CTSJ

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*Cover art by Chloe Ford

The Department of Critical Theory and Social Justice at Occidental College strives to provide students with the theoretical and practical tools that emerge from the international history of ideas in order to resist violence inherent in ideologies of ageism, ableism, colonialism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, whiteness, and capitalism. Through theoretical interventions and practical solutions, the scholarship and activism of students published here resists these forces of oppression. Echoing the introduction to the fifth volume of Critical Theory and Social Justice: Journal of Undergraduate Research, this volume is produced in a time of strife at its home campus. In November 2015, Occidental students occupied the Arthur G. Coons Administrative Building for nearly a week in protest against the Administration's poor commitment to diversity, equity, and 'inclusive excellence' to POC, queer, and female identifying students. Now, almost a decade later, hundreds of Occidental students occupied the main quad by setting up a 'solidarity encampment' in protest of Israel's genocidal actions against Palesinians and the College's complicity in said genocide. The encampment at Occidental occurred in the wake of numerous student encampments and occupations across the country. Many encampments have faced threats from the institution, violent state repression, and aggressive zionist counter protestors. Amid the violence and repression, what stands out is the resiliency of the communities which are protesting the violence in Gaza. In light of the 2015 occupation, the editors of the fifth volume noted, "What is pertinent in this event is the consideration for theoretical interventions in the discourses that have made this event possible." This is true of the current situation as well. The recognition that our tuition is enabling a genocidal apartheid regime and the relationship of the Palestinian struggle to nearly every other movement against oppression compelled students, faculty, and community members of various backgrounds and positionalities to support the encampment and demand the College to divest. Following an eight day encampment, Occidental administrators agree to calling a vote by the board of trustees on the issue of divestment. It is through student protests such as this one where the discourses of Critical Theory are applied towards actual change, raising the scholarship in the field and of individuals to new heights.

The articles presented in this volume utilize a range of theoretical frameworks and cover a variety of issues. Even so, we urge our readers to keep Palestine in mind as they engage with the diverse array of articles presented in this volume. In doing so, we not only deepen our understanding of the multifaceted nature of oppression but also affirm our solidarity with those fighting for liberation everywhere.

This volume of Critical Theory and Social Justice: Journal of Undergraduate Research would not have been possible without the collective effort and support of numerous individuals and resources. The editors extend our gratitude to the faculty of the Department of Critical Theory and Social Justice at Occidental College, and especially to our faculty advisor, Professor Moazzam-Doulat. Your patience, flexibility, and guidance have been instrumental during these tumultuous moments of academic inquiry and social discourse. An additional thanks to all the graduating Senior Editors: Emily Crouse, Bahar Tuncan, Ezgi Koc, Claire O'Callahan, Raina Pahade, and Gieselle Gatewood. We acknowledge and celebrate their exemplary service, leadership, and commitment, which have been invaluable to the success of this issue. Lastly, to our dedicated readers, we extend our appreciation for your engagement with critical inquiry and transformative discourse. Your commitment to exploring alternative perspectives and challenging normative ideologies is essential to the advancement of knowledge and social justice.

સોનું (Gold)

Acrylic on canvas, 36x30 in, 2023.

Raina Pahade | Occidental College

Growing up, I have always seen how gold jewelry was something so special in my culture. All my aunties had pieces they wore, things they got for their grandchildren; they would show me pictures of their wedding jewelry or something their great-grandma gave them. Even my friends have a chain they wear every day or an earring from their grandma. I wanted to capture the importance of inherited gold jewelry within the South Asian diaspora amongst South Asian women. Not only are the jewelry pieces themselves important, but also the act of getting ready, putting the jewelry pieces on, has always felt like a sacred space for me, shared amongst women and family. Whether it's my grandma, my mom, or my cousin, someone is always there to help me clasp my necklace or provide a backing for an earring. And I'm not the only one who gets to participate in this intimate space; my community also has stories of getting ready together, sharing a mirror, two aunties helping put on their sari. I wanted to show the diverse array of jewelry that is meaningful within the diaspora; each piece is so unique, comes from a different region, its own local method of making, and has its own story. Lastly, historically, gold jewelry was often the main source of financial agency for many South Asian women. So to me, jewelry is always more than a necklace. There is much more behind it.

Much love to: my mom (Soni), Auntie Tanvi, Nena (Duksha), Pooja, Ella, Auntie Neelam, Sneha Auntie, Prekshaya, Neha, Nikki Auntie, Audrey, Auntie Meeta, Auntie Mirah, Sejal, Sonali, Khadeja, and Jaya.

"Real War Refugees": Examining the Racialization of Migration in the Context of the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis Using Discourse Analysis

Katrina Matta | The Harkner School

Abstract

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, prompted an outpouring of support for fleeing Ukrainian refugees. There were cries of solidarity across social media and street protests worldwide combined with border-opening policies like the European Union's activation of the Temporary Protection Directive. Subsequently, the response wrought criticism over the apparent double standard between the treatment of Ukrainian refugees and treatment of Syrian and Afghan refugees, or other populations of color escaping crises in recent years. This disparity reflects the different sentiments directed at Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees, which many scholars have argued is a result of racism. Through a discourse analysis of 275 Twitter comments responding to 16 news stories about refugees from The Guardian, The Independent, Daily Mail, and The Telegraph, the presence of these (un)welcoming attitudes within the public opinion, as expressed by Twitter users, was investigated. Three major themes in the sentiments towards these groups were identified: (1) the idea of the cultural *other*, (2) perceptions and hierarchies of deservingness, and (3) the securitization of migration. The current study argues that these themes comprise the foundations of the present racialization of migration within public opinion, which both gives rise to and widens the disparity in treatment faced by refugees.

Introduction

After the launch of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the world has faced a new refugee crisis, with an estimated one million Ukrainians fleeing their homeland within just the first week of war.[1] The global response has been overwhelmingly welcoming, with the activation of the 2001 Temporary Protection Directive by the European Union (EU) for the first time in its history offering Ukrainians the ability to reside in the EU for up to three years without requesting asylum.[2] Additionally, while not as permissive as the EU policy, the United Kingdom (UK) established the Ukraine schemes, which consist of two visa programs requiring refugees to have either a family member or sponsor in the UK to apply.[3] Conversely, in response to the

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[1]   "'Senseless War' Forces One Million to Flee Ukraine: UN Refugee Chief," UN News, last modified March 3, 2022, https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113192.

[2]   "EU Invokes Temporary Protection Directive to Help Those Fleeing Ukraine," European Website on Integration, last modified March 3, 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/eu-invokes-temporary-protection-directive-help-those-fleeing-ukraine_en.

[3]   "Settlement Schemes for Ukrainian Refugees," South Cambridgeshire District Council, https://www.scambs.gov.uk/commu-

2015 Syrian refugee crisis, when over one million people fled conflict in primarily Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the EU embarked on extensive and costly efforts to keep these refugees out: investing in border control, bargaining with Turkey to deter asylum seekers, and imposing various legal hurdles on asylum seekers, including assigning a quota to the number of refugees accepted into the EU.[4] Similarly, the UK's programs for Syrian and Afghan refugee resettlement are far less accessible than the Ukraine schemes, often not open for application and making applicants exclusively eligible by referral.[5]

Many scholars have pointed to the idea that this disparity in treatment is a result of racism, and is a demonstration of how concepts like the cultural *other* and a perceived deservingness of asylum, are intertwined with race, influencing the discussion of migration. An impactful example of this phenomenon, other than policies, is in the media coverage of these crises. One instance is in the widespread use of "migrant" over "refugee" when referencing populations of color, as the term "refugee" carries connotations of humanity and sympathy.[6] Similarly, studies show that news articles humanize Ukrainian refugees through writing individual profiles and tend to emphasize their innocence at higher rates than Syrian or Afghan refugees, which can influence readers' perceptions of these populations.[7] Changing global attitudes towards migration is evident in media coverage, and its new conceptualization of migration over the last several decades as an issue of security can foster negative sentiment to non-white refugees who begin to be perceived as a threat.[8]

Using the ideas of a hierarchy of deservingness, the cultural *other*, and the securitization of migration as a theoretical framework, this paper seeks to examine how discourses around racism have contributed to the disparity between the treatment of Ukrainian refugees and refugee populations of color by examining racism in public discourses of migration. To glean knowledge of public opinion, publicly available comments on Twitter responding to news articles discussing Syrian, Afghan, and Ukrainian refugees from four British newspapers across the political spectrum (The Guardian, The Independent, The Telegraph, and Daily Mail) were examined. The sentiments expressed in these comments were classified using discourse analysis to answer the following question: What do the differing sentiments faced by Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees as expressed by the

nity-safety-and-health/support-for-ukraine/settlement-schemes-for-ukrainian-refugees/.

4   Priyanka Boghani, "The 'Human Cost' of the EU's Response to the Refugee Crisis," PBS, last modified January 23, 2018, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/the-human-cost-of-the-eus-response-to-the-refugee-crisis/.

5   Peter William Walsh and Madeleine Sumption, "Q&A: The UK and the Ukraine Refugee Situation," The Migration Observatory at the University of Cambridge, last modified August 24, 2022, https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/qa-the-uk-and-the-ukraine-refugee-situation/.

6   Simon Goodman, Ala Sirriyeh, and Simon Mcmahon, "The Evolving (re)categorisations of Refugees throughout the 'Refugee/migrant Crisis,'" *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2017): 111, https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2302.

7   Nina Rosstalnyj, "Deserving and undeserving refugees? An analysis of the EU's response to the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 compared to the refugee influx from Ukraine in 2022" (master's thesis, Central European University, 2022), 18-20.

8   Pietro Castelli Gattinara, "The Politicization and Securitization of Migration in Western Europe: Public Opinion, Political Parties and the Immigration Issue," *Handbook on Migration and Security*, 291, https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785360497.00024.

public through Twitter comments on newspaper articles reflect about the racialization of migration?

Based on the discourse analysis of 275 comments across 16 news articles, the present study argues that the disparity between the treatment and perception of Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees stems from the themes of the cultural *other*, differing perceptions of deservingness among different populations, and the securitization of migration. Before examining this data, this study will portray how these crises and theories have been discussed in the literature. Then, it will explore the ideas of *otherization*, the ontological hierarchy, and the securitization of migration as a theoretical framework. The next section of the paper will focus on methodology, and the fourth section will analyze the data in relation to the proposed question before concluding.

Literature Review

This literature review will discuss two major bodies of research. First, it will examine literature analyzing the racism in the Western news media towards Middle Eastern refugees. The second section will explore previous investigations of the disparity between the treatment of Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugee populations.

Racism Towards Refugees of Color in Western News Media

The racism present in Western news media discussions of refugees has been well-documented and established as a multifaceted, pervasive phenomenon. One prominent manifestation of this racism is in the dehumanization of refugee populations via a variety of journalistic techniques. Azevedo et. al, related the large group images often used in Western news articles about the Syrian refugee crisis to a harmful "removal of individuality."[9] Similarly, in their 2017 content analysis of European news, Chouliaraki and Zaborowski identified the "ambivalent humanity" granted to refugees of color based on the silencing of refugee voices in the European news through their low levels of quotation compared to European politicians.[10] Georgiou and Zaborowski's 2017 report, which examined 1200 newspaper articles from a variety of European and Arabic-language publications across the political spectrum, also noted this voicelessness, and they urged increased contact between refugees and journalists to combat this issue and recognize the refugee community.[11] Additionally, a large volume of the literature concerning the humanization of Middle Eastern refugees addresses the tragedy of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian toddler whose body was photographed after he drowned attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. A

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9   Ruben T. Azevedo et al., "When the Lens Is Too Wide: The Political Consequences of the Visual Dehumanization of Refugees," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8, no. 1 (2021): 14, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00786-x.

10   Lilie Chouliaraki and Rafal Zaborowski, "Voice and Community in the 2015 Refugee Crisis: A Content Analysis of News Coverage in Eight European Countries," *International Communication Gazette* 79, nos. 6-7 (2017): 646, https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727173.

11   Myria Georgiou and Rafal Zaborowski. "Media coverage of the "refugee crisis": A cross-European perspective," *Council of Europe*, 2017.

study by Klein and Amis established how the publication of Kurdi's picture resulted in a significant decrease in dehumanizing language and prompted expressions of compassion, emphasizing the impact of humanization on the perception of refugees.[12]

Researchers also highlighted the persistent framing of Middle Eastern refugees as an *other*, and subsequently their perception as a threat. Krotofil and Motak's critical discourse analysis of Polish newspapers' headlines recognized this *othering* rhetoric, noting prominently the idea of the "religious *other*" and the fear of the perceived danger of "Islamization."[13] Additionally, Khosravinik's 2014 article found refugees are consistently portrayed in the British press not only as a cultural other and a threat to the British cultural fabric and social order but also as a physical danger.[14] As established by Ihlamur-Öner, the framing of Middle Eastern refugees as a physical threat reflects the emerging "migration-terrorism nexus," including the negative stereotypes and racism surrounding Islamophobia and global efforts at counterterrorism.[15] Each of these themes will be reviewed in detail in the theoretical framework.

Disparities Between Ukrainian and Refugee Populations of Color's Treatment

After Russia launched the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, much new literature emerged examining the global response to the following refugee crisis. The sudden influx of refugees primarily to European countries provides an opportunity to investigate how the crisis has uncovered the different discourses around and attitudes toward refugee populations.

Several news and journal articles identified the disparity between the international Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugee responses in the media coverage of these crises.[16] One prominent example featured in the literature is in blatantly racist statements made on broadcast, like when former Deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine, David Sakvarelidze, said on BBC News, "It's very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blond hair … being killed every day".[17] Additionally, Rostallnyj noted that articles featuring

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12   Janina Klein and John M. Amis, "The Dynamics of Framing: Image, Emotion, and the European Migration Crisis," *Academy of Management Journal* 64, no. 5 (2021): 1333, https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2017.0510.

13   Joanna Krotofil and Dominika Motak, "Between Traditionalism, Fundamentalism, and Populism: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Media Coverage of the Migration Crisis in Poland," *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis*, 2018, 73, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67961-7_4.

14   Majid Khosravinik, "Immigration Discourses and Critical Discourse Analysis: Dynamics of World Events and Immigration Representations in the British Press," *Contemporary Critical Discourse Studies*, 2014, 515.

15   Suna Gülfer Ihlamur-Öner, "Delinking the Migration-Terrorism Nexus: Strategies for the De-Securitization of Migration," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 2 (2019): 196.

16   For example:
Moustafa Bayoumi, "They Are 'Civilised' and 'Look like Us': The Racist Coverage of Ukraine," *The Guardian*, March 2, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/02/civilised-european-look-like-us-racist-coverage-ukraine; McCloskey, Stephen. "The War in Ukraine Has Revealed a Hierarchy of Victims." *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review* 34 (2022): 138-49; Nadine White, "The racial bias in western media's Ukraine coverage is shameful," *The Independent*, February 28, 2022, https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/ukraine-refugees-racial-bias-western-media-b2024864.html.

17   Bayoumi, "They Are 'Civilised.'"

Ukrainian refugees tend to provide more identifiers and details that are often framed to elicit empathy in the reader, avoiding the harmful collectivization and aggregation experienced by refugee populations of color as described above.[18] Although McCloskey included the discussion of policy differences while Rosstalnyj chose to center her research on different forms of media, both their works further describe how the media response to the war in Ukraine demonstrates a "hierarchy of victims" or a hierarchy of deservingness of victimhood.[19]

Similarly, in their analysis of intersecting dynamics at the Polish border, Opiola et. al emphasized the role of racialized *othering* in creating the double standard faced by Middle Eastern refugees.[20] Paré also argued that the idea of *othering* serves as the psychological foundation of the "selective solidarity" granted to Ukrainian refugees and as a catalyst for *other* phenomena that negatively impact refugees of color, like the securitization of migration.[21]

The present study seeks to contribute to these existing bodies of literature by first analyzing the public opinion as expressed by Twitter users rather than directly reviewing policies or media coverage, and secondly by examining the racist discourses aimed at Middle Eastern refugees with the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Understanding the public opinion and current public discourses around migration is an essential step in addressing the iniquities imposed on refugees, as public opinion has the power to influence political actions and create political demands.[22]

Theoretical Frameworks for Analysis

Othering

Othering will be defined here as actions which aim to perpetuate the idea that a group is fundamentally different from another due to an aspect of its identity (race, ethnicity, etc.) as it is socially constructed, and because of these differences the minority group does not belong and should thus be actively excluded.[23] This process of constructing an "us" versus "them" implies that one group is superior to the other, in many cases resulting in the dehumanization of the minority population.[24] This dehumanization creates the ontological

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18   Rosstalnyj, "Deserving and undeserving," 18-20.

19   McCloskey, "The War in Ukraine," 138.

20   Opioła et al., "War and Politics. The 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Refugee Crisis on the Eastern EU Border from the Perspective of Border Studies," *Pogranicze. Polish Borderlands Studies* 10, no. 1 (April 25, 2022): 15, https://doi.org/10.25167/brs4791.

21   Céline Paré, "'Selective solidarity? Racialized othering in European migration politics," *Amsterdam Review of European Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2022): 53.

22   Alessandra Buonfino, "Between Unity and Plurality: The Politicization and Securitization of the Discourse of Immigration in Europe," *New Political Science* 26, no. 1 (2004): 24, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0739314042000185111.

23   Oscar Thomas-Olalde and Astride Velho, "Othering and Its Effects — Exploring the Concept," *Writing postcolonial histories of intercultural education* 2 (2011): 27.

24   Thomas-Olalde and Velho, 30.

hierarchy, or hierarchy of being, as defined below, which facilitates the discrimination and abuse of these populations. Additionally, by generalizing populations into *others* or "thems," they become more susceptible to harmful stereotypes which further foster negative sentiment.[25] Migrants are especially vulnerable to this *othering* because of the way their unique position, both in terms of their transnational identity and citizenship status, interacts with the politics of belonging, which serves as "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" and emphasizes the idea of division .[26] Media plays a large role in how these identities are assigned, as often the majority's exposure to the *other* is through media, and thus, the media controls the narrative of the *other*.[27] When the media depicts refugees as subscribing to stereotypes, dehumanizes them, or actively perpetuates the *other* narrative, it generates anti-migrant sentiment. Thus the idea of *othering* is a vital part of understanding current attitudes towards migration.[28]

The Ontological Hierarchy

Through the process of *othering* as defined above and other socially constructed divisions, the ontological hierarchy has emerged as a system of assigning values to human lives and populations. White, European individuals are placed at the topmost echelon using racism and the perceived distinction between European and non-Europeans as justification.[29] Additionally, the struggles migrants face with the idea of belonging as outlined above can affect their perceived value, since as Yuval-Davis highlights, "[b]elonging [...] is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are valued and judged."[30] It follows that migrants' identity and state of belonging being in flux, negatively impacts their perceived value in the socially constructed ontological hierarchy. This mechanism is often witnessed in discussions of coloniality and the colonial difference due to its systemic effect on the orders and practices of the postcolonial world. This is featured prominently in the work of Mignolo, who commented on "the coloniality of power that converted differences into values and hierarchies."[31] This concept is reflected in migration in the perceived greater value and subsequent deservingness of asylum of crisis victims who hail from European

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25   Thomas-Olalde and Velho, 41.

26   John Crowley, "The politics of belonging: some theoretical considerations," in *The Politics of Belonging: Migrants and Minorities in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Andrew Geddes and Adrian Favell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 30.

27   *Racism, Ethnicity and the Media in Africa: Mediating Conflict in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Winston Mano (London • New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 302.

28   Victoria M. Esses et al., "Justice, Morality, and the Dehumanization of Refugees," *Social Justice Research* 21, no. 1 (2008): 4-25, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-007-0058-4.

29   Walter Mignolo, "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference," *The South Atlantic Quarterly 101*, no. 1 (2002): 57-96, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/30745.

30   Nira Yuval-davis, "Belonging and the Politics of Belonging," *Patterns of Prejudice* 40, no. 3 (2006): 203, https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331.

