

Fourth Year Thesis Titles and Abstracts—Spring 2021

Rebecca Alemayehu

Doing the Work: Black Women's Leadership in Houston's Civil Rights Movement, 1944-1965

By 1940, Houston, Texas had the fifth largest population of Black Americans living in Jim Crow, only after New Orleans, Memphis, Birmingham, and Atlanta. Yet narratives of the Civil Rights Movement largely neglect Houston's desegregation and its activists. The city's extensive history of race riots, police brutality, voter suppression, and administration of the largest segregated school district underscore its geographic value in scholarship on Black liberation struggle. Additionally, Black Houston women were invaluable in the multifront attack on white supremacy. Two landmark Supreme Court decisions were a direct result of Black women's organizing and mobilizing efforts. This paper explores the rich history of Black women's activism in Jim Crow Houston while challenging their erasure because of racial, gender, and class identities.

In Chapter One, I describe Houston's dual identity as both refuge and racial terror under Jim Crow. Using archives of Black newspapers, evidence of Black women's organizations, Black labor organizing, and incidence of voter suppression, I detail the multiple manifestations of Jim Crow in the physical, economic, and social security of Black Houston women. I also describe how Black working and middle-class women targeted the prevalence of gender-based violence through fair housing advocacy. Through analysis of *Smith v Allwright* (1944) and its origins in Houston's Third Ward, I argue that Black women's work on the mundane aspects of enlisting popular and financial support ultimately obtained suffrage rights for Black Houstonians at large.

The remainder of the thesis deals with the various demographic shifts and its implications for Black women's economic mobility. I highlight the continuity of Black women in the workforce in contrast to the return of white working women to domesticity in the aftermath of World War II. I discuss the effect of the Red Scare on Black women's activism in desegregating education and the labor market during the 50s.

In Chapter Two, discusses *Sweatt v Painter* (1950) and its incomplete delivery of access to higher education. It analyzes the challenges facing Lulu B. White, Christa Adair, and Hattie Mae White to qualify prevailing notions of inactivity by Black middle-class women. I argue that their access to political and economic capital did not alienate them from the challenges facing the Black working class. I discuss how Black women employed media to push for the integration.

In the final chapter, I focus on the radicalization of Black students amidst integration battles. I demonstrate how the organizing of Black women students of Texas Southern University was consistent with the broader regional movement that planned sit-ins, boycotts, and freedom rides. I relate the importance of intergenerational examples of activism through interviews with student-activists Holly

Hogrobrooks and Deanna Lott, among other young women. I consider the role of media blackouts and dominant business interests in stifling the organizing efforts in Houston.

Medallia Ayalew

More Than Just an Image: Looking at Ritualized Spectacles of Violence Against Black Bodies

I argue that the images produced from the lynchings of African Americans and police brutality create a ritualized spectacle of Black pain and death in the United States. Understanding lynchings on a historical continuum with police brutality, I identify these forms as violence as state sanctioned violence against Black people and their bodies. Focusing on select cases of lynching photography and videos of police brutality, I analyze the intended work of these images and evolution of the spectacle of violence.

In Chapter One, I begin with an analysis of James Baldwin's *Going to Meet the Man* to provide insight into how Black and white bodies operate in a looking relation. I then discuss the ontological origins of the Black body and theories of looking, primarily citing the works of Hortense Spillers, James Elkins, Donna Haraway, Frantz Fanon, and bell hooks. Through the enslavement of Africans, the Black body has been constructed and defined by whiteness as an object and the racial "Other." Whiteness has imposed meaning onto the Black body and rendered the Black body available for consumption. By understanding the function of the Black body, I discuss looking and the white gaze as violent and invasive processes that are rooted in desire and possession. The white gaze has psychologically destructive consequences for Black people and is intensified by visual technologies. In this chapter, I also define the spectacle as the public display of Black death and ritualization as the repetition of this violent spectacle.

Chapters Two and Three examine visual images of violence against Black bodies. In Chapter Two I examine lynching photography through three cases: the lynching of Laura and L.D. Nelson, the lynching of Jesse Washington, and the lynching of Emmett Till. The lynching of the Nelsons and Washington are examples of traditional lynching photography that was meant to commodify the body and relish in the spectacle of the lynching. The lynching of Emmett Till inverts the purposes of lynching photography by using the photograph of his body to articulate the inhumanity of lynchings. In Chapter Three, I discuss the police brutality cases of Rodney King, Sandra Bland, and George Floyd and the videos resulting from these incidents. Documenting this violence can be a form of protest, but the distribution of these images also present issues in reading violence and the overconsumption of Black suffering.

Recognizing that Black pain and death is an integral part of American society, Chapter Four seeks to understand how Black people can reclaim images of themselves and their bodies. This chapter continues the focus on videos of police brutality and begins with a discussion on frameworks for "responsibly" viewing the violence that is often subject to virality. Bringing in an analysis of high-profile images of Breonna Taylor, I explore posthumous iconography of victims of police brutality as a method of Black resistance and its potential to propose alternative ways of seeing. Here, I consider how the internet and social media continue the risk of commodifying the Black body while remaining a crucial tool for Black protest. Chapter Five is a brief conclusion that ponders issues going forward.

Ryan Buscaglia

Nuclear Narratives: An Examination of American Discourse on Nuclear Weapons

The existence of nuclear weapons still poses an existential threat to humanity. Entire nations, cities, and cultures could be destroyed at a mere half hour notice from accident, miscalculation, or intention. At the same time, nuclear weapons seemingly legitimize the position and power of the nation-states that possess them. This thesis aims to look at nationalism and the social construction of national narratives in the United States in order to better understand our political and social relationship to nuclear weapons, and ultimately to better understand how we might abolish them.

I examine two different aspects of American engagement with nuclear weapons. The first is the American memory of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The second deals with narratives of nuclear disarmament in the United States. Looking closer at these two important nodes of our nuclear knowledge will help us reevaluate unquestioned assumptions about our nuclear history. In order to consider the possibility of a global scheme of nuclear disarmament one must consider how nationalism functions to hinder or advance that goal. Nationalism historically limits our public memory of nuclear weapons, but can also be mobilized to persuade the public and leaders that urgent moves towards nuclear disarmament are needed. Advocates for nuclear disarmament who successfully invoke the ‘national interest’ in the United States generate more public interest in schemes of disarmament.

Chapter One will start by briefly discussing the study of nuclear politics in international relations and critiques of the dominant theories of the field. The aim is to demonstrate that there is a place for historical sociology in discussion of nuclear weapons and national security. I will then discuss the field of nationalism studies and themes of American nationalism.

Chapter Two looks at the American national narrative about the atomic bombings of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and considers how an official national narrative developed over time. I will start by discussing the history of the bombings and the ways in which historians have reconsidered the decision to drop the bomb. I will conclude by recounting the public debate over the Smithsonian exhibit displaying the *Enola Gay* for the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII as an example of a battle over national narratives in America.

Chapter Three will consider how nuclear disarmament and abolition have been argued for on both national and international terms. I look at American discourse about nuclear disarmament in the 21st century compared to earlier advocates of nuclear abolition. The first part will consider the arguments for abolition at the beginning of the nuclear age which emphasized international governance. Then the chapter will discuss a group of former American Cold War statesmen—the so-called ‘gang of four’—who argued for nuclear disarmament in the 2000s. These statesmen used pragmatic appeals to national interests to form the basis of a persuasive vision for nuclear disarmament.

