also in other conceptions of futurity.

Perhaps one of the most controversial theories of futurity is that espoused by Lee Edelman in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive.* In this text, Edelman argues against "reproductive futurism," which he defines as "impos[ing] an ideological limit on political discourse as such preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by

rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations" (2). For Edelman, creating a future for the children is to sacrifice the present; further, it is to subscribe to heteronormative values at the expense of queer configurations of community and family.Yet, as refreshing and provocative as Edelman's claim is, we cannot forget José Muñoz's powerful critique of *No Future*:

> The future is only the stuff of some kids. Racialized kids, queer kids, are not the sovereign princes of futurity. Although Edelman does indicate that the future of the child as futurity is different from the future of actual children, his framing nonetheless accepts and reproduces this monolithic figure of the child that is indeed always already white. It all but ignores the point that other modes of particularity within the social are constitutive of subjecthood beyond the kind of jouissance that refuses both narratological meaning and what he understands as the fantasy of futurity (95).

The reality that Muñoz makes painfully clear is that the future, for some, is already a "no future." It is not a choice, or a radical point of view, but, rather, the everyday life of "the poor, the unemployed, the promiscuous, the noncitizen, the racialized immigrant, the queer." That is, while Edelman's notion of no future might seem liberating to some, we must also be mindful that futurity is already a risk because the nature of futurity is always raced, gendered, and classed.

Elizabeth Freeman, in *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, hints at the power of genre and its attendant temporal valences when she describes the colonial and cowboy cultures exemplified by *Treasure Island* and Manifest Destiny: "In other words, these dreams may be dreams of an escape from history, but they also give access to an alternative history" (xi). This alternative history reveals the "lost moments of official history" (xi) in which queer time exposes the "erotic contact between men" (xi), particularly in colonial endeavors. More

specifically, "time binds" demonstrate how "naked flesh is bound into socially meaningful embodiment through temporal regulation" (3) in other words, time binds reveal the ways in which temporal regulation enforces normative structures on bodies. To unbind time, then, "means recognizing how erotic relations and the bodily acts that sustain them gum up the works of the normative structures we call family and nation, gender, race, class, and sexual identity, by changing tempos, by remixing memory and desire" (173). In this way, alternative histories emerge from unbinding time, from finding the "lost moments of official history."

These lost moments signal the importance of "a 'revolution" in the old sense of the word, as a turning back" (Freeman 8). By examining the historical ruptures that revolutions generate while keeping in mind this notion of turning back, my project emphasizes the importance of the past for revolutions, particularly in terms of imagining alternative futures. Because unbinding time means turning back to find moments that "gum up the works," I focus on the ways in which the novels discussed in this project rely on displaced moments of time to uncover alternative futures. For example, Ninotchka Rosca and Jessica Hagedorn refer back to José Rizal and the Philippine Revolution to draw upon a moment in history when literature had the ability to galvanize a people to action. By ending their novels in 1983 and focusing on the key moment that sparked the Filipino People Power Revolution of 1986 – the assassination of Senator "Ninoy" Aquino – they imagine another possible future in which not only does literature galvanize the people, but it also traces a different endpoint than the failure of the revolution.

Drawing upon the "transnational turn" in US literature, particularly Hemispheric Studies and new work that examines the Global South alongside the New Southern Studies, I address the seminal question posed by Gustavo Pérez Firmat – do the Americas have a common literature? – to explore the roots and routes that link together literatures originating in spaces with a history of

both Spanish colonization and US occupation. Responding to recent calls by Ramón Saldívar and Simon Gikandi to consider how authors challenge dominant structures through "radical reconfiguration and recapitulation" ("Imagining" 18) and transformative authorship that does more than merely add to existing traditions (Gikandi), I focus on the formal features that emerge within a transnational legacy of revolution. More specifically, I examine how novels revise and expand our understanding of romance by drawing on forms that emerge out of imperialism (such as the Western) and colonization (for example, the guerrilla conversion narrative). In so doing, I demonstrate how these texts are central to US literature and prove the distinction between center and periphery, majority and minority, illusory.

As Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease influentially demonstrated in their seminal anthology, *The Cultures of United States Imperialism*, despite the long history of empire in US, it is curiously absent from American Studies more broadly, no doubt because of the imperialism that undergirded its founding. By calling for an examination of "the multiples histories of continental and overseas expansion, conquest, conflict, and resistance which have shaped the cultures of the United States and the cultures of those it has dominated within and beyond its geopolitical boundaries" ("Absence" 4), Kaplan advocates transnational frameworks that foreground the role of empire, thus building on critical advancements in postcolonial and ethnic studies. I extend these claims into literary studies by investigating how this history of empire informs US literature and destabilizes its purchase on revolution.

I advocate a Hemispheric framework to US literature that also considers the East/West formation in relation to the Americas. In so doing, I hope to expand the archive of Americas' literatures to explore the historical depth of cultural influences that impact US literature. While Jane C. Desmond and Virginia R. Dominguez call for a critical internationalism that "resituates

the United States in a global context" (475), I focus on a Hemispheric approach to foreground how the Americas framework inextricably links together the US within the broader context of North and South America.[9] That said, I am attentive to the numerous critiques of transnational frameworks, including Shelley Fisher Fishkin's argument that national borders should not determine the type of scholarship critics produce (22) and Janice Radway's examination of the American in the American Studies Association. Similarly, Priscilla Wald acknowledges the drawbacks of transnationalism; for example, how it coincides with "the emergence of the transnational corporation (TNC)" (201). That said, Wald rightly contends that transnationalism occupies a third-space that can be "both meeting ground and minefield" (216) as it allows for considerations of the complicity between transnationalism and multinational capital, for example, as well as the opportunity to forge new connections by exploring overlapping colonial histories.

The desire to decenter the US in an attempt to avoid replicating US exceptionalism usefully informs transnational frameworks. However, focusing on the role the US plays allows us to maintain the study of empire and complicity as our central concerns. For example, the post-9/11 context crucially informs the wariness of US exceptionalism in the 2003 *PMLA* special issue, *America: The Idea, The Literature*, which considers the collusion between American scholarship and American governmental policies while also pointing to the erasure inherent in the notion of America as it excludes Canada as well as Central and South America. While changing the name of American studies may open up new fields of inquiry as Djelal Kadir argues (11), I contend that the use of America and the violence that attends it must continue to

[9] For more on this framework, see Eldon Kentworth's *America/Américas: Myth in the Making of U.S. Policy Toward Latin America*.

name our field as a reminder of the history that undergirds the term, however painful that may be.

In light of such attempts to outline new paradigms, Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Claire F. Fox propose an inter-Americas framework in their 2004 *Comparative American Studies* special issue. Using Canada as their touchstone, they demonstrate how an inter-Americas framework can foreground geopolitical work outside of the US. However, such a paradigm neglects the East/West orientation that also informs American histories, which is why I turn to the 2006 *American Literary History* special issue, *Hemispheric American Literary History*, in which Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine propose a hemispheric framework to explore asymmetries of power without reinscribing hierarchies.

Two additional special issues that undergird my project, the 2003 *Modern Fiction Studies* issue, *Fictions of the Trans-American Imaginary*, and the 2004 *Radical History Review*'s *Our Americas: Political and Cultural Imaginings*, take up this hemispheric approach by demonstrating how hemispheric frameworks can open up new avenues for scholarship. For example, in the former, Paula Moya and Ramón Saldívar argue that focusing on a North/South dynamic in the Americas unsettles the East/West dynamic of the US and Europe, thus tracing alternate roots and routes for scholarship and, I would add, opening up new avenues for East/West dynamics across the Pacific. Meanwhile, in the *Radical History Review* special issue, Sandhya Shukla and Heidi Tinsman foreground the importance of José Martí in imagining a different way of thinking about America. In his famous essay, "Nuestra América," Martí not only critiques the US, but also argues for "native mestizo" knowledge through nature (290), American history beginning with the Incas (291), and, finally, a "government [that] must be born

from the country" (290).[10] In other words, Martí demonstrates how an Americas focused approach opens up new avenues for epistemologies, histories, and institutions. By building on his thinking, Shukla and Tinsman illustrate how Martí's approach invigorates scholarship by looking to historical processes rather than geographical formations to do work on comparative colonialisms, which can capture the entanglement of shared political histories in ways that national paradigms cannot. Finally, the most recent special issue, the 2014 *American Quarterly* titled *Las Américas Quarterly*, excitingly considers a hemispheric framework that allows Latina/o and Latin American scholars to operate outside American and ethnic studies frameworks to create new paradigms for scholarship. In so doing, Macarena Gómez-Barrios and Licia Fiol-Matta point to how hemispheric approaches can allow for South/South dialogues as well as North/South ones.

However, despite the traction that transnational and hemispheric approaches have gained over the past twenty or so years, a number of critiques point to the erasure of indigenous peoples from these approaches in addition to the US-based assumption that the nation-state is a privileged site of power. In their article for the 2006 special issue of *American Literary History*, "Rethinking Canadian and American Nationality: Indigeneity and the 49th Parallel in Thomas King," Jennifer Andrews and Priscilla L. Walton acknowledge that while transnational approaches can be useful for an understanding of indigenous groups, they also note that "to move toward a hemispheric model that subordinates the idea of nation to hemispheric geopolitical affiliations at a time when many aboriginals are attempting to make land claims and assert their sovereignty is to discount the need, however contradictory, for stable notions of the nation-state,

[10] Note that while Martí's "native mestizo" is an oxymoron – mestizos are not "native" to the Americas – here we can see how he attempts to navigate his advocacy for Americas-based epistemologies and institutions without alienating the mestizo population. In effect, his "native mestizo" is both native *and* mestizo, with the term signaling a unified identity.

which would allow such negotiations to take place" (600-601). Similarly, in their introduction to *Our Americas: Political and Cultural Imaginings*, Shukla and Tinsman remark upon the Latin Americanist critique of the timing of transnational approaches by noting, "was it not peculiar that 'nation' could be jettisoned as an object of privileged study in U.S. American (and European) circles at precisely the moment when the achievement of greater sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States and Europe seemed on the horizon, if not at hand, among former colonies and 'spheres of influence' elsewhere in the world?" (13). As both these critiques point out, to assume that decentering the nation-state would allow for critiques and analyses of empire can also reinforce US exceptionalism as, unlike indigenous groups seeking sovereignty and nationalist movements working toward decolonization and independence, the US already has sovereignty and independence, which is why scholars can so readily do away with the nation-state framework.

As Ralph Bauer further observes in his 2009 *PMLA* article on Hemispheric Studies, Latin American scholars are justly suspicious of hemispheric frameworks that critique the nation, particularly because such configurations recall the Monroe Doctrine with its attendant assertion of US dominance over Latin America (236). Indeed, he notes that the nation-state became an important geopolitical framework in Latin America exactly because it offered "a protection against United States cultural, economic, and military expansion" (236). Similarly, Claudia Sadowski-Smith and Claire F. Fox argue for the nation-state as an important means of resisting the US in Canadian studies where "the nation-state is often theorized as a guarantor of sovereignty from the United States and as a potential means of advancing alternative forms of globalization" (21). In other words, while decentering the US as a privileged location and critiquing its imperial policies are both important, scholars must also keep in mind that moving away from the nation-state formation in itself reveals asymmetries of power.

That said, there are exciting new developments that further expand hemispheric approaches to the Americas. In their groundbreaking anthology, *Look Away!: The U.S. South in New World Studies*, Deborah Cohn and Jon Smith demonstrate how the plantation opens up new hemispheric connections by tying together the US South with the Caribbean as well as Central and South America. Meanwhile, works such as Rachel Lee's *The Americas of Asian American Literature* and Lisa Lowe's *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, which looks at the Americas from Asia and Africa as well as Europe, complicate the North/South orientation of hemispheric studies by placing the Americas in dialogue with East/West dynamics. In short, hemispheric methods continue to invigorate scholarship by opening up new connections in comparative contexts.

While the above discussion points to a proliferation of terms and frameworks, I maintain that a Hemispheric approach allows us to account for the shared revolutionary and literary histories in the Americas that crucially rely on both Spanish colonization and US occupation. In so doing, we can parse out the revolutionary ties the US claims to the rest of the Americas to foreground its central role in creating instability south of the border while also tracking an alternate revolutionary history. This allows us to further recognize the genres that arose out of these conflicts and how they offer an alternate revolutionary history of the US within the Americas. By doing the work Ramón Saldívar calls "radically reconfiguring" ("Imagining" 18), transforming (Gikandi), and creating genres of romance, the authors I discuss demonstrate how an oppositional literature forms and adapts to new methods of domination.

Attentive to the potential and the critiques of such transnational and hemispheric turns, I seek to bridge multiethnic US literature with the literary traditions in which it participates to maintain specificity while also tracing connections across the Americas. With revolution as the

staging ground for tracking social and political change, my dissertation shows how personal and political histories are intertwined in the intersection of ideologies of nationalism and colonization as well as resistance to these forces. Each of my chapters analyzes how genre produces the nation and the kinds of community that can be imagined. In the first half of the dissertation I examine the Spanish Civil War and the Mexican Revolution to track the consequences of the fallen Spanish Empire and the legacy of conquest in the United States while in the second half I examine two genres that emerged in response to imperialism, the guerrilla conversion narrative and the Latin American Dictator Novel.

Chapter One, "Uncanny Affinities in Richard Wright," focuses on Richard Wright's non-fiction work *Pagan Spain* (1957) within the context of his other travel writings, including *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (1954) and *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (1956). Written roughly fifteen years into the Franco regime and after Wright's decisive break with the Left, *Pagan Spain* illustrates how Wright's later writings replace his Marxist focus on class with a dawning understanding of the potential of a global racial consciousness, one that is inflected by but not reducible to class. Wright's complex investment in Spain and the non-American world more broadly, I argue, relies on his transformation of the gothic genre as a way to theorize uncanny affinities among oppressed minorities, particularly Spanish women and African Americans living in the Jim Crow South. Central to my discussion of Wright is the division between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, the homely and the unhomely. The uncanny elicits discomfort because it reveals the familiar through processes of estrangement and defamiliarization. If affinities invite us to recognize similarity, then the uncanny forces us to register similarities that provoke discomfort. In this way, I demonstrate how the uncanny reveals the unnerving structural similarities between these Spanish

women and African Americans, thus allowing Wright to observe Spain's identity crisis after its fallen empire and to envision relationships outside the paradigm of the nation. The shared sense of unhomeliness that Wright and Spanish women experience enables Wright to imagine affinities outside of the paradigm of the nation in an affective transnationalism that conceptualizes revolutionary ways of being across difference.

This notion of *unheimlich* informs my discussion of the anxieties around domesticity and miscegenation in my second chapter, "Romance and Revolution," which considers two works that engage with the Mexican Revolution, Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) and María Cristina Mena's "Doña Rita's Rivals," first published in *The Century Magazine* in 1914, then republished in 1997 as part of Arte Público Press's Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage project. Both texts demonstrate how the discourse of family and domesticity torpedoes romance as both courtship and generic claim and renders visible the fear of miscegenation. McCarthy transforms the character Alfonsa's opposition to the relationship between the protagonist John Grady Cole and his love interest, Alejandra Rocha y Villareal, into a formal problem, as romance becomes the staging ground for competing generic claims, namely the western and the domestic novel. While the failure of romance is typically figured as an allegory for the revolution, in Mena and McCarthy it also coincides with the failure of the novel as a form. Unable to resolve the multiple genres of romance at work in the text, both texts point to the larger failure to imagine a future, as evidenced by the decay in Mena and the stasis in McCarthy that undergirds domesticity.

The second half of my dissertation investigates two genres that emerged out of colonization, what I have identified as the guerrilla conversion narrative and the Latin American dictator novel. By reading Ninotchka Rosca, Jessica Hagedorn, Junot Díaz, and Julia Alvarez

back into their political contexts and literary traditions, rather than as multicultural or global novels alone, I show how their formative involvement with historical events and genres elsewhere reshapes our understanding of transnational American literature. The Philippine-American War (1899-1902) and the subsequent occupation of the Philippines until 1946 along with two US interventions in the Dominican Republic, from 1916-1924 and 1965-1966 signal the rise of the US as a colonial power and the palimpsestic layering of intervention and occupation that unites the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, and the United States in shared political and narrative histories. Each of the authors in these chapters imports genres from the so-called periphery into the United States, thus demonstrating not only a shared political history, but also a shared narrative history that illuminates the centrality of ethnic literature to US literature and revolutionary traditions.

Central to each chapter in the second half of the project is the notion of conversion, with guerrilla conversions framing the third chapter and the conversion of the reader framing the fourth. For example, my third chapter, "Queering the National Romance: Chosen Kinship in Rizal, Hagedorn, and Rosca," argues that Ninotchka Rosca's *State of War* (1988) and Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* (1990) extend the literary tradition of the guerrilla conversion narrative inaugurated by Filipino national hero José Rizal in his novels *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891). In Rizal, guerrilla conversions happen between a young man and a male revolutionary who eventually convinces the young man to join the revolution, thus suggesting homosociality as the basis for nationalism. However, Rosca and Hagedorn modify the guerrilla conversion narrative to include women as political subjects who can also convert to the cause. In Hagedorn, the guerrilla conversion narrative also incorporates queer subjects, thus extending Rizal's already decolonial model of relation into a radical queer critique that replaces the

heterosexual romance as the founding fiction of nationalism. Significantly, both Rosca and Hagedorn set their novels during the period of martial law (1972-1986) under the Marcos regime, but refuse to depict the People Power Revolution of 1986. I suggest that Rosca and Hagedorn turn to Rizal's novels because they recall a moment in Philippine history when literature had the power to galvanize a people into taking action. Thus, each novel leaves open the possibility of a future, successful revolution that incorporates the guerilla's vision of kinship into a non-familial notion of the nation.

The fourth chapter, "The Anti-Romances of Junot Díaz and Julia Alvarez," illuminates how Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) and Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994)shift their focus away from the conversion of characters within their novels towards the larger pedagogical project of the conversion of the reader by instantiating proxies for the uninitiated reader within their respective texts. By resisting the totalizing narrative of the Latin American Dictator novel, Alvarez and Díaz demonstrate a revolutionary form of the *bildungsroman* that does not install the bourgeois subject into the middle class, but, rather, establishes a revolutionary subject whose conversion aligns with the act of reading. Because both texts address themselves to North American readers, (explicitly in *Butterflies* and implicitly in *Oscar Wao*), I suggest that the novels fuse together the two hemispheric perspectives of North and South instead of maintaining the divide between the Americas. By aligning the North American reader with a Dominican perspective, both authors expose and seam up the hemispheric divide to demonstrate the entangled political and personal histories between the United States and the Dominican Republic.

Finally, by way of conclusion, I discuss Cristina García's *Monkey Hunting* in relation to the historical romance. While Jameson argues that the contemporary historical novel is future-

oriented and often results in reflections on the present, rather than the past (*Antinomies* 298), I consider how a novel like *Monkey Hunting* takes place during the late nineteenth-century to reflect on the Cuban Revolution of 1959, thus complicating the teleology implicit in Jameson's remarks. Further, I demonstrate how García deconstructs the historical romance by illuminating the false narrative of a single history as the generational story she tells focuses on the formation of a Cuban national identity that excludes those of Chinese descent in Cuba, thus perpetuating the erasure of Asians in the Americas. Such an erasure points to the larger concern post-revolution of the relationship between the people and the state, thus rendering visible the strained relationships between revolutionary Cuba and who counts and does not count as people of the revolution.

Chapter One

Uncanny Affinities and Global Solidarities: Richard Wright's Travel Writings

At the time of their publication, the reception of Wright's travel writings was mixed at best, with some critics even going so far as to say that Wright, who was in exile in Paris beginning in 1946, was out of touch with African American concerns.[1] More recently, we are in the middle of a critical revival and reassessment of Wright's travel writings, with many critics focusing on the genre of travel literature.[2] Wright's comments on racial feeling, however, have been understudied and, when they are referenced, are either ignored or mentioned in passing, no doubt because Wright himself explicitly privileged rationalism over feeling. However, in "Beyond Naturalism?", critic Michael Fabre calls attention to the strange paradox between Wright's commitment to rationalism and proof (47) and his reliance on emotion (50), fantasy, and the gothic (53-54). He claims, "Wright's attraction to the fanciful, the mysterious, the irrational always proved too strong for him to remain attached to his self-declared rationalism

[1] Sara Blair observes that *Black Power* can be considered "the most roundly reviled of his texts. The controversy turns on Wright's sustained strategy of self-differentiation from the Africans he observes" (97) while the discomfort aroused by *Pagan Spain* stems from how "some American readers 'were shocked to see' a black writer discuss a white culture. Before Wright, a usual pattern had been for a Western anthropologist or a Western writer like Joseph Conrad to comment on Asian or African life. If Wright considered himself an African, his situation would have been the opposite of that of a Western writer" (Hakutani 197). Saunders Redding remarks on how Wright's writings in exile divorced him from the African-American experience: "In going to live abroad Richard Wright had cut the roots that once sustained him; the tight-wound emotional core came unwound; the creative center dissolved; his memory of what Negro life in America *was* lost its relevance to what Negro life in America *is* – and is becoming" (59).

[2] Mary Louise Pratt argues that Wright parodies the travel writing form and critiques what she calls the "seeing man" by highlighting what he cannot see (222). S. Shankar notes that *Black Power* "is both an anti-colonial and a colonial travel narrative" (16) while Ngwarsungu Chiwengo calls it "an eclectic neoslave travelogue combining characteristics of the travel genre, the literature of exile, and the slave narrative" (25). See also John W. Lowe's "Richard Wright as Traveler/Ethnographer" and John C. Gruesser's "Afro-American Travel Literature and Africanist Discourse."

and deliberate objectivity" (56). Such comments contrast sharply with Sara Blair's insistence that "the narrative of *Black Power* is calculated to reiterate how frequently racial 'feeling' is beside the point" (98), Kwame Anthony Appiah's resounding critique of *Black Power* and Wright's failure of sympathy (181), and S. Shankar's more moderate position that Wright's connections between African Americans and Africans are cultural, not racial (10). Despite this critical landscape, I examine what Wright calls "uncanny affinities" and demonstrate how such affinities are based on racial feeling, particularly in *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (1954) and *Pagan Spain* (1957) in which he casts both the Gold Coast and Spain in the form of the gothic.

The complex relationship between history and the gothic informs Wright's work as a whole in such popular texts as *Native Son*, and, as I will discuss here, in the travel writings he wrote towards the end of his career. These travel writings emphasize not only the specter of slavery for Wright, but also the way in which the texts, taken together, offer insight on Wright's emergent decolonial thought. Wright traveled to the Gold Coast in the summer of 1953; he worked on the revision to *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* during his first visit to Spain in 1954. After this initial trip to Spain, *Black Power* was published; he made two more trips to Spain before leaving for the Bandung Conference in April 1955.[3] He then published *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* in 1956 followed by *Pagan Spain* in 1957. This context gives a sense of how closely Wright's experiences in Africa, Spain, and Indonesia followed one another. The overlap between the writing of these pieces and the visiting of these locations also demonstrates how Wright's travel writing engage with multiple diasporas to compare the conditions of oppressed peoples globally. For Wright, the notion of

[3] The Bandung Conference was a global gathering of twenty-nine Asian and African nations held in Indonesia (*Color* 437).

diaspora is part of an overlapping sense of historical and ancestral linkages that form an ongoing narrative of subjugation that, significantly, also offers the promise of freedom.

Both *Black Power* and *Pagan Spain* deploy gothic tropes and conventions to elicit emotional responses. From slave narratives to *Beloved*, the gothic continues to be a narrative strategy for triggering visceral responses to the horrors of slavery and, as Teresa Goddu argues, rather than "departicularizing" such narratives, forms a robust genre of gothic fiction, the African American gothic ("Slave Narrative" 73). Wright's use of gothic conventions is both wide-ranging and consistent; however, rather than taxonomizing the various gothics at play in Wright — the Southern, the frontier, the African American, and, interestingly, the female — I instead focus on how Wright relies on the affective atmosphere of the gothic to elicit sympathy in order to point to the disturbing structural similarities between Francoist Spain and the Jim Crow South as well as the cultural resonances between Africans and African Americans.[4] Because the gothic plays upon the emotions and explores the psychology of its characters, it is a form well-suited for Wright's explorations of the Gold Coast and Spain.[5] By refusing to narrowly define Wright's gothic, my argument departs from recent work on Wright's frontier gothic in Spain and opens up

[4] For more on the African American gothic see Teresa Goddu's "The African American Slave Narrative and the Gothic" and *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* as well as Maisha L. Wester's *African American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places*. For the relationship between the slave narrative and the female gothic, see Kari J. Winter's *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives.* Also note that Kwame Anthony Appiah observes how *Black Power* inverts some of the tropes of the slave narrative: "in a splendid inversion of the strategy of authentication that Robert Stepto, among others, had identified in the affixed letter of the African-American slave narrative, Wright prefaced his book with an authenticating letter from Nkrumah" ("Long Way" 188).

[5] For more on the role of emotion and psychology in the gothic, see Fred Botting's *Gothic*.

Wright's travel writings to a consideration of global solidarities.[6] Further, Wright's gothic exemplifies how the genre is an oppositional literature well suited to a critique of institutions, namely the Catholic Church in Francoist Spain and colonization in the Gold Coast.[7]

The Black Legend and the Moors

Central to an understanding of how the gothic imbues Wright's experiences in Spain is a discussion of how Francisco Franco used the Black Legend to his advantage as he organized against the Republic. In the February 1936 election, the Popular Front, a coalition of leftist and revolutionary parties, won the majority of seats in the Cortes, Spain's legislature. While this was a promising moment for Spain, and even had far-reaching implications for the rest of Europe, the Spanish right viewed the Republican victory as another step toward world revolution (Preston 7). As a result, in mid-July of that same year, the rightist military staged a coup d'état against the newly elected Republic, thus starting the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Several prominent Africanistas — military officers who rose to prominence during the African Wars — participated in the coup, including Generals José Sanjurjo and Emilio Mola, who helped plan the coup, and General Francisco Franco who commanded the Army of Africa, an army composed of the Spanish Foreign Legion and Moroccan mercenaries, called Regulares Indígenas. The central

[6] For example, María DeGuzmán argues, "Although written by an African American, the text functions for the most part as an expatriation of Anglo-American Gothic, a tool of Anglo-American imperial ideology, and precludes the emergence of its writer's hyphenated subjectivity from beneath the long shadow cast by that very ideology" (232-233). However, such an analysis fails to account for the ways in which Wright reinvents the Gothic and strategically draws connections between the Spanish people, particularly women, and African-Americans.

[7] Charles L. Crow writes that the American gothic "is now usually seen as a tradition of oppositional literature, presenting in disturbing, usually frightening ways, a skeptical, ambiguous view of human nature and of history" (Crow 2) while Allan Lloyd-Smith observes, "The Gothic often provides a voice for silent or repressed concerns and disenfranchised groups, its distanced parallels with reality offering implicit critiques of accepted institutions and behaviors" (135).

roles held by these Africanistas had a significant impact on the nature of the Spanish Civil War, particularly in terms of rhetoric and tactics. For example, the rhetoric of the coup quickly replicated the racist imperial rhetoric that characterized Spain's colonial enterprises and subscribed to the genocidal logical of extermination and purification that would characterize Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy, two countries that would support the "nationalists" war with the Republic. Indeed, as Jeremy Treglown usefully points out, rather than World War II's "dress rehearsal, the Spanish Civil War may be better seen as its first act" (5). There were close ties between the nationalists and particularly, Nazis: as Preston recounts, one of Francisco Franco's collaborators, the Catalan priest Juan Tusquets Terrats visited Dachau in 1933 (36), thousands of Republicans were sent to Nazi concentration camps (516), and Himmler visited and advised Franco (494), to name just a few paradigmatic ties.

However, the racism and genocide that characterized Franco's strategy against the Republicans were, in fact, homegrown. The roots of Franco's tactics are closely tied to the Black Legend, the earlier eradication of Jews and Moors from Spain in 1492, and the result of these first two influences on Spanish colonial strategies. The Black Legend, which Wright also references in *Pagan Spain*, alludes to the "demonic" imperialism of Spain in its colonies. As David Shields reminds us, "[t]he Black Legend held Spain responsible for the disruption of New World peace" (33). The New World, coded as an Edenic paradise, was then despoiled by the Spaniards' cruelty, including, but not limited to, genocide and rape (Shields 177). Because the Black Legend describes the myth and not the reality of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas, Shields remarks that it became part of anti-Hispanic rhetoric (175), which DeGuzmán extends further into a claim about the "blackening" (5) of the Spanish people, who are then coded as other or, in her phrasing, "off-white" (xxvii). DeGuzmán traces a racial typology of blackness by

examining how the association with Moors, Gypsies, and Jews in Spain and with Native Americans and Africans in the Americas and Africa encoded fears of miscegenation and signaled the "imperial degeneration" of the Spanish Empire (xxviii).

The right quickly established a connection between imperial Spain and this fear of miscegenation. For example, as Paul Preston has pointed out, Onésimo Redondo, one of the founders of the JONS (*Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*) who translated *Mein Kampf*, grounded his own anti-Semitism in the fifteenth-century reign of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabel (45). In fact, when the JONS was established, it adopted the yoke and arrows, symbols of the Catholic kings, as its emblem and "demand[ed] Gibraltar, Morocco and Algeria for Spain and aspired to 'the extermination, the dissolution of the anti-national, Marxist parties'" (45). Along similar lines, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the son of the Spanish dictator and Africanista Miguel de Primo de Rivera, established the *Falange Española*, which further developed Spanish fascism and created the framework for the fascist ideas that would underpin Franco's dictatorship. Thus, when the JONS merged with the Falange to become the *Falange Española de Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*, not only was this a crucial step toward the consolidation of the right, but it also established the group as firmly committed to the ideals of imperialism, extermination, and purification.

During the Spanish Civil War, Franco engaged in "a kind of colonial invasion in reverse, against the home country" (Treglown 5) that relied on the resurrection of the Black Legend in two ways. First, the regime framed the Republican cause as rooted in a larger Jewish, masonic conspiracy bent on the destruction of the Spanish nation. As Paul Preston observes, "By lining Marxism as a Jewish invention and its alleged threat of a 're-Africanization; of Spain, [Onésimo] Redondo was identifying Spain's two archetypal 'others', the Jew and the Moor, with the

Republic" (47). This point is further underscored by the comparison between Moroccans and the Spanish left and the working class. While Preston enumerates several examples of Francoists drawing comparisons between colonial subjects and the Republic, one of the most telling is that of General José Sanjurjo, also an Africanista, who "was one of the first officers publicly to identify the subject tribes of Morocco with the Spanish left — a transference of racial prejudice which would facilitate the savagery carried out by the Army of Africa during the Civil War" (21). Preston's remarks reveal the continuity with which a number of Africanistas saw their war against the Republic as of a piece with their colonial undertaking in Morocco. Further, by transferring the racial prejudice that undergirded colonial repression in Morocco to the Republic, Franco and his collaborators turned the Black Legend on their own people and paved the way for staging "a colonial invasion" against the Republic.

Second, the regime deployed Moroccan mercenaries as a way of materializing the threats that underpin the Black Legend: invasion, miscegenation, and genocide. While Preston observes the contradiction in Franco using the African Army while simultaneously upholding the "rightist values [of] the reconquest of Spain from the Moors" (83), where the "Moors" here are the left and the working class, he also points to one of Franco's crucial moves: the dispatching of "Moroccan mercenaries to Asturias, the only part of Spain where the crescent had never flown" (83). By deploying Moroccan mercenaries in the one section of Spain that had never been under Moorish rule, Franco made real the threat of invasion. The use of the Moroccan troops perpetuated the threats of miscegenation and genocide as systematic rape and mass killing characterized the troops' invasion throughout Spain. Franco's use of terror was a key tactic in the Spanish Civil War, but, more than that, terror was specifically encoded in the terms of the Black Legend.

Uncanny Affinities in Richard Wright's *Pagan Spain*

The specter of the Black Legend haunts and informs Wright's three trips to Spain between 1954 and 1955, fifteen years into the Franco regime (1939-1975). In many ways, *Pagan Spain* reads like an ethnographic account of the Spanish people; however, rather than maintaining the boundary that divides the ethnographer from those observed, Wright closes this critical distance and replaces it with racial identification as he observes the numerous racialization processes at work in Francoist Spain. In fact, after spending a considerable amount of time in Spain, visiting notable landmarks and interviewing Spaniards, Wright remarks upon "the emotional plight of the Protestants in Spain" by observing "the undeniable and *uncanny* psychological *affinities* that they held in common with American Negroes, Jews, and other oppressed minorities" (162, emphasis mine). Although "oppressed minorities" may be interpreted rather broadly, the fact that it follows a list of racial groupings suggests that racial affinities inform Wright's approach to other minorities. Wright even goes so far as to call the Spanish people "white Negroes":

> Indeed, the quickest and simplest way to introduce this subject to the reader would be to tell him that I shall describe some of the facets of psychological problems and the emotional sufferings of a group of white Negroes whom I met in Spain, the assumption being that Negroes are Negroes because they are treated as Negroes (162).

Wright's recasting of the Spanish people as "white Negroes," demonstrates solidarity through what he terms the "uncanny affinity" that undergirds the psychology of the oppressed. His argument here — that being "Negro" is not innate or biological, but based on how one is treated — relies on the notion of affinity as a structural similarity. Wright's "uncanny affinities," then, link together the similarity in oppressive regimes – that between the Jim Crow South and Francoist Spain –with the psychological effects of these structures. In likening the "emotional

sufferings" of Spaniards under Franco to Negroes in the United States, Wright's notion of affinity establishes structures of racial feeling that illuminate emotional and structural similarities. In troubling the categories of white and black, Wright frames them as arbitrary distinctions that fail to account for how the "decisive aspects of human reactions are conditioned and are not inborn" (162).

Protestants in this context function as a synecdoche for those Spanish people who deviate from Franco's totalitarian view of a unified, Catholic Spain with conservative politics. Wright prefaces his comments on white Negroes and Protestants with a quote from the *Catechism on Protestantism* by Juan Perrone in which he claims that Protestants are "trying to spread Socialism and Communism" (161). Such a claim aligns Protestantism with the Left. Then, following his discussion of Protestantism, Wright gives the example of an unnamed Protestant woman who teaches Bible classes to children and, as result, is arrested. Once in prison, she tells her story to prison officials who are surprised to learn that religious beliefs are grounds for imprisonment (167). In this way, the woman's story stands in for the broader issue of religious freedom in Spain. Finally, Wright ends with a section from the political catechism created by the women's section (*Sección Femenina*) of Franco's fascist party, the *Falanage Española de Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista* and dedicated to educating women on how to be model citizens for the Falangist state (Enders 379). Wright quotes at length from a passage that articulates the Falangist position that universal suffrage and political parties endanger the state by relying on the whims of the people. With these three moves, Wright links the plight of the Protestant in Spain to the Left, women, non-Catholics, and the vast majority of the Spanish people, the disenfranchised. In this way, Wright points to the flexibility of the term "Protestantism" by outlining its different meanings, each of which signals divides among the

Spanish people. In the first instance, Protestantism is aligned with the Left through socialism and communism while the second instance signals an older religious divide. As Wright's excerpts from the political catechism make clear, Protestantism stands in for the majority of the Spanish people who are not part of the upper echelons of the Franco regime.

By framing the affinities that join together the oppressed majority in Spain with the oppressed minority in the United States as "uncanny," Wright complicates the idea of affinity as a site of revolutionary potential by rendering it in gothic terms, which heightens the affective and atmospheric effects of his experiences in Spain. In his famous essay on the uncanny (1919), Freud tracks how the frightening becomes the uncanny, a shift which pivots on a process of defamiliarization, in which "this uncanny element is actually nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only through being repressed" (148). Closely tied to this process of estrangement is the division between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, the homely, the familiar, the domestic, from the unhomely, the strange, the hidden. The uncanny has such an effect because it recalls something with which we are already familiar. If affinities invite us to recognize similarity, resemblance, likeness, then the uncanny forces us to register similarities that provoke discomfort. Uncanny affinities threaten to seep out, to leek; they cannot be contained. The uncanny registers the familiar within the strange and vice versa, a characteristic that continually unnerves Wright.

But affinity does more work than this: it implicates other histories, revealing an interconnected network of global oppression. For example, early in *Pagan Spain* Wright encounters a woman on the street who, he observes, "registered bewilderment upon seeing my face; then she stared, breaking into a knowing smile" (9), which makes Wright wonder, "Did I remind her of Moors?" (9). Wright perceives the woman as marking an uncanny affinity between

himself and the Moors, which in turn forces him to make the connection as well. This moment causes discomfort because, as Wright knows well, the Moors were forcibly driven out of Spain along with Jews and gypsies during Ferdinand and Isabel's reign (287). Yet another connection that Wright does not make – and may not be aware of – is Franco's deliberate use of Moroccan mercenaries to elicit terror during the Civil War. Franco's use of the Black Legend instituted an ideological "blackening" that racially encoded the Left in contrast to the Catholic, conservative, landowning right. Although we cannot know what the woman on the street experienced during the war — whether she had any firsthand experience with Moroccan mercenaries, whether she was a Republican or a nationalist — her "knowing" smile suggests an affinity with Wright in that moment. If she was a nationalist, then the mercenaries saved Spain; if she was a Republican, then she, too, was coded as black by the Franco regime.

Moments like these signal the way in which uncanny affinities are specifically tied to racial experiences, both historically and in the present. Yet, what to make of Wright's focus on race, considering that more often than not, Wright's notion of race was as an "accident of color" (88)? Despite the critical consensus – and Wright's own viewpoint – that he is an uncompromising rationalist, in *Pagan Spain*, Wright turns to emotion and the gothic to make sense of interactions like that between him and the woman on the street. To understand such moments, we have to take seriously what I call his racial feeling because doing so demonstrates Wright's experience of racialization – and, importantly, that of others – and foregrounds the centrality of affect to Wright's thoughts about race, oppression, and solidarity.

On the one hand, it would make perfect sense for Wright to express an affinity with Spain – as a Marxist and anti-colonialist who increasingly thought of himself as a world figure, siding with the Spanish people fits within Wright's Western, cosmopolitan viewpoint. Indeed, the

Spanish Civil War was a galvanizing force for the American Left; Ernest Hemingway and Langston Hughes were both war correspondents during the Spanish Civil War, which inspired Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) and numerous poems by Hughes, including "The Song of Spain" (1938). What is striking about the terms of affinity, however, is that it does not emerge out of Wright's Marxism or cosmopolitanism per se – though both certainly influenced his thinking – but out of a sense of *racial* feeling. In his last years, Wright turned away from Communism as a political movement capable of uniting people based on class because, as Wright learned, it did not adequately account for racial division. Like communism, anti-colonial and anti-racist movements organize around single issues, which is an unsustainable political framework for multi-issue movements. If "I Tried To Be A Communist" (1944) demonstrates Wright's disillusionment with the Communist party, then *Pagan Spain* marks the pivotal shift in Wright's thinking from single-issue politics towards a framework that understands and accounts for multiple political affiliations.

Crucially, however, Wright's uncanny affinity with Spanish women only manifests itself through Wright's repeated observations of the racialization of Spanish women, a process heightened by the gothic atmosphere of Francoist Spain. The gothic, which Leslie Fiedler influentially argues is the founding fiction of the United States, based as it is on "the guilt of the revolutionist who feels himself a parricide" (xxii), is an oppositional literature that in the United States, began with the guilt of the American Revolution and, in so doing, formed a uniquely American gothic haunted by the consequences of overthrow. Yet, as Fiedler continues, this revolutionary guilt is then coupled with paranoia at "the ambiguity of our relationship with Indian and Negro" (xxii), an ambiguity that stems from the twofold problem of the misapprehension of the United States as a blank slate without any prior history on the one hand,

and the legacy of genocide and slavery, on the other. American gothic, then, retains the revolutionary history inaugurated by the French and American Revolutions and also uneasily signals the fraught history of imperialism at the United States' inception. While the gothic Fiedler describes pivots on the specters of genocide and slavery, Wright's gothic develops from the position of the colonized other, caught between the division of *heimlich* and *unheimlich*. Thus, when Wright turns to the gothic to explore the uncanny affinities between his experiences in the Jim Crow South and those of Spanish women during the Franco regime, he does so to examine the unhomely conditions of one's country through processes of racialization.

Invented by Horror

A scene from *Black Boy* illustrates the connections Wright draws between affect and the gothic, which is further triangulated by a connection with women – Ella, a schoolteacher who Wright's grandmother boarded in her home and the story Ella tells Wright, the tale of Bluebeard and his wives: "As her words fell upon my new ears, I endowed them with a reality that welled up from somewhere within me. She told how Bluebeard had duped and married his seven wives, how he had loved and slain them, how he had hanged them up by their hair in a dark closet" (39). The sensationalism of the story captivates the young Wright as he imagines murdered women and closed spaces. While Wright remarks upon the content of the story, he also comments on its effect on him: "As she spoke, reality changed, the look of things altered, and the world became peopled with magical presences. My sense of life deepened and the feel of things was different, somehow. Enchanted and enthralled, I stopped her constantly to ask for details. My imagination blazed. The sensations the story aroused in me were never to leave me" (39). As Yogita Goyal cogently observes, this scene demonstrates how Wright can "alter such [material] conditions

through the sheer imaginative force of his writing" (150) because the Bluebeard tale creates, for Wright, a world "full of magic and romance which emerge from within him and in so doing, transform his environment" (150). I extend Goyal's claims to argue that it is exactly the world of magic and romance that Wright turns to in Spain. Faced with structural inequality and repression, which echo "the harshness of the material conditions of his life" (Goyal 150), Wright deploys the gothic to examine the uncanny affinities that connect his own structural position with that of the Spanish people.

Two pivotal moments contextualize the uncanniness that frames Wright's experiences in Africa and Spain: the ship in *Black Power* and the frontier in *Pagan Spain*. While Paul Gilroy has argued for the importance of the ship to the Black Atlantic and Frederick Jackson Turner for the role of the frontier in solidifying the Western expansion of the United States, Wright joins the two and, in so doing, signals how the ship and the frontier synecdochically represent empire; they are two elements of the same impulse. For Gilroy, the figure of the ship "focuses attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts" (4). Caught in two historical moments – Atlantic slavery and the possibility of return – the ship signifies both enslavement and homecoming for Wright. The frontier, meanwhile, as Frederick Jackson Turner famously claimed in 1893, gave shape to American democracy. For Turner, the frontier shaped the "American" character to be individual (30), mobile (30), and expansionist (37) and signaled a fundamental break with the Old World.[8] And yet, in noting how "[t]he wilderness masters the colonist" (4), "Americanization" for Turner begins to look like

[8] See Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in *The Frontier in American History*.

"going native."[9] Indeed, his comments point to the threat and, potentially, the promise, of the frontier; that one will enter it in European dress only to trade in these garments for a hunting shirt. In short, while Turner's frontier thesis explains United States' imperialism and noticeably ignores the violence that met the taking of "free land" on the frontier, it also begins to suggest that the frontier is both the physical and metaphorical space for decolonization; the imperialism of the frontier engenders its own undoing.

