Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Summer Writing and Research Training Program at UCLA

Research Colloquium and Final Reception



Friday, July 29, 2022

Hershey Hall Grand Salon

http://tiny.cc/mmufucla

Schedule of Events

8:45 - 9:00 a.m.	Check-in
9:00 - 9:15 a.m.	Welcome
9:15 - 9:45 a.m.	Panel 1
9:50 -10:20 a.m.	Panel 2
10:25 -11:05 a.m.	Panel 3
11:05 - 11:20 a.m.	Break
11:20 - 11:50 a.m.	Panel 4
11:55 a.m 12:35 p.m.	Panel 5
12:40 - 1:10 p.m.	Panel 6
1:10 - 2:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks & Reception

Research Colloquium Panels

Panel 1 (9:15-9:45am): Postcolonial Imaginaries and the Dissident Voice in Latin Cultures

Presenters: Zuri Mabrey-Wakefield

Marcos Padrón-Cure

Ale Uriostegui

Facilitator: Kimiye Maeshiro

Panel 2 (9:50-10:20am): Transnational Travels: Borders and the Ambiguous Other

Presenters: Ethan Barrett

Amalia Contreras Kelli Nakamura

Facilitator: Jesús Eduardo Sánchez Flores

Panel 3 (10:25-11:05am): Race, Gender, and Translation in Public Performance and Media

Presenters: Nicholas Amuh

Hazel Carias-Urbina Pauli Cuellar Aguilar Kimiye Maeshiro

Facilitator: Savannah Henderson

Panel 4 (11:20am-11:50am): Economies of Inequality, Intimacy, and Writing Pedagogy

Presenters: Christopher Moy-Lopez

Jesús Eduardo Sánchez Flores

MaryJay Villavicencio

Facilitator: Alaast Kamalabadi

Panel 5 (11:55am-12:35pm): The Body, Wellness, and Race: Cultures of Medicine and Visuality

Presenters: Abi Garpestad

Zoe Hirabayashi Savannah Henderson Alexander Rodriguez

Facilitator: Nicholas Amuh

Panel 6 (12:40-1:10pm): Nature, Religion, and Alternative Ecologies in Literature and Art

Presenters: Gabrielle Hill

Alaast Kamalabadi Kim Montpelier

Facilitator: Zuri Mabrey-Wakefield

Research Abstracts

(alphabetized by author last name)

Musical Afrofuturism: Communal Healing and Disruptive Planes

Nicholas Amuh (he/him) Brown University

How have Black artists used Afrofuturistic concepts to cultivate communities of healing and care? In what ways can we engage with sound, visuality, and performance that subvert colonial norms and institutions? Black feminist theorist and educator Tina Campt describes the Black gaze as a visual resistive practice "that forces viewers to engage Blackness from a different and discomforting vantage point, ultimately looking with and through rather than at Black people," while Black queer feminist author Mecca Jamilah Sullivan utilizes the poetics of difference as a framework to describe the way Black women authors create subversive languages through merging various genres together to disrupt conventional literary forms. Building from this work, my research explores Black American poet, musician, and activist Moor Mother's songs "Umzansi" and "Woody Shaw," demonstrating how a Black gaze and a poetics of difference are deployed in both. This project provides an understanding of a musical Afrofuturistic practice rooted in resistive visual and literary practices, and the importance of this practice for imagining and building toward a Black liberatory future. I aim to reach those who are invested in cultivating loving, caring, and healing communities centering marginalized folks and their experiences.

Aberrations of the Subjective: An Examination of the Intricate Nature of Dominican/Haitian Racial Identification

Ethan Barrett (he/him) Wesleyan University

I have always been interested in the ascriptive attributes of identity. The topic of this project is the contested facets of identity formation in the Dominican border town of Dajabon. The ambiguity of racial assignment in the Dominican Republic constructs a problem space. Cautious of my positionality and the ethical conundrums of cultural anthropology, I traveled with my research collective to the DR in order to understand the mosaic of selfdom. Space and place are imperative when assessing socio-cultural structures in a nation. With photographs taken during my fieldwork in the Dominican Republic and on the border with Haiti, I aim to complicate many core facets of how we perceive identity in the United States.