Omeed Faegh

Establishing Legitimacy: The Paradigm of Autocratic Rule in the Islamic Republic of Iran

This thesis analyzes the Islamic Republic of Iran’s legitimate rule through the content of its autocratic institutions of repression, ideology, and patronage. To maintain the consent of the ruled, stable autocracies, like the Islamic Republic of Iran, constantly work to bolster regime legitimacy through the reciprocal reinforcement and complementary advantage that the three institutional categories provide. In 1979, the Pahlavi Dynasty had lost prevalent belief in their rightful title to rule as the regime began to rely on repression to maintain control exclusively. The Islamic Republic established itself as the legitimate and enduring post-revolutionary regime because of its strong institutions of authoritarian governance. In the aftermath of a bloody war and a polarized revolution, the new regime fundamentally

transformed Iranian society in a way that was conducive to durable rule.

The Islamic Republic's ideology is 'Islamic' only in aesthetic. The ideology incorporated anti-imperialist rhetoric and Third World populist thought into the historically quietist Shia Islamic faith. The Islamic regime would embed the state conception of the revolution into the governmental organization and public consciousness. The democratic principles embedded in the ideology, no matter how shallow, would prove an effective form of citizen commitment to the regime and autocratic stabilization. After Khomeini's death, the regime persisted by changing the religious requirements for becoming the Supreme Leader and paving the way for the technocratic rule of Khamenei and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The regime has managed to deter specific activities and beliefs that challenge their legitimate rule through effective institutions of repression. The state security forces (auxiliary paramilitary and vigilante organizations), complex networks of surveillance and state intelligence, and internet controls have succeeded at subverting and punishing "subversive" individuals and organizations. The Islamic Republic has managed to fulfill its promises of socio-economic development and quality of life improvement through powerful institutions of patronage. These accomplishments have created social bases of loyalty to the regime and an enviable standard of living among comparable nations. For much of the Islamic Republic's history, these three pillars have both established and maintained the authoritarian regime's legitimate right to rule.

However, the Islamic Republic has recently been experiencing instability as a result of national protest movements. This thesis argues widespread collective action in the authoritarian Islamic Republic demonstrates that the burden of living under the brutal dictatorship has begun to outweigh the positive externalities of the ideological and patronage-based institutions that legitimate it because such resistance can come at the cost of life and liberty. Such unrest indicates a crisis of legitimacy for the Islamic regime's leadership. The 1999 Student Movement and 2009 Green Movement represent the ideological frustrations of the college-educated and upper-classes. The 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 unrest signify a broader response to the growing economic crisis which the working and lower-classes have spearheaded. In a state as opaque as the Islamic Republic, an analysis of these movements can provide meaningful insights into both the condition and future of legitimate rule in Iran.

Kiera A. Goddu

"You Are What You Eat": Exploring Identity and Agency through the Contemporary Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movement

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Movement is not new. Despite new language, theory, and popular interest in the organizing work of North American Indigenous communities to re-establish the foodways that sustained them for centuries, contemporary organizing is part of a cyclical and evolving relationship between settler colonial biopower and Indigenous resistance. This thesis will explore the historical through lines of Indigenous culture, political thought, and social movement strategy that underpin the contemporary Indigenous food sovereignty movement in North America.

Chapter One unpacks the language and theory necessary for analyzing the following historical and contemporary case studies. It will dig into the fraught and, at times contradictory, language used to describe and define Indigenous food sovereignty. Further, this chapter will define colonialism and settler colonialism and explain why Michel Foucault's theory of biopower is best positioned to describe how Indigenous foodways were both directly and indirectly targeted by settler colonialism. Finally, the

chapter will set the terms for understanding the activists and goals of the Indigenous food sovereignty movement since the 1990s when the concept of food sovereignty originated in South America.

Chapter Two explores historical case studies of the Choctaw and Pawnee nations to set the foundation for the argument that both settlers and Indigenous peoples have been trapped in a cycle of settler food control and Indigenous resistance to that control. Tactics, language, and goals have been repackaged and reframed to fit with cultural and political conditions of their time, but the outcomes and power struggles have largely remained the same. This chapter will document how and why settlers used food as they attempted to realize their goal of erasing Indigenous peoples and how Indigenous peoples asserted their humanity and entitlement to their land in the face of that erasure.

Chapters Three and Four bring us into the contemporary period with case studies of the Akwesasne Mohawk community and the Diné of the Navajo Nation. These case studies illustrate the lasting effects of both environmental degradation and food destruction on present-day Native communities. Both chapters will historically and socially situate the tribal community and apply the Indigenous Working Group on Food Sovereignty's definition of Indigenous food sovereignty to evaluate multiple, local food sovereignty initiatives.

Emily Guice

Theorizing the Intersection of Sexism and Speciesism in Contemporary American Dairy Factory Farming

The liberation of contemporary female factory farm animals requires an understanding of regimes of control specific to their gender. Feminist theorists have historically understood regimes of power, in particular capitalism and patriarchy, as oppressing female bodies' agency, autonomy, and social position. While feminist topics are traditionally human-centric, their consideration of hierarchical gender structures is valuable for all female beings. As recent work in animal theory, Dinesh Wadiwel's *The War Against Animals* offers a new theoretical model based in the history of political theory that argues human sovereignty over animals requires ongoing violence through a combination of speciesism and cognitive hierarchy enforced by capitalism and property rights that together create specific biopolitical regimes of power. Yet his core framework critically omits gender as central to his themes. This project connects and explores a constellation of feminist theory focused on patriarchal state control and Wadiwel's animal rights theory that unpacks the biopolitics of property rights and capitalism to analyze the intersection of sexism and speciesism in the contemporary dairy industry's widespread oppressive conditions to argue they cannot be fully understood without this frame.

Chapter one establishes a theoretical framework and linguistic toolkit to understand better patriarchy and capitalism as regimes of control that oppress non-human female animals. To foreground gender as central to female factory farm animals' oppression, this chapter first explores patriarchal state authority as it is theorized within the human realm, using the key concepts of bodily autonomy and maternal practices, to reveal how patriarchy enforces a gender hierarchy by denying women power over themselves and their practices. It employs feminist theories, such as Catherine A. MacKinnon's theory of dominance feminism and Nicole Buonocore Porter's intersectional work on gender and cognitive hierarchy.

The chapter then turns to Wadiwel's theory of property rights to argue capitalism violates female animals' bodily autonomy and devalues maternal practices to suborn animals under the control

of human sovereignty and enforce speciesist hierarchy. It examines Wadiwel's understanding of animals as simultaneously commodified objects and laborers who are alienated from their life, labor, and bodies. Margaret Benston offers a corrective to Wadiwel's occlusion of gender in his analysis of animals as laborers by contextualizing the history of labor within gender relations. The first chapter concludes that contemporary biopolitics and property rights suborn animals through sexist and speciesist hierarchies to defend humans' violent dominion over factory farm dairy animals, with the result that, in Judith Butler's terms, these animals are rendered "ungrievable" subjects.

Chapter Two considers chapter one's model within the context of contemporary American dairy factory farms, using dairy cows as a case study. To get at the heart of speciesism's intersection with sexism, the second chapter puts gender at the center of its analysis to explore regimes of control specific to female dairy animals to critique what a genderless analysis omits. It examines violent and oppressive structures against dairy cows at the points of birth and maternity, milk production, slaughter, marketing, and consumption to elucidate patriarchy's key role in dairy cow oppression at each stage.