Indeed, Wright turns the fraught spaces of the ship and the frontier against themselves. As Mary Louise Pratt argues, on the ship, Wright not only reverses the imperial gaze of the balcony scene, he also "declares dissatisfaction with the balcony convention" and "is conspicuously at pains to acknowledge limits on his capacity as a seeing-man" (222). Wright's gaze quickly reveals his deep ambivalence toward Africa, which quickly turns to the uncanny, the affective response that will permeate his experience of Africa. Approaching the continent, Wright observes,

> The ship sliced its way through a sea that was like still, thick oil, a sea that stretched limitless, smooth, and without a break toward a murky horizon. The ocean seemed to possess a quiet but persistent threat of terror lurking just beneath the surface, and I'd not have been surprised if a vast tidal wave had thrust the ship skyward in a sudden titanic upheaval of destruction (*Power* 38).

The ship's "slicing" evokes violence on the preternaturally calm ocean. Rather than a joyous homecoming, Wright speculates on the terror beneath the sea, a surface/depth issue that informs many of his interactions with Africans, a people with whom he simultaneously uneasily

[9] Rather than "going native" in Spain, John W. Lowe, in "The Transnational Vision of Richard Wright's *Pagan Spain*," goes so far as to argue that Wright in Spain *is* the native: "As an American, he stands in for the Indian; also like the Indian, he will see Spain from the viewpoint of a stranger, and he too will be 'baptized,' but with cultural understanding rather than religion."

identifies even as he attempts to distance himself from them. Here, as Pratt argues, Wright "encodes [the Atlantic Ocean] as evil and death," (222) a framing that evokes the middle passage and reveals that Foucault's heteropia *par excellence*, the ship, is not a dream, but a nightmare. The descriptions of the ocean signal that we are in the realm of the gothic, where old ghosts return to haunt us. This terror becomes an experience of what Paul Gilroy describes as the "slave sublime," which despite the horrors of slavery, can never "communicate its unsayable claims to truth" (37). The ocean here is silent, but it conveys "a quiet but persistent threat," signaling how the experience of the sublime and God in this scene is fraught with the history of Atlantic slavery. If *Black Power* begins with Wright's unease about visiting Africa, the ship manifests the contradictory impulses of the violent passage out of Africa and the conflicted decision to return.

Wright's experience of the Spanish frontier echoes his misgivings upon entering Africa and similarly signals his unease. Exploring the tension between the old and the new, the past and the future in Spain, Wright investigates how "the history of the other" that is "immanent in the landscape of the frontier" (Mogen, Sanders, Karpinski 17) is the history of Spanish imperialism meted out on the Spanish landscape through "pagan" carvings and churches that commemorate the imperial past by housing fetish objects. Casting Spain in the form of the gothic, Wright, like Sedgwick's gothic hero who is a classic paranoid (*Coherence* v), anxiously approaches Spain: "In torrid August, 1954, I was under the blue skies of the Midi, just a few hours from the Spanish frontier" (3) *Pagan Spain* begins, revealing the sharp contrast between the "torrid" weather and "blue skies" that mark the beginning of his opening paragraph with the repulsion and fear that characterize the latter half. "I wanted to go to Spain, but something was holding me back. The only thing that stood between me and a Spain that beckoned as much as it repelled was a state of mind" (3). The unnamed, unspeakable "something" that holds Wright back is the uncanny, the

unheimlich that renders Spain both familiar and unfamiliar, that situates his gothicism within a psychic landscape in contrast to the landscape he traverses on his journey. As Wright remarks, the fascist government does not deter him: "I had been born under an absolutist racist regime in Mississippi; I had lived and worked for twelve years under the political dictatorship of the Communist party of the United States; and I had spent a year of my life under the police terror of Perón in Buenos Aires" (3). Wright's fear is unlocatable because Franco-era Spain resonates with other dictatorships he has experienced. Tellingly, Wright's attempts to locate the cause of his fear situate him transnationally and historically – Spain is familiar because of the racism, dictatorships, and police terror he has experienced before. Yet, Spain is also unfamiliar because it represents an unidentified feeling for Wright, "What was I scared of?" (3) he queries by the paragraph's end.

What Wright is scared of, of course, is the threat of colonial resurgence as well as the structural similarities among regimes as diverse as the Jim Crow United States, the Communist Party, and Perón in Buenos Aires. Suggestively, affinity derives from the Latin *affinis*, which literally means "bordering on" — affinities cross boundaries, from literally crossing the Spanish frontier as Wright does, to metaphorically crossing frontiers of racial difference. The similarities Wright observes across oppressive regimes manifest themselves through the historical and political connections he draws between fascism in Spain and racism in the United States, which render visible the threat of the global reach of colonial resurgence. Visiting Seville, he comes across a religious procession during Holy Week that reminds him of the Ku Klux Klan: "It must have been from here that the Ku Klux Klan regalia had been copied. Well, I would see to what use the Spaniards had put this costume. Was pillage or penitence the object when one donned such an outlandish dress?" (280). As Faith Berry remarks in her introduction to *Pagan Spain*, the

Ku Klux Klan did appropriate their costumes from Spanish penitents, but Wright neglects to mention that the Spanish costumes were meant "to disguise the identities of sinners to all except God" (xvi) rather than pillage, which she reads as indicative of Wright's tendency to highlight information based on "what they symbolized to him" (xvii). However, *Pagan Spain*, for Wright, is primarily a political rather than a historical project. Thus, while Wright interprets events like watching a bull fight or visiting a monument symbolically, the overall political project of *Pagan Spain* does not rely on such isolated moments, but, rather, on the structural connections across racist regimes that Wright makes. By emphasizing Wright's project as political rather than historical, I do not mean suggest that history is not important to Wright; rather, in making claims such as the one above, he departs from his obsession with facts and documentary evidence and, instead, turns to affinity as a structure of feeling that connects multiple histories of colonization and repression. In other words, Wright's notion of history in *Pagan Spain* suggests that his investment in history is predicated on a notion of history as *felt* experience and the kinds of affinity that the uncanny makes possible.

The implications of Wright's political project are deeply connected with the form in which he chooses to write about Spain, the gothic. In his essay, "How 'Bigger' Was Born," Wright provocatively states, ""And if Poe were alive, he would not have to invent horror; horror would invent him'" (881). Wright's joining together of the gothic (through Poe) with the racial experience of African Americans (the subtext of "if Poe were alive") emerges as a specifically mid-twentieth century problem, where the horrors of the black experience in the United States are somehow uniquely positioned to create Poe rather than vice versa. Wright's thoughts along these lines extend to other canonical American writers, such as Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who he writes, "complained bitterly about the bleakness and flatness of the

American scene. But I think that if they were alive, they'd feel at home in modern America" (881). For Wright, it is almost as if the history of slavery in the United States is unknown to either Hawthorne or James, as if only in the mid-twentieth century would the issue of slavery reveal its centrality to American literature. Wright concludes: "But we do have in the Negro the embodiment of a past tragic enough to appease the spiritual hunger of even a James; and we have in the oppression of the Negro a shadow athwart our national life dense and heavy enough to satisfy even the gloomy broodings of a Hawthorne" (881). "A past tragic enough," "a shadow athwart our national life" – these are Wright's veiled references to the horrors of slavery. The significance of slavery on the national life of the United States can only be understood in the mid-twentieth century because the repercussions of this tragic past continue to reverberate decades after abolition. Slavery gave way to the Jim Crow South, revealing the entrenched racism that undergirds the United States and a present haunted by this earlier history.

Wright's comments point to two central literary concerns as well: the exclusion of African Americans from the literary canon on the one hand, and the relationship between literature and the experience of racialization, on the other. The absence of the horrors of slavery in such canonical works suggests a national amnesia that forms the basis for Wright's critique. By tracking the conspicuous absence of slavery in the works of Poe, Hawthorne, and James, Wright inscribes the horrors of slavery into the American literary canon. As Wright tells us elsewhere, "The Negro is America's metaphor" (*Listen!* 734). By explicitly linking the experience of African Americans to a form of literary figuration, metaphor, Wright connects racialized experience with literary representation and extends this claim to argue that African American experiences represent the nation as a whole: "The history of the Negro in America is the history of America written in vivid and bloody terms; it is the history of Western Man writ small. It is

the history of men who tried to adjust themselves to a world whose laws, customs, and instruments of force were leveled against them" (*Listen!* 734). If the gothic in African American literature powerfully depicted the horrors of slavery "in vivid and bloody terms," then *Black Power* and *Pagan Spain* extend that tradition to illuminate the tyranny of colonization and the uncanny affinities that thread them together.

Frog Perspectives

Wright's experiences in the Gold Coast before arriving in Spain crucially inform the notion of uncanny affinities, particularly given the ambivalence and uncertainty with which Wright considers such a trip. As *Black Power* begins, Wright describes a conversation with Dorothy and George Padmore, prominent West Indian Pan-Africanists, who encourage him to go to Africa. As soon as the Padmores recommend the trip, Wright wonders, "Being of African descent, would I be able to feel and know something about Africa on the basis of a common 'racial' heritage?" (18) and "Or had three hundred years imposed a psychological distance between me and the 'racial stock' from which I had sprung?" (18). Wright's comments touch on the felt experience of race and frame this experience as marking the distance between nature and nurture, biology and culture. Put another way, Wright wonders whether racial affinity is enough to tie him to Africa and African experience. He even goes so far as to consider how his historical relationship to Africa would impede such racial affinity: "What would my feelings be when I looked into the black face of an African, feeling that maybe his great-great-great-grandfather had sold my great-great-great-grandfather into slavery?" (18). Rather than romanticizing his relationship with Africa, Wright sees Africa as complicit in the history of African American oppression in the United States. "Would the Africans regard me as a lost brother who had

returned?" (18), he continues, signaling the typical diasporic claim on the homeland as the right of return.

Wright's racial feeling towards Africans oscillates between disidentification and recognition. For example, he writes, "I'm of African descent and I'm in the midst of Africans, yet I cannot tell what they are thinking and feeling" (*Power* 172). In this scene, racial heritage does little to break down the barrier between the African and the African American. And yet, earlier in the text, when he sees a group of women dancing, he recalls:

> I'd seen these same snakelike, veering dances before . . . Where? Oh, God, yes; in America, in storefront churches, in Holy Roller Tabernacles, in God's Temples, in unpainted wooden prayer-meeting houses on the plantations of the Deep South. . . . And here I was seeing it all again against a background of a surging nationalistic political movement! How could that be? (78).

The women uncannily recall the South; yet this moment of recognition is filled with revulsion and exclusion. Wright describes the women as "stripped to the waist, their elongated breasts flopping wildly" (78) and the event reminds him of his own inability to dance. He writes, "So, what had bewildered me about Negro dance expression in the United States now bewildered me in the same way in Africa" (79). Rather than signaling an embodied form of culture across centuries, the dancing women suggest that being of African descent is not enough, in the United States or Africa, to foster a sense of belonging.

Only when Wright confronts his relationship to his historical past does he begin to imagine a political framework that moves beyond race. Roughly halfway through *Black Power*, Wright speaks to an African cook. During his time in Africa, Wright has learned the significance of the relationship between the dead and the living; he remarks that in Africa, death is more of a

departure than a death as the dead continue to live alongside the living (259). Curious about his own relationship to his dead African ancestors, he asks the cook whether his ancestors "'called me back for some reason?'" (238). The cook replies, "'I'm afraid, sar, that your ancestors do not know you now. If your ancestors knew you, why, they'd help you. And, of course, it may be that your ancestors know you and you don't know them, so much time has passed, you see, sar'" (238). Unlike the cook, Wright here is a displaced African whose seemingly inherent ties to the homeland have been ruptured by slavery. The disidentification that takes place between Wright's ancestors and Wright (and vice versa) signify this historical break. And yet, while such a rupture would seem to nullify any inherent notion of black nationalism based on racial affinity, Wright uses this rupture as a way to think beyond black nationalism.

Wright's notion of the frog perspective, which he derives from Niezsche, draws upon these experiences of disidentification. Wright defines the frog perspective as "someone looking from below upward" (*Listen!* 656), which causes psychological, rather than physical, distance (656). For the person looking up from below, "He loves the object because he would like to resemble it; he hates the object because his chances of resembling it are remote, slight" (657). Wright's description recalls Du Boisian double consciousness; in fact, as Paul Gilroy has argued, the frog perspective for Wright is another way to theorize double consciousness "towards an interest in the geo-politics of (anti) imperialism and the place of various different racisms within the structure of imperial rule" (Gilroy 161). However, there is a significant difference between the frog perspective and double consciousness: whereas double consciousness depends upon the difference between the African American and the European/American, the frog perspective also signals a detachment from one's own people. Here, I depart from Wright's own framing of the frog perspective as the "'colored' peoples of the world" against "the white man" (*Listen!* 657).

Drawing upon Wright's experiences of detachment in Africa, I contend that Wright's desire for resemblance – to be an African American who can dance, for example – also informs his notion of the frog perspective and suggestively points to the work of affinity in joining together oppressed groups both across and within racial categories. That is, if frog perspectives describe the psychological distance between the colonizer and the colonized, then uncanny affinities do the work of closing such psychological distance among the colonized.

The frog perspective allows for a critical position outside of the binary logic of black and white, east and west.[10] In theorizing this third point of view, Wright combines this idea of the frog perspective with the felt experience of race to form both his theory of revolution and articulate (*Power* 410) his relationship to the West and the oppressed. As he tells Ellen Wright before leaving for the Bandung Conference, "I've had the burden of race consciousness. So have these people. I worked in my youth as a common laborer, and I've a class consciousness. So have these people" (*Color* 440-441). Wright then ties together the felt experience of race and class by remarking, "These emotions are my instruments. They are emotions, but I'm conscious of them as emotions. I want to use these emotions to try to find out what these people think and feel and why" (*Color* 441).[11] Wright's concept of emotions as instruments echoes his

[10] Richard King also observes a "third way" in Wright, though he does not connect this to Wright's notion of frog perspectives and his frequent references to a "third point of view" as in, for instance, Wright's remark during the First International Conference of Negro Writers and Artists in September 1956 in Paris, "I see both worlds from another and third point of view. (This outlook as nothing to do with any so-called Third Force; I'm speaking largely in psychological terms.)" ("Tradition" 349). King writes: "In sum, Wright sought to thread his way through the field of contending Cold War forces by adopting a 'third way' – *for* political independence in Africa and Asia and *against* Soviet or Chinese political domination of those countries in the wake of the departure of the Western colonial powers. In this respect, both *Black Power* and *The Color Curtain* were consistently anticommunist and anticolonial" (236).

[11] John M. Reilly similarly observes how these comments by Wright suggest global affinities: "This is the basis for identification that transcends for Wright any limitations he may feel

justification of Marxist methods (*Black Power* 12), which he also views as instruments or tools for analyzing his experiences in the Gold Coast. Thus, even though Wright at this point is no longer a Communist and even though he explicitly rejects racial feeling as the basis for solidarity, Wright also recognizes both as tools for understanding oppression and, consequently, the nature of revolution. In short, Wright cannot deny that the experiences of race and class affectively form what people think and why.

Focusing on how Wright conceptualizes racial feeling illuminates his controversial claim at the end of *Black Power* that African life must be militarized (415) precisely because the basis for this claim relies on racial feeling.[12] Before Wright makes this claim, he describes his visit to a Cape Coast castle, a gothic setting if ever there was one. He comments,

> If there is any treasure hidden in these vast walls, I'm sure that it has a sheen that outshines gold – a tiny, pearl-shaped tear that formed on the cheek of some black woman torn away from her children, a tear that gleams here still, caught in the feeble rays of the dungeon's light – a shy tear that vanishes at the sound of approaching footsteps, but reappears when all is quiet, hanging there on that black cheek, unredeemed, unappeased – a tear that was hastily brushed off when her arm was grabbed and she was led toward those narrow, dank steps that guided her to the tunnel that directed her feet to the waiting ship that would bear her across the heaving mist-shrouded Atlantic. . . . (409).

The treasure, in short, is the anguish of enslavement. Significantly, the value of this "treasure"

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because of his lack of detailed knowledge of Asia or Africa. The passage reveals as well an outlook that dissolves secondary differences among the colored peoples of the world and permits him the equations we have seen between the appearance of Jakarta with Accra, of the peasants in the hills of Indonesia with the country folk of the Gold Coast. For Wright, the life of the colored masses has become unitary" ("Art of Non-Fiction" 422).

[12] Manthia Diawara offers an alternate reading of Wright's call for militarization by reading militarization as a form of discipline (69-70).

pivots on a haunted present that ensures that the history signaled by the castle, the tear, and the ship, endures. "Unredeemed, unappeased" – Wright points to the unrest that still informs the present, a present that has not sufficiently dealt with the horrors of slavery. Further, by drawing upon sentimentality – a single woman's tear standing in for centuries of oppression – Wright undermines his insistence on rationalism and reveals the value of affect to revolutionary thought. Indeed, even though the paragraph that follows this moving description explicitly disavows emotion – "[t]he kind of thinking that must be done cannot be done by men whose hearts are swamped with emotion" (409) – the unredeemed past symbolized by the woman's tear galvanizes Wright's call to arms.

Despite his earlier moments of detachment, by the end of *Black Power*, Wright identifies with the African people and explains to Kwame Nkrumah,

> I felt an odd kind of at-homeness, a solidarity that stemmed not from ties of blood or race, or from my being of African descent, but from the quality of deep hope and suffering embedded in the lives of your people, from the hard facts of oppression that cut across time, space, and culture. I must confess that I, an American Negro, was filled with consternation at what Europe had done to this Africa. . . . (409-410).

Wright's use of the phrase "at-homeness" suggests a recuperation of the uncanny, where the *unheimlich* that characterized his time on the ship transformed into the *heimlich* of shared experience. Though Wright again attempts to divorce his thoughts from his feelings, the slippage that occurs between the two throughout *Black Power* demonstrates that Wright's experience of oppression cannot be separated easily from his race. When in Africa, he's haunted by his ancestors; when in Spain, he continually reflects on the Moors. Wright, famous for a Western point of view "that conflicts at several points with the present, dominant outlook of the West"

(*Color* 712) is continually drawn to "the claims of racial particularity on one side and the appeal of those modern universals that appear to transcend race on the other" (Gilroy 147). In this way, Wright identifies with the oppression he sees in the Gold Coast, not across historical lines – his supposed inherent relationship to Africa – but across spatial ones. He finds, in "this" Africa, a present Africa whose subjugation closely aligns with his own experiences as an "American Negro." Wright links Africans to African Americans based on shared experiences of oppression, which, by creating affinities based on experience, carves out a space for other oppressed peoples rather than relying on strict categories grounded in identity. In this way, racial feeling becomes the basis for revolution in Wright because it provides a framework for the oppressed in both Africa and Spain. Thus, while Wright's emphasis on militarization might seem odd given his experiences in Francoist Spain as he finished *Black Power*, what separates fascist militarization of Spanish life from militarization in African life is how these two forms of nationalism imagine their relationship to the past. These conflicting notions of the relationship between race and history become a formal concern in Spain, which Wright explores through his use of the gothic.

Resisting Desire, Racializing Whiteness

When in Spain, Wright's discussion of women hinges on tropes familiar to the female gothic, particularly "the terror of the familiar: the routine brutality and injustice of the patriarchal family, conventional religion, and classist social structures" (Winter 21). Witnessing the oppression of women elicits sympathy from Wright, an emotional response that characterizes his response to Spanish women in *Pagan Spain*. Wright's sympathy is remarkable, given the critical consensus on his misogyny (Evans 167). In fact, while Dennis F. Evans argues that Wright's sympathy simply stems from a sense of his own foreignness in Spain, and that he does not see

these women as "people of color," I contend that he mobilizes the frog perspective to do the work of affinity and, in so doing, simultaneously demonstrates how the construction of femininity in Spain is deeply racialized. This happens in two ways: first, Wright illustrates how the "blackening" of Spanish women echoes Franco's use of the Black Legend. Second, Wright ties race to structural oppression rather than skin color, thus demonstrating how *processes* of racialization rather than race itself undergirds the racism of the Francoist regime. Before demonstrating the racialization of women in Spain, however, I will first discuss how the frog perspective contends with internalized colonial perceptions to address the "terror of the familiar" before turning to the larger issue of structural oppression.

In his interactions with women, Wright sees them not only from his own point of view, but also through the hyper-sexualized gaze of Spanish men. For example, upon meeting André's fiancée, who is a virgin, Wright remarks, "I had the feeling that, if I had said: 'All right, now, pull off your clothes and lie there on that couch!' she would have been momentarily shocked, but would have obeyed at once. The girl was the living personification of sexual consciousness; one could have scraped sex off her with a knife" (*Pagan* 99). Yet, this scene, rather than illustrating the virgin's sexual desire, demonstrates Wright's transference of his own sexual desire onto first the virgin, then André, which he renders in disturbingly violent terms. Routed through his observations of André, the denial of sex intensifies the sexuality of the virgin for Wright. For example, when Wright comments, "[h]er entire outlook was one of waiting to be despoiled" (100) his viewpoint closely aligns with André's perceived perspective, which Wright describes in similar terms: "[w]hen in her presence he could not help but be conscious of her longing to be deflowered" (100). Both of these examples – Wright's perceived view of the virgin's sexual awareness and André's imagined reaction to it – recall the colonial legacy of rape and reveal

Wright's internalization of colonial perceptions.

Yet, complicating matters further, Wright also occupies a third perspective in which he both aligns with and critiques the gaze of Spanish men. While double-consciousness hinges on the awareness of being observed, this third perspective turns the notion of double consciousness outward by demonstrating how Wright observes Spanish men observing Spanish women. At a bullfight, Wright

> noticed that the pressmen and the photographers behind the space of the first barrier kept looking up at the tiers of human bodies in such a queer and self-conscious fashion that I felt compelled to turn my head and seek out what was interesting them so intensely. I discovered that they had an amazingly graphic view of many women who, enthralled and excited, had allowed their legs to spread, offering froglike visions of white flesh (109).

The women are completely unaware of the men observing them from below while Wright keenly observes how the men "jab one another in the ribs, whispering, laughing with taut lips, then resume their pacing and looking furtively upward" (109). In short, although Wright is not part of the cluster of men, he understands the male impulses that inform it. Significantly, in what is no doubt an unconscious connection on Wright's part, he links the frog perspective – which he initially describes in terms of racial difference – with that of sexual difference, through the "froglike visions of white flesh." Thus, if the frog perspective pivots on disidentification and psychological distance, where the person looking up from below "loves the object because he would like to resemble it; he hates the object because his chances of resembling it are remote, slight" (*Listen!* 657), then this moment of sexual excitement reverses the gaze of oppression, from oppressed to oppressor, and signals how the oppressor desires – and is distanced from – the oppressed.

Much like his reversal of the imperial gaze in the balcony scene, Wright reverses the power dynamic of the frog perspective and, in so doing, politicizes his second order observation of Spanish men by making what would be an obstacle towards affinity – sexual desire – into an observation of how desire undergirds oppression. Indeed, male sexual desire crucially informs the exclusion of women from the state, but this desire is also a source of shame, as exemplified by the bullfight where Wright observes a crowd of men and boys stomping a dead bull's testicles. He remarks, "They went straight to the real object on that dead bull's body that the bull had symbolized for them and poured out the hate and frustration and bewilderment of their troubled and confused consciousness" (156). This moment of violence sharply contrasts with the earlier vision of "white flesh" characterized by camaraderie. By stomping the bull's testicles, the men locate and symbolically destroy the root of the problem – male sexual desire – and simultaneously signal their disgust with their own masculinity. Significantly, this moment also signals a break in Wright's observations – rather than standing apart, but sharing the moment of looking up women's skirts, in this scene he stands on a balcony, looking at the crowd below him. Yet, rather than emphasizing the limits to seeing, as Pratt argues about his scene on the ship, Wright emphasizes the point of view of the colonized, looking at the barbarism of the colonizer.

If in these scenes Wright relies on the frog perspective's ability to turn double consciousness outward to critique how Spanish men view Spanish women, then uncanny affinities emphasize shared, felt experiences of oppression. By returning to familiar gothic tropes like the Catholic Church, a decaying city in ruins, and, most illuminating of all, the "madwoman in the attic," Wright once again shows how sentiment undergirds his critique. Early in his travels, Wright's friend Carlos introduces him to Lola, who emerges as Wright's double, as her structural position in Spain mirrors Wright's in the Jim Crow South. While there is certainly not a one-to-

one similarity between the American Civil War and the Spanish Civil War, the wounds of both wars influence the present of *Pagan Spain*. Lola's family, who house Wright in their apartment, are traditional Spanish Catholics, which Carlos is quick to distinguish from Loyalists; Communists killed the father during the Civil War. Wright meets Lola when he rents a room in her family's apartment, though his friend Carlos warns him of Lola's madness. His first night in his new room, Wright meets Lola, who he describes as having "a twisted smile on her face" (57) and "tousled hair [that] crawled over her heard in all directions" (57). He continues, "her neck was ringed with dirt; her mouth was large and her gums were blackened with stumps of rotted teeth. She had put on so much powder, rouge and lipstick that she seemed to be wearing a mask" (58). Not only does this scene show femininity in distress as Lola's make-up resembles a parody of femininity or the dramatic rouge and lipstick of a prostitute, but it also does so through gothic tropes. A monstrous figure, Lola reveals the *unheimlich* endemic to Francoist Spain.

Wright's sympathy for Lola is all the more striking because her political position as a traditional Spanish Catholic aligns her with the Nationalists, which would correspond to the confederacy in the United States. Yet, what Lola reveals is that no matter which side wins, the failure to incorporate the oppressed leads to madness. As Lola's mother explains, Lola's monstrosity stems from the psychological impact of the Civil War: "'She saw them kill her father. *She saw it happen!* That's why she's like that'" (62). This information shocks Wright because in his conversation with Lola she explained that the Communists had her father and that she and Ronnie, the dog, were waiting for his return (58). However, as Wright learns from Lola's mother, the Communists "took the both of them from the house and out into the countryside. They told her: 'We are taking your father. We'll bring him back soon.' And they took him off a few feet and shot him. She saw that, but she does not wish to believe it. She says that they'll

bring him back'" (62). This crucial moment from the Civil War explains Lola's mental illness; it also renders the Spain of 1954 in the past because the ostensible present is filled with the "memories of violence and horror [that] lived on and kindled mental and emotional pain" (61). Mourning a lost father, Lola allegorically represents the nation; not only has she repressed her memories of the war, but her home has also become a prison.

Lola's experiences no doubt resonated with Wright who grew up in a country still dealing with the ramifications of its own Civil War. Sensitive to the institutionalization of racism through Jim Crow laws, Wright proves to be a keen observer of the processes of racialization to which Spanish women are subject, which are rendered visible by the distinction between "good" and "bad" women in Spain (14). Wright quickly learns how Spanish men revere virginity – let us remember that, when he meets André's fiancée, André states that she is a virgin, as if that were "a kind of profession in itself" (100). After witnessing the Holy Week procession that reminds Wright of the Ku Klux Klan, he links the privileging of virginity with race: "Those hooded penitents had been protecting the Virgin, and in the Old American South hooded Ku Kluxers had been protecting 'the purity of white womanhood'" (284). Here the terms begin to implicate one another – the Virgin signals purity and, in so doing, whiteness. The purity of white womanhood – used to justify violence to African American men – finds its echo in the Holy Week procession. What both instances reveal is a preoccupation with miscegenation. Even in Spain, where, as the Catalan barber reminds us, "We don't shrink from dark skins. We created new races in South America" (92), the obsession with purity remains the same and recalls the expulsion of Moors, gypsies, and Jews in the fifteenth-century. Miscegenation happens elsewhere, off Spanish soil, it seems.

While virgins are coded as white, prostitutes are blackened. When Wright meets S., a white

slaver, he learns about the flourishing industry of sex trafficking from Spain to North Africa. Baffled, Wright asks S., "'White slavery?'" (217) to which S. replies, "'No. Not white slavery,' he chuckled. 'Olive-skinned slavery'" (217). In making this distinction, the slaver distinguishes between white, presumably northern European women, and those from Spain, who are not quite white, in his view. Still surprised, Wright wonders why women need to be shipped from Spain to North Africa, only to be told "'They are white'" (217). At this comment, Wright finally understands the market for Spanish women as "'Racial revenge in bed'" (217). What this exchange reveals is the complex racialized space Spanish women inhabit. In contrast to white slavery, they are "olive-skinned," but in relation to North African men, they are white. This suggests that aside from the Black Legend's differentiation of Spanish people from the rest of the West, the whiteness of Spanish people depends on the historical specificity that accounts for their earlier associations with miscegenation in the Americas on the one hand, and the connection with Africa on the other, from the Moorish rule of Spain that ended in the fifteenth century to Franco's Army of Africa in the twentieth. Indeed, at the time of Wright's trip, Morocco was still a Spanish protectorate (it would be until 1958, one year after *Pagan Spain*'s publication). In Wright's view, the North Africans exact "racial revenge" on their white oppressors. Thus, while the prostitutes Wright encounters are not white according to S., they are further blackened by their association with North Africans.

In addition to the way race undergirds female sexuality in Spain, Wright also offers a view of race based on behavior rather than skin color. Upon meeting a former acquaintance from Paris, V., Wright accompanies her to her pension so she can pack without harassment from her landlord. As she packs, V. says "'Oh, they think I'm a whore, all right. All women alone are whores. I'm worse; I've no official card'" (84), signaling the many ways in which women are

managed and surveilled, through limited mobility and documentation. After leaving the pension, V. complains, "'Can I *help* it if I'm a woman? Why *do* they act like that? It makes me mad clear through!'" (88). Her comment causes Wright to observe her more closely: "I looked at her wavy locks of hair, at her white skin, her brown eyes" (88) and say, "'You are acting like a Negro'" (88). Shocked by Wright's statement, V. asks Wright to explain. "'Raging and wailing and crying won't help you.' I argued. 'Negroes do that when they are persecuted because of their accident of color. The accident of sex is just as bad. And crying is senseless'" (88). Wright considers the "accidents" of color and sex to be equal, but, more importantly, in surveying V.'s whiteness before telling her she is "acting like a Negro," he realizes that how one behaves directly relates to how one is treated. This moment is key for Wright's remark almost a hundred pages later that he meets "white Negroes" in Spain. While V. is not a Spanish woman, she demonstrates how women are racialized once they are in Spain. By tracking the numerous ways in which Spanish women are racialized, we can now see that Wright shares an affinity with Spanish women not just across gender difference, but based on shared experiences of racialization. Indeed, when he leaves V. at her new hotel, she says, "'Maybe I can do as much for you someday'" (89). V.'s remark offers a veiled reference to the United States; back home, the positions between V. and Wright would be reversed.

V.'s comments point to culturally specific constructions of identity, which frog perspectives critique and expose while uncanny affinities emphasize the ramifications of such constructions and, in so doing, create new lines of solidarity. For Wright, Spanish women are a lens through which to critique structural oppression via the Francoist Spain but, more significantly, they demonstrate how the frog perspective – the colonized looking up to the colonizer with a mixture of love and hate – crucially undergirds the project of affinity by

allowing Wright to understand the plight of women from the outside. While uncanny affinities are accidental and rely on the unconscious, frog perspectives signal a conscious, deliberate way to forge solidarity through the recognition and critique of shared oppression. Thus, when Wright reflects, "Spanish men have built a State, but they have never built a society, and the only society that there is in Spain is in the hearts and minds and habits and love and devotion of its women. . . ." (*Pagan* 222, ellipses Wright's) and, "the women of Spain make her a nation" (*Pagan* 220), he not only signals his solidarity with women, but he also distinguishes the State from society, suggesting a shift away from a State-based form of nationhood, which in Francoist Spain relies on homogenization through totalitarian rule, to a society-based form of nationhood that incorporates diverse sectors of community.

Resurrecting Totalitarianism

Whereas in the majority of Wright's work he considers the effects of oppression on African Americans, significantly, in *Pagan Spain*, he examines the effects of colonization on the colonizer. In doing so, he distinguishes between two Spains, "the official Spain and the human Spain. How far they were apart! The sheer distance between them spelled danger. This nation had been brutally and bloodily wrenched from the slender democratic moorings it had had during the days of the Republic and had been set upon another course" (74). The official Spain reveals itself through the political catechism, the monuments he visits, and the treatment of women. Through the conversations Wright has with the people of Spain, he views the human Spain, the one recovering from Franco's colonial campaign against his own people. The strongest representatives of this human Spain are women, as Wright's emphasis on the women he encounters renders visible the conditions under which women live in Spain, conditions that

remind Wright of the regulation and management of African Americans in the Jim Crow South. In this way, women are a microcosm for the effects of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's subsequent regime; they are Spain's metaphor.

In the official Spain, like the Jim Crow South, nationalism tends towards homogeneity. While the cult of virginity is one manifestation of this impulse, Spanish Catholicism, according to Wright, codifies a singular national identity. Indeed, Wright suggests that the Church's universalism does not strive to render all people equal, but, rather, to make people fit its paradigm. As he first enters Spain, he visits a local church with two boys who reveal the crux of Spanish imperialism: it imagines universalism by erasing difference. Upon first entering the church, Wright theorizes the occasion for the visit: "To these boys it was unthinkable that there was no God and that we were not all His sons" (12). Further, Wright observes that the boys' attempt at religious conversion crosses class and racial lines (12) and the shrines he comes across – for plumbers, expectant mothers, etc. – covers every segment of society (12). In this way, Catholicism offers equal access to everyone and simultaneously homogenizes its adherents under the rubric of religious rituals and conventions. To that end, the boys then take Wright to a white marble basin in the Church, remarking that it is "'where the first Indians that Columbus brought from America were baptized'" (12). Wright's first experience in Spain, then, coincides with this pivotal moment in Spanish history, where Columbus, in "discovering" the Americas, ushers in a new Spain that propagates its "civilizing" mission through religious conversion and the creation of new, mestizo peoples. Thus, Catholicism carries out its homogenizing aspects in the realm of ideas and daily life. Further, it undergirds the larger national project of assimilating the colonized and erasing racial differences in an act of transubstantiation that transforms the blood of the colonized into that of the colonizers; Catholicism is a racial, as well as a religious, project.

Such blood ties link twentieth-century Spain to the fifteenth-century. The model of history at work here, in which history moves backwards in time by resurrecting a colonial past, relies on the strength of these blood ties. In the Falangist catechism, Wright comes across a section titled, "Historic Mission," where he learns how Spain conceives of its own relationship to biology and culture. The catechism imagines Spain as capable of retaking many of its former colonies, from North Africa, to Portugal, to the Americas. The question of the Americas is particularly telling, as it asks "How will the peoples of America join in this common destiny?" (194) the answer to which is "As the independent nations they are, but united to us by religion, culture, blood – stronger claims than the soil" (194). Blood ties exceed national boundaries – the catechism suggests an imperial nation capable of binding its former territories to itself, of resurrecting an army from its former colonies. Such an implication demonstrates how Spain's continuity with its imperial past is unbroken and rendered visible by the celebration of empire through relics like the marble basin (12), Cortés's crucifix (281), and Christopher Columbus's body (209). With such objects in mind, Wright observes, "But the Spanish Catholic remained static, the victim of a spell cast by the external configuration of fetish objects that coerced his imagination and emotions to unchangeableness" (272). Rather than create an afterlife for the future, Wright finds, Spain imagines a future in the afterlife.

Indeed, not only does Francoist Spain imagine erecting an army from its former colonies, but also it does so by tracing a historical line of descent originating with the Catholic Kings, whose ideology of "one Will, one Race, one God, and one Aim" (287) fundamentally frames Franco's fascism. This singularity of vision, as the political catechism reveals, emerges out of the fear of fracture; Francoist Spain would rather have a single, unified people (no matter the cost) than groups divided by difference. In the political catechism, Wright finds that the Falange thinks

of itself as explicitly totalitarian, defined as "[o]ne which does not admit the existence of universal suffrage, nor of political parties, one which seeks the justification of its existence in its own historical or vital theories and which orientates the whole machinery of the state toward serving these theories" (173). For the Falange, universal suffrage and the existence of multiple political parties deviates from the singularity of vision enacted by Ferdinand and Isabel. According to the political catechism, democratic governance is subject to the whim of the people and departs from "the everlasting truths," or "the existence of God, of the Motherland as an historical entity, justice, etc." (173). In Francoist Spain, the nation serves the "everlasting truths," not the people.

Because of the focus on everlasting truths rather than the will of the people, Francoist Spain's relationship to history and the future imagines a form of governance that maintains these truths throughout time. The core of this totalitarian national imaginary relies on the cycle of "death and resurrection, each death being linked with a rising from the dead, and each rising from the dead being enthroned in a new generation of men" (285). Thus, the Franco regime's joining together of twentieth-century totalitarianism with fifteenth-century Spanish imperialism "resurrects" the dead to "enthrone" the newest generation. As Wright reveals, the imperial project exemplified by Ferdinand and Isabel bears a shocking resemblance to the horrors of totalitarianism: "In 1492, in the name of God, the son, and the Holy Ghost, the Catholic king and queen, Ferdinand and Isabel, had driven the Moors from Spain, had liquidated the Jew, and had scattered a handful of willful gypsies (who were supposed to have forged the nails that went into the cross of Christ!) to the winds" (287). "Driven," "liquidated," and "scattered": these are the

terms that would come to define the worst of the twentieth-century's nationalisms.[13] The cost of early Spanish nationalism, according to Wright, is that it forces the nation to consolidate a singular notion of identity. To become an imperial power, Spain had to unify its purpose and insist upon itself as a unified character. By forcing Spain to adhere to a single (universal) image, Isabel and Ferdinand eradicated those threats to this image of Spain (Moors, Jews, and gypsies) and, in so doing, erased whole populations that challenged their notion of universality.

Spain's fascism, then, is intimately bound up with the imperial, Catholic project begun in 1492. St. Ignacio de Loyola, "the Soldier of Christ and founder of the Society of Jesus" (233), signals the creation of a Spanish Catholic form of militarization that pervades fascist Spain. As Wright heads to Azpeitia, the birthplace of Loyola, the gothic once again reasserts itself: "The moment I recrossed the Franco-Spanish frontier – this time at Hendaye and in a pouring rain – I noticed and felt a sharp drop in the material and psychological quality of living. No matter how lushly green the valleys, the Spanish villages were grim and sorry" (233). Set against this backdrop, which Wright senses despite the lush landscape, Wright imagines Loyola's birthplace, "the spot that housed the personal effects of the first man who had made Christianity a militant and deliberate way of life" (233-234). Juxtaposed with this visit is the section of the political catechism devoted to the military organization of the Falange, which is hierarchical and prescribed. The National Leader "is unchangeable except in case of death or incapacity" (237) and the strict hierarchy ensures the "direct control from the National Leader down to the last of the members" (237). The codification of Spain's singular vision enacted through organizational structure leads Wright to observe, "Loyola had not lived in vain, that his spirit went marching

[13] Walter Mignolo makes a similar connection within the Spanish context: "The horrors of National Socialism that contributed to the transformation of the 'rights of man and of the citizen' into 'human rights' were horrors whose traces stretch back the to sixteenth century (the imaginary of national characters)" ("Cosmo-polis" 175).

on" (237) in a clear articulation of how the militancy inaugurated by the Spanish Catholic's "civilizing" mission extends through the conservative branch of Spanish political culture to Francoist Spain.

Wright's work on Spain, then, grounded in the specificity of the Franco regime, reveals nationalism's genocidal tendencies as not only is difference flattened, but it is also eradicated completely either through extermination, like Franco's execution of thousands of Republicans, or assimilation through miscegenation and conversion. Although fascism tried to make the nation in its own image, it failed to assimilate others into that image and, consequently, laid the foundation for its own demise. By emphasizing affinity based on racial feeling, Wright suggests that viewing difference relationally is one solution to the problematic universalism of the Falange. In contrast to Evans's comment that while Wright witnesses, appreciates, and documents the lives of the people of Spain as being severely oppressed, he does not, however, see them as "people of color" (167), I argue that the framework of racial feeling crucially informs Wright's understanding of the Spanish people, particularly women.

Decolonial Spain

Pagan Spain was written on the cusp of numerous decolonization movements. Before going to Spain, Wright visited Nkrumah's Africa; after visiting Spain, he immediately flew to the Bandung Conference in Indonesia. Yet, while *Black Power* and *The Color Curtain* describe his experiences in the Gold Coast and at Bandung, *Pagan Spain* is the only one of Wright's texts that takes as its object of study the colonizer, not the colonized, thus radically reversing the colonial gaze. What he finds in Spain is much more complicated than he anticipates. Not only does he find what he fears – an imperial power dreaming of colonial resurgence – but he also

discovers something he could not have anticipated: a genuine sympathy for the Spanish people. And, strangely, Wright's sympathy for them emerges out of a shared sense of racialized feeling. When Wright calls the Spanish "white Negroes," he suggests first, that systemic oppression creates the Negro, not skin color and, second, that a shared sense of "Negro-ness" is a point of solidarity, rather than contention. If Wright theorizes uncanny affinities out of his observations of the racialization of the Spanish people, then he also learns how deeply oppression structures nationalism – across races, genders, and hemispheres.

At the end of *Pagan Spain* Wright asserts, "Spain was not a Western nation" (228). For him, the difference between Spain and the West hinges on the role of religion because he associates Western man with secularization Given this context, he represents Spain's commitment to religion as a form of racialized primitivism. In the Spain Wright observes, Catholicism emerges as a racial project as well as a religious one. This is why, for Wright, the similarities between the Holy Week procession and the Ku Klux Klan are of a piece, part of the same "ancient pattern of behavior" (284). Because Wright links the Holy Week procession with the Ku Klux Klan through the same pattern of behavior, he illuminates how religion and racism are intimately bound with one another and have the same primitive, non-Western origins. Becoming secular, therefore, becomes the path to decolonization.

The disidentification Wright experiences in relation to the official Spain usefully complicates his concept of the West and the universal. By critiquing religion – and its ties to race-based discrimination – Wright valuably opens up a discursive space for the questions, "Since I now felt most strongly, in fact, knew that Spain was not a Western nation, what then did being Western mean?" (228) and "Or was that difference a mere nuance, an angle of vision, a point of view?" (228). Defining the West at midcentury calls for a reevaluation of terms,

particularly since the organizing around decolonization demonstrates a radical shift in who counts as Western. While Wright's travels in the Gold Coast focused on race and nationalism, in Spain he finds another form of exclusion – gender, but one that surprisingly emerges as tangled with both race and religion, thus showing that any politics of liberation must learn to account for multiple and intersecting forms of oppression.

The racial feeling that informs Wright's interactions with Spanish women invites another form of decolonization capable of freeing Spanish women and African Americans, of disrupting "the ancient pattern of behavior." Decolonization signals a change in the pattern and it is only in *Pagan Spain* that Wright substantively adds gender to his examinations of class and racial oppression as mutually formative, rather than incidental, factors. Uncovering this line of decolonial thinking in Wright opens up fresh avenues for a more rigorous history of the ways in which oppressed peoples develop strategies of resistance. While Frantz Fanon's landmark text *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) famously examined the psychological ramifications of colonization, revising Wright's long neglected study of Spain forces us to re-examine additional lines of radical thought that consider not only the consequences of colonization on the psyche of the colonized, but also how "oppression helps to forge in the oppressed the very qualities that eventually bring about the downfall of the oppressor" (*Color* 674).