31   Mignolo, "The Geopolitics," 71.

states as opposed to those from the Middle East, which results in more generous policies and welcoming attitudes toward European refugees.[32]

The Securitization of Migration

The reconceptualization of migration as a security issue has gained traction over the past several decades, reflecting the attitudes of fear surrounding migrant populations.[33] Often when migrants hail from populations of color, they belong to the cultural *other* and they become viewed as a threat to the receiving nation's cultural identity.[34] By introducing new cultures, beliefs, and practices to the country, migrants of color are then also assumed to pose the risk of destabilizing the political and social order. Another common anti-migrant sentiment is the idea that immigrants will exploit the native population, whether through accepting welfare or taking job positions.[35] To protect against these perceived dangers, states impose restrictions and enact policies aiming to exclude these populations from their nations, such as by creating border control organizations and securing their borders.[36] Additionally, events like 9/11 and the 7/7 London bombings have fueled a global focus on counterterrorism, further associating migrants with an urgent need to securitize and defend against them.[37] These borders also exist symbolically, and concepts like everyday bordering demonstrate how an increased focus on securitization at the local level through processes like passport checks has brought *othering'* into the spotlight and widened divisions in society.[38]

In the context of the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis, the rapid influx of refugees of color was met with xenophobic, nationalist policy, and the EU embarked on this securitization and closed its borders.[39] Conversely, the EU opened its borders to Ukrainian refugees in 2022 largely because they were not perceived to carry the same alleged hazards as populations of color do: Ukrainians are believed to share many cultural similarities with residents from other Eastern European and Baltic countries, and "race" as it is socially constructed associates them with prosperity rather than destabilization and new contributions in place of exploitation, heightening this perceived familiarity and eliminating risk to the dominant group.

Methodology

32   McCloskey, "The War in Ukraine," 144.

33   Frank Bovenkerk, Robert Miles, and Gilles Verbunt, "Racism, Migration and the State in Western Europe: A Case for Comparative Analysis," *International Sociology* 5, no. 4 (1990): 476, https://doi.org/10.1177/026858090005004008.

34   Thomas-Olalde and Velho, "Othering and Its Effects," 41.

35   Gattinara, "The Politicization," 275.

36   Ayse Ceyhan and Anastassia Tsoukala, "The Securitization of Migration in Western Societies: Ambivalent Discourses and Policies," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (2002): 22, https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754020270S103.

37   Buonfino, "Between Unity," 47.

38   Nira Yuval-davis, Georgie Wemyss, and Kathryn Cassidy, "Everyday Bordering, Belonging and the Reorientation of British Immigration Legislation," *Sociology* 52, no. 2 (2017): 239-40, https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038517702599.

39   Boghani, "The 'Human'," PBS.

Data Collection

Discourse analysis was used to investigate Twitter commenters' discourse about British newspaper articles covering the Ukrainian, Syrian, and Afghan refugee crises. Discourse analysis is a qualitative methodology that allows for interpretation of the context when assessing the data.[40] This method is particularly applicable to discourses around racism, as recognizing the implicit racist assumptions and biases that can factor into the articulations of the text is vital to their understanding.

To select articles and comments for analysis, British newspapers were sampled due to Britain's relative geographical proximity to the Syrian, Afghan, and Ukrainian refugee crises and subsequent greater involvement in the Ukrainian refugee crisis compared to other English-speaking countries, like the United States of America. Next, articles were limited to the following publications: The Guardian and The Independent, both liberal newspapers, The Telegraph, a conservative newspaper, and The Daily Mail, a conservative tabloid. Newspapers across the political spectrum were selected to ensure a wide range of ideologies was reflected in the data, a decision supported by Khosravinik's findings, which identified influential narrative differences in the portrayal of migrant populations among conservative, liberal, and tabloid publications.[41]

To access the publicly available comments, articles on Twitter posted between March 14 to September 30, 2022, were analyzed, as one of the most prominent British refugee policies, the Homes for Ukraine scheme, launched on March 14. For each of the four publications, articles were sampled from the designated timeframe provided they had at least five comments, filtering out repeat comments as well as comments in languages other than English. Next, four articles were randomly selected from this pool using the random number method, where each article was assigned a number, and a random subset was selected using a generator. Further, two articles for each newspaper focused on Syrian or Afghan refugees and two articles featured Ukrainian refugees, resulting in the analysis of 275 comments across 16 articles. Only articles posted from the publication's primary official account were considered due to the difficulty of tracking Quote Tweets, Retweets, and article links. Comments with attached images were included in the analysis.

Data Coding

To begin, the retrieved Twitter comments were copied into a Google Spreadsheet. After data familiarization and reading through each of the comments, each data point was categorized into one of five broad categories: Welcoming/Unwelcoming - Non-Ukrainian, Welcoming/Unwelcoming - Ukrainian, or N/A. These

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40   Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, "Analyzing discourse," in *Analyzing qualitative data*, ed. Alan Bryman and Robert G. Burgess (London: Routledge, 1994), 48.

41   Khosravinik, "Immigration Discourses," 517.

categories were selected as a means of identifying the overarching sentiment expressed in each comment to then facilitate the isolation of more specific themes. The first four categories were assigned based on the sentiment expressed in the comment as well as the population referred to in the Tweet, and "N/A" denoted any comments with ambiguous sentiments towards refugees or otherwise unrelated content to the proposed research question (Table 1).

Table 1 Broad Categorization of Retrieved Twitter Comments

	Broad Categorization of Retrieved Twitter Comments	
	Non-Ukrainian	Ukrainian
Total Number of Comments	204	71
Positive (%)	20.10	36.62
Negative (%)	63.73	33.80
N/A	16.18	29.58

Next, using the method defined by Potter and Wetherell, comments were coded for notable sentiments related to refugees, and then organized to uncover themes in the discourses.[42] Following a thorough review of the data, the themes were named and examples were selected for each.

Using this approach, the most prominent themes returned included the following (listed in descending order of frequency): a) the concept of refugees as the cultural *other*, with associated language often pointing to the constructions of refugees as a threat to the receiving nation, physically or via disrupting the cultural order; b) perceptions of deservingness of asylum, victimhood, or life, which often interacted with the idea of the *other*; and c) the securitization of migration. This paper will next analyze these themes and their presence within the public discourse as well as how they have contributed to the racialization of migration.

Results and Analysis

This section will first describe the instances of the identified themes, next examine how the themes often interconnect and overlap, and lastly, use these comments to demonstrate the racialization of migration within the public discourse.

Identification of Themes

As outlined in the above Methods section, comments frequently advanced the ideas of the cultural *other* in response to discussions of migration. The language used to establish this differentiation varied, from using the pronouns "we" or "they" to describing a perceived outright difference between the receiving country and country of origin. This delineation is seen in the comments below, which both refer to Middle Eastern refugees.

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42   Potter and Wetherell, "Analyzing discourse," 47-68.

- "And we are agreeing to this?"

- "It might be normal in your country but it's not in others. You should adapt and assimilate to the culture and not live in a bubble."

While *othering* appeared in discourses around both Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees, it appeared at far higher rates for Middle Eastern refugees, comprising 7.04% of the comments pertaining to Ukrainians compared to 26.96% for Syrian and Afghan refugees.

Additionally, the theoretical framework outlined how this *othering* can engender stereotyping, and the recurrence of racial stereotypes combined with *othering* language within the comments, like in the following, demonstrates this phenomenon.

- "No, it's the opinion of the powerless majority who aren't sexual deviants."

- "Their religious belief has some explanations to that."

The second theme witnessed most commonly in the comments was the diverging perceptions awarded to Middle Easterners and Ukrainians, whether it be debating the legitimacy of their claim to asylum, the validity of their victimhood, or their deservingness of life. This theme was present in 18.3% of the discourses around Ukrainian refugees, and 12.25% of those around Middle Eastern refugees, though, notably, 53.85% of those around Ukrainians argued for their deservingness as opposed to none of those around Middle Eastern refugees. One such example is below.

- "Different people see this differently. Ukraine is being subjected to merciless genocide by an invader they didn't ask to come. Afghans were in a civil war due to a majority party that sponsored terrorism against the west. That's before cultural, religious & language differences."

The third most frequent theme was that of the securitization of migration, which often manifested itself in mentions of the (il)legality of different refugees' movements. See below.

- "The #Guarbage must stop exploiting illegal invaders as a desperate clickbait strategy. #ILLEGALimmigrants #illegalimmigration #invasion #guardian"

Similarly, several comments like those written below urged defending against the constructed image of refugees as a threat, which, as defined in the theoretical framework, serves as a key motivation for the global focus on border control and security.

- "Still want uncontrollable unchecked immigration here get in touch with reality"

- "And then there'll be some human rights bull shit reason as to why he can't be deported despite the fact that he is a danger to everyone"

Impactfully, discourses around Middle Eastern refugees featured mentions of the securitization of migration at a disproportionate rate to those around Ukrainians, with 13.24% of comments referencing the theme compared to none with those responding to articles concerning Ukrainians.

Intersections of the Themes

Through examining the comments, it can be determined that each of the three major themes identified previously often interact and amplify each other within the discourses, developing several sub-themes, a few of which have been mentioned briefly above. For example, racial stereotyping stems from the idea of the cultural *other*, which expands into the perception of the *other* not just as intrinsically different, but also as a threat, fueling the securitization of migration.

This notion of *othering* can also complicate conceptualizations of deservingness, which was witnessed in the comments in two main ways. First, the "us" group often questions the attribution of resources to the "them" and argues they are not more deserving of aid than the receiving country's population. Language within this discourse often employs the delineation of "we," "our," and "them" together with mention of these resources, as provided below.

- "Housed and fed before our homeless! These economic migrants should not be moaning. Send them back!"
- "Give it three months, and they would've been in dinghies coming over to Britain to get their freebies."

Here, "economic migrants" and "freebies" invoke this perceived unjust distribution of resources simultaneously with the idea of the *other*, which appears in the choice of pronouns. Similarly, the second primary interaction between the practice of *othering* and the construction of deservingness lies in the effect of *othering* on the dehumanization of the "them" population. Dividing populations into different implicit groups creates a hierarchy of being, with the white, European population awarded the highest value of life at the top of the pyramid, as explored in the theoretical framework. In doing so, the division impacts whose life is more deserving of saving. This sentiment appears in the discourse again through the use of *othering* language and an expressed disregard for the loss of refugee life, as seen in the following comments, which responded to news of the discovery of 77 Syrian migrants' bodies after the boat they were traveling on sank.

- "Shame it wasn't the ones coming from France 🤣"
- "Shame it wasn't more 🥹"

The usage of "the ones" not only dehumanizes but also *others* Afghan refugees, which together with the

general disrespect for the victims' lives demonstrate this intersection. In response to the same article, the following comment demonstrates a confluence of these themes and subthemes: *othering*, deservingness of resources, and deservingness of life.

- "sorry, but I cannot bring myself to think this is horrible. Illegally plundering the resources of the Europe WE built after they screwed up their countries while they complain of colonialism that created something for them to build on after independence"

It is of note that per the comments retrieved and analyzed in this study, discourses around Ukrainian refugees did not feature this same dehumanization and rather only expressed concerns over an iniquity of resources, demonstrating the racism embedded in the processes of *othering* and defining the ontological hierarchy.

The three major themes that emerged through my analysis are interconnected, and their intersections provide powerful examples of the forces behind anti-refugee sentiment within the public discourse.

The Racialization of Migration

Per Grosfoguel, racialization is "the process through which groups (frequently the dominant ones) use cultural and/or biological features/criteria to construct a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority among collective social actors."[43] In the discourses examined in this study, several themes, like the use of *othering* language, were identified which essentially served as the cultural criteria for the dominant group, or the population of the receiving country, to designate hierarchies. Within the context of migration, these hierarchies came to dictate who deserved, as socially constructed, to achieve the primary goals of a refugee: to receive asylum and consequently life. This stratification manifested itself often in the retrieved comments, as established. The stark differences in the discourses around Ukrainian versus Syrian and Afghan refugees demonstrate the role of racism as a driving force in this division, as Ukrainians were frequently perceived to be less of an *other* than Middle Easterners, and thus they were awarded a higher position on the migration pyramid. Consequently, the data demonstrates the racialization of migration within the public opinion, and since, as established by Buonfino, public opinion holds great influence over the political landscape, this racialization in part engenders the negative sentiments faced by Middle Eastern refugees.[44]

Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the racialization of migration in public opinion as expressed through Twitter comments to news articles discussing refugees. Through discourse analysis, several themes

43   Ramán Grosfoguel, "Race and Ethnicity or Racialized Ethnicities?," *Ethnicities* 4, no. 3 (2004): 326-27, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796804045237.
44   Buonfino, "Between Unity," 24.

were identified as playing a fundamental role in shaping the differing sentiments directed at Ukrainian and Middle Eastern refugees. Further, these themes, most notably the idea of the cultural *other*, a deservingness hierarchy, and the securitization of migration, often intersected, thereby intensifying each other. These themes may reflect the perceived ideological origins of the differing sentiments faced by Ukrainian, Syrian, and Afghan refugees, and in doing so demonstrate the racialization of migration within the public opinion, a motivating factor in the disparity in treatment experienced by these populations.

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Yeshua

Arden Courtney Collins | Occidental College

This collagraph print is an exploration of historical Jesus. His identity can be seen in the words behind him, reading, from top to bottom: "Yeshua" the likely original pronunciation of Jesus' name written in Aramaic, "Palestinian" in Arabic, and "Jewish" in Hebrew. Jesus inhabited both Jewish and Palestinian identities simultaneously, identities that seem so disparate today. To me, this piece serves as a reminder that the conflict and death happening in Gaza is not intractable, and there is hope for peace.

Gueules Cassés

Arden Courtney Collins | Occidental College

Meaning "broken faces" in English, Gueules Cassés depicts six WW1 veterans who suffered facial disfigurement in battle. It is a reflection on the horrors of war and the physical and mental impact it has on people. While the piece is meant to provoke discomfort, staring the bleak reality of violence in the eye, I hope it can also normalize people living with facial deformities--many gueules cassés faced discrimination and ostracisation when they returned home.

Participation mystique: A contradiction to the oppressive ideology of the Western World in *Borderlands/La Frontera*

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Abstract

The present paper argues that Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* is a criticism of *subject-object duality* — an ideology embedded in the unconsciousness of today's world order that produces dehumanization. Through writing from the perspective of the subaltern and the use of metaphors, Anzaldúa repositions subject-object duality as *a* truth rather than *the* truth and proposes an alternative way of thinking. She names this new method of thinking the *new mestiza consciousness*. However, this way of thinking is not new, but rather comes from an indigenous philosophy called *participation mystique*. Anzaldúa uses participation mystique as an alternative to subject-object duality, where she proposes that the identity of the subject and the object are blurred and that all knowledge is subjective. All humans produce knowledge and have knowledge produced about them, and all of this knowledge is both fact and myth at the same time. Anzaldúa demonstrates participation mystique through the use of metaphors connected to land and indigenous knowledge of the Americas as well as through challenging binaries such as "history/myth" and "rational/irrational."

Introduction

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa writes from the perspective of her marginalized identities. Being indigenous, Chicana, a woman, queer, and a product of the borderlands of Texas and Mexico has allowed her to construct a new history and ideology of the subaltern. Specifically, Anzaldúa uses the ideology and knowledge of indigenous cultures to deconstruct the current "world order" that was constructed by Western ideology and universalized during the colonization of the global south. According to Anzaldúa, the Western ideology that creates today's world order is *subject-object duality*, a philosophical concept that is the basis for a Western ideology which categorizes people of color as "objects" that cannot produce their own knowledge. The ideology produced by subject-object duality also organizes the world through hierarchies and structures created by violence, domination, and colonization. In addition to her critiques of the ideologies of the Western world, Anzaldúa introduces a different ideology called the *new mestiza consciousness*. This ideology is not new however, but rather is an ideology used by a wide variety of indigenous cultures called *participation mystique*. The current essay argues that in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa uses participation mystique to contradict the oppressive ideology based on subject-object duality of the Western world and envision a world

where power is redistributed between indigenous groups of Latin America and colonizers. She demonstrates these contradictions through the use of metaphors and reorganizing what "subjectivity" means.

Literature Review

Anzaldúa writes from a postcolonial perspective, which criticizes the colonization of the global south and its consequent creation of inequitable power relations that exist as of today. During the colonization of Latin America, Europeans universalized a subjective way of thinking called *modernity* in order to secure their position of power over non-white indigenous groups. According to Walter Mignolo, Europe's creation of an ideology called modernity normalized the domination of indigenous populations in the global south.[1] Modernity justifies the excessive power that the Western world has by celebrating the achievements of Europe and hiding the fact that those achievements were obtained through the dehumanization of indigenous populations, particularly in the global south. Europe created the historical "facts" of the world through the creation of a subjective narrative that normalizes the domination of indigenous people by Europeans. Anzaldúa uses a postcolonial perspective to argue that the narrative of modernity created by the Western world still dehumanizes non-white people to this day.

Anzaldúa not only challenges the "facts" of the dominant historical narrative, but also challenges the very concept of what the ideology of modernity considers to be a "fact." Within the development of the ideology of modernity was the scientific revolution.[2] During this period, a binary was solidified where what is rational and objective exists separate from the irrational and subjective. In "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification," Bornstein-Gómez builds on the postcolonial perspective of Mignolo to explain how Anzaldúa interrupts this binary.[3] Bornstein-Gómez explains that focusing on what is "logical" and "rational" was a way of inferiorizing the knowledge of indigenous groups in Latin America. Through the binary, the Western world creates artificial categories to separate their knowledge production from the knowledge production of the indigenous groups that they colonized. It is important to note that it is the Western world that determines what knowledge fits into the category of rational and objective. Ironically, however, it is impossible for the West to produce objective knowledge if it is this very knowledge that establishes their power and identity. In "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," Susan Stryker uses the concept of the categorical rational/irrational axis for knowledge to explain that there exists "subaltern knowledge," a knowledge that a dominant group (such as Western civilization) considers to be inferior.[4] Subaltern knowledge is the narratives and

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1   Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity.*
2   Ibid.
3   Bornstein-Gómez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification".
4   Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies".

ideologies of People of Color and indigenous people. According to Bornstein-Gómez, subaltern knowledge is not valued because Europeans placed the production of knowledge of People of Color in the category of "subjective" and "irrational" on their invented axis.[5] In other words, Europeans decided that knowledge of non-white people did not meet their arbitrary standards of being "rational."

Within the ideology of modernity, there exists an ideology named subject-object duality, which originates from the French philosopher René Descartes. The present paper argues that subject-object duality is a focal point in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, as Anzaldúa proposes that the duality is used to dehumanize indigenous populations in Latin America. In *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes originally defined subject-object duality to be a way to separate the mental and the physical. To Decartes, only the mind could think and describe the rest of the world, and therefore, he called the mind of a human being the "subject" that produces knowledge. The "object" is everything that is physical, and includes the body and environment of human beings. The role of the object is to be *described* by the subject.[6] For example, an object can be a tree, which cannot produce its own knowledge because it cannot think rationally. The subject, which is the mind of a human being, can produce knowledge about the tree through descriptions and classifications. Subject-object duality inspired the creation of modern Western science, where there is a separation between the individual and the rest of the world so that the individual can describe and classify the world in a way that is "objective" and "rational." However, according to Scheffler in "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology," Westerners reinterpreted subject-object duality to justify the colonization of indigenous people by classifying indigenous people as "objects" that could not think rationally and therefore could not produce knowledge. By doing so, Europe dominates through description by creating an untrue narrative where indigenous groups are "naturally inferior" to the Western world.[7] In the poem "We Call Them Greasers," Anzaldúa writes from the perspective of the European colonizer to demonstrate the positionality of colonizers as the "subject" and Mexicans as "objects": "[The Mexicans] weren't interested in bettering themselves, / why they didn't even own the land but shared it. [...] It was a laughing stock / them not even knowing English."[8] Here, the subject (the colonizers) justify their power through defining the Mexican people as deficit thinkers. According to Tara Yosso, deficit thinking is the belief that if non-white groups do not have the cultural capital of Western societies and have difficulty navigating systems built for white people, then they are "deficient." Deficit thinking does not acknowledge that non-white people and non-Western cultures have their own knowledge that is just as valuable as that of white peo-

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5   Bornstein-Gómez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification".

6   Descarte, *Meditations on First Philosophy.*

7   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166.

8   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 154.

ple.[9] In the poem, the European colonizers (the subject) classify the Mexican person as deficient for not owning their own land and not speaking English because these are important cultural values for the subject. Western colonizers use their own subjective cultural values to justify colonization and specifically the stealing of land from Mexican people. Anzaldúa demonstrates in her poem the existence of a subject-object duality, where Mexican people are placed in the position of the "object" because their knowledge production (which includes their cultural practices and their language) are not valued by the Western world. However, it is important to note that these power relations are completely unfounded because sharing one's land with the community and speaking Spanish are just as important as Western values. Anzaldúa therefore rejects Western logic and imagines possibilities outside of it.