Chapter Three returns to the dairy industry to explore how animal liberation from factory farms aids feminist objectives, foregrounding its core goal of exploring what a social movement that brought feminism and animal activism together might look like, not only to the benefit of nonhuman female animals but also to humans. It examines theoretical and practical gains and applies social movement theory to investigate collective goals, organizational spaces, tactics, limitations, gendered obstacles, and political timing to mobilize collective action between animal activists and feminists.

This project concludes that short term goals for collective action between feminists and animal activists should center around eliminating property rights over non-human animals to renounce human ownership and reframe animals as fully living beings rather than as both laborers and commodities for human use. It offers veganism as an initial practical approach toward accomplishing this end. Through its intersectional gendered analysis, this project reveals even within the realm of the fully living, female animals face oppression by interlocking hierarchies, such as gender and cognitive hierarchy. Thus, this project demands animal activists take an anti-hierarchical stance against domination of any being in their long-term objectives to fully liberate female factory farm dairy animals along with human women and marginalized individuals more broadly.

Caroline Hatley

Literature and Liberation: Examining the legacy of colonial education in Francophone West African Literature

In 1855, the *École des Ôtages* (School of Hostages) was established as one of the first public, French colonial schools in West Africa. This moment marked the beginning of a long period of suffering, not only on the part of the students who were conscripted to attend, but also for the countless other African students who were forced to attend French schools, made to learn the French language and culture, and most of all taught contempt for their heritage. This paper explores the implications of this colonial education policy throughout the colonial period in West Africa, examining the short term effects these policies had on social stability as well as the long term effects they had on an emerging political, social, and literary elite.

In Chapter One, I explore the way that assimilative education changed the political and social landscape of West Africa; using primary accounts from educators, French officials, and educated

Africans from the periods before and directly after the First World War, I show the myriad reasons behind a transition from policies of assimilation to those of association. I argue that these changes were primarily responding to and manipulating shifts in the education system's ability to reliably produce docile, African intermediaries to support the French regime. As Africans began to expect rights and privileges afforded to white citizens, French officials attempted to maintain order through adjustments to the curriculum, although these efforts were largely circumscribed by outside factors such as labor shortages and rural unrest.

In Chapter Two, I show how new policies of "association" in the French schools of West Africa led to the production of work that contained literary and artistic elements. I explain how these assignments were intended to promote the internalization of colonial norms, analyzing in great detail the stated intentions of educators in this period and the formal instructions of these assignments. After this explanation, I argue that despite their explicitly racist messaging, these assignments provided important opportunities for the subversion of attempts to limit the education of African students. They provided an outlet for students to connect with their cultures and experiment creatively in the classroom in ways that would have been unthinkable under the model of assimilation. Through an analysis of these literary-adjacent texts and their reception from French audiences, I argue that the school system inadvertently encouraged artistic investigation and cultural pride in its students, leading to developments that would make further literary expression possible.

Finally, I argue that the Négritude movement is inextricably tied to this literary tradition that originated inside the colonial classroom. Négritude authors explicitly aligned themselves with the student authors of the early 1930s, but traces of colonial education are also visible in the ideology and work of Leopold Senghor. Through contrast with more radical texts, it becomes apparent that many Négritude works can be situated in a progression towards full liberation from the ideas of colonial education.

Hugh Jones

Facebook as a Lens Crafter: Towards a More Democratic Digital Discourse

With close to three billion users worldwide, Facebook has become the primary custodian of the 21st century public square, playing an instrumental role in shaping our relationships not only with each other but with the norms and institutions of our democracy. As the enterprise has grown from Mark Zuckerberg's promiscuous dorm room vanity project into one of the most valuable corporations in the world, a growing chorus of voices across academia, government, and civil society have raised serious questions and concerns about its democratic consequences. The recent armed insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021—in which illiberal conspiracy theories that emerged and took hold in digital discourse spaces mutated into lethal violence in the halls of Congress—is perhaps the most hyperbolic example of the threat that social media platforms such as Facebook are perceived to pose to the prospect of democratic governance. By way of a critical case study of Facebook, this thesis examines the effects of social media platforms relative to the ideal of deliberative democracy, in which a premium is placed on the capacity of an engaged public to participate in deliberative discourse and make well-informed voting decisions.

In Chapter One, I argue that our shift from Keynesian to neoliberal governance at the outset of the 1980s has produced a media environment with profit incentives that reward ideologically-slanted

and extreme voices. The internet emerged from this lopsided context and was never subject to serious regulation, enabling “Web 2.0” pioneers like Zuckerberg to build highly-profitable global communications systems under the veil of gauzy neoliberal appeals to technology’s imagined democratizing force. Chapter Two discusses the prospect of “internet governance” *vis a vis* a critique of Facebook, providing an overview of the company’s founding, its “attention brokerage” business model, and its well-documented history of engaging in anticompetitive market manipulation. I emphasize how these features of the company and its business have produced an algorithmic product that siphons us away from each other and diminishes our capacity to engage in well-informed deliberation, threatening the prospect of deliberative democracy.

In Chapter Three, I introduce my concept of lenses—distinct modes of viewing and making sense of the world—and, by way of a case study of American right-wing media, describe how Facebook may facilitate the construction of novel, extreme, and anti-democratic lenses (a process which I label *radicalization*). This process threatens to undermine deliberative democracy. I locate the antidote to such *radicalization* in what I call *moderation*, by which audiences are exposed to a diverse plurality of legitimate lenses. By forcing lenses to remain in discussion (and therefore at least minimally interoperable) with one another, *moderation* better supports deliberation.

Finally, I conclude my thesis with a call for operationalized *moderation* in the form of an Internet-era adaptation of the Fairness Doctrine, centered on ensuring that social media platforms such as Facebook adhere to a robust and revitalized conception of the public interest. Given that Facebook is a product of the deregulatory, individualistic overtures of our neoliberal era, I argue the solution is to be found in a post-neoliberal (more regulatory and collectivist) approach to governance. Under this approach, social media platforms like Facebook could function more like the 21st century newspapers that they purportedly aspire to be, operating in greater support of deliberative democracy.

Zoe Larmey

Bearing Witness: The Evolution of Photographing Violence and The Use of Images in Social Movements

Certain iconic images have marked and memorialized historic events, including protests and humanitarian crises. Often, these images depict moments of violence and suffering, which prompts the question: what does it mean for viewers to encounter these images, and how should one respond? This thesis looks at the tradition of photographing violence and interpreting these images. Drawing from a wide range of theorists, I incorporate aesthetics, ethics, and media studies into my analysis to understand why these images become iconic and how spectators should react.

The first chapter draws on early theory and history of photography. Formulaic photographs of humanitarian disasters—and the individuals experiencing these disasters—have changed very little. I compare the reception of images from the current global refugee crisis to earlier understandings of photography in the context of disasters and wars. Throughout, I compare the opinions of a range of theorists to contest photography’s illusions of proximity, truth-telling, and humanization. Photography has historically been an enterprise by and for a largely white, western, and male demographic. Both explicitly and indirectly, these modes of photography have been used to reinforce hierarchical power, the white savior industrial complex, and imperialism.

The second chapter shifts to discuss protest and the agency of the people that are being

photographed in moments of violence. Images of the American civil rights movement show how marginalized groups have subverted the power-dynamics at play in photography to enforce social and political changes. Lynching photography in the 1900's and beyond used the spectacle of broken Black bodies as both trophy items and a tool of terror against the Black community. Black Americans, like the mother of Emmet Till and many non-violent organizers harnessed this same mode spectacle to create visibility of state-sanctioned violence against Black Americans and demand justice. With a focus on the Till's funeral and SCLC's Birmingham campaign, I consider the strategies that the organizers used to frame the news coverage of these events. I also consider how this approach might have fallen short of its goals by perpetuating narratives of Black victimhood under the eyes of white audiences.