Uncanny affinities, with their tendency to close up psychological distances through uncomfortable moments of recognition, render visible one method for forging such qualities. Whereas the frog perspective describes the oppressed as "someone looking from below upward," (*Listen!* 656), torn between love and hate with the oppressor, uncanny affinities encourage us to look sideways, away from the oppressor towards the oppressed peoples who flank us. Doing so forces us to recognize the unhomely conditions of the nation and, more importantly, find allies,

conspirators, and accomplices.

The Bandung Conference in 1955 became one such opportunity for looking sideways and forging new solidarities. Wright first learns of the conference while in Spain (*Color* 437) but, more importantly, he reflects that

> worlds were being born and worlds were dying. . . . In Asia and Africa the leaders of the newly freed nations were meeting to find ways and means of modernizing their countries to banish fear and superstition, while only yesterday in Sevilla I'd seen thousands of Spanish men, women, and children marching in pagan splendor behind jeweled images of Dying Gods and Suffering Virgins. . . . (*Color* 444).

After witnessing decay and deterioration in Spain – the last gasps of a dying empire – Wright anticipates the new world that Bandung will usher in. For Wright, Bandung represents a utopian future after colonization and as Walter Mignolo reminds us, the conference signals the beginning of an era of decolonization (*Modernity* xxiii).

Wright's enthusiasm for the Bandung Conference pivots on racial feeling. Reflecting that the twenty-nine nations at Bandung represent "ex-colonial subjects, people whom the white West called 'colored' peoples" (*Color* 437), he observes that "*the call for the meeting had not been sounded in terms of ideology*. The agenda and subject matter had been written for centuries in the blood and bones of the participants" (439-440), participants he describes as "brown, black, and yellow" (439). Impressed that "'colored' peoples" would come together despite political divisions, Wright stresses the importance of race – and the shared experiences of racialization and racism that undergird the colonial project – to affinity. Indeed, Bandung symbolizes the utopian possibilities of uncanny affinities. While uncanny affinities initially unnerve – as we saw in the Gold Coast – they also generate connections among diverse oppressions, as we saw in

Spain. It is these connections, Wright finds, that fosters an atmosphere of camaraderie, where he observes how "[f]rom both Moscow and Peking the word had gone out: Be nice, no more clenched fists" (568). While Communists are the focus of this scene – he describes them as "affable" (568) – he ends this chapter by noting, "[a]nd under this vague drift toward collectivism was a powerful substratum of racial emotion. . . ." (568), demonstrating the centrality of racial feeling to collective action.

However, even as Wright points to the centrality of race to affinity, he also considers the dangers of racial feeling, which, in his view, may lead to "racism in reverse" (441). This form of racism points to racism as a structure of power – it is this structure that Wright argues must be overturned. Otherwise, he cautions, the structure will remain the same with different people occupying the positions of power and subjection. For example, when he observes an Indonesian official giving a white American newspaperman a hard time while quickly processing Wright's press card, Wright ironically claims, "I was a member of the master race!" (519), recalling Nazism and the Final Solution. Preoccupied with this connection, he voices his concern to Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, who replies, "'The West feels what you say. But what the West feels can come about. Race feeling is in these people, and if the West keeps pressuring them, they will create racism in them'" (575). Nehru's reference to "race feeling" – the sense of difference and, also, affinity – reasserts race as a unifying factor while also alluding to the Western-made historical conditions that foster anti-Western attitudes.

While it's tempting to read Wright as a moderate, situating his concerns within his observations in Spain reveals the ways in which racial feeling and, even, pride, can lead to genocidal nationalism on the one hand and the perpetuation of systems of inequality on the other. As the Indonesian engineer Mr. P. reflects, "'We drove out the Dutch to build a good society,

now we have a class of Indonesians who are acting more or less like the Dutch'" (512). Indonesians acting like the Dutch, white negroes in Spain – each of these formulations highlights how oppression is a result of structural inequalities meted out on physical bodies. And so, while racial feeling forms the basis for Wright's decolonial thinking, his background as a former Communist and his sympathy for the condition of Spanish women demonstrate his emergent sense of intersecting forms of difference and the uncanny affinities that tie them together.

For Wright, Bandung represents a third way beyond East and West, beyond nationality and political affiliation. Rather, it points to global forms of citizenship based on shared concerns. That said, Wright's decoloniality also considers how to take the tools of the West – namely, secularization and militarization – and create something new, based on racial feeling. In *Black Power*, he imagines militarization without fascism. "The content determines the form" (418), Wright tells Nkrumah in the letter that closes *Black Power*. In advocating for the militarization of African life (415), Wright realizes that his suggestion invites uneasy parallels with the fascist displays of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco: "There will be those who will try to frighten you by telling you that the organization you are forging looks like Communism, Fascism, Nazism; but, Kwame, the form of organization that you need will be dictated by the needs, emotional and material, of your people" (418). And yet, highlighting the relationship between content and form underlines the difference between Nkrumah's militarization and fascism: if the people determine the content, then the form of Nkrumah's organization holds the possibility for democracy rather than fascism.

While uncanny affinities draw connections across difference, frog perspectives offer a critical eye that prevent Wright's decolonial vision from participating in the same kind of homogenizing project as Franco's fascism. Rather, as noted above, Wright maintains that

"oppression helps to forge in the oppressed the very qualities that eventually bring about the downfall of the oppressor" (*Color* 674). Such a notion of resistance implies a progressive view of history capable of imagining a decolonial future. Rather than Francoist Spain, which longs to resurrect the totalitarian past, the African gothic offers a model for a decolonial future in its description of the relation between the living and the dead: "to the degree that we love, honor, and revere our 'dead,' we must help them to establish themselves in the world of shadows" (*Power* 261), Wright explains, commenting on African burial practices and rituals. The world of the dead doubles ours; creating a safe future for the dead ensures peace for the present, for the living. Wright's call to militancy then, can be read as a way to replace the religious devotion to the dead with a devotion to decolonization. Instead of creating a future in the afterlife, Wright suggests, we should create an afterlife for our future.

In effect, Wright advocates a form of exorcism – to make things right in this world, we must make things right with the past. As the following chapter demonstrates, María Cristina Mena and Cormac McCarthy illuminate the centrality of contending with the past as they consider the ties between colonial violence and domesticity. While Wright's uncanny affinities offer us ways to forge new solidarities by looking to those on either side of us, the uncanny affinities between Mena's shorts stories and McCarthy's Border Trilogy reveal another way to create solidarities by reading seemingly disparate texts alongside one another and attending to the ways in which they engage with a shared set of concerns such as the legacy of the Mexican Revolution, the terror of domesticity, and the fear of miscegenation. Only by grappling with the past can we generate a decolonial future. Creating an afterlife for our future, then, means tracing these uncanny connections to follow previously unrecognized histories and genealogies that will offer a path outside our dystopian present.

Chapter Two

Romancing Revolution: Managing Desire in María Cristina Mena and Cormac McCarthy

While Wright's notion of uncanny affinities theorizes an emergent sense of global solidarity through the notion of *unheimlich*, this chapter unpacks how unhomely forms of domesticity collude with oppressive regimes. More specifically, I examine how romance, often figured as a strategy for containment, tends towards nativism and, more radically, subscribes to the nationalist ideas of the mid-twentieth century that secured their future through the eradication of difference, as we saw in the previous chapter with the Franco regime. Two influential theorists, Doris Sommer and Fredric Jameson, outline how national romances bridge differences – and in so doing, contain them – through the discourse of love (Sommer 6) to offer "the salvational or redemptive perspective of some secure future" (Jameson 103). For both Sommer and Jameson, the romance controls historical narratives; it "secures" the future. Yet this desire to contain differences through romance reveals the dark side of the form as authors deploy romance to erase difference. For example, in nineteenth-century Latin America miscegenation and intermarriage were necessary for national consolidation because, through romance, creoles eliminated the threat posed by indigenous peoples, thereby laying a claim on the land (Sommer 15). In this way, romance manages as much as it contains.

Yet, in two important works on the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the discourse of family and domesticity disrupts romance as both courtship and generic claim, thus rendering visible the hegemony of romance and the fear of miscegenation. In María Cristina Mena's "Doña Rita's Rivals," first published in *The Century Magazine* in 1914, then republished in 1997 as part of Arte Público Press's Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, Doña Rita foils the relationship that develops between her son, Jesús María with Alegría, a woman from the

lower classes, who is racialized, like the rest of her class, through her association with *los indios*. Significantly, Mena displaces her critique of Mexico by setting her stories during the Porfiriato (1876-1911), named after the dictator Porfirio Díaz, and referencing the events that led to the revolution. For example, while Díaz's presidency initially modernized Mexico by making contributions to Mexican infrastructure in the form of railway building, these efforts paradoxically shackled Mexico to foreign interests, a dynamic Mena explores in her work.

The tension between the US and Mexico during the Porfiriato also informs Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) as Alejandra Rocha y Villareal's aunt, Dueña Alfonsa, prohibits the relationship between Alejandra and John Grady Cole, the protagonist. Díaz's efforts "displaced hundreds of thousands of Mexicans as U.S. companies turned communal landholdings and indigenous farms to the purposes of industrial agriculture, railways, and mining interests" (López 94). Further, United States' interests owned roughly half of Mexico's national wealth during the Porfiriato (López 94). Though John Grady visits Mexico roughly thirty years after the revolution ends, his excursion is fraught with the antagonisms that characterize US-Mexico relations. Because John Grady enters Mexico without knowledge of this longer history, Alfonsa teaches him about the Mexican Revolution, which eventually turns her opposition to his relationship with her grandniece into a formal problem. Romance becomes the staging ground for competing generic claims as Alfonsa's female *bildungsroman* commandeers John Grady's Western. Significantly, romance, as both relationship and genre, fails in McCarthy. These failures of romance, in which it is typically figured as an allegory for the revolution, then, coincides with the failure of the novel as a form because it cannot resolve the multiple genres of romance at work in the text. Further, these failures signal an inability to create a world that manifests itself in reality. Because of this failure, the Mexican Revolution demonstrates a failure

of representation, a concern both authors share even though they are divided by time, gender, and ethnicity.

While both authors are concerned with the ways in which race informs class and how the Revolution fails to incorporate women into its vision of a unified Mexico, what is most striking about reading Mena alongside McCarthy is how both authors illuminate the ways in which notions of identity speak as much to their respective moments as to ours, demonstrating not only that identitarian categories shift over time, but also that in doing so through genre, as I will show, they enable a vision of past, present, and future that reaches beyond common notions of history and potentiality. As Marissa López cogently argues, examining how Mena's work emerges during the time of the Mexican Revolution reveals the moment when "Chicana/o literature incorporates the idea of its own race" (17), particularly the "contradictory stance on the value of indigeneity that parallels the United States' conflicted embrace of Mexico and lies at the heart of later twentieth-century theorizations of Chicana/o subjectivity" (97). By observing how Mena anticipates mid-twentieth century Chicana/o subjectivity while participating in a feminist anti-racist agenda (97), López also excavates an earlier history of Chicana resistance that predates its typical grounding in Chicana feminist writings of the 1980s.

Cormac McCarthy, meanwhile, in *All the Pretty Horses* and the Border Trilogy as a whole, demonstrates the palimpsestic layering of imperial conquest by framing war as a set of nested displacements: the Gulf War (1990-1991), which was ongoing at the time the Trilogy was written, is displaced onto the period just before and after World War II (1939-1945, with the United States entering the war in 1941), since 1939-1952 is the temporal range of the Trilogy. Yet, at the same time that World War II seems to cast a long shadow on the Trilogy, these concerns are further displaced onto the Mexican Revolution as Alfonsa's narrative touches on

key aspects of the revolution, such as Francisco I. Madero running against Díaz in the 1910 election and spearheading the effort to remove Díaz from office on the grounds that his rule was undemocratic as well as Madero's subsequent imprisonment after Díaz won the 1910 election under suspicion of election fraud. This, in turn, led to Madero escaping prison and fleeing to San Antonio, Texas, where he wrote the Plan of San Luis Potosí, the manifesto that sparked the Mexican Revolution. The preoccupation with wars south of the border also arises in the oblique reference to the Spanish-American War, where John Grady's grandfather had two brothers who "were killed in Puerto Rico in eighteen ninety-eight and in that year he married and brought his bride home to the ranch . . ." (*Horses* 7). The allusion here, of course, is to the United States' involvement in the war, which is then linked with romance as the grandfather's marriage immediately follows the mention of his brothers' deaths. Yet, even as each war would seem to be an isolated event, their juxtaposition creates a crosshatch of conflict that mutually implicates one another.[1]

What both authors share is an emphasis on revolution that demonstrates the complicity of romance – as relationship and as genre – with empire. Each text takes a transnational and transhistorical approach to the revolution: Mena, by writing for a United States audience and McCarthy by dislocating the West as the scene of the Western. As Laura Briggs, Gladys McCormick, and J.T. Way argue, transnationalism, rather than demonstrating complicity with empire, "[makes] us sensible of when nationalism and ideologies of the nation are in play" (645).

[1] Because of this context of United States imperialism, John Wegner argues that "war is the central thesis to McCarthy's southwestern works" (73). Wegner also points out the relationship between the Mexican Revolution and the United States' rise to global power by observing, "Pershing's foray into Mexico chasing Pancho Villa specifically helped the Army develop tank warfare and redefine troop supply from mule and train dependencies to vehicular supply. In essence, America's training along the border helped the troops' preparedness for World War I" (80-81). See John Wegner, "'Wars and Rumors of Wars' in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy."

My juxtaposition of Mena with McCarthy thus participates in the "transnational turn" in literary studies, a turn that marks a paradigm shift that destabilizes the United States as the central object of study and, instead, insists upon an investigation of how empire undergirds nationhood.[2] More specifically, as Paula Moya and Ramón Saldívar demonstrate, a "trans-American imaginary" allows for the "heterogeneous grouping of overlapping but distinct discourses that refer to the US in relation to a variety of national entities" (1). Thus, while transnational and hemispheric approaches have radically transformed the very idea of literary canons, as well as adduced new relations between race, nation, and empire, transnational approaches to the literatures of the Americas create new connections across discourses. Although critics have been less engaged with the task of specifying the literary or formal aspects of the field, this chapter refigures notions of nation and hemisphere by entangling them with genre.

In doing so, I take my cue from Gloria Anzaldúa, whose work in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* inaugurates an important shift in American studies towards criticism that not only engages with the United States as an imperial power, but also interrogates the colonial encounters that gave birth to new subjectivities and identities. "I am a turtle, wherever I go, I carry 'home' on my back," writes Anzaldúa (43). For Anzaldúa, "home" is a place she carries on her back because she is an *atravesada,* a border crosser. Her journey, marked by fluidity and a decentered sense of place, locates the home in liminal spaces marked by mobility and transience. This is because, in Anzaldúa's formulation, home is a contested site and scene of sexual violence; it is where "the primordial crime of capitalism" (*Dialectics* 83), according to José David Saldívar, occurs. Anzaldúa locates the sexual violence in the home both in her pre-

[2] See Shelley Fisher Fishkin's "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies – Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004" and Janice Radway, "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November, 1998."

Columbian, indigenous past, and in her fear of men. Even before the Spanish came to the Americas, Anzaldúa observes, "The male-dominated Azteca-Mexica culture drove the powerful female deities underground by giving them monstrous attributes and by substituting male deities in their place, thus splitting the female Self and the female deities" (49). The devaluing of the female and the privileging of the male is the object of *Borderlands*, as Anzaldúa creates a feminist, liminal space that celebrates women and critiques the patriarchal society that characterizes her upbringing. Anzaldúa fashions this new space because of the sexual violence that pervades her own home: "Mothers made sure we didn't walk into a room of brothers or fathers or uncles in nightgowns or shorts. We were never alone with men, not even those of our own family" (40), she remarks, alluding to the predatory male gaze that would see through a flimsy nightgown. Significantly, the mothers protect their daughters, marking the mothers as complicit in the patriarchal society of which they are a part.

In addition to sexual violence, Anzaldúa associates the home – and with it, family – with the erasure of the self. She writes, "Much of what the culture condemns focuses on kinship relationships. The welfare of the family, the community, and the tribe is more important than the welfare of the individual. The individual exists first as kin – as sister, as father, as *padrino* – and last as self" (40). Anzaldúa argues that the individual does not exist as herself, but begins life in relation to others. For Anzaldúa, this privileging of the community occurs at the expense of the self. The family destroys the self and, for women, nothing less is expected that total devotion to the family and the community. She further elaborates on the violent space of the home by punning on "homophobia." As Anzaldúa powerfully recounts, one of her lesbian students "'thought homophobia meant fear of going home after a residency'" (42). For Anzaldúa this remark renders visible the anti-homosexual space of the Catholic household alongside the fear of

erasure and the fear of sexual violence. “So, yes, though ‘home’ permeates every sinew and cartilage in my body,” she writes, “I too am afraid of going home” (43). While transnational approaches are typically associated with movement and mobility, Anzaldúa’s comment reveals the home as the primal scene of colonial violence. Indeed, revolutions pivot on the association between home and homeland – the need to reclaim a homeland on the national level becomes a romance plot that seeks to reclaim the home itself on the domestic level.

To unpack the collusion between romance and the home, I examine how the double valence of the domestic – as hearth and nation – informs the discourse of domesticity that emerges in Mena and McCarthy. Fusing together discussions of domesticity with revolution upends the still too often assumed binaries of masculine, public, historical events like revolution and the presumably more intimate arena of the home, marriage, and love. Yet, I contend that the two cannot be disentangled; they are mutually constitutive, which is why I insist on revolution *and* romance as equally crucial terms. One does not manage or contain the other; rather, they maintain seeming antinomies in creative, unresolvable tension. Further, I argue that the preoccupation with miscegenation that undergirds familial metaphors and the home is a microcosm for staging the war against intermixture. Because the Mexican Revolution famously divided loyalties, the role of the family and domestic space in Mena and McCarthy would seem to suggest an attempt to heal the rupture caused by the Revolution. As Barbara Fuchs argues, while romance “might seem ideally suited to the enterprise of empire, it is also possible to read romance as the deflation of epic purpose and imperial conquest” (83). However, rather than deploying romance to create a unified family and a stable domestic space – an allegory for Mexico after the revolution – both Mena and McCarthy demonstrate how genres of romance and the relationships they engender are complicit with the goals of empire. Moreover, both authors

reveal that the internalization of colonization proves to be the biggest threat to the goals and ideals of the Mexican Revolution.

Each author signals anxiety around romance, or what José Limón calls "the erotics of culture," which characterize the "eroticism and desire in the relationship between Greater Mexico and the United States" (4). More specifically, both texts uncover the unease that accompanies genres of romance because they no longer have the ability to consolidate the nation. As the multi-factional nature of the Mexican Revolution reveals, there are too many sides to unify.[3] Yet, despite these divisions, in Mena and McCarthy the scale of the Mexican Revolution coincides with the scale of familial (and filial) relationships such that the family becomes the ground upon which national differences are staged. Each author attends to the unease that accompanies the proper object of romance (the beloved) by demonstrating confusion about who should occupy this position. McCarthy extends this anxiety by transforming such confusion into a formal concern that addresses how romance fails generically, thus signaling the larger problem of determining the proper genre for depicting the revolution. These two concerns – of romance as courtship and romance as genre – mutually implicate one another as the confusion about their objects stems from the threat of miscegenation, intermixture, and contamination. To fully grapple with McCarthy's preoccupation with genre, however, it is first necessary to understand how the fear of miscegenation informs both "Doña Rita's Rivals" and *All the Pretty Horses*. Revolutions, as sites of rupture, are about newly imagined futures; therefore I find it useful to analyze texts that explicitly engage with revolution to unpack domesticity and futurity within an imperial context.

[3] See William H. Beezley and Colin M. MacLachlan, *Mexicans in Revolution, 1910-1940: An Introduction*.

The Anxiety of Romance

Asked by *Century Magazine* to write on Mexico, María Cristina Mena wrote short stories that shaped how audiences in the United States understood the Mexican Revolution.[4] Significantly, Mena published contemporaneously with the revolution and, in addition to *Century*, placed articles in well-known magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Household Magazine*. Mena's emphasis on class issues crucially informs her depiction of the Porfiriato as the influx of foreign capital made wealthy Mexicans grow wealthier while the poor lost their land and migrated from their villages to find work. Class differences further increased while Díaz's commitment to foreign interests, particularly the United States, betrayed the reformist agenda that won him the presidency.

Intrigued by this transition and resistance to a modern Mexico, Mena wrote about the home in magazines for the home. In her work, the privileging of endogamous relationships and the demonizing of exogamous relations reveals the internalization of colonization. In Mena's trio of stories that engage with the revolution specifically – "Doña Rita's Rivals," "The Sorcerer and General Bisco," and "A Son of the Tropics" – the anxiety around romance stems from notions of purity and pollution in terms of class and, subsequently, race.[5] In fact, exogamous relationships

[4] Toth, Margaret A. "Framing the Body: Imperialism and Visual Discourse in María Cristina Mena's Short Fiction."

[5] In "The Sorcerer and General Bisco," the relationship between Aquiles and Carmelita pivots on endogamous relations. Don Baltazar, the villain in the short story, marries his first wife for her property and wealth. She dies under mysterious circumstances and Don Baltazar marries Carmelita, who is also from a wealthy family. Carmelita then has an affair with Aquiles, Don Baltazar's brother-in-law from his first marriage. The romance between Aquiles and Carmelita, then, is based on (upper) class similarity while Don Baltazar's villainy stems from the fact that he does not belong to the class to which he aspires.

in the short stories largely appear to be exploitative.[6] For instance, in "Doña Rita's Rivals," Doña Rita substitutes one sister as the proxy for another to achieve her own ends. In short, these stories, particularly "Doña Rita's Rivals" attempt to offer a model of successful romantic relationships between and among the classes; however, the anxiety that imbues these texts foils these attemps. Mena's work figures romance in economic and exploitative terms such that, while romance would appear to bridge differences between the classes, these romances ultimately fail because they cannot escape the unease and discomfort that characterizes them.

In "Doña Rita's Rivals," romance is approved or condemned based on a strict class structure that implicitly figures the lower classes as more "authentic" than their upper class counterparts. The story relates Doña Rita's visit to Alegría Peralta, the woman with whom her son is in love. Doña Rita visits Alegría to end the affair, with the result that Alegría commits suicide and Doña Rita's son, Jesús María Ixtlan, becomes very ill. The story begins after Doña Rita has already visited Alegría and details class distinctions as follows: "The females of a family of shawl – *de tápalo* – do not aspire to decorate their heads with millinery, for the excellent reason that God has not assigned them to the caste *de sombrero*. Their consolation is that they may look down upon those *de rebozo*" (70). In this description, class status is imagined as static and unchanging; it is "assigned" by God. Seen through the lens of Doña Rita – Jesús María certainly does not conceive of class in this way – the different castes betray the assumptions of the privileged class by both viewing caste as ordained by God and imagining that the consolations of class exist simply in looking down upon those classes that exist even lower

[6] In "The Sorcerer and General Bisco," Don Baltazar marries to secure wealth and a social position while in "A Son of the Tropics," the rich *hacendado*, Don Rómulo, has an affair with Remedios, the Don's *nana*. Because of this affair, Don Rómulo elevates Remedios in terms of class status, but this honor is only conferred on her because of her sexual relationship with the *hacendado*.

on the social scale. Yet, a certain degree of mobility – or imagined mobility – exists in how different castes play with the clothing that signifies their social status. The description continues:

> No maid or matron of shawl would demean her respectable shoulders with the *rebozo* – it is woven long and narrow, and is capable of being draped in a variety of graceful and significant ways – but, contrariwise, young ladies of hat, authentic *señoritas*, to whom the mere contact of a shawl would impart 'flesh of chicken,' delight to dignify the national investment by wearing it coquettishly at country feasts" (70)

Significantly, the ladies of shawl, who are closest to the ladies of *rebozo*, do not wear the *rebozo*, but ladies of hat, who are two castes above the ladies of *rebozo*, do so to signify their authenticity. By wearing *rebozos*, "the national investment" at "country feasts," the ladies of hat, who occupy the highest caste, must perform and demonstrate their authenticity in order to remain so. This act of costuming reveals a notion of class in which those at the bottom – the ladies of *rebozo* – are imagined to have greater access to national culture.

This greater access that marks the people of *rebozo* reveals a primitivist approach to social structures in which the lower classes, aligned as we will see with indigeneity, are presumed to have a closer relationship with both the land and national culture. Mena wryly describes Doña Rita's romanticization of the lower classes as Doña Rita regards them as aesthetic objects: "They are pleasing to the artist eye, and are full of sorrows . . . Easily moved to tears, sensitive in love, swift and treacherous in quarrel" (73). In this way, Doña Rita effectively dehumanizes the people of *rebozo* and turns them into aesthetic objects whose poverty is romanticized: "for the most part they live in peaceable squalor, with song and suffering and weaving of flowers" (73), which negates any action to improve their condition. That their concerns are set aside is clear from Mena's ironic description of their role in society, as she writes, "The social superstructure, with

its mines, plantations, and railroads, its treasure-house cathedrals, and its admired palace of government, rests on their backs – for they are the people, prolific of labor and taxes – but otherwise they do not count, unless it be with God" (73). Noting that the people of *rebozo* do not count, the narrator remarks that they are "prolific of labor and taxes," which points to the paradoxical insignificance of the people of *rebozo*. That is, they *only* contribute labor and taxes; they only contribute the two things necessary for the country to run, in Mena's ironic phrasing.

While the lower classes are merely aesthetic objects, Doña Rita sees her own class as the proper object of romance. In fact, she is so committed to this position, that she supports incestuous endogamy between herself and her son rather than allow for "pollution" by the lower classes.[7] Stimulated by her son's romantic overtures to Alegría, she reads his love letters and "trembles." We learn that "All her maternity, all the sex in her, vibrated to the passion of his phrases" (72). Within a single phrase, the relationship between sex and romance is explicitly linked to reproduction. However, the "maternity" referenced here stems from the union between a mother and son as Doña Rita finds herself aroused by her son's writings. To distract her son from learning of Alegría's suicide, she attempts to entertain him by "employing with him the arts by which she had striven, alas! without success, to keep his father, the general, at her side" (74). As part of her seduction, she "begs" and "appeals" Jesús María to stay with her and becomes "magically younger" (74). In short, Doña Rita employs the arts of seduction to convince her son to stay. In doing so – and also, by regarding Alegría as not just a rival, but a sexual rival – Doña Rita promotes an endogamous view of romance in which incest is preferable to the deterioration of bloodlines and social status.

Significantly, Jesús María's letters to Alegría, while they make his mother "tremble" and

[7] Walter Benn Michaels lists three "technologies" for maintaining purity: incest, homosexuality, and impotence. See Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism*.

"vibrate," also exist alongside the goals and aims of the Mexican Revolution. Jesús María, we learn, courts Alegría "with all the delicacy of his caste, and a little more" (72) while simultaneously emphasizing the keywords of the revolution, "*reforma electoral, complimiento de garantías constitutionals, civilización para los peones, ¡Mejico para los Mejicanos!*" (72). In short, Jesús María promotes a democratic Mexico for the people, founded on land reform. For Doña Rita, Jesús María endangers "his future by concerning himself about the base fortunes of *los enredados*" (73). On the one hand, this statement speaks to Jesús María's refusal to socialize with the upper classes because of his beliefs. Yet, this phrase, in referencing Jesús María's "future," also points towards class extinction, as he is the "sole surviving hope of a line the perspective of which vanished among the lords and priests of an extinct civilization" (72). To preserve his future, Jesús María must preserve his bloodline; by engaging in a romance with Alegría, Jesús María risks not only his family line, but also his social ranking. That is, rather than desiring and helping lower class bodies, Jesús María should desire the "magically younger" body of his mother in order to resolve the central conflict of the revolution and preserve his caste.

Yet, for Doña Rita, the biggest threat to the national body politic (figured as upper-class, borne on the backs of the lower classes) is Jesús María's desire for a democratic Mexican state. Shortly after eliminating the danger posed by Alegría, Doña Rita turns her attention to the Mexican Revolution: "Having thus converted her dead rival into a powerful ally, she turned a cautious front toward her living rival, whose formidable name was Patria, and soon she was giving hospitable ear to her son's dreams for the regeneration of his unhappy country" (77). Because Jesús María sees the revolution as the opportunity for regeneration, his conception of generation differs starkly from his mother's, which is predicated on generation through perpetuation of the current system. Jesús María, instead, conceptualizes regeneration as possible

via the revolution, but also via romance with *los enredados*. Crucially, this differing standpoint on Mexico's future also carries with it a differing relationship to land, as Doña Rita demonstrates her concerns "by pointing out the indolent and pious resignation of the dear Indios, and wondering naively whether education, property rights, and an audible voice in government might not spoil their Arcadian virtues and dispel their truly delightful picturesqueness" (78). Even as Doña Rita perpetuates the role of the lower classes as aesthetic objects, she also imagines the land as prelapsarian and Edenic. However, this view of the land is at odds with the actual working conditions of the poor, a point of contention between Jesús María and his mother.

The Arcadian sentiment towards *los enredados* persists in Alegría and Piedad's names because their meanings – happiness and piety – suggest a greater access to virtue, particularly as each woman emerges as a tragic figure, Alegría because of her suicide, and Piedad because of her role as a "fallen" woman, the prostitute La Palma. Jesús María (who is explicitly named as a savior figure) projects his desire for Patria onto the lower class bodies of both Alegría and her lookalike, Piedad, a fact that reifies the relationship between the lower classes and the struggle of the Mexican Revolution (that is, the *peones* are presumed to have an inherent right to land simply because they work it, which reinforces primitivism and essentialism. In short, for Jesús María, romance with both women signifies his adherence to revolutionary struggle, which is explicitly marked in sexual terms: "The girl's murmured wonder came from a heart much moved, and Jesús María wept as he told her how he had once dreamed of working for the regeneration of Mexico, but how he had failed in the test of manhood, and was now a broken creature whose dreams lay all behind him" (85). This scene, which emphasizes the melodramatic aspects of romance also enforces Jesús María's mandate to "save" Mexico at the same time it places Piedad in a support role. Further, the concept of regeneration is tied with Jesús María's

masculinity as "he had failed in the test of manhood." Following Jesús María's confession, "they began to discuss plans; and presently he was all on fire with a new scheme of patriotic service" (85). That is, Piedad, in igniting Jesús María's sexual desire, simultaneously ignites his revolutionary desire, a point that is nowhere more explicit than in his own free indirect discourse: "Why might not he, the rejected, pull the rags of his life about him and set out to fertilize the soil of freedom with his songs?" (85). Notably, the figuration of desire here is also stated in terms of the land as Jesús María "fertilizes" the "soil of freedom." Yet, problematically, the regeneration of Mexico through Jesús María's fertilizing stems from the same exploitative and benevolent impulses that inform the hacienda system in the first place.

For Doña Rita, Jesús María's desire for *los enredados* signifies his abandonment and betrayal of both Doña Rita and his social caste. This sense of betrayal and abandonment is tied explicitly with purity as Doña Rita "blamed herself for having introduced the pollution of which she now despaired of ever ridding the house of Ixtlan, and she wished passionately that her son had died before her arrival at his bedside with that daughter of Judas" (86). The reference to the pollution of the house of Ixtlan echoes Doña Rita's earlier fear of class extinction. What's more, in figuring social intermixture as racial intermixture – note that Doña Rita aligns *los enredados* with the "Indios" – the only recourse for Doña Rita is death. At the end of the story, she dies in her outdated carriage, "her face serene in the inviolable aristocracy of death" (86). "Inviolable," Doña Rita cannot be penetrated and polluted by *los enredados*, offering death as yet another technology for maintaining purity. While the story ends with the possibility for a successful exogamous relationship, Jesús María's infantilizing of the lower classes – "the children of time" (85) – and his desire to spread his seed stems from the same exploitative and benevolent

impulses as those represented by Don Rómulo in "A Son of the Tropics."[8] Jesús María's imperialist impulses and Doña Rita's anxiety both speak to the larger issue of how race is conceptualized during the revolution as phrases like *¡Mejico para los Mejicanos!* presuppose a unified, homogeneous people that do not address the complicated intersection of race and class that continues to divide Mexico.

While Doña Rita subscribes to the sort of nativist sensibility tracked by Walter Benn Michaels, Mena problematizes and contests this position by demonstrating how Doña Rita's desire to maintain pure bloodlines results in the turn toward incest as a technology of purity (Michaels 49). Yet, even as Doña Rita's death symbolizes the transition from the values of the Porfiriato to those of the Revolution, Mena embeds her critique of the Revolution by satirizing Jesús María's commitment to *los Mejicanos*. McCarthy further complicates this critique by illuminating how the threat of miscegenation is tied to essentialist views of race, views that ultimately betray the Revolution's commitment to democracy and equality. The anxieties around romance and intermixture found in Mena, then, continue to haunt the later twentieth-century as exemplified by McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, which portrays the shadow the revolution casts on both Mexico and the United States decades later, signaling how the promise and unresolved inequity of the Revolution still troubles those on both sides of the border.

All the Pretty Horses follows the protagonist John Grady Cole and his best friend Lacey Rawlins as they travel from Texas to Mexico. On their journey, John Grady meets Alejandra Rocha y Villareal, the daughter of a wealthy Mexican *hacendado*, Don Héctor. Don Héctor disapproves of the romance between John Grady and his daughter and, at the end of the novel,

[8] Significantly, while "A Son of the Tropics" offers the possibility for reproduction and regeneration among the revolutionaries because of Tula's desire for Rosario, this potential is foreclosed by Rosario's suicide. In short, not only does each of these romances fail, but the possibility for reproduction also fails.

cooperates with the captain who arrests both John Grady and Rawlins for horse stealing. In prison, both John Grady and Rawlins are attacked, which results in Rawlins receiving a blood transfusion. This transfusion adds to Rawlins's anxiety as he tells John Grady that he was given over a liter of blood, to which John Grady remarks, "Well a litre would make you almost a halfbreed" (211). Yet, John Grady's joke reveals the impossibility of Rawlins's "contamination": for Rawlins to be "part" Mexican, he would have to be "bred" for it. Since this "breeding" did not occur, a simple blood transfusion is not enough to make Rawlins part Mexican. Rawlins, however, is not in on the joke: "Rawlins looked at him. It dont, does it? he said" (211). Rawlins's look in this context signifies his anxiety over racial mixing, an anxiety rendered more explicit by his follow up question. Rawlins's ignorance in this exchange demonstrates his misunderstanding of the relationship between biological processes – like blood transfusions and reproduction – and national identity. His confusion suggests that nationality has an essential quality that can be transmitted literally in the blood. Like Doña Rita, he too, believes his blood can be contaminated. Significantly, his anxiety regarding the transfusion contrasts with the ease with which he crosses the border, suggesting that the most significant boundary crossings are not those that happen across national borders, but that occur on the level of the body. John Grady disagrees with this view of biology and nationality; for him, "it dont mean nothin. Blood's blood. It dont know where it come from" (211). According to this definition, blood does not have ontological significance beyond itself; as such, it is incapable of transmitting anything, much less national identity.

Such a conception of blood resists the essentializing worldview promoted by Dueña Alfonsa, Alejandra's grandaunt. After his imprisonment, John Grady returns to the hacienda to speak to Alejandra; instead, he encounters her aunt in the living room, where she explains why

he cannot pursue a relationship with Alejandra. As part of her explanation, she describes blood's ability to transmit characteristics, and in the process, ascribes agency to blood: "I can scarcely count on my two hands the number of women in this family who have suffered disastrous love affairs with men of disreputable character . . . One does not like to entertain the notion of tainted blood. A family curse" (229). By linking romance with blood, Alfonsa articulates a superstitious conception of blood – and, by extension, being – in which particular tendencies are carried down through the generations. More specifically, this "curse" only affects the women in the family as she describes to John Grady "a certain extravagance in the female blood of this family. Something willful. Improvident" (240). By defining the curse in this way, Alfonsa removes agency from the women in her family and reifies gender difference, which she locates in the blood and blames for the inability of the women in her family to control their bodily passions.

The novel renders explicit both the relationship between blood and national identity and the instability of these categories by emphasizing Rawlins's anxiety concerning the blood transfusion he receives in the prison hospital, the threat of contamination that Alfonsa also shares. As Rawlins tells John Grady about the transfusion, he identifies the blood as "Mexican" and queries, "Well does it mean I'm part Mexican?" (210). Rawlins's description of the blood and his question both suggest that nationhood depends on bloodlines, not on residence, documentation, or even how one self-identifies. His concern is that, in receiving the Mexican blood, he has become part Mexican, a change in identity over which he has no control. Rawlins's concern replicates the arguments put forward by Alfonsa – if blood possesses particular qualities, then his new blood will not only possess, but also transmit these qualities to him. Although the blood is not "tainted," it is "Mexican," an identity that Rawlins's worries will become his own. The anxieties articulated here – both by Doña Rita and Rawlins – pivot on an essentialist

conception of identity in which bloodlines are subject to racial contamination. Crucially, for Rawlins, to become contaminated is to become another person entirely.

All the Pretty Horses and the Problem of Genre

The threat of contamination via forms of intimacy in "Doña Rita's Rivals" becomes a formal concern in *All the Pretty Horses*, which, itself preoccupied with impurity, transforms the anxiety of romance into the anxiety of genres of romance as competing generic claims are meted out on the relationship between John Grady and Alejandra.[9] As Derrida argues, "the law of genre" is fundamentally about legislating the promiscuous intermixture of genres: while the law presumably mandates that genre cannot be mixed, announcing this law supposes "the *a priori* of a counter-law" (57), that genres *can* be mixed. To mix genres – or, in Derrida's phrase, to "intermix" them, which suggestively points to the coupling of genres – is to endanger their purity. And this is what genres do; the law of genre is "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" (59). Where miscegenation begets formal contamination, genres of romance attempt to contain that contamination and preserve genealogical and generic purity.[10]

In *Cities of the Plain*, McCarthy's final installment in the Border Trilogy, Billy Parham points to the flaw that underlines generic purity – the idea that genre is something we can know; it has a stable reference. As he comments, "The first ranchera you hear sung you understand the

[9] Derrida's discussion of genre suggestively points to sexuality and sexual difference as he speaks of masculine genre and feminine affirmation as marking a "coupling that is also perhaps a mixing of genres. The genres pass into each other. And we will not be barred from thinking that this mixing of genres, viewed in light of the madness of sexual difference, may bear some relation to the mixing of literary genres" (76).

[10] As Derrida remarks, genre is directly linked to reproduction – engendering, generations, genealogy, and degenerescence (74).

whole country. By the time you've heard a hundred you dont know nothin. You never will" (218). By observing the way the ranchera – a genre of music that finds its origins in the Mexican Revolution – reveals both everything and nothing about Mexico, Billy touches on the ways in which genres seem to reveal something about their objects, only to conceal and blur what they ostensibly reveal. This conception of genre contrasts with the view held by John Grady Cole, Billy's friend in *Cities of the Plain* and the protagonist of *All the Pretty Horses,* the first volume of the trilogy. John Grady, in embarking on his quest to Mexico, demonstrates his belief that he can live the way of life popularized by the Western; moreover, he believes that Mexico is the country onto which he can impose and actualize his narrative possibilities. In short, John Grady imagines genre as a potential reality, which contrasts with Billy's realism. The difference in viewpoints arises in *Cities of the Plain*, when just before Billy comments on rancheras, John Grady queries, "Dont you think if there's anything left of this life it's down there?" (218). In making this remark, John Grady articulates his perception of Mexico as a land of possibilities, exemplified by the map he initially uses in *All the Pretty Horses* to travel from Texas into Mexico: "There were roads and rivers and towns on the American side of the map as far south as the Rio Grande and beyond that all was white" (34). Lacey Rawlins, John Grady's best friend and fellow traveler, suggests that Mexico has never been mapped. While John Grady knows better, the blank space of Mexico symbolizes the possibilities John Grady imposes on Mexico, both in his undertakings south of the border and in his conversation with Billy. However, this view of Mexico as a land of possibilities contrasts with Billy's remarks on the ranchera; in short, Billy disagrees with John Grady that Mexico can ever be known. The inability to know Mexico, then, points to a vision of Mexico in which it does not exist for alternate meanings to be mapped onto it.

What I have touched on so far are two interrelated issues: genre as both revelatory and occlusive – the ranchera as revealing both everything and nothing – and the deployment of particular genres as exhibiting a particular worldview. While much scholarship on *All the Pretty Horses* has touched on the problem of genre within the novel, two competing generic forms emerge: the Western and the *bildungsroman*.[11] Faced with the loss of his family's ranch after his grandfather's death due to his mother's desire to sell the ranch and pursue her acting career, John Grady's decision to leave Texas suggests his desire to reclaim a lost past that he no longer imagines as possible in Texas. John G. Cawelti notes, in *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel*, "the Western most seemed to express some sense of the uniqueness of the American experience and of the imagined exceptionalism of America" and "up until World War II, the American West was above all associated with future possibilities" (5), which makes John Grady's use of the Western genre fitting, as his journey demonstrates both his exceptionalist viewpoint and his coding of Mexico as an extension of the American West. John Grady's map further exemplifies the imperialism of his journey as the uncharted south implies a dehistoricized, apolitical space.

However, as John Grady quickly learns, Mexico is not a tabula rasa, but a deeply historicized space and he ignores this history at his own peril. While John Grady's own narrative can also be read as a *bildungsroman*, particularly as he receives an "education" from Dueña Alfonsa, I argue that Alfonsa's *bildungsroman* interrupts and derails John Grady's romance with her niece, Alejandra. By hijacking the narrative, Dueña Alfonsa relocates Mexico as a site of

[11] Gail Moore Morrison insists that *All the Pretty Horses* is a *bildungsroman* while James D. Lilley refutes her argument in favor of the Western as a form. Lilley points to the way in which the Western genre looks backward; in fact, Lilley goes so far as to point to the elegiac quality of the form. This elegiac quality is echoed by other critics who remark upon the lullabies that open and close the Trilogy. See Gail Moore Morrison, "*All the Pretty Horses* and John Grady Cole's Expulsion from Paradise" and James D. Lilley, "'The Hands of Yet Other Puppets': Figuring Freedom and Reading Repetition in *All the Pretty Horses*."

possibilities temporally, to the period of the Mexican Revolution. Thus, Alfonsa suggests that the time for these possibilities has passed, rather than that it was never a land of possibilities.. In short, she effectively forecloses Mexico as a land of possibility for John Grady such that his own *bildungsroman* – and along with it a progressive conceptualization of time and history – never achieves any kind of resolution. Because the text supports such competing generic classifications, I argue that *All the Pretty Horses* – indeed, the trilogy as a whole – forms a pastiche that draws upon various generic conventions in order to allegorize and problematize time via conceptions of historiography. Each of these generic conventions carry a particular conception of time and, along with it, of history. However, critics' desire to classify the novel as one genre or the other suggests the broader implications for the consequences of genre; namely, the ability (or inability) to contain and account for all narratives within a single genre.