Parade para el pueblo: COFECA and the Central American Independence Day Parade

Hazel Carias-Urbina (she/her) California State University, Los Angeles

For forty years, the Confederation of Central America (COFECA) has organized the Central American Independence Day Parade and Festival in inner city Los Angeles. Maritza E. Cardenas's sociological work on the event, "Performing Centralamericanismo", demonstrates how it enables the process of Central American identity-making for the diasporic community of Los Angeles. Building from Cardenas' research, Hazel is exploring the inclusion of 1.5 and second generation Central American youth in the creation process of the parade. Her research methods include creating an ethnography about COFECA's parade-building process in 2022 and acquiring historical information about COFECA through oral interviews and archived material. Using these research methods, she is investigating the creation of imagined communities, cultural preservation by diasporic communities, and civic life for immigrant communities. With over 3 million Central Americans living in the United States, this research may be used to understand celebratory cultural practices as a form of social organizing that are unique to this community.

No Place like Home: An Insight into the Resilience of Mexican Women affected by Unconstitutional Deportations of the 1930s

Amalia Contreras (she/her)
California State University, Fullerton

This project explores the unconstitutional deportations of U.S. citizens and noncitizens that were of Mexican descent that took place in the United States in the 1930s, through the lens of repatriated women. These women faced problems resulting from the repatriation process, including cultural clashes when arriving in Mexico, traveling alone with their children, and the status of their citizenship being reliant on their male family members. As women of color, they had difficulty exercising their citizenship rights. Based on a set of oral histories, this paper reveals that women of Mexican descent had already adopted American cultural practices prior to their deportation. Thus, they faced different cultural expectations when they arrived in Mexico. Because their spouses were also often deported, women were, then, coerced into traveling alone to join them. Due to the gender inequality emerging from the policies of the U.S. government since 1790, women of Mexican descent had no agency in their citizenship rights as these were contingent upon their husbands or fathers. Consequently, these women were less likely to make a living without the help of a male spouse, which forced them to leave the U.S. The oral histories consulted for this project offer a window into the tragic experiences and trauma these women underwent, particularly not having a home to go to. By exploring how survivors of the repatriation process recount the events that occurred to

them, this paper contributes to the growing body of research on gender studies through a historical lens.

Queerly Said: Linguistic Gender Discrepancies in Thai-to-Japanese Translated Media

Pauli Cuellar Aguilar (he/him)
California State University, Fullerton

The Thai and Japanese languages allow speakers to express their gender and sexuality semantically by conforming to the binary linguistic inventory of their identity or through a nonbinary combination of inventories that best express their individual identity. However, while both languages are indeed gendered, Thai allows for greater flexibility in its gendering, reflecting a difference in sociopolitical ideologies. This is especially evident when translating media from one language to another. Because Thai and Japanese both have similar gender markers, yet the latter is less flexible, translations from Thai to Japanese are often semantically altered to accommodate for the difference in gender and social ideologies between the two cultures. To investigate these translation discrepancies, I will be analyzing fictional Thai conversations that have been translated into Japanese. More specifically, I will be looking at queer television dramas which have gained significant popularity in Japan amongst young women, prompting an effort from fans to translate and provide subtitles for these shows themselves. I argue that fan translations are an adaptation of the original Thai dialogues into Japanese speech that demonstrates dominant cis-heteronormative ideologies found in Japanese media.