The third chapter seeks to understand the progression of image-use in contemporary protest movements and the role of the audience of violent images. I study the death of Neda Agha-Soltan in 2009 and ask how new accessibility to social media and cell-phone cameras made her death a viral spectacle, ushering in new traditions citizen journalism and internet activism. I compare this example to the Black Lives Matter movement the recent response to the death of George Floyd. I apply a framework of photography as a new form of citizenship what expects relationship between the subject and the viewer that expects the viewer to take political action. This framework is greatly enhanced and continuously evolving as social media and camera technology develop.

I conclude by acknowledging the complexity of images as an expected prompt for both humanitarian and political action. Spectacle is inseparable from all aspects of modern society and can be used as a tool of protest and change-making just as it can be used to marginalize and oppress people. One must know the historical events and practices that have shaped the way people take, use, and view images to approach each of these actions ethically.

Yixuan Liu

Through the Bloody Looking Glass: Examining Post WWII Magical Realist Novels Through Trauma Theory

Magical realism is one of the most common literary terms used in both academic and popular discourse. Magical realism, broadly defined, incorporates both fantastic and realist elements within the same fictional text, without resolving which is more or less true. This thesis argues that magical realism is uniquely equipped to represent traumatic experience.

In the introduction, I explain how the thesis will intervene in the confused and unproductive discourses around magical realism and suggest reading magical realism through trauma theory. I outline a brief history of post-WWII developments in literary and trauma theory. I suggest that magical realism is well-suited to tackling challenges inherent to trauma representation.

In the first chapter, I outline a history of magical realism and the prevailing critical discourse which first defined it as a Latin American aesthetic, and then a postcolonial aesthetic. I criticize this contrived history and categorization as reductive, essentializing, and inaccurate, drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism*. I argue that the postcolonial reading's failures necessitate a move to other interpretations of magical realism, such as trauma theory. For the remainder of my thesis, I analyze how magical realist technique modifies one element of fiction, such as narrative, character, or setting, to represent a corresponding category of trauma effects.

In the second chapter, I outline how magical realism uses narrative styles which help represent trauma's effects on senses of memory, time, and external reality. These narrative styles include literal

metaphors which capture the “felt reality” of trauma, third-person narrators who can render characters’ incoherent experiences coherent with their distance from direct traumatic experience, unreliable narrators who point to trauma’s effects on memory, ghosts and clairvoyants who help warp notions of memory and time, nonlinear and fragmented narrative structures, and meta-narratives which point to the constructed nature of memory and reality. I also argue that magical realism demonstrates how narrative and imagination can be a source of healing, but can also be an unproductive retreat into fantasy for traumatized individuals.

In the third chapter, I explore how magical realist technique portrays character developments in ways which demonstrate traumatic effects on senses of selfhood. I analyze how magical realist fiction subverts and corroborates various models of trauma and selfhood. The models I explore include the notion that trauma shatters the self, splits/doubles the self, stunts the self, spurs self-growth, marginalizes the self, and dehumanizes the self. Magical realism makes these invisible psychological character developments visible through exaggeration and literalized metaphor.

In the fourth chapter, I demonstrate how magical realist settings can help capture the relationship between a traumatized individual and their physical, communal, cultural, and familial backgrounds. The diverse uses of magical realism in diverse sets of texts demonstrate how trauma is not a product of a universal individualism, but often culturally contingent and collectively experienced.

The conclusion outlines how the trauma theory and the postcolonial theory can work together to enhance understandings of magical realism without resorting to essentialist categories, and suggests new frameworks for understanding the popularity of magical realism under modernity and postmodernity.

Evan Luellen

Reconsidering the Peremptory Challenge: A Reduction in the Number of Peremptory Challenges

Peremptory challenges empower litigants to remove qualified prospective jurors from the venire, the randomly selected panel of prospective jurors. Intended to be employed without inquiry, the peremptory challenge has historically been administered to remove prospective jurors on the basis of race. The United States Supreme Court, in *Batson v. Kentucky* (1986), attempted to remedy racial discrimination in the jury selection process but the Court’s mandate that prosecutors provide a race-neutral explanation for their peremptory challenges did not eliminate racially-motivated removals. In light of *Batson*, its shortcomings, and the resultant pleas for both the abolition and the retention of the peremptory challenge, this paper will propose the way forward for the challenge: a sharp reduction in the number of peremptory challenges allotted to the prosecution and the defense.

Part I outlines the history of the peremptory challenge, commencing with the challenge’s medieval, English origins. Throughout this Part, I attempt to answer why America adopted a relic of the Crown’s unfettered authority. During Reconstruction, and after the state restrictive laws, Black Codes, and other effective barriers to minority juror participation began to crumble, the peremptory challenge was employed as a last-ditch effort to preserve racial purity, as it allowed prospective jurors to be removed on the basis of race.

In Part II, I analyze the preeminent decision on peremptory challenges prior to *Batson*, *Swain v. Alabama* (1965). In *Swain*, the Court placed a crippling burden of proof on defendants attempting to raise a claim of discrimination in the use of peremptory strikes. *Swain* mandated that defendants prove

that the prosecutor had a historical record of striking African Americans in case after case — an insurmountable task. This Part explores, with brevity, how state and federal law began to reconsider the *Swain* standard for proving racial discrimination in jury selection.

The reconsideration of *Swain* came to fruition in *Batson v. Kentucky*, the topic of Part III. This part details the decision in *Batson*, the myriad of opinions in the decision, and offers an analysis of the decision focusing particularly on its shortcomings.

Given that *Batson* desperately needs reform, Part IV highlights how pleas for the abolition of the peremptory challenge have been met with equally ardent calls for the retention of the challenge. The impassioned pleas for abolition and for retention have left the system of peremptories at an impasse. After illustrating why both abolition of the challenge and retention of the current *Batson* framework are untenable, I scan scholarly proposals in academia in search of desirable reform. The various, yet creative, proposals for reform ultimately fall short. This final part of the thesis proposes a unique and modest reform: the reduction in the number of the peremptory challenges allotted to both the prosecution and the defense. This proposal will help to eliminate racial discrimination in the jury selection process, while retaining the few benefits of the challenge, namely the challenge as a mechanism to remove jurors alienated during a failed for cause challenge, and the challenge as a way to ensure that a judge is not solely responsible for the makeup of the jury.

Morgan Morin

A Framework for Understanding Chronic Pain: Making Suffering Bearable

Chronic pain is no small matter. In the United States alone, an estimated 20.4% of adults suffer from chronic pain and chronic pain expenditures reach around \$560 billion each year. Because chronic pain is so prevalent and is life-altering for many, it is important to consider prevailing beliefs about long-lasting pain, some of which exacerbate the suffering and some of which ameliorate the suffering of the person in pain. In this thesis, I address the question “How do we understand unrelenting bodily pain and how does our understanding of it affect the way we live with it?”

In Chapter One, I discuss the way in which the widespread prescription of opioids for chronic pain largely failed and led to unintended consequences because it misunderstood the multi-dimensional nature of chronic pain. I use the American opioid crisis to illustrate the complexity of chronic pain and to demonstrate that narrow or faulty views about the nature of long-lasting pain can increase the suffering of the person in pain.