Such a possibility for narrative recalls the cyclical historicity represented by Quijada's comments about the corrido in *The Crossing*. Speaking to Billy about whether or not the güerito in the corrido is Boyd, Quijada says,

> Yes, it tells about him. It tells what it wishes to tell. It tells what makes the story run. The corrido is the poor man's history. It does not owe its allegiance to the truths of history but to the truths of men. It tells the tale of that solitary man who is all men. It believes that where two men meet one of two things can occur and nothing else. In the one case a lie is born and in the other death (386)

By explaining how the corridor incorporates Boyd's narrative, Quijada indicates the power of narrative. I emphasize the importance of narrative and genre here to illustrate the Border Trilogy's meta-discourse about narrative and the making of history. The tendency of the Trilogy to discuss its own history-making crucially informs the trilogy as wars form the background for

the novels. Significantly, wars arise in the trilogy as a set of nested displacements – the Gulf War, which was ongoing at the time the Trilogy was written, is displaced onto the period just before and after World War II, since 1939-1952 is the temporal range of the Trilogy. Yet, at the same time that World War II seems to cast a long shadow on the Trilogy, these concerns are further displaced onto the Mexican Revolution via Alfonsa's use of the *bildungsroman*.

Indeed, the Trilogy as a whole makes several references to United States' imperialism. For example, in *The Crossing*, Billy witnesses an atomic bomb test in New Mexico. This reference, along with others scattered throughout the Trilogy, situate the United States within a larger global and specifically imperial context as it refers to the Manhattan Project and, ultimately, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the United States emerged as a global power during World War II, United States imperialism obviously has a much longer history, as noted in references scattered throughout the text, like the oblique reference to the Spanish-American War, where John Grady's grandfather's brothers were killed. The grandfather's ranch in itself points to United States imperialism via the Mexican-American War as Texas seceded from Mexico and declared itself an independent republic in 1836 and joined the union in 1845. John Grady's desire to keep the ranch is linked to United States imperialism and this imperialism undergirds John Grady's travels into Mexico.[12]

The competing generic forms in *All the Pretty Horses* do not just legislate the nature of romance; they also determine how history is remembered, particularly given the imperial backdrop that undergirds the trilogy. For example, the Western elements of the novel demonstrate a timeless, prelapsarian relationship to the past, which Alfonsa's deployment of the

[12] Because of this context of United States imperialism, John Wegner argues that "war is the central thesis to McCarthy's southwestern works" (73). See John Wegner, "'Wars and Rumors of Wars' in Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy."

bildungsroman interrupts. The sense of timelessness that pervades the Western colors John Grady's first sighting of Alejandra, which significantly takes place outdoors:

> He heard the horse behind him and he would have turned to look but that he heard it change gaits . . . She had blue eyes and she nodded or perhaps she only lowered her head slightly to better see what sort of horse he rode, just the slightest tilt of the broad black hat set level on her head, the slightest lifting of the long black hair . . . He'd half meant to speak but those eyes had altered the world forever in the space of a heartbeat (109).

The passage seems to occur within the moment of the encounter as we are given John Grady's moment-by-moment thought process: that he "would have turned to look," his attempts to classify Alejandra's acknowledgement of him ("or perhaps she only lowered her head slightly"), and his speechlessness at the sight of her. This encounter, focalized through John Grady, recalls the "fairy-tale time" discussed by Bakhtin in the context of the chivalric – and hence the romance – novel. For Bakhtin, fairy-tale time "is characterized precisely by a violation of normal temporal categories: for example, the work of several years is done in one night or, conversely, a year passes in one moment" (15) or, even, a world altered "forever in the space of a heartbeat." The language of this passage thus situates John Grady's encounter with Alejandra firmly within the realm of romance as both a generic and temporal category. This scene matches up with conventions of the Western, where the landscape is figured as an Edenic paradise; further, the sense of nostalgia characteristic of the Western imbues the entire scene as the description of the encounter seems to both occur in the moment and suggest John Grady's attempts to piece the moment together again in his recollection.

The Edenic scene of romance perpetuates itself in subsequent encounters, most notably the

scene in the lake: "She was so pale in the lake she seemed to be burning. Like foxfire in a darkened wood. That burned cold. Like the moon that burned cold. Her black hair floating on the water about her, falling and floating on the water" (141). In these encounters, John Grady exists in the ahistorical, unmappable Mexico that he originally wanted to find. The lake could be any lake, Alejandra could be any woman. Yet Dueña Alfonsa, the "serpent" in the garden, shatters the sense that their romance exists outside of time and space.[13] Further, Alfonsa displaces this Edenic scene of romance by moving the narrative indoors. Within the domestic spaces of the hacienda, she recasts Mexico as a deeply historicized (and mappable) space, effectively waking John Grady from his dream of Mexico. The hacienda itself acts as the setting for John Grady's education on the Mexican Revolution and genres of romance. The hacienda, located in the state of Coahuila, already implies the history that the Dueña will track as the state was also the home of Francisco I. Madero.

Alfonsa's interruption of John Grady's Mexican dream emphasizes the tension noted by Jane Tompkins, in *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*, between the masculine, twentieth-century genre of the Western and nineteenth-century domestic novels. Tompkins observes that "the Western is at heart antilanguage. Doing, not talking, is what it values" (50), an observation that resonates with McCarthy's minimalist writing style. Significantly, elsewhere in *All Pretty Horses* and in McCarthy's novels in general, McCarthy's characters are noted for their terse dialogue which, combined with his short descriptions, have led many critics to liken McCarthy to Hemingway. However, this reticent style dissipates in *All the Pretty Horses* when John Grady interacts with Dueña Alfonsa. By moving the narrative, the Dueña also moves it away from the Western as a genre. Tompkins's points about the antilanguage of the Western

[13] See Gail Moore Morrison, "*All the Pretty Horses* and John Grady Cole's Expulsion from Paradise."

germanely points to Alfonsa's facility with language; in particular, the ten-page monologue that occurs halfway through the novel. Tompkins writes: "Women, like language, remind men of their own interiority; women's talk evokes a whole network of familial and social relationships and their corollaries in the emotional circuitry. What men are fleeing in Westerns is not only the cluttered Victorian interior but also the domestic dramas that go on in that setting" (66-67). Significantly, with the movement indoors comes the network of relationships associated with the domestic novel that Tompkins points out: John Grady must listen to the family's history with the Mexican Revolution. Further, the novel closely details "the cluttered Victorian interior" of the house even as John Grady must demonstrate his facility with Victorian manners as he plays chess and drinks tea with the Dueña.

Set within this well-known home of Madero and the Revolution, the hacienda itself become an extension of memory and history as the house is described according to Alfonsa's life. Indeed, the first sentence that introduces Alfonsa ties her explicitly with the house: "The dueña Alfonsa was both grandaunt and godmother to the girl and her life at the hacienda invested it with oldworld ties and with antiquity and tradition" (132). Thus, at the same time we learn about Alfonsa's relation to Alejandra, the novel foregrounds her effect on the hacienda. From this introduction to Alfonsa and the house, the novel's description includes an account of the decor in terms of the Dueña's life:

> The ancient stereopticon in the parlor and the matched pair of Greener guns in the italian wardrobe in Don Héctor's room had been her brother's and it was her brother with whom she stood in the photos taken in front of cathedrals in the capitals of Europe, she and her sister-in-law in white summer clothes, her brother in vested suit and tie and panama hat (132).

Although the Greener guns reside in Don Héctor's room, the important point to note about them is that they belonged to *her* brother; that is, they exist in relation to her. Even the photos taken in front of European cathedrals are incorporated into the narrative history of Dueña Alfonsa – rather than existing on their own, each photo becomes a souvenir that marks a specific moment in time for the Dueña. The photos recall her European education and demonstrate her worldliness. In short, "the cluttered Victorian interior" memorializes the Dueña's past, and this memorial stages the interruption of the romantic plot between John Grady and Alejandra occurs.[14]

Notably, the first conversation in which Dueña Alfonsa warns John Grady takes place during a game of chess, signaling how the game becomes a way of staging larger class and national concerns, which sanitize and aestheticize opposition into a performance of civility. Upon meeting Dueña Alfonsa, John Grady notes that she speaks with an English accent (133), a fact at odds with one of their first exchanges, in which the Dueña complains, "My nephew will not play, she said. I trounce him. Is it trounce?" and receives John Grady's affirmation, "Yes mam. I believe it is" (133). In this exchange, despite sounding "like the schoolteacher she in fact had been" (133), the Dueña marks herself – and the English language – as foreign and, in doing so, acts the part of the demure hostess rather than that of Alejandra's gatekeeper. In this way, the chess game's importance gives ways to the interaction rituals performed before and after the game. Unlike this opening move in which Alfonsa concedes to John Grady's knowledge of

[14] Alfonsa's home as a memorial to her past echoes Doña Rita's home, where the decaying house and the commitment to Mexico before modernization symbolize the aging aristocracy. Doña Rita "had bought the house in which they lived, decayed and in a forgotten quarter, but of a grandeur, albeit cracked and faded, suitable to the peacocks and the carriage" ("Rivals" 79). Rather than the ancestral grandeur of the *hacienda* in "A Son of the Tropics," Doña Rita's home represents a view of the aristocracy on the way out; her house, while "suitable to the peacocks and carriage," is not suitable to the times. Further, "the land lay prostrate in the asphyxia of a money famine" ("Rivals" 79), which aligns the aristocracy with infertility and decay specifically in terms of the land. As such, Doña Rita's nostalgia for the past positions her within a mythic Mexico founded on feudalism.

English above her own, the chess game closes with Dueña Alfonsa winning the last game and sitting back while tea is served, "There were slices of cake on a plate and a plate of crackers and several kinds of cheese and a small bowl of brown sauce with a silver spoon in it," after which she graciously asks, "Do you take cream?" (134). The tea tray provides the opportunity for the Dueña to perform her gentility by simultaneously displaying her social status and alienating John Grady from the production.

Alfonsa's performance of class creates a "domestic drama" within the Victorian interior, with John Grady at the center. This domestic drama unfolds on a micro level as John Grady's his inability to partake of the delicacies before him because he will "have crazy dreams eatin this late" (134) foregrounds his status as a cowboy on the hacienda. John Grady's mention of time signals that the chess game takes place on Dueña Alfonsa's schedule. After the second chess game, the Dueña "pushed back the sleeve of her blouse to look at a small silver wristwatch. John Grady sat. It was two hours past his bedtime" (133). This moment marks the Dueña as a woman of leisure who can play chess and eat slices of cake while John Grady worries about the workday before him. In this way, Dueña Alfonsa signals the disparity between their respective social statuses in order to remind John Grady of the class difference between him and Alejandra. In fact, this reminder is well placed, situated as it is between Alfonsa's victory and the warning she imparts. Alfonsa tells John Grady, "Even though you are younger than she is it is not proper for you to be seen riding in the campo together without supervision. Since this was carried to my ears I considered whether or not to speak to Alejandra about it and I have decided not to" (136). Dueña Alfonsa asserts herself as the authority figure capable of chastising John Grady. At the same time, she enlists John Grady as a co-conspirator by mentioning that she will not speak to Alejandra about the incident. Further, Dueña Alfonsa's warning allows her to demonstrate her

power by the remark, "since this was carried to my ears." Written in the passive voice to erase the agent of the action – who, exactly, carried this information? – the warning is invested with the sense that anyone could have told her about John Grady and Alejandra. The hacienda is, in fact, her home, the center of the inspection-house from which she surveils.

With its emphasis on class differences, Alfonsa's home contrasts with the goals of the Mexican Revolution, exemplified by Francisco Madero. Motivated by sympathy for the poor, Madero attempted to match his practice with the theories he learned abroad. For instance, he "began to set up schools for the poor children of the district. He dispensed medicines. Later he would feed hundreds of people from his own kitchen" (233). Madero's efforts exemplify an increased class awareness such that he can move from the paradigm of simple *noblesse oblige* to a structural critique of the society in which he lives. This shift accounts for his movement into the political sphere, but notably, this initial movement began in the creation of schools, and, tellingly, in the kitchen. By feeding the poor from his own kitchen, Madero transforms the domestic space of the kitchen into a revolutionary space where people from different classes come together to eat. Significantly, this kitchen differs from Alfonsa's, which, although the hacienda workers eat there, is not a place of revolutionary struggle. Instead, the kitchen acts as a passageway to other parts of the house, effectively dislocating it as a location itself. Madero's actions seem to be common to children of a certain class – initially, Alfonsa thinks "there were thousands like us" (233) – which indicates a desire for social change that cuts across class lines. However, "in the end it seemed there were none" (233). Both of these statements point to the Dueña's resignation and, more damningly, her subscription to the social order she formerly resisted.

While the *bildungsroman*, as a genre of (heterosexual) romance figures futurity through

marriage and unification, Alfonsa's *bildungsroman* results in romantic failure and produces stasis. Unlike the male protagonist of the *bildungsroman* who, as Bakhtin reminds us, "emerges along with the world" (*Speech* 23), she remains frozen within the liminal space marked by pre- and post- revolutionary Mexico. The oil paintings that line the living-room walls poignantly illustrate Alfonsa's stasis and her ability to foist such stasis on Alejandra: "The most recent was she herself full length in formal gown on the occasion of her quinceañera at Rosario in eighteen ninety-two" (132). Notably absent from the series of oil portraits is one of Alejandra who, at seventeen years of age, could be expected to have an oil portrait on the occasion of her own quinceañera, much the way her grandaunt had. Instead, the series of portraits ends with Dueña Alfonsa, as if frozen in time at the moment of her debut, the moment when she entered society and publicly marked the transition from childhood to womanhood. This frozen moment is key for the romance between John Grady and Alejandra because the final oil painting signifies how Dueña Alfonsa's intersecting narrative freezes time – both hers and theirs – at the moment of the Revolution.

Yet, the domestic space in which Alfonsa has entangled John Grady does more than simply sabotage his romance with Alejandra. Rather, Alfonsa also alters the narrative structure itself by imposing the female *bildungsroman* onto John Grady's Western. If failure and the inability to come of age in the same way that male characters do characterizes the female *bildungsroman*, then Alfonsa's generic twist ensnares both Alejandra and John Grady into her own plot. [15] Franco Moretti, defending his choice to focus on *bildungsromane* that track the story of European males, writes that they are characterized by "wide cultural formation, professional mobility, full social

[15] As Lazzaro-Weis points out, "According to Annis Pratt, the female *Bildungsroman* demonstrates how society provides women with models for 'growing down' instead of 'growing up,' as is the case of the male model" ("Female" 17).

freedom – for a long time, the west European middle-class man held a virtual monopoly on these, which made him a sort of structural *sin qua non* of the genre" (ix). Yet the very traits that define the *bildungsroman* for Moretti are those traits that, in being denied to women, form the central tension of the female *bildungsroman*. The Dueña emphasizes this point, particularly in terms of mobility and social freedom when she tells John Grady, "The societies to which I have been exposed seemed to me largely machines for the suppression of women. Society is very important in Mexico. Where women do not even have the vote" (230). Alfonsa's lack of social mobility and freedom strikingly contrasts with her position as a member of the aristocracy; however, as we shall see later, Alfonsa's exclusion from the world in which she was raised firmly grounds her emergent revolutionary consciousness.

Paradoxically, in order for Alfonsa's *bildungsroman* to succeed, her narrative trajectory would have had to end in a marriage with her suitor, Gustavo Madero, Francisco's brother. As Carol Lazzaro-Weis reminds us, "Women writers, like their male counterparts, have traditionally turned to the *bildungsroman* not to subvert its structures but rather to flaunt the contradictions in the form which critical theory has tried to explain away" ("Female" 21). Alfonsa's narrative exemplifies this idea as marriage forms the central contradiction of her *bildungsroman* as, according to the logic set forth by the text, a union with Gustavo would demonstrate the Dueña's freedom to choose her own path as well as her freedom from the constraints put upon her by her father. As Moretti remarks,

> It has been observed that from the late eighteenth century on, marriage becomes the model for a new type of *social contract*: one no longer sealed by forces located outside of the individual (such as status), but founded on a sense of 'individual obligation'. A very plausible thesis, and one that helps us understand why the

> classical *Bildungsroman* 'must' always conclude with marriages. It is not only the foundation of the family that is at stake, but that 'pact' between the individual and the world, that reciprocal 'consent' which finds in the double 'I do' of the wedding ritual an unsurpassed symbolic condensation (22).

In this way, Alfonsa's social mobility, understood as gender equality, would be secured through marriage. While marriage plots are typically read, as in Moretti, as moments of unity, conversely, the failure of the text to end in marriage signals disruption and disorder. Significantly, the romance between John Grady and Alejandra also does not end in marriage, signifying that the rupture caused by the Mexican Revolution still stands: not only does the aristocracy, represented by Alejandra, and the bourgeoisie, represented by John Grady, fail to unify, but Mexico (Alejandra) and the United States (John Grady) also fail to establish a relationship outside of United States imperialism.

By foiling the romance between John Grady and Alejandra, the Dueña perpetuates the rupture caused by the revolution; further, the Dueña becomes the administrator of rules and propriety, which marks her complicity with the patriarchal and aristocratic regimes that she initially resisted. This can be seen in her elaborate performance of class over a chess game and in her tendency to impose her own narrative onto Alejandra's: "She is much like me at that age and I seem at times to be struggling with my own past self. I was unhappy as a child for reasons that are no longer important. But the thing in which we are united, my niece and I . . ." (135). In this moment, as the Dueña trails off, the suggestive ellipses are corrected by a return to gentility and propriety, signaling her commitment to the class structure with which she was raised: "She broke off. She set the cup and saucer to one side. The polished wood of the table held a round shape of breath where they'd stood that diminished from the edges in and vanished. She looked up" (135).

This shift in manner correlates to a shift in tone as she begins again:

> I had no one to advise me, you see. Perhaps I would not have listened anyway. I grew up in a world of men. I thought this would have prepared me to live in a world of men but it did not. I was also rebellious and so I recognize it in others. Yet I think that I had no wish to break things. Or perhaps only those things that wished to break me. The names of the entities that have power to constrain us change with time. Convention and authority are replaced by infirmity. But my attitude toward them has not changed. Has not changed (135-136).

The Dueña's remarks pivot on gender as she describes a world of which she cannot be a part. Despite growing up in a world of men, she finds no place in it. Yet, at the same time, the Dueña longs for the ability to break with the social structure complicit in the "suppression of women" (230). Despite her seemingly progressive views and her insistence that she is not "a particularly oldfashioned woman" (135) and that her attitude "has not changed" (136), Dueña Alfonsa becomes the strictest adherent to the rules of the society that seek her own – and Alejandra's – suppression. The Dueña's acknowledgement of her own constraints and those who constrain her does not change the fact that following this recognition she insists that John Grady desist spending time with Alejandra. Framed as concern for Alejandra's reputation – she states, "I want you to be considerate of a young girl's reputation" (136) and "There is no forgiveness. For women. A man may lose his honor and regain it again. But a woman cannot. She cannot" (137) – Alfonsa's staging of the conversation demonstrates her adherence to the old social contract symbolized by the Díaz regime.

Indeed, Alfonsa's divided loyalties point to her shift from revolutionary to an enforcer of social practices with their attendant class and racial constraints. For example, as a young woman,

Alfonsa demonstrates an emergent revolutionary consciousness, only to be foiled by her father's conflicting sense of responsibilities to the poor. Alfonsa explains that her father "was outspoken in his views concerning the responsibilities of the landed class" (236); however, his desire to help the poor stems from a sense of *noblesse oblige* whereas the Dueña's sympathies encourage in her a critique of not just society as a whole, but of God himself: "In all cases I refused to believe in a God who could permit such injustice as I saw in a world of his own making" (232). In her description of the poor, the Dueña notes that "In the towns there were tiendas which rented clothes to the peasants when they would come to market" (231) and "In the towns you'd see them trying to sell things which had no value" (231). Her descriptions highlight the acceptance of poverty as tiendas specially cater to peasants without proper clothing. Alfonsa also calls attention to the fact that there is apparently no workforce of which the peasants could be a part. This implication – the lack of work – foregrounds the problematic within the concept of *noblesse oblige*, namely that peasants are helped out of a sense of charity and responsibility without addressing the larger problem of an unused and frequently exploited workforce. This speaks to modernization under Díaz, which, on the one hand, emphasized rapid industrialization, but, on the other hand, did so at the expense of the peasant class, in effect cannibalizing them. The stark contrast between rapid economic growth – at this time, Díaz was trying to make Mexico a global power – and heightened poverty created the conditions for a class revolution, particularly among sympathetic members of the landed class, like Alfonsa and the Maderos.

If the *bildungsroman* is a novel of education – as Alfonsa's observations of the poor indicate – then Alfonsa's education reveals yet another contradiction: her inability to use her schooling and implement the ideas she learned while studying in Europe, ideas that sparked her revolutionary consciousness. Alfonsa's education reveals a deeper incompatibility within

Mexican society; namely, Alfonsa becomes "an exile in [her] own country" because the possibilities she grew up with do not match the possibilities open to her as a woman. She explains:

> When I was born in this house it was already filled with books in five languages and since I knew that as a woman the world would be largely denied me I seized upon this other world. I was reading by the time I was five and no one ever took a book from my hands. Ever. Then my father sent me to two of the best schools in Europe. For all his strictness and authority he proved to be a libertine of the most dangerous sort (239).

In "seizing" this other world, Alfonsa simultaneously makes herself unable to live in it, as it is a world where she is encouraged not only to read, but also to be able to do so in multiple languages. Her European education ostracizes her further by expanding the distance between what was expected of Alfonsa in Mexico versus the opportunities she had as a member of the landed class. As she comments upon this ever-widening gulf, Alfonsa indicts her father by calling him "a libertine of the most dangerous sort" because he makes a world available to Alfonsa that she is not permitted to enter. One of his most egregious acts, the fact that "no one ever took a book from [her] hands. Ever" indicts the novelistic form itself for creating worlds that do not coincide with reality and, worse, suggest a reality that, for Alfonsa, is not possible.

Exiled as a woman and, especially, as a woman from the landed classes, Alfonsa's family's position in Mexico further displaces her: "My family are considered gachupines here, but the madness of the Spaniard is not so different from the madness of the creole" (230). In describing her family as gachupines, the Dueña suggests that her family is seen as Spanish, rather than Mexican, which aligns them with colonizers over the colonized. She continues, "The political

tragedy in Spain was rehearsed in full dress twenty years earlier on Mexican soil" (230), a statement that illustrates an affinity between the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. In so doing, she points to the Spanish roots of both movements and, significantly, implies that a particular lineage that can be traced through both movements. Yet, this sense of a lineage or a resemblance between the two movements leads her to speculate, "Because the question for me was always whether that shape we see in our lives was there from the beginning or whether these random events are only called a pattern after the fact. Because otherwise we are nothing. Do you believe in fate?" (230). In this speculation, which follows Alfonsa's statement, "In a different life I could have been a soldadera. Perhaps [Alejandra] too" (230), the Dueña wonders about the relationship between fate and chance. In doing so, she hints at an alternative to fate, in which things are predetermined, in favor of patterns and sets of possibilities. Yet, even as she suggests a slightly more liberating model than that of fate, she also resigns herself to her current life, in which becoming a soldadera is not possible for her and Alejandra. Alfonsa – and Alejandra – are therefore constrained by their gachupine identity and the living room becomes the symbol and the stage for that constraint.

Divided family loyalties emerge in John Grady's billiards game with Don Héctor as well. Like Alfonsa, Don Héctor interprets the motives and failures of the previous generation in order to warn the next. The billiards game begins with a description that combines the billiards game with Mexican history: "He played slowly and studied the shots and the lay of the table and as he studied and as he played he spoke of the revolution and of the history of Mexico and he spoke of the dueña Alfonsa and of Francisco Madero" (144). The first part of the sentence situates the game in the past tense – a description of a game that was already played – while the second part, beginning with "as he studied" places the sentence in the ongoing moment of the game, which

coincides with the ongoing presence of the Mexican Revolution. Don Héctor's description localizes the history of the Mexican Revolution by situating the revolution within his own family history as he mentions Dueña Alfonsa and Francisco Madero within the context of his own familial upheaval at the time. Yet even as he briefly refers to the Dueña's romance – "Alfonsita may have been engaged to be married to Francisco's brother" (144) – Don Héctor abandons this narrative in order to describe his family's history alongside that of the Mexican Revolution. The consequence of this historical view is that it adds weight to personal and romantic relationships such that personal relationships are part of a larger history set as they are against the backdrop of political unrest. Further, the scale of the Mexican Revolution coincides with the scale of familial (and filial) relationships such that the family becomes the ground upon which national differences are staged. Don Héctor notes his close ties with the Madero family by explaining that Francisco Madero's grandfather was his godfather (145). Don Héctor also remarks that his godfather, Don Evaristo, was loyal to Porfirio Díaz, which makes Don Evaristo's political stance at odds with his grandsons' the Madero brothers. Don Héctor's articulation of the close relationship between his family and the Maderos personalizes the impact of the Mexican Revolution and emphasizes how class differences become a dividing line even among people of the same class. Don Evaristo and Don Héctor's grandfather – who remains loyal to Don Evaristo – both privilege loyalty, which happens to manifest itself as loyalty to the ruling class. For this reason, Francisco Madero's book, which Don Evaristo cannot believe he wrote, represents a betrayal to the ruling class and, therefore, of his own grandfather. In this way, familial relationships implicate larger national and class concerns.

However, unlike the Maderos, Alfonsa is unable to totally reject the values represented by her father. As such, the failure of romance in this context also becomes a failure to embody the

values and ideals put forth during the revolution. Alfonsa's refusal to cease her support of the revolution resulted in her father sending her to Europe, because "He would not bring me home unless I promised to disassociate myself from the Maderos and this I would not do" (236). While the Dueña remains loyal to the cause and to the Maderos, her inability to disobey her father implies that, while familial relationships can often be seen as allegories for a nation engaged in a civil war, there are shades of gray within this allegorical relationship. Alfonsa's support of the revolution underlines the way in which civil war creates unrest within the home; at the same time her refusal to disobey her father speaks to the strength of familial ties and, consequently, of her adherence to her own class and the social order. In this way, Alfonsa's failure of romance subsequently becomes a failure to uphold the ideals of the revolution – she does not become a soldadera, after all. Because the Dueña sees herself as existing in a hostile world – recall that societies for her are "largely machines for the suppression of women" (230) – because of her gender, the revolutionary movement also fails because it does not insist upon equality among the sexes in quite the same way it does for equality among the classes, in Alfonsa's view. The failure of romance, understood as an allegory for the revolution, then, coincides with the failure of the novel as a form – these failures rely on an inability to create a world that manifests itself in reality. Because of this failure, the Mexican Revolution becomes a parable told by the Dueña to explain her refusal to support John Grady's relationship with Alejandra. This is why, as she tells John Grady, "You will see that those things which disposed me in your favor were the very things which led me to decide against you in the end" (231). No doubt "those things" were class differences, differences that point to the Dueña's resignation and, more damningly, her subscription to the social order she formerly resisted. With the assassination of the Madero brothers came, for Alfonsa, the loss of her belief in revolutionary struggle and a loss in her

ability to advocate for a romance based on love rather than social conventions. In this way, Alfonsa's home, staged as a competitive space that highlights class differences, directly contrasts with the goals of the Mexican Revolution, which sought to end the hacienda system.

More specifically, the living room in *All the Pretty Horses* signals Alfonsa's confinement and adherence to traditional gender roles even as she speaks of her progressive ideals while unintentionally offering a narrative of resignation. As Alfonsa explains her position to John Grady, her narrative as a cautionary tale hinges on the themes of exile and failed romance. The Dueña's exile stems from her sense that she was raised in an environment incompatible with the world in which she must live. While her environment suggested a world of opportunities, the world itself proved to be a limit on what she was able to do. Her failed romance with Gustavo Madero acts as an extension of this sense of exile since the romance addresses the heart of Alfonsa's conflict; namely, that she must live according to her assigned role as a member of the landed class rather than become a soldadera. Alfonsa's commitment to her class – despite her protestations, she becomes the enforcer of her class's values – hints at the failure of the Mexican Revolution as it demonstrates a fixed sense of class despite a presumed revolutionary consciousness.

More broadly, Alfonsa's female *bildungsroman* signals how competing generic claims in the novel vie for competing forms of historiography. By interrupting John Grady's romanticized view of Mexico, Alfonsa also interrupts the imperialist narrative that imagines Alejandra and, allegorically, Mexico, as a woman in need of saving from her dictatorial aunt. In fact, Alfonsa's failed romance has larger implications for John Grady Cole's own *bildungsroman* as his failure to marry Alejandra has more in common with the female *bildungsroman*, which, as Carol Lazzaro-Weis demonstrates, is more tied to romance than that of conventional coming-of-age

narratives (*Margins* 94). In this way, Alfonsa demonstrates that Mexico does not need to be saved by the US (John Grady) and, more significantly, that any relationship between the two must consider how the Mexican Revolution provides the important historical context for any understanding of Mexico in the twentieth-century.

Homophobia, or, the Fear of Going of Home

The failure of genre in *All the Pretty Horses* thus becomes a failure of finding the appropriate narrative framework for historicizing Mexico. Significantly, this inability to narrate Mexican history arises as a preoccupation with forms of intimacy in both *All the Pretty Horses* and "Doña Rita's Rivals." The fear of intermixture stems from confusion over the proper object of romance – for example, a successful relationship between John Grady and Alejandra would confirm the imperialism that informs the Western, an outcome Alfonsa refuses to sanction. While both Rita and Alfonsa view the Mexican revolution as a generational difference, they also demonstrate how overcoming such differences through marriage would result in an incestuous relationship between Rita and Jesús María and a displacement of Alejandra in favor of Alfonsa, which, like the relationship between Aquiles and Carmelita in Mena's "The Sorcerer and General Bisco" restricts romance to one family. Jesús María and John Grady, however, view class and racial differences as those with which to contend. Yet, each character participates in the domestic seduction laid out for him: Jesús María dances with his mother in the drawing room after she has become "magically younger" (74), John Grady spends far more time inside "Victorian interiors" with Alfonsa than he does outside with Alejandra. Unable to figure the beloved, "Doña Rita's Rivals" and *All the Pretty Horses* reveal the larger problem of representing the Mexican Revolution as genres, genders, and generations compete with one another for narrative control.

While the use of the Western would typically enforce a teleological, developmental notion of time and history, in McCarthy this trajectory fails. Coded as part of a prelapsarian past, John Grady's Western also participates in the idealization of the past that Rita and Alfonsa exemplify. Further, Alfonsa sidelines the Western as she rewrites Alejandra's narrative in her own image. In so doing, she transforms the progressive nature of the Western into the failure and stasis of the female *bildungsroman*. Because the novel does not subscribe to the unifying function of the romance, the novel as a romance never materializes. The female *bildungsroman* is, in many ways, an anti-romance because not only does it reveal its own contradictions, such as Alfonsa's liberation through marriage, but it also "describe[s] experience in epistemological rather than teleological terms" (Lazzaro-Weis 21), indicating that the goal of the female *bildungsroman* is self-knowledge, not romance.

Further, if the romances found in genres of romance implicate notions of futurity, then the unreproductive time of the female *bildungsroman*, with its tendency to "grow down" suggests a Mexico frozen in time and recalls the association of Doña Rita with decay and Alfonsa with stasis. These characterizations betray a particular view of history as both women nostalgically look to an idealized past – Doña Rita, to the Porfiriato and Alfonsa to the moment when she had the potential to join the revolution. Yet, despite such differing politics, both women strictly enforce endogamy and perpetuate a fear of the foreign other. This fear, however, distracts from the real threat to Mexico, which is internal and domestic. Rather than regarding outsiders with suspicion, Mena and McCarthy reveal that the real threat is home-grown as Rita and Alfonsa are the ones who have internalized the logic of colonization, which favors the wealthy, landed class and, while it romanticizes the poor, mercilessly exploits them.

While two formative texts on domesticity, Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic*

Fiction: A Political History of the Novel and Claudia Tate's *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine's Text at the Turn of the Century* pivot on the authorizing power of the home and the nuclear family – Armstrong locates women's political power within their roles as managers and moral authorities while Tate argues that African American women looked to domestic novels as models for their own behavior – Mena and McCarthy critique this power by revealing the ways in which the home installs and reinforces the values of the privileged classes. Such a critique also emerges in the work of Priscilla Wald and Amy Kaplan, both of whom offer transnational critiques of domesticity by highlighting the ways in which it attempts to contain the foreign. Wald echoes the "homophobia" articulated by Anzaldúa in relation to the home by observing Freud's concept of *unheimlich* – or unhomeliness – and how it "produce[s] the unsettling experience that results from the resurfacing of what is supposed to remain hidden" (*Constituting* 5). For Wald, the home emerges as the site of the repressed; simultaneously, it becomes the setting for the "official story," which, Wald argues, manifests itself in the "family plot" (247). According to Wald, "The 'family plot' is the child's first narrative . . . To deviate too much from the family plot is to risk disrupting the narrative of identity" (247). Both Jesús María and John Grady disrupt such identity narratives. Yet, though his relationship with Alegría initially sets him on a different path, Jesús María's revolutionary fervor ultimately reinscribes the exploitative tendencies of his class. Similarly, Dueña Alfonsa reorients Alejandra to the identity narrative of her family plot. The insistence on the family plot reveals the hegemony of what Kaplan calls "manifest domesticity," in which discourses of the home conspire to transform "an imperial nation into a home by producing and colonizing specters of the foreign that lurk inside and outside its ever-shifting borders" (50). Such collusion incriminates the calcified nationalism promoted by Rita and Alfonsa, who police their homes to manage difference.

Joining together Mena and McCarthy reveals more than a typical narrative of resistance. Rather than reinforcing binaries of public and private, masculine and feminine, and, significantly, center and periphery, both authors share a critique of the cultural nationalism that prevents transnational and hemispheric forms of political consciousness. And, crucially, they do so through a critique of central tenets to Chicana/o and Mexican revolutionary consciousness. Mena's work satirizes the "authentic" relationship to the land that would form the core of Chicana/o nationalism in the 1970s through conceptions of Aztlán. McCarthy, meanwhile, reveals how the call to arms – *¡Mejico para los Mejicanos!* – results in a static nationalism incapable of overcoming the differences that factionalized the Revolution, thus forestalling any sort of transamerican solidarity. Carried to its extreme, *¡Mejico para los Mejicanos!* not only homogenizes the Mexican people, but, as the example of Jesús María demonstrates, it actually appropriates the presumed authenticity of the lower classes to serve the needs of the elite. As Kaplan argues, the foreign and the domestic mutually constitute each other; what Mena and McCarthy make clear, however, is that the hegemony of domesticity manages the foreign and, in so doing, reveals that the real villains of such romances are the administrators of the home. Rita, Alfonsa, and, by extension, Alejandra, are expected to subscribe as well as enforce a nativist nationalism that requires the governance of the home to collude with the governance of the nation, thus making the home a fearful place indeed.

In this way, the notion of *unheimlich* underpins this chapter as well the previous one as a way to examine unhomely domestic spaces that render visible the hegemony of the home, as Mena and McCarthy demonstrate, as well as a way to imagine new solidarities based on uncomfortable moments of recognition, as we saw in Wright. The discomfort that informs Wright and the colonial violence at the center of this chapter extends into the second half of the

dissertation; however, the chapters that follow point to how new genres arise to combat the seemingly pre-determined narrative of colonization and its aftermath. While I have focused so far on genres that demonstrate the legacy of imperialism – the decaying Spanish empire figured in gothic terms, the ahistoricity at the heart of the western – the second half of this project considers the centrality of conversion to revolutionary literature. Chapter three discusses how the guerrilla conversion narrative queers the romance and, in so doing, offers an oppositional form of romance while chapter four focuses on the conversion of the reader in two novels that draw upon the tradition of the Latin American Dictator Novel. Crucial to both of these latter forms is the formation of mentor/mentee relationships that revise the heterosexual romance towards other forms of sociality and sexuality.

Chapter Three

Guerrilla Conversions in José Rizal, Ninotchka Rosca, and Jessica Hagedorn: The Queer Future of National Romance

In chapter two, the female *bildungsroman* demonstrates how domestic discourses perpetuate colonial violence as figures such as Doña Rita and Alfonsa become the administrators of both the home and the nation. By legislating forms of intimacy, both characters subscribe to a nativist sensibility that illustrates anxieties around mixture, both in terms of race and class. Further, as exemplified by McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*, the threat of miscegenation becomes a formal problem as genres compete over different forms of historiography. In this chapter, I turn to what I have identified as the guerrilla conversion narrative, a genre of writing that emerged as way to write against the colonial violence that informs the genres in the previous half of this dissertation. Forms of oppositional writing – such as the guerrilla conversion narrative and, in chapter four, the Latin American dictator novel – critique the social structures and hierarchies empire enforces, which illuminates the generative power of revolution as it offers new imaginaries that allow for difference while simultaneously tracking erased genealogies both in terms of literary traditions and historical events.

In what follows, I first discuss how José Rizal, the Filipino nationalist hero and so-called "father" of Filipino literature inaugurated the novelistic tradition of the guerrilla conversion narrative with his *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and its sequel, *El Filibusterismo* (1891), both of which demonstrate the political possibilities of the form at its inception. The homosocial mentorships found in *Noli* and *Fili* follow a similar pattern: within the context of a friendship between a young man and a revolutionary, the latter encourages the former's commitment to the revolution. At first, the young, reform-minded man resists and seeks a more moderate path, then

a pivotal event occurs, at which point the mentee converts and becomes a revolutionary under the tutelage of his mentor. Because Rizal's novels hinge on friendship rather than romance as a decolonial model of relation, they offer homosocial relationships, rather than heterosexual romances, as the basis for Filipino nationalism. My reading of homosociality in Rizal departs from Doris Sommer's influential *Foundational Fictions: the National Romances of Latin America*, which argues that the heterosexual romance is the paradigm for the nation in the nineteenth-century and that consolidation via romance and marriage papers over the violence that accompanied the formation of Latin American nation-states. Indeed, in contrast to Rizal's liberatory narrative, Sommer emphasizes the terror of romance by observing how "[r]omantic passion . . . gave a rhetoric for the hegemonic projects in Gramsci's sense of conquering the antagonist through mutual interests, or 'love,' rather than through coercion. And the amorous overtones of 'conquest' are quite appropriate, because it was civil society that had to be wooed and domesticated after the creoles had won their independence" (6). I suggest that Rizal imagines the nation otherwise, even though the nineteenth-century Philippines shared a similar colonial framework with nineteenth-century Latin America.

I then turn to Ninotchka Rosca's 1988 novel *State of War* and Jessica Hagedorn's 1990 novel, *Dogeaters*, to analyze how these two texts, taken together, demonstrate a concern with similar sets of issues – namely, revolutionary kinships – regarding the 1986 People Power Revolution. Further, both authors draw from personal experiences as critics often note the similarities between Hagedorn's migration to the United States and that of Rio Gonzaga, the protagonist of *Dogeaters*. The genesis for Rosca's *State of War,* meanwhile, began in 1973, when Rosca was held as a political prisoner in Camp Crame, the infamous detention center that eventually became a point of contention during the revolution. Rosca and Hagedorn memorialize

the time period of the Marcos regime (1965-1986) as a historical moment ripe with revolutionary potentiality. By refusing to represent the People Power Revolution, Rosca and Hagedorn are able to forestall the revolution's inevitable failure while simultaneously attempting to rewrite this revolutionary outcome in the present. That is, both authors respond directly to the recent past of 1986 to galvanize structural change in the present. In this way, Rosca and Hagedorn are not able to think about revolutionary change in the present without comparing their work to the historical People Power Revolution. Each author grounds her work within the specter of the revolution, as evidenced by the narrative climax in *Dogeaters* happening on Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the same street where Camp Crame is located and on which the People Power protests occurred (which is why the revolution is often called EDSA). Further, Rosca revisits the time period during which Rizal lived because it was another historical moment when the Filipino people were inspired to rise up and fight against colonial rule.

By thinking outside of the framework of the national romance and looking back at Rizal's guerrilla conversion narratives, Rosca and Hagedorn reimagine models of relation through the paradigms of the heterosexual romance and the love triangle. While the heterosexual romance in Sommer's formulation consolidates the nation, the love triangle, according to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, reveals homosocial desire. Each author extends the scope of Rizal's guerrilla conversion narratives by emphasizing the role of women and transforming Rizal's implicitly queer relationships into an explicitly queer framework that allows for multiple forms of kinship and resists the couple and nuclear family forms found in the national romance. Chosen kinship networks in these novels are a way to resist the primal scene of colonial rape – a point Rosca renders visible by depicting the legacy of a single Capuchin monk and his rape of an unnamed *india*. Further, rehabilitating social and sexual relationships in both Rosca and Hagedorn

becomes a way to re-imagine romantic and platonic relationships while radically revising the influential literary tradition, based in the Philippines, of the guerrilla conversion narrative. In this tradition, the nation is built not through the heterosexual romance, but instead through chosen kinships. Further, this narrative is a flexible, historically specific genre that responds to the conflicts and concerns of its time. By situating both authors firmly within this Filipino literary tradition, I unearth a previously unrecognized generic form that richly engages with the long history of colonial occupation and intervention in the Philippines. Unlike Rizal, who privileges the homosocial, Rosca and Hagedorn explore the political possibilities of the heterosocial as the site for revolutionary potential.

Reading both authors in light of Rizal's work serves as an antidote to the problematic familial paradigms that frame Filipino politics because Hagedorn provides a sharp contrast to the Marcos regime's perverse "conjugal rule" that began with Ferdinand's presidency in 1965 and ended with the People Power Revolution in 1986. In his description of the Marcoses' "conjugal rule," Vicente Rafael argues that the Marcoses performed their intimacy on the national stage, going so far as to commission portraits of themselves as Malakas and Maganda, the mythical first Filipino couple.[1] In so doing, Rafael suggests that the Marcoses effectively established themselves "as the father and mother of an extended Filipino family" (122). By foregrounding their own heterosexual romance, particularly along mythological lines, the Marcoses justified their extended rule while advocating benevolent paternalism predicated on familial paradigms that rely on a hierarchical relationship between those who rule and those who are ruled. Rizal and Hagedorn's novels, by privileging friendship over familial relationships, dispense with this hierarchical framework and offer lateral kinship networks among the guerrillas in its stead.

[1] See Rafael's *White Love.*

The Marcoses' "conjugal rule" was not the only political context for Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*: at the same time that the Marcoses problematized intimate relationships, cacique (the term popularized in Latin America for prominent political bosses) rule further infected Filipino politics by constantly drawing power to only a few elite families. As Benedict Anderson explains, one outcome of colonization in the Philippines was the creation of an elite ruling class: "They might dislike one another, but they went to the same receptions, attended the same churches, lived in the same residential areas, shopped in the same fashionable streets, had affairs with each other's wives, and arranged marriages between each other's children. They were for the first time forming a self-conscious *ruling* class" ("Cacique" 11). Even though prominent Filipino families might fight with one another — as the Marcoses and the Aquinos (who galvanized the people to revolt against the Marcos regime) famously did — they still operated within a dynastic frame that reaffirmed rather than unsettled forms of power and spectacle. Hagedorn's guerrilla conversion narrative thus acts as an antidote to corrupt Filipino politics. Where cacique democracy draws power inward by continually consolidating power among the elite, the guerrilla conversion narrative of *Dogeaters* spreads power outward to incorporate the Filipino people into the nation.