The United States' Pervasive Perception of "Self-Enhancement": An Argument Against an Integrative Model of Medicine

Abi Garpestad (she/her)
The City College of New York

This project focused on culturally distinct perceptions of "self-enhancement", health and healing, and morality. Drawing on comparisons of the biomedical institution's objectification of the body and traditional Chinese medicine's (TCM) subjective/individualized approach — I argue that the conflicting perceptions of "self-enhancement", health and healing, and morality, persistent between Eurocentric standards of science and Confucianism (an Eastern philosophy influential to the development of TCM during the Han dynasty), destabilize the notion that an integrative model of medicine would establish culturally competent healthcare. My argument focuses on the hegemonic position of biomedicine and consequently, the assimilation process and selective adoption of Eastern cultures' traditions by biomedical (Western trained) physicians in the U.S.. This project references the westernization and reductionist approach to acupuncture and yoga in Western societies (specifically Los

Angeles within the last decade) to emphasize the misappropriation and commodification of Eastern cultures of healing.

Resituating Resistance: Fat Black Women in the Physical and Digital World

Savannah Henderson (she/her) Washington University in St. Louis

Who and what defines resistance for fat Black women? The intersections of Black womanhood and body size remain under-explored in race and body literature. Scholars who do investigate this topic often over-simplify the nuances by claiming that the women are "resisting." However, I argue that "resistance" is highly abstract and requires spatial and temporal contextualization. Through individual interviews and digital analysis, I create a definition of resistance rooted in the lived experiences of fat Black women within the Black community and on Instagram. Ultimately, my project advocates for fat Black women's agency and their ability to define and situate their own forms of resistance.

Black Feminist Ecological Agency: Narrative, Form, and Futurity

Gabrielle Hill (she/her) Cornell University

Black American women are ecological knowledge producers. Currently, popular theoretical frameworks used to study women and ecology, such as eco-feminism, fail to adequately address the specific historical and social contexts of Black American women and their relationship with nature. This project develops the theoretical framework Black Feminist Ecological Agency in order to demonstrate how Black women's relationship with ecology produces survival, liberation, and ecological well-being. Grounding my research in the scholarship of Black women, I engage with the work of Kathrine McKittrick, Kimberly Ruffin, Chelsea Frazier, among many others. Through an intertextual approach, I utilize Black speculative fiction, such as Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower (1993), Rivers Solomon's The Deep (2019), selections from Camille T. Dungy's Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature Poetry (2009), as well as interviews with Black women farmers in upstate New York in order to understand how narrative forms influence the structure of Black agricultural organizations and vice versa. My research seeks to understand how literature, poetry and Black ecological activist spaces imagine Black ecological futurity with the intention to upend narratives that uphold white supremacy and the ecological crisis.

How Do We Define Violence? A Study of Japanese Wartime Incarceration and Winged Eyeliner

Zoe Hirabayashi (she/her) University of California, Riverside

"Asian-fishing", a trend in which non-Asian (usually white) people use makeup to mimic the facial features of Asian people, is one of many forms of cultural appropriation and fetishization that has found a home on social media applications such as TikTok. My project investigates a history of anti-Asian racism and violence in the United States, particularly focusing on how we define violence, both physical and non-physical. I argue that stereotypical media portrayals of Asian people, specifically Asian women, in American television, movies, and now, social media, contribute to ideologies that result in physical acts of violence towards Asian people. Additionally, I aim to interrogate America's obsession with Asian culture while simultaneously upholding white supremacy, and situate this phenomenon within a larger timeline of white women appropriating defining features and styles of minority cultures in the name of "trendiness".