Borderlands/La Frontera metaphorically contradicts subject-object duality and proposes a new way of thinking that does not dehumanize people. Anzaldúa creates contradictions through reintroducing participation mystique, which is an indigenous ideology that opposes the dominant Western ideology. In "Jung and Lévy-Bruhl," Segal uses the psychoanalytic perspective to analyze the interpretations of participation mystique by Carl Jung, the Western psychologist who popularized the term. According to Segal, participation mystique has two parts. The first part, the "participation," describes a way of thinking where there is no separation of the subject and the object. The borders between a person and the rest of the world are blurred. This is a contradiction to Western logic because a person can exist as both a tree and themselves, but also be distinct beings at the same time. The second part, the "mystique," is a way of thinking in a way that is "mystical" or "magical" instead of logical. In other words, it is using emotions and concepts such as the soul to explain one's world. Carl Jung describes participation mystique to be an "inferior" ideology because it does not follow Western rationality.[10] According to Matthew Fike in "Depth Psychology in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*," Anzaldúa uses the mystique concept to demonstrate that participation mystique is not an inferior way of thinking, but rather just another way to interpret the world. Fike interprets Anzaldúa to believe that the world of the soul, the imagination, and the unconsciousness is in some ways just as real as the physical world because both produce important yet subjective knowledges.[11] Anzaldúa challenges Western ideology by challenging the presumptions it makes about the world.

The present literature review explains how knowledge production in the world is dominated by Western knowledge and oppresses People of Color and indigenous populations. In addition, the sources show how Anz-

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9   Yosso, "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth.", 70.
10   Segal, "Jung and Lévy-Bruhl".
11   Fike, "Depth Psychology in Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*", 54.

aldúa challenges dominant ideology and produces her own knowledge by going beyond metaphorical borders. However, there are currently no texts that propose that Europe's use of subject-object duality to maintain unjust power relations was a primary criticism in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Furthermore, although Fike explained Anzaldúa's usage of "mystique," there is a need to explain how Anzaldúa uses the "participation" aspect of participation mystique as well to contradict subject-object duality. The present essay bridges the gap by conceptualizing *Borderlands/La Frontera* as a process that contradicts subject-object duality through the use of participation mystique, an ideology that imagines a different relationship between the subject and object and redistributes power to the subaltern (which includes indigenous people in the global south).

The use of metaphors

Anzaldúa interrupts the ideology of the Western world through her use of metaphors connected to land and knowledge of the indigenous Americas. She uses border theory to create a metaphor which compares the construction of dualities to borders. According to border theory, separating land (such as the rigid border between Mexico and the United States) is an artificial process. The particularly tense border relations between Mexico and the U.S. can be attributed to the U.S.'s attempt to separate itself from the global south and maintain inequitable power relations. In the beginning of her book, Anzaldúa describes the border between Mexico and the U.S. as "an open wound"[12] because these artificial borders limit the natural flow of resources, people and culture. After describing physical border relations, Anzaldúa moves into the ideological realm to explain the tension at the border. Anzaldúa compares physical borders to ideological borders: "Our psyches resemble the border-towns [...] Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads."[13] Here, Anzaldúa explains that physical borders are a reflection of the ideological separations in one's mind, such as subject-object duality. Like physical borders separated by a wire fence, subject-object duality proposes that an entity may only exist on one side of the fence, as either the subject or the object, not both**.** However, according to Anzaldúa, it is not possible to separate the subject and object in the same way it is not possible to separate the natural flow of people and culture with a wire fence.

Anzaldúa's border theory can also be applied to the power relations that result from subject-object duality. Subject-object duality is a system where the subject maintains power through controlling the narrative and creating a rigid ideological boundary between the subject and the object. According to Scheffler, when colonizers created classifications and narratives about the global south, it trapped the global south's identity within a

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12   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 3.

13   Ibid, 87.

fixed position, without histories of their own.[14] Being in a fixed position as the "object," the global south lacks power because its knowledge production is undervalued. It is important to note that this organization of power relations is artificial. According to Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*, power is fluid and it is impossible to situate power within a person or a group. Instead, power exists through knowledge production.[15]

Following the metaphors within border theory, subject-object duality creates a duality within power, where power is trapped within the limits of the subject and theoretically does not exist in the identity of the object. This duality is an invention of the Western world to limit the flow of knowledge and maintain Western hegemony. Anzaldúa uses water as a metaphor to demonstrate that the organization of power in subject-object duality is forced and artificial. For example, Anzaldúa includes a poem by Isabel Parra to describe the struggle to cross borders: "Al otro lado está el río / y no lo puedo cruzar/ al otro lado está el mar / no lo puedo atravesar" (On the other side is the river / and I cannot cross / on the other side is the ocean / and I cannot go through).[16] Here, the object has to cross "the other side" to reach the river and the ocean, but they cannot do so. If one compares the fluidity of water to the fluidity of knowledge production and power, the poem can be interpreted as a metaphor about the boundaries and limits that is created by subject-object duality. The ideology of subject-object duality creates rigid boundaries between the subject and the object, where one cannot be the subject and object at the same time. These rigid boundaries allow the Western world to control knowledge production and as a result, maintain power and dominance. Anzaldúa demonstrates that subject-object duality dehumanizes the "object" (the global south) because it prevents the object from crossing the artificial limits that the subject created to maintain power.

Subject-object duality creates artificial power imbalances by controlling who can and who cannot produce knowledge. Through the duality, the Western world (the subject) can paint their own reality as they create subjective descriptions about indigenous groups. This causes dehumanization. Anzaldúa's poem "We Call Them Greasers" is a poem that describes the knowledge production of Western colonizers: "[The Mexicans] knew their betters:... / took off their hats / placed them over their hearts, / lowered their eyes in my presence."[17] Here, the (Western) narrator incorrectly interprets the action of the Mexican people in the poem. The narrator interprets removing one's hat and lowering one's eyes as a way to show submission to the colonizers. In reality, these actions are a common way in Mexican culture to show courtesy and respect to others.[18] The Western world

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14   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166.
15   Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 92-98.
16   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 139.
17   Ibid, 134.
18   Bornstein-Gomez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification", 49.

acts as a subject that paints a subjective reality about the non-Western world in a way that justifies its hegemony. Non-Western groups such as indigenous groups and Mexican society are thus trapped within the position of the object, where they are deprived of power because they live within the subjective projections of the Western world. Subject-object duality dehumanizes non-Western groups because they must live within an invented narrative where they are classified as inferior.[19] It encourages the world to be organized through domination.

Anzaldúa uses knowledge of indigenous groups (and specifically the Aztecs) to form a metaphor that defines the relationship between the subject and object from the perspective of participation mystique. The metaphor she uses is of an eagle and serpent. In Aztec history, these are opposite symbols but at the same time cannot be separated.[20] Anzaldúa describes that "Together [the eagle and the serpent] symbolize the struggle between the spiritual/celestial/male and the underworld/earth/feminine."[21] In the text, the eagle and the serpent symbolize the subject and the object, where the eagle is the subject and the serpent is the object. Anzaldúa brings to light the relation between the subject and the object in participation mystique when she describes the features of Coatlicue, a serpent-eagle god of the Aztecs: "She [Coatlicue] has no hands. In their place are two more serpents in the form of eagle-like claws, which are repeated at her feet: claws which symbolize the digging of graves into the earth as well as the sky-bound."[22] The claws of Coatlicue resemble the claws of an eagle, but at the same time, they are made of serpents. In the claws, the serpent and the eagle are the same, but at the same time distinct. According to participation mystique, the same relation exists for the subject and object, where the borders between the subject and object are blurred. They are the same but at the same time distinct. One cannot separate the subject and object because the object creates the subject and the subject creates the object. In other words, participation mystique is the belief that contradictions that come from the knowledge production of the object and subject must be embraced. Every person is the subject and object at the same time because everyone is defined by others and defines others through their own perspective.

Anzaldúa uses participation mystique to describe how subject-object duality obstructs the fluidity of knowledge production, and as a result, traps indigenous civilizations within a fixed perspective without considering that these groups have their own knowledge and perspectives. In her book, she compares subject-object duality to a mirror. When one views themselves in the mirror, they can see and be seen, and in this way there is "subject and object. I and she. The eyes pin down the object of its gaze, scrutinize it, judge it. A glance can freeze us in place; it can 'possess' us. It can erect a barrier against the world. But in a glance also lies awareness,

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19   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166

20   Aigner-Varoz, "Metaphors of a Mestiza Consciousness: Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera", 53.

21   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 5.

22   Ibid, 47.

knowledge."[23] Anzaldúa states that the subject traps the object within a fixed perspective with its gaze. In other words, every gaze/perspective situates a group of people in a certain position of power and produces subjective knowledge about that group. In the case of indigenous groups, being positioned as the "object," and the Western colonizers, positioned as the "subject," the Western gaze traps indigenous people into a false narrative of inferiority. Although a gaze and a narrative can be oppressive, Anzaldúa also recognizes that perspectives give us information because it is how one interprets the world. She uses the mirror as a metaphor to show that the object has their own gaze. The object adopts the role of the subject but at the same time maintains their role of being a product of the gaze of the subject. When one looks in the mirror, there appears two images looking at each other, just as the subject and the object reflect each other. The metaphor describes the ideology of participation mystique. Anzaldúa proposes that although perspectives can trap people, the only way the world can be seen is through subjective perspectives. Additionally, all humans are both the subject and the object at the same time because they can see and be seen by others. Participation mystique interrupts the fixation on Eurocentric knowledge production and focuses on the knowledge production of the "object," or the subaltern.

The Reorganization of "Subjectivity"

Anzaldúa also challenges subject-object duality through reorganizing and redefining "subjectivity." In her book, Anzaldúa proposes that European colonizers created artificial categories to separate their knowledge production from the knowledge production of indigenous populations. The separation also allowed them to devalorize and disadvantage indigenous populations. These categories were created in an attempt to control subjectivity and what is categorized as subjective. The Western world removes subjectivity from the "subject" (themselves) and places it with the "object," where they use this classification as an excuse to devalue the knowledge production of indigenous groups, who are considered the "object." They also justify their knowledge as the ultimate truth through the creation of labels such as "rationality" to erase the subjectivity of their knowledge.

Anzaldúa challenges the concept of "rationality" (which is a way to maintain subject-object duality) through her own narrative of the history and construction of the world. The dichotomy between the rational and the irrational is an ideology created by the European scholars to universalize their own knowledge production (which they call "rational") and devalue the knowledge production of the global south (which they call "irrational"). Anzaldúa states that "White anthropologists claim that Indians have 'primitive' and therefore deficient minds, that we cannot think in the higher mode of consciousness – rationality."[24] Anzaldúa implies that the

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23 Ibid, 42.

24 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.

invention of rationality and irrationality reinforces the rigid boundaries between the identities of the subject and the object. According to Mignolo, the invention of rationality caused the belief that information can be "objective" and one can arrive at objective and true knowledge through using rationality.[25] The Western world uses the word "objective" to describe their own knowledge and classifies all other knowledge as "subjective."

Anzaldúa believes that classifying the world as rational/objective and irrational/subjective is artificial because it is impossible for knowledge to be objective. Additionally, she argues that rational/irrational classifications of knowledge are not useful because it contributes to the oppressive ideology of subject-object duality. Anzaldúa writes, "In trying to become 'objective,' Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them."[26] In their search for objective knowledge about the world, colonizers tried to classify and describe indigenous groups during their explorations of the Americas. However, in the act of classification, they convert indigenous populations into subjective objects of their own imagination. For example, although Christianity promotes their own traditions and spiritual beliefs, "Voodoo, Santeria, Shamanism and other native religions are called cults and their beliefs are called mythologies."[27] Anzaldúa points out the differences in how the religion of non-Western civilizations are treated in comparison to Western religions, despite both having the same degree of subjectivity. Both promote beliefs that cannot be proved. Eurocentric ideologies ignore this contradiction by using a rational/irrational categorization, where Christianity is categorized as "rational" and as a result, the one true religion. At the same time, the religions of the global south are considered "irrational." Anzaldúa interrupts Western narratives by challenging the idea that subject-object duality is the only ideology that is true.

Similarly to how the artificial border between the United States and Mexico has been constructed by white people to benefit themselves, one can see that the words "objective/rational" and "subjective/irrational" have theoretical borders that maintain the power of Eurocentric societies. The axis of rational and irrational is useful for the Western world because it aids in keeping knowledge production within the subject and out of reach for the group defined as the object. If all knowledge that the object produces is "irrational," then only the subject may describe and produce knowledge about the world, because only their knowledge is "rational." Power is placed within the limits of what Europeans classify as "rational." The result is what Foucault names "subjugated knowledge," which is the invention of hierarchies that inferiorize certain knowledge.[28] Anzaldúa argues that the European ideology inferiorizes knowledge of the global south through classifying their knowledge as

25   Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity,* 6.
26   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.
27   Ibid, 37.
28   Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies", 13.

irrational. Additionally, the existence of subjugated knowledge is a product of subject-object duality because it is a way to undervalue the knowledge of the subject.

Anzaldúa contradicts subject-object duality by breaking the objective/subjective paradigm by reclaiming the word "myth." Anzaldúa uses language as a point of non-Western knowledge production to reclaim power to groups positioned as the object. The Western world uses language to maintain subject-object duality, where they create certain words to define, and consequently control, the subaltern. For example, for Europeans, the word "myth" has connotation with what is false or unreal. At the same time, European colonizers used this word to describe the narratives indigenous groups made about their reality.[29] Classifying indigenous knowledge as myths maintains subject-object duality because it removes value from their culture, history, and interpretations of their reality. Europeans describe their own narratives of the world as "history" and indigenous narratives of the world as "myths." Anzaldúa symbolically breaks the thinking of subject-object duality by redefining these words. For example, the first time that she uses the word "myth" in her text, she refers to "the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Aztlán."[30] By placing myth and history together, Anzaldúa implies that they mean the same. This contradicts subject-object duality because it combines two words that come from opposite ends of a Eurocentric axis. Specifically, "myth," which describes subjective or false knowledge, is combined with "history," which describes objective or true knowledge.

When Anzaldúa uses the word "myth" synonymously with the word "history," she redistributes power between the subject and the object. By fusing together myth and history as the same construct, all of what Westerners define as "myth" also becomes history and all that is defined as history becomes myth. Anzaldúa reveals that everything is subjective and all that is defined as myth or fiction comes from the real experiences of the world. When Anzaldúa asks of us to challenge Western ideology as the only way of thinking, she describes it in terms of myths: "Let's all stop importing Greek myths and the Western Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil and soul of this continent."[31] When Anzaldúa refers to the Eurocentric narratives and ideologies as a myth, she reveals the subjectivity of their knowledge and situates it as just one point of view instead of an "ultimate truth." She suggests we abandon the "Western Cartesian split point of view," which refers to the dualities and divisions between concepts such as the subject and object. Although the ideology of dualities is what the Western world considers to be an objective truth, Anzaldúa reconceptualized this ideology as just one point of view. Additionally, Anzaldúa states that "This [subject-object] dichotomy is the root of all

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29   Des Bouvrie, "The definition of myth. Symbolical phenomena in ancient culture.", 12.

30   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 11.

31   Ibid, 68.

violence."[32] Subject-object duality is not useful because it creates oppressive systems. She then moves on to a new way of thinking: "By creating a new mythos — that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the way we behave — la mestiza creates a new consciousness."[33] Instead of dichotomies, Anzaldúa suggests another ideology named the new mestiza consciousness. In this consciousness, dualities are erased by uniting opposite ends of an axis, such as the axis of subjectivity and objectivity.

It is important to note that Anzaldúa does not argue that the new mestiza consciousness is the more "correct" that Eurocentric systems and ideologies. In fact, Anzaldúa is not searching for the most correct or true way of thinking. She argues that the search for the ultimate truth is a concept invented by the Western world, and that it is impossible to find it because subjectivity and objectivity cannot exist separately. Instead, she embraces subjectivity in the new mestiza consciousness. At the end of the first part of her book, Anzaldúa describes the process of moving away from Western ideology and going back to the ideology of the indigenous people of the Americas — participation mystique: "She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the dark skinned, women and queers."[34] Anzaldúa not only creates a subaltern narrative of the history of the world, but also reassembles the values and assumptions that structure our world order. She creates a structure that is empowering for the subaltern and creates an ideology that does not promote a world that is organized by domination. Anzaldúa also makes the subject feminine in the quote which contradicts eurocentric norms of having a masculine subject as the default and further affirms the perspective of the subaltern.

Conclusion

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza is the text of the subaltern, of the groups marginalized by the Western world because it fights for the redistribution of power between the colonizer and the colonized. Anzaldúa brings to light the subjectivity of Western ideology, an ideology that was interpreted as "the truth" and programmed into the unconsciousness of the world. Western ideology created a world organized by domination, where the fight for power inspired Western colonizers to implement subject-object duality. This duality created ideological borders that limited the power and value of the knowledge production of the subaltern. Additionally, the Western world created "rational/irrational" and "objective/subjective" binaries to inferiorize non-Western knowledge and maintain power. Anzaldúa uses participation mystique, an ideology from indigenous cultures

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32   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.
33   Ibid, 80.
34   Ibid, 82.

of the global south, to contradict Eurocentric ideology. Participation mystique is what Anzaldúa incorporates in the new mestiza consciousness because she argues that it is the ideology that most empowers the subaltern and creates a world order that is not based on violence and domination. Participation mystique erases the borders of subject-object duality and creates a new structure where the subject is also the object, but at the same time is still a distinct entity (like a person and their mirror image). This ideology also redistributes power and places value on the knowledge production of the global south. Although participation mystique is not more true or correct than subject-object duality, Anzaldúa argues that it is more useful to the world because it redistributes power to the subaltern: to the indigenous, to the global south, to women, to queer people, and to marginalized groups.

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La participación mística: Una táctica para contradecir la ideología opresiva del mundo occidental en *Borderland/La Frontera*

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Abstracto

Este ensayo sostiene que *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* es un criticismo de la dualidad sujeto-objeto – una ideología cubierta en la inconsciencia del orden mundial que produce deshumanización. Con escribir a través de la perspectiva del subalterno y usar las metáforas, Anzaldúa reposiciona la dualidad sujeto-objeto como una verdad en vez de la verdad absoluta y propone otra manera de pensar. Ella nombra esta nueva manera de pensar como la *nueva consciencia mestiza*. Sin embargo, esta manera de pensar no es nueva, sino que viene de una filosofía indígena que se llama la participación mística. Anzaldúa usa la participación mística como una opción diferente de la dualidad sujeto-objeto, donde ella propone que la identidad del sujeto y el objeto son borrosos y que todo conocimiento del mundo es subjetivo. Todos los seres humanos producen conocimiento y son productos de las narrativas de otras personas, y todo este conocimiento es un hecho y un mito al mismo tiempo. Anzaldúa señala la participación mística a través del uso de las metáforas de la tierra y del conocimiento indígena de las Américas y también a través de desafiar a binarios como "historia/mito" y "racionalidad/irracionalidad".

Introdución

     Borderlands: La Frontera escrito por Gloria Anzaldúa es un libro que usa las identidades marginadas de Anzaldúa (como indígena, Chicana, mujer, cuir y una persona procedente de las fronteras de México y Texas) para construir una nueva historia e ideología del subalterno. Anzaldúa usa la ideología y conocimiento de los indígenas del sur global para deconstruir el "orden mundial", que fue construido por la ideología occidental, y fue universalizado durante la colonización del sur global. Según Anzaldúa, la ideología occidental que crea el orden mundial violento es la dualidad sujeto-objeto que es una dualidad que categoriza a las personas de color como "objetos" que no pueden producir su propio conocimiento. La dualidad sujeto-objeto organiza el mundo por jerarquías y fomenta las estructuras creadas por violencia, dominación y colonización. Además de criticar la ideología eurocéntrica, Anzaldúa anima otra ideología que se llama la nueva conciencia mestiza. Esta ideología se llama participación mística y viene de la ideología de los indígenas. El presente ensayo sostiene que en *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Anzaldúa emplea la participación mística para romper la dualidad sujeto-objeto del mundo occidental para redistribuir el poder entre los indígenas y los colonizadores. Ella muestra las contradic-

ciones a través del uso de las metáforas y de la reorganización del sentido de la "subjetividad".