Time is central to these critiques of the Marcos regime as both look back to the energy of Rizal's work to animate their own. Significantly, while Rizal's novels proleptically imagined the Philippine Revolution, Rosca and Hagedorn choose to situate their novels in the time period leading up to the People Power Revolution. This suggests that Hagedorn and Rosca are more interested in the potentiality of the revolution than the revolution itself, which, while promising, ultimately failed. By locating their novels pre-People Power Revolution, Hagedorn and Rosca memorialize a time in Philippine history that was pregnant with revolutionary possibilities. In

short, they look back in order to imagine a future.

Nostalgia imbues this tendency to look back. As Svetlana Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia* explains, nostalgia pivots on two root words: *nostos* signifies home while *algia* refers to longing; thus nostalgia is fundamentally about a longing for home, for the homeland. She then parses out the word to create a typology of nostalgia, one that is either restorative, with an emphasis on the home, or reflective, with an emphasis on longing. The proper object of restorative nostalgia is best exemplified by a national monument, for restorative nostalgia stresses the national past and the national future with the pretense that there can be true, factual descriptions of events. In this case, we can think of the proliferation of Rizal monuments in the Philippines and his institutionalization in schools – both of these examples reveal a clear trajectory from Rizal's death to students today. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the Rizal monument at Intramuros, a district in Manila, features the great author and nationalist holding, as Benedict Anderson tells us, *closed* copies of his books (*Specter* 253). With restorative nostalgia, the past is known; the case is closed.

In this way, restorative nostalgia is a poor fit for the novels discussed here. Rather, reflective nostalgia, with its emphasis on longing, speaks best to the anguish of *Noli* and *Fili*, the fractured narratives of *State of War* and *Dogeaters*. As Boym explains "[r]eflective nostalgia does not pretend to rebuild the mythical place home [. . .] This defamiliarization and sense of distance drives them to tell their story, to narrate the relationships between past, present and future" (Boym 50). Unconcerned with rebuilding, reflective nostalgia highlights "individual and cultural memory" (49) and underlines the connections between events rather than following a linear historical trajectory. In this way, reflective nostalgia "temporalizes space" (49) by focusing less on the location itself than on the palimpsestic layering of events that mark different spaces.

By attending to the termporalization of space, Boym's remarks about reflective nostalgia converge nicely with Benedict Anderson's notion of "the specter of comparisons." Taken from a phrase in *Noli Me Tangere*, Anderson elaborates on the idea, remarking that the specter is "a new, restless double-consciousness which made it impossible ever after to experience Berlin without at once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin. Here indeed is the origin of nationalism, which lives by making comparisons" (*Specter* 329). Thus, interestingly, the specter of comparisons relies on leaving and returning to the homeland, recalling one place while in another.[2] And yet, while Anderson stresses the significance of location, he fails to take into account that the specter of comparisons is not just spatial, it is also temporal. Rizal must look at the past through the lens of the present; similarly, he must look at the present through the lens of the past. Thus, not only does the specter of comparisons compare temporalities, but it also does so nostalgically.[3] To compare time is always to look backward.

This notion of temporal comparison is crucial for understanding both *Noli* and *Fili.* Indeed, these temporal specters haunt Philippine literature as a whole, for Philippine literature is always haunted by occupations and revolutions, a haunting that is the palimpsestic layering of events and interventions. While *Noli* calls on the future with its apostrophe to the Philippines, *Fili* renders this layering visible through its dedication to Don Francisco Gómez, Don José Burgos, and Don Jacinto Zamora, the three priests garroted for their role in the Cavite Mutiny. In looking

[2] Indeed, the role of exile is curiously absent from Anderson, as Boym remarks. For her, the crucial point about the imagined community is that this type of consciousness "does not begin at home, but at the moment of leaving home" (255). This aspect of the imagined community – and the specter of comparisons – is crucial for an understanding of each of the texts discussed here, since each author is an exile. See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

[3] While I read the specter of comparisons within a temporal framework, Caroline S. Hau suggestively argues that the specter of comparisons also introduces a hierarchy that privileges European accomplishments over Philippine struggles (95-96). See Caroline S. Hau, *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation 1946-1980.*

backwards towards the Mutiny, Rizal also proleptically looks forward to the Philippine Revolution. This tendency to look backward in order to look forward is a feature of other Filipino novels as well, from Ninotchka Rosca's *State of War*, Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, and *The Gangster of Love* to Linda Ty-Casper's *Dream Eden*, *The Empire of Memory* by Eric Gamalinda, and Gina Apostol's *The Gundealer's Daughter*. What then, to make of this nostalgia, of this desire to constantly look back?

Rizal's Homosocial Nationalism

Although José Rizal (1861-1896) gained notoriety as an alleged leader of the Katipunan organization that would plan the 1896 Philippine Revolution, he was already famous for anti-colonial critiques of Spanish rule. These critiques, while present in *Noli Me Tangere* became significantly more palpable in *El Filibusterismo*. *Noli* was written during Rizal's first trip abroad, when he left the Philippines to pursue his medical studies and avoid the political tensions at home. His older brother Paciano precipitated these tensions because he was a student of Father Burgos, one of the three priests garroted for his involvement in the Cavite Mutiny of 1872. Paciano's relationship with Burgos was a dangerous association for the Rizal family and their predicament would only worsen with the publication of *Noli* and Rizal's subsequent label as a subversive, or *filibustero*. Tensions increased even further with the publication of *Fili,* which Rizal dedicated to the three priests. Rizal was exiled to the city of Dapitan shortly after his return to Manila in 1892. Accused of leading the Katipunan revolt in 1896, Rizal was subsequently arrested, tried, and executed. Shortly thereafter, the Philippine Revolution broke out, followed by the Spanish-American War in 1898.[4]

[4] In subsequent years, the Philippines would continue to be marked by the interventions of

While he is a popular figure in the Philippines, José Rizal's widespread familiarity in the United States' academy stems from the work of Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and *The Specter of Comparisons.* Yet even as Anderson's key concepts are deeply tied to his readings of Rizal, critics tend to focus on his foundational ideas while forgetting that Rizal inspired them. Indeed, the very definition of the imagined community — that it is imagined because one cannot actually know each person who comprises the nation (*IC* 6) and that it is a community "conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (*IC* 7) — originates in the first paragraph of *Noli Me Tangere*, which describes the seemingly unremarkable event of a dinner party at Captain Tiago's house. As Anderson persuasively argues, the dinner party stages what it means to be connected as a nation given that the dinner party is discussed by "hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different parts of Manila, in a particular month of a particular decade" (*IC* 27). Anderson's imagined community, then, already signals a model of national consolidation not founded on the heterosexual romance's biologically-grounded conception of unity. While Anderson points to one type of national imaginary in Rizal, I point to another through the guerrilla conversion narrative. Like the imagined community, the guerrilla conversion narrative is similarly based on "deep, horizontal comradeship" rather than biological, familial connections. However, the guerrilla conversion narrative also offers an explicit critique of the heterosexual romance by

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foreign interests and armed uprisings to combat those interventions. While the historical coordinates for what follows are the Philippine Revolution (1896) and the period of martial law under the Marcos regime (1972-1986), these two time periods bookend a larger timeframe that spans the Spanish-American war (1898), the Philippine-American War that followed (1899-1902), the Sakdal uprisings in the 1930s, the Japanese occupation of the 1940s, the Hukbalahap Rebellion from 1946-1954 and the First Quarter Storm of 1970 that eventually led to the period of martial law beginning in 1972. Although my focus is on the eve of the Philippine Revolution in 1896 and the eve of the People Power Revolution in 1986, resistance to foreign intervention characterizes each of these uprisings.

constructing a national imaginary based on homosociality and demonstrating the limits of romance for national allegory.

In contrast to Sommer's argument that nineteenth-century Latin American novels aspired to consolidate the nation through the unification of heterogenous couples via marriage, *Noli* looks outside heterosexual coupling to frame national consolidation and unification in the Philippines. In *Noli,* the relationship between Crisóstomo Ibarra, the protagonist of the novel, and María Clara, his love interest, would seem to be the key to this nationalist romance. However, the more compelling — and convincing — "romance" that occurs in the novel is that between Ibarra and the indigenous revolutionary Elías. Because *Noli* pivots on the relationship between Ibarra and Elías, Rizal suggests that homosociality is central to nation-building. In so doing, Rizal paves the way for a broadened understanding of kinship, one that underscores chosen networks rather than family ties or heterosexual coupling. Guerrilla conversion narratives, with their focus on political commitments and new national imaginaries, underpin these chose kinships, which are another kind of "deep, horizontal comradeship" (*IC* 7) predicated on relationships between men.

Rizal's novels were incendiary because they imagined both a resistance to colonial rule *and* a unified Filipino people. Under Spanish rule, "Filipino" used to signify a creole class distinction by naming people of Spanish descent who were born in the Philippines. However, in the late nineteenth-century, Rizal shifted this meaning of "Filipino" to signify a national identity that crosses class and racial lines.[5] The configuration of the Filipino as Asian rather than as

[5] Lifshey explains that during the late nineteenth-century, Filipinos were considered creoles, people who were of Spanish descent but born in the Philippines. Read in this way, "Filipino" designates this grouping apart from two other racial (and class) groupings: *indios* (indigenous people) and *peninsulares* (people who were actually born in Spain) (1436). See "The Literary Alterities of Philippine Nationalism in José Rizal's *El Filibusterismo*."

Spanish creole, then, owes much to Rizal's impact on the Filipino national imaginary. As Anderson tells us, Rizal is the "first Filipino" because he is the first to imagine Filipino as a national, rather than colonial, identity.[6] In so doing, Rizal shifts the understanding of "Filipino" to an Asian ethnic identity rather than a classed, Spanish one. This history of identification reveals the class politics that underpin the construction of Filipino ethnicity in the novels of both Rizal and Hagedorn.

Crucial to Rizal's conception of Filipino ethnicity were the homosocial societies that informed his *ilustrado* homosociality and were central to the plot of the Philippine Revolution and his guerrilla conversion narratives in *Noli* and *Fili*. As Raquel Reyes reminds us, Rizal formed a number of homosocial societies before he organized Los Indios Bravos, a society inspired by a Wild West show he observed at the 1889 Paris Exposition. In naming this organization, Rizal drew a structural connection between Native Americans in the United States and *indios* in the Philippines, a connection that Sharon Delmendo reads as a subversive undercutting of the racial slur, *indio* (27). Moreover, Los Indios Bravos played an important role in establishing Rizal's subsequent organization, La Liga Filipina. While these societies mark significant advances in the nascent conception of the Philippine national and ethnic identity, they were further solidified in the well-known Katipunan organization, which E. San Juan Jr. argues could only be conceptualized because of Rizal's Liga Filipina (*Rizal* 9).

Such all-male societies relied on male comradeship and the exclusion of women, a feature that defines Rizal's guerrilla conversion narrative. As Reyes observes, the *ilustrados* bonded

[6] Anderson explains this idea of the "First Filipino" as follows: "The Spain from which so many of the characters have at one time or another arrived is always off stage. This restriction made it clear to Rizal's first readers that 'The Philippines' was a society in itself, even though those who lived in it had as yet no common name. That he was the first to imagine this social whole explains why he is remembered today as the First Filipino" (*Specter* 230).

over their conquest of European women, which is in sharp contrast to the entirely different standards to which they held Filipinas, who were supposed to be icons of virtue (xxix). The sexual culture of these societies was predicated on the exclusion of Filipinas, which is rendered visible by the excised chapter of *Noli*, "Elías and Salomé." Carol Hau argues that the missing chapter suggests that women are nothing more than distractions to the masculine calls for patriotism and revolution (*Subject* 165). Women in Rizal's novels emerge as a distraction to the cause while Rizal's emphasis on homosocial societies provides a rich background to the importance of homosociality in *Noli* and *Fili*.

By reading these affirmative homosocial relationships in Rizal, we can recover Filipino history from the problematic homosocial discourse that pervaded United States' rhetoric about the Philippines during the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). Vicente L. Rafael explains that the United States historically constructed Filipinos as "orphans of the Pacific" ("White Love" 185) and "little brown brothers," a term infamously coined by William Howard Taft, Governor-General of the Philippines from 1900-1904. As Juliana Chang points out, this framework describes the colonial project as predicated on "homosocial, paternal-fraternal relationships in which the United States would provide tutelage and protections" (639). This paternalistic framework characterized United States' political discourse at the time, as President William McKinley's justification confirms: "'There was nothing left to do but take them all, and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize them'" (Brands 25). Whereas the United States condescendingly used the language of homosociality and racial uplift to justify Philippine intervention, Rizal's representation of homosociality offers a vision of solidarity based on shared political goals. Revisiting Rizal crucially decolonizes homosociality, and, in so doing, resists imperialist discourse.

In *Noli* and *Fili*, love for the nation or love for a woman are competing choices rather than allegories, a point rendered explicit by the way in which love triangles depart from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential reading of homosocial relationships. Sedgwick argues that the love triangle reveals homosocial bonds rather than confirming heterosexual ones when two men compete for the love of a woman (21). However, in *Noli* and *Fili*, rather than two men competing for the love of a woman, each woman competes for the love of a man who is simultaneously wooed by a mentor to join the revolution. In *Noli*, the love triangle involves Ibarra, María Clara, and Elías; in *Fili*, the triangle shifts to Ibarra/Simoun (Ibarra is disguised as the foreigner Simoun for much of *Fili*), Basilio, and Julí. Although the death of each woman motivates revolutionary zeal in the novels, the real work of the revolution can only be done once the women are off-stage: we never see María Clara in *Fili* (she is locked away in a convent for the duration of the novel) and Julí dies roughly halfway through *Fili*.

The women offer a normative cover for the relationship between Ibarra and Elías and, later, Simoun and Basilio, such that the homosocial bonds between men are fostered and cemented in an implicitly queer framework. My use of "queer" here stems from the more expansive sense of the term Martin Joseph Ponce suggests, in which "queer" is "an unraveling of the normative lineup of biological sex, gender, and sexuality" such that "the term's critical force derives from its expulsion from and opposition to the normal" (26).[7] The relationship between Ibarra and Elías and Simoun and Basilio hinges on this expansive notion of queerness because both sets of homosocial relationships resist the structurally normative by opposing Spanish rule while also resisting heteronormativity by forming allegories for the nation that rely on the guerrilla

[7] This usage marks a larger shift in queer theory reflected in the work of scholars David L. Eng, José Esteban Muñoz, and Judith Halberstam who view queerness as invested in critiques of the normative. These queer scholars imagine queerness as not solely tied to sexuality and sex acts, but as "a political metaphor without a fixed referent" (Eng, Halberstam, Muñoz 1).

conversion narrative rather than the heterosexual romance.

Revising the problematic homosocial discourse Taft employs and utilizing Sedgwick's conception of a love triangle shifts our understanding of *Noli* and *Fili* from the heterosexual romance to chosen kinship relationships and presents an alternate temporal mode, since different genres mandate their own forms of temporality. The Filipino novels discussed in this chapter engage in nostalgia as part of their resistance to the teleological framework of progress. Typically, the narrative of progression exemplified by the nationalist romance is one in which a heterosexual couple meet, must overcome obstacles to be together, and finally marry. However, Rizal's novels do not follow this linear path of progression. The nostalgia that imbues a novel like *Fili* for instance, already resists such a linear progression. As Boym observes, "nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress" (10). This resistance to linear progression is crucial because it demonstrates how the novels focus on lateral moves rather than subscribing to a developmental trajectory that reinforces Western notions of time and history. As Boym goes on to say, "The nostalgic directs his gaze not only backward but sideways" (13), an observation that demonstrates the shift in relationship to time as exemplified by the nostalgic. Given this backward and sideways movement of time, we can see how chosen kinship relationships promote lateral relationships and reinforce an anti-teleological progression of time.

Homosocial bonds, as articulated by Sedgwick, offer a different model of reproduction and of time. Homosocial bonds are crucial for revolutionary reproduction precisely because not only do heterosexual romances fail in Rizal, but they are also an inadequate vehicle for reproducing revolutionaries, since what matters is commitment to a cause rather than commitment to bloodlines. Indeed, revolutions often pit brother against brother. In place of biological reproduction then, guerrilla conversion narratives feature mentorship as a key to political

awakening and conversion. Indeed, becoming a revolutionary follows a genealogical, though non-biological, framework. While one may argue that this pattern is one of progression, I suggest that rather than a linear model of time, the friendships forged offer a networked temporal framework in which revolutionaries look back and across to different revolutionary moments (as evidenced in *State of War* and *Dogeaters*) even as they are produced (for example, we can think of how the Elías/Ibarra model serves as a template for Ibarra/Simoun's relationship with Basilio).

Rizal's fascination with homosocial relationships crucially informs his work such that the relationship between Elías and Ibarra — the first iteration of Rizal's national imaginary — paradigmatically reveals the centrality of homosociality to the national project. Indeed, not only does the relationship between María Clara and Ibarra do little to forward this project, but Denise Cruz even goes so far as to argue that the heterosexual romance in *Noli* is satire (82). Unlike the Latin American novels Sommer describes, which bridge the racial and class differences that Spanish imperialism created, the relationship between Ibarra and María Clara would merely act as a ballast, not a bridge, since both are from the same class and racial background. The relationship with the most potential for national consolidation is that between the creole Ibarra and indigenous Elías. This homosocial pairing cements the Filipino elites' relationship to the common people by crossing, rather than reinforcing, class and racial lines.

As Ibarra's relationship with María Clara declines throughout *Noli*, his relationship with Elías strengthens. At the end of the novel, Ibarra is on the run; he chooses to leave María Clara and leave with Elías. As Ibarra explains to his guerrilla mentor, "'you owe your misfortune to my family, twice you've saved my life, and I owe you not only my thanks but the restoration of your fortune. You advise me to live abroad, well, come with me and we can live as brothers. I am an outcast here, too'" (399). In this miming of the marriage proposal, Ibarra imagines a homosocial

future rather than a heterosexual one. By offering Elías brotherhood, Ibarra points to the kind of national consolidation Sommer suggests: Elías, a self-proclaimed *indio*, would be coupled with Ibarra, an upper-class creole.

While *Noli* suggests the possibility of lateral, homosocial bonds as the vehicle for national consolidation, this relationship fails as Elías ultimately refuses to escape with Ibarra because he does not agree with Ibarra's vision for the future, particularly on the role of violence in their political aims. The relationship cannot proceed and Elías sacrifices himself; he dies by luring the Civil Guard away from Ibarra. However, the possibility for future revolution is reignited by Ibarra's encounter at the end of the novel with Basilio. Rizal takes up this homosocial relationship more fully in *Fili* when Basilio and Ibarra meet once again. If in *Noli*, Elías attempts to convert Ibarra to the revolution, in *Fili*, it is Ibarra as Simoun who attempts to mentor and convert Basilio. Much like Ibarra's initial resistance to Elías in *Noli*, Basilio refuses Simoun's advances at first, but then joins the revolution after a pivotal event — Julí's death.

By converting to the revolutionary cause, Basilio replaces his filial and fraternal bonds with a new filial relationship based on revolutionary genealogies and a new kind of fraternity based on homosocial bonds. He situates his chosen kinship within the framework of his biological one; as he tells Simoun, "'I've been a bad son and a bad brother. I forgot the murder of one and the torturing of the other and God has punished me. What remains is only the will to pay back evil for evil, crime for crime, and violence for violence'" (*Fili* 280). Basilio has been a bad son because he has forgotten how his mother was driven to madness; he has been a bad brother because he has forgotten the murder of his brother Crispín at the hands of the sextons. Much like Ibarra at the end of *Noli*, Basilio has nothing left to lose. He commits to the violence of Simoun's revolutionary vision and becomes the newest convert to the cause.

The failure to view marriage as an appropriate metaphor for national consolidation is revealed through the failed marriage between Simoun/Ibarra and María Clara and, later, Basilio and Julí, as well as Isagani, Basilio's friend and fellow student, and Paulita Gómez, a wealthy heiress.[8] The one successful marriage we witness in *Noli* and *Fili*, between Juanito Peláez and Paulita, consolidates power and wealth between two powerful families rather than bridging the gap between the indigenous and creole populations. Sadly, Paulita, by marrying Juanito, abandons Isagani, whom she determines is a "provincial indio who slept in forests full of leeches, of doubtful family, with a priest for an uncle who might just be against luxury and balls, to which she was very attached" (*Fili* 277) despite the fact that Isagani is a poet, a student, and a critic of the friarocracy. For Paulita, Juanito is a much better suitor because he is "the son of a rich merchant in Manila and a Spanish mixed-blood to boot or, if Don Timoteo were to be believed, a pure-blood Spaniard" (*Fili* 277). In short, Paulita's marriage to Juanito confirms and reinforces the prejudices and values Rizal critiques in both novels rather than offering unification across class and ethnic lines. Fittingly, then, Simoun plans to disguise a bomb inside a beautiful lamp, which he will leave at the wedding reception for Paulita and Juanito. By choosing the wedding reception as the location for the bombing, Simoun implicitly critiques the heterosexual romance, which, in the Philippines, retains power among the elite. However, the plot fails after Basilio explains the plan to his friend Isagani, who throws the lamp into the sea.

Isagani destroys the bomb because of his love for Paulita. His decision reverberates in both novels as heterosexual romances impede revolutionary plots. After all, Simoun abandons the first

[8] Although this is not the case for Isagani and Paulita, Dizon suggestively observes that both María Clara and Julí die, not at the end of the novels, as one might expect, but in the middle. This is further proof that, because neither woman is part of the climax to either novel, Rizal is not interested in heterosexual romances but in homosocial bonds. See Alma Jill Dizon, "Rizal's Novels: A Divergence from Melodrama," *Philippine Studies* 44.3 (1996): 412-426.

revolutionary plot in *Fili* because of María Clara's death. Although love for women seemingly drives the plot of each novel – Simoun for María Clara, Basilio for Julí — by the end of *Noli*, but especially *Fili*, romantic love ultimately fails to demonstrate (or consolidate) love for the people, thus failing to meet the requirements of national allegory. As Father Florentino articulates to Simoun on his deathbed after the latter has poisoned himself to escape the authorities, "'Only love can bring about wondrous things. Only virtue is redemptive! No, if someday our country can be free, it will not be by vice and crime, not by corruption of our children, by cheating some, and buying others. No, redemption supposes virtue, sacrifice, and sacrifice, love!'" (*Fili* 324). In critiquing Ibarra's methods and motivations, Father Florentino reveals how Simoun's love is distorted because it relies on romantic love at the expense people. Simoun's plan to foment revolution in *Fili* relies on escalating the crisis in the Philippines by further oppressing the poor and disenfranchised; in so doing, Simoun forgets to love the people and, as a consequence, worsens their conditions.

Tellingly, at the end of *Fili*, Father Florentino invokes the youth who will rise up and fight for independence when he queries, "'Where are you, you children who must embody the vigor of life that had fled from our veins, the purity of ideas that has become stained in our minds and the fire of enthusiasm that has gone out in our hearts? We await you, Oh youth! Come, we await you!'" (*Fili* 326-327). As this call to arms indicates, the most important relationships in Rizal's work are lateral, chosen kinships in which ordinary citizens are converted into revolutionaries. We see this in *Noli Me Tangere*, when Elías educates Ibarra on revolution; we also see it in Simoun's education of Basilio in *Fili*. The national paradigm that emerges from Rizal's novels is based on homosocial bonds that suggest brotherhood and fraternal relationships will win independence and free the Philippines. Yet, each relationship and each revolutionary attempt

ultimately fails in Rizal's novels. In *State of War* (1988), Rosca takes up this tradition, but features Anna Villaverde, a female mentee who becomes a guerilla leader and suggests the possibility of a biological future because Anna has a son whom she intends to raise in a matriarchal tradition. In *Dogeaters*, Hagedorn reimagines a successful queer alternative to the heterosexual romance that also relies on chosen kinship networks. In her version of the guerrilla conversion narrative, as with Rosca, the key to the success of the revolution is the incorporation of the feminine. Hagedorn's Daisy and Rosca's Anna create the kind of revolution by propagation that Father Florentino advocates; they produce the youth on whom Father Florentino calls.

Colonial Legacies in *State of War*

In *State of War*, Rosca introduces a cyclical model of time that relies on patriarchal notions of power. However, Anna transforms this cycle by offering a matrilineal tradition that commemorates revolutionary history and love in place of the colonial legacy perpetuated by the Marcos regime. Further, the love triangle among Anna, Adrian, and Eliza complicates Sedgwick's argument in *Between Men* by offering multiple, shifting objects of desire that open up the possibilities for love and kinship. Rosca fashions this cycle by covering roughly the same time period as *Noli* and *Fili* (the end of the nineteenth century) through the time frame described by *Dogeaters* (1965-1983). As Rosca indicates in her comment to *The Monsoon Collection*, her 1983 book in which we first encounter Anna, Eliza, and Colonel Amor, her idea for the novel is deeply tied to her own experiences as a political prisoner in Camp Crame. Simultaneously, *State of War* is also an extended meditation on Philippine history and the events that led up to the Marcos regime. The issues in *State of War* demonstrate palimpsestic layering as Rosca builds

upon earlier events to inform the cycle of revolution that occurs in the present of the diegesis. While the nostalgia that permeates such palimpsestic layering can, as Dolores de Manuel remarks, signify a desire to return to a "lost Eden," I extend Manuel's claim to suggest that the project of looking back indicates an attempt mobilize the present through a fuller knowledge of the past.[9] Part of this mobilization includes the need to revisit and reshape the most horrifying moments in Philippine history such as colonial rapes committed by the friarocracy.

The cyclical notion of time in *State of War* contributes to the novel's peculiar temporality, which critics often remark upon to link this notion of time to postmodernist technique. The novel is broken up into three sections, the Book of Acts, the Book of Numbers, and the Book of Revelations. Significantly, the Book of Numbers section takes us out of the present of the novel and back in time to the late nineteenth-century, on the eve of the Philippine Revolution. Meanwhile, the Book of Acts and the Book of Revelations section concern the present moment of the novel, during a festival where revolutionaries intend to plant a bomb and kill the Commander (Ferdinand Marcos). This structure creates a non-linear relationship to time and history that Myra Mendible reads as a resistance to Western conventions ("Politics and Poetics"). As Mendible observes, Rosca "uses repetition and contiguity to establish links between past and present, self and other, contemporary state violence and colonial violation" ("Politics and Poetics"). Rosca plays with cyclical notions of time by emphasizing repetition and beginning and ending *State of War* with the festival, the present of the diegesis, which comprises the first and last sections.

In the novel, the three protagonists – the wealthy Adrian Banyaga, the widowed Anna

[9] For Dolores de Manuel, women writers like Rosca "aim at a recovery of the Filipina and the Filipino American woman as a colonial and neocolonial subject" (Manuel 99). See Dolores de Manuel, "Decolonizing Bodies, Reinscribing Souls in the Fiction of Ninotchka Rosca and Lynda Ty-Casper."

Villaverde, and the well-connected Eliza Hansen – do not know that they are all related to one another, suggesting a kinship network already in place. Critics often read the relationship between the historical elements of the novel and the characters' interrelatedness as symbolic; for instance, Rocio G. Davis argues that the novel revises "centuries of Philippine cultural and imaginative history through the metaphor of familial relations" (66). In this view, because the protagonists are related to one another, we can think of them as an extended family that allegorically represents the Philippines. Significantly, this kinship network stems from a single Capuchin monk who fathers multiple genealogies. Adrian is the great-great-grandson of the Capuchin Monk and an unnamed *india,* "a brown Venus rising from the waves" (154). Anna is the great-granddaughter of the same Capuchin Monk and Maya de Villaverde. Anna and Eliza share the same grandfather, Hans Zangroniz (who later changes his name to Chris Hansen). Hans was the lover of Mayang Batoyan, Carlos Lucas's wife. Carlos Lucas was the son of Maya and the Capuchin Monk and is the assumed grandfather of Anna since no one knows about Mayang's affair.

The failure to know personal history contributes to the cyclical notion of time, as characters repeat earlier events and dynamics. As the plot progresses, we learn that Anna's dead husband, Manolo Montreal, is actually alive and a traitor to the cause. However, as readers, we should be forewarned of this betrayal since Manolo's father, Jake, betrayed Luis Carlos, Anna's father, years earlier. As Rocio G. Davis observes, *State of War* implies "that because most of the persons involved are not aware of their history or their bloodlines, they are condemned to repeat the errors of the past" (68). However, because the characters never learn of their complex relationships to each other, *State of War* suggests that what is at stake is not refusing to "repeat the errors of the past," but transforming the cycle from one based on the colonial legacy of rape

and subjection to a new cycle that celebrates revolutionary kinships.

Revolutionary kinships necessitate a rethinking of conventional forms, including that of the love triangle. More specifically, the relationship among Anna, Adrian, and Eliza upends the formulation of the love triangle Sedgwick describes. Sedgwick examines men who rival each other for the love of a woman; in a simple reversal of this model, we might expect two women fighting for the love of a man. However, *State of War* offers neither; instead, we have a man and a woman who are both in love with the same woman and a man who is potentially in love with both women, multiplying the possibilities for romance. These possibilities are first introduced by Adrian, whose interest in both women demonstrates how his desires overlap between them. Imagining himself as a prince consort, Adrian remarks upon Eliza and Anna's startling similarity: "Were it not for their color, the two women could have been twins. But where Eliza was of that rare fortuitous sienna skin, accidentally bred by a mingling of Caucasian and Malay blood, Anna was fair, of a golden tint that testified to an indefinable mixing of Chinese, Malay, and other strange bloods. A true child of the Philippine archipelago" (12). As readers, we do not know yet that Eliza and Anna are related, though their remarkable similarity links them together. Significantly, Eliza's skin is "accidentally bred" as she is the product of Mayang's affair with Hans. Anna, meanwhile, is the "true child of the Philippine archipelago" because her fairness, while it fails to place her particular "mix," suggests a long history of conquest and cultural mixing. Torn between the two women, Adrian thinks of them as "two fairy-tale women," "the laughing princess and the princess who could not laugh" (13). Inserting himself into the fairy-tale narrative, he speculates, "if anyone, anywhere in the world, had ever created a story for the two. Or for the three of them – for there was no doubting his own role as fairy-tale prince. Perhaps, the Festival would weave it for them, he told himself wryly" (13). In short, Adrian

creates a love triangle between him, Anna, and Eliza. Unlike the triangles described by Sedgwick, Adrian has no male rival; rather, he cannot decide between the two women. For their part, Anna and Eliza do not vie for Adrian's attention, further shifting the terms of the love triangle.

Whereas the love triangle Sedgwick describes marginalizes the female love object, in *State of War*, women are central. Indeed, Adrian and Eliza's mutual love for Anna foregrounds the importance of Anna to the plot, rather than relegating the female love object to the background as in *Noli* and *Fili*. Further, because Eliza loves Anna, the novel highlights female sexuality as well as relationships between women, two concepts not found in Rizal. In the explicitly queer space of the festival, Eliza confesses her same-sex desires for Anna to a transvestite, highlighting the importance of fluid sexualities to the revolution. The transvestite queries, "'But you have loved one of your sex?'" (43), to which Eliza reluctantly replies, "'I am able to love only one person. Always and constantly, from the day we discovered we were to share a room at the college dormitory'" (43). In this way, *State of War* renders visible queer desire, a possibility submerged in Rizal.

As the novel progresses, Anna increasingly becomes the primary revolutionary figure and, as such, the model for revolution in the novel. While Eliza bridges the gap between the homosocial and the homosexual, Anna queers the heterosexual by exceeding the logic of the couple form. Although Anna and Adrian eventually pair off, their relationship is unconventional. They do not marry; in fact, by the end of the novel, they are not together. Adrian is crippled from the explosion that was meant to kill the Commander; Eliza is dead. Yet, Anna continues to be part of multiple couplings on a continuum of romance and friendship. She begins her revolutionary journey with her husband, Manolo Montreal, continues her revolutionary work

with the guerrilla leader Ismael Guevarra, has a relationship with Adrian, and ends the novel by running to the mountains with Rafael, Guevarra's lieutenant. By the end of the novel, Anna is unmarried and pregnant. More importantly, however, she has the mobility to move to the mountains because of her revolutionary couplings – her friendship with Guevarra and her comradeship with Rafael, which demonstrates the importance of lateral kinship networks rather than hierarchical familial ties.

In the tradition of Elías, Anna becomes a guerrilla who lives in the utopian space of the mountains; further, she does what Elías could never do – biologically reproduce a revolutionary. Moreover, Anna decides to raise her son within a matrilineal tradition. Rosca inserts women into the Filipino imaginary in two ways. First, rather than dispatching Anna to a convent, as Rizal does to María Clara, or have Anna commit suicide because of her disgraced virtue (similar to Julí, who kills herself rather than jeopardize her virtue), Rosca creates a strong female character who becomes a guerrilla. Second, Rosca erases the patriarchal legacy of colonization by inaugurating a specifically indigenous and matrilineal tradition for Anna's son. As Anna comments, her son "would be born here, with the *labuyo* – consort of mediums and priestesses – in attendance" and "that her son would be a great storyteller, in the tradition of the children of priestesses" (382). By situating her son within a tradition of mediums and priestesses, Anna suggests a female line of heritage, if not genealogy (though Ismael will have some of that too, with Maya as his progenitor). Anna's son inaugurates a lineage that accounts for the strength of women, from his own ancestors to the mediums and priestesses to which Anna refers.[10] Further,

[10] While critics like Leonard Casper critique Rosca's decision to have Anna give birth to a son, rather than a daughter, this view is too simplistic. Rather than view gender as following a set binary, Rosca – and, later, Hagedorn – offer a spectrum for gender identification. In this way, the transvestite who speaks to Eliza exemplifies how gender and sexual preference are multiple and shifting. See Leonard Casper, "Minoring in History: Rosca as Ninotchka."

he is free to defy gender expectations and, by operating out of a matrilineal tradition, blend together multiple, gendered traditions. As such, Anna's son begins a new line of men who operate out of a tradition separate from the patriarchal culture established by the friarocracy. Rather, Anna's son offers the potential for a line of men who can incorporate femininity rather than violently act against it.

In this rare moment of biological reproduction, Rosca hints at a possible future out of nostalgia. This possible future is represented by Anna's son, Ismael Villaverde Banyaga. As his name suggests, he bridges the link between the two bloodlines founded by the Capuchin monk, the Villaverdes and the Banyagas. In so doing, he "marries" the brown venus to Maya in an act that effectively cancels out the Capuchin monk and recuperates the primal scene of the colonial encounter.[11] Significantly, Anna and Adrian's heterosexual romance produces a child who consolidates the family line. This relationship echoes the earlier relationship between Carlos Lucas and Juan Itak, half-brothers (Carlos Lucas is the offspring of Maya and the monk; Juan is the offspring of the brown Venus and the monk) unaware of their fraternal relationship, who engage in a sexual relationship with one another. Anna transforms the cycle by mirroring an earlier event, with a difference. This difference – the consolidation of the family line – brings together the larger Filipino family despite the legacy of colonization and rape that threatens the family form.

Through his naming, Ismael also suggests another coupling, that between his two family lines – the Villaverdes and the Banyagas – and the revolutionary after whom he is named, Ismael Guevarra. Anna's decision to join her familial line with Guevarra's suggests that Anna chooses to commemorate her chosen family and, as such, her own revolutionary history. Anna's naming

[11] However, it is important to note that this connection happens in name only. Because of Mayang's affair with Hans, Anna is not a Villaverde by blood.

of her son also participates in the greater proliferation of Ismael Guevarras – pages earlier, we learn "A fledgling guerrilla group overran and destroyed a military base. The leader, a young man of few words, had named himself after a great man. He called himself Guevarra" (378). An Ismael here, a Guevarra there – what the revolutionaries are doing is keeping their own myth-making alive by reproducing, through naming, the next generation of revolutionaries. Anna's act of naming participates in this same reproductive urge, demonstrating how Anna participates both in biological reproduction and the non-biological reproduction via mentorship first observed in Rizal.

Further, unbeknownst to Anna, choosing the name Ismael reinforces an earlier historical thread and contributes to the palimpsestic layering of people and events. As a child, the revolutionary Guevarra was saved by Anna's father, Luis Carlos. Before departing, "[Guevarra's] eyes focused on the name tag on Luis Carlos's uniform. He was committing it to memory: Villaverde'" (317). Guevarra owes a debt to the Villaverdes, which he repays by assisting Anna, though he never tells her how her father saved him. Thus, Anna participates in naming structures that link matrilineal with patrilineal lines; however, in addition to offering Ismael a biological genealogy, she also provides him with a revolutionary one. As such, Ismael consolidates family lines and also allows for the possibility of productive heterogeneity through revolutionary struggle rather than the destructive heterogeneity spawned by colonial rape. Although Anna may not know her own family history, she chooses to memorialize her chosen family through her son's naming and, in so doing, incorporates the revolutionary Ismael Guevarra into her family line.

Through this act of naming, Anna solidifies her relationship with Guevarra, reaching into the future while simultaneously relaying her past. At the end of the novel,

> She heard him speak of her father, not knowing who he was; the music and that act of kindness, never forgotten, in the midst of cruelty. They were, Anna thought, ordained to meet each other again and again, through time, reenacting stories of love, of abuse, of kindness, of betrayal. But of kindness above all, which enabled them to survive, which in turn allowed the archipelago to keep on dreaming its history (380-381).

As her father helped Guevarra, so Guevarra helps and guides Anna. Their destinies intertwined, Anna both names and perpetuates their relationship through her son. Through these acts of kindness – and, of mentorship and friendship – the Philippines survive. Further, by noting how she and Guevarra are "ordained to meet each other again and again," Anna offers a view of the future that transforms the historical cycle to a revolutionary one that relies on chosen kinship networks, networks that as they persist, will keep the archipelago's dreams alive.

Perversion, Erasure, and Friendship in *Dogeaters*

While Rosca covers a wider swath of Philippine history, Hagedorn's novelistic events closely parallel those events in Filipino history that characterize the Marcos regime. The structure of *Dogeaters* tracks Rio Gonzaga, who comes of age during the Marcos regime. While Rio's story begins in 1956, the events she describes parallel similar events that occurred in the Philippines as the Marcoses rose to power. By referencing the emergence of practices that would eventually characterize the oppressive regime, like torture camps, Rio offers a prehistory to the regime at the same time that she tracks events that punctuated Marcos's government. The most notable real-life parallels are a disastrous cultural center accident, which resulted in the death of many workers, the beauty queen's renunciation of her title, and the assassination of a dissident

senator. Daisy Avila, a character in the novel, is based on the beauty queen Nelia Sancho, who was the first runner up in the Binibining Pilipinas pageant in 1969 and in 1971 won Miss Queen of the Pacific. While in college, Nelia became an activist, renounced beauty pageants, and eventually went into hiding. *Time* magazine named her the Guerilla Queen and, in 1976, she was imprisoned by the Marcos administration. Daisy's father, Senator Avila, is based on Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, who was assassinated in 1983 after several years of imprisonment for critiquing the regime during martial law. Ninoy's assassination galvanized anti-Marcos sentiment in the Philippines and eventually caused Ninoy's wife, Corazon "Cory" Aquino, to run for president in 1986. Marcos's attempts to rig the election sparked the People Power Revolution, which culminated in the election of Cory and the banishment of the Marcoses from the Philippines. *Dogeaters* tracks the time period leading up to Senator Domingo Avila's assassination as well as the subsequent aftermath; however, the novel does not actually depict the revolution. Rather, like Rosca, Hagedorn chooses to end her novel with the political energy that follows Avila's assassination.

Rio is often read as an autobiographical character, one who has "the right to summarize everything at the end."[12] By closely attending to the ways in which Rio's authorial hand organizes the collage-like structure and intersecting narratives of *Dogeaters*, we can see how she queers the national romance in terms of form through the anti-Western structure of the novel and her resistance to the teleological framework of the heterosexual romance that insists on a linear, developmental narrative. Instead, Rio relies on the palimpsest as she "temporalizes space" (Boym 49) by uncovering earlier layers of her familial history to make sense of her own present both in terms of time and space. Further, by uncovering her own familial history, Rio

[12] Don Shewey, "Filipino Life, Seen Through a Pop Culture Prism."

demonstrates how the family form cannot survive when it is founded on colonial rape and the historical erasure of that violence. Because the official history restorative nostalgia promotes threatens the family form, Rio's mode is that of the reflective nostalgic, one who "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (Boym 41). As such, Rio's narrative mode recalls Benedict Anderson; she cannot imagine the Philippines without the United States, the United States without the Philippines.

This reading of Rio departs from cultural nationalist critics who initially read the fragmented style of *Dogeaters* as imitating postmodernism, which blunted the critical and political power of the novel.[13] Instead, such a reading has more in common with the next decade of critics who offered more sympathetic readings of the novel that interpreted Hagedorn's style as a resistance to Western conventions such as a linear, progressive storytelling method. In *Immigrant Acts*, Lisa Lowe exemplifies this critical turn as she examines the role of gossip in the novel to argue that the novel of resistance does not subscribe to narrative progression or to a realist mode of representation. Rather, she argues, *Dogeaters* is an instance of Asian American texts that are antidevelopmental and antirealist. Techniques like collage and gossip in this case do not signify Western influences on Hagedorn but, rather, are decolonial techniques that

[13] For instance, Caroline S. Hau remarks, ""A historical novel such as *Dogeaters* does not set out to represent the historical past, for it can only represent our ideas and stereotypes about that past, and it is aware of this" ("*Dogeaters* and Postmodernism" 117). Even critics like E. San Juan, Jr., who read Hagedorn's use of postmodern technique as resistance still calls *Dogeaters* "a parodic bricolage of western high postmodernism – whose cumulative force blunts whatever satire or criticism is embedded in her character portrayals and authorial intrusions" ("Transforming" 10). As Maria Zamora notes, "such essentially nationalist critiques have failed to recognize the novel's central concern with the politics of representation and in particular, with the constraints imposed on women in the act of shaping national history" (Zamora 169). See Caroline S. Hau, "*Dogeaters*, Postmodernism and the 'Worlding' of the Philippines," E. San Juan Jr., "Transforming Identity in Postcolonial Narrative: An Approach to the Novels of Jessica Hagedorn," and Maria Zamora, "Female Embodiment and the Politics of Representation in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*."

Hagedorn uses in relation to Filipino history. Such an antidevelopmental framework challenges our notions of temporality as the use of collage creates a sense of simultaneous rather than progressive time. Moreover, rather than simply critiquing the novel's use of postmodernism by deeming the novel "inauthentic," Lowe remarks upon postmodernism's anti-representational nature to suggest that the postmodern techniques found in *Dogeaters* do not stem from modernist or postmodernist traditions, but, rather, are part of a decolonial mode that insists upon dissonance and fragmentation as a result of colonialism and immigration. That is, whereas we typically read modernist fragmentation as linked to the trauma of World War I, decolonial fragmentation is linked to the trauma of colonization and the sense of dissonance and fragmentation that comes from living in two worlds or between cultures.