The Corpus of Consumption: Post-Anthropophagic Bodies of Ayrson Heraclito

Alaast Kamalabadi (she/her) University of California, Riverside

Over the past century, Brazilian art has frequently been constructed and dissected through the lens of carnivorous cosmopolitanism and cannibalistic nativism. Recent exhibitions such as the 24th and 30th São Paulo Art Biennial center Oswalde de Andrade's Antropofagia (Anthropophagy)—in short, cultural cannibalism—as a guiding art historical framework, drawing parallels between the act of consumption and national identity. My project interrogates Anthropophagy as a post-colonial theoretical framework and as a subaltern theory, looking at how contemporary Brazilian artist Ayrson Heraclito's conceptual and performance works engage with and criticize Anthropophagy as a theoretical framework. I investigate how Heraclito folds together discourses of racial and cultural identity and addresses historical issues such as imperialism, slavery, and the indigenous past through the use of crops and agricultural materials such as coffee, palm oil, corn, and sugar. Through material analyses, my project explores the twin notions of food-as-body and body-as-food, as well as the intersecting modalities of food, race, body, and art, complicating Anthropophagy and developing a more nuanced modality of subaltern thought through the lens of critical race theory.

Postcolonial Fact and Postcolonial Fiction: The White Captive of Nineteenth Century Latin America

Zuri Mabrey-Wakefield (she/her) Barnard College

While the majority of the world was dominated by global empires during the nineteenth century, Latin American nations became independent and, ostensibly, postcolonial during that same era. Understanding the historical arc of this formative century is fundamental to frame the Spanish-language and Portuguese-language primary texts for this project: Esteban Echeverría's long narrative poem "La Cautiva" (1837) and Bernardo Guimarães' novel A Escrava Isaura (1875). In each of these works, both the Argentinian intellectual and Brazilian author portray narratives of white women caught in constructions of captivity and/or enslavement while endangered by a racialized or "othered" population. Echeverría and Guimarães' works were also published in different halves of the nineteenth century and, thus, my critical and comparative reading of both texts bridges two different national contexts, linguistic traditions, and moments in history that fit under the regional and temporal focus of this project. The narratives and subject matters of "La Cautiva" and A Escrava Isaura are particularly instructive as I explore the connection between imperialism and culture, the incorporation of romanticism in the Latin American context, exclusionary political independence, whiteness, abolitionist rhetorics, and anti-Blackness. With this project, I locate those themes in the specific context of nineteenth century Latin America and illuminate the ways in which that context influenced and was influenced by Echeverría and Guimarães' work. In addition to interrogating that more localized Latin American postcolonial context, this project also complicates more global notions of postcolonialism.

Urban Dance: How Artistic Nomenclature Dances Around Appropriation

Kimiye Maeshiro (she/her) Bryn Mawr College

The "hip hop dance" seen in music videos and television shows today is not actually hip hop. Although its moves are borrowed from traditional hip hop dance, classifying it as "hip hop" diminishes the original dance form. Choreographers renamed this style "urban dance" to distinguish its own separate identity, but the word "urban" connotes demeaning stereotypes of BIPOC communities who created hip hop culture. My research interrogates the word "urban" and the ways it has been weaponized against and later reclaimed by BIPOC communities. Through a historical analysis of hip hop culture, I examine how the artistic nomenclature of dance styles both reflects and dilutes the history of urban spaces, cultures, and resistance. How do we categorize new art forms in ways which reflect their break from tradition, but also the debt they owe to the forms they are derived from? How might the racialized history of an artistic style as well as an artist's positionality influence how we describe the form? How can names

contribute to the appropriation or the appreciation of cultural practices and of the vernacular used by dance communities?

Cavendish and God

Kim Montpelier (she/her) Cornell University

The question of God's existence and role in the universe has remained a persistent human curiosity. This paper looks at God's role and relationship to nature in the works of the seventeenth century philosopher, Margaret Cavendish. Though scholars have acknowledged Cavendish's allusions to God, few have examined the structural nature of God in conjunction with nature and the potential inconsistencies in Cavendish's claim. This paper fills this gap by examining three of Cavendish's philosophical works: "Observations upon Experimental Philosophy", "Philosophical Letters" and "Philosophical and Physical Opinions." In addition, I look at the stoic influence on Cavendish to understand her view of nature and God, as stoics heavily influenced Cavendish's materialism, as well as the fact that both Cavendish and Cicero, a person who wrote about stoicism, lived in a time of civil war. By examining Cavendish's view of God, we can gain a better understanding of how nature works in her thought as well as broadening our own notions of how the world exists.