Chapter Two discusses the complications that arise in answering the seemingly simple question, “What is pain?” To do this, I look at René Descartes’ explanation of pain in the 16th century and then illustrate the contested and multi-dimensional nature of pain with more recent pain theories from doctors, psychiatrists, and scientists who amend Descartes’ theory, adding additional layers to the scientific explanation of pain.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the shortcomings of the scientific model in understanding chronic pain, particularly the failure of this model to provide meaning to the presence of pain in a person’s life, to promote effective communication of the experience and effects of pain, and to acknowledge the permanence of pain in the human condition and the limited human capacity to fix pain and ailment. From these shortcomings, I formulate a set of criteria for interpreting pain in a way that makes suffering more bearable.

Chapter Four turns to the question of how the particular understanding of pain's meaning affects the quality of the sufferer's life with pain and as well as his ability to cope with pain in a fruitful way. I do this by looking at contemporary American Prosperity Theology. I draw a parallel between the scientific model's view of pain and the Prosperity Gospel's view of pain and then spend the rest of this chapter reflecting on the ways in which the Prosperity Gospel exacerbates the suffering of those in pain by failing to meet the criteria laid out in chapter 3.

In Chapter Five, I provide a counterpoint to the view of pain and suffering elaborated in chapter four by examining the writings of 20th century Christian theologians and authors who view pain as part of God's plan for the ultimate good of His people. Throughout this chapter, I illustrate the way this Christian view of pain transcends limited views of chronic pain given by modern science and prosperity theology; this view acknowledges the spiritual aspects of the pain experience, while also providing theological resources a person in pain needs to live a rich and fulfilling life in the midst of unrelenting bodily ailment. I will show how this view of pain as meaningful and redemptive meets the set of criteria formulated in chapter three, making the suffering of the person in pain more bearable.

Rebecca Ndebee

Navigating Triple Consciousness: Being Woman, Nigerian, and Black in Houston, Texas

African American scholar W.E.B. Dubois first coined the concept of double consciousness as the tension between being both African-American and American. Ghanaian filmmaker, Akosua Adoma Owusu, complicates Dubois' theory by adding a third space for ethnicity that allows her to reconcile her racial and gender identities. Nigerian women, upon immigrating to the United States, contend with this third space. Not only are their experiences in the US shaped by their immigrant status, but also by their gender and race.

In Chapter One, I provide a historical account of the gendered landscape of Nigeria prior to colonialism. Using a series of literature and scholarly articles, I detail some of the political, social, and gender structures that were in effect before it was disrupted by colonial powers. Nigeria's matriarchal society was altered as a result of the colonial notions of gender. The chapter shows how The Women's War of 1929 was a movement of resistance by Nigerian Igbo women to reassert their position as influential members of traditional society.

For the remainder of my thesis, I examine the following questions: how do Nigerian women navigate the racial and gender landscape of the United States? What aspects of their identity are they having to minimize in order to acculturate? In each chapter, I evaluate factors that determine the ease or difficulty of becoming part of American society. I conclude that age plays a significant role in how difficult or easy it is for Nigerian immigrants to acculturate into the American society.

In Chapter Two, I evaluate immigration policies, starting with the xenophobic remark by former President Donald Trump. I analyze this rhetoric within the broader context of historically unfavorable immigration policy and degrading media depictions of Nigerians and African immigrants in the US. I use Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* to show how emigration from Nigeria is a structural legacy of colonialism. Relying on acculturation theories such as transnationalism, I also show how Nigerians make the US home outside of traditional social networks. I conclude that Nigerian Americans have multiple strategies to deal with the challenges of living abroad and how they ultimately succeed.

In my remaining chapters, I situate Nigerian women in the United States. Using interview responses, I show how older Nigerian women redefine traditional cultural expectations as they come in contact with new belief systems on family and womanhood. I also ground my analysis in the frameworks of W.E.B. Dubois and Kimberlé Crenshaw to discuss the intergenerational differences of acculturating.

I conclude by reflecting on my personal experiences as a Nigerian woman who has been forced to reconcile with these three identities of race, gender, and ethnicity. I discover that Nigerian women are tasked with navigating their triple identities in ways that show that Blackness in the United States cannot be treated as a monolith.

Jacob Olander

When Anger Spills Over: HIV/AIDS Activism and the Genesis of the Global Right-to-Health Movement

In June 1981, five gay men in Los Angeles acquired a multitude of opportunistic infections as a result of spontaneous immunodeficiency. After a year of confusion on behalf of the medical establishment, the Center for Disease Control formally defined this deadly disease as “AIDS” in 1982. AIDS quickly grew to become an internationally destabilizing phenomenon, eventually claiming millions of lives across the globe. In spite of the scale of this epidemiological crisis, many elected officials were negligent in their responsibility to control the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which was largely concentrated among socially and economically marginalized communities. In response, a collection of civil groups formed which aimed to hold states accountable for their obligations to embody the “highest attainable standard of health” as it is expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In this thesis, I argue that HIV/AIDS social movements mobilized their anger at governmental neglect to transform systems of healthcare and resource distribution, as well as give greater urgency to the so-called human right to health.

In Chapter One, I begin by tracking the historical development of the human right to health through the analysis of key legal documents, including the UDHR, the Constitution of the World Health Organization, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Using Nancy Fraser’s theory of recognition, I illustrate how HIV/AIDS activism mobilized identarian claims of misrecognition to aid in the fight for accessible HIV-related drugs and treatments.

Chapter Two details the historical emergence of HIV/AIDS in the United States, highlighting the moralized creation of “gay cancer” within the mainstream American consciousness. The chapter traces ACT UP’s successes in overhauling systems of material distribution so as to make antiretroviral therapy more accessible to the communities most affected by the pandemic. I also apply Fraser’s theory of recognition to ACT UP’s legacy, noting that ACT UP interrogated the sociopolitical positionality of gay men in the American cultural landscape.

In Chapter Three, I move into a discussion of the Treatment Action Campaign in South Africa. I examine TAC’s movement to seize affordable antiretrovirals through challenging both the global pharmaceutical industry and the HIV denialism of President Thabo Mbeki. Furthermore, I emphasize the transnational coalitions made between TAC and other geographical sites of HIV/AIDS activism.

I conclude in Chapter IV by identifying how ACT UP and TAC were instrumental in theorizing how states can begin approaching the realization of the human right to health. Referencing the UDHR, I

show how these two groups forced their respective governments to commit to the obligations found in international law to respect, protect, and fulfill the human right to health. Recognizing that the human right to health is not yet fully realized, however, I delineate the ongoing structural issues that abet the continued transmission of HIV among marginalized populations. I finish the thesis by providing recommendations for robust healthcare reform which would aid the United States federal government in more fully embodying the human right to health.

Steven Radilla

The Necropolitics of New Spain and Biopolitics of Settler Colonial Mexico

The history of Latin America is saturated with the presence of global colonial powers and along with this presence have come vestiges of colonialism, in some cases structures and systems, which pervasively maintain their firm grip. Included in this history and its contemporary realities are modernity, neoliberalism, cataclysmic events, violent governance, settler-colonialism, racialized violence (specifically, anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity), eugenics, eurocentrism, and many other relationships or outcomes within the colonial matrix of power.

In the spirit of the work of Richard Gott, Patrick Wolfe, David Nemser, and other scholars with areas of concentration within settler-colonialism, biopolitics, and necropolitics, the purpose of this work is to expand on the research which seeks to situate Latin America within the context of the continuation of colonialism and its location within settler-colonialism. The thesis concentrates on Mexico so as locate one case example of a colony that began as franchise colonialism, though existing today as a modern nation-state that could arguably be categorized as a present white settler society.