More recently, important readings by Rachel Lee and Viet Thanh Nguyen observe the novel's complicity with and challenge to the nation by examining gender and sexual politics in *Dogeaters*, the dynamics of which continue to be debated. Viet Nguyen argues that queerness offers an alternative to the nationalist romance such that novels like *Dogeaters* and *State of War* not only argue for the need for a revolution, but also for a sexual revolution. In his reading of Joey, particularly Joey's joining the revolution, Nguyen argues that Joey is "troubling to this conception of the state in two senses, as something that 'perverts' the nationalist romance and as something that might be necessary for purging upon the successful completion of the revolution" (138). While Lee agrees with Nguyen that Joey's sexuality "goes underground" once he becomes a guerilla, she also argues that only Joey's gay subjectivity is privileged in the novel since, in her reading, Rio's lesbianism holds no power in the novel (101). Finally, Lee's reading deemphasizes Joey as a nationalist leader in favor of analyzing Daisy's role as a nationalist and feminist leader. By compellingly pairing Daisy's feminism with her nationalism, Lee offers a

remarkably subversive reading of the nationalist romance, which typically focuses on a male hero who marries a woman (who often represents the land) thereby, as Lee argues, subordinating women's issues in favor of national consolidation.

Both of these readings by Nguyen and Lee problematize the national romance. However, both critics do so by situating Daisy and Joey in opposition to one another. If we instead read them as friends rather than rivals, the ambiguous relationship between Joey and Daisy joins together sexual minorities (Daisy at this point is technically still a married woman; she has also had an affair and a miscarriage), allowing the novel to step outside the framework of domination and subordination upon which the nationalist romance is predicated and, instead, offering intimacy and kinship horizontally rather than vertically. Such a reading departs from Nguyen's insistence that the productive "perversion" of the nationalist romance allows for the introduction of queerness. Instead, novels like *Noli Me Tangere*, *El Filibusterismo*, *State of War*, and *Dogeaters* reveal that the nationalist romance was perverted at its inception. That is, the couple and family forms already existed in perverse relation to one another because they were founded upon colonial rape and exploitation. Thus, rather than reading queerness in *Dogeaters* as a necessary "perversion" of the nationalist romance that will lead to a sexual revolution, queerness instead offers the possibility of rehabilitating kinships *despite* the perversion of the couple and family forms.

Whereas homosocial mentorship emerges as the generative site of revolutionary reproduction in Rizal and Rosca subverts the love triangle by stressing how Adrian, Eliza, and especially Anna, exceed the couple form, Hagedorn dispenses with the love triangle entirely. Both disenfranchised sexual minorities from radically different social strata, Joey, the queer prostitute, and Daisy, the wealthy single woman, come together not to unify themselves through

romance, but to introduce ambiguity and friendship as the foundation for political futures. The role of friendship removes love as the ideal relation between men and women and, instead, emphasizes the political value of friendship across gender difference. Moreover, Hagedorn, like Rosca, foregrounds the importance of women to the revolution by placing Daisy in the role of mentor rather than mentee. In so doing, Hagedorn locates women within political discourses of friendship, a discourse from which they are often excluded, particularly in Rizal's work.

To understand the narratives Hagedorn writes against and how they open up new kinship structures, we must consider how the novel toys with the role of historical narrative and its relationship to memory. *Dogeaters* contains a number of excerpts from other sources like Jean Mallet's *The Philippines*, newspaper articles, a speech by President William McKinley, and a quotation from José Rizal, all of which form the collage structure Lowe describes. If the narrative modes suggest the relationship among diverse characters, then these types of documents situate those relationships within a broader historical framework bookended by initial forays into the Philippines (Jean Mallat) and the continuation of colonial rule by the United States (President McKinley). These historical documents link historical accuracy with individual memory by punctuating memories with key moments in Filipino history. The contradiction at the heart of restorative nostalgia is revealed: Mallat and McKinley suggest one historical frame for understanding Philippine history while Rizal indicates yet another. Thus, we can read Rio's lack of historical accuracy, her reflective nostalgia, as subverting any claims to historical truth.

Rio "queers" the national romance by refusing the "straight" history advocated by Pucha.[14]

[14] Victor Mendoza argues a similar point by noting that Pucha's desire for factual history problematizes the very nature of history itself. Mendoza argues for the "fundamental queerness" of history, noting that although "'straight' history indicates an aspiration to material accuracy, it actually, according to Pucha, is to convey faithfully the heterosexual romances that narratologically organize the family and the nation" (820). Thus, according to Mendoza, Pucha's

Further, Rio undermines her own claims to historical accuracy by actively contributing to her own unreliability as a narrator. The penultimate section of the novel clearly points to Rio's unreliability as Pucha, Rio's cousin, finally has her say and undermines the veracity of Rio's truth. In this section, Pucha writes Rio a letter in which she refutes everything Rio has said, from simple items like dates to bigger pieces of information, like who is alive, who is dead, who is married, who is divorced. Yet, Pucha's final words in the letter are the most telling: "Nothing is impossible, I suppose, with that crazy imagination of yours. I'm not surprised by anything you do or say, but if I were you, *prima*, I'd leave well enough alone" (249). Although Pucha initially explains Rio's story as part of her "crazy imagination," her final remarks suggest a warning. Rio should "leave well enough alone;" that is to say, Rio must subscribe to the same restorative version of history practiced by her family. Rio poses a threat not just because she reports on events, but because her reporting contradicts the norms and values represented by heterosexual romances and, by extension the family and the nation. As such, she threatens the nation by not only employing reflective nostalgia as a narrative mode, but also revealing the dangers of restorative nostalgia to national identity.

Rio's queer history uncovers the secret history her family would rather forget; namely, the colonial rape that founds her family line. As Rio tells us, "The only thing I know for sure is that my mother's grandmother was the illegitimate and beautiful offspring of a village priest. My mother can never remember her name, and Lola Narcisa refuses to disclose it" (239). Although Dolores cannot remember her grandmother's name, Lola Narcisa's refusal to say her own mother's name speaks to the historical erasure that papers over how Lola's mother became the

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desire for a particular historical framework is also a desire for the national consolidation that animates foundational fictions. See Victor Mendoza, "A Queer Nomadology of Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*."

"illegitimate" daughter of a village priest. Such an erasure refuses to acknowledge the sexual exploitation – and probable rape – committed by the priest. Yet, even as Lola Narcisa refuses to name her mother, she completely bans any mention of her lecherous grandfather: "The father of my blue-eyed great-grandmother was a Spanish missionary, and to speak his name was absolutely forbidden in my Lola Narcisa's house" (239). While Lola Narcisa's objection to saying her grandfather's name heavily implies his sin, her refusal to disclose the story to Rio still participates in a willful erasure of this traumatic past. Rio stands apart from her family by refusing to ignore this history; instead, Rio reports on it.

Rather than celebrating her "official" family history, one that aligns her family with the "winning" (8) side (first the Spanish, then the Americans), Rio recognizes that this version of events demonstrates how her family willfully participates in their own erasure while simultaneously internalizing this erasure as a value. By subscribing to the logic of the "winner," the Gonzagas reinforce hegemonic cultural norms that rely upon a destructive cultural disidentification. While critics like Lisa Lowe in *Immigrant Acts* and José Esteban Muñoz in *Disidentification: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* have pointed to the empowering side of disidentification, one that make minority subjects critical of the norms and values placed upon them, the Gonzagas internalize negative disidentification. This is true for Rio's father especially, who claims to "'feel like a visitor'" (8) in the Philippines despite the fact that his family has lived in the Philippines for several generations. Instead, Rio's father remarks, "'After all, my great-grandfather came from Sevilla'" (8). By continually tying his family history back to Spain, Rio's father legitimates the colonial influence Spain has on the Philippines without recognizing the darker side of that influence, that of sexual exploitation and rape.

Rio recognizes that failing to remember further threatens the family form because it erases

historical accuracy and refuses to acknowledge the colonial legacy of rape, two outcomes that result in the negative disidentification her father exemplifies. Further, Rio's investigations uncover the way in which memory gaps are silences, present absences that seem to offer a coherent family history but instead imply an alternative history. Thus, while restorative nostalgia "proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps" (Boym 41), Rio's family demonstrates the disintegration of the home and the price of restoration: the refusal to acknowledge the legacy of colonial rape, which contributes to the silencing of women in the novel. For Boym, restorative nostalgia is an attempt to retrieve "the original stasis, [...] the prelapsarian moment. The past for the restorative nostalgic is a value for the present; the past is not a duration but a perfect snapshot. Moreover, the past is not supposed to reveal any signs of decay; it has to be freshly painted in its 'original image' and remain eternally young" (Boym 49). Yet, as the rape reveals, for the past the Gonzagas choose to restore, there is no prelapsarian moment; the snake was there all along. Further, the inability to see the past as it was causes the decay to happen in the present.

Rio's decaying house represents the consequences of restorative nostalgia by demonstrating how choosing to restore a false past creates a present marked by deterioration and dissolution. Rio renders this connection visible when she returns to her childhood home after living with her mother in the United States. Rio's father tells her not to visit, adding that "reality will diminish the grandeur of [her] childhood image of home" (245). That Rio's father gives her this advice is significant since he is the one who knows the discrepancy between "reality" and "image." Rio walks through the house and observes, "My father is right. The house with its shuttered windows looks smaller than I remember, and dingy. The once lush and sprawling garden is now a forlorn landscape of rocks, weeds, and wild ferns. The bamboo grove has been

cut down" (245). The house – small, dingy, and forlorn – is unfamiliar to Rio; it fails to match up with her childhood image of its splendor. Although Rio never addresses the end of the Marcos regime and the People Power Revolution directly – instead, she references key moments in the lead up to the revolution – the house parallels and exists alongside the decay of the Marcos regime.

The disintegration of Rio's family persists in her inability to properly memorialize her own family history. When Rio visits her father before she goes to see the house, she "take[s] his picture with my new camera, which later falls in the swimming pool by accident. The camera is destroyed, along with my roll of film" (245). Rather than commemorating her visit, the roll of film is destroyed in yet another act of erasure, leaving Rio with her image of how things were rather than the reality of them. While this piece of evidence – the roll of film – no longer exists, for those pieces of evidence that do – letters and notes – Rio carelessly compartmentalizes:

> I return to North America. I save all Raul's letters, along with my father's cordial birthday telegrams and Pucha's gossipy notes, in a large shopping bag labeled FAMILY. I move to another city, approximately five thousand miles away from where my mother lives and paints. We talk on the phone once a week. I am anxious and restless, at home only in airports. I travel whenever I can (247).

The sum of Rio's family ties fits into a shopping bag. The label "family" is ironic: family is something to compartmentalize, to store, to put away. To forget. Rio moves away from both her family in the Philippines and her mother in the states; she chooses to be anywhere but with them. Only "at home" in the airport, Rio finds her home in homelessness. She ends the section with the simple sentence "I never marry" (247), a decisive statement that sees proleptically into her future. For Rio, the future is foreclosed. Rio marks the fact of the Philippines today, a country

characterized by the dispersal of its citizens across the globe in search of work, in search of something more than the corruption at home.

The historical erasures the Gonzaga family endorses speaks to the tenuous foundation of their family line, a foundation that dissolves after years of trauma, erasure, and acceptance. The homes in the Philippines, as Rio demonstrates, are broken. Rio's parents separate when one day Rio's mother "cheerfully announces she is sending [Rio] to school in America and moving there with [her] for an indefinite period" (*Dogeaters* 244). The flimsiness of Rio's family ties is demonstrated by the ease with which they are broken, a point that is reinforced by Rio's brother Raul's marriages. Raul initially marries a woman named Belen Garcia, but after Belen leaves him, he settles in with another woman named Erlinda, without obtaining a divorce. His relationship with Belen deteriorates because "[Rio's] father bails Raul out of several sticky situations during martial law; he threatens to disown Raul, but [Rio's] brother doesn't take him seriously" (242). While the toll of martial law destroys Raul's relationship with Belen, what is more telling is the ease with which he is able to start a new family. Finally, Pucha's marriage to Boomboom Alacran is short-lived; she divorces him and marries another man, though she never has children. Relationships in *Dogeaters* are easily broken and erased, revealing how the colonial legacy continues to threaten the couple and family forms through the institutionalized practices of the Marcos regime.

Rio's attempts to piece together her family history as well as her refusal to marry upend reader expectations of both narrative authority and narrative closure. In doing so, Rio "queers" the national romance in both senses of the term; she not only queers it with her refusal to subscribe to institutions of relation (marriage, the family), but she also queers the national romance by offering unconventional, unexpected narrative strategies; namely, the anti-Western

and antirealist modes Lisa Lowe observes. In so doing, Rio continues Rizal's episodic storytelling method by shifting among different moments in time. Rio's narrative strategy is replicated in the novel as a whole, with Hagedorn invoking Rizal's mode of narration by moving among characters and cutting across class lines to demonstrate the interconnectedness of these different social strata, from country clubs to night clubs.[15] In this way, the fractured and inconclusive endings found in the novel embody the individual and cultural memory on which reflective nostalgia pivots. By moving away from factual information towards the dreaminess of memory, both Hagedorn and Rosca "temporalize space" and encourage the reader to recall the "specter of comparisons" both between time periods and between novels that revisit similar events in a kind of cultural repetition compulsion.

Daisy's rape, which also recalls that of the *india* in *State of War*, exemplifies one instance of such repetition compulsion in *Dogeaters* as the novel demonstrates the need to revisit and work through the violence that attends the legacy of colonization, which General Ledesma epitomizes. Under the fictionalized version of the Marcoses, the General oversees the detentions and interrogations that characterize the Philippines during martial law. The General, like the other orphans and "bastard sons" who populate *Dogeaters*, represents both a threat to the nuclear family and the stability of the nation. The description of Severo Alacran's illegitimate children is illustrative, from the viewpoint of his legitimate daughter, Girlie: "Because her father threatens to acknowledge his bastard sons. Because he employs them in menial jobs. Because his bastard sons worship him, love him, plot against him" (19). Severo Alacran's bastard sons reveal the love/hate relationship between illegitimate sons and their powerful fathers: they love him, but

[15] Matibag notes the proto-postmodernism elements in Rizal by remarking upon self-referentiality in *Noli* and the way in which *Fili* is a "metafictional rereading" of *Noli* (258-259). See Eugenio Matibag "'El Verbo del Filibusterismo': Narrative Ruses in the Novels of José Rizal."

they also want to plot against him. Such plots reveal the subversive potential of bastard sons, from Alacran's sons to General Ledesma. As described here, the sons are everyday workers – part of the people – but also leverage against an unruly wife. That said, the sons still have the power to overthrow their father, a threat rendered visible by General Ledesma whose desire for legitimacy propels him to the top of the social ladder where he assures his position by carrying out the regime's most unseemly acts. And yet, the desire for legitimacy still contains within it the potential for subversion and it is this instability upon which Filipino politics are placed.

Daisy's torture uncovers how the General's desire for legitimacy undermines the family and couple forms and attempts to foreclose revolutionary political futures. Significantly, the chapter that describes Daisy's interrogation is titled "The Famine of Dreams," which suggests how torture threatens political awakening by numbing the mind and inducing a "famine" of dreams or, in the case of revolution, of utopian possibilities. By this time in the novel, Daisy has run off with the guerrilla leader Santos Tirador, in the process abruptly ending her short-lived marriage to Malcolm Webb, a British banker, without bothering to initiate a divorce. Additionally, Daisy's father, the well-known critic of the Marcos regime, Senator Domingo Avila, has been assassinated for his political views. Daisy's connection to both a guerrilla leader and a prominent critic along with her own critique of the regime thus makes her a prime target for interrogation. During Daisy's interrogation and torture, the *Love Letters* episode, "Diwa" plays in the background. Significantly, while the focus of the scene is actually on the torture, formally the torture resides in the background because it exists as a set of parentheticals to the main "stage" of the chapter, which is the *Love Letters* episode. As Rio remarks in the first chapter of *Dogeaters*, "Without fail, someone dies on *Love Letters*. There's always a lesson to be learned, and it's always a painful one. Just like our Tagalog movies, the serial is heavy with pure

love, blood debts, luscious revenge, the wisdom of mothers, and the enduring sorrow of Our Blessed Virgin Barbara Villanueva" (12). Given this description of the soap opera, the juxtaposition of "Diwa" with Daisy's interrogation foreshadows the "painful" lesson to come.

Daisy's rape reveals how the colonial encounter perverts the heterosexual romance by co-opting the language of chivalry and love. Further, because the novel juxtaposes the rape scene with *Love Letters*, *Dogeaters* suggests a perverse kind of moralism at the center of Daisy's torture and rape. Indeed, if the heterosexual romance and the nuclear family of which it is a part allegorically represent the nation, then Daisy's refusal to subscribe to such national myths is therefore punished by perverting both the romance and the family form. The plot of "Diwa" compares the potentially subversive activities of a man named Ponciano with Daisy's rape. Despite the formal separation between the soap opera and Daisy's narrative, when the man comes for Ponciano, the men come for Daisy. Her rape painfully mimics the language of romance and intimacy as one of the men says, "'Lover boy talaga'" (216) as he waits for his turn, the "talaga" (really) heightening the sense that what happens to Daisy is not "really" love; the man is not her "lover boy." This act distorts sexual intimacy and painfully parodies the language of coupledom. With a "lover boy" like this, *Dogeaters* implies, there is no room for romance in the revolution.

Throughout the torture scene, the General emerges as a perverse father figure who distorts the family logic and structure through his torture techniques. He adopts a paternalistic tone by calling Daisy "*hija*" even as he shows her pictures of Santos's torture and references her father, implicitly reminding her that he is behind the assassination. The General's performed civility contributes to his depraved technique as his tone mimics that of a concerned father or uncle. Yet, not only does he act like a father to Daisy in this scene, but he also exhibits fatherly pride in his

soldiers, as indicated by his admiration of his soldiers' ingenuity. Further, his relationship to both Daisy and the soldiers demonstrates the twisted logic of the family the General has created at the detention center. As an illegitimate son himself, the General perpetuates the degeneration of the family by overseeing the rape of his "daughter" by his "sons." Indeed, in the final scene of Daisy's torture, the General actively participates in his daughter's defiling. He calls her hija once more and, as his men rape her, he "leans over to whisper in Daisy's ear. He describes the special equipment set up in another room, a smaller room where the General plans to take her after his men are through. 'We can finally be alone,' the General says. He calls her hija once again, exclaims at her extraordinary beauty. He promises to make her dance" (216). By speaking to Daisy as she is raped and making her "dance" – itself a perversion of a daughter's debut into society – the General completes Daisy's debasement.

General Ledesma's destruction of the family form manifests in Daisy's miscarriage. Pregnant at the time of her torture, Daisy "is barely showing, and wonders if the General suspects her condition" (215). The father of Daisy's child is Santos Tirador and she keeps hidden this knowledge even as she "imagines she is not pregnant with Santos's child, that somehow she will steal the General's pistol and open fire on all the men in the room" (215). Even as she pretends she is not pregnant, Daisy is reminded of the father of her child while the General forces her to recognize that he has stolen the possibility of a family from her. In fact, we later learn that Daisy's "unnamed baby girl was born premature and dead" (233), the result no doubt of Daisy's sustained torture and rape. Thus, General Ledesma is responsible for the total annihilation of Daisy's family, from her father, to her lover, and, finally, her child. If we read the General as an illegitimate son who seeks legitimacy on the national scale by doing the Marcos regime's bidding, then we can also understand how even this type of legitimacy is twisted. Even as his

actions are sanctioned by the state, the General still contributes to the destruction of the nuclear family and demonstrates the impossibility of the family form after its perversion through colonial contact and discourse.

While the General renders visible the perversion of the family form under the Marcos regime, Daisy's decision to create a family among the guerrillas suggests a new family form. This model of the family recalls the process of guerrilla conversion and political awakening seen earlier in Rizal's novels. Daisy, already converted into a revolutionary by her lover Santos Tirado, in turn converts Joey Sands into a guerrilla fighter. In doing so, Daisy extends the non-biological reproduction found in Rizal and Rosca. Further, the utopian space of the jungle, where the guerrillas live, recuperates the primal scene of colonial rape which, as we saw in *State of War* is often described in pastoral, romanticized language (the Capuchin monk's desire for "a brown Venus rising from the waves"). Daisy and Joey's friendship offers a new model for kinship based on friendship networks rather than the incestuous family networks that persist in cacique democracy.

Daisy's friendship with Joey simultaneously echoes and differentiates itself from the guerrilla conversion narrative found in Rizal. Whereas Rizal excludes the feminine from his mentorship model, Rosca foregrounds the importance of women. However, even in Rosca the mentorship models are led by men; each of Anna's mentors are male guerrillas. However, in *Dogeaters*, while Daisy's lover Santos initially mentors her, this mentoring happens offstage. Instead, we see how Daisy mentors Joey in an inversion of the mentorships found in Rosca, which is a completely different model than that offered by Rizal. Before joining the guerrillas, Daisy's role as pageant queen reinforces the "double exclusion" of the feminine from political discourses that Jaques Derrida articulates in *Politics of Friendship*. Because, according to

Derrida, homosocial relationships shape political discourses, the double exclusion of the feminine stems from "the exclusion of friendship between women [and] the exclusion of friendship between a man and a woman" (279). Rather than perpetuate this double exclusion, Hagedorn introduces the feminine and shows Daisy mentoring Joey, which revises Rizal's mentorship model and introduces the heterosocial as a politically productive relationship. While Rosca introduces and centralizes the figure of the woman in revolution, Hagedorn radically excises romance from the equation entirely. None of the relationships in Hagedorn are successful; romantic failure in this context becomes a means to imagine women as political subjects who are capable of the kind of political friendships implied by notions of "fraternity" and "comradeship."

In this context, it is worth recalling, as Sarita See reminds us, that Filipinos "are structurally queer to the United States" (117) because, like the Philippines, Filipinos are unincorporated into the United States' national imaginary. However, Daisy and Joey's relationship revises this queer relation by offering a queer Filipino national imaginary based on incorporation and inclusion. Moreover, given the neocolonial turn to prostitution around United States' military bases (let us not forget that Joey is the product of one such union), heterosocial relationships are "queer" because they radically oppose the sexual subjugation that undergirds the heterosexual romance, from the sexual economy that dictates Joey's relationship with Rainer to Daisy's rape at the hands of General Ledesma's men. Thus, rather than Joey's sexuality going "underground" once he is among the guerrillas, Joey refuses to participate in an exploitative sexual economy. Hagedorn's guerrilla conversion narrative amplifies the role of sexual subjugation by making it the pivotal event that turns first Daisy (through her rape), then Joey (through his witnessing of Senator Avila's assassination following his final assignation with

Rainer) into guerrillas. In so doing, she creates a through-line between the sexual subjugation that undergirds *Noli* and *Fili* — Father Salví's lust for María Clara and Julí's decision to commit suicide rather than succumb to a priest's advances — and the neocolonial sexual exploitation that characterizes the Marcos regime.

Daisy's transition from pageant queen to guerrilla queen signals her transformation from object of romance to political subject. As Myra Mendible cogently observes, Hagedorn frames the Daisy sections of *Dogeaters* around notions of sleep to emphasize the character's political awakening. We are first introduced to Daisy in a chapter titled "Sleeping Beauty;" Daisy's subsequent desire to stay awake stems from "a dawning consciousness, a painful process of political awakening" ("Dictators" 5-6). Daisy's political consciousness is further underscored by the Rizal quotation that Hagedorn uses to open the second half of the novel, in which Senator Avila is killed and Daisy is tortured and raped: "The sleep had lasted for centuries, but one day the thunderbolt struck, and in striking, infused life" (119). By recalling Rizal in this context, Hagedorn suggests literature's potential to galvanize a people to action, much the way Rizal's novels precipitated the Philippine Revolution. Daisy, then, represents the dawning political consciousness of the Filipino people.

Significantly, Joey's ability to recognize Daisy as a mentor and friend pivots on his ability to empathize with the feminine through his mother. Sold to his "uncle" – a man who is a known hustler and pimp – for fifty pesos, Joey is the orphan offspring of a prostitute and an African American GI stationed in the Philippines. Growing up with Uncle, Joey first learns to hustle, then turn tricks. For Joey, his mother Zenaida is both a ghost of legend and a blueprint for a movie: "Zenaida. She was a legendary whore, my mother. Disgraced and abandoned, just like in the movies. Driven to take her own life. My father was not the first man to promise her anything,

that much I know for sure" (42).[16] Himself an orphan and a bastard son, Joey recognizes himself in his mother. Joey is also a legendary whore, "disgraced and abandoned." Because of this act of recognition, Joey emerges as an antidote to General Ledesma. Whereas Ledesma is a bastard son who seeks legitimacy and paternal support by serving the Marcos regime, Joey focuses on his connection to his mother. Joey's ability to sympathize with his mother sets him apart from the bastard sons who plot against their fathers. We can read Joey as an adult version of Anna's son Ismael, raised in a matrilineal tradition with the hope that he will be able to incorporate the feminine into his masculinity. Joey, then, emerges as a redemptive figure who discovers his absolution among the guerillas but, more importantly, with Daisy.

Joey and Daisy's friendship links together generations of colonial occupation. Whereas the possible relationship between Elías and Ibarra would have brought together the (pre-colonial) *indio* and the (Spanish) creole, the friendship between Daisy and Joey links the Filipino with the neocolonial Filipino/African American mixed-race figure. Half African American, Joey is "Joey Taboo: my head of tight, kinky curls, my pretty hazel eyes, my sleek brown skin. 'Where's the little GI baby?' [Neil would] ask Andres, if I wasn't around" (72-73). This "little GI baby," is unassimilable into the Filipino national identity because he is linked inextricably with his US parentage. Neil, one of Joey's johns, says, "'HEY, little pretty black boy . . . ain't seen nothing like you since I left Detroit . . .'" (72), which situates Joey within a specifically African

[16] Juliana Chang offers a suggestive reading of Joey's mother: "Hagedorn's figure of illicit native female labor puts pressure on the fantasy of the U.S.-Philippine neocolonial romance as legitimate homosocial family romance. Both the younger brother and the prostitute as metaphors for the neocolonial nation are figures of dependence, but the metaphor of the prostitute calls into question the fictions of legitimacy, benevolence, and autonomous subjecthood that underpin the fantasy of neocolonialism as fraternity" (640-641). In this way, Joey participates in the precedent set by his mother, one in which the fantasy of a homosocial relationship between colonizer and colonized is revealed as exactly that, a fantasy. See Juliana Chang, "Masquerade, Hysteria, and Neocolonial Femininity in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*."

American context. However, by incorporating Joey into the guerrilla conversion narrative, Hagedorn demonstrates a Filipino national imaginary that is capable of absorbing new racial mixtures into the Filipino identity.

Paradoxically, Joey's uneasy position within the Philippines makes him a synecdoche for the larger Filipino nation. Two paratexts render this relationship visible: the Jungle Chronicle quote that precedes the chapter about Joey's mother, "His Mother, the Whore," and the excerpt from McKinley's 1898 address that precedes another chapter on Joey, "Heroin." Jungle Chronicle excerpts a section from Jean Mallat's 1846 work, *The Philippines*:

> The most inaccessible lairs of these wild mountains are inhabited by a great number of those small Negroes called 'Negritoes' whom we spoke about earlier; sometimes they are chased out of their homes, taken prisoner, the youngest among them being chosen to be raised by inhabitants in their homes until the age of reason, in the meantime being used for diverse chores, after which they are set free. One of our friends owned one which he gave to us; he was called Panchote, was not lacking in intelligence and was most of all very mischievous (41).

The treatment of the "Negritoes" parallels Joey's life with Uncle as Hagedorn makes clear through the juxtaposition of Mallat's piece with the description of Joey's upbringing in the following chapter. Like the Negritoes, Uncle takes Joey in at a very young age, where he is forced to earn his keep. Yet, unlike the Negritoes, Uncle does not set Joey free after he has reached "the age of reason"; rather, Joey continues to be indebted to Uncle. Read in this way, Joey's escape at the end of the novel signifies his freedom and a metaphorical return home, back to the "wild mountains." Although Joey does not return home by tapping into his African American heritage, Joey's mountain hideout suggests that there was always already a place for a

"Negrito" like him within Filipino culture and geography. Never able to make it to the United States (despite his repeated attempts to find a john who can take him there), Joey finally locates his blackness within a Filipino imaginary — the mountains — that is often coded as revolutionary and black.

McKinley's description of the Filipino people echoes Mallat's description of the Negritoes. McKinley delivers his address to a group of Methodists and describes how after praying on the Filipino question, he finally received guidance:

> And one night it came to me this way – I don't know how it was, but it came: one, that we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonorable; two, that we could not turn them over to France or Germany – our commercial rivals in the Orient – that would be bad business and discreditable; three, that we could not leave them to themselves – they were unfit for self-government – and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and four, that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them (71).

Much like Panchote, the Filipino people are property; in McKinley's address he alone must decide what to do with them. He cannot "give," "turn them over," or "leave them," but must instead "take them all." By seeking to "educate," "uplift," and "Christianize" them, McKinley will help them reach "the age of reason," in Mallat's terms. McKinley's address thus shares thematic similarities with Mallat's observations. Further, both Mallat and McKinley's statements precede Joey's chapters in the novel, thus indicating how imperialist discourses converge on Joey's subjectivity as an African American Filipino. In this way, Joey synecdochically stands in for the larger Filipino people across multiple colonizations and occupations.

More specifically, Joey's background positions him as a synecdoche for United States' neocolonialism. Although his narrative shares a structural similarity to General Ledesma's own illegitimate heritage, Joey and the General take two markedly different paths. The General's desire for legitimacy compels him to carry out the regime's most unseemly acts in an attempt to please the "father" of the nation, Ferdinand Marcos. In contrast, Joey emerges as an antidote to the General by sympathizing with his mother, a move that sets him apart from the bastard sons who threaten national cohesion. Instead of working for a corrupt regime to gain legitimacy, Joey chooses to fight for the revolution and, in so doing, converts from an apolitical hustler to a guerrilla who ardently fights to save the Philippines from dictatorship. The non-traditional relationship between Daisy and Joey defines this newfound order; only alternative kinships can create familial connections under a dictatorship that has perverted those family relationships through conjugal rule. Once in the mountains, Daisy and Joey create a new home and, by extension, a new national imaginary that productively revises Rizal's guerrilla conversion narrative to include women and finally incorporate the orphans and bastard sons who were previously unassimilable into the nation.

At the start of the novel, Joey seeks to escape the Philippines; however, by the end of *Dogeaters*, he becomes one of those who ardently fights to save the Philippines from dictatorship. In short, Joey's narrative – though it shares the same illegitimate heritage as General Ledesma – is the opposite of the General's. Rather than work for a corrupt regime to gain legitimacy and destroy the core of the nation, the nuclear family, Joey chooses to fight for the revolution, an "illegitimate" government according to the Marcoses and, by doing so, creates a new family structure based on chosen relationships. The non-traditional relationship between Daisy and Joey fits perfectly into this newfound order – only alternative kinship models can

create familial connections under a dictatorship that has perverted those family relationships. Along with Joey, Daisy creates a new home. Further, she creates a chosen family rather than relying on her biological one. She does this even though it separates her from her family after her father's death. She does this even though her lover, Santos Tirador, is dead and her baby miscarried. In short, despite the eradication of her former guerilla family, Daisy decides to begin anew.

Daisy and Joey's narrative demonstrates how characters are enfolded into the resistance plot, a pattern that perpetuates itself in Filipino history to this day. Yet, for those who are not part of revolutionary plots, Rio's narrative demonstrates the effect of sustained resistance, colonization, and occupation. While Daisy finds a home, Rio remains homeless. In short, the homes in the Philippines, as demonstrated by Rio, are broken; her parents are divorced, her brother marries another woman without getting a divorce, Pucha's first marriage falls apart. Daisy's family similarly falls apart: Senator Avila is assassinated; Maria Luisa acquiesces to the Marcoses' demands of her daughter, Daisy; Daisy's sister fails to become a member of the movement. The only relationships that persist are those in the mountains, among the guerillas; these relationships form the resistance that will ultimately take down the Marcos regime during the People Power Revolution of 1986. And, it is this moment, pregnant with revolutionary potentiality, that both Hagedorn and Rosca choose to end their novels.

Out of Empire

Each of the novels discussed here – *Noli*, *Fili*, *Dogeaters*, and *State of War* – upend our expectations of novelistic endings. Despite the proliferation of romances in the novels, from Ibarra and María Clara to Anna and Adrian to Daisy and Santos, none of these novels ends with

marriage. While each of these novels feature marriage plots and revolutionary plots, that is all they remain: plots. Although each novel includes a denouement, they imply that more events are forthcoming: Father Florentino calls on the youth of the future; Anna and Daisy fight off stage, in the mountains. We always end in media res with no conclusion in (clear) sight. These novels not only subvert our expectations, but they also perform their own resistance to developmental models of progression. Rather, they leave the possibility for revolution within a state of suspension; as a result, they hold out hope for a revolution that is yet-to-come. To encourage such a revolution, the novels privilege the guerrilla conversion narrative as a mode of non-biological reproduction.

These guerrilla conversion narratives pivot on the friendship that develops between a revolutionary mentor and mentee. By focusing on these friendships, new political actors come into play as female and queer revolutionaries are incorporated into the revolutionary family. These chosen kinship networks then become a way to imagine a Filipino nation for the Filipino people rather than a Filipino nation for the Filipino elite. In this way, national consolidation still occurs; however, it does so in a radically different form than that of the heterosexual romance. While the guerrilla conversion narrative is a non-biological mode of reproduction, *State of War* allows for the biological reproduction of revolutionaries once the colonial legacy of rape has been transformed into a new cycle that advocates matrilineal lines and the incorporation of femininity into the nation. Like Ismael, Joey in *Dogeaters* emerges as a paradigmatic figure who demonstrates how the colonial inheritance of orphans and bastard sons can be recuperated through the recognition rather than the refusal of the feminine. Given that friendship and choice rather than biology form the basis for the family model, Rizal, Rosca, and Hagedorn further suggest that chosen kinship networks offer a way of reclaiming the family form after its

perversion by colonization.

Significantly, my readings of *State of War* and *Dogeaters* vis-à-vis *Noli* and *Fili* unearths a previously unknown, but rich literary tradition. Excavating this tradition contextualizes and invigorates Rosca's and Hagedorn's work by locating the source of their radical politics. In fact, reading Rizal through Rosca and Hagedorn illuminates the social advances that Rizal could not yet imagine: the incorporation of female and queer subjects into the national imaginary. However, the importance of this tradition extends beyond recovery. By situating *State of War* and *Dogeaters* within a longer Philippine tradition, we can investigate how the guerrilla conversion narrative responds to and interprets specific historical conditions. Further, by reading Rosca and Hagedorn back into Philippine literature to examine how their work participates in these literary traditions opens up the possibility that there may be other genres that, like the guerrilla conversion narrative, have also been historically unnoticed.

Much of this essay has centered on the specificity of the experience in the Philippines: cacique democracy, the guerrilla conversion narrative, and the long history of occupations and dictatorships. I do not read *State of War* and *Dogeaters* in a distinctively Filipino context to promote a nativist claim, however. Rather, I turn to the Philippines to analyze how transnationalism invites such an analysis because it, like guerrilla conversions, spreads outward, linking seemingly disparate struggles within a complex history of revolution and occupation. Examining such connections allows us to then situate literary traditions that emerge out of the complex negotiation between empire and resistance.

Along these lines, I now turn to the Dominican Republic to explore another such literary tradition, the Latin American dictator novel. Like the guerrilla conversion narrative, the Latin American dictator novel offers yet another way to examine how forms from seemingly elsewhere

engage with a longer history of the Americas and crucially influence US literature. The following chapter examines yet another model of conversion, this time with an eye toward the North American reader. By focusing on narratives of political development, Junot Díaz and Julia Alvarez extend the idea of the guerrilla conversion narrative into a larger hemispheric project that aims to convert the North American reader to a broader hemispheric consciousness.

Chapter Four

Revolutionary Pedagogies: The Anti-Romances of Junot Díaz and Julia Alvarez

Much like we saw in the previous chapter, Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) and Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994) are two novels that also take up issues of revolution, feature dictators, and theorize the possibility of conversion. As we saw in the work of Rizal, Rosca, and Hagedorn, the guerrilla conversion narrative models an alternate form of sociality based on mentor/mentee relationships rather than heterosexual romances to carve out a space for new configurations of sociality and sexuality within revolution. Significantly, this narrative emerges as a critique of cacique democracy and, more specifically, the conjugal rule of the Marcoses. In this way, each author foregrounds conversion as a central feature of revolutionary consciousness not only to resist the perversion of romance installed by the Marcoses, but also to offer alternate frameworks for intimacy.

Díaz and Alvarez similarly use conversion as a way to write against the dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molina's regime (1930-1961), which promoted a family romance that relied on his sexual exploits by prominently displaying his lovers, such as Lina Lovatón ("Seduction" 1115), according to Lauren Derby, thus revealing the prevalence of the *casa chica*, or the home for a Dominican man's second, unofficial family ("Seduction" 1116).[1] Rather than offering a paradigm that reinforced the nuclear family and thus, the stability of the nation, Trujillo presented the Dominican people with a fractured family structure based on unstable, capricious

[1] As Sandra Cox describes, "This disruption of kinship affinities is a mirroring of an earlier disruption of the family on the island, and that earlier disruption is much more clearly anchored in the oppression of the state under Trujillo" (113).

relationships.[2] These relationships signaled who was out of favor and who was in as Trujillo exerted power through the homosociality and homoeroticism that undergirded his regime by ensnaring the daughters of the bourgeoisie into love triangles with their fathers. In this way, the Trujillato's homosociality was markedly different from those found in José Rizal novels, where homosocial friendship offered a revolutionary possibility for alternate forms of kinship. By creating ties with what Ignacio López-Calvo calls his "homosocial acolytes" (*God* 75) and their daughters, Trujillo engaged in perverse love triangles between men that sedimented their commitment to the regime, thus using homosociality towards counterrevolutionary ends. Or, in Lauren Derby's words: "[r]omantic conquest…. became a means both of subjugating the bourgeoisie and of entering their ranks" ("Seduction" 1117). However, the homosociality of the regime, coupled with the separation between "family" and "romance" has broader implications as well. Because the regime insisted on the evacuation of family from romance, it unwittingly invited the possibility of imagining alternative kinships that no longer relied on the hegemonic unity of romance.

Indeed, while dictator novels demonstrate the ways in which the dictator's totalizing narrative presumably consolidates national life, they also carry with them the means for their own undoing. Works such as Cristina García's *King of Cuba* (2013), for example, features an aging dictator and narrates the events that lead to his death. Other texts such as Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*, *Oscar Wao,* and *Butterflies* undermine the dictator's narrative with characters including Urania Cabral (*Feast*), Yunior (*Oscar Wao*), the *gringa dominicana* and

[2] This family structure it not merely an allegory for the nation, as Cox argues, but, rather, "the consequences of diasporic conditions through an examination of disruptions of kinship structures caused by nationalism and racism as systemically deployed by the Trujillato. Family functions in these instances both as an allegory for nationhood and as a literal depiction of the experience of displacement and transculturation as an effect of immigration and exile" (113)

Dedé (*Butterflies*), who tell alternate stories to the official narratives of the dictatorship.[3] *Oscar Wao*, for example, traces the political development of the titular character as well as the subsequent conversion of his best friend and the narrator of the text, Yunior. *Butterflies*, meanwhile, tracks the conversions of the three Mirabal sisters who were key figures in the resistance movement against Trujillo's regime – Patria, Minerva, and María Teresa as well as the subsequent conversion of the only surviving sister, Dedé, and the fictional character of the *gringa dominicana*. By shifting the dictator novel away from Trujillo, each novel highlights the untold stories of the regime, from the Mirabal sisters to the diasporic subjects the dictatorship created.

Further, Díaz and Alvarez resist Trujillo's family romance by highlighting the author/secretary relationship that undergirds Latin American dictator novels, which, as Roberto González Echevarría explains, pivot on the dynamic between those who tell the story and those who write it down (*Voice* 77). Like the mentor/mentee relationships in the previous chapter, the author/secretary relationship creates intimate relationships in which politically developed characters mentor those who are just beginning their own narratives of political consciousness. Significantly, the author/secretary dynamic in Díaz and Alvarez depends on the tension between the dictator novel and the *bildungsroman*. In evacuating romance from the latter, Díaz and Alvarez demonstrate how the *bildungsroman* can resist the tendency to incorporate the individual into the middle-class through the marriage plot by instead imagining the alternative political possibilities offered by a collective, revolutionary *bildungsroman*. Significantly, both authors model and witness the *bildungsroman* of a revolutionary subject whose process of emergence stands in sharp contrast to the dictator novel. Much like guerrilla conversion narratives, which

[3] For more on *Oscar Wao* as a "resistant history," see Hanna 500.

spread power outward rather than consolidating it (as in cacique democracy in the Philippines) the oppositional dictator novels of Alvarez and Díaz resist the totalizing narrative of dictatorship that emerged from the *caudillo* system with its emphasis on the cult of *personalismo*, or the elevation of a local, charismatic leader.[4] Rather than focusing on the dictator as the protagonist, as do most dictator novels, both texts depict Trujillo as a minor character, a spectral presence. Because they do not portray his perspective, they do not run the risk of sympathizing with the dictator, and thus maintain their critical distance from the regime.[5]

The revolutionary *bildungsroman* is one such narrative as it refuses the tendency to install what I call dictator time, which subsumes national history to the dictator's rule. Both *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* resist dictator time by offering a hemispheric, transhistorical narrative of development that operates according to a recursive logic rather than the teleological trajectory of dictator time, which imagines the beginning of the nation as hurtling inevitably towards the birth and reign of the dictator. *Butterflies*, for example, organizes time according to the deaths of the Mirabal sisters, an act that is also commemorated by the International Day for the

[4] See López-Calvo's *God and Trujillo: Literary and Cultural Representations of the Dominican Dictator*, page 4 and Echevarría, *The Voice of the Masters: Writing and Authority in Modern Latin American Literature*, pages 67-68. Generally speaking, scholars often attribute the first dictator novel to Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's 1845 novel, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism*, which examines the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina. However, other critics, such as Roberto Gonzalez Echevarría observes that, as an "indigenous thematic tradition in Latin American literature, the dictator and the dictator-book, can be traced as far back as Bernal Díaz del Castillo's and Francisco López de Gómara's accounts of Cortés's conquest of Mexico (structurally, López de Gomara's book is the most akin to the recent dictator-novels)" (65). For more on how characters in dictator novels exist in relation to the dictator as well as the historical underpinnings of dictator novels, see Flores-Rodríguez 93.

[5] As López-Calvo observes in two paradigmatic dictator novels, "Following a trend set off by the 1974 publication of Augusto Roa Bastos's *I, the Supreme* and Alejo Carpentier's *Reasons of State*, the Patriarch's inability to feel guilt for his hideous actions may open the door, after the nostalgic presentation of the pathetic autumn of his life, to the perhaps dangerously sympathetic understanding of the readers" (*God* 55).