Sugar Dating and the Intimacy Economy

Christopher Moy-Lopez (any pronouns) Cornell University

In this project, I seek to demystify common misconceptions surrounding internet-based sex work and the intimacy economy within the United States. The intimacy economy can be defined as any work that requires relational or emotional labor. Currently, our society has progressively gained an interest in this seemingly foreign sphere of intimacy and sex work through the promotion of sugar baby culture within Gen Z's media and sugar dating's entrance into mainstream social media discourses. Specifically, I dive into heterosexual sugar-baby relationships as they have become a topic of controversy within academic spheres due to their varying social scripts which challenge the idea of what sex work constitutes, as asserted by Maren T. Scull. Sugar dating's inner workings are important to understand because with the progression of sexual autonomy and intimacy work comes both misconceptions and legal controversies about how to classify sugaring. Through a pro-sex work perspective and an acknowledgment of the merit that Radical feminism holds—regarding the inherent violence that pervades sex work as asserted by Gloria Steinem — I will espouse new general findings relating to the intimacy economy and how intimacy itself is both commodified and politicized. To do this, I review online sex forums, gender theory, literature, and websites such as seeking arrangements. When looking within these spheres, I grapple with questions of consent

within a power imbalance, the varying degrees of intimacy work, and how money influences interpersonal relationships.

Translating Adoption through Literature: Analyzing Ting-Xing Ye's *Throwaway Daughter* Through the Coming of Age Framework

Kelli Aiko Nakamura (she/her) California State University, Long Beach

Coming of age novels traditionally center upon young people struggling to establish their place within the dominant society. These novels highlight the transition from childhood to adulthood—moreover, they serve as a form of social commentary. I argue that the traditional coming of age framework overlooks the racial ambiguity and the geopolitical context surrounding adoption. I center my analysis on *Throwaway* Daughter (2003) by Ting-Xing Ye. The novel depicts Grace Parker, a Chinese adoptee who searches for her birth mother. My approach synthesizes Kenneth Millard's coming of age framework with Dr. Jennifer Ho's theory of racial ambiguity. Ho argued that adoptive parents treat transracial Asian adoptees as racially malleable; in turn, adoptees assume the ethnic and racial identities of their adoptive parents. Nonetheless, the dominant society treats Asian adoptees as racialized bodies. As a Chinese adoptee to white parents, Grace Parker subverts existing ideas regarding race and identity. Furthermore, since the novel takes place in 1970s to 1990s Canada, I examine racial formation through the Canadian context. Likewise, Grace's racial ambiguity and the sociopolitical context within China serve as critical facets of her coming of age journey. In turn, Throwaway Daughter reveals that societal expectations may not accurately reflect individuals' lived experiences.

Crushing the Snail: The Impossibility of the Eternal in Transnational Postcolonial Literatures

Marcos Padrón-Curet (he/him) Haverford College

The Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) was not only a physical battleground but also a philosophical one where authors of the Maghreb and the Global South began reflecting on what living under empire is. In my paper, I examine how the Algerian War influenced the notion of eternity in Latin American writer Gabriel García Márquez's stellar novel *Cien años de soledad*. I will later explore how this new conception of the eternal under empire is adopted by the Algerian writer Rachid Boudjedra in his novel *L'escargot entêté*. Finally, I will examine how the eternal in both texts is always terminated by empire, depriving the Global South of the possibility of the infinite.

Medical Pushout: Racial Disparities from the Classroom to the Clinic

Alexander Rodriguez (n/a) Pitzer College

This sociological study bridges methodologies and theoretical frameworks from education studies, critical race studies, and public health to understand how educational practices affect racial medical disparities, tethering the classroom to the medical clinic. Combining medical student narratives, quantitative data, and preclinical curricula, this study triangulates data utilizing micro and macro scales of analysis to understand the present-day impacts educational biases have on racialized medical circumstances for people of color in the United States. Using an indigenous two-eyed seeing approach, I introduce medical pushout as a useful framework for further understanding the impacts of racism across institutions in order to propose more effective and holistic solutions.