In spirit of this project honoring both the colonial violence enacted historically and the ongoing violence happening now, this thesis is divided simply into two chapters. One chapter devoted to the colonial period and another devoted to *modern* Mexico.

Chapter One seeks to temporally situate colonial violence in the period of New Spain, the Spanish colony which would eventually become the nation-state of Mexico. During this period of the Mexican project there are various institutions which stand out the most as necropolitical tools for developing the colony. Primarily, this chapter contends with the colonial systems and programs of the *Encomienda system*, the *Repartimiento* program, projects of *Congregaciones*, the *casta system*, and the enslavement of Asian and Black people brought to Mexico.

Chapter Two is purposefully titled using “modern” instead of using other more descriptive or appropriate terms such as “present” or “contemporary.” Part of this project rests on demonstrating that colonialism was not simply an event, it was a system that altered the lives of the Indigenous upon encounter and that with it brought western hegemonic thought. Consequently, this chapter confronts vestiges of colonialism tracked from the period of Mexican Independence through the Mexican Revolution to present day and their parallelism to epistemes of colonialism. This chapter includes discussion on cultural hegemony, popular nationalist ideology, and the biopolitics of *Mestizaje*.

Paige Singer

The Role of “Tough” Rhetoric in the Implementation of the Rockefeller Drug Laws

In 1973, Nelson Rockefeller signed into law the “Rockefeller Drug Laws,” which included the harshest sentencing measures in the nation and contributed to a surge in non-felony drug arrests and New York’s prison population. In the decade that followed, forty-eight other states passed similarly harsh laws to deal with drug use – a dramatic transition away from rehabilitation programs which many states had initially offered.

This paper explores politicians’ framing of drug use and crime to mobilize public opinion in favor of “tough” policies on drug use, crime, and welfare. I argue that conservative politicians framed the crime issue as a result of liberal permissiveness towards who use drugs, receive welfare, or commit crimes. In particular, I focus my analysis on how academic journals, mass media, and social discourse in New York help explain the state’s transition towards a more punitive method of dealing with drug use.

I have structured this thesis into an introduction, three chapters, and a conclusion. In the introduction, I explain how social issues are constructed and framed as they relate to drug use and crime between the 1950s and 1973. The first chapter then examines the role of geopolitical, historical, and cultural conditions in New York in explaining why Harlem became the “narcotics capital” of the country. I incorporate a race-conscious approach in this analysis and explain factors which contributed to the racial disparities in heroin use and crime rates. *De facto* segregation, de-industrialization, and disparities in educational opportunities all can help explain why rates of heroin use and addiction were significantly higher in Black and Puerto Rican communities than white ones. I discuss the initial model of rehabilitative justice for drug users in New York and explore the role of media and political agenda-setting in reducing faith in rehabilitation.

In my second chapter, I discuss the primary discourses which emerged from this demise of the rehabilitative ideal. I examine how academic journals were a vital forum in reframing the issues of crime and drugs as caused by excessive leniency from liberal court decisions and welfare programs and remedied by “tough” policy. Economists and related legal scholars posed criticisms to government programming while depicting criminal behavior as rational choice, while cultural theorists attributed addiction and crime to intrinsic differences between the “underclass” and the rest of society. Together, these developments in academia raised doubts about the government’s ability to provide social welfare, and offered punishment as the best remedy to the dependence and depravity.

In my third chapter, I discuss how conservative politicians offered an alternative vision of government which imposes control rather than provides welfare in response to the alleged leniency of liberal politics in the 1960s. I then discuss how at the national level, politicians employed rhetoric of “personal responsibility” and “toughness” to promote harsh anti-drug policies. In my conclusion, I touch on the effects of the Rockefeller Drug laws themselves and the changes in public opinion around drug use which facilitated their implementation.

Blair Smith

We Were Born from Beauty: Parenting Practices in Contemporary Narratives of Gender Diversity

In recent years, parents in the United States have begun to grapple with the notion that a person's gender identity does not always correspond to their biological sex. Increasingly in the twenty-first century, there are parents that understand their children's gender identity as "transgender" or "gender nonconforming." Medical authorities and non-experts now promote a "gender affirmative model" of care, which encourages parents to embrace their children's gender expression regardless of whether it is conventionally masculine or feminine. This thesis explores the gender affirmative narrative that is currently proliferating in the United States.

In Chapter One, I offer a brief history of U.S. parenting ideologies in the twentieth century alongside a history of clinical research focusing on gender nonconforming youth. Though the accepted wisdom mid-century was that parents should not forcefully alter their children's behaviors, gender identity researchers of the same period instructed parents to "correct" their children's cross-gender expressions. The final section of this chapter describes the development of the gender affirmative parenting approach.

Subsequent chapters focus on three recently published stories that center family and gender identity. I analyze how families in these texts interact with the gender affirmative paradigm, noting whether the parents intervene in their children's social environments. I conclude that these texts show how the affirmative model establishes standards of success that are contingent on a parent's ability to shield their children from traditional socialization.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the theme of affirmation in Laurie Frankel's novel, *This Is How It Always Is*. I compare elements of the novel's plot to a popular handbook for parents of transgender children to illustrate the gender affirmative model's standards of permissive and intensive child rearing. I then discuss the parents' difficulty deciding whether medical intervention would be an affirming or pathologizing experience for their transgender daughter. Frankel suggests that all parents, and not just those with transgender children, have to make decisions that are similarly challenging.

Chapter Three narrates the rise of "gender open" parenting, which Kyl Myers details in her memoir, *Raising Them*. Myers emphasizes the importance of allowing all children the opportunity to autonomously disclose their gender identity. For this reason, she and her husband refer to their child using the singular pronoun "they" and attempt to prevent others from treating them according to traditional gender norms. I describe the interventions that these parents make in their child's social environment and argue that these interventions generate a limited kind of autonomy for their child.

In Chapter Four, I read "failure" as central to the meaning of Ocean Vuong's novel, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. This text depicts the relationship between parenting and social determinants that are not explicitly discussed in the previous two texts, including historical context, national origin, and trauma. I analyze Vuong's positive portrayal of a "monster" mother and her gender nonconforming son, and note that the parent and child protagonists find affirmation in their reciprocal, non-hierarchical dynamic. I conclude that Vuong's presentation of parental failure is one compelling alternative to the intensive demands of the gender affirmative approach.

Natalie Solaja

Domestic Workers' Historical Construction of the U.S. Alternative Labor Movement Since 1865

Since the 1980s, worker centers have emerged rapidly across the United States, coalescing into what many call the worker center, or alternative labor, movement. Organizing communities composed of mostly low-wage workers of color, immigrant workers, and women workers—which, of course, are not mutually exclusive categories—worker centers mobilize laborers who, for a variety of reasons, largely lack access to conventional forms of labor organizing. To grow a labor movement centering and accessible to their constituents, many worker centers use five main organizing strategies: spatial organizing, relational organizing, individual worker empowerment, recognizing the revolutionary potential of their membership base, and building national coalitions of worker center organizations. In recent decades, worker centers have successfully organized laborers in the communities in which they are situated, and consequently, have offered a number of alternatives to worker mobilization as the mainstream American labor movement struggles to maintain its size and influence.

However, the history of domestic worker organizing in the United States complicates the timeline of alternative labor's formation. Since 1865, domestic workers have utilized many of the same strategies as alternative labor organizations, instilling the five central tactics of the worker center in struggles to improve their material conditions. Such tactics are thus embodied within domestic workers' everyday and organized resistance, the latter of which manifesting into organizing models such as quasi-unions, militant organizations, economic power-building groups, and more—all of which are not unrelated to the worker center. In sum, this thesis argues that domestic workers, through their use of the worker center in their labor organizing, have constructed and maintained the alternative labor movement since at least 1865. In other words, domestic workers have always reimagined pathways to liberation outside of mainstream approaches to class mobilization—a task central to the worker center movement today.