Elimination of Violence Against Women, held on November 25 every year. As Alvarez demonstrates, the veneration of these sisters freezes them at the time of their death. By writing a narrative of their revolutionary emergence, Alvarez creates a space for a progressive future.[6] Similarly, *Oscar Wao* hinges on the development of first Oscar's, then Yunior's, political consciousness through a narrative that oscillates between past, present, and possible future.

In Díaz and Alvarez, the revolutionary *bildungsroman* emerges as a pedagogical project as well as an oppositional one. Both authors shift their focus away from the conversion of characters within their novels to the larger project of converting the reader by instantiating proxies for the uninitiated reader within their respective texts. These pedagogical projects reveal themselves through the addresses to the reader peppered throughout the footnotes of *Oscar Wao* and in the postscript to *Butterflies*. Yunior's footnotes often admonish the reader and, in so doing, underscore the historical amnesia that accompanies revolution. He offers historical context for those who missed their "mandatory two seconds of Dominican history" (2n1) and nudges the reader by making remarks such as, "Hatüey, in case you've forgotten . . ." (212n23). However, these rebukes are only true for the first reading of the text, as once the reader is familiar with the history detailed in the footnotes, Yunior's sarcastic "in case you've forgotten" becomes an actual process of remembering after the book is closed. You can't remember what you don't know, Yunior suggests, as he fashions the *bildungsroman* into a novel of political education. In this way, *Oscar Wao* performs its own narrative of emergence through Yunior's political development. Similarly, in describing her pedagogical project in the postscript to *Butterflies*, Alvarez writes about an imagined North American reader who has presumably just

[6] In his reading of postdictatorial Latin American fiction, Idelber Avelar argues that such novels feature "untimeliness," which he argues "rescue past defeats out of oblivion and remain open to an as yet unimaginable future" (21). Along similar lines, I argue that both Alvarez and Díaz, by offering alternate genealogies, create a space for new, alternative futures.

finished the book and thus, is already part of her hemispheric project. Crucially, to shift the *bildungsroman* away from its counterrevolutionary context, these novels must imagine new forms of kinship rather than follow the romance paradigm. Instead, they create lines of filiation between characters and among readers. While Ellena Machado Sáez reads kinship as the queer relationship between Yunior and Oscar (546), I contend that these relationships, including that between Yunior and Oscar, do not occur contemporaneously, but, rather across time and across generations. The de León family history, after all, is fundamentally a generational view of time.

Such a generational view of time pivots on a form of chosen kinships that Díaz calls "invented filiations," which, I posit, offer a model for imagining what a collective, political *bildungsroman* might look like. Rather than assimilating the protagonist into the bourgeoisie, this model instead inspires a turn to collectivities and political consciousness. In an annotation to *Oscar Wao* that Díaz wrote for the website Genius, he compares the landscape of Tatooine (a planet in *Star Wars*) to Outer Azua, where Oscar's grandmother finds his mother: "Depending on your fanboy orientation either the first or second most famous desert planet in nerdom . . . I felt [a] surge of kinship. Shit, on first viewing I also thought my man's name was Juan Kenobi. But that's what happens when you're an immigrant kid of color in a culture that erases your community completely. You start inventing filiations."[7] While the note ostensibly explains the Tatooine reference, more importantly, it points to the invented filiations Yunior creates as a diasporic subject. Significantly, by creating new forms of kinship, invented filiations give birth to innovative literary forms capable of contending with familial and revolutionary ruptures and generating transhistorical imaginaries that link together Yunior and Oscar and, in *Butterflies*, Dedé and Alvarez.

[7] Originally Rap Genius, the site started as a place to annotate song lyrics but has significantly expanded to include literary texts.

To invent, with its connotation of planning and plotting, aptly describes the focus on form in both novels, particularly in terms of their revolutionary aesthetics and kinships. Both authors read through and against the dictator novel to refuse the pre-determined narrative of the dictator in favor of an ever-expanding future, thus revising the dictator novel to revolutionary ends. Indeed, each author self-consciously draws attention to the process of invention, either explicitly, through Alvarez's postscript to *Butterflies*, or implicitly, through Yunior's narration; halfway through *Oscar Wao* Yunior confesses that his introduction to Oscar as a child dancing the perrito is actually inaccurate, because the perrito only became popular a few years later (132n17) while Alvarez's postscript foregrounds how her book "invents" (323) the Mirabal sisters and the events leading up to their assassination. In doing so, she admits how her work – and, we can add Díaz's – underscores the centrality of imagination in conceptualizing alternatives to the singular origin story of Trujillo, who rewrites national history according to dictator time. Rather, both texts resist the "god-making impulse" (*Butterflies* 324) that mythologizes rather than humanizes.

To do so, each author focuses on *bildung* – understood as "formation" or "education" – to underline the centrality of revolutionary education to political development. This revolutionary *bildung* pivots on invented filiations rather than on the national time and bourgeois family of the European *bildungsroman*, or on the perverse family structure of the Trujillo regime. Instead, revolutionary *bildung* traces how the diasporic subject confronts the dual history of colonization and dictatorship of the homeland. In so doing, it emphasizes the process of becoming rather than the "transcendental" model of revolutionary conversion outlined by María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo in revolutionary autobiographical writings, in which the "underdeveloped subject must make the ethical choice to enter development and thereby history, to leave behind a prodigal life in favor of a productive one, with this prodigal life most often thematized negatively as ethnos –

as clan, caste, tribe, or extended family" (264). In *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies*, the politically unaware subject returns to his or her origins to enter history, while simultaneously pointing to a recursive historical framework that returns to key events of the Trujillo regime – the Haitian genocide, the rise of the fourteenth of June movement, and the assassination of the Mirabal sisters, to name a few – to unearth the forgotten and invisible histories that underpin empire, thus modeling the importance of historical excavation to the project of political development for the reader. Rather than reading "the curse of Diaspora" as simply another trauma of the regime, dispersal and exile necessitate this search for family history and, in the process, the development of political consciousness. That is, to learn their origin stories, the future generations must, like Isis, look to written history and, like Oscar, Yunior, Dedé, and Alvarez, experience the process of return. Yunior's affiliation with Oscar, then Isis, and, potentially, future generations, along with Alvarez's imagined relationship with the Mirabal sisters and the North American readers she addresses in the postscript create links across time in a move that offers kinship without the underpinnings of the nation. Instead, the revolutionary *bildung* of the characters becomes the hemispheric project of Díaz and Alvarez.

This hemispheric project emphasizes splitting as central to the political project of converting the reader into a revolutionary subject by modeling the development of political consciousness through Oscar, Yunior, Alvarez, and Dedé. While *Oscar Wao* splits the revolutionary *bildungsroman* between Yunior and Oscar into an invented filiation with Isis, the departure of the *gringa dominicana* in Alvarez underlines a similar split – that between the interviewer and Dedé, before yoking Dedé and Alvarez together in a symbiotic relationship. Significantly, each pairing features the divide between those who identify as Dominican (Yunior, Dedé) and those who embody the figure of the Dominican American (Oscar, Alvarez, the *gringa*

dominicana), which emphasizes the hemispheric project of both Alvarez and Díaz.[8] Because these readerly proxies are Dominican-born (Yunior, Dedé), and because both texts address themselves to North American readers (explicitly in *Butterflies* and implicitly in *Oscar Wao*), I suggest that the novels fuse together the two hemispheric perspectives of North and South.[9] In so doing, both authors expose and seam up the hemispheric divide to demonstrate the entangled political and personal histories between the United States and the Dominican Republic.

By placing the reader in the subject position of Dominicans and tracing how a return to the homeland leads to the development of political consciousness, Alvarez and Díaz compel the reader to see how Dominican history is also US history. While the Dominican Republic is not a homeland for the North American reader, this search for origins reveals the US's entanglement with the so-called periphery. "Schooling" the North American reader reveals the complicity between dictatorship in the Dominican Republic and US intervention and, by extension, the complicity of North American readers. To evade the invented filiations Díaz and Alvarez imagine means acquiescing to imperial history and participating in the perpetuation of erased and invisible histories.

Offering scenes of political instruction foregrounds how both authors resist the Global North's tendency to infantilize the Global South by demonstrating the development of

[8] Oscar and Alvarez further complicate Dominican American identities as Oscar "liv[ed] in the DR for the first couple of years of his life and then abruptly wrenchingly relocate[ed] to New Jersey – a single green card shift not only worlds (from Third to First) but centuries (from almost no TV or electricity to plenty of both" (21-22n6). Critics often assume that Oscar is US-born (Sáez 526), no doubt because of his strong connections to US culture. Similarly, because Alvarez's family fled the Dominican Republic to the US, critics often assume she was born there (a point she quickly clarifies on her website); however, she was born in the US, then lived in the Dominican Republic until the age of ten.

[9] See López -Calvo, "A Postmodern Plátano's Trujillo: Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, more Macondo than McOndo" for a discussion of Díaz as a native informant.

characters' political awareness through homegrown literary traditions rather than those offered by the Global North. Further, they do so by refusing the teleological, developmentalist paradigm of the Global North by instantiating a recursive revolutionary *bildung* that focuses on repetition and return. And yet, while these novels revise, retell, and re-read, they do so by creating within the diegesis the goal of the hemispheric project more broadly: to read these stories back into the Dominican Republic and, by extension, into their literary traditions.

In this chapter, I investigate how the rejection of the family romance promotes the construction of invented filiations in both *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies*. I begin by examining how both novels resist dictator novels' tendency to install dictator time, or the specific ways in which the dictator novel establishes relationships between time and space. I then examine Díaz's revolutionary *bildungsroman* as Yunior's narrative splits the novel of education between himself and Oscar, thus modeling revolutionary conversion. From there, I offer a detailed analysis of *Butterflies* to illustrate how splitting the narrative of formation between herself and Dedé creates what she calls a "synthesizing consciousness" ("Chasing" 175). In this way, Alvarez and Díaz track narratives of formation that establish revolutionary subjects whose conversion aligns with the act of reading. These models of conversion not only offer paradigms for the reader's own political development, but also emphasize the role of invented filiations (both between characters and among readers) by foregrounding how the revolutionary *bildungsroman* refuses the pre-determined narrative of the dictator novel to offer alternative futurities, thus revising dictator time to revolutionary ends. In this way, I demonstrate how the political role of the imagined filiations between Yunior and Oscar, Dedé and Alvarez, illuminate the possibilities of felt kinship and the political awareness it instantiates.

The Dictator Novel and Dictator Time

As part of his regime, Trujillo reconstituted the nation by reordering national history and space according to his life and achievements such that national belonging hinged on the citizen's ability to negotiate the new spatial markers and temporalities Trujillo instituted. A joke Minerva tells María Teresa about how to travel from Carretera El Jefe to Parque Julia Molina illustrates the extent to which Trujillo remodeled public space to fit within his own personal history and, more specifically, within his own family: "'You take the road of El Jefe across the bridge of his youngest son to the street of his oldest boy, then turn left at the avenue of his wife, walk until you reach the park of his mother and you're there'" (131). In others words, to arrive at the park, one must literally trace Trujillo's family tree from his sons, Radhamés and Ramfis, through his wife, María Martínez, to his mother, Julia Molina, signaling a refashioning of space that demonstrates how deeply (and how quickly) Trujillo's personal history became ingrained in the minds of Dominicans.

These altered street names foreground the ways in which dictator time subordinates national history to the dictator's biography.[10] The real-life Trujillo rendered visible this relationship between national history and dictator time by establishing himself as the eternal ruler of the Dominican Republic and celebrating the island's "founding" through his veneration of Christopher Columbus.[11] Further, he organized the national calendar of the Dominican Republic after his own personal history by making national holidays out of his birthday and dates of inauguration. He also foregrounded his place within national history by implementing the

[10] For additional analyses on temporality and space in *Butterflies*, see Charlotte Rich's discussion of "temporal immediacy" in the novel (173) as well as her examination of the "decentralized or 'centrifugal' narrative" (175).

[11] For example, Trujillo planned to erect the Columbus Memorial Lighthouse to house Columbus's remains, which were already a tourist destination in Ciudad Trujillo (Roorda 116).

following formula: "on such and such a day in 1955, 112th year of Independence, 89th of the Restoration, and 25th of the Era of Trujillo . . ." (Galíndez 183). Further, he extended his control spatially by naming places after himself, such as renaming the nation's capital, Santo Domingo, to Ciudad Trujillo, in addition to renaming several provinces: "Benefactor, Libertador, San Rafael"(Galíndez 181).[12] Even institutions bore the stamp of Trujillo by emphasizing his beneficence: "village water spigots bore the sign 'Trujillo gives Us Drink,' and hospitals displayed the slogan 'Trujillo Cures Us'" (McCracken 81). In this way, Trujillo created the nation in the image of himself. In fact, his presence was so deeply imprinted on the Dominican Republic that when Vargos Llosa visited the country, a group of people he met "continued to talk about the dictator as if he were still alive and referred to him as 'The Chief' and 'His Excellency'" (*God* 34), according to López-Calvo. In dictator novels, such real-life facts, along with key moments from the dictatorship are mentioned, thereby assimilating real life into the form of the novel.

Significantly, Trujillo's power extends to the supernatural, as the fukú (or curse) that Díaz describes in *Oscar Wao* illustrates how the dictator actually absorbs national history by harnessing the mythology of colonization. *Oscar Wao* begins with a rich description of the fukú that ties the cyclical time of the curse to the horrors that accompanied the "discovery" of the New World, the original sin of slavery and genocide:

> They say it came first from Africa, carried in the screams of the enslaved; that it was the death bane of the Tainos, uttered just as one world perished and another began; that it was a demon drawn from Creation through the nightmare door that was cracked open in the Antilles. *Fukú americanus*, or more colloquially, fukú – generally a curse or a doom

[12] See Derby, *The Dictator's Seduction: Politics and the Popular Imagination in the Era of Trujillo*, page 5.

> of some kind; specifically the Curse and the Doom of the New World. Also called the fukú of the Admiral because the Admiral was both its midwife and one of its great European victims . . .” (1; ellipses mine).

Refusing to speak the Admiral’s (Christopher Columbus’s) name because “to say his name aloud or even to hear it is to invite calamity on the heads of you and yours” (1), Yunior demonstrates how the fukú creates a rupture in the temporality of the New World and inaugurates dictator time as Columbus’s arrival destroys the Taino way of life.[13] The original sin of discovery and its accompanying curse informs the Trujillo mythology as “whoever killed Trujillo, their family would suffer a fukú so dreadful it would make the one that attached itself to the Admiral jojote in comparison” (3). The two curses here – one of colonization, the other of dictatorship – are part of the same regime of authoritarianism the Spanish introduced in 1492. In this way, Trujillo’s reverence for Columbus sediments the connection between Trujillo’s rise to power and this earlier moment of contact. The colonizers, after all, also fashioned the New World in their own image[14]

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[13] As Adam Lifshey remarks, “Columbus visited the island on his first journey and his remains are presumed to be buried there, thus endowing the country with the foundational and (of course) genocidal semiotics of his existence” (437). See “Indeterminancy and the Subversive in Representations of the Trujillato.”

[14] With dictator novels closely associated with post-independence Latin America and the conquest of the Americas, the relationship between dictators and conquistadors comes as no surprise. In fact, López-*Calvo* observes in Alvarez’s *In the Time of the Butterflies* the persistent connection between the two: “Thus, after a toast during the commemoration of the ‘discovery’ of the New ‘New World,’ the narrative voice sarcastically states, ‘The Spanish ambassador presents this illustrious descendent of the great Conquistador with yet another medal’ (*God* 95). Afterwards, the dictator’s conduct is introduced as a continuation of colonial practices. While he dances with Minerva, one of Trujillo’s sexual overtures consists of suggesting that perhaps he could conquer her heart just as El Conquistador conquered the island” (101). Further, in this same scene, which celebrates Discovery Day, Minerva observes that “the whole courtyard had been outfitted like one of Columbus’ ships. On each table there is a clever centerpiece – a little caravel with tissue sails and lighted candles for masts” (95).

In spite of the dictator's mythic status and his ability to re-order time and space, dictator novels resist progressive narratives of unity by narrating the dictator's downfall or death, making this genre one of decay and deterioration rather than growth and development. In striving for the overthrow of the dictator, the protagonists of dictator novels attempt to install a narrative of progress and reform. However, in novels about the Trujillato, rarely do the protagonists survive: Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat* intersperses the narrative of Trujillo's assassination on May 30, 1961 with those of his assassins, all but one of whom are caught, tortured, and killed. Alvarez's *Butterflies* narrates the death of the Mirabal sisters, an assassination that many think led to Trujillo's downfall. Díaz's *Oscar Wao* ends with Oscar's death in the historically fraught space of the cane field. In short, the era of progress that the dictator's death is meant to usher in results in death and chaos and signals a persistent anxiety about nationhood post-dictatorship.

While dictator novels, particularly those in the magical realist mode (such as Gabriel García Márquez's 1975 novel, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*), often feature dictators who can control time, the most significant indication of dictator time is the consistent attempt to overcome it.[15] For example, in a handful of novels about the Trujillato, the text operates according to the personal history of its protagonists.[16] *Butterflies* deploys temporal displacement by including scenes in the present with narratives of the past. Only in the third part of the novel does time stabilize as each sister's narrative ends with the year of her death, 1960. Yunior's

[15] As López-Calvo remarks in his analysis of *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, the dictator manipulates chronology through his use of atemporality and anachronism: "In the beginning the despot is so powerful that he can alter the dates of holidays and even the hour of the day of his own benefit. The paralysis of time is emphasized from the story's first sentence (according to the author, the first sentence is essential for setting the one of the work) by presenting the tyrant lying dead and surrounded by vultures . . ." (*God* 27).

[16] In *The Feast of the Goat*, for example, the chapters oscillate between telling Urania Cabral's story in the present and telling the story ofTrujillo and his assassins in the days leading up to May 30, 1961.

narrative of the de León family similarly jumps through time as he relays the events leading up to Oscar's death alongside the de León family history and, finally, ends in the present. Yet even in these texts, the personal histories of the characters and Trujillo are so deeply intertwined that narrating personal events is impossible without referencing moments in Trujillo's life as well as the regime, such as the 1937 Haitian Genocide, the failed invasion from Cuba on June 14, 1959, which inspired the Fourteenth of June Movement, the death of the Mirabal sisters, and Trujillo's assassination on May 30, 1961. The assassination of the Mirabal sisters is often tied to Trujillo's assassination as the former became the catalyst for the latter; Beli, Oscar's mother and the "lost" daughter of Abelard Cabral, can flee the Dominican Republic because of Trujillo's death after her affair with one of his henchmen (and brother-in-law), the Gangster.[17]

Dictator time, then, reveals the entanglement between personal and political histories and constitutes a narrative register as well as a temporal one. However, the revolutionary *bildungsroman* operates against dictator time by focusing on emergence, growth, and invented filiations rather than the dictator novel's narrative of decay. Because this narrative of emergence pivots on invented filiations, Yunior's quest to uncover Oscar's family history and the story of Oscar's final days demonstrates how the development of political consciousness means uncovering personal narratives outside of official ones. Alvarez also animates a narrative of revolutionary emergence through her invented filiation with the Mirabal sisters; her framing narrative implicitly bookends the journey toward political consciousness via the figure of the *gringa dominicana,* and explicitly details this in Dedé's narrative. By emphasizing such narratives through chosen kinships both authors reinvent personal and political history and render visible how dictator time, in creating a rupture in the temporal and spatial coordinates of

[17] Similarly, in *The Feast of the Goat* the narration of Trujillo's death happens alongside the death of each of his assassins.

the nation, also opens up new possibilities for temporalities and imaginaries. As Trujillo's *Obelisco del Malecón* went from being a celebration of the Trujillo-Hull Treaty of 1940 to "a monument to the Mirabal sisters when Dominicans painted a mural titled 'Un Cantoa la Libertad' commemorating the sisters over the obelisk itself, inscribing a new history atop the official one" (Johnson 104), so do Alvarez and Díaz foreground the mutability of history. Significantly, they do so through invented filiations that reveal the centrality of instruction to the development of political consciousness.

The Revolutionary *Bildungsroman*

Because dictator novels in general, and those about Trujillo specifically, question the absolute history the dictator legislates, critics often read novels such as *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* as texts that resist the totalizing logic of the dictator novel. Jennifer Harford Vargas, for example, investigates the minorness of the dictator in *Oscar Wao*, arguing that the novel is a narrative of resistance as "the uneven distribution of characters and perspectives in a novel can be analyzed as a system of power hierarchies" (11). Indeed, for Vargas, the entire novel is about narratives of domination (the fukú) and narratives of resistance: the zafa, which Yunior defines as a counter spell and Vargas reads as "dictating as recounting or writing back" (10).[18] Along similar lines, Rune Graulund argues that the novel "turns all of his [Díaz's] registers into minor discourses" (37) rather than reinforcing the majority/minority dynamics regarding "English/ Spanish, American/Dominican, and non-migrant/migrant" (37). In contrast, Ellena Machado

[18] Flores-Rodríguez also makes a similar point to Vargas's about the role of footnotes in the novel, contending that Yunior "effectively displac[es] the traditional signifiers of power and oppression to the margins of the story. In this sense Junot Díaz erodes the sense of complacency that assigns all of the responsibility to the dictator by highlighting the underlying structures of power in a dictatorial regime, such as the complex relationship between power and writing" (95).

Sáez draws upon a common preoccupation of dictator novels: the allegorical alignment between the dictator and the author him or herself.[19] By examining Yunior's role as the narrator of Oscar's story, she argues against these liberatory readings of the novel and instead contends that Yunior "enacts a narrative dictatorship" (544) and, more damningly, that he "charms and entices the reader, especially the academic reader, into becoming complicit with the heteronormative rationale used to police male diasporic identity" (523) exemplified by Yunior's attempts to make Oscar conform to Dominican ideals of masculinity when they are roommates at Rutgers. These polarizing viewpoints on the novel point to the central tension of *Oscar Wao*: the competition between the *bildungsroman* and the dictator novel. While both Vargas and Sáez engage with the dictator novel as a form, one to argue for speaking back, the other to point out the genre's tyrannical rule, both critics fail to recognize that the novel is also the story of Oscar's political emergence; further, Oscar's narrative becomes the foundation for the development of Yunior's political consciousness.

Both *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* underscore the importance of education to political development by aligning the revolutionary subject with the act of reading rather than installing the bourgeois subject into the middle class, which is the more conventional narrative arc of the *bildungsroman*. The scene of reading, or revolutionary instruction, alters the traditional

[19] Yunior similarly notes the relationship between the two: "What is it with Dictators and Writers, anyway? Since before the infamous Caesar-Ovid war they've had beef. Like the Fantastic Four and Galactus, like the X-Men and the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, like the Teen Titans and Deathstroke, Foreman and Ali, Morrison and Crouch, Sammy and Sergio, they seemed destined to be eternally linked in the Halls of Battle. Rushdie claims that tyrants and scribblers are natural antagonists, but I think that's too simple; it lets writers off pretty easy. Dictators, in my opinion, just know competition when they see it. Same with writers. *Like, after all, recognized like*" (97n11). However, my argument about the revolutionary *bildungsroman* complicates the allegorical alignment between the two by proposing that the role of the author actually shifts such that there are many authors in the novel, including Lola (who is the only character to narrate her own story) as well as Oscar.

association of author with dictator to critique the complicity of narrative with nation by featuring characters such as Yunior and the *gringa dominicana* who stand apart from the narrative and outside of national frameworks to model the recursive project of political development. In so doing, they challenge the traditional author/secretary dynamic Roberto González Echevarría outlines as one in which the scriptor (or secretary) replaces the orality of the dictator. In this dynamic, the secretary becomes "the agent of the text" (*Voice* 77) who "prefigure[s] the real absence of dictator-authors, the coming of the TEXT" (77). For Echevarría, the dictator novel removes authority from the dictator; the scriptor "is the secretary of a voice no longer enthroned" (70) "who reigns, even if he is nothing but a Carnival king" (76-77). A harbinger of the death of the author, the secretary points to the centrality of the written word and, I would add, the primacy of the scene of reading to revolutionary instruction.

By emphasizing the literariness of their work (as we see in Alvarez's postscript to the novel and her essay, "Chasing the Butterflies" as well as Junot Díaz's extensive use of footnotes), both Alvarez and Díaz underscore the role of textuality in the formation of the revolutionary subject, thus emphasizing the revolutionary possibilities of the written word rather than the orality of the dictator. Echevarría further argues that dictator novels remain complicit with a form of middle-class individualism that forecloses any form of collective, political identity even as the death of the author presumably democratically opens up the novel to the *text*, thus freeing readers from the constraints of intentionality (84-85).[20] However, I contend that the revolutionary *bildungsroman* revises the conservatism of the dictator novel Echevarría describes by imagining a collective, political identity through the changing roles of author and secretary. Moreover, this form of the *bildungsroman* also liberates the novel of education from a story of

[20] Such deconstructions are fashioned from the proliferation of textualities: editor's notes, annotations, lists, records (78).

incorporation into the nation as a member of the bourgeoisie to a narrative that not only critiques such a trajectory, but also guides the uninitiated reader toward the political consciousness that the authorial figure lacks at the beginning of the narrative.[21]

Because the revolutionary *bildungsroman* inaugurates a version of the dictator novel capable of resisting the urge to sympathize with the dictator and, instead, maintaining a critical distance, Díaz and Alvarez also offer a vital corrective to the European *bildungsroman*, which Franco Moretti characterizes as a genre that "keep[s] history *at a safe distance*" (vii) and features a "withdrawal from political life" (viii). For Moretti, these are both necessary qualities for a genre that, he suggests, attempts "to heal the rupture that had generated (or so it seemed) the French revolution and to imagine a continuity between the old and the new regime" (viii). However, *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* collapse such distinctions between history and narrative, the political and the literary. More specifically, both novels refuse the *bildungsroman*'s tendency to manage and contain—its counterrevolutionary impulses—and instead offer a *bildungsroman* that splits and synthesizes, thus formalizing the novels' commitment to a progressive future.[22]

Jed Esty writes in his useful gloss of Franco Moretti's work that the genre's "historical vocation was to manage the effects of modernization by representing it within a safe narrative scheme" (4). But what the *bildungsromane* of Díaz and Alvarez reveal is the inability to manage and contain the horrors of dictatorship, not modernization. Rather than tending toward the unifying compulsion to marry outlined by the *bildungsroman*, *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* tend

[21] As Vargas explains, Latina/o dictator novels "give narrative space to second-generation perspectives as they grapple with dictatorships and the afterlives of these regimes in Latin America and the United States. The residues of authoritarian pasts thus mark Latina/o fiction across national origin groups, generating a pan-Latino and transamerican dictatorship novel tradition (25).

[22] See Esty, page 4.

towards death as the central turning point that reconciles the competing genres of the novel by operating on a logic of dispersal and exile that pivots on the rupture that the tyrant's downfall creates. That is, while the European *bildungsroman* assimilates the individual into the middle-class and nation, another form of the *bildungsroman* emerges as a response to the dictator novel. This novel works outside of the nation paradigm by focusing on diaspora and, in so doing, privileges dispersal rather than consolidation.

Oscar Wao illuminates such an emphasis on dispersal as the novel splits the narrative of education and maturation between Oscar and Yunior and, in so doing, fractures the totality of the dictator novel. Oscar's death signals the narrative divide and secures Yunior's felt sense of kinship and inspires his decision to take on the role of scriptor by investigating Oscar's family history. Oscar's political development begins with his acceptance as an outsider in the United States and ends with his search for his Dominican identity and his de León family history. While this is the end point for Oscar's life, it also becomes the occasion for Yunior to write his story, which is both the story of Oscar's life and the story of Yunior's own growing political consciousness. By excavating the de León family history, Yunior unearths the political history that accompanies it. Further, the novel performs its own model of education as Yunior's narrative indoctrinates the reader into the political history of the Dominican Republic and ties it inextricably to personal history. In so doing, Grauland suggests, "Díaz charges us, his readers, united across the board in a mutual and never-ending process of incomprehension, not only to become more perceptive but also more accountable; he forces us to take responsibility for our own readings rather than accepting a given version as authentic, official, or true" (44). In short, by relying on the "incomprehension" of the reader, Díaz resists the totalizing narrative of the dictator and, according to Graulund, paradoxically *includes* the reader through seemingly

exclusionary practices (32) by highlighting "just how specific (exclusive) a reader's expertise must be in order to achieve full cognition of his many esoteric registers" (39).[23]

Similarly, Díaz opposes the romance as a narrative of inclusion by excising the *bildungsroman*'s romance mandate, which allows the novel to create a narrative of political consciousness. Elena Machado Sáez provocatively argues for reading the relationship between Yunior and Oscar as the suppressed relationship of the national romance that undergirds the novel and results in Yunior's extreme compulsory heterosexuality (546). However, I contend that the supposed culminating romance in Oscar's life—the romance between him and Ybón—is not so much a strategy Yunior deploys to hide Oscar's homosexuality, but a means to grapple with the novel's anxieties about miscegenation and citizenship following the fukú of diaspora, or what Yunior calls "Trujillo's payback to the pueblo that betrayed him" (5). That is, the heterosexual romance that Yunior narrates between Oscar and Ybón, according to Sáez, allows Yunior to "authenticate" and "initiate" (545) Oscar into "Yunior's community of compulsory heterosexuality" (545), which plays the additional role of repressing Yunior's sexual desire for Oscar. Thus, while Yunior narrates "a romantic ending of consummated love" (538), I argue that the neat ending Yunior provides uncovers the instability of romance and desire during the regime exactly because of the forced narrative of romantic love Sáez outlines.

While the family romance the Trujillato creates instantiates one form of this instability, the two romances (between Beli and the Gangster, and between Oscar and Ybón) that find their denouement in the over-determined space of the cane fields illuminate the persistent

[23] Graulund continues, "a specificity that, contrary to its seemingly exclusivist intent, in fact achieves the very opposite by presenting a text that relies on a mix of registers so eclectic as to transcend specific places (New Jersey and Santo Domingo), specific politics (American foreign policy and Dominican dictatorships), and specific national languages (English and Spanish)" (39).

preoccupation with skin color that underlies the anxiety of romance in the Dominican Republic.[24] Or rather, skin color in *Oscar Wao* reveals the racial mixture that forms the core of Dominican identity even as miscegenation is officially disavowed.[25] A Cabral, Beli comes from "one of the Cibao's finest families" (82) and "was born black. And not just any kind of black. But *black* black – kongoblack, shangoblack, kaliblack, zapoteblack, rekhablack – and no amount of fancy Dominican racial legerdemain was going to obscure the fact" (248). Beli's blackness exposes the truth of her family line as the references to the Congo and, especially, to Shango, an orisha with ties to voodoo in the Caribbean, make clear. Further, Beli, who after the death of her family initially lives with relatives until she is sold to a family who cages her then pours hot oil on her back, leaving a "scar on her back as vast and inconsolable as a sea" (51) recalls Sethe's back in *Beloved*, which heals into the pattern of a chokecherry tree after she is whipped at Sweet Home.[26] Beli's back, with its scars and "shangoblack" skin, renders visible, in material terms, the legacy of slavery in the Caribbean and the US South: the curse of diaspora.[27]

[24] As Vargas reiterates, "The cane field is a primal site where violence is perpetrated against African-origin subjects: slaves, Haitian laborers, Dominican subjects (Beli), and transnational subjects (Oscar)" (15-16).

[25] As Derby writes, "[i]f blackness in this context was a metaphor for social inequality, the Era of Trujillo thus promised to make whiteness available to all Dominicans by incorporating them into the modern nation" (24).

[26] López-Calvo further ties Beli to blackness by linking her to Haiti: "As a result, she ends up being a sort of child servant or slave (known in Haitian Creole as *restavek* or *restavec*) for a poor family that abuses her and burns her back with acid when she insists on going to school" ("Postmodern" 76).

[27] Vargas similarly ties Beli to slavery by noting that the description of Beli's scar to the sea and her bra as a sail "calls forth a slave ship in the Middle Passage," which "establish[es] intersectional resonances between the violence enacted on Beli, Oscar, and the slaves and laborers in the cane fields" (16).

Beli's blackness, which marks her as foreign to the Dominican racial imaginary despite her lineage, extends to her children, Lola and Oscar, who similarly discover how their mixed race makes it difficult for anyone (including themselves) to place them in the racially-coded factions of their neighborhood. Lola's straight hair, which makes her "look more Hindu than Dominican" (52) becomes the object of neighborhood amusement once she transforms into a "punk chick": "The puertorican kids on the block couldn't stop laughing when they saw my hair, they called me Blacula, and the morenos, they didn't know what to say: they just called me devil-bitch. You, devil-bitch, yo, *yo!*" (54). The Puerto Ricans' name for her – Blacula – signifies her punk appearance and, more importantly, her blackness. Meanwhile, the morenos, the blacks, also do not know what to make of this supposed black girl with her love for Siouxie and the Banshees (54). Signifying whiteness with her straight hair, green eyes, and punk music, but with skin like her mother's, Lola is an anomaly to everyone, including other Dominicans.

Oscar, similarly, fails to signify Dominican-ness, a failure that will result in his death at the end of the novel. With a "Puerto Rican afro" (20) and skin that can easily make him "look Haitian" (32), Oscar, according to Yunior, "[h]ad none of the Higher Powers of your typical Dominican male, couldn't have pulled a girl if his life depended on it. Couldn't play sports for shit, or dominoes, was beyond uncoordinated, threw a ball like a girl. Had no knack for music or business or dance, no hustle, no rap, no G. And most damning of all: no looks" (19-20). Failing to mark himself as masculine in Dominican terms, Oscar identifies with the outcasts, "the fat, the ugly, the smart, the poor, the dark, the black, the unpopular, the African, the Indian, the Arab, the immigrant, the strange, the feminino, the gay" (264). Oscar's further identification with queerness occurs in his transformation from Oscar de León to Oscar Wao because of his resemblance to "that fat homo Oscar Wilde" (180), a nickname that Oscar eventually answers to,

which Sáez reads as his "quiet acceptance of a queer identity" (547). Oscar does not look Dominican but, more significantly, by not acting like a Dominican, he yields to this other identity that marks him as an outsider to his community.

While Beli, Lola, and Oscar all reveal their mixed identities, Beli and Oscar's beatings in the cane field clearly reinscribe blackness into Dominican political history, though, significantly, at the expense of their Dominican-ness. The cane fields signify the Haitian genocide, where Trujillo massacred "Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and Haitian-looking Dominicans" (215n24). Beli and Oscar's skin and hair mark them as "Haitian-looking Dominicans," citizens who look foreign. This foreignness, along with the impetus for their beatings (Beli's relationship with the Gangster, Oscar's with Ybón) signals how, in the heterosexual romance, relationships are policed, approved and condemned along racial lines. Although Beli's punishment ostensibly stems from the Gangster's wife, a Trujillo, the real threat is Beli's pregnancy. As the Gangster's wife explains during her confrontation with Beli in the parque central, "It has reached my ears that you've been telling people that you're going to marry him *and* that you're having a child. Well, I'm here to inform you, mi monita, that you will be doing neither" (141). She then tells Beli that she will have an abortion. Such measures – refusing marriage, forcing Beli to abort the baby – run counter to the typical family framework in the Dominican Republic, which allows for both the official family and the *casa chica* for the second, unofficial family (Derby 1116). Yet, the wife insists on Beli's later beating in the cane fields, ensuring that Beli's baby will die.

This fear of mixed children and blackness stems from anxieties about citizenship and belonging. More specifically, Oscar's death in the cane field underscores the centrality of political consciousness to the novel by emphasizing the primacy of citizenship and Dominican-ness to the narrative through Oscar's facility with Spanish. While the Trujllato created a unified

citizenry based in large part on the homogenization of Dominican identity through its anti-Haitian framework, this question of citizenship arises, with a difference, during Oscar's death speech, which echoes the *perejil* test, yet another instance of the dictator's ability to exercise power through orality. Taken to the cane field for his affair with Ybón, the capitán's girlfriend, Oscar tells Grod and Grundy (Yunior's names for the capitán's henchmen) "that what they were doing was wrong, that they were going to take a great love out of the world. Love was a rare thing, easily confused with a million other things, and if anybody knew this to be true it was him" (321). Oscar's proclamation of love, coupled with the consummation of his relationship with Ybón, would appear to install the romance plot in *Oscar Wao*. Oscar's relationship with Ybón would represent the union of diaspora as Oscar completes the cycle of exile and return and finds his home in the Dominican Republic.

This, however, is not Oscar's fate. Describing the scene of Oscar's death, Yunior remarks, "The words coming out like they belonged to someone else, his Spanish good for once" (321). Previously unable to speak Spanish well, Oscar fluently explains his commitment to love and, in so doing, linguistically passes as Dominican rather than American. Yet, once he is finished, the capitán's henchmen say, "Listen, we'll let you go if you tell us what *fuego* means in English" (322). While this request enacts the form of the *perejil* test, Oscar's response, "fire," makes this test about content rather than form. The noun *fuego* becomes the verb *fire* in English, which causes Oscar to seal his own fate by effectively dictating his own death.[28]

[28] Sandra Cox's reading of this scene emphasizes Oscar's blackness, "the paradox of his *prieto* features and his *norteamericano* privilege" (297), particularly in relation to Haiti. As she observes, "The two policemen who abduct Oscar also participate in a dialogue that reveals the enduring quality of the antihaitianismo Trujillo used in his 'Dominicanization' program; 'Didn't you grow up around here' one of the men asks 'his darker-skinned pal' as they approach the cane fields, and notes, 'You look like you speak a little French to me'" (297).

This is the moment that splits the *bildungsroman*. Oscar's response to his executioners is followed by Yunior's interjection, "Oscar –" (322), which collapses the diegesis of Oscar's story with Yunior's extradiegetic narration. This rhetorical metaleptic moment is the only point in the novel where the two diegetic levels converge, signaling the termination of Oscar's search for identity and Yunior's inspiration for developing political consciousness. The em dash that follows Yunior's interjection demonstrates the speechlessness that accompanies the Trujillato as the traumas that became a regular part of the regime continue in the present. Neither Spanish nor English can capture the horror and the anguish of the regime, but Yunior's story, also titled, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (285), attempts to fill that silence, that void, with a narrative capable of filling in the space of the em dash.

Yunior's "Oscar –" is a synecdoche for the larger problem of ever knowing the whole story of a dictatorship. By referencing his research and his liberties with the truth, Yunior reveals the lie that undergirds the dictator novel: that the entire story can ever be told.[29] *Oscar Wao*, however, is not a story about writing, but about reading: how we read, what we read, and why we read, a point that "emphasizes the role of the reader as the ultimate interpreter of history" (Hanna 508). Rather than reading footnotes as textual subordination, for insistence (Vargas 14, 12), we can interpret them as emphasizing *Oscar Wao* as a text that must be read and annotated to be understood. In fact, it is primarily in the footnotes that the novel gives the historical background of the regime from the Haitian genocide (3n1) to the Mirabal Sisters (83n7) and Johnny Abbes García (110n14), head of the secret police. The footnotes also detail a longer history of resistance by discussing Hatüey (212n23), the Taino leader during the Spaniard's "First Genocide in the

[29] Or, as Monica Hanna observes, "Yunior often explicitly rejects the possibility of recovering an original, whole story because so much of the history he wishes to recover has been violently suppressed and shrouded in silence" (498).

Dominican Republic" (212n23) and Anacaona, "[o]ne of the Founding Mothers of the New World and the most beautiful Indian in the World" (244n29), who also resisted Spanish rule. In this way, *Oscar Wao* is a history of book of sorts, a primer on the Trujillato and its legacy.

As Yunior resolutely explains the political and historical context of Oscar's story, he also assumes an uninitiated reader who must be taken to task. In Yunior's first footnote, which introduces Trujillo and gives an overview of the regime, he begins, "For those of you who missed your mandatory two seconds of Dominican history: Trujillo, one of the twentieth century's most infamous dictators, ruled the Dominican Republic between 1930 and 1961 with an implacable ruthless brutality" (2n1). The "you" addresses the uninformed reader while the "mandatory two seconds of Dominican history" critiques the education system's neglect of the Dominican Republic, an admonishment echoed a few pages later when Yunior references the first American occupation from 1916-1924 and parenthetically comments, "(You didn't know we were occupied twice in the twentieth century? Don't worry, when you have kids they won't know the U.S. occupied Iraq either)" (19). By comparing the two occupations, Yunior points to a transnational network of forgotten wars and forgotten people. By describing Trujillo as "one of the twentieth century's most infamous dictators," Yunior situates Trujillo among the well-known dictators during a century of endless dictatorship. Readers will no doubt know of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, and, perhaps, Francisco Franco, but not knowing that Trujillo should be listed among such notorious leaders reveals the US national amnesia that accompanies the so-called periphery. By framing Dominican history as a set of tutorials and reminders, Yunior fills the lacuna of Dominican-US relations while chastising US readers.

Although Yunior critiques readers who do not know their Dominican history, the playboy Yunior of the diegesis differs remarkably from the politically conscious extradiegetic narrator.

While the latter literally follows in Oscar's footsteps, the former would rather spend his time womanizing. However, in the chapter that describes Oscar's suicide attempt, Yunior begins to transition from the character in the diegesis to the narrator of the extradiegesis. Significantly, the chapter's title, "Sentimental Education" (168), alludes to Flaubert's 1869 *bildungsroman* of the same name, rendering visible the link between the events of this chapter and Yunior's narrative of emergence. In his description of the events that lead up to Oscar's suicide attempt and its aftermath, Yunior recalls, "People asked me, Did you see the signs? Did you? Maybe I did and just didn't want to think about it" (188). Yunior, initially more concerned with forcing Oscar to conform to his notions of Dominican masculinity by implementing a workout regimen, becomes a more reflective character whose self-indictment forms the basis for his process of becoming, which culminates in Oscar's death.

While Yunior's political consciousness stems from his relationship with Oscar, Oscar also develops his own awareness about the Dominican Republic's history and politics. However, Yunior only briefly remarks upon these scenes of Oscar's growing sense of his ethnic identity. Yunior tells us that Oscar looked for the "full story" but he's "not certain whether he found it either" (243); he mentions that Oscar wanted to read his grandfather's "grimoire" (245), and that Oscar visited his grandfather's grave toward the end (251) as part of his journey. Oscar's lost book is probably his own *bildungsroman*, his own narrative of his discoveries in the Dominican Republic, first as scriptor, then as author. As Oscar writes, the book "contains everything I've written on this journey. Everything I think you will need. You'll understand when you read my conclusions. (It's the cure to what ails us, he scribbled in the margins. The Cosmo DNA.)" (333). If the *bildungsroman* tracks the development from innocence to experience, then what Oscar's

final letter gives us is the acknowledgment of development, the discovery of "the cure to what ails us" without the accompanying narrative of emergence.