Bibliografía Razonada

Anzaldúa escribe desde la perspectiva de los estudios poscoloniales, que se centra en los criticismos de la injusticia de la colonización del sur global y su efecto de crear unas relaciones de poder injustas que todavía existen hoy. Después de la colonización del sur global, los europeos universalizaron ideologías subjetivas (conocidas como *la modernidad*) creadas para asegurar su posición del poder. Según Walter Mignolo, los europeos crearon una ideología llamada *la modernidad* para normalizar la dominación de la gente indígena en el sur global.[1] La modernidad justifica el poder que tiene el mundo occidental para celebrar los logros de los europeos y ocultar que obtenían estos logros por deshumanizar a la gente del sur global. Así, los europeos crearon los "hechos" históricos del mundo a través de la creación de una narrativa subjetiva que normaliza la dominación de la gente indígena por los europeos. Anzaldúa usa la perspectiva de los estudios poscoloniales para sostener que la ideología de la modernidad continúa deshumanizando a las personas en la actualidad.

Anzaldúa no solo desafía los "hechos" de la narrativa de la historia, sino que también desafía el concepto de lo que es un hecho según la ideología de la modernidad. Dentro de la modernidad fue la "revolución científica"[2] la que creó la división binaria de lo racional y objetivo por una parte y lo irracional y subjetivo por otra parte. En "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification", Bornstein-Gómez usa el trabajo de Mignolo como su contexto histórico del mundo y usa la teoría poscolonial para explicar cómo Anzaldúa interrumpe este contexto histórico.[3] Bornstein-Gómez explica que el enfoque de lo que es "lógico" y "racional" fue una manera de inferiorizar el conocimiento de los indígenas. Es importante notar que es el mundo occidental el que determina qué es lógico o ilógico. Por eso, es imposible que los europeos puedan producir conocimiento objetivo si este conocimiento establece su poder y su identidad. Los colonizadores europeos crearon categorías artificiales para separar su conocimiento del conocimiento de los indígenas. En "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies", Stryker emplea esta teoría para explicar que existe "conocimiento subyugado" y es lo que el grupo dominante (como el mundo occidental) considera inferior.[4] El conocimiento subyugado es el conocimiento de los indígenas que incluye sus propias narrativas e ideologías del mundo. Según Bornstein-Gómez, este conocimiento no es valorado porque los europeos ponen, dentro de su eje "racional" e

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1   Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity.*
2   Ibid.
3   Bornstein-Gómez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification".
4   Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies".

"irracional", la producción del conocimiento de las personas de color en la categoría "subjetiva" e "irracional".[5] El conocimiento subyugado no es aceptado por las sociedades eurocéntricas porque no cumplen los requisitos de ser "racional".

Dentro de la modernidad existe una ideología que se llama la dualidad sujeto-objeto, creada por René Descartes, un filósofo occidental. La dualidad sujeto-objeto es en lo que Anzaldúa se centra en *Borderlands/La Frontera* y lo describe como una manera para deshumanizar a la gente indígena. *En Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes originalmente creó la dualidad sujeto-objeto para describir la diferencia entre lo mental y lo físico. En otras palabras, Descartes quería decir que solo la mente puede pensar y describir el resto del mundo. La mente de un ser humano es el "sujeto" que produce el conocimiento. El "objeto" es todo lo que es físico, e incluye el cuerpo de los seres humanos y también el medioambiente del mundo. El rol del "objeto" es ser descrito por el sujeto.[6] Por ejemplo, el objeto puede ser un árbol que no puede producir conocimiento porque no puede pensar. El sujeto, que es la mente del ser humano, produce conocimiento sobre el árbol. La dualidad sujeto-objeto inspiró la creación de la ciencia occidental, donde Europa creó una separación entre el individuo y el resto del mundo para describir y clasificar el mundo de una manera "objetiva" o "racional". Sin embargo, según Scheffler en "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", los occidentales reinterpretaron la dualidad sujeto-objeto para justificar la colonización de la gente indígena y para clasificar a la gente indígena como "objetos". Cuando uno pone a otro ser humano dentro del rol de "objeto" en la dualidad sujeto-objeto, es una manera de decir que este ser humano no puede producir su propio conocimiento. Así, el mundo occidental domina por descripción ya que es el que crea conocimiento sobre la gente indígena, poniéndo a los indígenas en una posición desfavorable y a los colonizadores occidentales en una posición de poder[7]. En el poema "We Call Them Greasers", Anzaldúa muestra la perspectiva de los colonizadores como el "sujeto" y los mexicanos como el "objeto". "[Los mexicanos] weren't interested in bettering themselves, / why they didn't even own the land but shared it." [...] "It was a laughing stock / them not even knowing English".[8] Aquí, el sujeto (los colonizadores) justifica su poder para usar el pensamiento deficitario. Según Tara Yosso, el pensamiento deficitario es la creencia de que si la gente no occidental no tuviese la capital cultural (ni conocimiento ni costumbres) de la cultura occidental, serían "deficientes" porque carecen de un conocimiento que es valorado en la sociedad actual debido al racismo sistémico al que se enfrentan. El pensamiento deficitario no reconoce

5   Bornstein-Gómez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification".
6   Descarte, *Meditations on First Philosophy.*
7   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166.
8   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 154.

que la gente no occidental tiene sus propios conocimientos que son tan valiosos como el suyo.[9] En el poema los colonizadores Europeos (el sujeto) nombra a los mexicanos como "deficientes" por no ser dueños de su propia tierra y no hablar inglés porque estos son valores importantes en la cultura del sujeto. Además, los valores de su vida privada fomenta una lucha por la tierra y justifica la colonización. El sujeto llega a la conclusión de que el objeto es inferior ya que no sigue las normas sujetas creadas por el mundo occidental. Los mexicanos en el poema están en la posición del objeto porque su producción de conocimiento (que incluye sus valores y su lengua) no está valorado por el mundo occidental. Sin embargo, es importante notar que estas relaciones de poder son falsas porque compartir su tierra con su comunidad y hablar español son valores tan importantes como los valores de la cultura occidental. Anzaldúa por eso rechaza la lógica occidental e imagina las posibilidades fuera de esta lógica.

Borderlands/La Frontera es una lucha para romper la dualidad sujeto-objeto y reemplazarlo con una nueva manera de pensar que no deshumaniza a la gente. Anzaldúa crea contradicciones a través de resucitar la participación mística que es la ideología de los indígenas que contrasta la ideología del mundo occidental. En "Jung and Lévy-Bruhl", Segal usa la perspectiva psicoanalítica para analizar las interpretaciones de la participación mística de Carl Jung, un psicólogo occidental. Según Segal, la participación mística tiene dos partes. En la primera parte, la participación, consiste en la falta de existencia del sujeto-objeto. Las fronteras entre la persona y el resto del mundo son borrosas. Esto causa contradicciones porque una persona puede ser un árbol y una persona, pero al mismo tiempo son distintos. La segunda parte, la mística, es una manera de pensar de una forma "mística" o "mágica" en lugar de "lógica". En otras palabras, es el uso de las emociones y conceptos, como el alma, como una forma de explicar el mundo. Carl Jung sostiene que la participación mística es una ideología "inferior" porque no sigue la idea occidental de "racionalidad".[10] Según un psicoanálisis de Matthew Fike en "Depth Psychology in Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza", Anzaldúa usa la parte mística en su libro para demostrar que la participación mística no es "inferior", sino simplemente otra manera de ver el mundo. Según Fike, Anzaldúa sostiene que el mundo del alma, la imaginación y la inconsciencia es tan real como el mundo físico y consciente porque ambos producen conocimientos importantes, pero subjetivos.[11] Así Anzaldúa desafía la ideología occidental por contradecir sus suposiciones del mundo.

Los fuentes explican cómo la producción del conocimiento en el mundo es dominado por el conocimiento occidental y oprime a la gente de color. Además, explican cómo Anzaldúa desafía a las ideologías dominantes

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9   Yosso, "Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth.", 70.

10   Segal, "Jung and Lévy-Bruhl".

11   Fike, "Depth Psychology in Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza", 54.

y produce su propio conocimiento a través de superar las fronteras. Sin embargo, no hay ningún texto que se enfoque en cómo el mundo occidental atrapa el poder en límites rígidos, lo que se llama la dualidad sujeto-objeto, ni que conecte esto al texto de Anzaldúa. Además, aunque Fike explica cómo Anzaldúa usa la parte mística cuando ella desafía la ideología occidental, esta fuente carece de una explicación sobre cómo Anzaldúa usa la parte de "participación" en la participación mística para romper la dualidad sujeto-objeto. En el presente ensayo, se retoman distintas fuentes para analizar *Borderlands/La Frontera* como un medio para romper la dualidad sujeto-objeto a través del uso de una ideología que tiene otra construcción del sujeto y objeto y que redistribuye el poder al subalterno (que incluye la gente indígena y el sur global en general), con la finalidad de brindar una nueva perspectiva que sustente la necesidad de un nuevo orden mundial, el cual inspire una nueva forma de pensar y existir.

El uso de las metáforas

Anzaldúa interrumpe la ideología del mundo occidental por su uso de las metáforas de la tierra y el conocimiento de las Américas (indígenas). Anzaldúa usa la teoría de la frontera para crear su primera metáfora que compara las dualidades con las fronteras. Según la teoría de las fronteras, los límites físicos (como la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos), son artificiales. El esfuerzo de los Estados Unidos para separarse del sur global y mantener relaciones de poder no equitativo generando tensión en las relaciones de la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos. Anzaldúa describe la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos como "una herida abierta"[12] porque estas fronteras artificiales limitan el flujo natural de los recursos, de la migración de la gente y de la cultura. Anzaldúa compara las fronteras físicas a las fronteras ideológicas (o las dualidades): "Our psyches resemble the border-towns" [...] "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads".[13] Aquí Anzaldúa explica que las fronteras físicas son un reflejo de las separaciones ideológicas en la mente, como la dualidad sujeto-objeto. Así como fronteras físicas separadas por un alambrado, la dualidad sujeto-objeto propone que solo se puede subsistir en un lado del alambrado como el sujeto o como el objeto, pero no ambos. Sin embargo, según Anzaldúa, no se puede separar el sujeto y el objeto porque existen simultáneamente dentro de cada persona de la misma manera que no se puede separar la tierra por un alambrado.

Se puede seguir la teoría de las fronteras al aplicar la idea de fronteras a las relaciones de poder dentro de la dualidad sujeto-objeto. La dualidad sujeto-objeto es un sistema donde el sujeto puede describir (o mejor dicho, crear) una realidad subjetiva para controlar esta realidad y para controlar las relaciones de poder a través

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12   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 3.
13   Ibid, 87.

de usar fronteras rígidas. Según Scheffler, cuando los colonizadores clasifican al sur global, se atrapa la identidad del sur global en una posición fija, sin su propia historia[14]. Además, en esta posición fija, el sur global se encuentra en desventaja del poder porque el mundo occidental subvalora su producción del conocimiento. Es importante notar que esta organización de poder es artificial. Según Foucault en *The History of Sexuality*, el poder es algo fluido y no se puede ubicar el poder en una persona ni un grupo, sino que el poder es motivado por la producción del conocimiento.[15]

Siguiendo la metáfora de la teoría de fronteras, la dualidad sujeto-objeto está construida para crear una dualidad dentro del poder, donde el poder está atrapado dentro de los límites del sujeto y teóricamente no existe en la identidad del objeto. Además, es una invención para limitar el flujo de conocimiento y mantiene el poder y la hegemonía occidental. Anzaldúa usa el agua como una metáfora en su teoría de las fronteras para mostrar que la organización del poder en la dualidad sujeto-objeto es forzada y artificial. Anzaldúa usa un poema de Isabel Parra para describir la lucha de cruzar las fronteras: "Al otro lado está el río / y no lo puedo cruzar/ al otro lado está el mar / no lo puedo atravesar".[16] Aquí, el objeto tiene que cruzar 'el otro lado' para alcanzar el río y el mar, pero no puede hacerlo. Si se ve el agua como la fluidez en la producción del conocimiento y el poder, se puede interpretar el poema como una metáfora de los límites rígidos que crean la dualidad sujeto-objeto. Esta ideología crea fronteras rígidas entre la identidad del "sujeto" y el "objeto", donde nadie puede ser el sujeto y el objeto al mismo tiempo. La dualidad también ayuda al mundo occidental a controlar la producción del conocimiento, y como resultado, mantener su poder. Anzaldúa nos enseña que la dualidad sujeto-objeto deshumaniza al "objeto" (el sur global) porque previene que el objeto cruce los límites artificiales que crearon al sujeto.

La dualidad sujeto-objeto atrapa el poder en límites rígidos para controlar quién puede producir su propio conocimiento y quién no puede. Así, el mundo occidental (el sujeto) puede pintar su propia realidad cuando crea descripciones subjetivas sobre los indígenas. Esto causa la deshumanización. Un ejemplo clave viene del mismo poema "We Call Them Greasers", que es un poema que describe la producción del conocimiento de los colonizadores occidentales: "[Los mexicanos] knew their betters:. / took off their hats / placed them over their hearts, / lowered their eyes in my presence".[17] Aquí el narrador (del mundo occidental) interpreta mal las acciones de los mexicanos en el poema. Interpretan las acciones como sacarse el sombrero y bajar los ojos como maneras de mostrar la sumisión a los colonizadores. La realidad es que estas acciones son actos de cortesía

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14   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166.
15   Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 92-98.
16   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 139.
17   Ibid, 134.

comunes en la cultura Méxicana.[18] El mundo occidental actúa como el sujeto que pinta una realidad subjetiva sobre los no occidentales, de una manera que justifica el poder de los occidentales y el sometimiento de los grupos no occidentales. Así, los no occidentales, como los grupos indígenas y los mexicanos se ven atrapados dentro de los límites del objeto, donde ellos están privados de poder porque viven dentro de las proyecciones subjetivas del mundo occidental (como implicó Scheffler). La dualidad sujeto-objeto deshumaniza a grupos no occidentales porque tienen que vivir dentro de una narrativa creada para clasificarlos como inferiores.[19] La dualidad también causa deshumanización porque fomenta una manera de organizar el mundo por dominación, donde hay una lucha por el poder.

Anzaldúa usa el conocimiento de los indígenas (y específicamente los aztecas) para formar una metáfora que describe otra manera de pensar en la relación entre el sujeto y el objeto desde la perspectiva de la participación mística. La metáfora que ella usa es del águila y la serpiente, que son representaciones de símbolos opuestos en la historia azteca, pero al mismo tiempo no se pueden separar.[20] Anzaldúa escribe que "Together [el águila y la serpiente] symbolize the struggle between the spiritual/celestial/male and the underworld/earth/feminine".[21] En el texto el águila y la serpiente son un símbolo para la relación entre el sujeto y el objeto, donde el águila es el sujeto y la serpiente es el objeto. Anzaldúa hace consciente la relación del sujeto y el objeto desde la perspectiva de la participación mística cuando ella describe los rasgos de Coatlicue, un dios serpiente-águila de los aztecas. "She [Coatlicue] has no hands. In their place are two more serpents in the form of eagle-like claws, which are repeated at her feet: claws which symbolize the digging of graves into the earth as well as the skybound".[22] Las garras de Coatlicue tienen la forma de las garras de un águila, pero al mismo tiempo, se forman por serpientes. En las garras, la serpiente y el águila son lo mismo, pero a la vez son distintos. Según la participación mística, la misma relación existe para el sujeto y el objeto, donde las fronteras entre el sujeto y el objeto son borrosas porque son lo mismo pero también son distintas. No se puede separar el sujeto y el objeto porque el sujeto crea el objeto y viceversa. En otras palabras, la participación mística cree que hay que abrazar las contradicciones que vienen desde la producción del conocimiento del sujeto y el objeto, y también aceptar que cada persona es el sujeto y el objeto al mismo tiempo. Cada persona es definida por otros y define a otros desde su propia perspectiva.

Anzaldúa usa la participación mística para describir cómo la dualidad sujeto-objeto entorpece la fluidez

18   Bornstein-Gomez, "Gloria Anzaldúa: Borders of Knowledge and (re)Signification", 49.
19   Scheffler, "The Ideology of Binary Opposition: Subject/Object Duality and Anthropology", 166.
20   Aigner-Varoz, "Metaphors of a Mestiza Consciousness: Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera", 53.
21   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 5.
22   Ibid, 47.

de la producción del conocimiento y atrapa a la gente indígena dentro de una perspectiva ajena sin considerar la de ellos. Ella describe la dualidad sujeto-objeto como un espejo. Cuando alguien se mira a sí mismo en el espejo, la persona puede ver y ser visto, y así hay "subject and object. I and she. The eyes pin down the object of its gaze, scrutinize it, judges it. A glance can freeze us in place; it can "possess" us. It can erect a barrier against the world. But in a glance also lies awareness, knowledge".[23] Anzaldúa dice que el sujeto atrapa al objeto dentro de una perspectiva con su mirada. En otras palabras, cada mirada/perspectiva pone a grupos de gente en ciertas posiciones de poder, y produce conocimientos subjetivos sobre estos grupos que combinan con la perspectiva. En el caso de los indígenas, siendo el objeto, y los colonizadores, el sujeto o espectador, la mirada atrapa a los indígenas dentro de una narrativa falsa de la inferiorización. Aunque una mirada puede ser opresiva, Anzaldúa también reconoce que las perspectivas nos da información y la consciencia porque es una manera de interpretar el mundo, y usa la imagen del espejo para mostrar que el objeto tiene su propia mirada también y por eso, el objeto adopta el rol del sujeto y al mismo tiempo mantiene su rol de ser el producto de la mirada de otra persona. Cuando uno se mira en el espejo, hay dos imágenes mirándose e interpretándose, por lo que, los personajes son el sujeto y el objeto al mismo tiempo. La metáfora describe la ideología de la participación mística. Anzaldúa propone que aunque las perspectivas pueden atrapar a la gente, todas interpretaciones del mundo vienen de las perspectivas subjetivas. Además, cada persona es el sujeto y el objeto al mismo tiempo porque pueden mirar y son observados por otros. La participación mística rompe la fijación en la producción del conocimiento eurocéntrico (creado por las fronteras rígidas que crea la dualidad sujeto-objeto) y se enfoca en la producción del conocimiento del "objeto" o subalterno.

La reorganización de la "subjetividad"

Anzaldúa también desafía la dualidad sujeto-objeto a través de reorganizar la "subjetividad". En su libro, Anzaldúa propone que los colonizadores europeos crearon categorías artificiales para separar su producción del conocimiento de la producción del conocimiento de los indígenas, de una manera que desventaja a la gente indígena. Las categorías están creadas para tratar de controlar la subjetividad o lo que está categorizado como subjetivo (aunque todo el conocimiento tiene propiedades subjetivas). Cuando el mundo occidental mueve el concepto de la subjetividad fuera de sus fronteras del sujeto, y dentro de las fronteras del objeto, pueden usar esto como excusas para devaluar la producción del conocimiento de los indígenas. También se justifica su conocimiento como la última verdad a través de la creación de etiquetas como "racionalidad" para borrar la subjetividad que existe dentro de su conocimiento.

Anzaldúa desafía el concepto de la "racionalidad" (que es una manera para mantener la dualidad suje-

23   Ibid, 42.

to-objeto) a través de su propia narrativa de la historia del mundo. La dicotomía entre lo racional y lo irracional es una ideología creada por escolares europeos para universalizar su propia producción del conocimiento (que ellos nombraron "racional") y subvalorar la producción del conocimiento del sur global (que ellos nombraron "irracional"). Según ella, "White anthropologists claim that Indians have 'primitive' and therefore deficient minds, that we cannot think in the higher mode of consciousness – rationality".[24] Anzaldúa explica que la dualidad entre lo que es "racional" e "irracional" es un concepto creado para reforzar los límites rígidos de las identidades del sujeto y el objeto. Según Mignolo, el producto de la invención de la racionalidad es la creencia de que hay información que puede ser "objetivo" y se puede llegar a la objetividad por usar la racionalidad.[25] El mundo occidental usa la palabra "objetivo" para describir su conocimiento y nombra todo conocimiento fuera de ellos como "subjetivo".