Inequality in Developed Nations' Economic Inequality: The Cases of the USA, Australia, and France

Jesús Eduardo Sánchez Flores (he/him) University of New Mexico

The USA currently has the greatest levels of economic inequality in the developed world. For every \$100 someone in the bottom 10% makes in the USA, a person in the top 10% makes \$1520. In Australia and France, a person in the top 10% makes less than \$500 per \$100 a person in the bottom 10% makes. Much of this disparity arose from policy passed in the 20th century, because very little progress has been made in altering economic policy since then. Tax codes and other economic policies have had nearly a century of impact without major alteration. This means that the differences in legislation across countries has led to them having drastically distinct economic positions, due to how long that legislation has had to impact the citizenry. I use comparative analysis of policy differences, Gini coefficients, and P90:P10 ratios to examine why the USA's public policy led to much more economic inequality than that of other developed nations.

Opening the Avenues for Political Participation: The 1968 Mexican Student Movement in Gonzalo Martré's *Los símbolos transparentes*

Ale Uriostegui (she/her) Washington University in St. Louis

My project analyzes how students expose the controlled modes of political participation in the 1968 Mexican Student Movement and offer new routes. The Mexican military violently repressed the Movement's peaceful protest on October 2, 1968, killing over 400 people. The 5,000 students, educators, and parents protested against the

unconstitutional military occupation of universities, demanded the release of political prisoners, and the repeal of Articles of Penal Code which punished political dissent. I analyze Gonzalo Martré's novel *Los símbolos transparentes* (1978) to explore how the work reflects on collective hope for social changes amidst a politically repressive regime. Using Ana Dinerstein's concepts of political autonomy in Latin America, I ask how do the student characters in the novel 1) "negate" the available acts of political participation, 2) "create" new avenues for political participation 3) navigate "contradiction" with their demands and actions, and 4) exemplify "excess"? This project has implications for citizenship education and political literary studies.

We Write Here

MaryJay Villavicencio (she/they) California State University, Los Angeles

In current practices of writing pedagogies, specifically at CSULA the practices of Eurocentric literature form the mainstream thought of conversations and critical thinking application for its majority population of Latinx students and more students of multi-ethnic backgrounds. Through personal experiences as a writing tutor, I have engaged with a wide majority of students struggling with connection to how Latinx students practice writing and self-identity in their writing. What became transparent was the lack of reciprocated excitement to be sharing new narratives and giving space to students of ethnic backgrounds and identities in our coursework and our application of critical thoughts and connections to our reading materials. I've amassed a study reviewing first-generation students of color at my university, and gathering their general feelings of their learning histories with how they related, if they ever did, to their cultural backgrounds to present as representation of themselves through the curriculum. Through their responses to my survey, I've focused my research on written testimonies of culturally responsive pedagogy that deconstructs the focus of Eurocentric, traditional learning and teaching practices in the current demographic of students being served by my institution and student self-authorship. These perspectives have not been allowed to fester in practice and open discussion to how instruction is handled, and that is part of what I am investigating.

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Ivanna Berrios, UCLA PhD student in Comparative Literature*

Anthony F. Caldwell, Assistant Director, UCLA Digital Research Consortium and Manager/Resident Technologist, UCLA Scholarly Innovation Labs

Dr. Medria Connolly, Clinical Psychologist

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Dr. Ross Fenimore, UCLA Graduate Division Office of Fellowships and Financial Services

Dr. Jonathan H. Grossman, *UCLA Professor of English and Co-Editor of Nineteenth-Century Literature*

Alex Hawley, Dartmouth College '19, currently preparing for Fulbright Fellowship in New Zealand*

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Dr. Darnell Hunt, UCLA Dean of the Social Sciences Division, Incoming Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

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