Because of this gap in knowledge, the persistent references to páginas en blanco and the suggestive em dash encourage Yunior to enact Oscar's final journey. To piece together the story, Yunior speaks to "old-timers" (127), has Lola dictate her story (51), and records Beli's narrative (160). In so doing, "he includes the reader in this process of reconstruction; there is much that is explicitly left up to the reader's interpretation" (Hanna 501).[30] Unable to tell the full story, Yunior retraces Oscar's steps, which invites the reader to do the same, while creating a *bildungsroman* that describes his own process of becoming pays homage to Oscar's transformation. By telling these stories, Yunior not only uncovers the family history, but also demonstrates the close entanglement between the personal and the political. In this way, Oscar's story becomes part of Yunior's primer on the Dominican Republic. We cannot understand the dictatorship, Yunior implies, without examining its roots and ramifications. As Lola reminds us, "you can never run away. Not ever. The only way out is in" (209). To escape the totalizing narrative of the dictatorship and the hegemony of the dictator novel, Yunior must unearth the unofficial histories that undermine the regime and offer a new vision of a progressive future. In short, while the turn to textuality evidenced by Yunior's documentation of the de León's family history underscores the death of the author in Echevarría's terms, it also signals the rise of the reader, embodied in Lola's daughter, Isis.

In a novel full of dead children – Beli's sisters, Jackie and Astrid, Beli's, first child, Lola's aborted fetus with Yunior – the narrative installs a non-biological reproductive model of

[30] She continues, "This is another strategic move on the narrator's part; by emphasizing the constructed nature of all histories and narratives in general, the narrative compels readers to examine the power structures behind the act of telling" (Hanna 501).

futurity instantiated by Oscar and Yunior's friendship: Oscar reproduces Yunior and Yunior reproduces Isis, but this model of reproduction pivots on invented filiations rather that biological reproduction. Instead of relying solely on a reproductive future, *Oscar Wao* ends by imagining a future readership. When Yunior first describes Isis, he writes that she is "[a] little reader, too, if Lola is to be believed" (327), which reinforces her filiation with both Oscar, the reader and fanboy, and Yunior, the Watcher.[31] Indeed, Isis represents the new generation of Watchers as Yunior makes clear in his imagining of a future in which Isis also seeks out her family history. "[W]hen it starts getting late," Yunior envisions, "I'll take her down to my basement and open the four refrigerators where I store her tio's books, his games, his manuscript, his comic books, his papers – refrigerators the best proof against fire, against earthquake, against almost anything" (330). Isis, then, holds the promise of a past not forgotten, but preserved, of a paper trail that will eventually lead to the development of her own political consciousness à la Yunior and Oscar. If, as I have argued, *Oscar Wao* is a novel of instruction, then Isis stands in for the broader readership of it. In this way, the novel stages the classic scene of the *bildungsroman* – the scene of reading – by imagining the future reader, Isis, and the current reader of the book, the "you" addressed in the footnotes.

Inventing Butterflies

The revolutionary *bildungsroman* in *Oscar Wao* mirrors that of the mentor/mentee relationship in chapter three as the model of conversion splits across characters and underscores social, rather than sexual, relationships as the basis for attachment. Meanwhile, *Butterflies*

[31] As Yunior explains his identification with the Watcher: "it's hard as a Third Worlder not to feel a certain amount of affinity for Uatu the Watcher; he resides in the hidden Blue Area of the Moon and we DarkZoners reside (to quote Glissant) on '*la face cachée de la Terre*' (Earth's hidden face)" (92n10).

demonstrates how such dispersal brings together people at different stages of political development. More specifically, by merging Alvarez-as-author and Dedé-as-proxy, Alvarez underlines her goal as a writer who hopes to create "a new consciousness, a new place on the map, a synthesizing way of looking at the world" (*Something* 173) that draws upon her "island genes to be a pan-American, a gringa dominicana" (175). In other words, such synthesis means embracing both her Dominican and her American heritage. To do so, Alvarez divides the narrative of political formation between herself, the author who addresses her readers in the postscript, and Dedé, the only surviving Mirabal sister who becomes Alvarez's authorial proxy within the diegesis of the novel.

This reading runs counter to the prevailing critical consensus, which posits that the character of the *gringa dominicana* who arrives from the US to the Dominican Republic to research the Mirabal sisters' story is based on Alvarez.[32] However, Alvarez's essay "Chasing the Butterflies" (1998) and the postscript to the novel, both of which outline her motivation for writing the book, suggest otherwise as Alvarez's comments as an author echo those of Dedé as a character, which suggests that Dedé, not the *gringa dominicana*, stands in for Alvarez. By arguing for the alignment of Alvarez and Dedé, I complicate hemispheric readings of the text that underline the *gringa dominicana*'s role as a representative of North America (thus erasing her ties to the Dominican Republic) and Dedé's as a representative of South America, a partitioning that reinscribes the hemispheric divide.[33] In reading Dedé as Alvarez's authorial proxy, I suggest instead that the novel encourages North American readers (to whom the novel is

[32] For scholars who read the *gringa dominicana* as a proxy for Alvarez, see Behar 6, Martínez 267 as well as Puleo 12-14. Although Puleo implies a distinction to be made between the *gringa dominicana* and Alvarez, his discussion of the *gringa dominicana* conflates the two.

[33] See Stefanko 65, McCracken 84, and Harrison and Hipchens 16 for more on *In the Time of the Butterflies* as a hemispheric project.

addressed) to view the Dominican Republic from a Dominican, rather than North American, perspective.

Significantly, even attempts to resist the easy association between the *gringa dominicana* and Alvarez reinforce the hemispheric divide by highlighting the tension between US and Dominican perspectives. Frans Weiser remarks that "Dedé continues to revisit her memories well after the interviewer leaves" (7n 231), a disappearance Silvio Sirias reads as the catalyst that demonstrates how "Dede's voice, her point of view, grows in strength until it does not need the prompting of the interview woman to finish telling the story" (70), two points of view that suggest Dedé's ascendance over the US perspective. Still other critics contend that "Dede's ambivalence toward history close[s] the text" (McCallum 113), which leads to a silencing of Alvarez's authorial voice, and thus "downplay[s] the role of the novelist bearing witness to history" (Behar 7), which, by extension, diminishes Alvarez's point of view. However, Jacqueline Stefanko troubles this reading by observing how downplaying the role of the *gringa dominicana* as an authorial figure allows Alvarez to participate in a more complex political project in which "she distances herself by several layers from the telling, perhaps to avoid the gestures of colonization that say, 'they cannot represent themselves so they must be represented.' Furthermore, as the hybrid *gringa dominicana*, she blurs the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' in the performance of her own subject status" (61-62). While such remarks about Dedé's voice and Alvarez's potential silencing germanely point to the broader implications the issue of perspective has for hemispheric readings of the text, the ambivalence around which figure possesses a privileged viewpoint demonstrates my argument about the entanglement between the two.

While the *gringa dominicana* may not be the authorial proxy in the novel, she still plays a crucial role as the reader's proxy, which allows Alvarez to upend traditional distinctions between center and periphery as she "inserts a U.S. immigrant into the Dominican historical fiction" (9), an idea that Elizabeth Coonrod Martínez extends by arguing that "the U.S. comes to the Dominican Republic to hear the story" (267). By featuring an American who comes to the US, Alvarez, according to Steve Criniti, makes the Dominican Republic legible to a North American audience by using a North American narrative structure in addition to synthesizing both points of view.[34] In other words, the *gringa dominicana* "provides a model for Alvarez's readers of how even someone as 'conditioned' as they are against a more hemispheric view of 'our America' can approach the story of the Mirabals" (Hickman 113). In short, Alvarez's political project for *Butterflies* pivots on her ability to "school" North American readers in the history of the Dominican Republic, which, as Criniti points out, enfolds the Mirabal sisters' story "into North American collective memory" (50) and invites such readers to learn the unofficial story of the Dominican Republic (McCracken 84), which allows them to view themselves as hemispheric subjects. Thus, according to these critics, through Alvarez's pedagogical project of instructing her North American readers on Dominican history, she resists the "fail[ure] to connect with the rest of the hemisphere in the coalitional politics that could provide the means for more effective change" (Stefanko 65) by tying US history to that of the Dominican Republic based on a shared, hemispheric political history.

Alvarez stresses the importance of this shared history through the creation of the synthesized perspective she shares with Dedé. In the epilogue, Dedé demonstrates how once "she

[34] As Criniti writes, "Overall, in highlighting Alvarez's linkage of the story of Las Mariposas to North American narratives of collective identity, I am essentially arguing that Alvarez rewrites a legendary Dominican tale using an utterly North American structure" (52).

has finished being the listener, she can start being the storyteller and continue to narrate the story to the readers, making it her own" (Socolovsky 8). Alvarez similarly makes the story "her own" by taking up Dedé's role as "oracle" (313) and with it, the task of educating the uninitiated reader in the story of the Mirabals as well as Trujillo's dictatorship. In her postscript to *Butterflies*, Alvarez articulates her desire to instruct as she writes, "I would hope that through this fictionalized story I will bring acquaintance of these famous sisters to English-speaking readers" (324). By directing her comments to an uninitiated readership that does not know the story of the Mirabal sisters, Alvarez further underscores the importance of teaching a North American audience rather than Spanish-speaking Dominicans who are "separated by language from the world I have created" (324) because she "hope[s] this book deepens North Americans' understanding of the nightmare you endured and the heavy losses you suffered" (324). For Alvarez, the Dominican people do not need this book because they know the history; this book is for those who are unfamiliar with the terror of the Trujillato and the deaths of the three Mirabal sisters.

While the postscript creates a clear divide between Dominicans and North American readers, "Chasing the Butterflies" uncovers the complex history that intertwines her personal story with the Mirabal sisters as Alvarez narrates her personal history according to the sister's decline: "And so it was that my family's emigration to the United States started at the very time their lives ended" (198). Alvarez's family flees from the Dominican Republic to the United States because of her father's involvement with the Fourteenth of June Movement, the revolutionary organization of which he and the Mirabal sisters were a part. By tying together her family narrative with that of the Mirabals, Alvarez points to the real-life connections between her family and the sisters, though not without a critique of her family's decision: "These three brave

sisters and their husbands stood in stark contrast to the self-saving actions of my own family and of other Dominican exiles. Because of this, the Mirabal sisters haunted me. Indeed, they haunted the whole country" (198). Such a haunting underlines Alvarez's survivor's guilt but, more significantly, draws an invented filiation between herself and the sisters; she is haunted because her emergence as an exile coincides with their deaths. This filiation, this haunting, binds Alvarez to the Mirabals, compelling her to write their story.

These real-life connections inform Alvarez's processes of invention as she recounts how she began to gather material about the sisters. One of the earliest pieces she collects is a letter from her father, who writes: "'I met the man who sold the girls pocketbooks at El Gallo before they set off over the mountain. He told me he warned them not to go'" (272-273). This particular scene appears in *Butterflies* twice: first, in the final chapter in which Minerva describes the events leading up to the sisters' deaths (290-291) and second, in Dedé's epilogue in which she details meeting the man who sold the purses to her sisters. Within the diegesis, we know this story because the attendant at El Gallo tells Dedé (301), who pieces together the story. However, because of Alvarez's essay, we know that outside of the conceit of the novel, the story stems from Alvarez's father rather than from Alvarez's visit to Dedé in the Dominican Republic. Similarly, Alvarez-as-author and Dedé-as-character share the same goal for telling the story of the butterflies, which further elides the two: "Dedé worries that she has not kept enough from the children. But she wants them to know the living breathing women their mothers were. They get enough of the heroines from everyone else" (64). Dedé's desire to describe her sisters as real women rather than heroines finds its echo in Alvarez's postscript, in which she comments on her intention to de-mythologize the sisters: "I realized, too, that such deification was dangerous, the same god-making impulse that had created our tyrant. And ironically, by making them myth, we

lost the Mirabals once more, dismissing the challenge of their courage as impossible for us, ordinary men and women" (324). While the justification for a realist portrayal of the women is different – Dedé wants the children to know their mothers better, Alvarez hopes to restore the real-life women – both Dedé and Alvarez strive to undo the work of deification; the diegetic Dedé enacts the intentions that Alvarez outlines in the postscript. Significantly, by arguing that this "god-making impulse" has its origins in the same impulses that produced Trujillo and that such deification prevented "ordinary men and women" from enacting the same change as the Mirabals, Alvarez connects the construction of the dictator to the inability to overthrow him. By resisting mythologizing, Alvarez contends that ordinary people can oppose dictatorships and prevent the conditions that make the dictator possible. Further, theses moments in *Butterflies* trouble Echevarría's distinction between author and secretary by blurring these roles such that Alvarez and Dedé emerge both as secretarial figures compiling the narrative *and* as authorial figures telling the story. By reading Alvarez and Dedé as two sides of such a synthesizing consciousness, I suggest that incorporating and privileging Dedé as a character also necessitates foregrounding the Dominican perspective within Alvarez's explicitly Dominican American framework.

From the beginning of the novel, the *gringa dominicana* depicts the initial naïveté of the US reader as she explains the lack of awareness in the US about the butterflies: "The Mirabal sisters are not known there, for which she is also sorry for it is a crime that they should be forgotten, these unsung heroines of the underground, et cetera" (3). By juxtaposing the *gringa dominicana*'s remarks – the "unsung heroines of the underground" – with Dedé's dismissive "et cetera," Alvarez pokes fun at the overeager North American *gringa dominicana* while situating the reader within Dedé's weary Dominican point of view, thus letting the reader in on the joke

even as Dedé's comments take the reader to task. Indeed, even as the *gringa dominicana* models the reader's lack of political consciousness, the novel never provides her perspective, which further strengthens Alvarez's political project of aligning the uninitiated reader with Dedé's viewpoint.

However, because the reader does not have access to the *gringa dominicana*'s thoughts, the novel lacks a sense of her political growth over the course of her conversations with Dedé. Because the interviewer leaves roughly halfway through the novel, her presumed political maturation, given her assumed role as Alvarez's alter ego, occurs largely outside of the diegesis, much like Oscar's. Acting as a synecdoche for the uninitiated reader who approaches the Mirabal story with little, if any, previous knowledge, the *gringa dominicana*'s political maturation, like that of the reader, occurs off-stage. The reader's conscription into the narrative reveals the intertwining of authorship and readership such when the *gringa dominicana* leaves, her departure signifies that the reader of the novel no longer needs a proxy within the narrative. While up to this point the interviewer's thoughts have been focalized through Dedé's own imaginings of what the *gringa dominicana* could be thinking (to the extent that Dedé imagines the interview questions as stemming from her own reflections), now that she no longer has to rely on the presence (and trope) of the interviewer, Dedé is free to examine her role in her sisters' story and finish telling the narrative without a diegetic audience. In this way, the narrative also frees Dedé to claim the story as her own, as the *gringa dominicana*'s absence suggests the removal of the interviewer as the author of the text. As the interviewer departs, Dedé tells her, in response to Minou's invitation to visit again, "'Yes, now that you know the way'" (174). Like the *gringa dominicana*, the reader also knows the way, thus removing the need for a narrative guide, a point

underscored by the contrast between the *gringa dominicana*'s need for directions at the beginning of the novel and her departure in the middle.

Yet before the reader can "know the way," the novel traces Dedé's development as a politicized subject, creating the trajectory of her own revolutionary *bildungsroman* from the time of her sisters' political maturation until after their deaths. Significantly, Dedé's political consciousness coincides with a potential romance plot as she competes with Minerva over the communist Virgilio Morales. Early in her political development, Dedé learns in the newspaper that Virgilio protested the regime at the university along with other members of the Communist party. She realizes "that they were really living – as Minerva liked to say – in a police state" (75). Virgilio facilitates this epiphany because she refuses to see him as the "self-serving and wicked, low-class criminals" (75) the newspaper suggests, but instead as "a fine young man with lofty ideals and a compassionate heart" (75). The disconnect between the newspaper description and Dedé's own judgment inspires her to examine the Trujillo regime more closely rather than accept the regime's narrative of events. Dedé reads the newspaper with newfound curiosity, "evaluat[ing] and reflect[ing] on what she read" (75). More importantly, she questions her earlier point of view by asking, "How could she have missed so much before?" (75) and "What was she going to do about it now that she did know?" (75). In this way, Virgilio inspires Dedé's political maturation as she not only critically examines her country and the Trujillo regime, but also understands that critique is not enough; she must do something with her knowledge.

And yet, the romance plot interrupts Dedé's potential revolutionary consciousness as she chooses Jaimito, who believes in gradual reform. "'If he'd just relax, and stop all this agitating,'" Jaimito argues, speaking of Virgilio, "'then he could stay and slowly work his changes in the country'" (78). Spouting the colonial discourse of gradual change, Jaimito symbolizes the safe

choice. "[A]fraid to face her powerful feelings for Lío" (184) and, by extension, entangle herself in the revolutionary cause, Dedé chooses Jaimito, "although she knew she did not love him enough" (184). A pragmatist, Dedé decides to obey her husband rather than join her sisters in the revolution. Because "[i]t was her marriage she couldn't put on the line" (177), Dedé's decision underscores the incompatibility of marriage plots with revolutionary plots. In choosing the stability of the family and home – and, thus, the Trujillo regime and the nation – Dedé recognizes the collusion between the dictatorship of the home, where she "had gotten bound up with a domineering man" (177) and the dictatorship of the regime. Or, as Minerva, remarks regarding their father, "'His advice was always, don't annoy the bees, don't annoy the bees. It's men like him and Jaimito and other scared *fulanitos* who have kept the devil in power all these years" (179). The dictator in short, does not make a dictatorship; the men and women who refuse to "annoy the bees" do.

Despite this foray into stability, Dedé realizes even before her sisters' deaths that their lives are deeply intertwined. This realization informs her transformation into a revolutionary and an author/scriptor. As we learn from Dedé, "after all her indecisiveness, she had never really had a choice. Whether she joined their underground or not, her fate was bound up with the fates of her sisters. She would suffer whatever they suffered. If they died, she would not want to go on living without them" (193). And yet, Dedé does live and becomes the repository of her sisters' stories. If, in Echevarría formulation, "the author dies, the dictator is killed, the secretary remains to tell the 'true' story (71), then *Butterflies* revises this formulation by merging the figure of the secretary – who remains to tell the true story – with the figure of the author in an act of authorship that, rather than pretending that there is a "whole" story, recognizes the piecemeal

nature of storytelling as much of what Dedé knows derives from the many people who make pilgrimages to her house to tell their role in the story of the Mirabal sisters' deaths.

In the epilogue, in which Dedé listens to the stories of her sisters' last moments, her thought process recalls the secretary's role as the compiler of the narrative. Like the disciples who gather Christ's dicta (*Voice* 76), according to Echevarría, Dedé threads the stories together in her role as scriptor and storyteller as she inhabits first-person narration and, in so doing, finds her own voice. She recounts:

> They would come with their stories of that afternoon – the little soldier with the bad teeth, cracking his knuckles, who had ridden in the car with them over the mountain; the bowing attendant from El Gallo who had sold them some purses and tried to warn them not to go; the big-shouldered truck driver with the husky voice who had witnessed the ambush on the road. They all wanted to give me something of the girls' last moments (301).

Each person Dedé lists – the soldier, the attendant, the truck driver – plays a role in the final scene of the novel proper, the girls' last journey on the mountain where they meet their death. By cataloging her visitors and they stories they tell, Alvarez (via Dedé) stresses the ways in which Dedé's story is in fact a compilation of stories stitched together to form a seemingly seamless narrative, much as the diegetic Dedé herself is a synthesis of Alvarez's research, which includes her own father's letter. Each visitor exposes another seam and, in so doing, points to the text as a collaborative effort between witness and scriptor/author. Or, in the case of Dedé's relationship with the *gringa dominicana*, between witness (Dedé) and interviewer. This doubling of witnessing and storytelling carries with it an imperative to pass the story on, from Dedé's visitors to Dedé to the *gringa dominicana* to Alvarez to the readership of the novel. In this way, the

dictator novel creates chains of signification that rely on imagined filiations via authorial figures such as Dedé and their subjects, such as the Mirabal sisters.

To carry out this imperative to witness, compile, tell and retell, the story needs to be written down; it cannot rely on the orality of the dictator. "And as they spoke, I was composing in my head how that last afternoon went" (301) Dedé tells us, drawing attention to her own act of authorship, which hinges on testimonials and the murderers' narratives (302-303). And yet, even once Dedé knows the whole story, she does not electronically reproduce it as Minou suggests. To tell the story on a cassette per Minou's recommendation would be to align herself with the dictator, "the one who dictates," whose voice "can be *reproduced*" (*Voice* 76). Rather than creating a reproducible version of the narrative – and thus sparing herself the anguish of telling the story over and over again – Dedé tells the story to the *gringa dominicana* and Alvarez who fashions the story into a novel. Yet, rather than taking down Dedé's dictation, Alvarez, in the postscript, confesses to taking liberties with the narrative. "[W]hat you find in these pages are not the Mirabal sisters of fact, or even the Mirbal sisters of legend" (324) Alvarez admits, adding, "So what you will find here are the Mirabals of my creation, made up but, I hope, true to the spirit of the real Mirabals. In addition, though I had researched the facts of the regime, and events pertaining to Trujillo's thirty-one-year despotism, I sometimes took liberties – by changing dates, by reconstructing events, and by collapsing characters or incidents" (324). What we have then is not only a collection of testimonials from the fictional Dedé and Alvarez's research, but also a narrative that threads them together and, in so doing, replaces the singular voice of the dictator with many voices in a collective effort that underscores a proliferation of stories rather than a single narrative, thus emphasizing the collectivity that infuses the revolutionary *bildungsroman*.

Such a collective imaginary crucially points to the ways in which the revolutionary *bildungsroman* becomes a model for passing on a story. By the time Dedé meets with the interviewer, her transition from a scriptor to an author is complete. As Dedé reflects, "When did it turn, I wondered, from my being the one who listened to the stories people brought to being the one whom people came to for the story of the Mirabal sisters?" (312). No longer the person who receives the visitors who make the pilgrimage to her home to explain their roles in the Mirabals' story, Dedé transforms from the secretary compiling and composing the stories to the one whom people, like Alvarez, seek to *tell* the story. While Dedé further contemplates, "When, in other words, did I become the oracle?" (312), she reveals that she is not so much a "mouthpiece of the gods" as she is the mouthpiece of her community, exemplified by the visitors who come to see her, especially in November. The story she tells, then, informs the pedagogical model of the novel by demonstrating how to fashion a narrative as well as how to read it.

Dedé's transformation further underscores her similarity to Alvarez, who also initially served the role of secretary, collecting facts and conducting interviews until she eventually becomes the storyteller, the source for the Mirabal story within the United States. The fictional Dedé and Alvarez share the desire to create a story about the Mirabal sisters. As Dedé explains to her friend Olga, their collective story emerges because "'We had lost hope, and we needed a story to understand what had happened to us'" (313). Alvarez, meanwhile, needs to tell the story of these heroic women to "bring acquaintance of these famous sisters to English-speaking readers (324). By bringing "acquaintance," Alvarez plays on the word's double meaning as a noun, in which acquaintance is a form of filiation and as a verb, where acquaintance describes increasing familiarity, in this case, with the Mirabal sisters. In so doing, Alvarez underscores the relationships she creates between her readers and the Mirabal sisters by making her readers

familiar with the sisters' story such that they form their own filiations with the Mirabals. Further, this quote aligns the diegetic Dedé's motivation to tell the story with Alvarez's, both of which focus on audience: the former wants to share the story with her fellow Dominicans while Alvarez's decision emerges from her wish to broaden the readership for the story to North American readers and to prevent the Mirabals from global forgetting.

Invented Filiations and the Revolutionary *bildungsroman*

In this chapter, my concern has been to show how Díaz and Alvarez revise both the dictator novel and the *bildungsroman* towards revolutionary ends by offering models of political development. Crucially, these models do not depend on heterosexual love as the foundation for kinship but, rather, underline the importance of invented filiations, or fictive kinships, rather than heterosexual romances. Invented filiations in *Oscar Wao* and *Butterflies* largely pivot on homosocial relationships, between Oscar and Yunior as well as Alvarez and Dedé. The emphasis on the social, rather than the sexual, highlights the need to imagine new forms of sociality outside of Trujillo's perverse family romance.

By turning towards invented filiations rather than romantic love, Yunior and Alvarez highlight the instability of romance from Trujillo's predatory, capricious relationships to the false ending to the novel Yunior attempts to install in *Oscar Wao*. As Ramón Saldívar remarks, *Oscar Wao* contains no less than three distinct endings ("Imagining" 12-13), which points to the failure of Oscar's relationship with Ybón to offer narrative closure through "the classical plot of the love story" (13). While Saldívar rightly points to Oscar's failure to be "redeemed by romance" (14), he neglects to fully account for the full potentiality of "utopian desire" (14) in the text, which *does* follow "the heroic story of deferred success" (13) only such success is achieved

beyond the text, through the reader's revolutionary instruction. Similarly, Alvarez's postscript reveals her own utopian desires as she imagines a future readership capable of following the Mirabals' example.

Both Yunior and Alvarez focus on their imagined readership. Yunior's fantasy of a grown-up Isis who learns her family history through Yunior's story and Oscar's archive models the behavior of the reader of *Oscar Wao* who similarly learns the de León family history. In much the same way, Alvarez's postscript outlines how the story should be read by her imagined readership. While both authors focus on the North American reader as the subject of conversion, we must also remember the centrality of the figures that model such narratives of political development as they complicate conventional narratives of hemispheric relations where one character allegorically represents the North and another, the South. Díaz and Alvarez encourage their readers to assume a Dominican perspective, thus subverting conceptions of development more broadly as North American readers face their own underdevelopment regarding hemispheric ties. Simultaneously, they are tasked with assuming the southern perspective of already politically developed subjects, such as Yunior and Dedé.

In taking on the colonized subject's perspective, North America readers gain access to a globalized worldview from which they are typically protected as they fail to see their direct connection to wars abroad. As Fanon reminds us, "The colonized, underdeveloped man is today a political creature in the most global sense of the term" (40). In other words, the colonized subject is "a political creature in the most global sense of the term" because this subject experiences the everyday ramifications of colonial violence and occupations. In this same passage, Fanon remarks on people who cannot understand why a colonial subject would buy a radio over a dress then goes on to list a number of prominent African political leaders with

whom the colonized is familiar (40). In this way, Fanon underscores the importance of the radio as it keeps the colonized apprised of the political shifts that directly impacts their lives. North American readers, on the other hand, can buy the dress instead because they do not understand the extent to which their lives depend regime upon changes.

Homi Bhabha explains this conundrum more forcefully when he observes that the colonized subject becomes an instructive figure. In his foreword to *The Wretched of the Earth*, he points to the incongruity between a decolonization that aspires to liberation and a globalization governed by the free-market, and asks, "In what way, then, can the once colonized woman or man become figures of instruction for our global century?" (xi). Díaz and Alvarez suggest that, despite the caution with which hemispheric studies should be approached, the colonized figures in their texts demonstrate how the North American reader can ethically and judiciously engage with the Americas more broadly, in large part by recognizing the shared political histories that link the hemispheres. In so doing, this reader can better understand how US globalization depends upon imperialism to maintain the illusion of free-markets and democracy. Understanding how their support for US endeavors contributes to oppression abroad, North American readers must at least recognize that not only are they are a part of the shared history of war, genocide, and dictatorships in the Americas, but also that their inaction and willful ignorance make them complicit with the US policies that lead to the continued instability of governments south of the border.

Indeed, the importance of instructing a North American audience about wars and dictatorships abroad informs this project as a whole as scenes of instruction permeate the texts discussed in this dissertation. Chapter one outlines how Richard Wright comprehends the stakes of the nationalist movement in the Gold Coast by speaking to Africans he meets there in much

the same way he interviews Spaniards to learn about the horrors of the Franco regime. Similarly, in chapter two, I discuss how Dueña Alfonsa's lengthy monologue in the middle of Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* details the history of the Mexican Revolution to John Grady Cole. While the first two chapters emphasize the importance of scenes of instruction, the last two chapters highlight genres and relationships explicitly based on instruction, as we saw with the mentor/mentee relationship in chapter three with the guerrilla conversion narrative and the author/reader relationship in the revolutionary *bildungsroman* discussed here. The emphasis on instruction in each of these texts demonstrate how readers can become historical individuals through resistance, albeit minus the deification implicit in Hegel's notion of "world-historical individuals" because, as Alvarez reminds us, such idealized figures make "the challenge of [the Mirabal sisters'] courage as impossible for us, ordinary men and women" (*Butterflies* 324).

In this way, the new forms of sociality Díaz and Alvarez outline along with those in the previous chapters demonstrate the necessity of generic revision and renewal to see how genres from elsewhere have significantly impacted US literature. Further, by examining genres that developed as a response to imperialism, such as the guerrilla conversion narrative and the dictator novel, we can see how US ethnic literature participates in creating the literatures of the Americas more broadly. This formative engagement with historical events and genres from the so-called periphery reshapes our understanding of US literature by tracing alternative lineages – and new political imaginaries – for US literature that reveals its revolutionary possibilities.

Conclusion

Monkey Hunting's Historicity

Traditional history, the way it has been written, interpreted and recorded, obviates women and the evolution of home, family, and society, and basically becomes a recording of battles and wars and dubious accomplishments of men.

- Cristina García
Interview in *Michigan Quarterly*

While much of this dissertation has been about the fictive kinships that increasingly replace the conventional heterosexual romance, I want to end by discussing what it means to write history, particularly given García's remarks about the "dubious accomplishments of men" (610). By examining the revolutionary unconscious, I argue, we can shift discussions from such dubious accomplishments towards histories that uncover other actors than "world-historical individuals" to unearth alternate temporalities – including ones that resists García's teleological sense of "evolution" – and forms of kinship.[1] By looking away from a "recording of battles and wars," I look towards the revolutionary possibilities that are uncovered when we read texts that are informed by, but not explicitly about, revolution.

As the first two chapters demonstrate, depicting the aftermath that follows wars reveals resistance to imperialist nostalgia. Richard Wright's Spain is one of decay, one so foreign that it "was not a Western nation" (*Pagan* 228) and yet, was also excluded from the revolutionary promise of the Bandung conference. While Wright visits an empire in ruins, María Cristina Mena's "Doña Rita's Rivals and Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* demonstrate how notions of a romanticized Mexico deny not only the historical present, but the future as well. In other words, we cannot think contemporarily without understanding the earlier revolutions – like

[1] As Jameson explains, "what Hegel infamously called 'world-historical individuals,' […] dominated the historical novel at least until more modern forms of nationalism – the allegorical protagonists of the nation and the people – took their place, and the lower classes of peasantry and proletariat began to make sporadic appearances" (*Antinomies* 263).

the Mexican Revolution – that shape our present moment. The next two chapters illustrate the alternate histories that can be told once the "dubious accomplishments of men" are decentered. Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* and Nintochka Rosca's *State of War* clear a space for queer characters in revolutionary history and, in so doing, offer imaginative possibilities outside of heterosexual romance and linear development. Similarly, Junot Díaz and Julia Alvarez offer models for the revolutionary conversion of the uninitiated reader, thus demonstrating how readers can become historical individuals through resistance.

What each of these chapters has in common, then, is a concern with *whose* history is written and, I would add, how the way history is written informs revolutionary imaginaries. I want to end, then, by foregrounding the genre that unites each of these texts together: the historical novel. More specially, I turn to Cristina García's novel *Monkey Hunting* (2003) to examine how multiple, intersecting histories are narrated and how the novel emphasizes the displaced, non-contemporaneous engagement with the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Ostensibly a multigenerational history that portrays the immigration of a Chinese man, Chen Pan, to Cuba in 1857 and the lives of the three generations that follow, *Monkey Hunting*'s preoccupation with the legacy of the 1959 revolution further meditates on the relationships among China, Cuba, and the US. García's narrative may be set in the past, but her project unfolds as a history of the present as she illustrates how the lines of conflict and solidarity among the three nations began long before communism.

As Ramón Saldívar argues in his work on the genre he terms historical fantasy, postrace American ethnic fiction is "the radical reconfiguration and recapitulation of the history of fictional genres and classical forms of the novel" ("Imagining" 18). For Saldívar, generic mixture signals an opportunity for creating new ways of imagining and theorizing race,

particularly historically. This new conceptualization of historical fantasy marks contemporary literature with a more pronounced edge intended to redeem, or perhaps even create, a new moral and social hierarchy" (6). In this way, historical fantasy allows for the expanded notions of kinship and intimacy detailed in this project as the novels I discuss revise social hierarchies. Further, in Saldívar's view, examining historical fantasy allows us to see the intersection of multiple genres at work and, importantly, how form directs us to "what is absent in realism, magical realism, and metafiction" (12), which compels the reader to make sense of these absences and thereby forge "links between the *fantasy of the imaginary* and the *real of history*" (14). However, in noting how contemporary ethnic literature represents representation – in his example, *Oscar Wao* stages fantasy rather than representing it (14) – Saldívar points to the ways in which these novels exceed the logic of both history and fantasy.

While Saldívar usefully points to the excesses of form in contemporary ethnic literature, I would add that the proliferation of genres within a text forms a crucial part of this radical reconfiguration. Indeed, unlike Saldívar, I argue that such proliferation, rather than marking a postrace aesthetic, underlines the opposite as the multiple histories and genres at work signal a persistent preoccupation with deeply racialized histories. Further, as discussed more explicitly at the end of the last chapter, the novels I examine demonstrate a concern with losing these histories as scenes of instruction crop up again and again in these texts, always with the intention of elaborating on earlier historical circumstances.

In this way, the political work of *Monkey Hunting* – and for the novels in this dissertation more generally – arises from the adaptions and adjustments the text makes by turning to specific literary genres to narrate particular historical circumstances. For example, the novel expands the reach of the slave narrative to chart Chen Pan's journey to Cuba through imagery that recalls the

Middle Passage from the claustrophobic spaces below deck to the suicides on board, thus transforming a genre with which we are already familiar towards new narrative ends. Further, the multiple genres the novel deploys – "the slave narrative, family saga, historical and immigrant fiction, prose, and poetry" (Moiles 167) – demonstrates the larger project of the texts in this dissertation to rework existing genres such as the gothic while also developing new ones, such as the guerrilla conversion narrative, as ways of resisting the singular narrative of US exceptionalism. Moreover, each text I discuss in this dissertation demonstrates the multiplicity of and competition among genres as different histories in each text require different genres. As Jameson reminds us in *The Political Unconscious*, genre provides one way to recover submerged histories. I extend this claim to underscore the ways in which the proliferation of genres enables us to examine the multiple, intersecting, suppressed histories that illuminate how deeply US literature has been shaped by revolutions elsewhere such that by tracking these texts we can unfold an alternate revolutionary history in much the same way that Chen Pan's resistance offers an alternate history of Chinese-Cuban relations.

To demonstrate the depth of the connections among China, Cuba, and the US, I focus on a single character, Chen Pan's great-grandson Domingo, whose historical amnesia reproduces that of the US more broadly and exemplifies the importance of a deeper, richer sense of family and, by extension, history. In Vietnam, "Domingo started checking out other books from the library – cowboy stories, a volume on tropical diseases, a history of the American Civil War – the more remote from his life, the better" (212), completely unaware of how these books touch on his own family history. Aside from his grandfather Lorenzo's role as an herbalist (and thus healer of tropical diseases), Chen Pan details the relationship between his family and the American Civil War as "Confederate refugees had come to Cuba from the American South and

pawned their weapons and pearl stickpins at his shop" (176). While for Domingo the American Civil War exists at a comfortable distance from his life, little does he know that his family's wealth in part stems from transactions with Confederate soldiers. By viewing history as "remote" from his life, Domingo fails to recognize the overlapping, entangled histories that join Cuba with the US South.

Domingo's lack of awareness results in the lost connections that tie his concerns about fighting for the US in Vietnam with Chinese participation in wars for Cuban independence. More specifically, unmindful that he contributes to a tradition in his family of fighting for a nation that excludes him, he proves the centrality of his people to US history as Chinese soldiers aided Cuba in winning the Spanish-American war while Domingo himself fights in Vietnam. As Chen Pan informs us, during the Ten Years' War in 1868, he delivers machetes to the Chinese commander, Sebastián Sian (87) and sends "the money he'd made off the Spaniards, who had departed Cuba by the shipload" (175) to Jose Martí's army during the Spanish-American War. He also notes the bravery of his fellow Chinese who "fought under Calixto García, Napoleón Arango, all the great leaders" (246) and "fought everywhere in the eastern provinces – in Las Villas, Quemado de Güines, Sierra Morena, San Juan de los Remedios, Camajuaní. When they were captured, they pretended to speak no Spanish, but not a single one ever surrendered or betrayed the Cuban cause" (246-257). While Chen Pan recalls a rich tradition of patriotism, Domingo's lack of knowledge forecloses the possibility of tracing his experiences in Vietnam within a longer history of his family's contributions to patriotic endeavors in the Americas.

This historical amnesia demonstrates how a single historical narrative emerges, thus erasing the multiple and intersecting histories that are also a part of the story. Indeed, it further reveals that world-historical individuals are not the only contributors to the "battles and wars"

Cristina García refers to, but, rather Chinese shopkeepers in Cuba and Chinese Cuban immigrants to America in Vietnam. What this richer, more complex history uncovers are the ways in which national affiliation fails to signify national belonging. As exemplified by the Chinese soldiers who refuse to speak Spanish, language operates as a form of subterfuge that actually hides national origin to protect the chosen homeland. Even as national origin can lead to divided sympathies, Commander Sian's response to the Spanish soldier "who pleaded for his life in perfect Cantonese" (178) during the Ten Years' War demonstrates the complexity of national and linguistic ties. The soldier's ability to speak Cantonese signals a form of linguistic affiliation with Commander Sian, a connection made even stranger by the fact that the soldier is Spanish. Language, however, does not supersede nationality in this scene as Sian slits the soldier's throat, which not only kills him, but also prevents him from speaking further, thus severing this potential affiliation.

The unique position of Domingo in Vietnam points to a broader, more complicated history even as he registers a flattened sense of his own background. Domingo only explicitly refers to his Chinese background when he wonders whether "some distant relative would kill him. He'd heard that Chinese advisers were all over the VC" (110), which demonstrates his acknowledgement of his complex family history. However, when Domingo worries that "his fellow soldiers would mistake him for a Viet Cong and shoot him dead" (107), he describes his difference as follows: "[w]ith his heavy accent and brown skin, how could he be American?" (107). Domingo's failure to signify as American stems from his Cuban accent and mixed heritage, the brownness of his skin recalling his grandfather Lorenzo's, who could be taken "for a light-skinned *mulato*" (188). Domingo's skin, like Lorenzo's, recalls Lucrecia's, tying both

men to blackness rather than their Cuban, Chinese, and, in Domingo's case, American, affiliation, thus pointing to the multitude of differences that Domingo's body signifies.

And yet, the "distant relative" Domingo references is not so distant after all – because his grandfather Lorenzo's first family stayed in China, this raises the possibility that Domingo would be killed by his cousin, Lu Chih-mo, his aunt Chen Fang's only son. The problem, then, of Domingo's flattened version of history persists as not only does he remain oblivious to the longer history of his family's contributions in the Americas, but he also remains unaware of their contributions in China. While the Americas and China may seem far apart, the 1959 Cuban revolution and the Vietnam War illuminate how closely and how often the two are drawn together as Domingo's immigration to the US stems from his father Pipo's refusal to subscribe to the ideals of the Cuban revolution. Meanwhile, Chen Fang is similarly at odds with China as Mao's government imprisons her for her associations with the bourgeoisie even as her son Lu Chi-mo stakes his career on "his reputation running an important southern province. A reputation, no doubt, built on corpses" (230). In this way, García draws connections between revolutionary China and revolutionary Cuba alongside those "between mid-nineteenth-century China and pre-Castro Cuba" (Moiles 179-180). For García, then, the present cannot be understood without recourse to a more extensive history that accounts for the imperial and colonial endeavors that undergird contemporary relations among each nation.

Gaining a better understanding of these deeper histories requires exploring what Domingo terms "cross-cultural lusts" (209) that pull together people from across the world and create new races (209). As Lisa Lowe details, Chinese indentured servants were brought to Cuba to forestall a revolution among Black slaves (*Intimacies* 23), a concern shared throughout the Americas, particularly after the Haitian revolution. However, as Lowe also demonstrates, despite

attempting to create a distinct social class from Black slaves (31), colonists could not deny "the variety of contacts among slaves, indentured, and mixed peoples living, working, and surviving together in the Americas" (34), which she calls an "emergent formation of the intimacies of four continents" (34). As Domingo ponders the perils of his own mixed intimacy with Tham Thanh Lam, the Vietnamese prostitute he impregnates, he ultimately decides to abandon her, thus following another family tradition of leaving as Chen Pan and Lorenzo both desert their first families in China. In a way, Pipo leaves too as he refuses to embrace the Cuban revolution.

The history of Chen Pan's family, then, does not follow the paradigm of the historical romance in which the hero's romantic love interest allegorically represents the shift from the antiquated past to a progressive future. Rather, as Lowe's hemispheric framework demonstrates, expanded ways of viewing history reveal the intimacies that arise from the "cross-cultural lusts" that make it impossible to understand history without also understanding the complexity of family ties that account for multiple intimacies with or without romantic love. If we better understand such intimacies, we can better see what forms of filiation link together a Chinese Communist (Lu Chih-mo), a Chinese Cuban exile (Pipo) and a Chinese Cuban African Vietnamese boy (Domingo's unnamed son). Turning away from world-historical individuals allows us to more closely examine the ties that bind for a richer sense of not only history, but also the present.

Returning to Domingo's library book selections – "cowboy stories, a volume on tropical diseases, a history of the American Civil War – the more remote from his life, the better" (212), I want to end by emphasizing that we know and learn these histories through genre. Cowboy stories portray the push of Manifest Destiny and the subsequent attempts to control the "wild west." The volume on tropical diseases tells a slightly different story as cataloguing diseases also

catalogues foreign encounters as tropical medicine arose as a specialty with the specific mandate to protect colonists abroad.[2] Finally, Domingo reads a history book, a book presumably remote from his life, yet tied to it within a larger hemispheric framework that links up the plantation and hacienda systems. In this way, our broader understanding of Domingo's background also transforms our understanding of the books he reads as, in seeking to find an escape from his life, Domingo stumbles across multiple genres that track the history of imperial expansion and colonial conquest.

While Saldívar's discussion of a transnational imaginary examines "the social, cultural, and political intersections of multinational populations across nation-states" ("Imaginary" 9), Lowe's notion of the intimacies of four continents focuses on forms of hemispheric intimacy that account for "cross-cultural lusts" as a way to investigate historical connections that, while driven by multinational capital (albeit in a much earlier form), are forged out of resistance as empires taxonomized and regulated racial intermixture because of the threat such intimacies posed. In other words, these intimacies signal the ways in which desire overcomes difference to establish cross-cultural solidarities. In this way, Chen Pan embodies such a threat as he staunchly supports Cuba's struggle against Spain.

If the last half of this dissertation emphasizes forms of resistance to perverse family romances, then I conclude by remarking upon the oppositional family romance García proposes by tracking the intimacies that arose from a single Chinese immigrant to Cuba. While colonial violence informs this dissertation as a whole, *Monkey Hunting* becomes one way to excavate the longer histories of resistance to such violence. In this way, forms of intimacy and kinship reveal

[2] See Farley, *Bilharzia: A History of Imperial Tropical Medicine*.

their centrality to the revolutionary unconscious as they offer new models for solidarity and resistance and generate new genres to combat the tyranny of a single story.

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