Anzaldúa señala que la manera de clasificar el conocimiento como racional/objetivo e irracional/subjetivo es artificial porque es imposible que el conocimiento pueda ser objetivo. Además, ella sostiene que la clasificación racional/irracional del conocimiento no sirve al mundo porque contribuye a la dualidad sujeto-objeto opresivo. Según Anzaldúa, "In trying to become 'objective', Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing "touch" with them.[26] Según ella, en el esfuerzo de encontrar conocimiento objetivo, el mundo occidental trata de clasificar a la gente indígena. Sin embargo, el acto de clasificación convierte a la gente indígena en objetos subjetivos de su imaginación. Por ejemplo, aunque la iglesia cristiana promueve sus propias tradiciones y creencias del mundo espiritual, "Voodoo, Santeria, Shamanism and other native religions are called cults and their beliefs are called mythologies".[27] Anzaldúa señala que la iglesia cristiana y las religiones indígenas tienen el mismo nivel de subjetividad. Los dos promueven creencias que no se pueden probar. Sin embargo, usando la dualidad racional/irracional, el cristianismo es considerado "racional" u "objetivo" y por eso, la religión verdadera. Al mismo tiempo, las religiones que vienen del sur global son "irracionales". Cuando Anzaldúa critica la ideología occidental, ella interrumpe la dualidad sujeto-objeto que se presenta como la única ideología verdadera.

Si seguimos la metáfora dentro de la teoría de la frontera, donde las definiciones de las palabras son comparadas a las fronteras construidas de una manera útil por los europeos, se puede ver que las palabras "objetivo/racional" y "subjetivo/irracional" tienen fronteras que mantienen el poder eurocéntrico. La dicotomía (o frontera) entre lo racional e irracional es útil para el mundo occidental porque ayuda a mantener la producción

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24   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.
25   Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity,* 6.
26   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.
27   Ibid, 37.

del conocimiento dentro del sujeto y fuera del objeto. Si todo conocimiento que produce el objeto es "irracional", entonces solo el sujeto podría describir y producir conocimiento sobre el mundo, porque su conocimiento es "racional". Así, el poder está puesto dentro de los límites de lo que los europeos clasifican como "racional". El resultado es lo que Foucault llama "conocimiento subyugado" que es la invención de jerarquías que inferioriza ciertos conocimientos.[28] Anzaldúa sostiene que el mundo occidental inferioriza el conocimiento del sur global para clasificar toda su información como irracional. Además, la creación del conocimiento subyugado es un producto de la dualidad sujeto-objeto porque es una manera de subvalorar el conocimiento del objeto.

Anzaldúa rompe la dualidad sujeto-objeto para romper la dicotomía objetivo/subjetivo y los límites de las definiciones de estas palabras para reclamar la palabra "mito". Anzaldúa usa el idioma como un punto de producción del conocimiento fuera del conocimiento occidental para dar poder al objeto. El mundo occidental usa la lengua para mantener la dualidad sujeto-objeto, donde crean ciertas palabras para definir (y como resultado, controlar) al subalterno. Por ejemplo, los europeos crearon la palabra "mito" para tener connotaciones con cuestiones que son "falsas" o "irreales" y, al mismo tiempo, usaron esta palabra para describir lo que llamaron los indígenas "la naturaleza" o "la realidad".[29] "El mito" ayuda a mantener una dualidad sujeto-objeto porque es una palabra para clasificar el conocimiento de los indígenas como algo irracional. Los europeos llamaron su narrativa del mundo la "historia" y la narrativa del mundo de los indígenas como "mitos". Anzaldúa simbólicamente rompe la dualidad sujeto-objeto por reclamar esta palabra y redefinirla. Por ejemplo, la primera vez que ella escribe "mito", ella escribe "the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Aztlán".[30] Aquí, ella indica que la "historia" y el "mito" son lo mismo. Esto rompe la dualidad de lo racional/irracional que existe dentro de la dualidad sujeto-objeto porque combina dos palabras que vienen de lados opuestos de un eje eurocéntrico. Específicamente, el "mito", que describe conocimiento subjetivo o "falso" es combinado con la "historia", que describe conocimiento objetivo o "verdadero".

Cuando Anzaldúa usa la palabra "mito" como sinónimo de la palabra "historia", ella redistribuye el poder entre el sujeto y el objeto. Al fusionar el mito y la historia como el mismo constructo, todo lo que el mundo occidental definió como "el mito" se convierte en historia y todo lo que se definió como "la historia" se convierte en mito. Anzaldúa reconoce que hay subjetividad en todo y que el conocimiento que es nombrado como subjetivo viene de las experiencias del mundo. Cuando ella ruega que debemos abandonar la ideología eurocéntrica como el último punto de vista, ella lo describe en términos del mito: "Let's all stop importing Greek myths

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28   Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies", 13.

29   Des Bouvrie, "The definition of myth. Symbolical phenomena in ancient culture.", 12.

30   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 11.

and the Western Cartesian split point of view and root ourselves in the mythological soil and soul of this continent".[31] Cuando ella se refiere a la narrativa e ideología eurocéntrica como un mito, ella reconoce la subjetividad de su conocimiento y reconceptualiza su conocimiento para ser solo un punto de vista en vez de una "verdad definitiva y objetiva". Ella sugiere que abandonemos el 'Western Cartesian split point of view' que se refiere a las dualidades y las divisiones de ciertos conceptos (como el sujeto y el objeto) que creó Descartes. Aunque la ideología de las dualidades es algo que el mundo occidental considera una verdad objetiva, Anzaldúa reconceptualiza esta ideología como solo un punto de vista. Además, según ella, "This [subject-object] dichotomy is the root of all violence".[32] Ella sugiere que lo abandonemos porque es un punto de vista que no sirve a las Américas porque crea sistemas opresivos y pasa a crear una nueva manera de pensar. "By creating a new mythos– that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the way we behave– la mestiza creates a new consciousness".[33] En vez de dicotomías, Anzaldúa sugiere otra metodología o punto de vista del mundo, o en otras palabras, una nueva ideología que ella llama la nueva conciencia mestiza. En la cual, ella borra las dualidades por unir los ejes opuestos, como la subjetividad y la objetividad.

Es importante notar que Anzaldúa no sostiene que el nuevo sistema de pensar que ella propone es más "correcto" que el sistema y la ideología del mundo occidental. Anzaldúa no trata de encontrar "la verdad", sino que critica que el intento de encontrar una "verdad" es un concepto inventado por el pensamiento eurocéntrico y no es posible, porque la subjetividad y la objetividad no pueden existir separados. En lugar de eso, ella abraza la subjetividad en su nueva conciencia. Al final de la primera parte de su libro, Anzaldúa describe el proceso de intercambiar la ideología occidental para la ideología de los indígenas– la participación mística. "She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the dark skinned, women and queers".[34] En consecuencia, ella no solo crea una nueva narrativa de la historia del mundo, sino que también reestructura los valores y la base que crea la realidad. Ella crea una estructura que es útil para el subalterno y crea una ideología que no está organizada por dominación. Además, en la cita, ella usa un sujeto femenino, que contradice las normas eurocéntricas de tener un sujeto masculino como la única alternativa y afirma una perspectiva del subalterno.

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza es el libro del subalterno, de los grupos que el mundo occidental marginaliza, porque lucha por la redistribución del poder entre el colonizador y el colonizado. Anzaldúa nos da consciencia de la subjetividad de la ideología occidental, que fue interpretado como "la verdad" y por

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31   Ibid, 68.
32   Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* 37.
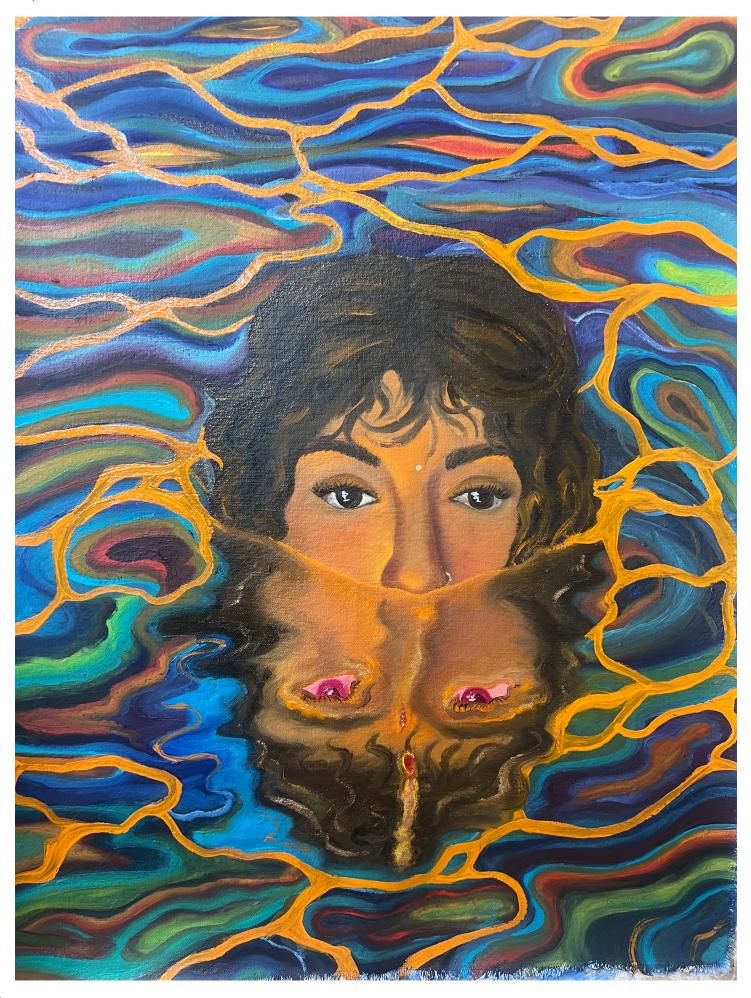33   Ibid, 80.
34   Ibid, 82.

eso, reprimido en el inconsciente del mundo. La ideología occidental organizó el mundo por dominación, donde la lucha por el poder inspiró a los occidentales a crear la dualidad sujeto-objeto, para crear fronteras ideológicas que limitan el poder y el valor en la producción del conocimiento del subalterno. Además, el mundo occidental creó las categorías "racional/irracional" y "objetivo/subjetivo" para inferiorizar el conocimiento no suyo para mantener las fronteras ideológicas y el poder. Anzaldúa usa la participación mística, la ideología de los indígenas del sur global, para contradecir la ideología eurocéntrica. Esta ideología es lo que Anzaldúa llama "la nueva conciencia mestiza" porque sostiene que la participación mística es una ideología más útil para el subalterno y para crear una organización del mundo que no está basada en la dominación. En la participación mística se borran las fronteras de la dualidad sujeto-objeto y se reorganiza en una nueva estructura donde el sujeto es también el objeto, pero al mismo tiempo son distintos (como una persona y su reflejo en un espejo). Así esta ideología redistribuye el poder y el valor en la producción del conocimiento del sur global. Aunque la participación mística no es objetiva, ni "más correcto" que la dualidad sujeto-objeto, Anzaldúa sostiene que esta ideología puede ser mejor para el mundo porque redistribuye el poder al subalterno: a los indígenas, al sur global, a las mujeres, a la gente cuir y a los grupos marginados.

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I can't be the Only one

18x24 inches oil and acrylic on unstretched canvas

Raina Pahade | Occidental College

Drawing upon the themes of futurism and color fall-off, I was inspired by reflection and the queer diasporic imagination. Being possibly the only queer person in my family, I questioned this narrative and sought to re-imagine myself and those who came before me. The reflection of my face in the water, adorned with red eyes and additional embellishments, symbolizes this reimagining and acknowledges those who I do not know but paved the way for me. The reflection is supposed to resemble me slightly as it represents the limitations of my knowledge about my own past, particularly regarding queerness. It is also meant to be slightly confusing because my goal is to question my past, what am I really looking at? Is it me? In a way, I am sometimes the only one I can look back on when it comes to gender expression within my family and it is quite isolating, scary even. The colorful liquid background represents an imagined magical space, while the overall aesthetic evokes a sense of beauty and reverence, visualizing the sacredness of queer spaces and the divine feminine. Viewers are encouraged to appreciate the piece but also feel a sense of unsettlement or perhaps danger, reflecting the introspective nature of the subject matter.

Illiberal Populism: The Rise of Ron DeSantis

Zachary Donaldson | Ohio University

Abstract

International domestic political leadership over the past 15 years has followed a trend of what many academics, journalists, and pundits would describe as right-wing populism. This fall, a column in the Wall Street Journal entitled "Right Wing Populism May Rise in the U.S." highlighted the increasing prominence of conservative European groups like Marine La Pen's National Rally Party and the Sweden Democrats as a sign of future political developments to come in the West. [1] Giorgia Meloni's victory in Italy has been identified as packaging "toxic populism," and incumbent Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban cruised to his fourth term this April, espousing Christian identity and anti-immigrant sentiment. [2,3] Despite multiple leadership turnovers, the United Kingdom has also continued to adopt supposed right-wing populist tendencies at the top, with new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak being a staunch supporter of Brexit and adopting many of the same directives as Liz Truss and Boris Johnson. [4] In the United States, Donald Trump's presidency and his greater constituency have encompassed a populist movement with members of the Republican party embracing his rhetoric and ideology. The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change identifies seventeen different populist leaders in democratic governments globally today as compared to fourin 1990. [5] Since 2007, that number has continued to stay between 15 and 20, showing no noticeable decrease in populist presence. Academics and pundits allege that illiberal and authoritarian sentiments inhabiting more traditional democracies are consistent with these movements.

Such a pervasive consensus on this movement poses fundamental questions to our understanding of the modern nature of politics and political representation. What exactly is populism and how can we identify when it occurs? What is the appeal of these movements in constitutional republics, and how can they be politically effective? Will populism be the future of the politics of representation?

1   William A. Galston, "Right-Wing Populism May Rise in the U.S." 25 November 2022, Wall Street Journal, https://www.wsj.com/articles/right-wing-populism-may-rise-in-the-u-s-giorgia- meloni-italy-europe-immigration-working-class-college-educated-11664277816

2   Robin Ghivan, "In Italy and beyond, packaging toxic populism" 27 September 2022, The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/09/27/italy-beyond-packaging- toxic-populism/

3   Robert Tait and Flora Goramvolgyi, "Viktor Orban wins fourth consecutive term as Hungary's prime minister" 3 April 2022, The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/03/viktor-orban-expected-to-win-big-majority-in- hungarian-general-al-election

4   Miriam Cates, "The populist case for Rishi Sunak" 2022 October 27, Unherd, https://unherd.com/thepost/the-populist-case-for-rishi-sunak/

5   Brett Meyer, "Populists in Power: Perils and Prospects in 2021" 18 January 2021, Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, https://institute.global/policy/populists-power-perils-and-prospects- 2021

This article will undergo an analysis of current Florida Governor Ron DeSantis to identify how right-wing populism may continue to manifest itself in the United States of America. I will begin by undergoing a literature review on the topic of populism, a definition of populism for our purposes, and outlining a methodology for my analysis. Then, I will identify his political strategy, if he is populist, his illiberal tendencies, and the political expediency and efficacy of these efforts.

Literature Review: What Populism Is and Isn't

Despite its wide usage in academic literature, there is no consensus as to the definition of "populism." Scholars assign it to a variety of categories including an ideology, a discursive style, or a political strategy, and it is a common contention that "...the mercurial nature of populism has often exasperated those who attempt to take it seriously." [6]

If populism is to be an analytically useful tool, it is imperative to parse out exactly what populism is and is not for the purposes of our research. I will begin by reviewing common arguments and trends we will take exception to including ascribing a moral value to populism, a political content, or an ideological definition. I will then transition into Ernesto Laclau's populist grammar which will lay the groundwork for our analysis, and finally provide my own definition.

First, populism cannot be seen to have an innate moral quality, or it is impossible to effectively study its functionality without bias. In media and colloquial talk populism is often linked together with more authoritarian and illiberal administrations. While those attributes may hold true in this study, populism cuts across a wide variety of political contexts and movements and has no inherent social or political content. If populism is seen as a bogeyman or proxy word for authoritarian politics, movements which could be accurately categorized as populist will be overlooked and others will be incorrectly identified as populist.

Theorists have often tried to frame populism as an ideology, applying it to a diverse list of political movements and governments. With populism defined as an ideology, research on the topic often uses programmatic statements by political actors as a base unit of analysis. This includes party literature and manifestoes to ascertain if said leaders are populist or not. Some scholars, such as Margaret Canovan and Donald MacRae, have constructed typologies with preconditions to create a definition, including attributes like charismatic or personable leadership, threat of apocalypse, or anti-elitism. [7] In attempting these specifications, they corner populism into a categorization which many movements do not satisfy and is too narrow to be universally applicable

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6   Ben Stanley, 31 January 2008, "The thin ideology of populism", Routledge
7   Laclau, Ernesto 2005. On Populist Reason. London; New York: Verso.

or useful. Arguing specific contents such as personable leadership or anti-elite rhetoric as a necessity for populism clouds its functionality as a political process.

Others in the ideology camp have tried to develop a model which is more malleable and can attach itself to a variety of sociopolitical contexts. This was notably done by Cas Mudde who argued that populism is "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups: "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite," and argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people." [8] As a thin-centered ideology, populism would not be a framework which could solve all major socio-political questions, but a bundle of ideas which could be compatible with more developed political belief systems including socialism or conservatism.

Mudde's model captures certain elements which are helpful to our later analysis, primarily the construction of a people and homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. However, the ideological framework is still limiting. Populism cannot serve as an ideology because it does not answer to a social base, and it doesn't set out a form of political recourse to solve problems facing society.

A different school of thought is to define populism as a discursive style. Like Mudde's ideological approach, much of the discursive style is focused on the construction of a people versus the elite. Carlos de La Torre calls populism a "rhetoric that constructs politics as the moral and ethical struggle between el pueblo [the people] and the oligarchy." [9] Distinct from ideology, however, the discursive approach's recognition of populism as a characteristic of political talk and rhetoric changes how populism is attributed to political actors. This notion shifts our conversation from the question of if a leader is populist or not to the question of how much populism a leader engages in. The discursive style's linguist tendencies and broader applicability draw us closer to our desired definition, and to the work of Ernesto Laclau.

In his 2005 work On Populist Reason, Ernesto Laclau challenged the dominant narratives on populist thought and constructed a populist process which captures the articulation of demands, and how populist language can be used and wielded. Laclau's populist grammar is particularly useful for us to understand the construction of the political, how the politics of representation function, and how and why there are rearticulations of who is to be represented.

Crucial to Laclau's framework is our base unit of analysis: demands. This is atypical in the field, as most theorists use individuals or groups to understand the mobilization of demands and political claims. In pondering this query, Laclau notes, "We can decide to take as our minimal unit of analysis the group as such, in which

8   Cas Mudde, 2004, "The Populist Zeitgeist", Government and Opposition
9   de La Torre, Carlos. 2000. Populist Seduction in Latin America: The Ecuadorian Experience. Athens: Ohio University Press.

case, we are going to see populism as the ideology or the type of mobilization of an already constituted group…

or we can see populism as one way of constituting the very unity of a group." [10] By making demands the base

unit on their own, Laclau recognizes groups and people as not already constituted entities meant to be mobi-

lized, but social agents which must be constituted and given their identities through demands themselves.

Laclau explains that when each individual demand, known as a democratic demand, emerges it is either

satisfied by government action or some other identity or left unsatisfied. An emergence of various unsatisfied

demands which would disrupt social order is what Laclau classifies as systemic dislocation.

When systemic dislocation occurs and multiple isolated democratic demands are left unsatisfied, it be-

comes apparent that they cannot be responded to in a differential way and an equivalential relation is established

between them. This process involves heterogeneous and particular demands being homogenized through their

shared dissatisfaction, forming what is known as an equivalential chain. [11] An equivalential chain is a collec-

tion of any number of particular demands with different social contents. These chains link them together whilst

keeping their particularity, creating the preconditions for broader social subjectivities.