In Chapter One, I introduce the contemporary material and social conditions of the U.S. domestic labor industry, including the industry's reliance on African American women and migrant women workers of color, its location within employers' homes, and the historical exclusion of domestic workers from labor protections and mainstream unions. This chapter also interprets the 2011 passage of Convention 189 at the International Labour Organization as the fruit of domestic workers' historical alternative labor organizing efforts.

Chapter Two analyzes the ways in which domestic workers have resisted in quotidian and organized capacities during the Gilded Age and the turn of the twentieth century to improve their lives. From negotiating with employers to coordinating the infamous 1881 Washing Society strike in Atlanta, I argue that both everyday and organized resistance are intrinsic to domestic worker organizing in and beyond this period, that the five core strategies are embodied in both forms, and the two contribute to the rise and sustenance of alternative labor organizing.

My third chapter considers the material conditions of domestic laborers during world wars, the Great Depression, and the New Deal as they relate to the so-called “servant problem.” Domestic laborers in this period also manifested the five core strategies within everyday and organized resistance capacities while leading their own liberation struggles rather than subscribing to top-down organizing approaches during an age saturated with employers' “solutions” to the servant problem. Such tendencies are seen in the formation and political work of, for example, the Domestic Workers Union.

In Chapter Four, I present the ways that domestic workers' organized resistance manifests in a

variety of organizing models, including but not limited to quasi-unionism, militant organizations, and economic base-building groups. These configurations of organized resistance resemble contemporary worker centers in their use of the five central tactics. Analyzing Georgia Gilmore's Club from Nowhere, Mae Mallory's involvement with militant civil rights leader Robert F. Williams, and Dorothy Bolden's National Domestic Workers Union of America, I describe such organized resistance as buttressing both the alternative labor and U.S. civil rights movements.

My final chapter describes domestic workers' creation of national coalitions of grassroots, worker center organizations in the neoliberal era. Here, I also describe the conditions upon which the domestic labor industry functions globally, such as the feminization of migration and the political and economic marginalization of migrant women workers. This chapter also studies *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*, Domestic Workers United, and Damayan Migrant Workers Association and their struggles to better the material and social conditions of domestic workers under neoliberalism. Such organizations, denoted formally as worker centers by scholars, deploy the central organizing methods in their work and are additional examples of domestic workers' continued formation of the alternative labor movement. Lastly, I depict the creation of the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) and its campaign to pass Domestic Workers Bill of Rights legislation.

The NDWA and the contemporary alternative labor movement as a whole prove the existence and success of domestic workers' historical reimagining of worker mobilization and victory. Importantly, envisioning new paths to workers' liberation has only become more pressing amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In sum, the pandemic, coupled with contemporary struggles to create an inclusive U.S. workers' movement, ascribes great significance to domestic workers' creation and continuation of a movement for alternative labor and, thus, a better world for all workers.

Edwina Tepper

The French Identity Crisis: Citizenship, National Identity, and the Myth of Universalism

France appears to be undergoing an identity crisis. In Summer 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement resonated with minority populations in France, where racial inequality and discriminatory policing are taboo topics. Historically, the French government has viewed public discourse about racial difference as disruptive and dangerous—race is not a necessary consideration in the French Republic, where everyone is supposedly equal and loyal to French identity over particular racial, ethnic, and religious groups. This colorblind approach to the race in modern France evolved from the republican, universalist principles that animated the French Revolution and endowed the first French Republic, and depends on the invisibility of race and racism.

French colonial history corrupted universalist ideals, and the shadows of discriminatory policing and institutionalized racism remain today. Universalism is a myth that is clung to out of fear of shaking the foundations of national identity. The colorblindness that results from the dependence on universalist rhetoric does not protect the equality of all citizens, but perpetuates inequality and colonial dynamics. In France, non-white citizens are rendered invisible by the lack of discourse, lack of data, and lack of governmental support. The result is a national identity attached to whiteness and homogeneity. The demarcating line between those considered French and those considered foreigner is not citizenship, but race.

In Chapter One, I discuss theories of citizenship, national identity and myth, and universalism. These theories are the foundation of my exploration into the relationship between French national identity and race. I argue that universalism is a national myth on which French national identity depends. I also argue that in France, claiming citizenship does not give non-white citizens access to national identity.

Chapter Two explores why non-white citizens are profiled as non-French. I argue that Black and Muslim French citizens are profiled at similar rates as foreigners. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to several colonial codes. I discuss the dialogue between two major codes, *Code Noir* and the *Code de l'Indigénat*, and their role in defining who is racialized in France today.

In Chapter Three, I argue that, as a modern manifestation of colonial dynamics, non-white French citizens are invisible in French national discourse. I investigate the lack of racial and ethnic statistics in France, the 2018 decision to remove the word “race” from the Constitution, and the physical marginalization of non-white populations in the peripheral *banlieues*.

Finally, Chapter Four proposes that France is undergoing fundamental change that has resulted in increased visibility for minorities. The emergence of the cinema of the *banlieue* brings the periphery to the core, illustrating the struggles that French citizens experience in the *banlieues*. *La Haine* is considered a French cultural masterpiece. Residents of the *banlieues* are pushing back against gentrification efforts and urban renewal projects that aim to homogenize the periphery. In Summer 2020, tens of thousands of antiracist protesters gathered in front of the Eiffel Tower and government buildings in the Parisian city center to demand reform. The movement sweeping across France now feels different from earlier protests: the cultural revival of the past twenty years has culminated in a moment that the French government can no longer ignore with appeals to universalism.

Mackenzie Frances Williams

Documenting Their Mothers: Locating the Woman Writer in her Revisions of the Brontë Myth

The desire for foremothers is strong in the female literary tradition, and Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë have served as raw material which successive woman writers use to define and revise their conceptions of the female author since Elizabeth Gaskell published *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857. Concrete biographical knowledge about the Brontë family is relatively scarce. As a result, any Brontë narrative reflects the biographer and the context in which she writes. In this way, the Brontës offer an apt study in the evolution of the category of the woman writer. Brontë myths are more a reflection of the era in which they were constructed and the politics of the biographers than the Brontë sisters themselves, who remain tantalizingly out of reach.

The Life created a series of “Brontë myths” — narratives attempting to explain the source and nature of each sister’s genius — that have been contested by the following generations of woman writers, who manipulate the Brontës’ legacies to work out the values that center their era’s concerns. Indeed, the Brontës reflexively define and are defined by current woman writers. Harriet Martineau, Margaret Oliphant, Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf, Daphne du Maurier, Muriel Spark, and Sylvia Plath are only a few of the woman writers who have narrated the Brontës and, by extension, the writing woman.

Each Brontë iteration, as documented in each of my three main chapters, has been a retrieval of

sorts. For Charlotte, it was proving that genius could coexist with femininity and domesticity. For Emily, it was embracing misanthropy in the woman and disorder in the novel. Anne's retrieval, finally, aligns with a legitimization of female rage as an acceptable and even laudable artistic expression. Together, these women's cultural afterlives have expanded and complicated popular understandings of what a woman writer can be, even if those well-meant constructions were not always faithful to the women as historical figures.

The versatility of the three sisters has ensured that they can, in turns, be appropriated to suit the cultural demands of the moment. Focusing on the woman writers at the helm of each narrative project, I will explore each of these eras and reclamations, tracing the dialogical relationship between contemporary woman writers and the stories they tell about their chosen mothers.

