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The Forgotten Flesh: Confronting Western Epistemologies through Parody in Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's *The Couple in the Cage* (1992)

Celia Martínez-Sáez

Abstract: The category of "the human" has recently undergone extensive examination in intellectual and academic circles. Especially through decolonial theory, various authors have attempted to define the current conception of the category of the human, tracing a genealogy that dates from 1492. Decolonial thinking maintains that racialization is a project of humanization or dehumanization at the service of the colonial apparatus. And yet any attempt to confront that epistemology of coloniality leaves us in an abyss of impossibility. Activists like Boaventura de Sousa Santos think that this abyss can somehow be spanned when one plays an intellectual-activist role. In this paper, I analyze Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco's "The Couple in the Cage" performance in the context of the commemoration of five hundredth anniversary of the Conquista in 1992 Spain. I argue that the parody of the two "undiscovered bodies" in the cage confronts the naturalized and unspoken Western dehumanization of nonwhite bodies by bringing the flesh of the indigenous peoples back to the center of the discussion that the colonial project has attempted to obliterate.

Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Paul Robeson's *Othello*: Representations of Black Masculinity in Contemporary Adaptations of *Othello*

Anna Glotzer

Abstract: In this article, the author examines Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1941) as a contemporary adaptation of *Othello*. Richard Wright's literary representation of Bigger Thomas in *Native Son* is strongly tied to the narrative of Shakespeare's *Othello*. An analysis of the adaptive quality of *Native Son*, as well as Paul Robeson's public profile during his time performing *Othello*, allows a fuller critical understanding of the ways in which the Othello character serves as a foundation for representations of black masculinity in literature, translated into American society. The adaptive quality of *Native Son* complicates the narrative of *Othello* by integrating the context of America's racial history. The parallel between Bigger Thomas and Othello represents a compelling pattern in language used to portray black male narratives in literature. The framework between Othello and Desdemona is compared to Bigger Thomas and Mary Dalton in this analysis to highlight the formulaic patterns of interracial tragedy. In the decade preceding Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Paul Robeson's performance as Othello in London began in 1930 at the Savoy Theatre. Paul Robeson's entanglement with the complicated narrative of *Othello* evokes the conflicts in Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Robeson's entanglement of identity with the role of Othello highlights the ways in which *Othello* informs a fixed narrative for black men in America.

Can One *Get Out*? The Aesthetics of Afro-Pessimism

Ryan Poll

Abstract: “Can One *Get Out?* The Aesthetics of Afro-Pessimism” situates Jordan Peele’s 2017 movie *Get Out* in dialogue with two prominent forms of African American discourse, Afro-Pessimism and Post-Blackness. Peele’s movie narrates how slavery remains a central paradigm for understanding the present, a central tenet of Afro-Pessimism. Although, as this article argues, Peele’s movie narrates the deep truth of Afro-Pessimism, the movie also gestures toward ways out of this seemingly historical fixity. The way out, the movie suggests, begins with aesthetics—radical Black aesthetics.

Inside the NBA: Black Dandyism and the Racial Regime

Frank García

Abstract: This essay builds from previous scholarship investigating the politics of race, racism, and white supremacy in sports and the history, method, and efficacy of athlete protest. Specifically, this discussion focuses on how predominantly white National Basketball Association (NBA) owners and executives enact racism and maintain white supremacy in a league whose players are mostly Black; it also addresses the ways that players negotiate this racist space and construct subversive, countercultural subjectivities. The author argues that, in 2005, NBA executives and owners instituted a mandatory dress code as a racializing tactic, which sought to further pathologize and control players and Blackness by rendering hip-hop culture both criminal and unprofessional. However, this article also reveals how NBA players co-opted this dress code to usher in a new NBA subculture: Black dandyism. Ultimately, Black dandyism resisted and subverted the league’s policing of Black players. It eventually created avenues for players to transform the NBA into a space where fashion operates as a critique of racialized police violence and the criminal connotations associated with the hip-hop aesthetic and the Black body.

Mathilde Blind, the Highland Clearances, and the "Trappings of Nationality" in the British Isles

Katherine E. Ost diek

Abstract: This essay strives to bring critical attention to the formal and aesthetic attributes of the often-overlooked epic poem, *The Heather on Fire* (1886), by fin-de-siècle poet Mathilde Blind. Blind’s writing, like her persona, challenged boundaries of style and genre to bring seemingly disparate styles together. She combined her knowledge of conventional forms, her fascination with old-world imagery, and her politically charged and locally grounded cosmopolitan perspective to bridge old and new worlds. This essay examines the ways in which Blind applies the forms of traditionally British genres in her 1886 epic, *The Heather on Fire*, to depict the violence and injustice of the nineteenth-century Highland Clearances. Blind’s manipulation of form in this hybrid poem addresses the British Scottish question in the late-Victorian period by documenting the Highland crofters’ loss and grief and by advocating for crofter land rights and inclusion under modern British law.

Seeing through the Trees: Annie Dillard as Writer-Activist

Jack Shindler

Abstract: This essay makes a case for Annie Dillard as a writer-activist who seeks to awaken her readers’ active appreciation of the natural world through the art of creating sentences. By carefully following the

artistic "lines," or passages, of seven sentences selected from five of her essays, readers can simulate the experience of being in nature through the syntactical "trees" of Dillard's sentences. These "tree-portraits" can thus heighten the readers' awareness, sharpen their focus, and awaken a deeply conflicted understanding of their place in the natural environment. Ultimately, within the structures of a well-crafted sentence or paragraph, readers get to participate in the challenges and tensions of that relationship.

Systems in Need of Activism: Considering the Effects of Segregation and Policy on French and US Primary and Secondary Education

Julia A. Gorham and Kris Aric Knisely

Abstract: This article argues that disparities in educational quality in elementary and secondary schools contribute to discrimination against underprivileged students in the United States and in France. Using a comparative framework to apply the findings of recent studies demonstrating a relationship between race, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement to first the American and then the French educational contexts, the processes of school funding and teacher education are identified as possible sources of educational inequality. The means by which funding procedures, curricula, and selection of teachers aggravate socioeconomic differences across the geographic landscape are also analyzed through the lens of residential segregation. Although popular rhetoric portrays elementary and secondary education as an efficacious means of surmounting poverty, these institutions frequently work paradoxically to reinforce the inequalities faced by disadvantaged students. Specifically, families of lower socioeconomic status, a classification that frequently includes immigrants and citizens of currently or historically oppressed ethnic backgrounds, tend to reside in economically disadvantaged school districts. Because these districts are funded according to the income level of local taxpayers, underprivileged children attending underprivileged schools lack access to the advanced pedagogical methods and high-quality teachers essential for their success. The effects of such regional variation in educational opportunities are demonstrated by unfavorable academic outcomes for students attending inadequately funded institutions in both the United States and France. Since this cycle of restricted opportunity directly shapes not only the lives of individual students but also the future of society as a whole, recommendations are made for individuals, educators, and government policymakers to support the academic potential of historically underrepresented populations.