For this equivalential chain to be mobilized into a populist moment, demands and rhetoric must be

recognized througha universal symbol. This requires certain demands to be morphed into empty signifiers; a

word or symbol without a true referent. As a demand is continually signified and rearticulated into discourse, it

is emptied of its meaning and can be used to represent equivalential chains of particular and disparate demands,

taking on the role of an empty signifier. These rearticulations ultimately construct the 'people,' outgroups or

'elites,' and the broad social significations that define populism. Populism is not mobilizing existing classes or

groups; it is the very process of social signification that constructs those groups. [12]

For clarity, I will provide a brief example. Imagine any large industrial city like New York or Chicago. A

demand arises from the price of housing in the city, and it is unsatisfied due to minimal interest of government

intervention or lack of resources to provide affordable housing. Soon people begin perceiving demands of their

neighbors that are equally unsatisfied, including sanitation and health, schooling, and crime prevention. System-

ic dislocation occurs and an equivalential relationship is then established between them. One of these demands,

let's say combatting crime, is articulated under the auspices of bolstering the city's security. This request and

virtue of security is pushed into the public dialogue frequently across different political contexts such as eco-

nomic or educational policy, pulled away from its original denotative point, and emptied of its meaning. Secu-

rity becomes an empty signifier, speaks for the equivalential chain, and a people are constructed through their

10 Laclau, Ernesto 2005. On Populist Reason. London; New York: Verso.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.

social relation to that desire of security.

Utilizing Laclau's work, we will define populism as a political process which involves the construction of a people through empty signifiers from an equivalential chain of demands.

Methodology

This paper will address two chief questions. Is Ron DeSantis a populist? If populist, does Ron DeSantis engage in illiberal practices and authoritarian decision making?

To qualify and answer these questions, I will use the policy implementation, goals, and rhetoric of the Governor from his 2018 gubernatorial campaign to the present. This will include an analysis of social media, public speeches, and his legislative agenda. I will apply the grammar of Laclau's populist process, including DeSantis' use of empty signifiers, the construction of an equivalential chain, and the constitution of a people.

Additionally, to analyze the illiberal actions of Governor DeSantis, I will compare his directives with three of the five liberal scripts proposed by Marlene Laruelle to ascertain whether he posits liberal or illiberal politics. [13] Scripts 4 and 5 were not relevant to our purposes given their focus on international and geopolitical attitudes, more contemporary of national leaders.

These scripts are as follows:

1.) The first script is classical political liberalism. This script states that individual freedoms should be protected as much as possible, and that genuine democracy is about free and fair elections, checks and balances, and guaranteeing the rights of the minority.

2.) The second script is economic liberalism. This script advocates for privatization, deregulation, globalization, and free trade as oppositions to state intervention in the economy. More commonly known as neoliberalism, economic liberalism has been instrumental in spurring many illiberal movements as a retaliation to privatized economies which have shrunk civil service and welfare states. [14]

3.) The third script is cultural liberalism. This script stresses the emancipatory power of individual rights, specifically identity rights relating to ethnic groups, sexual orientations, and gender identifications.

Why Ron DeSantis?

Before reviewing my analysis, it is first important to explain how I arrived at focusing on Governor DeSantis. DeSantis is particularly relevant and fruitful for our purposes for a multitude of reasons, including rising prominence within the Republican ranks, potential political future, and ability for localized study. Gov-

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13   Marlene Laruelle (2022) Illiberalism: a conceptual introduction, East European Politics.
14   Ibid.

ernor DeSantis is easily one of the most recognizable figures in America's conservative movement, receiving heavy media coverage for his unorthodox style of pandemic governance and culture war stances. While other Republicans struggled in the 2022 midterm elections, DeSantis cruised to re-election in a typical battleground state defeating his opponent by a 19 point margin. [15] His robust performance and popularity among Republicans have made him a prime potential contender for the 2024 presidential race, with early polls having him outrun former president Donald Trump for the Republican nomination and President Joe Biden in a general election. [16] Additionally, his role as Governor of a state would give us future reference on how more localized populism could transcend to a national stage. Given his age, rising star, and high political ceiling, it is likely DeSantis will continue to be a further subject of study into the future.

Is Ron DeSantis a Populist?

Our first concern is the question: is Ron DeSantis a populist? To satisfy these requirements, Governor DeSantis would have to demonstrate engagement in constructing a people through empty signifiers represening an equivalential chain of demands.

To begin answering these questions, we must first identify a handful of demands that have emerged in Florida. On an economic level, a primary demand of Florida is that of reduced tax burdens. Florida is 1 of 9 states with no state income tax making it a primary attraction for relocation. [17] The Covid-19 pandemic similarly unearthed this demand for reduced state intervention on the economy, with Florida pushed to ease and lift restrictions on lockdowns, business capacity, and business operation earlier than other states. [18] Florida also reopened schools earlier than their counterparts, prioritizing in-person education as opposed to virtual alternatives. [19]

Additionally, a demand of individual autonomy can be seen in the advent of Covid-19, with Florida passing laws to outlaw vaccine mandates, vaccine passports, and lift mask mandates. [20] The specific lifting of

15   Matt Dixon and Gary Fineout, "DeSantis wins big with an eye toward 2024" 8 November 2022, Politico, https://www.politi-co.com/news/2022/11/08/florida-governor-2022-ron-desantis- charlie-crist-00065788

16   13 December 2022, "Poll: Ron DeSantis Significantly Outpolling Donald Trump", Suffolk University, https://www.suffolk.edu/news-features/news/2022/12/13/00/53/suffolk-poll-shows-ron-desantis-significantly-outpolling-donald-trump

17   Connie Eckerle, "What You Need to Know About Relocating to Florida" 7 January 2021, Bloomberg, https://news.bloombergtax.com/daily-tax-report-state/what-you-need-to-know- about-relocating-to-florida

18   James Call, "Florida Gov. DeSantis invalidates COVID-19 restrictions statewide, says there's no need 'to be policing people at this point'", 3 May 2021, USA Today, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/05/03/florida-covid-restrictions-gov-ron-desantis-lifts-rules-statewide/4923900001/

19   Andrew Atterbury, "Desantis claims in-person learning saved Florida students. It's not that simple." 8 June 2022, Politico, https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/08/desantis-in-person- learning-florida-students-schools-00038099

20   Staff, "Desantis Signs Legislation to Protect Florida Jobs" 18 November 2021, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2021/11/18/governor-ron-desantis-signs-legislation-to-protect-florida- jobs/

mask mandates in public schools coincided with a broader demand of parent choice. These demands were heavily present in school curriculum battles, including moves to ban the teaching of sexual orientation and critical race theory in public schools. [21] They are also ever present in policy moves towards school-vouchers, school choice, and the elimination of common core. [22]

Demands more consistent with national conservative sentiment like law enforcement on immigration and crime prevention are no doubt present in Florida. The state has passed restrictions on sanctuary city policies and flown undocumented migrants to other states upon arrival. [23] [24] On the crime front, Florida has passed policies to increase penalties against actions which target law enforcement or engage in violent and disorderly assemblies. [25]

We must next ask ourselves if these demands are absorbed in a differential or equivalential manner. If they are absorbed in a differential way, these demands would remain isolated, individually satisfied through government action and disparate from being grouped under a chain of demands. If they are absorbed in and put on an equivalential chain, we would see a false fullness constructed of them through empty signifiers and the construction of a people. Ron DeSantis' public addresses and communication unabashedly confirm the latter, signifying and rearticulating disparate demands on distinct cultural, economic, and social issues into a people.

There are two primary empty signifiers present in DeSantis' rhetoric; constructing the people of a 'free Florida' and fighting the outgroup of the "woke."

In terms of the first signifier, DeSantis has markedly co-opted the word freedom to mar its initial meaning and construct a people. Freedom's widely recognized definition is the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action. [26] Early in his term, DeSantis' use of the word was either nonexistent or consistent with its accepted denotation. In his 2018 inaugural address, DeSantis does not use the word freedom at all, only making references to liberty. [27] In his 2019 state of the state address uses the words free or freedom six times,

21   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs Legislation to Protect Floridians from Discrimination and Woke Indoctrination" 22 Aprill 2022, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2022/04/22/governor- ron-desantis-signs-legislation-to-protect-floridians-from-discrimination-and-woke- indoctrination/
22   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs Transformational Legislation to Expand School Choice Options" 11 May 2021, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2021/11/18/governor-ron-desantis-signs- legislation-to-protect-florida-jobs/
23   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs SB 168: Federal Immigration Enforcement" 14 June 2019, Fl Gov, https://flgov.com/2019/06/14/governor-ron-desantis-signs-sb-168-federal- immigration-enforcement/
24   Edgar Sandoval, Miriam Jordan, Patricia Mezzei, and J. David Goodman "The Story behind Desantis's Migrants Flights to Martha's Vineyard." 2 October 2022, The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/02/us/migrants-marthas-vineyard-desantis-texas.html
25   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Announces the "Combatting Violence, Disorder, and Looting and Law Enforcement Protection Act"", 21 September 2020, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2020/09/21/governor-ron-desantis-announces-the-combatting-violence- disorder-and-looting-and-law-enforcement-protection-act/
26   Merriam Webster, (2022) Freedom, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/freedom
27   Ron DeSantis, (2018). "Inaugural Speech" ABC Action News, https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/state/ron-desantis-inaugural-speech-read-the-full- transcript

and they exclusively reference foreign affairs matters in Cuba and Venezuela. These instances do not relate to constructing a people given their international focus and are consistent with the definition of freedom as they seek to call out other oppressive governments. [28] In his 2020 state of the state address, DeSantis only uses free once, hoping for a "hurricane-free summer." [29] In his 253 posts on Instagram account (@rondesantisfl) prior to the onset of Covid-19, the governor used the words free or freedom six times. These uses were consistent with the accepted definition of freedom, either quoting or calling upon nationally enshrined symbols. Three of these times were in reference to national holidays including Veteran's Day, Constitution Day, and Flag Day. One referenced World War II, one referenced the constitution, and the other quotes the national anthem. [30]

However, in the wake of Covid-19 and his re-election campaign, Governor DeSantis has made it no secret that he hopes for freedom to be a primary point of his term. During the pandemic, his laissez faire approach to re-opening and imposing mandates were a key part of his political strategy. On his Instagram account, 42 of 81 of his posts since March 2, 2021 (postings after the onset of the Covid-Crisis) have invoked the words free or freedom. [31] The tagline of his campaign is 'Keep Florida Free,' which is commonly hashtagged, listed in his profile biography, and reverberated in digital campaign paraphernalia. Statements quoted on his Instagram continue to signify freedom. Referencing Covid-19 on March 2, 2021, DeSantis stated that "Florida sun now serves as a beacon of light to those who yearn for freedom." [32]

In public statements, DeSantis' prerogative has been much of the same. DeSantis constructs a people out of Florida's freedom, invoking "we" and "our" when referencing the state and making the word "freedom" synonymous with the state itself. In his 2021 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) speech, the Governor began by welcoming the audience to "our oasis of freedom." [33] He opened his address at the conference the next year using the same language, stating "Let me welcome you to the freest state in these United States." [34] At his 2022 State of the State address, DeSantis declared that "Together we have made Florida the freest state in these United States" and remarked "While so many around the country have consigned the people's rights to the graveyard, Florida has stood as freedom's vanguard." [35] He would close that same address invoking religion,

28   Ron DeSantis, (2019). "Governor Desantis' State of the State Address" Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2019/03/05/governor-desantis-state-of-the-state-address/
29   Ron DeSantis, (2020). "Governor Desantis' State of the State Address" Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2020/01/14/governor-ron-desantis-state-of-the-state-address/
30   Ron DeSantis [@rondesantisfl]. Posts. Retrieved November 30, 2022. https://www.instagram.com/rondesantisfl/
31   Ibid.
32   Ibid.
33   LiveNOW From Fox (2021, February 26) Ron DeSantis CPAC 2021: "Can't Cancel America" Florida Governor takes on media and democrats, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPk1u2C0ujA
34   Ron DeSantis, (2022). "CPAC 2022 Rosen Shingle Creek Orlando, FL," Democracy In Action, https://www.democracyinaction.us/2022/cpac/desantis022422spt.html
35   Ron DeSantis, (2022). "State of the State address" ABC Action News, https://www.abcactionnews.com/news/state/full-transcript-of-governor-desantis-2022-state-of- the-state-address

"God has blessed us to live and serve in America's liberty outpost, the free state of Florida!" [36] DeSantis illustrates a people's struggle for a free Florida in his re- election victory. "Over these past four years, we've seen major challenges for the people of our state, for the citizens of the United States, and above all, for the cause of freedom. We saw freedom in our very way of life and so many other jurisdictions in this country wither on the vine. Florida held the line." [37] DeSantis even internationalizes Florida's free identity, declaring "we stood as a citadel of freedom for people across this country and indeed across the world." [38]

Already a broad, value-laden term, his continued rearticulation of freedom has led to an emptying of its meaning, allowing it to represent an equivalential chain of demands without adhering to any denotative content and constructing a free people of Florida. Freedom attaches itself to a broad range of sociopolitical contexts and demands, whether it is Covid-19 policy, parental rights, taxes, or culture war issues. It has become a universal and consistent occupant of his public dialogue without any supporting rhetoric to define exactly what the word entails. Freedom has gone from a value or demand to an identity, synonymous with "we" and the people of Florida.

Just as he utilizes freedom to signify a people and represent a chain of demands, DeSantis utilizes "woke" to signify an outgroup. Woke is defined in the United States context as having an awareness of and being attentive to important societal facts and issues, especially issues of racial and social justice. [39] Particular demands opposite those discussed under the equivalential chain of freedom emerge. These include promoting diversity equity and inclusion training, Covid-19 restrictions, and economic welfare and redistribution. DeSantis represents an antagonistic equivalential chain, rearticulating these demands as the antithesis of the people of Florida and signifying woke as an empty signifier to oppose an outgroup.

Much like his signification of freedom, DeSantis does not utilize the term woke prior to his re-election campaign or the onset of Covid-19. The word woke does not appear in any of his aforementioned state of the state addresses or Instagram posts, nor is there any CPAC or adjacent speeches in which the Governor is seen railing against a woke agenda.

However, by 2021, there are a plethora of examples of DeSantis speaking against a woke outgroup in public dialogue, legislation, and addresses. His 2021 sponsored piece of legislation to ban critical race theory teaching in schools and corporation trainings was so entitled the "The Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees (W.O.K.E) Act." In his words this piece of legislation fights numerous forms of social decay, stopping

36   Ibid.
37   Ron DeSantis, (2022). "Ron DeSantis gives victory speech after re-election as Florida Governor" Rev, https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/ron-desantis-gives-victory-speech-after-re- election-as-florida-governor-transcript
38   Ibid.
39   Merriam Webster, (2022) Woke, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/woke

"state-sanctioned racism," and ensuring kids are not "taught to hate each other." [40]

He also practices attributing this signifier to his political opponents to make it synonymous with liberal ideology. In statements supporting his legislation, he noted, "In Florida, we will not let the far left woke agenda take over our schools and workplaces. There is no place for indoctrination or discrimination in Florida." [41] In his 2022 CPAC speech, Desantis declares that "woke is the new religion of the left." [42] His juxtaposition of "far left" with "woke" ensures that his political opponents are attributed to his negative signifier.

He focuses on drawing an antagonistic struggle, illustrating how Florida's people are antithetical to wokeness. "I also want Florida to be known as a brick wall against all things 'woke.'" [43] At his recent re-election speech, he highlighted the unanimity of wokeness and the peoples struggle against it, claiming "We have respected our taxpayers, and we reject woke ideology. We fight the woke in the legislature. We fight the woke in the schools. We fight the woke in the corporations. We will never, ever surrender to the woke mob. Florida is where woke goes to die." [44]

Woke's continued rearticulation in different political contexts hijacks it, empties it of its initial denotative meaning, and is represented to oppose a fullness of demands that would be contradictory to a free Florida. Through its consistency in DeSantis' dialogue, he is able to have woke assume the role of any political measure he opposes. In using empty signifiers, DeSantis is able to construct a people through an equivalential chain against an outgroup responsible for perceived social decay, more than satisfying our definition of populism.

Illiberalism

Knowing that the DeSantis phenomenon is a populist moment, it is next important to analyze how or if his populism lends credence to illiberalism and what the political ramifications of his use of populism are.

To qualify if DeSantis' actions are illiberal, we must accomplish two things. First, we must determine if Florida's political environment constituted a liberal environment prior so we can know if DeSantis 'actions are

40   Staff, "Governor DeSantis Announces Legislative Proposal to Stop W.O.K.E. Activism and Critical Race Theory in Schools and Corporations" 15 December 2021, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2021/12/15/governor-desantis-announces-legislative-proposal-to-stop-w- o-k-e-activism-and-critical-race-theory-in-schools-and-corporations/

41   Staff, "Governor Ron DeSantis Signs Legislation to Protect Floridians from Discrimination and Woke Indoctrination" 22 April 2022, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2022/04/22/governor- ron-desantis-signs-legislation-to-protect-floridians-from-discrimination-and-woke- indoctrination/

42   Ron DeSantis, (2022). "CPAC 2022 Rosen Shingle Creek Orlando, FL," Democracy In Action, https://www.democracyinaction.us/2022/cpac/desantis022422spt.html

43   Tim Craig, "Florida legislature passes bill that limits how schools and workplaces teach about race and identity" 10 March 2022, The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/03/10/florida-legislature-passes-anti-woke-bill/

44   Ron DeSantis, (2022). "Ron DeSantis gives victory speech after re-election as Florida Governor" Rev, https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/ron-desantis-gives-victory-speech-after-re- election-as-florida-governor-transcript

a move away from liberalism. Next, we must apply his policy and rhetoric against three liberal scripts, political, economic, and cultural liberalism. Political liberalism posits individual freedoms should be protected as much as possible, and that genuine democracy is about free and fair elections, checks and balances, and guaranteeing the rights of the minority. Economic liberalism advocates for privatization, deregulation, globalization, free trade, and opposition to state intervention in the economy. Cultural liberalism stresses the emancipatory power of individual rights, specifically identity rights relating to ethnic groups, sexual orientations, and gender identifications. [45]

It is worth noting that the environment of Florida under DeSantis' predecessor Governor Rick Scott already constituted elements of illiberalism. Also, a member of the Republican Party, Scott embraced initiatives which opposed both the first and third liberal scripts. On the political front, Scott was notorious for what critics called his 2012 "voter purge," an effort to remove predominantly non-citizen and minority voters off voter rolls. [46] On the third script, Scott attacked his 2010 primary opponent for promoting "pro-homosexual rights candidates." [47] Scott's policies did not take any actions of note against the second script, generally embracing Florida's low-tax and anti-regulation environment. At large, his policies and actions did not promote any elements of liberalism different from his Republican peers, and they could be considered moves away from liberalism themselves. However, DeSantis' policy initiatives are both a continuation and exacerbation of said move away from liberalism, rivaling Scotts in both severity and variety. DeSantis expands assaults on the first liberal script through restrictive voting measure, moves towards illiberalism on the second script with targeted state intervention on individual corporations, and intensifies the third liberal script through the suppression of marginalized identities.

On the first liberal script, DeSantis' pursuit of fighting the woke and embracing a free Florida has legitimized efforts to implement and enforce restrictive voting policies. In 2021, Governor DeSantis signed legislation to limit mail-in voting, ballot-drop box usage, and expand powers to partisan poll-watchers. Invoking his signifier, he justified the bill stating, "Elections should be free and fair, and these changes will ensure this continues to be the case in the Sunshine State." [48] DeSantis also expanded gubernatorial and executive authority in elections to an unprecedented level, directing the state legislature to establish a subsidiary office under the Secretary of State to investigate and prosecute voting irregularities. In August, the Office of Election Crimes and

45   Marlene Laruelle (2022) Illiberalism: a conceptual introduction, East European Politics.
46   Zachary Roth, "Rick Scott's voter purge was illegal: Court" 2 April 2014, MSNBC, https://www.msnbc.com/msnbc/florida-voter-purge-illegal-court-msna299001
47   Ben Smith, "Scott attacks rival for ties to pro-homosexual rights Giuliani" 6 June 2010, MSNBC, https://www.politico.com/blogs/ben-smith/2010/06/scott-attacks-rival-for-ties-to-pro- homosexual-rights-giuliani-027888
48   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs Bill to Safeguard the Sanctity of Florida Elections" 6 May 2021, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2021/05/06/governor-ron-desantis-signs-bill-to- safeguard-the-sanctity-of-florida-elections/

Security exercised this power, arresting twentycitizens with prior criminal offenses for voter fraud.