Ruohan Xiao

Face masks in epidemics: Possibilities for Chinese society in SARS and COVID-19?

By disrupting the existing social order, epidemics open up possibilities for social change. As a visual symbol of crisis, the practice of mask-wearing during an epidemic synthesizes many different discourses ranging from the medico-scientific, the political, to issues of individual identity. Devised as a modern weapon to fend off infection, the anti-epidemic mask also serves as a conduit for a great variety of social actors to cooperate, negotiate, and contend with one another.

In this thesis, I explore the practices and discourses related to the face mask in Hong Kong and the PRC during two recent epidemics—SARS in 2003 and COVID-19 in 2019-2020. I argue that these provide a helpful lens into the changing (and often overlooked) dynamics of state-society interactions in contemporary China. Moreover, I argue that a public discourse of anti-epidemic masks illuminates the possibilities for informed and effective social action in China.

In the introduction, I offer an account of the origin of modern anti-epidemic masks in the 1911 Manchurian plague. I also lay out the conceptual framework for a dual comparison of Hong Kong and the PRC in their mask-related responses to the SARS and COVID-19 crisis, and clarify my use of analytical terms, including "civil society," throughout my thesis.

In Part I, I investigate mask-wearing in Hong Kong and the PRC as an important form of collective action to combat the SARS epidemic in 2003. In response to the government's inefficacy in coping with the outbreak, social groups and individuals came to their self-rescue. In Hong Kong, social initiatives of mask-wearing provided an impetus for the emergence of civic awareness that was vital to large-scale political participation in the July 1 demonstration. In the PRC, the prevalence of a masking discourse among citizens pressurized the government to respond by linking the mask to a unifying concept of Chinese national identity. These developments enable us to see the ways in which ordinary citizens influenced the trajectory of society in an epidemic.

In Part II, I shift my focus to mask-wearing in the COVID-19 pandemic against the backdrop of changing political and social environments in Hong Kong and the PRC. A comparison of the two time periods shows that while preexistent opportunities in civil society were partially foreclosed in 2020, new ways of leveraging power also emerged. The persistent contestation over the dual functions of masks (protest and anti-epidemic) sheds light on novel strategies to sustain political participation in Hong Kong. In China, the agency of ordinary people to engage in various forms of societal action was not stifled despite an increasingly government-controlled welfare sector. The masking culture provided an

opening for civil society to negotiate the boundary of citizenship rights and recognize loopholes in a state-imposed nationalist discourse.

In conclusion, I demonstrate that the varying forms of societal self-organization, examined through the lens of anti-epidemic face masks, open up new possibilities for the growth of Chinese society.

Ellen Yates

Intra-Religious Culture Wars: Faith-Based Countermovements to Religious Nationalism

Religious violence and extremism in their myriad forms present issues of the greatest importance in our contemporary world. From terrorism to interreligious conflict, the world faces pernicious and pervasive phenomena that we are still struggling to understand and confront. Religious nationalism is a growing iteration of this extremism: it can be found in countries from Myanmar to Poland and Egypt. A common response to this threat, particularly in the West, has been to push for greater secularization. However, this neglects the fundamental good that religion can bring to communities. In this thesis, I explore how communities of faith react to and counter religious nationalist movements within their same religious cohort. To do this, I explore three different iterations of contemporary religious nationalist movements: Protestant Christian nationalism in the U.S., Hindu nationalism in India, and Muslim nationalism in Turkey. I seek to extricate the strategies, rhetoric, and motivations behind the movement. It is my hope that my findings—best practices that include calling out heresy and forming interfaith coalitions, as well as ideal conditions for such countermovements, such as healthy democratic structures and democratization of religious texts—show alternatives to confronting religious nationalism that do not villainize or shun religion as a whole.

In my first chapter, I describe the growing issue of religious nationalism, both qualitatively and by the numbers, and provide its historical context. I also define central concepts such as “religion” and “nationalism.”

In my second chapter, I describe American Protestant nationalism, beginning with the events leading up to the Moral Majority movement. I then explore faith-based countermovements, including the “Christians Against Christian Nationalism” initiative and the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, the organization behind CACN. Strategies utilized by these countermovements include dispelling misinformation and addressing nationalists’ “heretical” views.

Chapter Three sketches the history of Hindu nationalism in India, and then describes the important figures, like Swami Agnivesh, and organizations, like Hindus for Human Rights, that have worked to counter it. Strategies utilized by these countermovements include engaging diasporic communities and universalist thinking.

In my fourth chapter, I describe the history of Muslim nationalism in Turkey and those who have attempted to counter some of its premises, while also identifying reasons as to why there appear to be fewer countermovements in Turkey. An important strategy utilized here is “third path” thinking, as defined by Fabio Vicini.

Based on these case studies, my concluding chapter identifies important strategies for faith-based confrontations of religious nationalism, as well as conditions that make resistance to religious nationalism easier to engage in.

Zach Zamoff

Historical Memory in Colombia: The Conflict Over the Narrative

This thesis explores Colombia's efforts to understand its violence. Specifically, it focuses on the idea of historical memory, or the creation of a narrative of the conflict to help the nation move forward into a more peaceful future. "A reconstruction of the past in light of the present," historical memory is distinct from history as an academic discipline. Historical memory narratives come into conflict. In highly divided societies, such as Colombia, establishing a single, unifying narrative is difficult. While other literature on historical memory has explored its theory, in an era of "memory boom," these pages add to that literature an understanding of the practice of historical memory—the conflict over the narrative—through a profound analysis of Colombia. What is at stake when it comes to Colombia's efforts towards historical memory? This thesis moves from an "objective" history of the Colombian conflict to an exploration of the historical memory narratives that have emerged based on this history. Then, I look for the origins of these narratives, analyze spaces of contestation where these narratives come into conflict, and explore the potential impact they have on building democratic coexistence, or *convivencia*.

In the introduction, I establish a justification for focusing on Colombia's conflict over the narrative and provide background for the key concepts of historical memory and *convivencia*. Next, in the first chapter, I sketch an "objective" map of the Colombian conflict, from the origins of *La Violencia* before 1946 to Colombia's internationally praised and domestically contentious 2016 Havana peace accords, which have ever since been at the center of the conflict over the narrative.

The second chapter moves from history to historical memory and explores the narratives of Colombian history through Colombia's most emblematic historic commissions, which demonstrate a general shift from "a country without memory" to a country at the center of the "memory boom." The chapter observes an "objective causes" narrative, prevalent among some Colombian *letrados* ("intellectuals"), that tends to legitimize guerrilla violence against the state. I argue for an alternative, "reformist" approach that calls attention to both structural factors of the conflict and actors' intentions, rejects political violence, and emphasizes the potential for peace. Chapter Three shifts to the present to analyze two institutions formed from the 2016 peace accords that are engaged in historical memory efforts. The analysis illuminates current debates over the narrative of the Colombian conflict and evaluates the institutions' effectiveness in building *convivencia*.

In the fourth chapter, I examine the origins of historical memory narratives in Colombian media and in the work of Gabriel García Márquez, focusing on the "culture of violence" narrative that has become somewhat rooted in Colombian political culture. I explore whether and how Colombians might be able to overcome this narrative and what role *letrados* have to play in this process. I argue in the conclusion that rather than a new national myth or blind faith in historical memory initiatives, an understanding of progress, a renewed appreciation of Colombian democracy, and empathy for victims' stories could contribute to *convivencia*.