These individuals passed through the process of registering to vote and were led to believe they were eligible only to face legal repercussions. [49]On the second liberal script, DeSantis has shown both strong adherence to and radical deviations from practicing economic liberalism. The Governor's staunch support of lower tax rates and eased Covid-19 restrictions through freedom as an empty signifier shows some compatibility between a populist moment and promoting liberalism. However, the Governor has also developed a record of wielding the state's regulatory economic powers to punish political dissidents. For example, when Disney World CEO Bob Chapek publicly criticized Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act, DeSantis and the Republican legislature retaliated with a bill removing much of Disney's special tax and regulatory autonomy by dissolving the special improvement district of Riddy Creek. [50] This measure removes Disney's ability to tax itself to provide services like firefighters or infrastructure development and potentially levies $766 of Disney's bond debt onto its new local governing authorities and taxpayers. [51] Speaking to supporters on the issue in March, DeSantis invoked Disney as a member of the woke out group, stating, "...in Florida, our policies got to be based on the best interest of Florida citizens, not on the musing of woke corporations." [52] Similarly, the Governor has directed the State Board of Administration to prohibit environmental, social, and governance practices in state investments, decrying them as "imposing woke ideology on the economy." [53]

On the third liberal script, the Governor has shown a consistent and repeated utilization of a free Florida and woke outgroup to suppress the individual rights and identities of marginalized groups. His administration has overseen several efforts undermining transgender identities and rights including signing legislation barring transgender women from competing in women's sports and successfully calling upon state medical boards to adopt regulations prohibiting the delivery gender-affirming care to minors. [54] [55] His bill entitled the Parental Rights in Education Act banned the discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity topics in K-3 and

49   Tim Craig and Lori Rosza, "Florida let them vote. Then DeSantis' election police arrested them." 2022 September 4, The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/09/04/desantis-election-police-voter-arrests/
50   Derek Thompson, "This Is How America's Culture War Death Spirals." 2 May 2022, The Atlantic, https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2022/05/ron-desantis-disney-florida- republicans/629722/
51   Madison Selcho, "DeSantis vs. Disney: A timeline." 27 Sept 2022, DeseretNews, https://www.deseret.com/2022/9/27/23363693/ron-desantis-vs-disney-a-timeline
52   Jessica Chasmar, Kelly Laco, "DeSantis slams 'woke' Disney after CEO condemns parents' rights bill", 10 March 2022, Fox News, https://www.foxnews.com/politics/desantis-woke-disney- ceo-parents-rights-bill
53   Mivette Vega, "DeSantis Goes After Companies 'Imposing Woke Ideology on the Economy'", 28 July 2022, Floricua – The Americano, https://theamericanonews.com/floricua/2022/07/28/desantis-goes-after-companies-imposing- woke-ideology-on-the-economy/
54   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs Fairness in Women's Sports Act" 1 June 2021, Fl Gov, https://www.flgov.com/2021/06/01/governor-ron-desantis-signs-fairness-in-womens-sports-act/
55   Anthony Izaguirre, "Florida to ban transgender healthcare treatment for minors." 2022 November 4, AP News, https://apnews.com/article/ron-desantis-health-business-florida- government-and-politics-78e417a184718de8b9e71ff32efbc77f

threatens to revoke teacher's licenses in the face of noncompliance. [56] These policies, justified under the guise of attacking "wokeness", function to suppress LGBTQ+ activists, educators, and youth.

On all three scripts DeSantis displays strong tendencies of illiberalism. Utilizing signifiers DeSantis imposes centralized power to undermine and limit individual autonomy in democratic processes and impose economic sanctions on political opponents.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of his rhetoric, policies, and speeches, Ron DeSantis engages in illiberal populist practices that curtail certain individual, democratic, and economic protections. DeSantis has used empty signifiers to represent equivalential chains of particular demands on a variety of cultural, political, and economic issues in Florida. He has constructed the people in Florida through the empty signifier freedom, marring its denotative meaning and making it synonymous with the state and its inhabitants. Similarly, he has been able to effectively construct an "woke" outgroup that is the antithesis of the people. The term has been emptied of its meaning representing opposition to a chain of demands more generally associated with liberal emancipatory politics.

In utilizing these signifiers, DeSantis has advocated for and implemented policies that oppose core liberal scripts. His promotion of "free and fair" elections has given leeway to expand state power in restricting and limiting access to the ballot. He has wielded the centralization of the office in an unprecedented way, creating executive agencies with more latitude to enforce and investigate election irregularities and fraud. The constructed woke outgroup has served as justification for economic and cultural illiberalism, punishing private industry for political dissidence and limiting the individual rights and protections of marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations.

The Governor's marked electoral and legislative success pushing his initiatives in a traditional swing state demonstrates the efficacy of his populism. If DeSantis continues to rise as pundits predict, it is likely we will see nationalized conservative populist grammar in electoral politics, and continued rearticulations of the people.

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56   Staff, "Governor Ron Desantis Signs Historic Bill to Protect Parental Rights in Education" 28 March 2022, Fl Gov, https://flgov.com/2022/03/28/governor-ron-desantis-signs-historic-bill-to- protect-parental-rights-in- education/#:~:text=Governor%20 Ron%20DeSantis%20Signs%20Historic%20Bill%20to%20Pro tect%20Parental%20Rights%20in%20Education,- On%20March%20 28&text=SPRING%20HILL%2C%20Fla.,the%20upbringing%20of%20their %20children.

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Divine

18x24 inches acrylic on unstretched canvas. 2024

Raina Pahade | Occidental College

Drawing inspiration from Zenana paintings and the profound sanctity of all-female spaces, I, as a non-binary person, unexpectedly found solace and healing within these intimate cultural realms, particularly through the acts of adorning and resting with the women in my life. However, rather than confining my figures within the traditional bounds of painted Zenana, I liberate them into nature. This divergence signifies a departure from the Orientalist gaze that historically misrepresented such spaces, instead granting agency to the women portrayed. Opting for blue, traditionally associated with Hindu gods, I sought to imbue these women with a divine aura. Yet, intentionally blurring their figures, I control the viewer's access to the sacredness of this space, symbolizing its exclusivity. The contrast between blurry, ethereal forms and detailed jewelry set against an abstract jungle background highlights the tension between visibility and concealment, prompting reflection on the nature of agency, the gaze, and the power dynamics inherent in representation. Through gestural brushstrokes, I assert my presence within this narrative, aiming to delve into the divine feminine and challenge the viewer's assumptions and privileges.

Accessibility and Inclusivity: Theme Park Design and Operations Present Challenges for Persons with Disabilities

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Abstract

This paper presents research on inclusive opportunities at theme parks for people with disabilities. The purpose of the study was to explore park design and operating policies from the standpoint of the disabled guest and how deficiencies in these areas may contribute to situations of unequal access. Researchers engaged in a qualitative study at four theme parks located throughout the United States. Interviews with guests visiting the theme parks, along with researcher observations made during park visits, were gathered for analysis. The findings indicate that disabled guests are willing to travel substantial distances to experience accessible and enjoyable theme parks like many guests. However, disabled guests are often unaware of the accessibility challenges when visiting those parks. In many instances, park facilities were inadequate, and park staff was unaware of park procedures instituted to improve accessibility. Many procedural issues involved park staff and their interactions with disabled guests, some of which were considered discriminatory. The paper also provides recommendations for theme park owners, administrators, and industry groups to improve the quality of the park experience for disabled guests.

Keywords: persons with disabilities, PWD, theme parks, tourism, accessibility, inclusivity

Introduction

Theme parks are associated with thriller rides, heart-racing attractions, fun with family and friends, and tasty carnival foods. However, for some visitors of theme parks, particularly the disabled, thoughts may quickly turn to considerations of accessibility.[1] According to the World Health Organization (WHO), fifteen percent of the global population has some form of disability. This percentage is increasing due to improvements in diagnosing and treating diseases that can lead to disability, as well as a general aging of the world's population.[2] In the United States, more than one in eight Americans have a disability. That figure equates to roughly 40 million people who have a severe impairment consistent with one or more of six areas of difficulty identified and measured by the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Those areas are hearing, vision, cognition, ambulatory, self-

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1   Keerthi Wang, "39 Theme Parks With Special Needs Access Passes," *Friendship Circle*, October 10, 2013, https://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/10/10/39-theme-parks-with-access-passes-for-special-needs/.

2   Benjamin, Sarah, Bottone, Elizabeth, and Lee, Michael. "Beyond accessibility: Exploring the representation of people with disabilities in tourism promotional materials." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 29, no. 2-3 (2021): 295-313.

care, and independent living.[3]

Accessibility for the disabled is about providing an opportunity to share life's precious moments with friends and family, including tourism and recreation. In addition, accessibility provides an opportunity for people of different abilities and backgrounds to come together and, in doing so, positively affect others' perceptions, break down cognitive barriers, and combat negative stereotypes.[4] According to Devlin and Pothier, within our society, there exists "deep structural economic, social, political, legal, and cultural inequality in which persons with disabilities (PWD) experience unequal citizenship".[5] Social inequality for PWD is found in many aspects of daily life. In the end, justice and equality for PWD require more than modest attempts at accessibility but meaningful inclusion in every part of society.[6] *Accessibility* precedes inclusion by ensuring PWD can have access to, or benefit from, an experience. *Inclusion* results from true accessibility so that PWD are equally empowered, valued, respected, and supported in pursuing and participating in all aspects of life. Unfortunately, we often view PWD from a needs perspective rather than rights.[7]

Barriers to Access and Inclusion

Disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. Regarding limitation of activities, some argue it is a societal responsibility to meet the disabled where they are and provide them greater access to opportunities by making small changes or reducing barriers to their environment.[8] In advancing that proposition, there are several barriers to accessibility and inclusion that may be present:[9]

- Attitudinal barriers may take the form of misconceptions, stereotypes, or labeling. These barriers can foster a sense of unacceptance and feelings of nonacceptance by society.[10] Society often segregates people with disabilities in education, recreation, and their work pursuits, which can perpetuate a

3   Elflein, John. "Disability in the U.S. - statistics & facts," Statista, March 30, 2021, https://www.statista.com/topics/4380/disability-in-the-us/#dossierKeyfigures; United States Census Bureau. "Disability Characteristics," American Community Survey, 2022.

4   Adapt the Fun for Everyone! - Physical Activity and People with Disabilities, (2009). Retrieved February 16, 2022 from State of New York website: https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0954/

5   Devlin, Richard, and Dianne Pothier, eds. Critical disability theory: Essays in philosophy, politics, policy, and law. UBC Press, 2006.

6   Benjamin, Sarah, Bottone, Elizabeth, and Lee, Michael. "Beyond accessibility: Exploring the representation of people with disabilities in tourism promotional materials." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 29, no. 2-3 (2021): 295-313.

7   Curran, T., Jones, M., Ferguson, S., Reed, Abbie, M., Lawrence, A., Cull, N., and Stabb, M. "Disabled young people's hopes and dreams in a rapidly changing society: A co-production peer research study." *Disability & Society* 36, no. 4 (2021): 561-578.

8   Allen, Diane D., and Jonathan M. Wagner. "Assessing the gap between current movement ability and preferred movement ability as a measure of disability." Physical Therapy 91, no. 12 (2011): 1789-1803.

9   Heyne, Linda. "Solving Organizational Barriers to Inclusion Using Education, Creativity, and Teamwork," Impact Newsletter. Retrieved February 16, 2022 from the UMN website: https://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/162/over9.html

10   Overmars-Marx, T., Thomese, F., Verdonschot, M., and Meininger, H. "Advancing social inclusion in the neighborhood for people with an intellectual disability: An exploration of the literature." *Disability & Society* 29, no. 2 (2014): 255-274.

feeling of isolation. This isolation makes it difficult for a diverse community to blend, where people of all abilities and backgrounds are integrated and feel included.

- Administrative barriers typically result from a lack of leadership from boards of directors and administrators that recognizes the need for inclusive environments and encourages organizations to accept peoples' differences. This barrier often stems from a misconception that creating inclusive environments is difficult, risky, and requires expensive liability arrangements.

- Architectural barriers are associated with the quality and degree of physical access organizations provide. PWD often feel excluded when architectural barriers in facilities limit or make it more difficult for them to participate in an organization's activities.

- Programmatic barriers are encountered when an organization's rules, regulations, and practices do not serve and may exclude people with limited abilities. Administrators may be unfamiliar with how to promote positive interactions between and among people, both with and without disabilities, by making program adaptations, implementing adaptative technologies, or assessing individual needs.

In addition to the barriers mentioned above, two other barriers present accessibility challenges for PWD. These barriers are a lack of financial resources and a lack of transportation. For example, "Global data show that employment rates are lower for disabled men (53%) and disabled women (20%) than for nondisabled men (65%) and nondisabled women (30%). In the 37 member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the employment rate of PWD (44%) was nearly half the rate for people without disabilities (75%)".[11] Transportation is another often overlooked issue. The disabled often depend on a parent, caregiver, or friend to transport them from one location to another.[12] There are also government mobility services, private mobility organizations, and rideshare options to help the disabled meet their transportation needs. Finally, it is important to recognize that not all disabilities have a physical dimension. Autism, cognitive and developmental issues, sensory challenges, and other differences are also disabling conditions.[13]

Tourism and Theme Parks

The growing numbers of PWD traveling to entertainment and tourist destinations throughout the world have spurred calls for greater accessibility for PWD at those destinations. One organization advocating for change is the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, which works to achieve acces-

11   World Health Organization. "10 facts on disability." Retrieved February 16, 2022 from the WHO website: https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/disabilities

12   Uttinger, Daniel. "Handicap Transportation | Transportation for Disabled Persons | Fiscal Tiger." *Fiscal Tiger*, May 8, 2018, https://www.fiscaltiger.com/disability-transportation-services/

13   Elflein, John. "Disability in the U.S. - statistics & facts," *Statista*, March 30, 2021, https://www.statista.com/topics/4380/disability-in-the-us/#dossierKeyfigures.

sible tourism. This effort calls upon administrators at tourist destinations to endeavor to provide an environment where "all persons, regardless of their physical or cognitive needs, are able to use and enjoy the available amenities in an equitable and sustainable manner".[14]

The fact is, most social spaces and activities are designed with mainstream bodies and the nondisabled public in mind.[15] When it comes to tourist destinations in the United States, like the nations theme parks, most are created by considering the needs and interests of the vast majority of guests who are not disabled.[16] While accessibility affects PWD, exclusion potentially affects their family members and friends. Thus, inattention to accessibility can alienate PWD and those guests accompanying them.[17]

While incorporating full inclusion into the workings of every theme park may not be feasible or even possible, the goal of park design and management should be to maximize accessibility for all, including those guests with a disability. Parks may not have proper signage, accessible entries and parking, usable navigation equipment, telecommunication devices, auxiliary aids, Braille, staff assistance, and visual emergency alarms, among other considerations. Unfortunately, PWD are a neglected group by the tourism industry, "probably due to it being considered a 'minority' market, requiring too much investment to 'pay off' and also as an undesirable segment to include in the industry's target market, since its presence may affect the 'happy, perfect environment' of a wonderful holiday (where people, arguably do not want to be confronted with negatively perceived dimensions of life)".[18]

Theme parks have had challenges in past attempts to foster a more accessible environment for PWD. That said, many theme parks have attempted to improve their access. For example, many parks have historically extended front-of-the-line opportunities for PWD. Sadly, Disney was forced at one point to scale back such opportunities due to actions by some parents to turn Disney's improved access policy into an unfair advantage for themselves.[19] According to Disney, abuses of the policy were getting out of hand. The *New York Post* reported that some parents had gone so far as to hire disabled "tour guides" to accompany their families, allowing

14   United Nations, "Promoting accessible tourism for all," Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Disability, Retrieved February 16, 2022 from the United Nations website: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/promoting-accessible-tourism-for-all.html

15   E. Figueiredo, C. Eusebio, and E. Kastenholz, "How diverse are tourists with disabilities? A pilot study on accessible leisure tourism experiences in Portugal," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 14 (2012): 531-550.

16   Paul L. Levin, "Inspired by daughter, dad builds water park for people with disabilities," *CNN*, June 16, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/16/health/worlds-first-fully-accessible-water-park-trnd/index.html

17   E. Kastenholz, C. Eusebio, and E. Figueiredo, "Contributions of tourism to social inclusion of persons with disability," *Disability & Society* 30, no. 8 (2015): 1259-1281.

18   Kastenholz, Eusebio, and Figueiredo, "Contributions of tourism to social inclusion of persons with disability," 1260.

19   Billy Greene, "It's a small-minded world, Disney learns," *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 2013, https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304213904579095393810419548

them to move to the front of lines and avoid long waits. There are also stories of nondisabled patrons of Disney parks renting from a limited supply of wheelchairs for the sole purpose of avoiding waits in long lines. According to Disney, the policy change was necessary because some families chose to pretend that one or more of their family members were ill or disabled to game the system. In response, Disney instituted their Disability Access Service (DAS), which requires PWD, including those with autism, to wait the same amount of time in line as other guests. They can wait virtually, meaning they have a place in the queue but can wait in other locations in the park. A return time is provided to them via an electronic ticket. PWD must return to the ride where an attendant scans their ticket and they board the ride. The process does not preclude a PWD from waiting in a standard DAS queue for their ride when they return. In response to this change in policy, numerous lawsuits were filed against Disney for violations of both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act over failures to accommodate guests with disabilities adequately.[20] Disney has since implemented Disney Genie, a replacement program that allows guests to pre-register for certain attractions and assists in park planning.[21]

As the Disney example illustrates, there are a variety of challenges theme parks and PWD face in addressing accessibility and inclusion for their guests. Improving inclusiveness in these parks would enhance quality of life and perceptions of social connectedness among PWD, increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem and stimulating a desire to more actively participate in all areas of social life.[22] In addition to these benefits, improved access signals an organizational commitment to equity, social responsibility, diversity, and other values increasingly expected by customers, investors, and other stakeholders.

Purpose

This study explores the issue of access for PWD at theme parks by investigating and evaluating factors that allow for improved accessibility and enjoyment. In reviewing the extant literature on access for the disabled, no published work was found that explicitly addressed disability challenges for PWD at theme parks from the guest perspective. This study is intended to fill an information gap that may exist between theme park operators and guests regarding visitor expectations and needs. As such, this is essential research for both theme park administrators and members of the disabled community and their supporters.

In pursuing this study, these specific research questions were investigated:

Q1) What is the state of operational accessibility and inclusivity?

Q2) What is the state of structural accessibilty and inclusivity?

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20   Katie Mintz, "Is Disney disabling?" *Disability & Society* 33, no. 8 (2018): 1366-1371.

21   Walt Disney World, "Disney Genie," Retrieved from the Disney website: http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/genie/

22   Kastenholz, Eusebio, and Figueiredo, "Contributions of tourism to social inclusion of persons with disability," 1260.

Methodology

According to Sutton & Austin, qualitative research can help researchers access the thoughts and feelings of research participants, enabling the development of an understanding of the meaning that people ascribe to their experiences.[23] Therefore, a qualitative research study was considered appropriate and suitable for this study to gain insights into guest experiences through individual interviews and observations.

Four theme parks located around the United States were the subjects of this study. The first theme park visited is located in Texas and is one of several parks that form the largest amusement park company in the world.[24] The second theme park is located in Texas and is one of twelve parks of its kind. The third theme park is located in Florida and is one of a chain of eight family theme parks. The fourth theme park is also located in Texas and caters primarily to disabled guests. Table 1 provides an overview of the four parks.

Table 1

Theme Park Detailed Information

Theme Park	Location	Size	Focus	Year Constructed
1	Texas	200 acres	Thrilling rides	1992
2	California	189 acres	Animal shows and thrilling rides	1964
3	Florida	145 acres	Shows, attractions, and rides	2011
4	Texas	25 acres	Inclusive play	2010

An evaluation checklist was used to evaluate accessibility factors associated with theme park design upon arrival at each park. The checklist was created by facilities management experts as well as a registered accessibility specialist (See Appendix A). The checklist consisted of factors that the U.S. Department of Labor and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration use when evaluating facilities for ADA compliance and safety. It includes factors such as designated access routes, parking locations, wayfinding, maps of theme park grounds, proper signage, ticket booth access, safety measures while on rides, resting spaces, dining services, smoking policies, and special ticket offerings.

After completing each park checklist, interviews were conducted with guests. Prospective interviewees were notified that this study was approved by the Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB-approved application #6194). A discussion of rights ensued, and prospective interviewees were informed that

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23   Jane Sutton and Zubin Austin, "Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management," *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy* 68, no. 3 (2015): 226-231.

24   Business Wire, "World's Largest Theme Park Company Celebrates Record Revenue," *Business Wire*, January 5, 2018, https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180105005459/en/Worlds-Largest-Theme-Park-Company-Celebrates-Record-Revenue.

their consent to participate in the study was needed before interviews could commence. Additionally, they were advised that they could discontinue their participation at any time if they decided to take part. Their decision to participate signified informed consent. The details of each discussion were captured in notes made immediately after each interview's conclusion. The reason for employing this method was to build rapport, allow each conversation to flow naturally, and generate open and thoughtful responses from strangers on potentially sensitive questions. In utilizing this approach, the intention was to evaluate each park for its inclusiveness for PWD. The subjects of the interviews were PWD. If accompanied, guardians, parents, other relatives, or friends could participate in these interviews. The interviewees were selected at random at each theme park. They were asked nine questions regarding their experiences at the theme park. The state of residence was also captured during these interviews to ascertain how far guests traveled to the park (see Table 1). A total of 40 individual and group interviews were conducted across the four parks involving a total of 140 participants.

Table 2

Interview Questions

Question #	Interview Questions
1	Are you 18 years or older?
2	Are you from this state, or are you visiting from out of state? Please share your state of residence?
3	Why did you choose to visit this theme park?
4	What do you like about this theme park?
5	Have you experienced any accessibility problems during your visit?
6	Do you have any recommendations regarding accessibility improvement for this park?
7	Would you recommend this theme park to a friend?
8	Can you identify another entertainment venue that does a great job of catering to your accessibility needs?
9	What is the distance you are willing to travel to experience accessible fun?

Findings

Theme Park 1

Regarding the first research question, interviewees stated that they were pleased the park had improved its food offerings. For some, this fact alone motivated them to visit the park weekly. However, interviewees also mentioned that the electric wheelchairs are expensive to rent, there are no discounted tickets available since they are limited in their entertainment options, the lunch policies and options are not consistent at the various restau-

rants, and there are no food and beverage options for guests with dietary restrictions. Additionally, interviewees stated that the park did not provide safety and accessibility guidelines. Interviewees also described a state of invisibility where they are sometimes disrespected by park staff and other guests. They expressed dissatisfaction with not being included in park parades and activities. They also voiced dissatisfaction and disappointment that the park does not allow other guests in their party to get ride tickets validated on their behalf.

One comment received from a park guest mentioned that this park requires PWD to provide paperwork to receive special access. This interviewee stated that since she and her party did not have paperwork on hand, they were not granted special privileges routinely provided to disabled guests. This interviewee expressed that she believed this action violated the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It can be quite uncomfortable to discuss a hidden disability as, in some cases, the disability is an insecurity they would rather not share. A member of this interviewee's party did have a visible disability, yet both were still denied access privileges intended to prevent the disabled from ride-related injuries. An additional comment regarding park actions that may be legally problematic was taken from an interviewee who was stopped and questioned about their service animal by a security officer. This interviewee stated, "In the United States, disabled Americans are granted civil rights protections from discrimination and harassment under the Americans with Disabilities Act." This interviewee felt harassed, threatened, and afraid that access would be denied to her and her service animal. The guest recommended that the park implement a rule to only allow animals with proper identification (such as a dog vest, dog I.D., and in training/working sign) into the park rather than interrogate guests at the park entrance.

Regarding the second research question, interviewees stated there are not enough handicap-approved parking spots available during busy hours. Also, there are no accessible seating options on rides. Interviewees also stated that it is a long walk to get to the ride exits to receive a call number and return later for the ride.

Theme Park 2

Regarding the first research question, interviewees mentioned that there were glass windows surrounding each animal exhibit and they could easily roll their wheelchair up to interact with the animals. They could also step up for higher viewing to watch and observe the wildlife. The same was true of the park's interactive pools. There are even moving and lighted escalator pathways to facilitate accessibility so that PWD can enjoy their experience along with other guests. Interviewees stated that they appreciate that the park offers wheelchair rentals, natural wayfinding throughout the theme park with a non-electric wheelchair, easy accessibility of rides, and friendly staff and other guests. It also offers clean, spacious, and accessible bathrooms and unique shows without the use of loud music or extreme light effects.

More generally, clear markings were evident in ride queues addressing where disabled guests could stand to prepare to enter rides, the ability to strap in wheelchairs along with surrounding seats for their families or service animals to join them on the ride, and elevator access for exiting rides.

The shows are the most commonly mentioned reason guests visited the park because anyone could enjoy them, and they did not have loud noises or light displays. Interviewees also mentioned that they loved each show's cross-cultural or educational component. There is both front and top row accessible seating and bench seating for accompanying guests and wheelchair spaces.

However, the interviewees also expressed some concerns. There are no discounted tickets available for disabled guests, even though they cannot enjoy all of the park's activities. They expressed that more affordable ticket options would encourage them to bring their children, grandchildren, and other family members along with them. Also, the electric wheelchairs were expensive to rent and were sometimes unavailable. Additionally, they occasionally felt disrespected in a wheelchair by children and families when navigating throughout the park. Interviewees stated that the park did not have an accessibility map to help them navigate around the park. They also expressed dissatisfaction with navigating up to a ride only to learn that it was closed due to maintenance. Finally, they were upset about not being informed about accessible rides and unique park offerings as they entered the park.

Regarding the second research question, interviewees mentioned that a favorite ride was a non-motion ride, available in theater-style seating. Guests could experience the same ride and show but without motion. This ride was favored by small children, the elderly, people afraid of the regular ride, and disabled guests. The park displayed six restrictions on the screen in the queue for this ride for guests to consider which type of ride best fit their needs. On the other hand, it is difficult to navigate up inclines in the park to see the shows with a non-electric wheelchair, and there is limited accessible seating on the front row for shows, so they must sit on the very top level. Additionally, there is no quiet or cool space available to rest.

Theme Park 3

Regarding the first research question, interviewees mentioned that from their initial experience at guest services, enthusiastic employees known as "model citizens" treated them with kindness and understanding. As a result, they felt included, welcomed, and not judged. Interviewees stated that they appreciated that the park website provides accessibility offerings and autism visitor tips such as locations of loud zones, dark scenes, and ride cycle times. Additionally, they expressed appreciation for the availability of the courtesy wheelchair in the parking lot. There are many courtesy wheelchairs throughout the parking lot with signs informing guests that

they can use this complimentary chair to get to guest services and trade it for a rental chair. The availability of these chairs allows guests to arrive at guest services without struggling from their vehicles to get into the park. They also found the accessibility guide from guest services helpful. Their experiences with the expedited access pass and designated entryways were positive, and they enjoyed interacting with employees on the spectrum.

Finally, parents expressed satisfaction that their children can enjoy the rides and shows like any other park guest. However, the interviewees also mentioned that it would be helpful for the park to have earplugs available for purchase for PWD who may be triggered by loud noises. Interviewees stated that they were not notified about the accessibility guide upon receiving their disabled accessibility pass. Also, they mentioned that the outside cooling fans for the rides are set on high and extremely loud, which can trigger guests with sound sensitivities.

Regarding the second research question, interviewees stated that the park provides family-size, accessible bathrooms with proper signage for guests and provides service dog relief centers. In addition, the park offers three air-conditioned quiet rooms where parents can bring children out of the crowded park and into a space where they can relax and settle down. The rooms are equipped with weighted blankets, light dimmers, a sensory box, a rocking chair, a hammock, bean bags, and a bed. However, interviewees mentioned there is no accessible parking entry line for easy access into the park. There are no wheelchair stations in the park other than the station located at the very front of the park. This makes it difficult for small families to split up in search of one when their disabled family member is in need. Also, interviewees wished the park had better signage available for navigating the park.

Theme Park 4

Regarding the first research question, this park provides free admission to PWD. The interviewees stated that most employees have a disability and have found success and job security. Interviewees were impressed by the cleanliness of the park, the friendly staff, delicious food choices, entertaining shows, clean bathrooms, refillable water stations, and overall experience (which some characterized as magical). The park offers *joy fast* passes that allow guests to skip the line once for each ride. There is also a location tracker for parents that enables them to track the location of any member of their party through the use of a wristband and a downloadable phone application. Interviewees described the quiet, relaxing, and welcoming environment, enjoyable rides, and the availability of playscapes and sensory areas. Also, they mentioned that the catch and release fishing was exciting, the staff are caring, and there is an option to bring food and drinks into the park. They also remarked that the park is nothing like they have ever experienced before, describing it as "good for the soul." Each of

the park's holiday events and activities has sensory-friendly activities, games, and prizes. However, the interviewees expressed concerns that ticket prices are high for other guests, unlike the free access provided to PWD. There is also no significant discount in ticket pricing for those who arrive within an hour of park closure. They were also disappointed they were not informed of rides closed for maintenance.

The interviewees stated that the park adequately serves the disabled community and provided no negative feedback regarding the second research question. The park provides a gym that allows special teams to practice for various sports such as power soccer and basketball and welcomes players of all ages and abilities. All rides are wheelchair accessible and sensory-friendly and allow PWD to navigate up an accessible loading ramp and onto coasters, cars, or boats. There is clear signage throughout the park. The park also has fully accessible playgrounds, sandpits, swings, jungle gyms, slides, and a water park. The newest addition to the park is a digital gaming and interactive section with Microsoft computers and an Xbox center. Several interviewees shared that this center is impressive because it features the new adaptive controller with joystick and foot pedal. According to the Microsoft website, the machine is "Designed primarily to meet the needs of gamers with limited mobility".[25]

These findings are summarized in Tables 3 (State of Operational Accessibility and Inclusivity) and 4 (State of Structural Accessibility and Inclusivity) by the major issues found at each theme park (designated with an X).

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[25]   Xbox, "Designed primarily to meet the needs of gamers with limited mobility," *Microsoft*, accessed June 25, 2024, https://www.xbox.com/en-US/accessories/controllers/xbox-adaptive-controller.

Table 3

State of Operational Accessibility and Inclusivity

Issues	Theme Park 1	Theme Park 2	Theme Park 3	Theme Park 4
Wheelchair availability	X	X		
Discounted tickets for PWD/guests	X	X	X	X
Disrespected by staff and guests	X	X		
Parade participation	X			
Ride validation by others in party	X			X
Lack of ride availability/ accessibility information		X		
Lack of park safety and accessibility guidelines	X	X	X	
Paperwork required for special access	X			

Table 4

State of Structural Accessibility and Inclusivity

Issue	Theme Park 1	Theme Park 2	Theme Park 3	Theme Park 4
Inadequate number of accessible parking spots	X		X	
Lack of accessible seating options on rides	X			
Lack of accessible seating options for shows		X		
Challenging to navigate inclines with non-electric wheelchairs		X		
No quiet or cool spaces	X			
A limited number of wheelchair stations			X	

Discussion and Recommendations

Regarding research question one, in terms of favorable actions or activities, three theme parks offered PWD the ability to enter rides immediately using an express pass without requiring a wait or call back time. This is a significant offering for guests who may have difficulties waiting in line, particularly in extreme temperatures. The passes allow the assigned guest to board any ride along with their group immediately. If the park is busy, then a reservation time is set for that guest to return later to experience the attraction. Theme park 3 provided a designated line for guests presenting disabilities and special needs. This addition is much more practical because PWD do not have to travel through the crowded ride exits to get to the ride queues. Theme parks 3 and 4 also had visibly marked signage on their attractions where wheelchairs and express pass guests can safely enter the ride. One parent said it is a relief not to determine where to enter using an express pass with designated lines and proper signage. She stated that every moment of the day was stress-free and such a fantastic experience.

Theme parks could improve accessibility by creating signage to help guests navigate around the park, communicate daily about rides that are unavailable due to maintenance, accommodate the needs of guests with food allergies or intolerances or allow them to bring in their food, and allow representatives of disabled guests the ability to arrange return times to rides for their guests. The parks could also improve their inclusivity by creating opportunities for PWD to participate in parades and activities. For example, they might decorate electric wheelchairs with the event theme and allow disabled guests to participate in that way, given that the parade floats themselves are not accessible. Also, offering special ticket and show-only rates for guests who are uninterested in the rides and allowing PWD to enter shows five minutes earlier than other guests so they have time to navigate and get seated would be helpful. The parks could also hire interpreters to communicate in sign language during their shows, on train rides, and other park activities. Additionally, two of the theme parks ensured all staff are trained in interactions with disabled guests on the autism spectrum, and other parks should consider implementing such a program.

Parks could also improve accessibility by providing PWD with safety and accessibility guides upon entry into the park. These guides are helpful because they display the features of each ride and assist guests in determining which rides are suitable for them. Ride features include cognitive triggers such as flashing lights, 3D effects, cycle times, sharp turns, and type of restraint, among others. The disability guide also discusses ride restrictions, locations of first aid stations, use of oxygen tanks, evacuation routes, use of service animals, special access passes, and access to wheelchairs. Also, if parks could include symbols on the map that shows the ride

specifications mentioned above, like loud sounds or bright, flashing lights, that would undoubtedly be helpful. This information should be included on the park website for guests to plan their visit prior to arrival.

All four parks offered wheelchair rentals; however, there were issues with wheelchair rental offerings and options. Guests travel from all over the world to experience these entertainment venues, and in most cases, they depend on the park to have wheelchairs available for their use during the visit. If the parks have a limited supply of wheelchairs and the only option provided to guests is to return at a later time or date to secure a wheelchair, that is a poor outcome. Parks could reduce the wheelchair rental fee, purchase additional wheelchairs to improve availability, and consider expanding the benefits for disabled season pass holders allowing them to earn and receive free wheelchair rentals. The placement of courtesy wheelchairs in the parks and parking lots could also be improved.

Regarding research question two, these parks met the minimum requirements for ADA compliance standards, including accessible parking, entrances, ticket booths, spacious bathrooms, wide pathways, and ride entry, except for theme park 1, which failed to provide adequate access. As mentioned earlier regarding theme park 1, it is not easy to navigate around the park, and there are not enough handicap-approved parking spots available during busy hours. There are also no accessible seating options on rides. In general, these parks provided informative websites, accessible seating and viewing options, and accessible ride offerings that should be considered in the design and operation of all new theme parks. New parks should consider constructing an indoor facility for a sensory space, video game entertainment, and other fun learning activities for guests who cannot remain outdoors for long periods of time. The installation of accessibility buttons to open doors for wheelchair and stroller access is also highly recommended. Implementing visual alarms in case of emergency is crucial. It is also essential to install a Braille and tactile map for blind guests whose most significant challenge is orienting themselves to their surroundings.

Theme parks 2 and 4 had wonderful spaces set aside for guests with cognitive disabilities or those that required an indoor space to play. Theme park 2 had multiple quiet rooms specially equipped with squishy toys, noise-canceling headphones, weighted blankets, and other complementary resources available to guests on the autism spectrum and their families. Theme park 4 had an attraction that encourages creative play through make-believe activities such as a grocery store, news station, car repair shop, and animated screens that respond based on that individual's shadow movements.

Theme park 3 offered a virtual reality ride that enabled guests to enter the ride through an accessible ride elevator using their wheelchair or strapped in a seat with a seatbelt. This accessible elevator brings them to

where they can board the ride and provides a safety lift at the conclusion of the ride. This lift can easily be installed in other parks to aid in the entry and exit of rides. It is advisable for any ride that requires guests to climb stairs or has high inclines to reach the level of the ride to implement a lift for disabled guests.

Conclusion

Accessible and inclusive environments and activities are critical for the social and developmental quality of life for persons with disabilities. The findings presented in this study indicate that, by and large, structural issues are not the overwhelming concerns of PDW visiting these theme parks. There are issues here but forced compliance with the ADA has alleviated many concerns. However, these compliance requirements are intended to establish only minimal standards for accessibility. The interviewees mentioned far more operational issues that are relatively easy for park operators to address. Given the findings, it would be advisable for park management to implement the following recommendations to help combat both operational and structural barriers to accessibility and inclusion:

- Hurtful characterizations of PWD as wheelchair-bound, handicapped, crippled, or spastic can serve to perpetuate negative stereotypes, emotions, and feelings toward those who struggle with physical and mental disabilities.[26] Attitudinal solutions begin with one person. Other employees often follow suit when one staff member or manager demonstrates an inclusive attitude and behaviors. Attitudinal solutions begin with proper training on appropriate ways to interact with people of varying abilities. Another way to demonstrate inclusive attitudes is by advocating for "person-first" language (e.g. "people with disabilities" rather than "disabled people").[27]

- Administrative solutions begin by educating the board of directors, administrators, and staff on inclusion's significance, meaning, and practice. An advisory council can be created to 1) uphold the expectation of inclusion for both employees and guests, and 2) require access to be discussed and displayed in their promotional materials. Recent research findings indicate there continues to be an absence of PWD within promotional materials. This lack of representation perpetuates a stigma that this group is unable to participate in recreational or entertainment activities and does not belong in such a setting.[28] Organizations should also endeavor to employ more PWD in staff and administrative roles.

26   Beth A. Haller, Bonnie L. Dorries, and Jacquelyn Rahn, "Media Labeling Versus the US Disability Community Identity: A Study of Shifting Cultural Language," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (2006).

27   National Disability Authority, "Person-Centred Language," *National Disability Authority*, 2019, https://nda.ie/Publications/ Attitudes/Person-Centred-Language/ (accessed June 25, 2024).

28   Suzanne Benjamin, Teresa Bottone, and Doretta Lee, "Exploring Representation and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Advertising: An Analysis of Visual Content," *Journal of Advertising Research* 61, no. 1 (2021): 77-88.

- Architectural solutions take the form of universal access design for facilities that are intended to be utilized by people of all ages and abilities. Persons with disabilities should be involved in the initial design and any structural modifications to facilities to ensure functional accommodations. There are grants for agencies to submit proposals to fund accommodations such as lifts, ramps, elevators, and paved pathways to bring an older structure up to code.

- Programmatic solutions include hiring a certified park and recreation professional or a certified therapeutic recreation specialist on staff. Doing so would provide an onsite and trained staff member who is knowledgeable in disabilities and inclusion techniques, able to conduct personalized assessments, and can offer individual instruction to other employees. Additionally, parks should solicit further suggestions from parents of children with disabilities or PWD themselves on needed park improvements in areas such as communications, behavior, positioning, and other potential issues. A lack of accessibility guides, information on ride availability, wheelchair availability and cost, parade participation, and other operational issues identified by this study are already within the control of park operators to address. It only requires a willingness to do so.

Suggestions for Future Research

It would be helpful to expand the current study and investigate other industries within the tourism and entertainment industries. Further research into theme parks should explore the conditions present in more parks, include interviews with park administrators and employees, and investigate new and innovative ways to adapt park operations to realize greater degrees of inclusivity and accessibility.

Additionally, the current study utilized a qualitative research methodology based on face-to-face interviews of PWD and other members of their parties. The use of surveys and other disclosure methods may yield different and possibly more beneficial results in future studies.

Much work remains to be done to create an inclusive society for all. Businesses want to be more inclusive in their operations. However, it is up to multiple stakeholders to identify those gaps in service and advocate for the needs of others, like PWD, who can find themselves marginalized in their pursuits of tourism and entertainment.

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Appendix A

ADA Checklist

Assessment of Accessibility Guidelines and Standards	Present	Not Present	Up to par	Suggestions for improvement
1. Designated access route a. Parking locations; b. Route from parking;				

2. Wayfinding; (spatial problem solving, when/how)
   a. Visual
   b. Audio – crosswalk height, audio guide
   c. Tactile				

3. Maps of Theme Park grounds showing accessible rides and routes;
   a. Visual
   b. Audio
   c. Tactile				

4. Proper Signage
   a. Ride Entry
   b. Elevator access/ Lifts				

5. Ticket booth access; Height a. Waiting lines with adequate turn-around space				

6. Safety measures which accommodate wheel chairs, etc. while on a ride;
   a. Usable doors
   b. Ride entrances
   c. Transfer space from chair to ride;
   d. Companion seating				

7. Resting space
   a. Cool zone
   b. Space to rest while nauseated
   c. Refreshment access
   d. Bathroom adult size changing stations				

8. Dining services a. Vending machines				
9. Smoking allowed?				

10. Special ticket offerings
   a. Attendant accommodations; Priority ride access
   b. Service animals welcome?				

Sourced material (recycled cardboard), acrylic, oreo crumbs

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